

## WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2011

**IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK**

*President*

### **1. Opening of the sitting**

*(The sitting opened at 09.00)*

### **2. Documents received: see Minutes**

### **3. Implementing measures (Rule 88): see Minutes**

### **4. Delegated acts (Rule 87a): see Minutes**

### **5. Economic governance**

**President.** – Good morning, welcome to our plenary.

– The next item is the statements by the Council, the Commission and the Euro Group on economic governance.

We are all aware of how important this discussion is for the European Union and for its citizens. Therefore, we will carefully listen to all the proposals that will be submitted here, and we are also very much counting on an open and thorough discussion.

Group leader, welcome to the European Parliament. We will start with the speech by Mr Van Rompuy, President of the European Council.

**Herman Van Rompuy**, *President of the European Council.* – Mr President, it may at first sight appear strange to be addressing the issue of longer-term reforms to our system of economic governance when we have not yet completely dealt with the immediate difficulties which are the legacy of past mistakes. Yet these are two sides of the same coin: short-term solutions will not be credible in the absence of a longer-term perspective. The longer-term perspective also presupposes that we can turn the corner on the current crisis, but in today's debate I will focus, as Parliament has suggested, on the longer term.

As you are aware, the conclusions of the Euro area Summit of 26 October 2011 charged me, in close cooperation with the President of the European Commission and the President of the Euro Group, to identify possible steps to strengthen the Economic Union to make it commensurate with the Monetary Union, focused on strengthening economic convergence within the euro area, improving fiscal discipline and deepening Economic Union, including exploring the possibility of limited Treaty changes.

I will present an interim report to the December European Council, which will include a roadmap on how to proceed while fully respecting the prerogatives of the institutions, including the European Parliament. A final report will be finalised by March or June 2012. The task I see for us is clear: we have to bring the Economic and Monetary Union to a solid end-state. I relish this opportunity to listen to your views.

In discussing this, I think it is first advisable to look at what we have already done over the last 20 months and then to see where it is desirable to move further. At that point it will

become clear whether or not such further advances need Treaty change and, if so, what changes.

What is it that we have achieved so far? It is often overlooked and underestimated, not least by the outside world and the markets, and we need to be extremely vigilant in implementing it. We have in fact put in place a multi-faceted reform, combining institutional pressure, peer pressure and market pressure. I mentioned these in the debate last month, but allow me to be more detailed now.

Institutional pressure has been strengthened, also thanks to your Parliament, through: the establishment of the three financial sector supervisory authorities and the European Systemic Risk Board; the reform of the Stability and Growth Pact, providing for shorter deadlines, a greater focus on debts (and not just on deficits), and making it easier to sanction a Member State not fulfilling its obligations; adding a new macroeconomic surveillance procedure looking at other macroeconomic imbalances – after all, that is only a part of the wider economic picture – and finally, establishing the EFSF (and the long-term ESM) capable of providing support in return for strict conditionality. Conditionality is a powerful tool, as is now becoming clear to all those who follow these matters.

At the same time, peer pressure has been enhanced. To give a few examples, for a start all governments now realise much more acutely how the conduct of another country can have an enormous economic and financial impact on their own. Peer pressure will also be exerted at the highest political level through regular Euro Summits. The events of the last weeks show how effective this can be for some countries. The European semester provides an annual cycle of intense macroeconomic, budgetary and structural policy coordination. Finally, 23 of the 27 Member States have agreed to go further and work together in the Euro Plus Pact on structural reforms that have a bearing on their competitiveness, over and beyond the important Europe 2020 programme.

Market pressure will complement the above because institutional and peer pressures will also have an impact on the market, amplifying their political effect. Markets may now be over-reacting, but they will not go to sleep again!

Indeed, the combination of these three pressures is already producing results. At their summit last month, euro area Member States entered into a number of additional commitments, notably the following: to translate the Stability and Growth Pact rules into national legislation, preferably at constitutional level or equivalent, by the end of 2012; to ensure that national budgets are based on independent growth forecasts; to consult one another and the Commission before the adoption of any major fiscal and economic policy reform plans with potential spillover effects; and also to stick voluntarily to the recommendations of the Commission and the relevant Commissioner regarding the implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact. Finally, a number of Member States have adopted further reform measures, not least as a result of these pressures.

It was also agreed that for euro area members in an excessive deficit procedure, the Commission and the Council will be able to examine national draft budgets and adopt opinions on them prior to their adoption by the relevant national parliament. The Commission will now bring forward proposals on closer monitoring to the Council and Parliament under Article 136.

The Commission has already strengthened the role of the competent Commissioner in this field, and I would like to congratulate Olli Rehn on his elevation to the Vice-Presidency

of the Commission. The Euro Group of Finance Ministers will, together with the Commission and the ECB, remain at the core of the daily management of the euro area, as is explicitly mentioned in the conclusions of the Euro area Summit. As you know, the Treaty provides for the euro area Finance Ministers to elect their own president, currently Jean-Claude Juncker, to whom I want to pay tribute today for his work and his engagement. When his mandate expires next year, a decision will be taken on whether his position should become a full-time one based in Brussels.

The Euro area Summit – and I quote – ‘will define strategic orientations for the conduct of economic policies and for improved competitiveness and increased convergence in the euro area’. In the same way as the European Council does for the Union as a whole, we will also organise a better coordination among the euro area institutions and strengthen the existing administrative support without creating new bodies.

Does this strengthening of cooperation among the 17 – I repeat among the 17, no more, no fewer – create a two-tier Europe? There has been much exaggerated talk about this; it is time to de-dramatise this debate. After all, it is perfectly natural that those who share a common currency take some decisions together. Indeed, the existing Treaty already provides for that with a special chapter containing provisions specific to Member States whose currency is the euro and other provisions where only members of the Council from euro Member States can vote.

It is thus a perfectly normal part of our current institutional arrangements, a specific working method. As I said to you last month, the euro area is not a derogation from the European Union, it is part of the European Union. The Treaty is quite clear: it is the Member States who have not joined the euro which are referred to as Member States with a derogation, and of course most of them will in due course join the euro. It is in the interest of the non-euro area EU members that its financial stability is organised and secured. A better structured euro area is in everybody’s interest while ensuring coherence among the 27.

It is my intention to organise Euro area Summits as a rule in conjunction with European Council meetings, if possible following them. This will enable all 27 to contribute in the full European Council meeting and make points, should they so wish, on the issues to be discussed among the 17, and likewise the Commission and the Parliament will continue to play their substantial roles involving their members from all Member States. I will report to Parliament on Euro area Summits.

I wanted to outline all this to you because it shows that the steps taken over the last few months, each one perhaps small in itself, amount cumulatively to a significant change already in our governance structures. It is clearly the starting point for any reflection on where to go further. In doing so, it is my intention to examine the ‘what’ before the ‘how’. We should examine the goals, and only afterwards the legal instruments required to get there, including limited Treaty changes should these prove necessary.

A lot can be done within the treaties, including the use of instruments such as enhanced cooperation. For Treaty changes, a unanimous ratification is needed by every single Member State. Institutional changes are no substitute for dealing with the immediate financial crisis, so we have to get the different time perspectives right. However, improvements of all kinds are possible and in themselves desirable.

It is useful too to give the public and the markets a sense of our medium-term direction. Some of these areas in which improvements to our economic governance could be envisaged are obvious; others less so. Let me mention the three issues in the mandate from the Euro Summit statement: strengthening economic convergence, improving fiscal discipline and deepening economic union.

Firstly, as regards strengthening economic convergence, we need to examine whether to go beyond the 'six-pack' in terms of further macroeconomic surveillance, how to strengthen the framework for commitments under the Euro Plus Pact, and whether there are areas in which enhanced cooperation is desirable among the 17 in areas of economic policy that are crucial for competitiveness.

Secondly, in terms of improving fiscal discipline, should we go further in terms of the automaticity of the sanctions provided for under the Excessive Deficit Procedure? Should we provide, in extreme cases, for further sanctions such as suspension of voting rights, suspension of structural funds or other payments, or power for a central authority to intervene in national budgetary procedures?

Thirdly and finally, in terms of deepening economic union, is there a need for harmonisation in certain areas such as taxation or even some social fields? Should there be a limited mutualisation of public debt, and what further regulations are needed for the financial sector?

Again, all these questions are interlinked and changes in one respect cannot always be assessed independently of changes in others. This crisis in the euro area does require us to do more. We have come a long way from the empty, and now discredited, toolbox I discovered when I took office – which I still consider as a major error, all the more so that during the Convention warnings were given by lucid observers.

We now need to go further, and we need both fiscal discipline and economic and fiscal integration focused on growth – not only to punish the sinners but also to link our policies, to demonstrate that we share a common destiny.

We need to acknowledge that this means a sharing of sovereignty for all members of the euro area, and not only a loss for the countries in difficulty. We need to find the right balance between intrusiveness and legitimacy, discipline and incentives, effectiveness and accountability. This will guide my thinking on the fundamentals of the Economic and Monetary Union in the months ahead.

But above all, today, I want to listen to your views, your ideas and your

suggestions; this Parliament has always been a rich source of ideas, a laboratory of proposals for the development of our Union. I look forward to hearing them.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission* . – Mr President, the European Commission's recent economic forecasts are further proof that the backdrop against which we are all working is indeed pressing, and extremely challenging. Economic recovery has hit a standstill. Since our last fully-fledged forecast in May, global economic conditions have worsened. Investment and consumption are stagnant, and are being damaged by a persistent lack of confidence. Growth forecasts are low and unemployment is set to remain at around 10% for the next two years, at 23 million people across the European Union: a terrible situation. Added to this are the continued turbulent events in the sovereign bond markets meaning that our challenges are of a greater magnitude today.

It is precisely for the restoration of confidence that our work on fiscal consolidation, on structural reforms, on strengthening economic governance and on boosting growth is more important than ever before. That is why the Commission is advancing its work and taking its responsibilities with the utmost seriousness.

As I said to this House on the day after the Euro Area Summit on 27 October, the Commission will advance its second Annual Growth Survey on policies for growth and jobs in the European Union for 23 November. At the same time, we will come forward with our proposals on further strengthening the economic governance of the euro.

The purpose is to continue the comprehensive approach I set out in my State of the Union address to this Parliament, and also in the Commission's Roadmap to Stability and Growth two weeks later. We need more discipline, but we need more convergence. We need more responsibility, but more solidarity. We need financial stability, but also economic growth. And this is the pact we are proposing to the European citizens. We cannot do this only through responsibility; we need solidarity. We cannot do this only through financial stability; we need economic growth.

The Commission's second Annual Growth Survey will provide a first assessment of progress in the implementation of commitments made in the first European semester, including country-specific recommendations and those under the Euro Plus Pact, and constitutes the starting point for the second European semester.

Let me make two remarks on the Annual Growth Survey. The first message will be the importance of staying the course and implementing what has already been agreed. Consistency in implementation is key. We cannot change our plans all the time. We have to be consistent and deliver concretely the commitments that have been made.

The problems we will face in 2012 are even more systemic and urgent. We should continue to deal with them robustly and not be diverted from the direction we have set ourselves. The downbeat economic perspectives do not mean we can allow ourselves to reduce our efforts in fiscal consolidation or in promoting growth. They must be stepped up, because we are reforming for the long term.

The second remark is that the experience of having completed one full Annual Growth Survey and European semester, combined with the strengthened rules we now have on economic governance, means that our decisions need to be reinforced and adapted in certain respects. Not least to take account of the persistent and pervasive nature of the crisis. We are indeed now facing a truly systemic crisis that requires an even stronger commitment from all and may require additional – and very important – measures.

For 2012, the Annual Growth Survey will focus on five key areas. First, on pursuing stability through fiscal consolidation. Second, on further strengthening the financial sector. I would like to thank this House for its support for the 27 proposals on the financial sector that the Commission has put forward over the last months. I count on you in 2012 to support the financial transaction tax and the proposal we adopted yesterday on credit rating agencies.

Third, on boosting growth by reducing fragmentation in our markets and making Europe a more attractive place to create and invest. In the year ahead, I count on the support of this Parliament to fast-track a number of measures on the table, namely the Single Market proposals. Let us not forget that we have to liberate the full potential of the single market, because the key to the response to the current crisis is growth, and without growth there

will be no way out of this crisis. We can do much more – through structural reform – to achieve the goal of growth.

Fourth, on nurturing our human and social capital. I am thinking here specifically of young people unable to find meaningful work in Europe, and all that can be done to help them.

Fifth, on modernising our public administrations, which are a determining element of competitiveness and productivity.

Today we are invited to discuss economic governance. For some, it may seem frivolous to discuss this topic at a time when urgency demands action. And yes, let me be clear: all levers of action must now be used without delay. Discussing governance, including Treaty change, must not be an excuse not to take action now, because action is needed now.

Having said that, governance matters: it defines the parameters within which action can – or cannot – be taken. In this respect, we have been held back by the intergovernmental approach that has been predominant in many of the decisions, because the intergovernmental approach puts a premium on the slowest and the most reluctant, not on the most decided and the most engaged.

Take the European Financial Stability Facility, for example. It must be as flexible as possible. The unanimity rule has held back its development for too long, until we finally came to the decisions of 27 October, and this is one of the problems. Today the markets, the investors, are not only looking at the deficits, at levels of debt, but also at the capacity of the euro area and the European Union to take decisions.

That is why having a stronger governance of the euro area is vital for the survival and the reinforcement of our common currency. Markets and investors demand stronger governance in the euro area – it is not just a political issue for those, like me and many of you, who share a passion for a stronger Europe. It is indeed now just a matter of common sense to have stronger economic governance in the euro area, and of course in the European Union.

Reforms at national level must be completed with appropriate structures at European level that will give weight and resonance to the economic decisions. On 23 November, I expect the Commission to adopt, and to send to this House, two initiatives on further deepening European Union and euro area economic governance in line with the Roadmap for Stability and Growth that I presented to you on 12 October, and which was largely endorsed by the European Council.

These initiatives are based on Article 136 of the current Treaty. In addition, the Commission will present a Green Paper on stability bonds, which I know is eagerly awaited by this House.

This will be followed, before the end of the year, by a Communication that deserves special attention: a Communication on the external representation of the euro area, based on Article 138(2) of the Treaty. It will make proposals towards a more consolidated European voice and representation in international fora and institutions such as the G20 and the IMF. In strengthening our integration, we must also strengthen our voice and strengthen our credibility worldwide.

The initiatives based on Article 136 that Vice-President Rehn is now completing will address two issues. On the one hand, the need to increase surveillance, especially for Member States that put at risk the financial stability of all. The first Regulation is for enhanced surveillance

of euro area Member States that are experiencing severe financial disturbance or requesting financial assistance. It will provide an interface between intergovernmental financial assistance and Treaty-based surveillance – in other words, bringing it into the Community framework. It will step up surveillance for euro Member States receiving precautionary assistance and assistance under an adjustment programme, and will also ensure post-programme surveillance. The key here is to ensure coherence between reinforced governance in the euro area and the overall *acquis* of the 27 Member States of the European Union, thereby increasing convergence in the 17 members of the euro area without damaging the interests of all the European Union.

The second Regulation is for enhanced surveillance for euro area Member States in excessive deficit procedure, thereby translating one of the commitments of 26 October. It will set out graduated steps and conditions for monitoring national budgetary policies. It should enable the Commission and the Council to examine national draft budgets *ex-ante* and to adopt an opinion on them before their adoption by the national parliaments, requesting a second reading in serious cases. In addition, the Commission will monitor budget execution and, if necessary, suggest amendments in the course of the year.

But in connection with this, I want to be clear about one thing in particular. The final say on national budgets will remain where it belongs, with national parliaments. But national parliaments have to be made much more keenly aware of the European rules which their governments – and they themselves – have agreed to respect. Increased surveillance by the Commission will lead unavoidably to a greater role in domains previously restricted to national governments or parliaments. But this is necessary and indispensable if we want to have a common currency. Here, I think, the European Parliament can play an absolutely vital role, in particular through interparliamentary dialogue and cooperation.

The final part of our package is the Green Paper on euro stability bonds. It will present and assess the options for the joint issuance of bonds in the euro area. It will also explore reinforced economic governance options that would need to be developed, depending on the decisions taken. I believe that euro stability bonds will be seen as natural when we achieve our goal of reinforced governance and, of course, discipline and convergence in the euro area. They will be a concrete demonstration of the principles of responsibility and solidarity.

I should like to summarise by saying a few words on the principles behind this package. The increasingly systemic nature of the crisis has made it clear that we must progress with greater integration of economic governance, especially within the euro area. This crisis has exposed weaknesses and gaps in terms of surveillance, intervention and decision-making. Some of these can now be addressed thanks to the recent successful conclusion of the 'six-pack' negotiations, for which I thank this House for its excellent cooperation – more than that, for its decisive commitment.

The 'six-pack' will come into force in around one month from now and, as Vice-President Rehn has stated, the Commission will use its provisions from day one. But, as we could see from the conclusions of the Euro Area Summit on 26 October, there is full consensus now to go further, and this is a very important development. Member States are now accepting what some time ago would be considered unthinkable. Euro area Member States must now consult the Commission – and each other – before adopting any major fiscal or economic policy reform plans. They have committed to respect the Commission's recommendations in implementing the Stability and Growth Pact. And they have entrusted

the Commission with the lead role in monitoring the implementation of the second Greek programme and the reforms in Italy.

That is why this package, and in particular the Regulations based on Article 136, will address problems that have become more visible and more acute in the sovereign debt crisis, namely the risks of contagion and spill-over from countries experiencing severe financial disturbances. Reinforced surveillance is absolutely crucial in bolstering confidence among the general public and market participants.

While this reinforced discipline is now recognised as entirely necessary, the Commission is committed to going further to make sure that changes in economic governance are done in a transparent way; in a democratic way; in the Community way. These Regulations will be based on the principle of full transparency. Both Regulations will of course be subject to codecision. And we look forward to continuing the excellent cooperation with this House which we saw, for instance, in the 'six-pack' negotiations.

The instruments we have developed and are still developing will be essential to ensure that we do not face again the kind of situations that made Europe so vulnerable to the crisis. They insist that Member States, especially in the euro area, live up to a long-standing obligation. It is, to quote the European Union Treaty, that Member States must – *ipsis verbis* – 'regard their economic policies as a matter of common concern'.

This is the fundamental lesson of the crisis: it is the lesson of interdependence. It is the lesson that, when things go wrong, the consequences are felt far beyond national borders. And the hardest lesson is this: when things go badly wrong, the impact is felt by every European taxpayer and by far too many European workers, whose prosperity and livelihoods are put at risk not only by their own governments but, sometimes, by someone else's government. That is why we need to learn these lessons, to do all we can to rebuild our structures and revise our rules in a unified way that takes proper account of our interdependence and the responsibility that places on all of us, including of course the European institutions.

A key way to ensure this is – as I have said many times to this Parliament and also to the European Council – to insist that the Community method and the Community institutions remain at the heart of our response to the crisis. They must be at the core of how we shape the European Union to make it stronger and fitter for the future; to make it more efficient, but at the same time to uphold its democratic principles. It means governance for all and by all, not only by a few.

In the future, we will need to go even further on strengthening integration. This will require Treaty changes. Let me be clear: I am in favour of Treaty change if the Treaty change is to reinforce the European Union, the Community method, the European institutions and the sense of a common purpose. But let us not fool ourselves. Treaty change takes time and should not be seen as the immediate solution for the current crisis. Let us discuss it seriously, with due reflection and with due involvement of relevant actors and institutions, namely this European Parliament. As President Van Rompuy has mentioned, there will be a report to the next European Council. The President of the European Council was asked, in close cooperation with the President of the Commission and the President of the Euro Group, to identify possible steps on further strengthening economic convergence within the euro area, improving fiscal discipline and deepening economic union, including exploring the possibility of Treaty changes.

But this should be seen as just the beginning of a process in which the level of ambition, democratic participation and involvement of the representatives of the European citizens is absolutely crucial. I am committed, and I will make sure, that this process will be conducted in close collaboration and cooperation with you, the European Union citizens' representatives.

The Community method and the Community institutions remain at the heart of the process and they must also remain at the core of how we shape the European Union to make it stronger and fitter for the future.

This also shows that for the euro – if we are committed to the Community approach, and if we are committed to respecting the Treaties – we do not need another Commission, another Parliament, another Court of Justice. The euro is a central part of the European Union, not something separate or apart.

*(Applause)*

The euro is not an opt-out from the European Union. This is why we should implement the Community approach when we deal with the euro. We will not make the euro stronger through the fragmentation of the European Union.

As I have stated several times to you and also to the European Council, the economic government of Europe in matters of European Union competence is the European Commission. Its accountability is to this Parliament. This is the responsibility of the full College, not a part of it. I have given Vice-President Rehn special responsibility regarding euro governance and we have made sure that economic analysis is done in the most objective way. But let us be clear: in matters of political decision, the responsibility of the Commission is collegiate. We need to respect the rules. We need, more than ever, strong Community institutions and strong governance.

This is also part of rebuilding confidence. Any revision of the Treaty should be for deeper integration of the euro area, but also for a stronger European Union, in full respect of the Community method and, of course, the prerogatives of this Parliament.

Reinforcing the governance of the euro is also reinforcing our Union. There should not be any divide between the current 17 Member States on one side and 10 on the other; most – almost all – of which have a vocation to join the euro. All Member States are full Members of the Union, and all should be committed to fulfilling the objectives of the Treaties. The Member States of the euro area have committed to completing the monetary union with an economic union, but this must also be completed with a political union, and with the political unity to move forward together.

The Community institutions *par excellence* – this Parliament and the Commission – have never left in doubt their determination to tackle this crisis head-on and to work for a stronger European Union. I know that I can count on you and you can certainly count on the Commission to continue doing precisely that.

*(Applause)*

**Jean-Claude Juncker**, *President of the Euro Group*. – (FR) Mr President, President of the European Council, President of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, as I understood it, the debate which brings us here today was to be on governance of the euro area and should therefore not be about the substance in the first instance, but first and foremost it should

instead be about our style of work and the dovetailing between our different working methods.

To tell you the truth, I can hardly tell the difference between style and substance, because in Europe I have often found that style is the substance that rises to the surface. If your working methods are intergovernmental, then your will is not entirely community-based, which obviously explains the working methods.

I would very briefly like to go over a few points in our train of working methods: first of all macroeconomic surveillance and the European semester. I do not honestly believe that we are now in a position to draw definitive conclusions from this first experience of the first European semester. I am not disappointed with the results provided by the first European semester, however I do believe that they can absolutely be improved upon.

I think that it is quite normal during a first, hasty and rather superficial experience that not all possible lessons can be learnt. I believe that when governments present their draft budgets for 2012, this *ex ante* and *a priori* consultation exercise will enable us to check whether or not governments have fully or partially followed the recommendations sent to them during the first European semester.

Generally speaking, I want this exercise to become more political, more inclusive and less technical. If we want to be the economic government of Europe, we should have the ambition of a government. It is obvious that all the different groups within the Council should be more involved in the exercise revolving around the European semester and that all the sensitivities expressed through the different Council groups must be listened to properly.

As economic government amounts to more than just managing budgets, I do not think it can be exclusively in the hands of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council and the finance ministers.

(Applause)

Wait! I can already hear the train whistle.

What I mean by this – as pointed out by both presidents – is that as the growth dimension is equally important, when preparing European councils, whether European councils at euro area level or European councils as we know them, the Council for Social Affairs, the Competitiveness Council, as well as the Research Council, the ministers for energy, transport and innovation, for employment, and for combating poverty will all obviously need to be involved, and I want them to be just as actively involved in the debate as the finance ministers.

(Applause)

I want our working methods to become more political in all our actions. If the truth be known, after many years' experience in all things Community, I often see that with finance ministers, and sometimes even prime ministers, texts are endorsed that we have not even prepared or even discussed amongst ourselves. It is a bit like in some European Parliament committees, but with us, it is more ...

(Exclamations)

I had you going there! I was just trying, in vain, to get you out of your overly benevolent shell. Forget it. It was a test.

I want our work to be more political. I want us in ECOFIN, and in the other Council groups, and in the European Council under Mr Van Rompuy's presidency, to discuss the specific situations of the various Member States in more detail. When recommendations are made to a government, I want that government to be able to say whether or not it agrees and for the others to be able to engage in a virtuous dialogue with the government of that country. We are not a government if we fail to nurture meaningful debate amongst ourselves on the key points of political choices which together we will make but which we will have to apply individually in our different countries.

As for budgetary and macroeconomic surveillance, I want the European Parliament to be as closely involved as possible with our approach. I realise how difficult the Council and the European Parliament found it to agree on the exact content of so-called economic dialogue. However, I want the various presidents of the various Councils to be invited by the European Parliament to discuss the major decisions that have been made by Member States and by the Council of Ministers.

As President of the Euro Group, you know that I will always be willing to come and talk and discuss the various recommendations and decisions that we have made. I am one of those that believe that a Member State facing particular difficulties, a Member State with a huge deficit, a Member State under specific pressure, ought to have the opportunity to come to the European Parliament to put over its own case. It is stipulated that Parliament can invite a Member State – the Member State does not have to come – but if we want to make Europe more mutually supportive, it seems obvious to me that those wanting solidarity and who need to demonstrate their strength must also explain themselves to the European Parliament, if only to gain a better understanding of the brand image and the level of difficulty which the other Member States, and members of Parliament will understand better if a government explains itself live and in colour to the European Parliament.

As for actual governance, President Van Rompuy has explained to you the dovetailing of relations between the Euro Council chaired by Mr Van Rompuy and the Euro Group which I have the honour of chairing. There is no rivalry and no competition between the two of them. The Euro Group still plays a vital role when it comes to the detail of organising day-to-day, or monthly management of economic policy coordination. The Euro Group has to prepare Euro Council meetings and we will see, when my mandate comes to an end, that is on 1 June 2012, whether or not we will transform the Euro Group presidency into a permanent presidency building on Protocol 14 of the Treaty, which does not actually say that a member of the Euro Group has to chair the Euro Group, but that another president of the Euro Group can be chosen from outside the members of the Euro Group. We shall see in due course.

What I want, in any case, is that we make the job of president of the Euro Group Working Group, in other words this subgroup of the Economic and Financial Committee, a full-time job. It is vital, if only to organise the day-to-day relations between the Commission, the Directorates-General and the Euro Group, that a president of the Euro Group Working Group be finally established permanently in Brussels. That will really help with the work involved in preparing and finding solutions.

In the very short term, I want to tell you that, in the Euro Group, we are currently finalising the amendments that need to be made to the framework agreement regarding the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). Mr Klaus Regling, the big boss at the ESFS, is currently looking in detail at the various options, particularly those involving the leverages to be

taken under scrutiny. I have every confidence that we can complete this work before the end of November. We have no choice, in any case, but to speed things up. I refer to the wise words spoken by the President of the Commission on this aspect of governance.

Before the end of the month, we will have to discuss things before taking a final decision on the matter of paying a sixth instalment of EUR 8 billion: we will pay two thirds to Greece and the International Monetary Fund will pay one third. During its session a week ago, the Euro Group decided that this instalment could be paid if sustainability is proved, if we agree on a new Greek programme on which Mr Van Rompuy had also got us to agree to on 26 and 27 October. Payment of this sixth instalment is subject to our conditions that all elements of all the decisions taken in Brussels on 26 and 27 October are met and we expect to have before us a letter from the Greek Prime Minister informing us of the exact intentions, now and over time, of the Greek authorities in meeting these recommendations and the decisions taken on 26 and 27 October.

We will up the pace to finalise the amendments to be made to the Treaty regarding the European Stability Mechanism. We will examine the tricky issue of private sector involvement, of the private sector participating in future operations of support. This is a deceptively simple issue, which, in fact, is more difficult on closer inspection.

Briefly speaking, Mr President, that is, in the main, my current thoughts on the matter.

*(Applause)*

**Joseph Daul**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, Mr Barroso, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Juncker, ladies and gentlemen, the economic and financial crisis is turning everything on its head and things are changing at an increasingly dramatic pace: changes in Greece and Italy, with the establishment of governments of national unity, which we welcome; whereas until now, our citizens saw European integration as being far removed from their day-to-day lives, now they are calling for more integration. Well, not everyone, as just yesterday, David Cameron saw fit to attack a Europe to which, last time I checked – yesterday afternoon –, his country still belongs, when what we really want is constructive positions, even from him, on how to emerge from the crisis.

Still, all the influential players in the Union acknowledge – as I have been saying for years – that the answer to our problems is not less but more Europe. The solution is Europe. I think some presidents realise this. Those who do not are replaced; which is a good thing. A Europe that needs to be transformed along the lines of integration which should have been done when the euro was created because, I will say it again, the current crisis is not just a crisis of the euro which, this morning, Mr Juncker, was still trading at around 1.35 against the dollar – or 1.34 as it might have dropped a centime, which is still acceptable.

The reason for this crisis is the mistake made in setting up a currency without giving it the governance needed to make it work. We need to acknowledge this political error, but, above all, we need to put it right, and very quickly. That is what the euro area Member States are being forced to try and do and, once again, I congratulate the Council, Mr Van Rompuy, which is hard at work but which, in my opinion, is not working quickly enough because when your house is burning down, the fire-fighters get to work and, I tell you, fire-fighters are never criticised. I used to be a voluntary fire-fighter myself. We would sum up after the fire: we would look at what had been lost and what could be improved. That is what I am asking of you, Mr Van Rompuy. Do not be afraid. Be stronger. We will work it out later.

However, once again, I want to emphasise the importance of crisis management which is a new source of division in Europe. Ladies and gentlemen, we are seeing it more and more, we need to take care to distinguish between those that are in a deep crisis and those that have managed it better. We need to recognise this.

I want to stress how crucial it is that the Seventeen take into account all the instruments of the Euro Plus Pact when making any decisions on governance of the euro area. Mr Juncker, this is your job, do it. There are many countries wanting to join the euro area. We must not create different categories of players in this Euro Plus zone. We must not leave those countries wanting to join warming up on the sidelines. We must not exclude them from strategic decisions taken in the dressing rooms. I want to underline, here, the merit of countries like Poland, which has the Presidency, and which, despite not yet being in the euro area, are making extremely brave efforts, from a political viewpoint, to clean up their finances and boost growth. We should encourage them; we should make them feel a part of our club. Similarly, and I shall say it again, we should not abandon the Community method.

As much as I firmly believe that the Franco-German alliance is a key driving force in Europe – which recent weeks have again proved –, I call on all Member States to contribute and go further than Paris and Berlin, instead of complaining about the impetus provided by Paris or Berlin. Nobody is stopping them.

Likewise, Mr Barroso, I also call on the European Commission, with your commissioners, to do everything in your power to safeguard, strengthen and shield European cohesion. Do what you can to reassure small and medium-sized States that the Community method is still the glue that holds us together, that makes us stand firm and binds us together. It is in times of difficulty that it needs to be reinforced. That is the main responsibility of both institutions, the European Parliament and the Commission, which stand up for the European general interest.

I want to finish my part in the debate on a possible revision of the European Treaties. Yes, changes will definitely need to be made to put right what is necessary. Yes, these will definitely have to be major adaptations, given the significance of the issues at stake. My group is open to this process as long as there is open, democratic debate involving elected representatives and civil society as part of an agreement. Above all, however, we must not fall back into the temptation of spending all our time talking about the mechanical tools, to the detriment of our political objectives. We must not lose sight of what is urgent, namely credible economic governance, and of what is less urgent, and let us do what can and must be done to current treaties, if necessary by making small changes to the rules of procedure as I call them. I am thinking of the establishment of the internal market, of the rules governing financial supervision or credit rating agencies. I am thinking about the political role played by the Vice-President of the Commission responsible for economic and monetary affairs, which is yet to be defined. I am thinking about the rapid implementation of the Stability and Growth Pact and of macroeconomic surveillance.

*(The President interrupts the speaker following an interruption off-microphone from Mr Bloom)*

I am thinking about real budgetary, fiscal and social integration. Mr President, it is Europe which speaks while the anti-Europeans scream and shout. That is not my way of moving Europe forward.

*(Applause)*

**Martin Schulz**, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, today, Mario Monti is introducing his new Government. Prime Minister Papademos is today facing a vote of confidence in the Greek parliament. Both of these Heads of Government – the one in Italy and the one in Greece – are certainly facing challenges of historic proportions in their respective countries. On behalf of my group, I would like to start – after what has been, it seems to me, a very technical debate – by saying that this Parliament, too, would like to express its solidarity with the people of these countries, who have to cope with the biggest crisis. We are discussing Treaty changes and the structure of the EU – when will we actually be debating the fact that these countries need investments and growth, without which they will never recover? That is the task with which we must engage this morning.

(Applause)

Mr Monti has said that democracy needs time. He is absolutely right. However, the markets do not give democracy time. What we are experiencing is a footrace between democracies and anonymous forces that expose the democracies to an indeterminable risk through their speculation. We would therefore be well advised to do everything we can to stabilise those countries that, in my estimation, and that of my group, are not only the victims of excessive national debts, but also subject to speculation through which, as a result of these national debts, democratic State systems can be driven to bankruptcy while people make money out of that very occurrence.

We are, at the moment, spending a lot of time discussing what the Council is and is not doing – and what it wants and does not want to do – and what the Commission brings to the table, and what it does not want to bring to the table. I want to tell you which institution in this Europe of ours delivers. In six months, Parliament has delivered the six-pack and the Canfin report, which we adopted here: the ban on naked short selling – a tough measure against speculation – was delivered by this House. That being the case, I would like to thank the President of the European Council for ending his speech by saying that we are a rich source of ideas. Parliament is no think tank though – we represent the citizens of Europe, and we deliver tangible solutions.

(Applause)

We are discussing a revision of the Treaty, indeed we are. I do not know whether Mr Monti needs a debate about revising the Treaty. Nor do I know whether Greece needs a debate about revising the Treaty at this point in time. The reason we are debating a revision of the Treaty is that Chancellor Merkel wants to write the six-pack into it. That is all. And you two, there – and you, as well – do not have the guts to say 'Leave it be!', despite the fact that everyone here knows that you do not actually want it. That is the reality.

It is my belief that, if this revision of the Treaty takes place because it has been forced, then I say to you, once again, what I said to you last time, which is that a convention would then be needed, and Parliament would have to be involved in that. I want to make it very plain to you that without the European Parliament there will not be any efficient reforms in the European Union – and I refer you back to what I said before.

(Applause)

One of the reasons for this is that this House is the best institution to ensure cohesion in Europe. What we are experiencing is the splitting of this continent. I have said it on

numerous occasions, there is a tripartism: there is the cosy Franco-German relationship, the rest of the euro area, and the rest of Europe.

We accept the fact that the Heads of State or Government of the euro area states need to come together under the pressure of the markets and, where necessary, also have to take quick decisions outside the Treaty. We accept that one hundred per cent. What is currently being attempted, though, is to make a rule out of this exception, and that is wrong. I will tell you where that leads: if we discuss revising the Treaty, we also discussing whether or not the Community method is to remain.

In that respect, Mr Daul is right when he makes reference to the speeches of the British Prime Minister. Is the Community method to remain or not? Like my fellow Members, I do not defend the Community method because it is a technique, but because behind it is a philosophy. The Community method was the opportunity – Europe's big achievement – to balance the interests of large, medium and smaller states with one another in common institutions.

If we give that up and the Heads of State or Government of the euro area represent the economic government, I have to ask on what basis decisions will be reached. Will they be made by unanimity? If unanimity is the system, then that leaves us dependent on the result of the ballot vote of the FDP party in Germany, on whether a narrow majority of 60 000 members of that party will decide the future of the euro. If decisions are made by majority voting, then it is always Germany and France that have the majority. Yet that leaves Chancellor Merkel and President Sarkozy to decide on what Luxembourg must do, or Mr Monti in Rome, or Mr Papademos in Athens. What we have then is not the European Council, it is the Congress of Vienna – and we do not want to go back to those days.

(Applause)

Mr President, before you again refuse to respond to all the shouting and screaming, many thanks for your attention.

**Guy Verhofstadt**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, let us come back to reality. Yesterday interest rates in the bond market rose to 7.05% for Italy. Yesterday the interest rates for Spain were 6.27% and 3.6% for France.

France has triple-A status – exactly the same as Germany – but the reality in the markets is that France has to pay double the interest rates of Germany. As I am always saying, I do not know what these ratings from the rating agencies mean, but they certainly have no effect on interest rates, because today France has double that of Germany.

It is obvious that the euro crisis has reached a very dangerous point, a decisive point where everything is possible, even the most dramatic scenario. We are at a point where countries which are Europe's third and fourth economies have interest rates of nearly 7% – which is not sustainable – and where the second biggest economy is paying double that of the benchmark, Germany.

We first have to recognise that we have to go beyond the decisions of 21 July and 26 October 2011 if we want to deal with this crisis. It is very good, Joseph, that France and Germany meet each other from time to time – they do it every two weeks – but it is not sustainable and it is not convincing for the markets. Their decisions only calm the markets for 24 hours. After 24 hours everything starts again.

What we need is not the combining of two important countries in the euro area, but to stand behind the global approach of the Commission. My message today is that we must ask the Commission to formalise this package as fast as possible. Maybe a number of new elements are needed, but what the Commission must do is put an act formalising an economic and fiscal union on the table for the Council and the Parliament: we are not only talking about the package, we should formalise and legalise this economic and fiscal union.

That is the only way we can end the euro crisis of today. Do not think that a new two-day summit or a new combined effort by the two big countries can stop it. We need other more formalised, legalised initiatives.

What we need is economic governance based on the European Commission. I propose that we should end this discussion of who should chair the Euro Group and so on. If we are to have a Vice-President who is responsible for the euro, let him also share the Euro Group. Let us not continue to multiply functions inside the European Union and inside the euro area. That is the first thing.

Let us have a convergence code. Let us have this Green Paper and decisions on the Green Paper. I hope that the Green Paper on stability bonds can be put before Parliament in the coming days. Let us also look into the very important proposal made two days ago by the five wise economists of the German Council of Economic Experts. What they have proposed, in a paper directly addressed to Ms Merkel and the German Government, is to create what could be called a European collective redemption fund to neutralise debts of above 60% in the euro area, combined with a bold debt reduction scheme, for countries who are not using the EFSF.

That is a fund of EUR 2.3 trillion to stabilise the euro crisis. Together with the EFSF that means that you have firepower of EUR 3.3 trillion, based on eurobonds. Was it the federalists who proposed that to the Parliament? No, it was the five wise economists who are the direct advisors of Ms Merkel and of the German Government. Now is the time to do something about that. Beyond the 60% threshold, there is only one solution to this crisis, and it is the eurobond market.

Finally, a word on the question of whether we need a Treaty change. I think many things are possible without a Treaty change. Many things can be done with today's existing Treaty. But if we are to have Treaty change, then we also need a convention before this Parliament.

**Daniel Cohn-Bendit**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, there are times in life when you have to step back and think things through properly.

I was a long time fan of Hölderlin who said: ...

(DE) 'Where there is danger, salvation grows too'.

(FR) 'Where there is danger, salvation grows too'. Europe has unfortunately taught us that things are not quite so clear-cut, that the danger is increasing but we cannot really see what our salvation will be.

I am a little dumbstruck at Mr Van Rompuy's words. Mr Van Rompuy, you tell us: 'Everything is fine, we have worked hard for 20 months'. You are a good accountant, you have been doing your sums and, meanwhile, the world is moving in all directions. But you, the accountant, are counting and continue to count how many days you have spent in your office. No, Mr Van Rompuy, not enough has been done. The fundamental question

for all of us is that, in the face of the crisis, many believed that federalising the intergovernmental approach was the most effective way forward.

(FR) If we look at public opinion, federalists believed this and still believe this. In fact, there is evidence that this is not true. Europe is no longer effective because the European telephone line is in Berlin and there is a small second line in Paris. That does not make for a unified Europe. Mr Schulz talked about the Congress of Vienna, one could pick any number of examples.

What has astonished me in today's debate is, in fact, that the politicians are giving up and they are saying that what is going to save us is the European Central Bank's intelligence. Everyone knows that the Central Bank will continue to shell out. Everyone knows that the Central Bank will set up its Eurobonds in its own way, but there is just one fundamental democratic problem: who controls the Central Bank? I am not criticising the Central Bank, I am just saying that you are telling us stories about the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and you know full well that that will not resolve the crisis. Mr Monti will go straight to Mr Dragi and say: 'How do we do it? I need 200 billion in spring. If I go to the market, that will be catastrophic, so I am coming to you'. In response, Mr Dragi will say to Mr Monti: 'I will help you'. That is how it will happen and not with your small funds from here there and everywhere. Or we actually make a move towards Eurobonds – and I think Mr Verhofstadt is right –, and the mighty Merkel will say to the five Wise Men: 'I have my doubts'. That this lady should have doubts concerns me greatly. She already had her doubts about helping Greece before the elections in North Rhine-Westphalia. If we set any store by Mrs Merkel's doubts, we are heading for disaster. I beg you, therefore, to put Mrs Merkel's doubts to one side.

If you are going to analyse the problems in Europe, I would call on the Commission to establish a European observatory on the investment needed in Europe to kick-start the economy. We need Keynes in Brussels. Nation states cannot keep on investing, not even Mr Verhofstadt's Belgium, not even if he were Prime Minister.

Everyone now knows that there can only be one European initiative. We need to know what to do to achieve this. As for us, we advocate green growth – as everyone knows – and ecological transformation. If we are debating the quality of investment, yet the Commission is saying: 'We can not simply judge stability, budgetary deficits'; the need for investments then needs to be judged and the whole of Europe told.

Then, if you are analysing countries, spreads, I want to hear about a spread: how can it be right that the minimum hourly wage in France is nine euro while in Germany, there is talk of introducing a minimum wage of five to six euro. You are going to tell me that that is economic convergence and that we can work like that in Europe. Utter madness! Mrs Merkel needs to be told. Such a rich country where almost 20% of the population live in poverty, it is utter madness! I want the Commission to take responsibility and say that Germany's economic policy, with its export surplus, is madness when there are such inequalities in that country.

This also needs to be said.

(Applause)

I want to finish on this one note, Mr President: Europe sometimes needs 30 seconds more to survive. You need to know this.

*(Interjection from the floor from Mr Bloom)* You shut up, OK? If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. You know. Churchill.

I should like to say one thing about Treaty changes. There will only be Treaty change if this Parliament and the national parliaments – in other words by means of an agreement – really are the instruments for this Treaty change. If you want to sneak Treaty changes through the back door, this Parliament will oppose it, as will the federalist groups and the European groups. We need to realise this so that no time is wasted with false treaty changes.

**Jan Zahradil**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I am a very disciplined person so I will try to keep this within the time, since there is nothing much to talk about. All of you have said that more centralisation, more fiscal and political union, is needed in the euro area. Your direction is clear. Instead of reducing the number of euro area members that might create a leaner, healthier and stronger single currency, you have gone the other way round.

I am sorry to say this but this is once again ideology prevailing over economy. People from my part of Europe lived in a system that promoted ideology over economy for a long time and it did not go well at the end.

One good thing you are trying to do is to restore fiscal discipline in the euro area. But you are not doing it through political will and democratic means but by implementing some kind of fiscal dictatorship which would be run from Brussels, Frankfurt, Berlin and Paris. I can agree to a large extent with Mr Schulz that this is much more like the Vienna Congress than a European Union, but where I disagree with Mr Schulz is that the Community's so-called Community method can save us. The Community method and all that federalist ideology is only an illusion in my understanding. It is only a coat of varnish behind which power games are played out and if this continues it will undermine the very little that remains of the credibility the EU has in the eyes of its citizens.

Secondly, any Treaty changes would require the unanimous approval of all 27 EU members, not just the 17 euro area members. There are 27 European Union members, including my own country and including the United Kingdom. You might or might not like it but that is the situation and if you open the Treaties you should expect that those non-euro-zone members will negotiate. They will not grant automatic approval to any Treaty change because what happens in the euro area does affect all of us. We will negotiate: you may want more centralisation, we do not. We will negotiate for more flexibility. I am not scared of a two-tier or a multi-speed or a variable geometric Europe.

So, if you want to open the Treaties you must be prepared for negotiations and there will negotiations just not in a one-way road but in a two-way road. It is that simple.

**Lothar Bisky**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Presidents, ladies and gentlemen, as the example of Italy shows, where risk premiums for government bonds exceeded the critical mark of 7% for a while, the markets are relatively unimpressed by the decisions of the most recent European summit. The next euro area country is already in their sights. The increase in rates in Italy since October is not based on any trends in the real economy, and as the experiences of Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain in similar situations show, concentrated remedial measures from the EU and the IMF and the use of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) appear inescapable.

That clearly shows that the measures we have adopted so far to regulate the financial markets do not fully take effect. I fear that, even with the new plans to strengthen the

economic governance of the euro area, this will not significantly change. When I think of the package of European Commission measures that you have announced, President Barroso, with the five proposals for increased economic policy coordination, I cannot see the answer to the main question, namely do you have the courage and the ability to regulate the players on the international financial markets in such a way that, in future, speculative activity could be excluded as far as possible? Ecofin's discussions on the financial transaction tax demonstrate that there is no political will in the Member States even for small steps. The finance ministers continue to answer global challenges with national thinking and proposed solutions based on the interests of their national banks. How big does this crisis have to get, how many countries need to be mired in it, and how big must the sacrifices of the populaces of the countries affected be before people see that we need to act?

You propose, for example, issuing a Green Paper on Euro Stability Bonds. Much as I stress the necessity to introduce Eurobonds, I am astounded by the method. How long do you want to spend talking about the necessary minutiae of the shape to be taken by the mechanism? What effect will the time spent on the discussion process have on the markets? For me, these are the crucial questions.

Instead, the monitoring of the budgets of individual countries is to be tightened up again. It is as if you believed that forcing austerity measures would trigger growth. In reality, however, the most pressing issue is the need for specific measures to improve growth and employment, with the resultant income and thus domestic demand. The austerity measures put in place in the crisis only serve to deepen it. The key economic figures for Greece, Portugal and Ireland for 2010 and 2011 surely show this.

There is one question that, it seems to me, has not been given sufficient consideration, namely how can additional sources of finance be unlocked for these Member States? Their Government revenues need to be increased. Up to now, we have only heard proposals to cut social security payments, wages and pensions, or to increase VAT. The result of this is to stifle consumption by the mass of the population, and the fairness gap between the rich and the poor could become even larger. The citizens, too, can feel this. They do not see themselves as responsible for this crisis, and they are right. They are calling for social equality, including fair taxation. That is why there are mass protests in the Member States where austerity packages have been imposed. That is why there is political instability in the crisis countries, where numerous governments have already been swept aside. If the austerity course were to be made worse, the protests would also grow further. Where does that lead us?

It strikes me that there is a complete lack of taxing the banks, the big corporations and the rich in the Member States. They could make a greater contribution to overcoming the crisis without difficulty. Tangible steps in this direction are required. That would give the citizens the feeling that the pain was being shared more fairly. However, that policy direction must also come from you, from the Commission, the Council, the Euro Group and other international institutions. It has been shown, after all, that the neoliberal mantra of tax cuts and reducing the regulation of market forces led to such terrible distortions that the entire global financial system is in jeopardy. A reorientation of thinking and approach is required here. We need a ban on short-term trading of credit default swaps, on short selling and of other high risk financial products. That is the order of the day.

**Nigel Farage**, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – Mr President, here we are, on the edge of a financial and social disaster, and in the room today we have the four men who were supposed to be responsible. Yet we have listened to the dullest, most technocratic speeches I have ever heard. You are all in denial.

By any objective measure, the euro is a failure. Who is actually responsible? Who is in charge out of you lot? Well of course the answer is none of you, because none of you have been elected. None of you actually have any democratic legitimacy for the roles that you currently hold within this crisis. Into this vacuum, albeit reluctantly, has stepped Angela Merkel. We are now living in a German-dominated Europe – something that the European project was actually supposed to stop, and something that those that went before us actually paid a heavy price in blood to prevent.

I do not want to live in a German-dominated Europe and nor do the citizens of Europe, but you guys have played a role. When Mr Papandreou got up and used the word ‘referendum’, you, Mr Rehn, described it as ‘a breach of confidence’, and your friends here got together like a pack of hyenas, rounded on Papandreou, and had him removed and replaced by a puppet government. What an absolutely disgusting spectacle that was. And not satisfied with that, you decided that Berlusconi had to go, so he was removed and replaced by Mr Monti – a former European Commissioner, a fellow architect of this euro disaster, and a man who was not even a member of the Parliament. It is getting like an Agatha Christie novel where we are trying to work out who is going to be the next person who is going to be bumped off. The difference is that we know who the villains are.

You should all be held accountable for what you have done. You should all be fired. I have to say, Mr Van Rompuy, that 18 months ago when we first met, I was wrong about you. I said that you would be the quiet assassin of nation state democracy, but you are not any more. You are rather noisy about it, are you not? You, an unelected man, went to Italy and said that this is not the time for elections but the time for actions. What, in God’s name, gives you the right to say that to the Italian people?

**Philip Claeys (NI)**. – (NL) Mr President, if one form of common policy does not work, then what we need is more common policy. That is the axiom, the dogma, professed by the Commission, the Council and also a majority of this House.

I would like to give my fellow Members a reality check. Is there, for example, democratic support for the systematic rush ahead to a kind of super-Europe that will even involve itself in the tax and the social security systems of the Member States? Is there a point in keeping a Member State that does not structurally fit into the euro area within that area purely and simply out of a refusal, on ideological grounds, to admit that mistakes were made in the past? How much further can we go in taxing the EU’s net contributors?

Ladies and gentlemen, it is high time that we brought EU policy into line with the reality of the real world, instead of continuing to try and do the opposite.

**Werner Langen (PPE)**. – (DE) Mr President, Presidents, I would like to start by congratulating you. All three of you have been elected – one by Parliament and two by the Council. Mr Farage’s information was therefore not correct – and now he is leaving.

Three things go together: regulation of the financial markets, the Stability and Growth Pact, economic governance and the rescue packages. If we do not tackle regulation of the financial markets, the rescue packages will have no effect. That is the first prerequisite. If

we design the economic governance properly, we will not need the rescue packages. That is why this crisis is a European Union institutional crisis.

Looking at the regulation of the financial markets, I see that the United Kingdom is blocking whatever it can, which is in every nook and cranny. I believe, in this connection, that we must also consider how we can improve on that. As Mr Juncker said, we need to involve all the different configurations of the Council. Personally, I would go further: the President of the Commission must involve all the Commissioners and the Directorates-General, as there is no common thread in the proposals in this regard.

I believe that moderate changes to the Treaty are necessary. As well as Article 136, we need the abolition of Article 126(10), which expressly denies the Court of Justice of the European Union the ability to monitor compliance with the Treaty.

The Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro needs the same powers as the Competition Commissioner: rights of intervention. That is the right way to go. Propose it.

Eurobonds and collectivising the debts is not the right way to go. The Member States bear the responsibility themselves and thus the only issue is inflation. One group wants to prod the European Central Bank into action and create more money, while the other wants to collectivise the debts. The right approach is to realise that inflation hits the poorest hardest, while only self-responsibility on the part of the Member States creates the stability that we all need.

**Stephen Hughes (S&D).** - Mr President, President Barroso has said we need some positive action. I agree with him, so I would like to suggest some positive actions.

First, the December Council should agree on a coordinated Europe-wide strategy to fight youth unemployment. This should involve a special European Youth Unemployment Fund to finance targeted programmes in countries with the highest youth unemployment rates.

Second, the March 2012 European Summit should agree on the creation of a eurobond system within the euro area. That would follow up a proposal by the Commission to the December summit, and that system should aim at grouping at least two trillion euros of euro area public debt in a joint guarantee fund by the end of 2012.

Third, the March Summit should also define a European strategy of investment for growth with the objective of raising average EU public investment to 2.5% of GDP in 2015 and 3% by 2020. This should be accompanied by a declaration by the Commission regarding the implementation of the new Stability and Growth Pact committing the Commission to a differentiated use of the rules in the interest of strengthening public investment.

In return, the Council would agree to specific powers to the Commission in assessing in detail national public investment plans, plans contained in draft national budgets on the basis of a list of public investment spending recognised as productive public investment.

These actions would give hope to our young people. They would have meaning for the people on the streets of my region and your region. They would actually give us the chance of growth and employment.

What you are talking about is rearranging the deckchairs while the ship is sinking.

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

**William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFD).** - Mr President, Mr Hughes mentioned youth unemployment which is of grave concern. Would he perhaps consider the effect of the Commission's Temporary Workers Directive on youth unemployment?

**Stephen Hughes (S&D).** - Mr President, the effect of the Commission's proposal – or rather not its proposal, but the directive that is now in effect – is, in my view, extremely positive.

My son is an example. Having left university, he went through a series of temporary posts where he was grossly exploited, quite frankly. As a result of the directive, he now has pro rata rights with full-time workers.

I think it is an excellent proposal and I am glad it is now implemented.

**Sylvie Goulard (ALDE).** – (FR) Mr President, thank you all for being here and for actually keeping this dialogue alive. I very much appreciated what Mr Juncker said about the need for frequent dialogue covering many subjects.

In this morning's *Financial Times*, Mr Van Rompuy, you are quoted as saying that it is not enough for Italy to have a brilliant prime minister, he still needs the support of parliament. I think that this is also true at European level.

I should just like to say today that for both the revision of Treaties and for a certain number of crisis management measures, it would be in your interest, it would be in our collective interest for this Parliament to be more involved, not for us, but to get citizens on our side, to do away with the feeling that there is a lack of democracy even when democratic problems are often found within the States.

One word, Mr Barroso, about external representation, about Eurobonds: we expect ambitious measures. Do not choose the smallest common denominator from the Member States. Make sure that the euro area is represented externally in a way that wins over our external partners. Opt for Eurobond solutions that are credible on external markets.

The world is watching us right now and that is what makes matters extremely serious. We therefore need to work together, but without this Parliament, we will get nowhere.

### IN THE CHAIR: GIANNI PITTELLA

*Vice-President*

**Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Mr President, I have three points to make in this debate on economic governance. First of all, the continued blocking of the Eurobonds and the stability bonds by Germany – and I address this point to Members representing the German Christian Democrat and Liberal parties – will mean that you are forcing the European Central Bank to take on the necessary stabilisation measures. You are sounding the death knell of the European Central Bank's credibility and, Mr Langen, what you had to tell us here re-emphasises that point.

The second point that I wish to address concerns the area of taxation. We are aware that we have a problem on the revenue side all over Europe, and at the moment the working groups for greater cooperation on tax and countering tax dumping are in deadlock. The reason for this is that, as ever, the measures against business tax, dumping and tax evasion get blocked for reasons of national interest. For that reason I would ask you, Mr Barroso,

to be brave and put forward a new taxation package now, during this crisis, and to attempt, in so doing, to increase the pressure on the Member States that are doing the blocking.

My third point is that we in this House have adopted a package of measures against economic imbalances with a large majority. We now hear that, in the last Ecofin meeting, the Council again called for this package not to be implemented. In Germany's national interest, Mr Rehn had to declare at that meeting that he would be proposing sanctions against surplus countries. At the same time, Germany is currently attempting to manipulate the indicators for when economic surveillance kicks in. Originally, you wanted to implement plus 4% of gross domestic product as the surveillance point for economic imbalances, for current account surpluses. You have since retreated to plus 6%. That is not good enough for Germany. At the most recent meeting of the Council, Germany insisted on plus 7%.

Mr Rehn, Mr Barroso, I call on you both not to make these joint decisions weaker than they already are. Implement the law in full. Make it clear that all the instruments of the law are still on the table. Do not allow the Council and its national interests to dictate the stripping down of this package of measures to counter economic imbalances – which we urgently need – before it has even been signed.

*(Applause)*

**Kay Swinburne (ECR).** - Mr President, Parliament, the Council and the Commission have spent hundreds of hours over the course of the last 12 months discussing and negotiating a suitable text on EU legislation to establish the principles of good economic governance. Now is the time to deliver these carefully crafted words through definite actions, by thoroughly implementing the agreed rules and measures and ensuring their compliance in all relevant countries. It must be monitored and then enforced.

We do not need at this time any more grand plans or structures or statements. The time for delivering the existing plans is here. The EU will be judged by its results, in terms of concrete measures which will assist stability and go towards re-establishing investor confidence in the European economy.

The ink may not yet be dry on this afternoon's signing of the legislation, but deep structural reforms are only just beginning in certain Member States. Unpleasant and unpopular actions are required to ensure a competitive EU for the next decade and beyond. Action, not words, is now needed. Growth, not additional regulation, has got to be the prime focus.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD).** – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the euro should be a guarantee of stability and security, but it is proving to be a straitjacket which does not allow ailing states to implement necessary measures. It seems to be more than clear that it is not only Greece and Italy who are ailing – in fact, the whole euro area is in crisis. What is dramatically entertaining is that there are two patients, called France and Germany, who are playing at being doctors without being in possession of the rights or the qualifications to do so.

Europe is moving further and further away from its citizens. In Greece it was not permitted for workers to be able to express their opinion through a referendum on the possibility of choosing between having their salaries halved and witnessing the failure of a foreign bank.

It is not by dictating governments from above that situations are resolved. What is happening is yet another slap in the face to the sovereignty of the people. The European Union must understand that at the base of everything are citizens; otherwise, sooner or

later, the entire structure will come miserably tumbling down. Long live the sovereignty of our European States!

**Hans-Peter Martin (NI).** – *(DE)* Mr President, what would we have advised our fellow parliamentarians in 1931 or 1938, when we were in the Depression, when the financial markets had already annulled the democracies – and when we were heading for war? Two things would be necessary, two emergency measures: we need something like a transitional arrangement. Do what you have to do and do it quickly. Do not allow yourselves to be slowed down. Regulate every product, every institution and every player, as Chancellor Merkel has said.

However, a transitional arrangement implementing the fiscal emergency programme cannot, on its own, have a future without an emergency programme for democracy. In this case, what this means is that we clearly do need a new European community, we clearly do need different treaties and we clearly do need an opus that works but that is legitimate and acquires legitimacy through referendums. We would have to begin the campaign for this now that the situation has become so dramatic that there must be a serious rethink before the Right, before the national splitters, again get the upper hand in relation to something that had actually already been established.

**Mario Mauro (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, President of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, I will resume with a key point of this intervention, that is to say how we can take steps to unite interdependency and development with democracy.

These days, in line with the demands made from many points of view, even from European Institutions, the main parties in Italy have favoured the birth of a technical government that will have the task of imposing sacrifices on a country that has always been reluctant to promote reforms and changes. As I see it, and in response to Mr Farage's speech, the birth of this government is fully legitimated by the standard procedures of our constitution, by the consequent initiative of President Napolitano and by the deep sense of responsibility displayed in the circumstances by Mr Berlusconi, President of the Council, and by the main majority and opposition parties.

In this sense the birth of this government is good news for Europe and for the stability of the euro area. Certainly, this set of circumstances is also the fruit of that interdependence that you cited and that binds the EU's Member States and the most significant protagonists of the global economy. This sense of interdependency is the fulcrum of future political strategy on our continent and, if governments can and must take a step backwards when unable to face up to given difficulties, that is all the more reason why we should not hesitate to consider the guidance given by European Institutions, the Presidents of the Council and of the Euro Group, who should step in when courageous and timely measures cannot be made to correspond to the dramatic nature of the situation. What I mean to say is that in anticipation of changing the Treaties we should act promptly and well in a manner permitted by the Treaties, but an excessive subordination to the reasoning of certain Member States is dangerously curbing our ability to do so.

**Enrique Guerrero Salom (S&D).** – *(ES)* Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Barroso, as we have seen in recent weeks and recent days, the crisis has now reached a high-risk systemic situation.

Countries that were complacently looking at others are now facing this risk, and if we do not break the current dynamic, it will affect everyone, including Germany.

Against this background, immediate measures are needed rather than going down a difficult path of institutional reforms; on the one hand, we cannot give a rapid response to those reforms, and on the other, their outcome is uncertain. In the end, these measures could produce a result which paradoxically may complicate and weaken our position.

In any event, we are not ruling out these reforms. However, if they are undertaken, it is necessary at this stage to bear in mind that within the Union there are those who think that the Union has too many powers, and that they should be transferred back to Member States; those who think that there can only be an intergovernmental response to the problems; and those, like me and many others, who believe that it is necessary to have greater economic integration – with discipline, but also with growth – greater solidarity, a Community response and a role for Parliament that is consistent with its role as the direct depository of democratic legitimacy.

Therefore, not a step backward, but a step forward.

**Sharon Bowles (ALDE).** - Mr President, crisis solutions are fast becoming binary: lenders of last resort and leaders of last resort, or not. Further shocks will happen and I do not think that we can avoid accepting losses on overpriced assets at some stage.

But there are more ways to exploit the depth of a combined bond market. There is more strength within Europe than going round with a begging bowl to China. Investors are reluctant about the EFSF and now care must be taken in courting sovereign wealth funds. If guarantees are wrong, instead of a transfer of funds from Germany to other parts of Europe, which does have mutual benefit, we risk transfer of those same funds to China with no benefit.

The single market is crucial for growth. The fruits of tighter discipline within the euro area could be undermined if intergovernmentalism and protectionism fragments the EU and damages reputation. In this, the Community method is our guardian.

**Derk Jan Eppink (ECR).** – (NL) Mr President, in the style of the Roman senator Cato, I would like to say that Greece must leave the euro area. We all know that Greece cannot recover within the euro area. Italy is now paying higher rates of interest and we cannot find investors, speculators, for the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). Quite simply, no one wants to do it.

We are also finding that, just as the problems actually get bigger and the wheels are coming off, European leaders want to accelerate. Mr Verhofstadt would rather drive into a wall at 100 miles an hour than take his foot off the pedal a little.

We want to reform the euro area economy, but where are we heading? We need competitiveness. Yet with a financial transaction tax, with European taxes and with emissions taxes what we are doing is exactly the opposite. We are making the euro area economy too expensive. We are not competitive, we have no growth and that will lead to economic stagnation that will last for years.

What we are doing is replacing competitiveness with bureaucratic coordination, and democracy with technocracy. In Belgium, the former Prime Minister Mr Eyskens – you know him, Mr Van Rompuy – has already proposed government by decree, which would actually bypass the parliament there. That is the opposite of all the aims with which European democracy began.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD).** – (EL) Mr President, I fear that the results of the last summit failed to persuade the markets that the European rescue fund is alive and kicking. Interest rates have risen and both the euro and stock exchanges have fallen. Although I believe that the measures proposed are a step in the right direction, I worry about the reticence to use the basic instrument of quantitative easing, which could be used to finance the European Financial Stability Facility which could, at the same time, guarantee Eurobond issues. At the same time, it would motivate private individuals to participate in the programme.

I think that, in order to rebalance the volume of money in circulation, which was upset by quantitative easing by the United States, the Union could comfortably print new money in excess of EUR two trillion. I think that would limit attacks by the so-called markets. To put it simply, I fail to understand how a stockbroker's agent can produce money by increasing the price of a share and an entity such as the European Union cannot do likewise.

**Nicole Sinclaire (NI).** - Mr President, I notice the word 'competent' is missing from the title of this debate, for competence and financial probity are strangers to this project.

The very foundations of the euro were dug up when the Commission allowed Member States to ignore the convergence criteria of Maastricht. We all know that this is a political project, not an economic one, and political expediency will always prevail over sound economic rules.

But what do you care about the ordinary person on the street? The EU has shown its utter contempt and arrogance concerning the detrimental effect your deluded economic policies have on their lives. Maastricht had only four criteria, that you negligently brushed aside, and now you are proposing a six-pack. This exercise will fail and expose the soft underbelly of Europe.

What confidence do you all project? Absolutely none. Your answers to economic problems are more political solutions, more political and financial integration and more blatant disregard of democratic values.

'Stop now', my constituents say. It takes a wise person to accept they are wrong. Just for once, just once, say you were wrong and dismantle this project.

**Jean-Paul Gauzès (PPE).** – (FR) Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy, Mr Barroso, Mr Juncker, I obviously agree with what was said by Mr Daul, Mr Langen and Mr Mauro, so I will not go back over the same ground.

I want to talk to you about something else, about what citizens understand. Last night, I was with a hundred or so citizens who were asking me about the crisis, as, unfortunately, it is one of the issues that I am dealing with. What we need to do now for Europe is win the citizens over and, above all, get them on side. You have two categories of citizens: those who give in to the lure of populism and who scream and shout 'Europe is a failure; Europe is good for nothing'; and then you have all the other citizens, larger in number, who say 'We expect a lot from Europe, but Europe is not convincing us in what it is doing'.

It is therefore our job to convince these citizens together. What is more, I say convince the citizens before convincing the markets. I have heard endless talk about the markets; I know the markets and I know them professionally. Has nobody ever told you that the markets will never be satisfied? They will always ask for more. There is a change of government in Italy, and now they are saying that it needs guarantees that it will do this or that. When it has done this or that, they will ask it to do something else.

The politicians need to regain control. The markets are useful. The economy needs them. They allow it to work. However, they should not take advantage. When I see the Commission back down, yesterday, on the credit rating agency project, on innovative proposals which, in my opinion, did not go far enough, this is no way to convince the markets. This is proof that we are all weak, that we give in to those who put pressure on us, forgetting that we are here to serve the citizens.

You can count on this Parliament. I have just heard that Mr Schulz endorsed the 'Six Pack', which he did not vote for. That just proves that here, once you have voted, you are able to follow the Commission, to help it. Mr Barroso, you have just said 'Help us!' Does Parliament not help the Commission to move Europe forward?

Then let us all be courageous and brave together.

**Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D).** - (FI) Mr President, at least the Commission cannot be accused of prettifying the situation: on the contrary, Mr Barroso and Mr Rehn, you have been frank and said that the economic situation in Europe has become dramatically worse.

Now it would actually appear that the medicine – and all strong medicines generally have side-effects – has arrested growth, and that is why we need a new plan, a plan B. I am pleased that we have heard today that we will have some sort of new plan in the shape of the Green Paper on stability bonds, with which the firewall will be reinforced. On the other hand, we will be making long-term plans to tame market forces, by means of the financial transaction tax and Eurobonds, for example. This is very important.

It should also be remembered that a Europe for Citizens cannot exist without a social Europe. Mr Bisky, you were right when you said that we also need to feel that Europe is going in the right direction. We need government, we need action, but we also need to feel that Europe is going in the right direction.

Mr Van Rompuy, I have an idea for you. Could you please put the earphones on because I am going to say it in Finnish. You say that the European Union is a source of ideas. Put pressure on the Member States to give the Commission power to close down the tax havens, because this would be a great act of justice and would reaffirm the feeling that Europe is now on the right track.

**Niccolò Rinaldi (ALDE).** – (IT) Mr President, President Van Rompuy, President Barroso, Commissioner Rehn, ladies and gentlemen, just yesterday the Italian statistics office reported that the figure for tax evasion in Italy in 2008 was between 16% and 17% of GDP, which comes to between EUR 255 billion and EUR 275 billion. With such figures there will never be any control of the deficit. In its annual report the Italian Court of Audit spoke of the cost of corruption for 2009 at EUR 60 billion, adding that we will never have any kind of growth. The income gap is widening, and we therefore have no social cohesion.

I believe it is imperative for the EU to update its convergence criteria, also adding parameters relating to good governance and social equality. I should say that the verification carried out by the Commission on the tax shield of the last Italian government, that from our point of view violated a large part of the European standards on money laundering, competition and tax evasion – as well as on VAT evasion which, following our appeal, was proven to be correct – demonstrates lack of attention on the part of these institutions regarding an approach that should be fair and global.

**Lajos Bokros (ECR).** - Mr President, a couple of months ago I made a speech here indicating that the best solution to the Greek crisis would be an orderly default, with a significant 'hair cut' to private and public bond-holders. I made a distinction between insolvency and liquidity, and argued that insolvency cannot be addressed by throwing good money after bad.

Commission Rehn dismissed my proposal because he felt it would trigger a domino effect and the Commission feared contagion. Now we do have contagion – see the example of Italy – without having made any significant move to solve the Greek crisis. The Commission and the whole European political class is dangerously behind the curve.

What needs to be done? Euro area governments have to push through an orderly 'hair cut' immediately; the EFSF needs to be recapitalised before France loses its triple-A rating; Greek banks should sell their Balkan empires, and the remaining carcasses have to be taken over by well-capitalised financial institutions; privatisation should go ahead at full steam; the tax system must be streamlined, and its rules enforced with rejuvenated administrative vigour; societal solidarity needs to be rebuilt. For the sake of preserving democracy in Europe, capitalism must be saved.

**Nick Griffin (NI).** - Mr President, when there is a stench of death and decay in your house, there is no point complaining about the neighbour's drains or arguing about which air freshener to try next. The first thing to do is to admit that the real problem is the rotting corpse of the dead elephant in the living room.

It is absurd to speak of economic governance while ignoring the root cause of the debt crisis that is dragging Europe, and indeed the world, down to economic disaster.

The thing that is rotten is the fiat money banking system. A system that allows the banks to create credit out of nothing and lend it into circulation as interest-bearing debt; a system that makes bankers the masters of the universe, instead of the servants of productive industry. A system that leads to poverty, division and war.

The first step to long-term economic stability is to put an end to the international bankers' swindle and restore the power to create credit to sovereign national governments. This is the only way out of the crisis; the way to prosperity and peace.

**Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE).** - Mr President, it is telling and symbolic that this debate, which is supposed to be on economic governance, is on the euro area in the absence of the President of the Council. Are we already in the two-tier Europe? Do we need, as Pervenche Berès proposes, a separate Parliament for the euro area?

The present crisis is not a crisis of the euro as a currency – it is a healthy currency. It is a crisis of excessive indebtedness. Dividing lines, if unavoidable although deplorable, should not go between the 17 and the 10. They do appear, *de facto*, between macroeconomically healthy and unhealthy countries. It would be fatal to institutionalise a smaller club within the bigger club. That would lead to unravelling and undoing the reunification of the continent, creating disunion in place of the Union. For those left outside, it would be unfair and unacceptable to be 'sort of' expelled and then obliged to re-enter, for the second time, the true, so-called core Europe.

A split Union will not work. A spread Union will not work, but will further disintegrate creating divergent levels of solidarity. A split Union would make the crisis deeper. The only answer is more convergence and more Community method.

We should say no to this two-speed Europe. Many non-euro area Member States are much more in the *de facto* first speed when it comes to growth, fiscal discipline and reform – my country Poland included – than some euro area member countries. Moreover, they are, with two exceptions, committed and obliged – no derogation, as you said – to join the euro area. Should that lead to institutionalising a ‘euro- and economically healthy Member States’ group also? Certainly not. That would be against our principles of unity and solidarity.

The answer is centrifugal Euro Plus. It equals 23 at least. Euro area summits, President Van Rompuy, should precede – not follow – EU summits.

**Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D).** – (NL) Mr President, today I want to speak not about the increased spread, however disquieting that may be, or about some future reform of the Treaty, but about democracy in the European Union today. I have two examples that I would like to give.

The first is from my own home country, which is also that of President Van Rompuy – and he follows this closely, I know – a country where we still await a government and the associated budget. In the margins rages a very acidic discussion between liberals and social democrats. Liberals believe that the Commission’s recommendations need to be implemented in full as part of the budget, while social democrats think that there needs to be a debate about this. Mr Barroso, you are nodding, but these recommendations have not been approved in any parliament – not in this House and not in a national parliament. I listened closely to what Mr Juncker had to say. He said that, in future, he wants there to be more participation by the national parliaments and this House on this kind of thing.

I now turn to my second example, Mr Van Rompuy. You provided an impressive overview of all the initiatives that have been taken. Was it really impressive? In any case it was certainly valuable. There are, however, two groups who are not impressed. The first of these, about whom we hear a lot, is the financial markets. They are not impressed. Then there are the people who are out on the streets today – the Occupy movement, the trade unions and all sorts of different initiatives. Gentlemen, do not make the mistake of filing this as some sort of leftist plot, as there is an important common thread, namely uncertainty, the demand for work and the future. In a democracy – and I am finishing off with this, Mr President – it is not the financial markets but the people who have the last word. It is high time we returned to the core business of our European project.

**Wolf Klinz (ALDE).** – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the European Union stands at an absolutely crucial crossroads. We need to deepen integration, especially in the fields of financial and economic policy. We need a strong Commissioner who combines the functions that are currently spread between the Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Euro, the President of the Euro Group, a different Finance Minister every six months and the regent of economics Herman Van Rompuy into a single role and who represents the EU and the euro area to the outside world.

If that does not succeed, we will not even be able to defend the *status quo*, we will then inevitably find ourselves in a disintegration phase. We do not want a union of debt. We need a union of stability, and that is why the solution does not consist of issuing Eurobonds.

Only today, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) had to pay 200 basis points more for its bond issues than Germany. The situation is getting worse – the bonds already issued are quoted far below face value. We need to attempt to also raise reserves that we still have in every Member State. The whole issue of the subsidies must be approached. In

my country alone this is certainly a high two-digit, maybe even a three-digit, figure in billions that thus can be adjusted in the budget, with the effect of raising taxes.

Mr Trichet hit the nail on the head today when he said that time is of the essence. The reality is that we must act fast or else the markets will continue to set the course for politics.

**Michał Tomasz Kamiński (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, what I am missing from the current debate is the element which would encourage the citizens of the European Union to place more confidence in us. What is it that I am referring to? We are talking about the crisis in Europe; however, the way we are talking about it is as if it has fallen out of the sky, as if it was a part of some natural disaster, even though we can trace the litany of errors which have been made and which have led to the current crisis. If we want this crisis to mark a new beginning, a better start for Europe, then for our own credibility, we have to own up to those elements of our structure that have failed. This does not imply euroscepticism or a negation of the European Union. On the contrary, admitting to the mistakes that we have committed will only strengthen our credibility.

I do hope that this crisis will present an opportunity to build a 'greater Europe'. The question, however, is what does a 'greater Europe' mean? Does it imply more bureaucracy, more regulation and consequently less competitiveness, or does it signify a greater Europe with a larger free and single market?

**José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (PPE).** – (ES) Mr President, I think that, in order for this exercise to be useful, we should start by telling the truth. The truth is that we are not capable of resolving any of the problems that we have on the table: neither the problem of Greece, nor the problem of Italy.

This incapacity to resolve these problems is affecting every economy in the European Union, it is rendering the efforts of Ireland and Portugal useless, and it is spreading contagion everywhere, including to Belgium and France.

The truth is that the penalty for sovereign debt does not arise for economic reasons, because the foundations of our current account deficit are better than those of the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. Therefore, if it does not arise for economic reasons, it is because it arises only for political reasons. We have not succeeded in finding the right model, and we do not have the institutional structures to resolve the issue.

Up to now, all the solutions that have been adopted – and many have been discussed – all those that have been accepted are based on a restrictive fiscal policy and a restrictive monetary policy; this simply has not worked.

Now is probably the time to consider whether we should look at other models, for example the Anglo-Saxon model, which is based on a lighter fiscal policy and an ultra-accommodating monetary policy.

Obviously we cannot import the model to the European Union exactly as it is. No state, except probably Germany, is in a position to boost public spending, lower taxes or borrow. The room for manoeuvre is very limited, and it will be necessary to submit to fiscal discipline.

We can, however, do this at EU level, and that is what you are responsible for. What needs to be done? I think that in the first place the European Central Bank has to do much more than it is doing now. Since 2007, the Federal Reserve has increased its budget by 226%. The European Central Bank has increased its budget by 103%. The Bank of England has a

volume of debt equal to 16% of the gross domestic product of the United Kingdom. That of the European Central Bank is only 2%.

Secondly, a bailout fund will have to be put in place using Eurobonds – with joint responsibility until the Treaty is amended – but before 9 December. It will then be necessary to cater for growth using the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the project bonds, which are like the Loch Ness monster: we all talk about it but nobody has seen it.

If that is not done, what Minister Tremonti said in Italy will happen: the Titanic will sink and it will take everyone with it, including the first class passengers.

That is your responsibility.

**Roberto Gualtieri (S&D).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, first of all allow me to offer my sincerest congratulations to Mario Monti for his good work; his nomination to guide the Italian Government is fantastic news not only for Italy but also for Europe.

I believe that from this debate strong messages from all political groups will emerge with clarity, and I hope these will be listened to attentively. The first message is that without instruments for growth and development, and with only an austere approach to fiscal matters, the idea of a stable Union is a chimera. The second is that the government of peers, this peer pressure of which President Van Rompuy has also spoken, cannot function. We need provisions that have a legal basis, and we need institutions legitimated democratically. This is the only way to produce a true European economic government.

In all this, to think that reforming three paragraphs of Articles 121 and 126 as decided in Berlin should be a panacea is an illusion not only because of the difficulties and risks of the revision itself but also because, of these three amendments, the first is useless, the second is irrelevant and the third is impossible.

Thus, our position is clear. Firstly, before changing the Treaty of Lisbon, apply it and read it, and you will discover that Articles 136 and 352 are founded on strong legal grounds for strong governance of the euro area based on communitarian methods. Secondly, it is obvious that this Parliament is not opposed in principle to strengthening the EU's jurisdiction by reforming the Treaty, but this mandate can be limited and should be well-balanced, and this Parliament will not accept a reform which, alongside stability, does not create a Union of solidarity, growth and democracy.

**Andrew Duff (ALDE).** – Mr President, I would like to address Mr Van Rompuy. I have to say that I find your timetable much too leisurely, both for the markets and for democracy. In a bureaucratic timetable from December to March the leaders will ponder the goals of Treaty change.

Mr Barroso has spelt out clearly the goal. It is to create a credible, discernible, strong, federal economic government for fiscal union. He has also quite correctly said that all Member States should be committed to achieving that exercise.

I have to say to my British colleagues that if the UK thinks it has the moral authority or the political will to block what is necessary and desired by everyone else, it will be a profound tragedy for Britain and also for Europe.

**Marietta Giannakou (PPE).** – (EL) Mr President, I have listened to the Presidents of the Council, the Commission and the Euro Group on the subject of economic governance, which is considered necessary to the proper functioning of the euro area and in order to

address the continuing economic crisis. Of course the Union, and especially the countries in the common currency, need a long-term strategy and plan to protect them from international crises.

Economic governance cannot succeed alone; it needs to be accompanied by properly functioning institutions, democratic equilibrium and respect for institutional competences. The problems we have witnessed, with the Council – and, in particular, certain members of it – taking charge of everything, is out of keeping with the basic principles and values of the Union and of the Treaty of Lisbon. It is understandable that the large countries should play a bigger role. However, the power of the Union and its importance in the global system stem from the balance struck between large and small countries and from its unity. The European Commission and Parliament are the strong and necessary factors that give the Union credence as an area of peace, prosperity and democracy, for the benefit of European citizens and of the entire world.

The crisis in the euro area, in which certain countries, such as Greece, are the weak links, cannot be addressed with panicked reactions and fragmented decisions. The austerity programmes for the countries with debts and deficits are absolutely necessary; however, without a long-term plan for growth, without coordinated policies and without disseminating resources between the Member States, the crisis will return again in other countries.

The introversion that marks certain political decisions is undermining the Union's common future and success. The European Commission should assume fully the role allotted to it in the Treaties and Parliament is entitled to timely information and to participate in the decisions taken to deal effectively with the crisis, in order to give them democratic credence. It is said that history teaches that nothing can be taught. Let us hope that the European Union does not confirm that.

**Anni Podimata (S&D).** – (EL) Mr President, allow me to start, as did Mr Gualtieri, by wishing every success to Loukas Papademos's government, which is expected to win today's vote of confidence in the Greek Parliament, and to emphasise that, if this government – like Mario Monti's government – is to succeed, it will need our honest and undivided support, both within our countries and in the European institutions, and it will need support from all the European capitals.

Today we are debating if and to what extent institutional changes are needed, if the Treaties should be amended, at a time when the debt crisis is growing and expanding while, according to the Commission's data, growth is slowing, putting the European economy at risk of another recession. All this is happening, more and more, on the orders and at the instigation of the markets and, more and more, behind the backs of the citizens of Europe. We have plenty to say about fluctuations in lending rates and spreads, but we have too little to say about people-related indicators, we have too little to say about unemployment, employment and growth and we have barely anything to say about the very worrying Eurobarometer data on the rapid increase in extreme and nationalistic views throughout Europe. None of this is creating the right environment for a debate about amending the Treaties.

President of the Commission, of course you can rely on our assistance in pushing ahead with a financial transaction tax; we have done so in the past and we shall continue to do so today; however, we too are asking for a firm stand and support from you in defending

democracy and the rights of 99% of European citizens, a percentage which, as one of the Occupy Wall Street slogans says, is a very big number to reduce.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE).** – (PT) Mr President, President Barroso, President Van Rompuy and President Juncker, I would like to say, first of all, that it is with much satisfaction, but also without surprise, that I note in the speeches of all three presidents a strong commitment to Europe and a great will to resolve the current crisis. Nonetheless, it is essential that your energy and will be passed on to the Heads of State or Government and, in particular, the Heads of State or Government of those countries with the greatest economic and financial weight in Europe.

This is for the following reason: there has been a great deal of talk about Treaty change, including behind the scenes here in Parliament. Yet no national public opinion, no Member State electorate, will accept Treaty change if the European Union is not capable of resolving the crisis and of providing the prospect of a solution to the current situation.

We could have the best institutional solution; we could have the best economic governance we could imagine: the best solutions. If, in the next six, seven or eight months, we do not show signs that we are resolving the crisis, no European electorate or national parliament will be willing to change the rules of governance within the European Union in order to change the Treaties, which would indeed give us the tools to prevent crises of this sort.

In view of this, I call on all the European bodies and institutions to move forward with a plan for resolving the crisis once and for all, because, as my colleague Mr García-Margallo y Marfil rightly said, not only have we failed, but we have failed repeatedly.

I also wanted to say that it is crucial that this be done with a view to the single market that we have, both to the area of the 27 Member States and, in particular, to the area encompassing those countries that wish to join the euro area. The solution to the crisis will be achieved not only through austerity, but also through growth, and there can only be growth if there is a single market. If we separate into two Europes and break with the idea of the single market, we can be sure that sinking will certainly not be the path towards growth.

**Pervenche Berès (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, Mr Barroso, Vice-President Rehn, I think that you heard Mr Juncker when he talked about how the European semester should become a political tool. To that end, the founding act of the discussion – which is at least what we think you called the Annual Growth Survey – must become annual guidelines for sustainable growth. You have the chance, this time, to change it before next time, so do it. If this European semester is to be a debate about political guidelines, there will then be no economic government without Parliament involved, having its say, creating discussion around these political and economic guidelines.

You must realise that, in 2012, this European Parliament might propose amendments to this Annual Growth Review, which would be debated at the European Council. That is what this Parliament is proposing. I hope that you can take it into account, because then you will be keeping democracy and political debate alive and national parliaments and the European Parliament will be involved in what must be genuine governance of the euro area and of the Union.

**Gay Mitchell (PPE).** - Mr President, first of all can I make just three points? Is it good governance that states and multinational institutions dance to the tune of powerful unelected wealthy secret figures?

The role of rating agencies, with a precarious history of triple-A rating products, including subprime property, comes to mind. So-called free markets appear to be open to manipulation by powerful interests that can even target countries in the euro area and beyond: we have seen sterling in the past, and we may see the yen in the future.

It is right that countries should behave responsibly and ethically, but it is also right that public service institutions serve the public interest and equip themselves to address manipulation and reckless greed. I invite the President of the Commission to reflect on this matter.

In the time available let me make two other points. First of all, I support what President Barroso said in relation to intergovernmentalism. I come from a small Member State; we suffer most when intergovernmentalism is at its best. When things are set down in the Treaties it is best for small Member States, it is best indeed for the Union, because we are not then at the whim of a particular leader in a particular Member State.

The third point I want to make is in relation to growth, and a point made recently by the former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. He said that the IMF has said that, if there were a global growth pact to increase consumer spending in Asia and infrastructure spending in the West, the world economy would grow much faster, and 25 to 50 million jobs would be created.

He then asked, in relation to the good governance of Europe, who in Europe had the capacity to deal with this. The answer is: none of the Presidents here present. Apparently the real power to do this lies with the President of the French Republic, who happens to be in the chairmanship of the G22. But we need to start thinking in terms of what the IMF has said: we are too small in our thinking, we need to be bigger in our thinking in relation to growth.

**Elisa Ferreira (S&D).** – (PT) Mr President, let us be honest. For three years we have been using the same remedy to get out of the crisis, yet the situation is worsening day by day. Instead of a cure, we have created two fatal vicious cycles. The first of these is between the banks and the Member States. It is now more likely that we in Europe will be discussing the bankruptcy of a Member State than of a large bank, but we continue to hope that the banks will finance the Member States and the Member States will save the banks.

This spiral must be broken. The Commission must come forward with European legislation to protect taxpayers from the banking crisis. Yet it is also vital to protect Member States' debt from attacks by speculators. In order for this to happen, there is an urgent need, already overdue, to prepare the coordinated issue of sovereign debt, known as Eurobonds or stability bonds, and to guarantee them through robust instruments of a Union, rather than intergovernmental, nature. In short, we must also reconsider the involvement of the European Central Bank.

However, the second vicious cycle stems from the argument that some Member States are rich because they are virtuous, while others are poor because they have sinned. This narrative is politically incendiary and technically incorrect. It ignores the essential fact that a single market and currency, built out of political choice and between unequal parties, inevitably exacerbates imbalances in competitiveness between the centre and the periphery.

It is this which must be addressed by economic governance. Not, Mr Van Rompuy, through sanctions which promote squeezing salaries and incomes, with one country monitoring another. Rather, Commissioner, the issue must be addressed through the involvement both of countries with surpluses and of countries with deficits, so as to make productivity converge through investment, education and science. The sanctions have only generated unemployment, disillusionment and a wave of recessions from which we cannot escape.

**Sławomir Witold Nitras (PPE).** – *(PL)* Mr President, I have listened very carefully to the speech made by President Barroso and the statement by Mr Van Rompuy, on behalf of the European Council, as well as the statement by President Juncker. Firstly, I would like to say that it appears that we have a consensus in the House regarding one issue, namely that the proposed preventative measures and coordination mechanisms that we are adopting with regard to credit rating agencies or short-term sales are essential. There is absolutely no doubt that in the current unstable situation, these solutions are vital and necessary. They need to be implemented as quickly as possible. The question only remains whether they address the core of the problem and whether they resolve future problems. We truly need more ambitious measures for which the measures currently proposed serve as a foundation only. The need to strive towards true convergence is of key importance today, since it is only under such conditions that the Economic and Monetary Union can grow effectively in the long term. Union regulations must support true convergence, otherwise we will only drift and will not be able to develop and compete in world markets. Convergence means, first and foremost, the single market, which is a guarantor of our competitiveness in the world market. If I may, I would like to make a remark addressed directly to President Van Rompuy. The euro is not the property of the euro area States. The euro is a value of importance to all of us.

The impact of the euro currency and its stability on the economies of Member States that are currently availing of a derogation which, let me remind you, is only temporary, is often as important as it is for euro area States. Therefore, decisions in this matter have to be taken jointly. Mr President, we need to take them using the Community method, together with all the Member States. This is because, although the Community method is quite slow and often fails as a result of the focus on the particular interests of individual Member States, it was the intergovernmental method that created a euro area without a common policy for fiscal and revenue matters. It was the intergovernmental method that constructed a flawed, or far from perfect, currency system. The Community method, on the other hand, ensures that if we pass certain regulations, they will apply to all of us and not only to weaker Member States. Today, we can ask ourselves the question: if the governments of Germany or France, for example, were weak, would we be able to change them by exerting external pressure? Or would we not? Thank you very much.

**Roberta Angelilli (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, President Barroso, President Van Rompuy, ladies and gentlemen, I have put on a shirt bearing the name of Italy because Italy, like Greece, is ready to play its part. However, without a European plan for investment and for fighting unemployment, the sacrifices are at risk of being in vain. Austerity policies should be followed urgently by effective actions for growth and development, thereby accelerating progress on Eurobonds, project bonds and the financial transaction tax, as well as the fight against tax evasion.

In order to be credible we should not simply reassure the markets and support the banks, but also give more faith alongside concrete answers to the people of Europe, to our enterprises and to our youth, who are in danger of paying too high a price. As

President Van Rompuy has said, we should not only punish sinners but also feel that we are united in a common destiny of responsibility, solidarity and social cohesion.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D).** – (SK) Mr President, the December summit of the European Council will deal in particular with the mechanism for ensuring the financial stability of the euro area and the requisite changes to the Treaty of Lisbon. However, I fear that measures of this kind will not be sufficient on their own, even if they are clearly necessary. Much more will have to be done.

There are more effective alternatives which our citizens quite rightly expect from us. I would like to say on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament that ever since the outbreak of the crisis in 2008, we have been proposing economically effective and socially just measures, including a financial transaction tax, or the regulation of international financial markets, resolving the problem of tax havens, and ending speculation about the sovereignty of individual Member States.

Last but not least, it is important that the much-needed recapitalisation of banks is accompanied by measures to protect the public interest, transparency and allocation of responsibility.

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE).** – (ES) Mr President, seamlessness, more Europe and more economic governance.

I support the measures set out, but we are still in this political crisis. Assume your leadership and, please, inspire confidence, because Europe is not just Merkel and Sarkozy.

Make the speeches we listened to this morning a little more human. Speak out about the need to restore values and the need for people. Economic control, of course, but Europe is paralysed.

For this reason, it is vital to have a serious plan for economic recovery, with more investment, more collaboration between the public and private sectors, more innovation, more technology, more risk and more economic development backed up by social development.

These measures were the model of success in the Basque Country during the crisis of the 1980s when the Basque Nationalist Party was in government. We achieved a triple A rating, just like Germany. However, we were dragged down by the Spain brand.

Look to the regions. Mr Juncker, in this constructive dialogue, take account of everyone's knowledge. The method is important. Look to the regions to rebuild Europe from the bottom up.

**Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, Mr Barroso, Mr Van Rompuy, you are right, the Commission must be the Union's economic government.

In fact, it already is in that it dictates the conduct of Member State governments in budgetary matters and also increasingly in other areas such as in social affairs.

What is not right is that political choices governing these recommendations are made behind closed doors between the Council and the Commission. The only concession you are willing to make is for the European Parliament to be kept 'informed'. Do not think for one minute that national parliaments are consulted any more, because of what Mrs Merkel

does at every turn when she consults the Bundestag. How many Heads of State or Government do the same with their parliament?

What we are saying, is that there can be no federal economic governance in Europe unless these major guidelines are adopted under codecision with the European Parliament and unless they are translated to the Member States under codecision with national parliaments.

Taking short-cuts with democracy is the surest way of weakening it. There are plenty of people in Europe hoping that will happen, our citizens will not put up with it.

**Peter van Dalen (ECR).** – (NL) Mr President, Europe was too mono-focused on the euro, and this mammon is now on the verge of imploding. In its temples, called hedge funds, stock exchanges and bonus banks, people worked feverishly to keep the money altars up. We are now seeing all kinds of disasters occurring at the same time: rising unemployment coupled with high levels of public and private debt. Never in history have so many people been depressed.

Europe traded in its Christian values of moderation, justice and compassion for money and goods. That is no basis for a sustainable existence and a sustainable economic policy. The forthcoming European Council would do well to address a couple of real questions of government, such as: how can we return to being a Europe of standards and values, what riches do our Christian roots have to offer and how can we become considerate stewards for our fellow human beings and creation? Let the debate about this begin so that a new and future-proof vision of Europe is born.

**Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, Mr Van Rompuy has come here to say that the governments are doing everything right, that the European semester is the be all and end all, and that what is needed at the end of the day is pressure, more pressure and yet more pressure. He applauds budgetary discipline and calls for it to be stepped up, and for automatic sanctions, even if this means blocking voting rights or structural funding for countries in difficulty.

Dr Barroso has come to talk about rebuilding trust, about strengthening growth policy in a pact with Europeans and for Europeans, about the Community method, and about more Europe.

Mr Juncker has come to tell us that so much can be done one way or another, and that there is ultimately not a great difference between form and content; that it is the ends that are important. He is somewhat disappointed with the European semester because he says that it needs to be more political and less technical.

Mr Van Rompuy, Dr Barroso, Mr Juncker, can you hear one another? If you can, are you really listening to one another? You are destroying Europe.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, we need functional economic policy coordination between the Member States, as we actually want to see real action. We need clear definitions to be established for once, so that we can tackle the sweeping critics. There is no need for the fear of the loss of heterogeneity that has been stirred up despite the fact that none of the elements that differentiate us are affected.

We have had a common economic area for a long time. A transparent analysis of national budgets by the Commission will benefit the citizens. One example of what I am including here is greater monitoring of the national budgets. When it comes to the potential Treaty

amendments that are under discussion I would say that we should finally take seriously, for example, the existing stipulations of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Presidents, *nous sommes l'Europe* – we are Europe. Let us make it happen.

**Jean-Claude Juncker**, *President of the Euro Group*. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I am somewhat surprised at this debate. After all, I am someone who has come before Parliament willingly and I am dealing with the matter entrusted to me. Since my task this morning is to talk about governance – or *gouvernance* or *wirtschaftspolitische Steuerung*, whatever you want to call it – then that is the dry subject matter with which I must grapple. Consequently, I do not like it when know-it-alls then stand up and say that I should get to the point. If I am asked to speak about a particular matter – albeit rather rudely and very late in the day – then that is what I will talk about. I, too, would much rather talk about the things that these wise guys have allowed themselves to talk about, but they are not on the agenda.

Many of you talk about Europe and the European Parliament, but give arguments that are quite clearly motivated by domestic politics. Some are in favour of Chancellor Merkel, others are against her. Funnily enough, the former are in the CDU and the latter are in the SPD. It is exactly the same with President Sarkozy. Is this a European Parliament, or is it an extension of domestic parliamentary debate? If so, do not force the President of the Euro Group to take part in such a debate; it has nothing to do with the matter in hand.

(Applause)

A few months ago, I spoke in favour of Eurobonds in an article in the Financial Times – because I always use British newspapers if I want to get across a message in Europe. I have not given up on this idea, but others did not want them. Listening to the groups here, in each group there are those in favour of Eurobonds and others who are less keen. One might expect the national governments in Europe to advance only national viewpoints, but very often that is also what happens in this House. I would therefore ask you to hold back on the collective damnation that is regularly rained down on the governments here.

I am in favour of Eurobonds, and I do not like it when this idea is permanently subjected to so much character assassination as to be unrecognisable – as has been done by some of my colleagues in Germany. It does not, after all, represent the absolute communitarianisation of all the debt; it is an instrument of solidarity with conditions attached. That is what Eurobonds are. One day we will come back to this instrument. As Head of the Euro Group, however, I am not authorised even to say that here. Yet since everyone here is saying what they think, I am allowed to say what I think sometimes too.

I believe we should incorporate as much flexibility as possible into the recast of the framework agreement on the European Financial Stability Facility, because the financial markets cannot comprehend our insistence on unanimous opinions that are set in stone and never change even after debate. So long as we have the principle of unanimity we will not be flexible or able to react. We complain that the financial markets are much faster than the democracies – although that is no reason to abolish democracy. If we want to react quickly, then we need to drop these unanimity clauses. Not everyone in the Euro Group shares this opinion, however. I am in favour of the financial transaction tax, but not all the euro governments are in favour of this tax. We therefore have to consider how we organise these debates in future.

In this debate precisely 84 questions have been put which have nothing to do with the actual subject of the debate. If I am invited here to talk about governance, then I wish to speak about governance. I would far rather spend time on the other matters, because they are infinitely more important. I then get five minutes in which to answer 84 questions. It may be parliamentary procedure, but it is pointless and there is nothing smart about it.

(Applause)

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – Mr President, many issues were raised during the debate. These issues are, in a way, interlinked. That is why, when we put forward our roadmap for stability and growth, we mentioned the need to combine growth and stability.

During the debate, one specific issue that was referred to in some statements was taxation. It is important to look at this in more detail at European level. The truth is that, after the United States, the European Union is the richest region in the world. Yet some are suggesting that we should depend on emerging economies, countries which are much poorer than us, to rescue the European Union. I find this rather strange, to be honest.

The reality is stark. We have the resources in Europe to respond, provided there is the political will. The reality is that our Member States spend more than they receive from taxpayers. This is the reality. When the point has been reached where you can no longer cut expenditure, you need to think about raising revenue. This is unavoidable. This means appropriate, fair taxation. This taxation, I want to make clear, should not be dependent on labour – because we need more employment, not less – but should be dependent on, for instance, resource consumption, on excessive consumption of energy or on considerable fortunes and patrimony.

The Commission has made proposals on the fight against tax evasion through the request for a mandate to negotiate with third countries. So far we have not received a mandate from the Council to negotiate with third countries to fight tax evasion. We have made proposals in the Energy Tax Directive. We have made proposals on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) as a first step to some kind of coordination. We have made proposals for a financial transaction tax.

So let us be honest. It is not necessary to bring forward yet another package. It is time for the Council and the Member States to act, and to act quickly, also in the field of taxation.

Let us speak in very concrete terms. Some governments have said that their country is very rich. The state is poor because people do not collect taxes, but the country is very rich. So, if the country is very rich, it will probably be the right moment to ask the rich country to contribute to stabilising the situation, rather than putting itself and the euro area as a whole at risk because it does not have a proper taxation system.

Regarding the more general debate about economic governance, the Treaty requires that Member States regard their economic policies as a matter of common concern – all the Member States, not only the euro area countries – and that their budgetary policies are guided by the need for sound public finances. The Treaty further requires that Member States' economic policies do not risk jeopardising the proper functioning of Economic and Monetary Union.

These are the guiding principles for the package of proposals for deeper economic integration which the Commission is finalising for next week. We aim to find a package

with the right balance between substantial reinforcement of economic governance, on the one hand, and assessing options for stability bonds, on the other. Such bonds could, if well designed, strengthen financial stability and fiscal discipline in the euro area, and thus facilitate sustainable growth and job creation in Europe as a whole.

Let us be very honest about this. There are no miracle solutions. We have to have some kind of instruments to fight the current financial instability in Europe. If we want to keep a common currency, something more is needed in terms of the common instruments to fight this financial instability. We have to make a decision on this as a matter of urgency, even before any revision of the Treaty.

As demonstrated by the current crisis, and in particular by the need to put in place common financial backstops, euro area Member States are liable to experience spillovers. They should come up with more concrete responses to possible spillovers from their policies. Therefore, Member States in the euro should consider their budgetary plans to be of common concern. That is why we think that draft budgetary plans should be assessed at European level before they become binding. We will, of course, assess budgetary plans with regard to both fiscal sustainability and macroeconomic imbalances.

This is why we have been discussing governance today. Governance is not just an objective issue regarding the substantive issues of economic policy. As we have seen during this crisis, what investors – and our citizens, of course – are asking is ‘are you in the euro area ready to take decisions?’ ‘Are you in the euro area able to sustain a common currency?’

So the governance issue is a substantive issue. It is not a formal issue. This is the reality all over the world. Just today, the President of the United States, speaking in the Pacific, asked the European Union to take bolder decisions in terms of structure and governance. I think our partners are right to ask us to have a clearer, streamlined way of taking decisions.

This is why it is important to discuss these matters of governance. They should not be seen in terms of turf – if matters are decided at European or national level, if they go to Brussels, to this institution or another. An indispensable pre-condition for a strong common currency is to have some kind of integration in terms of the governance of the euro area. Without this increased integration, convergence and discipline, we will not be able to sustain a common currency.

That moment of truth is coming. Either Member States accept this and complete what was initiated in Maastricht, by supplementing monetary union with an economic union that requires further discipline, further convergence, and further integration, or they do not accept it, which would jeopardise our goal.

This is the truth. These coming weeks will see very important decisions being taken. The Commission is coming with proposals which I hope will enable us to achieve our goal and I have seen the determination in many of our Member States. We know that it will be extremely difficult; let us be fair to all our Member States.

There are 17 democracies in the euro area and 27 democracies in the European Union. The rhythm of democracy is slower than the rhythm of markets. We now need to show, also through increased Community governance, that we are able to respond to the immediate and longer-term concerns. We can only achieve that through stability and growth, only through responsibility and solidarity.

This is the pact at the core of our response. Some just want to speak about discipline and responsibility. They should also think about solidarity. Others just want to speak about growth. They should also speak about discipline.

We need this pact to be achieved so that we can have a consistent, coherent, credible response to this crisis. We can come out of this crisis stronger, but, in order to do this, some important decisions have to be taken.

**Herman Van Rompuy**, *President of the European Council*. – (FR) Mr President, I will be very brief.

I was invited here by the President of Parliament to talk about economic governance. This was the subject in preparation for the European Council to be held on 9 December including the report that I had to deliver in cooperation with the President of the Commission and the President of the Euro Group. It was the subject of this debate and I therefore stuck to it.

I was very analytical in my introduction. What has been done and what will be done? It is as simple as that. I therefore drew up a list, a summary, in fact, of what has been done. Is it enough in itself to say what is being done? No. It is a completely factual report that has been drawn up, which should have been done long before the euro area crisis. It was not done, it was not even requested and now we are paying the price for it.

After the chapter about what has been done is the one about what should be done. Once again, chapter by chapter, I will put forward the subjects that we need to discuss. These subjects are central to the interim report that I will make in December with Mr Barroso and Mr Juncker. These subjects involve budgetary discipline, budgetary integration, in fact the Economic Union, and economic convergence. For each subject, I have specified the issues to be raised. It is not about me having to come up with a plan at this stage.

What is more, I have nothing but respect for the Community method. The Commission is the one that has to come up with the proposals, not me. It is therefore the Commission which has come up with the proposals and which will continue to do so. My role is to try and find a consensus at the European Council between both the Seventeen and the Twenty-Seven. That is my role and that is why I was asked to take on this job. I will do it. Yet I think that I asked the right questions earlier and I thank those of you who wanted to put their point across on those issues now on the agenda and on economic governance.

As for the three major issues – budgetary discipline, budgetary integration and economic convergence –, I have just one comment. What we are experiencing is a private debt crisis, made much worse by what the banks and financial institutions did not only in Europe, but across the globe, and in a way, I would say by a global policy of extremely low interest rates. That brought about escalating debts in some countries, which led to a loss of competitiveness and the current balance of payment deficits. Many of the problems we face stem from this, alongside a sovereign debt crisis. Private debt and public debt are what got us into this trouble in the first place.

I often hear a lot of talk in this House about the effects of the austerity policy, but seldom do I hear anybody saying much about this policy of budgetary discipline being inevitable in many countries. Some countries are not under attack from the financial markets, and there is a reason for that: they have conducted a sound enough budgetary and economic policy. If all countries had a, shall we say, satisfactory ratio in terms of private and public debt, we would not be in this euro area crisis. First things first, then: we need to bring each

house into order. That comes at a cost, I know, but it is absolutely essential. Even for conducting a policy of budgetary integration, and there has been a lot of talk about stability bonds, Eurobonds, a way of pooling the debt. That cannot be done without budgetary discipline. They go hand in hand. The two go together.

Yes, it has been said, I agree, but there has been no real focus on it. This is the very least that can be said. If we want to go along the path of budgetary and financial integration, we need to do so in stages, because we are currently not ready for fully-fledged budgetary integration as there are too many economic, social and budgetary divergences within the euro area.

When the rate of youth unemployment stands at 8% in some countries and 48% in others, we are not ready; the divergence is far too great. Therefore, if we want budgetary integration, we need to choose the means and the instruments, then see if there is a need for Treaty change for some methods and if there is no need or less need for others.

We will work on these three channels and we will discuss them in December. I am sure that we will also discuss them again in this Parliament and at the European Council in the months ahead

I will make two small comments on division in Europe. Ladies and gentlemen, the thing that would create the biggest division – which will not be the case – would be failing to guarantee stability in the euro area. Should that happen, division will indeed be great. We must therefore provide the 17 countries with all the instruments and means to ensure they safeguard stability in the euro area. In my opinion, this is the primary objective. At this stage, I am not concerned about knowing whether so and so is frustrated or whether so and so would love to have this or that. We must do everything in our power to ensure that we are sailing in the same boat: first of all the Seventeen, and secondly the Twenty-Seven. However, the primary objective is to secure financial stability in the euro area.

Just one final comment on economic growth. It is not just a European problem. Obviously, we have to make our own contribution to growth and the first condition is to restore confidence in our own zone because the recession, or rather the stagnation these days is caused, in the first instance, not by austerity policies but by the lack of confidence shown by investors and consumers in the euro area. This mainly explains the current stagnation. There is obviously the United States which is also suffering a debt problem and which is also suffering a structural problem with its economy. I was just there in September and I heard business leaders there saying practically the same as they do in Europe. Of course, emerging countries are also experiencing a loss of growth. I have to be extremely wary in how I express myself when I say that they also need to accept greater flexibility in their exchange rates so that the problems they face are not exported to other parts of the world. Growth is a whole. It is not just Europe and in Europe, it is not just a matter of austerity, it is also a matter of confidence.

We need to work on economic growth. We also need to work on it using non-financial means, hence the importance of the single market. We have not yet exploited all the possibilities of the single market by far. We must work on different levels and not only in Europe but across the entire planet.

These are some of the explanations that I wanted to give you in this debate on economic governance.

*(Applause)*

*(The sitting was suspended at 12.05)*

### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) Today we are debating long-term reforms in the area of EU economic governance, which will determine the principles on which the European economic governance and surveillance system will be based. The European economic governance mechanism adopted is the greatest body of law aimed at economic and financial regulation since the establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union. This package sets out economic priorities, regulates enhanced supervision of national fiscal policies, provides for measures for ensuring greater economic stability and eliminating the financial sector's regulatory deficiencies. Mr President, you have expressed your support for the economic governance model chosen, which many fear will split Europe into a so-called two speed Europe. Although all countries will be able to participate in the mechanism and fulfil the criteria set out in it, only countries belonging to the euro area will have the right to make decisions. Those Member States which have already linked their currencies to the euro and have transferred their monetary policy to the European Central Bank, but for certain reasons have not yet introduced the euro (such as Lithuania), are directly affected by all aspects of decisions made in the euro area but are unable to influence them. I believe that we have to reconsider in detail the principles of the economic model chosen and ensure that those Member States whose exchange rate is pegged to the euro also have the right to make decisions in the European economic governance mechanism. Perhaps such a principle would be a greater incentive for non-euro area countries to firstly link their currencies to the euro and thus strengthen their aim of integrating into the euro area and at the same time participate in decision making.

**Nessa Childers (S&D)**, *in writing*. – With a strengthening of action comes a strengthening of credibility. It is clear to all that we need a Community-wide approach if we are to see stability again in Europe. The economic crisis is our common problem and it will only be resolved through common action based on a collection of democratic institutions, rather than a small coterie of EU leaders. The European Parliament is the representation of European citizens and the guarantor of democratic legitimacy. MEPs must be given more say in the resolution of the financial crisis, particularly in light of the unsuccessful resolutions put forward by a small group of national leaders. The European Parliament is already taking action on speculation. This week in Strasbourg, MEPs voted to ban the short-selling of bonds in the financial markets, which is the first in a number of important steps needed to temper the markets, restore demand and create sustainable jobs. We have tried the European Council route to stabilise the euro, and it has proved unsuccessful. The focus must now be to utilise the EU's other democratic arm for fiscal reform – only in this way can we ensure support for our plans by European citizens.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) From summit to summit, from document to document, the leaders of the EU are allowing the dictatorship of the markets to be imposed, the crisis to spread to more countries and the veritable theft to continue, above all through financial speculation, leaving the most vulnerable economies, workers and peoples to live with the consequences.

It is time to stop heading down this path to social and economic disaster. The way out cannot be the dictatorship of budgets based on irrational and nominal criteria, which exacerbates inequality, increases unemployment and poverty and impoverishes peoples, always to the benefit of big business and the financial sector. This is implemented through

so-called economic governance, which is nothing more than the deepening of centralisation and the concentration of economic and political power, shoving democracy aside and paving the way for the intensification of social struggles and tensions.

The way forward is to fight these policies, as in the general strike due to take place on 24 November in Portugal.

**Kinga Göncz (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (HU) Only together can we overcome the intensifying crisis of the euro area. We need steps that serve the deepening of integration while more efficiently utilising Community tools and methods. The markets reject belated and slow half-measures and separate deals. The intensifying debt crisis makes it clear that only quick, commonly adopted and implemented decisions and credible measures taken by Community institutions invested with extended powers can keep the euro area, and consequently the European Union, from falling apart. I agree with those who believe that the strengthening of European economic governance and the deepening of political integration is needed for the EU to break free from this crisis, which is reaching an extent not seen since World War II. The crisis, which threatens the existence of the Monetary Union, can be felt throughout Europe. It is for this reason that Member States that are not members of the euro area are urging countries using the common currency to engage in closer cooperation. At the same time we reject the intention to create a two- or multi-gear Europe, as well as intergovernmental solutions. What we need now is openness and the consideration and reconciliation of the interests of all Member States. The European Parliament must have full say in decisions that concern the basis of the future of integration. A commonly governed Community deciding on closer integration needs a budget reflecting its ambitions, and a strong cohesion policy.

**Liem Hoang Ngoc (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The agreement of 27 October is flabbergasting. The austerity policies that it intends to include in the constitutions will plunge Europe into a recession where tax revenues will dry up and deficits will widen. They will increase the risks associated with holding sovereign debts, leading to higher interest rates. The banks will see their balance sheets deteriorate and will struggle to increase their capital. Only the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) would allow for a restructuring of debts and recapitalisations and defuse any new tension about rates. To do so, it would have to turn into the embryonic European Treasury, issuing Eurobonds which the European Central Bank (ECB) could buy back at a lower rate. There are no plans for this. The fund, which started off with EUR 440 billion, now only has EUR 250 billion. To raise the EUR 1 trillion supposed to reassure the markets, it will transform the sovereign debts held into derivatives to activate the 'leverage effect'. However, the recession will increase the risk of defaults. We hardly dare imagine the effects of this securitisation of Italian and Spanish debts should these countries partly default. This agreement is explosive for the financial system, already under threat from austerity measures which are crippling growth. Turning to China rather than the ECB is detrimental to industry and employment in Europe.

**Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (HU) It has been almost one month since 26 October and Europe is still powerless when it comes to deciding on such cardinal issues as the calming of the European markets or the objective management of the ratings of credit institutions. Europe can only be taken seriously if it is able to offer the citizens genuine, forward-looking answers. That is why I envision our activities in two dimensions: a short-term dimension which refers to tasks that need to be completed immediately, and a long-term one that pertains to several decades, and guarantees economic growth and job creation, that is, European prosperity. However, in order for us to be able to keep our

long-term strategies – which are based on mutual solidarity and are often not without serious tradeoffs – such as the creation of the common financial supervision or the launching of economic governance, we must not allow short-term goals and actors from outside of Europe to make the achievement of our common goals impossible in any way. It is welcome that after a long time the Commission has initiated the stricter regulation and legal accountability of credit rating agencies, but it is shocking and perplexing that the proposals on the temporary suspension of ratings and the creation of a European credit rating agency have been postponed. I therefore urge the Commission to create as soon as possible a European credit rating agency that is intimately familiar with the moods of the European markets and is fundamentally interested in the upturn of the European economy in order to create a stable and predictable European economic atmosphere, which can be considered the key to our future.

**András Gyürk (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (HU) It is unacceptable for global economic processes and the reputations of the economies of individual countries to be at the whims of credit rating agencies who are responsible for the outbreak and intensification of the economic crisis through the series of erroneous and sometimes self-serving ratings they have given in the past few years. It is high time for Europe to step up in unison against the wrong and damaging practices of credit rating agencies. In this regard the announcement made yesterday by Michel Barnier, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, stating that the European Commission will initiate a stricter regulation of credit rating agencies in several respects, and that in certain cases the agencies will be held legally accountable, is welcome. However, it is disappointing that the Commission has, for the time being, postponed the decision on the temporary suspension of ratings and the establishment of a European credit rating agency. It is in the common interest of Europe that the European Commission decide as soon as possible on these matters as well. The Hungarian delegation of the Group of the European People's Party supports all efforts by the European Commission that include the further harmonisation and tightening of the rules on the operation of credit rating agencies. Until then, however, the opinions of credit rating agencies should be treated with ample reservations, because, as revealed unfortunately over the past few years, there is often serious doubt as to their soundness. Increasing the uncertainty on the financial markets, unfounded and unjustified downgrades only serve to further deepen the crisis, and may plunge European countries already struggling with difficulties into further recession. In the most severe crisis in the history of the European Union this is unacceptable irresponsibility.

**Iliana Ivanova (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (BG) The most recent turmoil in Europe's economic and financial environment showed once again that the efforts of individual countries are not sufficient to stabilise Europe's financial markets. At the moment, we are not talking about a few problems with public debt, but are facing a systemic crisis which is having an impact on every citizen in the EU's Member States. At this difficult time, Europe must be united more than ever and not give into the populist voices calling for the euro area to be disbanded. We can only tackle the challenges in the world around us if we are together. Europe's institutions must strengthen their role as a unifying force and use the crisis as an opportunity to create a sound legal framework for economic governance.

I call on the European Commission to implement the economic governance package measures as soon as possible and to present other European instruments which will help financial stability in the EU. Member States which do not belong to the euro area must be involved on an equal footing with the other states in making decisions about the European Union's future, and must not be isolated from the processes. This is the path Europe must

pursue to avoid a two-speed Union, which will be detrimental to the European project in the long run.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The outcome of the latest Council meeting on the future of the euro area was positive and demonstrated the solidarity shown by all Member States towards the states which are experiencing hardship, although we still have many grounds for concern at European Union level. A variety of options at euro area level have been discussed so far, ranging from the European Union's Solidarity Fund to Eurobonds or intervention from the ECB on secondary markets. It is absolutely necessary to implement these options without any restrictions. However, I think that unless proper European economic governance is established for the euro area, with increased decision-making powers, the European Union will not be able to respond as an entity. This European economic governance will allow us to develop much closer coordination of fiscal policies at EU level, carry out macroeconomic supervision of Member States and devise a common economic strategy which will make the European Union more powerful globally. In the opposite scenario, the future of the single European currency and even of the European project itself may be seriously jeopardised.

**Vladimír Maňka (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) We all agree that imbalances must be eliminated and we must stop getting deeper into debt. On the other hand, we have to prevent Europe from falling into the same situation as fourteen years ago with the Far Eastern crisis, which slowly engulfed one state after another. A policy of cutbacks in one country would not only slow that country down economically, but would have a knock-on effect on the others. A policy of excessive cutbacks is also an infection that could bring down a country's immediate neighbours and drag down others. This would be untenable without measures to stimulate growth.

It is very important to make maximum use of the European funds. If we use them according to plan, we would have 2% higher economic growth, 1% higher employment and 1% greater labour productivity in the new Member States

**Kristiina Ojuland (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – Mr President, Presidents of the European Council, the Commission and the Euro Group, just as in a Shakespearean tragedy the European Union must, like Hamlet, ask: 'To be, or not to be, that is the question: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them? To die, to sleep...' The question that expects a swift response is just as existential, as in principle there are two extremes: either to abandon the European project as such altogether or to reinforce it radically. All the other options fall between the two, yet it must be kept in mind that any half-hearted effort that stalls progress towards an effective solution that actually saves the Euro area only paves the way for the ultimate demise of the EU. My concerns are primarily related to the security of Eastern Europe. I am afraid that the current division within the EU on the solution of the crisis only works against us, therefore I call for more purposeful action. We will not survive with a solution that everyone can accept, but with a solution that works.

**Jacek Protasiewicz (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) At a time of deepening crisis, which is being experienced in Europe in particular, the overriding objective should be to take joint actions aimed at the stabilisation of European economies and better coordination of anti-crisis measures. Discussions as to how this objective should be brought about effectively often come with concerns that the introduction of new principles of economic governance in the European Union may lead to the creation of a two-tier Union. These concerns are not

unfounded. However, the facts already point to the existence of two Unions: one encompassing the euro area Member States and the other, more political, consisting of all 27 Member States.

It is evident to me that the States with the common currency need to have instruments for conducting common fiscal and monetary policy, as well as measures for enforcing discipline across these two areas. Accession to the euro area comes with shared responsibility for the state of the single currency. It is therefore obvious to me that membership in the euro area must be linked to acceptance of the principles of single economic governance. This is not only for the benefit of a particular Member State, but also for the common good.

**Edward Scicluna (S&D)**, *in writing*. – We all state in public that European economies are so interconnected that we need to coordinate our actions. Yet what we have seen in practice are creditor countries in the euro area, with relatively sound and stable public finances and strong economies, pursuing the same austerity policies as those receiving emergency loans. As a result, last week's economic forecasts by the Commission demonstrated that the euro area has now been brought to the brink of a new recession. This is definitely not the time to be talking about changing the treaties. As we saw from the creation of the European Stability Mechanism earlier this year, even the use of the new simplified procedure takes months – and that is without changing the EU's competences. The issue of embedding the current emergency measures in the treaties should wait until we see the resolution of this crisis. Rather than behaving exclusively like conventional creditors, Europe's strongest countries should take this opportunity to pursue more demand-driven policies and stop the EU from going over the brink.

**Theodor Dumitru Stolojan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I firmly believe that, if we implement the new European economic governance legislation as it should be, we can prevent in the future the current tough situations caused by some Member States' excessive indebtedness. I agree that we perhaps need new measures to enhance economic governance. However, we should beware of needlessly increasing European legislation, only because we make compromises politically when it comes to the behaviour of an individual Member State.

**Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (HU) The European economy is on a knife's edge. Thanks to the forced austerity measures and erroneous economic policy decisions of the past period, forecasts now indicate a drastic slowdown in the economic growth of European countries for the next year. At the same time budget deficit will once again soar and it will be more difficult and more costly to finance public debts. There is only one way to break free from this two-fold stranglehold. We must implement the legislative package on economic governance which serves budgetary discipline as soon as possible, and must adopt additional rules serving the reinforcement of economic cooperation. In the medium term, however, we need a policy that encourages investments, and accelerates sustainable economic growth in Europe primarily through energy efficiency, the development of renewable energy sources, and expenditure on research and development, education and the improvement of the health care situation. Without stable and sustainable economic growth the renewal of the European social model and the at least partial preservation of its most important accomplishments is unthinkable.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) In light of the downbeat forecasts for short-term economic growth, the economic governance legislative package is intended to restore confidence in the financial markets. I think that imposing austerity measures alone without any measures promoting economic and social development would prolong the

current economic crisis and exacerbate the social crisis. Europe's leaders and institutions need to focus on devising and implementing structural measures capable of creating jobs and economic growth. The efforts to exit the crisis must be made using the Community method rather than the intergovernmental method, while Europe's institutions have to remain at the heart of this process. The EU and Member States need industrial development in areas where the EU is competitive, as well as development of the transport, energy and communications infrastructure and investment in education and research. It is vital that the economic governance measures do not restrict these investments which are crucial for the EU's economic and social development, and for its competitiveness. I think that an extensive campaign is required to inform and consult with the public and local authorities, which need to have the capacity to attract investment and create jobs locally, with regard to the economic governance measures that are adopted at European or national level.

**Anna Záborská (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SK) The anniversary of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe is also a good opportunity to remind the whole of Europe that socialist economic planning does not work. It creates an illusion of prosperity which has to end one day. The Slovaks have lived through this. The opening up of the market showed us how inefficient a planned economy is. The majority of enterprises were unable to survive in a competitive environment. The result was a 23% drop in Slovakia's GDP from 1991 to 1993. In 1993, every fifth family and every fourth child were living on the poverty line. But there was no other way.

This has to be acknowledged even by those who today want to avoid the painful but necessary measures that are needed to save the European economy. On 17 November, the Slovaks and Czechs took a courageous route. They turned their backs on the certainties of socialism, which had become unsustainable. The freely-elected politicians had the courage to tell the unpalatable truth and take painful, but necessary, measures. That is just what the EU needs today – the courage to venture into the unknown. Three bail-out funds and a two-speed Europe, however, give rise to fear and anxiety.

*(From 12.05 to 12.20, Parliament held a formal sitting for the award of the LUX Prize)*

*(The sitting resumed at 12.20)*

#### IN THE CHAIR: EDWARD McMILLAN-SCOTT

*Vice-President*

### 6. Voting time

**President.** – The next item is the vote.

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

**6.1. Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2010/019 IE/Construction 41 from Ireland (A7-0375/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)**

**6.2. Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2010/021 IE/Construction 71 from Ireland (A7-0377/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)**

**6.3. Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2010/020 IE/Construction 43 from Ireland (A7-0376/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)**

**6.4. Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2011/001 AT/Lower and Upper Austria/Austria (A7-0379/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)**

**6.5. Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: application EGF/2011/004 EL/ALDI Hellas/Greece (A7-0378/2011 - Barbara Matera) (vote)**

**6.6. ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2010 (A7-0315/2011 - Filip Kaczmarek) (vote)**

**6.7. European Heritage Label (A7-0331/2011 - Chrysoula Paliadeli) (vote)**

**6.8. Single European railway area (A7-0367/2011 - Debora Serracchiani) (vote)**

– Before the vote on Amendment 53cp:

**Ramon Tremosa i Balcells (ALDE).** - Mr President, I am the Liberal shadow rapporteur on this report. The Liberal Group would like to make an oral amendment. In the last sentence of Article 6(4), we would like to improve the text, adding only four words. After 'capital employed' we could add 'except from public funding'. I think that the other rapporteurs of the big Groups are in favour of this.

*(The oral amendment was not accepted since more than 40 Members were opposed)*

**6.9. Climate change conference in Durban (B7-0571/2011) (vote)**

**6.10. Accountability report on financing for development (B7-0574/2011) (vote)**

**6.11. European cinema in the digital era (A7-0366/2011 - Piotr Borys) (vote)**

– Before the vote:

**Piotr Borys, rapporteur.** – (PL) Mr President, this is a true festival of cinema; this report complements the LUX Prize and, at a time of crisis, is an important signal for European film. European cinematography has been waiting for this report for nearly 10 years, and I would like to tell you that its adoption will not only accelerate work on the full digitisation of European film, but also on expanding the opportunities for Europeans to access European film. I warmly encourage you to vote, and express my enormous gratitude to the shadow rapporteurs for their cooperation.

*(Applause)*

*(The sitting was suspended for a few moments)*

## **7. Explanations of vote**

### **Oral explanations of vote**

**Report: Filip Kaczmarek (A7-0315/2011)**

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, a democracy is only a democracy if it is formed by informed, aware and committed citizens. The Cotonou Partnership Agreement is important precisely because it aims to give legal support for the birth of an active civil society in places such as Africa, which are still immature in their expressions of democracy. However, it is essential that it should above all be Africans who desire this social growth, and incentivising all initiatives, including the smallest ones, can help to make this happen.

The second revision of the Agreement, which took place in January 2010, should be an opportunity to adapt the Agreement in the light of the crises of recent times and those that are current, including the uprisings for democracy in North Africa, climate change, soaring food and petrol prices, the financial crisis and extreme poverty. Nevertheless, it should still be stressed as an inescapable necessity that the EU-Africa strategy should be people-centred and focussed on the active participation of civil society.

This is where the innovation of the Cotonou Agreement lies. This Agreement establishes cooperation in the economic and financial sectors and in political dialogue, by introducing a new participatory approach. Participation, which is the fundamental principle of cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries, is understood in Article 2 as the primary instrument for encouraging integration of all branches of society, from the private sector to civil organisations. These are the reasons why we have voted in favour.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I voted in favour of the text on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly which, due to the quality of its work, has established itself as a key player in cooperation between the north and the south of the world. As a member of that assembly, I too have participated in the meetings held in Brussels and in the work that took place in Tenerife in April 2010 and in Kinshasa, Congo, in December of that year. Thanks to these trips I was able to see at first hand, as in Angola in 2009, the sad conditions that some people live under every day while at the same time assessing the efforts made by the ACP to improve things.

In conclusion, I feel inclined to underline that at this unique historical and political moment – particularly for the countries of North Africa and the Middle East – the role played by the ACP has been fundamentally important. This is particularly so in the context of supervising negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements, improving the transparency of these processes and the development of deprived local areas.

**Adam Bielan (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly of the representatives of the European Parliament and selected African, Caribbean and Pacific countries is, so far, the only international panel which sits regularly with the aim of promoting the interdependence of North and South. It plays a particular role through the monitoring of negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements.

I therefore see a need for the Commission to provide the parliaments of ACP countries with all available information and to support them in exercising democratic control. Efforts that strive to uphold the freedom and independence of the media are extremely important and are aimed at ensuring pluralism and the participation of democratic opposition representatives and minority groups in political life. The exchange of views with local authorities on the situation in a given country, which took place for the first time in Kinshasa, may become an appropriate solution. I also hope that in the future

misunderstandings such as the absence of the Council's representative during Question Time will not occur again, as this casts an unfavourable light on European diplomacy. I endorsed the report.

**Syed Kamall (ECR).** - Mr President, it is all very interesting for politicians from the EU and the ACP countries to get together, but if we really want to help development, if we really want to help entrepreneurs in developing countries, quite often the best way is for politicians to get out of the way and allow entrepreneurs in those countries to trade with each other.

We also need to help entrepreneurs in many of these countries to tackle some of the barriers to trade that they face, whether in terms of local state monopolies or companies that are connected to corrupt local politicians. What we need to do is free the spirit of free enterprise to allow those entrepreneurs to create wealth for their citizens, and ensure that they do not face trade barriers when they are selling their goods and services to us in the EU. Let us make sure that we reduce our trade barriers. Let us make sure that we help the entrepreneurs of these countries, and let us make sure that, together, we tackle poverty.

**Recommendation for second reading: Chrysoula Paliadeli (A7-0331/2011)**

**David Campbell Bannerman (ECR).** - Mr President, I am deeply unimpressed with this idea of a European Heritage Label 'to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the EU'. Once again, we seem to have a scary 1984-style rewriting of history, just like the wasteful Museum of European History, where no-one can agree when this history is due to start and where, of course, no-one can mention the war. This is an Orwellian exercise that seeks to term World Wars as mere European civil wars, with the realities obscured in a haze of half-truths.

In Brussels last week a French lady insulted my red Remembrance Day poppy as 'out of date'. I find it disgusting that a symbol of the huge sacrifice that has guaranteed all our freedoms should be treated with such contempt. That poppy commemorates, too, the British soldier who died just last week in Afghanistan. History may be inconvenient and painful but, by God, you get into far more trouble seeking to deny its realities.

**Franck Proust (PPE).** - (FR) Mr President, we will soon be having monuments and sites labelled 'European Heritage'.

I support this label as it will be a response to the underlying need to bridge the gap between Europe and its citizens. Europe is often said to be remote and inefficient. When put to use properly, culture and heritage can bring people together. With this type of initiative, Europe will be able to prove that it is indeed active and, above all, real.

I am more than well placed to talk about this as I am actually an elected member for a region whose history began with the very first European civilisations. In the land of Nîmes, and throughout the Mediterranean, men often came from elsewhere in Europe, marked out roads, built monuments and set up the towns and cities in which are still living today.

The way I see it, these are the landmarks of our common heritage, which we should bring to the fore and that is why I voted in favour.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE).** - (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome this proposal, which aims to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging

to the European Union through shared history and heritage, and an awareness of diversity, as well as to intensify intercultural dialogue.

Promoting initiatives like the recognition of European heritage, which aim to bring citizens closer to an idea of belonging to a Europe that unites us is, in my view, hugely positive. Often, the concept of Europe remains vague and national identities still tend to dominate.

The European Heritage Label has a special characteristic: it shows the historical importance of a monument, indicates that it had an important role for European culture and clearly underlines its intangible value as a bearer of a historic and cultural message. It stands apart from other labels in this field that refer to the object's extraordinary historic, cultural or artistic value due to its material nature. Of course, that is not to say that the historical substance of a monument is irrelevant; that is precisely what makes it authentic, as its physicality strongly conveys the intangible importance of a place. Essentially, it represents a symbol of ideas like democracy, freedom and diversity.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I personally think that establishing a European Heritage Label is an interesting project. At a time when due to the ongoing economic crisis a certain euro-scepticism is creeping into many Member States, I think an initiative of this kind can reinforce European citizens' sense of belonging to the Union. The unique characteristic of the European label is not, in fact, the beauty of a site but rather the symbolic value that it has represented or still represents for bringing European citizens on board in the journey towards better intercultural dialogue.

**Salvatore Iacolino (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I supported the stance taken by Ms Paliadeli because I think it is worth simplifying and smoothing the way for genuinely promoting Europe in all Member States, providing a potential tourist attraction and enhancing particularly significant sites. To put it briefly, this provides a tangible manifestation of the founding values of the community in which we live. I approve of the rigorous selection of projects for educational activities, which are essentially for young people. The European Heritage Label is without doubt something we must pursue, both in terms of rediscovering and redeveloping the sites, but also to tangibly and genuinely make the best of the places of civilisation and authentic remembrance in whose image our memories must always be remade.

**Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Europe and its history speak through the huge achievements that have distinguished the development of civilisation in our countries. Much of Europe's history is told through the roads, the monuments and the convents that, in times of darkness, have given dignity to the journey of the peoples of Europe. I support the stance taken in this measure which, naturally, perhaps ought to be extended to the countries waiting to join the EU, the Western Balkan countries, because I think it would be a good idea to involve them in this project of identifying a European brand. I think their involvement would send out a positive message to them. I am delighted that this measure has been adopted today by a broad majority and this further assures me that the Council cannot throw up further obstacles to its swift approval.

**Raffaele Baldassarre (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the goal of promoting a European identity and improving knowledge of our shared history – especially among young people – is of crucial importance, especially at a historical and political juncture like the present.

To work towards achieving this goal I voted in favour of the report by Ms Paliadeli, in which I completely agree on the criteria for identifying the sites, which I think should take place transnationally and on a two-yearly basis, thereby boosting the quality of the process.

Lastly, I fully agree with the role given to Parliament, which will be duly involved in the process of selecting the chosen sites. For one thing, Parliament has always supported the development of this label, firstly in the 2007 tourism resolution and then in the 2008 resolution on the European agenda for culture in a globalised world.

**Hannu Takkula (ALDE).** - *(FI)* Mr President, Ms Paliadeli's report on the European Heritage Label is excellent and worthy of support. I believe that all of us in this House agree that it is important for the public to know more about Europe, the history of the European Union, and European values and identity.

It is especially important to realise that, if we want to build European cooperation, this can only be based on knowledge of the facts and of history, and then we will be able to deal with issues more successfully, in the historical context established.

We should also remember that this programme will not be in competition with the UNESCO World Heritage label: rather it will be different, more educational and, above all, directed at youth. It expresses our genuine desire to strengthen our knowledge and expertise with regard to history. In this respect, it does not, in my opinion, increase the fear of history being rewritten: on the contrary, there are many national symbols, one example of which is the poppy mentioned here, which many British people wore last week. Others should know why such national symbols exist. We will get to know and respect each other's culture and history, and, in that way, establish better understanding.

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** - Mr President, whenever there is a German general election British newspapers always run the same photograph, which is of Germans voting in traditional national costume – Bavarians in their leather shorts, and North German ladies in these fantastic dresses.

It seems to me that those photographs are now the perfect symbol of European democracy. Voting has become a folkloric activity. Our constituents go through the motions out of atavism, out of some half-remembered civic duty from the time when it used to matter, rather than in the expectation that casting their ballot will make any difference.

And do you know what? They are right to think that. According to a study by the German Federal Justice Ministry, 84% of the laws in the Member States are there to give force to EU Directives or Regulations. The split is no longer between Left and Right, between capitalists and socialists; it is between the 'euro elites' and everybody else.

How sad that this Continent, which developed and exported the idea that laws ought not to be passed nor taxes raised except by our elected representatives, should have turned its back on democracy itself.

The thing that now deserves a heritage label is the ideal of representative government in Europe.

**Kay Swinburne (ECR).** - Mr President, I have abstained from voting on the European Heritage Label report, as I still have a number of concerns that have not been addressed from the first reading.

My main concern is that the tone of the report is one of homogenisation. This goes against the principles of the European Committee of the Regions, which stands for respecting the cultural differences between Member States. Indeed the difference between Welsh heritage and the rest of the UK does not even support this integrated approach. I do not agree with the potential increased bureaucratic burden which will be placed on Member States as a result of processing these applications. I also worry about the potential difficulties that could arise in relation to the financing of such a European Heritage Label. Given our current economic climate, I think this is poorly timed.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – (GA) Mr President, I was happy to support this report and I am delighted that it has been accepted today with a large majority. Without any doubt it has advantages, especially in fostering the Tourism Initiative and also in fostering interest and understanding amongst young people, especially in the history of Europe.

I think this label first of all is different to the world heritage UNESCO label and is pretty distinctive; it is not based on beauty or architectural value, but on the history and the contribution of a particular site to creating the history of Europe and I think that is a good idea. I think no harm can come from it; the scheme which would be reviewed every two years is a good idea; thirteen people in the committee; a million euro maximum as a budget. I think that if it promotes tourism and promotes understanding, then it is all very well.

I am sorry that my own country is not taking part because there are a number of sites which could contribute: the Irish College in Leuven, the Irish College in Paris, Kinsale Town, the Blasket Islands, etc.

**President.** – Just while you are in the Chamber, Mr Kelly, I am aware of your complaint about the way in which we select speakers in Question Time to the Commission and I am one of the two Vice-Presidents who chairs that. There are problems. Yesterday, for example, there were 60 people requesting the floor and we could only get through 20 questions, so that is 40 dissatisfied Members. We are considering alternatives to selecting the speakers. One of the proposals from me is that we have a big glass bowl on the table here and we fill it with coloured ping pong balls with numbers on, and I merely select from the bowl. We are indeed considering alternatives to the way we do it at the moment, but thank you for pointing out the problems.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** - Mr President, I would not go down the road of the glass bowl for the moment, but you personally are absolved from all blame.

Thank you for your forbearance and for your explanation.

**Syed Kamall (ECR).** - Mr President, one of the issues that we often see here is this idea of building a European identity. As the previous speakers mentioned, we have had the Museum of History, which seeks to erase the unpleasant episodes of European history. We have had the European Prize for Journalism, and now we see the European Label of Heritage.

But what is this label? As Mr Kelly said, the label is not about a site's beauty or its architectural quality, but rather its symbolic value for European integration and the history of the Union. It is not about the conservation of sites, but about the activities they can offer and their educational dimension, especially for young people.

So there we have it. It is not really about heritage; it is actually about propaganda and educating young people to believe more in European integration. If we really want to focus

upon heritage, let us not forget those who gave their lives so that we can enjoy our freedom today.

**Nicole Sinclair (NI).** - Mr President, I supported this amendment to reject this proposal on the European Heritage Label as I believe it is an artificial attempt to create a European identity. Only in your twisted imaginations does such an identity exist, an identity that my constituents want no part of, nor the expense of paying for.

We have no joint heritage. Most of you have lived under totalitarianism – either communism or fascism – whilst we in the UK have fought against many of your countries for our freedom. Are you so insecure that you have to develop such a scheme? Be proud of your national heritages, if you can. I am of mine.

**Emma McClarkin (ECR).** - Mr President, maintaining cultural heritage is of course an important aspect of national identity. It contributes to the understanding and preservation of our natural environment, as well as highlighting Europe's rich and diverse historical roots.

Whilst I welcome this initiative and initiatives that can help Member States coordinate their actions in this area, I am not convinced that the benefits of the European Heritage Label will outweigh its cost implications. The delivery of existing and highly regarded programmes, such as UNESCO, would be undermined and in fact duplicated. Additionally, in the current period of financial austerity, I do not feel that it is appropriate to be utilising funds that could otherwise be channelled into initiatives that provide jobs and growth. Quite simply, we must prioritise.

Therefore, I voted to abstain on this second reading for a number of reasons. There has been little substantive change since the first reading, which I also abstained on. The label will duplicate existing heritage programmes at national level and by the UN, and the financial contribution of Member States should be questioned, given these times of budget cuts. On a practical level, the proliferation of European Heritage Label sites under the current proposal will serve to diminish any label's credibility.

#### **Report: Debora Serracchiani (A7-0367/2011)**

**David Campbell Bannerman (ECR).** - Mr President, I speak as someone with a railway industry background. I worked for Britain's passenger railways, the Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link, and as a ministerial adviser.

Whilst I support the concept of a British-style model of liberalised rail services, which has given the UK the fastest-growing railways in Europe, of track charges, of open access, of train leasing and of a strong and independent rail regulator, I simply do not see this as anything to do with the European Union.

Britain has 10 000 miles of rail lines and only one line is connected to Europe. Continental-gauge trains would not even fit on our lines in Britain. They would demolish our bridges and tunnels with their bulk.

So I am sorry, but this idea of a single European railway area is a nonsense. It is unnecessary, undesirable and excessive interference in the responsibilities of national governments, so I do not support this report.

In short, will the EU please keep off our tracks!

### **Recommendation for second reading: Chrysoula Paliadeli (A7-0331/2011)**

**Milan Zver (PPE).** - (SL) Mr President, listening to this debate, I feel it is rather one-sided, mostly in favour of those who oppose this report, which from 2013 introduces a European Union cultural heritage label. However, this report was adopted by an overwhelming majority. I supported it myself and it received strong support in the Committee on Culture and Education. But, ladies and gentlemen, men develop different...

*(The President cut off the speaker.)*

**President.** – Mr Zver, I am sorry but we have moved on from heritage to railways, I do apologise. This is not a debate, it is an opportunity for Members to make a point about the way they voted. This is the explanations of vote.

### **Report: Debora Serracchiani (A7-0367/2011)**

**Herbert Dorfmann (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, I voted in favour of the proposal for a directive establishing a single European railway area. I am convinced that only by opening up the markets can we improve the quality of the offering for both passenger and freight transport on the railways of Europe.

Above all, however, I am pleased that Article 32 was adopted, because rail transport also gives rise to noise. This is mainly related to the quality of the rolling stock; some completely outdated wagons are used, particularly in the freight sector.

There is increasing opposition to this noise among the population, and this is likely to be putting at risk the shift in freight transport – particularly that from road to rail. Consequently, urgent measures must be taken to reduce the noise pollution. Noise must cost money, and I believe that the approach set out in Article 32 moves us in this direction. I hope that agreement can soon be reached with the Council on this matter.

**Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL).** - Mr President, I voted against the recast of the Railway Directive because it is very clear that, despite the promises of the neo-Liberal doctrinaires in this House and elsewhere, the Railway Directive will remain the ugly duckling that it is and will never become a swan. It continues on the course, which is already failing across Europe, of chopping up our public transport systems into bite-size pieces for the private sector to gobble up.

The result is clear right across Europe, where you have services being cut back, leaving communities completely isolated, you have a lack of investment in maintenance that has caused an increase in delays, an increase in down-time and, most worryingly, an increase in accidents, including fatal accidents. You also have railway workers suffering under the burden of a massive increase of working pressure and of massive attacks on their working conditions and trade union rights.

Developing our railway services means pushing back the private sector, it means pushing the private sector out of our vital public transport services, it means renationalisation of those parts that have been privatised so far. It is on that basis – together with massive investment by the public sector, together with democratic control by the railway workers and users – that you could develop a railway system that is user friendly, environmentally sustainable, reliable and safe.

**Guido Milana (S&D).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, this report was adopted with a huge majority in Parliament. I voted for it, but I would have liked to vote on

something different, something bolder. In my opinion, Parliament has missed an opportunity to go further.

It is quite true that the single European railway area can and must result in a much better relationship with consumers than we have had so far. Why stop, however, at a single national regulatory body and not push on towards a single European regulatory body? Why stop short of the issue of unbundling, bringing in a clear separation between ownership and service management? Yes, the budgets have been separated, but probably this time in Parliament it was not this House's authority to make its voice heard that has prevailed, but rather the representatives of the abundant privilege and competition present today in the European railway market.

We will only manage to truly change the fortunes of freight, improve people's lives, improve the free circulation of goods when this single European space is worthwhile. Essentially, keeping well away from the train tracks is good for the health and not for economic policy; perhaps by getting too close you will get run over.

**Hubert Pirker (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, European rail transport remains dominated by the monopolies, and different types of current, different track gauges and even different safety requirements are preventing the expansion of cross-border rail transport.

The European Parliament has therefore decided to recast what is known as the railway package. In future, strong authorities – known as regulators – in all the Member States will ensure that these barriers are removed, that we bring about a customer-friendly liberalisation of the market and that those who continue to block service-oriented competition will be rapped across the knuckles.

I have therefore been vehement in my support of this directive. At the same time, this decision is the first step towards a European, uniform and thus competitive rail market. Only once the barriers that exist in rail transport have been removed completely will Europe benefit from the new rail transport corridors, and only then will the businesses along these corridors be able to develop too.

What I would like is for us to be able to travel all the way across Europe in the near future using just one engine, one set of carriages and one ticket.

**Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D).** – (PL) Mr President, I have endorsed the report, since in my opinion, the European Parliament should deal with the issue of rail transport more frequently and in a more concrete manner. At the moment, we have a situation where the state of the railway sector in Europe is not improving. It is worth noting that in just the last 10 years, the share of rail freight in Europe fell to 10%, while that of road freight has already exceeded 45%. Unfortunately, cross-European rail services are still encountering a multitude of financial, technical, legal and, regrettably, political obstacles.

I think that we have an opportunity to achieve progress in two areas. The first area concerns the increase in funding for rail transport, while the second involves the effective elimination of discrepancies between individual Member States. This report creates an opportunity to achieve such progress. Thank you.

**Carlo Fidanza (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the recast of the first railway package is of huge importance for creating a truly European railway area that is more competitive, modern and efficient. We certainly expected a more ambitious final text, given the rather timid stance taken by the Commission. We are taking away a more

effective national regulation structure, which must fully carry out its role of monitoring the market, as well as greater clarity on financial management.

We are handing back to the Commission the responsibility to present, by the end of next year, a new text on the separation between the infrastructure managers and the operator, and on opening up the market. I think that the liberalisation of the railway market – particularly opening up national markets to foreign operators – is a precondition for modernising Europe's rail system that will guarantee mobility for our citizens with the least disturbance possible and without creating competitive distortions between national markets.

I must draw some negative attention to the rejection of the amendment that sought to bring in a distinction between light maintenance and ordinary maintenance compared to heavy maintenance works. A maintenance centre must not be obligated to provide heavy maintenance services to all rail operators, because what is at stake here is responsibility and the principle of safety, which even recent accidents have shown to be a very sensitive issue for European rail transport. I hope that a more ambitious stance can be reached in the forthcoming negotiations with the Council.

**Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE).** – (ES) Mr President, I voted in favour because the first railway package was not complied with. The direct consequences were infringement proceedings against states and loss of competitiveness, effectiveness, sustainability and time.

Ten years later, the provisions are recast in the hope of creating a proper single railway area. We have agreed on greater liberalisation of the sector, better financing, greater transparency of costs and a strengthening of the national regulators. These will establish a European network and lead to the creation of a European regulator in the future.

I regret the fact that there is no provision in this document to separate the infrastructure manager from the service operators, even though there will be a later proposal, that the Council refused to include the correlation tables, despite the position of the Commission and Parliament, and that the majority groups rejected the possibility of including regional authorities, some of which have powers in this area.

This attitude turns its back on reality and, regrettably, I am certain that within 10 years this Parliament will include the regions in order to achieve the competitive, effective and sustainable European space which we all so desire, at least some of us.

**Erminia Mazzoni (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, I too voted in favour of this document, because I accept the argument that 'a general attempt at liberalisation is better than nothing', as per the headline of *Finanza e mercati*, a well-known Italian financial daily. As many of my fellow Members have said, this document could certainly have been more ambitious and gone further. It makes a stab at considering the guidelines brought in by the 2011 White Paper on transport, but does not manage to follow through; it fails to demonstrate courage as much as it could. As many other Members have pointed out, the rail transport sector has not grown at all since 2001, losing out to road transport which is now worryingly saturated. I think today's decision sees us take a step forward, above all by introducing new regulatory and financing systems for the transport system. However, there is still much to be done and, unfortunately, we will have to wait for the decisions of late 2012 for real liberalisation.

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, the traffic density on the roads continues to increase, and with it the stress suffered by car and lorry drivers. Neither does this bring us any closer to our goal of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Rail transport – both passenger and freight transport – must therefore be promoted and improved. For this reason, I also voted in favour of the motion. On the other hand, the expansion of the rail sector naturally brings with it not just advantages, but also new challenges and disadvantages – and noise pollution is clearly among these. We have made an important decision of principle here: that we also want to combat noise pollution effectively, using new rail track and new technology.

If rail transport is to survive in competition with other modes of transport, however, then we also need more competition within the sector. The demand for strong national regulatory authorities to control the rail sector is therefore a major success. European parochialism will get us nowhere here. European rail transport could represent a great opportunity, if we can overcome national egotism.

**Alfredo Antonozzi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the railway sector has always been something of a special case, where the competitive ethos of the single market and the European Union has taken root rather late. The deficiencies in the services that this sector offers to citizens are linked precisely to this lateness. I am convinced that more transparent and smoother conditions for accessing the market, together with explicit rules on conflicts of interest and discriminatory practices in the railway sector, will be the right measures to spur on greater competition.

I completely agree with the legislative proposal on the complete, mandatory separation between infrastructure managers and businesses operating the transport services, namely train companies. I invite the Commission to put forward concrete proposals on this within the pre-established timeframes.

I believe that the measures contained in the report will allow us to make it easier to provide train services, boosting the quality offered to passengers and people using freight services. Ms Serrachiani's report provides tangible responses to the request for greater liberalisation and competition in the railway sector and accordingly I have given it my full support.

**Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE).** – (SK) Mr President, here in the European Union we have been witnessing a decline in the share of freight carried by rail, while road haulage, which is less environmentally friendly, has increased to as much as 45.9%. The opening of the EU railway market involves reviewing and harmonising the laws on rail transport.

I firmly believe that the establishment of competitive railway services will require additional investment in the railway infrastructure, whereby the EU structural funds will only be one of many resources. The Member States and the EU must look at other sources of funding for European railway projects, encourage private investment and in particular make the railway market attractive to private investors by securing a transparent legal environment.

**Kay Swinburne (ECR).** – Mr President, whilst I can appreciate the vision of the rapporteur for a single European railway area when it concerns a single landmass, I believe that the proposed measures would inevitably create unnecessary regulatory burden for the rail industry throughout Europe, including those that would not benefit at all from being part of that single landmass. This is why I voted against this report.

This report excludes provision for an obligatory minimum service for rail companies in the case of strikes which, in my view, would be detrimental and not acceptable for European citizens.

In addition to this, it is envisaged that there would be a high level of involvement from the Commission. I cannot support the additional oversight over the work of national regulatory bodies and the creation, ultimately, of a European regulatory body for railways.

**Nicole Sinclaire (NI).** - Mr President, I voted against this report. Unbundling of infrastructure management and operation of transport services is good, but we already have that in the UK.

Calling for additional financing in Member States for a TEN-T is problematic at a time of economic crisis. In fact, in my country, the cost of a new high-speed rail link – HS2 – is causing such an outcry that the government is trying to portray the project as a domestic necessity, rather than part of an EU-wide project.

Even the UK state broadcaster, the BBC, seems to have fallen for this deception. The first railway package of 2001 was such a failure that the Commission had to take 13 Member States to the Court of Justice for failure to implement it properly. The truth is they probably could not afford to implement it properly.

Since 2001, the percentage of freight being moved by rail has actually fallen: the exact opposite of what this package is set to achieve.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is essential to halt the decline of rail transport and reform it with a particularly close eye on European citizens' right to mobility. Passenger trains must be adapted to transport disabled persons, decent and reasonably priced. It is therefore well worth establishing minimum quality standards for train carriages, ensuring respect of timetables and connections, and allowing free competition between operators in order to keep ticket prices under control.

We need to insist on the construction of massive European infrastructures for transporting freight and passengers at high speed. Given the positive outcome of sharing the costs of building the third pass – the Rotterdam corridor – and the high-speed Turin-Lyon corridor, as well as their inclusion among the ten big projects deemed essential by the European Union, it is crucial that the works begin as soon as possible.

With regard to the mandatory separation between infrastructure managers and historic railway operators, which traditionally own the infrastructure, compensating for the costs incurred is the right thing to do.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the free market environment remains unchanged compared to pre-existent legislation and includes all rail transport services, with the sole exception of passengers travelling within national borders.

The request that we have put forward with force moved towards the need to extend liberalisation to that market segment as soon as possible. The amendments made in this vein commit the Commission to submitting, not later than 2012, a suitable regulation on complete, mandatory separation between infrastructure managers and transport service providers, together with a proposal to extend liberalisation to passenger rail transport within national borders.

In a free-market context, which is the natural goal of the liberalisation process undertaken by Parliament, there can be no doubt that completely separate infrastructure managers is an essential pre-condition for the optimal functioning of competitive mechanisms. I also hope to see a liberalisation of delays, so that the delays that accumulate in some countries

like mine can be liberalised, extended and divided among all European countries; perhaps some of them, like Italy, would be able to improve their punctuality.

### **Motion for a resolution B7-0571/2011**

**Andrea Zanoni (ALDE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I voted in favour of the resolution on the forthcoming international United Nations conference in Durban because I think that the climate change challenges posed by global warming require, more than ever, extremely strong commitment from Europe.

Climate upheaval due to overheating is shown by irrefutable scientific proof and the consequent environmental, human and economic damage is now quite clear to everyone. This situation requires us to take fast, courageous decisions. Europe must retain a leading role in the fight against global overheating, committing to provide aid to other countries in terms of technology and resources. These financial resources must also be recovered through an international ‘Tobin tax’ on financial transactions.

The Durban conference must lead to a legally binding international agreement with tangible outcomes for the fight against global warming. Above all, it must produce a clear calendar with deadlines and precise commitments for all countries of the world. All countries must finally put collective interests above their own individual interests because either we make an effort, or we will all pay a very hefty price. These are tough, extremely important and essential decisions, because there is no plan B any more.

**Paul Murphy (GUE/NGL).** – Mr President, in 1949 in an article entitled ‘Why Socialism?’ Albert Einstein wrote: ‘We shall require a substantially new manner of thinking if Mankind is to survive’. The relevance of that idea today hits home when you look at the dire consequences of climate change and the threat to the future of our planet and humanity that it poses.

Then you look at the response of the capitalist establishment and the political leaders around the world and you have no new thinking, no sense of urgency. The world’s 21 developed economies and the European Commission publicly announced pledges of USD 28 billion in fast-track money after Copenhagen. Only USD 12 billion have so far been budgeted for, and as little as 30% has been delivered. If we are serious about tackling climate change, empty pledges are simply not good enough. We need a massive increase in internationally coordinated, patent-free, cooperative research and development into combating climate change.

Fundamentally, we need a new way of thinking about how we run our society and our economic system. Capitalism is a system. It is built on wastage and short-term profit. A so-called green economy built on the same logic of profit and competition will not solve climate change. We need socialist transformation of society. We need the massive resources that exist on our planet to be democratically planned in the interests of the majority and to protect our environment.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE).** – *(IT)* Mr President, the resolution voted upon this morning asks the European Union to arrive at the negotiating table with a commitment to reduce emissions by more than 20% by 2020, regardless of the result of the international negotiations.

As is well known, nobody thinks that a global agreement can be reached at Durban. The European Commission has declared that the earliest possible date for reaching a global

agreement could be 2015, and a transition period is in progress until then. I think that the international context means that it is not possible to go further than the pre-established goals. The European Union already has a post-2012 commitment, namely to reduce emissions by 20%, as per the energy and climate package.

The EU then confirms its willingness to sign up to a second period of commitments only as part of a transition towards a global climate treaty that involves an agreement from all countries on setting out a road map and a schedule. Ms Hedegaard herself has stated that it would be a strategic error for the European Union to sign up to a second Kyoto commitment without the other economies. Furthermore, it is well known that some large economies have already declared that they will not sign up to a Kyoto 2 agreement.

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, climate change has been a key political topic for some years now. It is obvious that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions need to be reduced.

I should like to make two comments regarding this, however. Firstly, I feel that it is completely wrong to focus essentially only on CO<sub>2</sub> as an indicator when looking at climate change. Climate change does not have only one cause, and therefore it cannot be combated simply by reducing CO<sub>2</sub>. In my opinion, we should instead be putting conservation of our natural resources at the heart of our agenda.

Secondly, there is little point in the European Union trying to achieve agreed targets if third countries are lagging far behind the targets they have set themselves. That is another problem we need to address.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE).** – (IT) Mr President, in December 2009, I took part in the 15th Conference of Parties at Copenhagen as an official member of Parliament's delegation. Around two years have passed and regretfully I can say that the work undertaken and the commitments taken in Copenhagen, which were then formalised in Cancún, will not be enough to limit the annual average temperature rise on Earth to two centigrade.

Some large polluting countries such as Japan and Russia seem to want to renege on the commitments taken, while others do not seem to be giving the climate change issue the correct level of priority. Today, although I am voting in favour, I am aware that only through a sizable and robust commitment from Heads of State or Government around the world will be able to create the conditions for a complete international agreement.

**Daniel Hannan (ECR).** - Mr President, the markets have withdrawn their confidence in the euro area, the bond spreads are widening, our economies are contracting, the Doom is almost upon us and here we are solemnly talking about these proposals massively to increase our debt and deficit and pour more money into this climate change project. It would be disastrous if we actually meant it, but of course what is really happening is an exercise in post-modern legislation: we are not using the law as an instrument of effecting real change; we are using the law as a way of showing what terribly nice people we are.

The rest of the world has made it clear that they have no intention of applying the targets being discussed at these UN conferences, but Europe still has this pious requirement that we pretend to mean it, even though we have no intention of implementing it.

Just ponder, though, that that might be why we are in this mess in the first place. Constantly using our constituents' money – because MEPs generally are exempt from national taxation – to show what terribly concerned and decent human beings we are has landed our

Continent in this debt crisis in the first place. More spending is not going to be the way out.

**Hynek Fajmon (ECR).** – (CS) Mr President, I voted against the resolution on the climate change conference in Durban. The world's climate has changed, is changing and will continue to change, regardless of human activity, and people have always adapted to the changing climate and will continue to adapt in the future, without costly central climate control from Brussels. So-called global warming, or what today tends to be referred to as climate change, cannot be a pretext to the adoption of global social engineering measures that will introduce new taxes, prohibit certain technology and subsidise other, supposedly green, technology. The cost of these measures are already huge and seriously hamper the economy of those States which have introduced them. We can see this after all in the constantly rising price of electricity in the European Union caused by the spiralling costs of renewable energy resources. It is absurd to continue this process, as the world just does not have the means to do so. In addition, this approach will not lead to the limitation of emissions on a global scale. I have therefore voted against this report.

### **Motion for a resolution B7-0574/2011**

**Syed Kamall (ECR).** – Mr President, whenever we have looked at the issue of development finance in the past, it has really been an exercise in taking the money from taxpayers in Europe, giving it to the wealthy elites of the developing countries and calling that direct budgetary support. Now is definitely the time for us to be far more imaginative and more targeted, but also let us not forget that if the governments withdraw from this role and we actually help entrepreneurs in the developing countries, there is a role for finance.

Let us look at an example: the Kiva website, which encourages people from all round the world to lend money directly to entrepreneurs in developing countries. When that money comes back, we lend again and we help take more people out of poverty than development aid often does.

Let us also look at the other issues and instruments, such as private equity, which is responsible for about 12.5% of South Africa's GDP. Unfortunately, when we had a debate on the Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive, there was a move to prevent investors in the European Union investing in funds outside the EU that invested in the development of these countries. Let us make sure that we are consistent on this and we really want to help finance development.

### **Written explanations of vote**

#### **Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0375/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D),** *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Ireland. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. Ireland has requested assistance in respect of 4 866 workers made redundant from 1 482 enterprises involved in the construction of buildings. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 12 689 838.

**Regina Bastos (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist

in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which has been an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support for those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. That is why I voted for this report on the mobilisation of EUR 12 689 838 from the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 1 482 enterprises operating in Division 41 ('construction of buildings'), in the regions of Border, Midlands and Western, and Southern and Eastern.

**George Becali (NI)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted in support of the assistance required by almost 5 000 people made redundant in Ireland. Parliament's request to simplify the procedures and speed up the process of awarding grants is fully justified by the current situation. The fact that this is already the 19th application due to be examined confirms the need to speed up the process.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The application to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in question is part of a broader request by Ireland totalling EUR 35 741 805 for 5 987 redundancies targeted for assistance in 3 272 enterprises operating in the construction sector. More specifically, the application in question, 'Construction 41', requests the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 12 689 838 from the EGF for Ireland in relation to 3 205 redundancies targeted for assistance. Since it does not present any critical issues and it fulfils the eligibility criteria laid down, I voted in favour of this report.

**John Bufton (EFD)**, *in writing*. – Although I have great sympathy for those 6000 redundant workers from 300 companies active in construction, architecture, engineering and technical testing in Ireland, I cannot support this report. I believe that UK taxpayers' money, which provides a significant contribution to the EU and thus Global Adjustment Fund budget, is better concentrated on providing jobs for unemployed workers in the UK. Unemployment in the UK continues to rise to unexpected levels. Many of our heavy industries have shut down and our workforce is inundated with EU migrants. Many Brits have lost their jobs in industries that have relocated to other EU countries under EU law to then find that their contributions as taxpayers are being spent by the EU in assisting unemployed people in Ireland. As unemployment continues to rise in the UK, particularly blighting some of the former mining towns in Wales, I cannot justify assenting to aid newly unemployed workers abroad when long-term unemployed people continue to suffer in communities in my constituency. I was elected to support them and make sure their interests are properly represented therefore I cannot agree to that kind of use of British taxpayers' money.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Given the various repercussions that Ireland has suffered owing to its vulnerability in the face of the financial crisis caused by mortgage lending in the US and structural changes in the patterns of world trade, I believed it important to vote for this report, which will provide vital one-off, time-limited assistance to workers who have been made redundant. Furthermore, I believe in the purpose for which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been mobilised, to a total of EUR 12 689 838 for Ireland. This support for the reintegration into Ireland's labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis is vital

in order to safeguard 3 205 redundancies which occurred in 1 482 companies in Division 41.

Of the package of measures proposed by the Commission, I would like to emphasise, in particular, two which are imperative, namely occupational guidance, whereby one-to-one occupational counselling sessions will be arranged for redundant workers in order to give them advice on steps to be taken towards a return to employment; and also vocational and second-level education and training programmes and income supports, which will be developed for the retraining that is increasingly important in the context of increasing competitiveness in a more globalised world.

**Mário David (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I am voting for this report, as the Irish application has been made within the framework of the support provided for in the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). The EGF is aimed at supporting workers affected by major structural changes in world trade and assisting their reintegration into the labour market. I also hope the EGF will be mobilised swiftly, and that it will have the desired effect, so as to lessen the psychological, social and economic impact on the affected workers.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted for this proposal, as I believe it will make a useful contribution to reducing the high unemployment rates in Ireland. Following the international global financial crisis, demand for labour in the Irish civil construction sector has fallen by around half, and the sector is not expected to recover quickly. In view of this, it is important to contribute to the retraining of some of the country's workforce, and it makes perfect sense to use the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to this end.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The Irish civil construction industry has been affected by the crisis, with 4 866 workers made redundant from 1 482 companies in the sector. Ireland is one of the countries currently experiencing a serious financial and economic crisis, which originated from the mortgage credit problems in the US and affected Irish banks. It therefore merits particular attention and solidarity from other Member States, in particular as regards aid provided to its workers.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The low wage policy practised in some regions of the world has not only caused many EU companies to relocate, but has also caused others to go out of business. This situation has occurred in the civil construction sector in Ireland.

This report concerns a proposal for decision by the European Parliament and the Council on the mobilisation of EUR 12 689 838 from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), with the aim of supporting the reintegration of Irish workers made redundant as a result of the current economic and financial crisis. This application, the 19th to be examined within the framework of the 2011 EU budget, was submitted by Ireland on 9 June 2010, and concerns 4 866 redundancies from 1 482 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 41, in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02). Given that this involves a specific budgetary instrument, and that the amount requested is legally acceptable and complies with the proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Ireland, I am voting for this proposal, and I hope that it contributes to rapidly improving the economic conditions in that region.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) With this report, Parliament is giving the green light to a proposal to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), whose purpose is also to benefit Ireland by supporting the reintegration of workers made

redundant as a result of the economic and financial crisis. It relates to 4 866 redundancies, 3 205 of which are targeted for assistance, in 1 482 enterprises operating in Division 41 ('construction of buildings') in two contiguous regions, which comprise the entire Republic of Ireland. No matter how many of these applications there are, we are bound to express our regret that, in each case, much could and should have been done to prevent them.

Once again, although we support the mobilisation of the EGF to help workers who have been made redundant, we would stress that this is a mere palliative that does not solve, as is necessary, the root causes of this wave of redundancies. These causes are inextricably linked to the policies of the EU, which is bringing the crisis upon itself, as we have been saying for a long time. It is imperative that these policies be changed to prioritise growth and development and job creation, rather than the irrational criteria of the Stability and Growth Pact.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** With this report, Parliament is giving the green light to a proposal to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), whose purpose is also to benefit Ireland by supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant as a result of the economic and financial crisis. It relates to 4 866 redundancies, 3 205 of which are targeted for assistance, in 1 482 enterprises operating in Division 41 ('construction of buildings') in two contiguous regions, which comprise the entire Republic of Ireland.

This was another case of redundancies that we regretted, but we voted for the mobilisation of the EGF to support the workers who are the victims of these redundancies.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D), in writing. – (SK)** Point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission allows the release of funds from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) using the flexibility instrument within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million beyond the relevant rounds of the financial framework. On 9 May 2010, Ireland submitted request No EGF/2010/019 IE/Construction 41 because of redundancies in 1 482 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 41 (Construction) in the NUTS II Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02) regions. These two neighbouring regions constitute the entire Irish state. The request is one of three submitted for the construction industry in Ireland. After carefully considering the requests, the Commission has come to the conclusion that they meet the condition for a financial contribution. I also firmly believe that in the light of the above circumstances, the request should be granted.

**Jim Higgins (PPE), in writing. – (GA)** I welcome this money to provide retraining to those who are unemployed as a result of the economic crisis. We must look at the structure of this scheme, however, because it is not flexible enough at present.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD), in writing. – (LT)** The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Ireland in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. I welcomed this document because this particular case relates to the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States in mid-2007. As a small export-oriented economy, Ireland suffered from the effects of the credit crunch on its major trading partners. The credit crunch severely affected the banks

in Ireland, with further effects on mortgage loans and the construction sector. The Commission therefore proposes to mobilise an amount of EUR 12 689 838.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted to give the green light to the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist workers in Ireland made redundant due to the downturn of the construction industry.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I welcome the decision by the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to allocate EUR 12 689 838 to Ireland in assisting this case concerning 4 866 redundancies in the construction sector. One of the major challenges facing the construction industry nowadays is the need to diversify and develop new skill sets. This fund, designed to assist with retraining and back to work programmes, will be a welcome step in the right direction for the workers directly affected by the financial crisis.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur in the context of globalisation.

More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers' rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU countries in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Ireland, which has applied for assistance with regard to 4 866 cases of redundancy, 3 205 of which are targeted for assistance, at 1 482 enterprises operating in the NACE Revision 2 Division 48 ('construction of buildings') in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), in Ireland. These two contiguous regions comprise the entire Republic of Ireland.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – This is the nineteenth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 12 689 838 from the EGF for Ireland. It concerns 4 866 redundancies, 3 205 targeted for assistance, in 1 482 enterprises operating in the field of construction in Ireland, during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. It is necessary to help Ireland, but the criteria of the fund should be amended to make it available in Latvia. I am in favour.

**Andreas Mølzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund provides additional support to workers across Europe who are suffering the effects of major structural changes in world trade patterns. It finances measures such as occupational orientation and further training programmes, but also new businesses and helping people into self-employment. In the Commission's assessment, the application from Ireland – where the construction industry has taken a severe battering as a result of the financial crisis – meets the eligibility criteria set out in the Regulation establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, and it is recommending to the budgetary authority that the application be approved. This will fully utilise the reinforcement of budget line 04 05 01 and, in accordance with the Regulation establishing the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, more than a quarter of the annual maximum amount of the fund will remain available to cover needs arising in the last four months of 2011. The Fund can be utilised up to an annual upper limit of EUR 500 million. I am in favour of this use of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcome this decision to allocate support to Ireland's construction sector because this sector has been hit particularly badly by the economic and financial crisis. In order to mitigate the negative impact of globalisation, the funding available from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund needs to be used in a targeted manner. It is very important to ensure that assistance for workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible. I believe that the amount allocated is sufficient to mitigate the consequences of mass redundancy in the construction sector and will create favourable conditions for workers in this sector who have suffered to return to the labour market.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade.

On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the 19th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of the total sum of EUR 12 689 838 from the EGF for Ireland, with regard to 4 866 redundancies, 3 205 of which are targeted for assistance, from 1 482 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 41 ('construction of buildings'), in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), in Ireland, during the nine-month reference period between 1 July 2009 and 31 March 2010. As all of the requirements necessary to apply this financial assistance mechanism have been met, I voted for this report.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Given that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns, the proposal to mobilise the fund for Ireland stems from the need to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. In light of the above and in view of the importance of the proposal for a decision in question, I voted for the proposal for a decision since it can provide for measures for occupational guidance, training programmes and associated training allowances and redundant apprentice on- and off-the-job training and support.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The application submitted by Ireland for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 4 866 redundancies, 3 205 of which are targeted for assistance, in 1 482 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 41 ('construction of buildings'), in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. This application is related to the mortgage crisis, which severely affected Irish banks, with further effects on the construction sector.

According to the Commission's assessment, this application meets all of the legally established eligibility criteria. Indeed, EGF involvement in situations like this is provided for in the EGF Regulation, in which, as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis, there are 'at least 500 redundancies over a period of nine months, particularly in small or medium-sized enterprises, in a NACE 2 division in one region or two contiguous

regions at NUTS II level'. I therefore voted for this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I would like to congratulate Ms Matera on her excellent work, considering that this application for mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is the nineteenth proposal submitted to the Budget Authority in 2011 alone. This time, the EU applicant country is Ireland, which calls for the EGF to be activated in three applications put to the vote this morning: the first for assistance in relation to 4 866 redundancies – 3 205 targeted for assistance – in enterprises operating in the 'construction of buildings' division; the second for 842 redundancies – 554 targeted for assistance – in enterprises operating in architectural and engineering activities; and the third for 3 382 redundancies – 2 228 targeted for assistance – in enterprises also operating in specialised construction activities. Among the various crises that have hit Europe's economy over the last three years, one of the deepest and longest-lasting (as demonstrated once again today), and most difficult to overcome, is the crisis in the construction industry. The recession has affected, and is still affecting, the construction market.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 established the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy. With a budget of EUR 500 million for 2011, the Commission believes that EUR 6 598 378 should be made available for Ireland, so that it can address the 4 866 redundancies at 1 482 enterprises in the subsector of construction of buildings located in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western and of Southern and Eastern.

I also believe all procedures should be sped up, in order that the redundant workers might have quick access to vocational training that will enable their quick and effective reintegration into the labour market.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in favour of Ireland, in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. The application concerns 4 866 redundancies in 1 482 enterprises located in two contiguous regions which comprise together the entire State of Ireland. Almost 80% of the enterprises are located in the Southern and Eastern region, while the remaining 20% are located in the Border, Midlands and Western region. The redundancies were made during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. In the wake of the economic and financial crisis and of the closure of numerous SMEs in the construction industry, which enjoyed steady growth for a decade, the unemployment rate in this sector soared by 19% between 2009 and 2010. Furthermore, Ireland has an export-oriented economy, which resulted in the credit crunch which, in turn, seriously affected the mortgage loans market and, consequently, the building sector. This is why we advocate the mobilisation of the EGF in support of the Irish workers made redundant so that they are reintegrated into the labour market.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) In the wake of the economic crisis many small and medium-sized enterprises that were operating in the construction industry have had to close down in Ireland. The building trade was booming before the crisis and made

a not insignificant contribution to Irish GDP; as a result of the present closures, 4 866 workers have lost their jobs within a period of months. Among those affected were 669 apprentices. The further training measures have been coordinated with the local social partners and educational institutions, and are being sensibly invested in growth areas such as environmental technology. I voted in favour because the collapse in this sector could potentially have substantial effects on other parts of Ireland's economy, which is only now beginning to stabilise to some extent.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the application for mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) submitted by Ireland on 9 June 2010. At a time of economic crisis, perhaps without precedent, I feel that it is right to approve the allocation of funds necessary to fulfil the requests for mobilisation submitted by Ireland, such as the one in the text in question, as well as those submitted by other countries when conditions have been satisfied.

**Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0377/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Ireland. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. Ireland has requested assistance in respect of 842 workers made redundant from 230 enterprises involved in architectural and engineering activities and in the areas of technical testing and analysis. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 1 387 819.

**Regina Bastos (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which has been an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support for those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. That is why I voted for this report on the mobilisation of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 230 enterprises operating in Division 71 ('architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis'), in the regions of Border, Midlands and Western, and Southern and Eastern.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The application to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in question is part of a broader request by Ireland totalling EUR 35 741 805 for 5 987 redundancies targeted for assistance in 3 272 enterprises operating in the construction sector. More specifically, the application in question, 'Construction 71', requests the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for Ireland in relation to 554 redundancies targeted for assistance. Since it does not present any critical issues and it fulfils the eligibility criteria laid down, I voted in favour of this report.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Given the various repercussions that Ireland has suffered owing to its vulnerability in the face of the financial crisis due to mortgage lending

in the US and structural changes in the patterns of world trade, I believed it important to vote for this report, which will provide vital one-off, time-limited assistance to workers who have been made redundant. Furthermore, I believe in the purpose for which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund will be mobilised, to a total of EUR 1 387 819 for Ireland. This support for the reintegration into Ireland's labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis is vital in order to safeguard 554 workers made redundant from 230 companies in Division 71.

Of the package of measures proposed by the Commission, I would like to emphasise in particular two which are imperative, namely occupational guidance, whereby one-to-one occupational counselling sessions will be arranged for redundant workers in order to give them advice on steps to be taken towards a return to employment; and also vocational and second-level education and training programmes and income supports, which will be developed for the retraining that is increasingly important in the context of increasing competitiveness in a world that is also increasingly globalised.

**Mário David (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Like the position that I took in relation to Report A7-0375/2011, I am voting for this report, as the Irish application has been made within the framework of the support provided for in the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). I would reiterate that the EGF is aimed at supporting workers affected by major structural changes in world trade and assisting their reintegration into the labour market. I also hope the EGF will be mobilised swiftly, and that it will have the desired effect, so as to lessen the psychological, social and economic impact on the affected workers.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted for this proposal, as I believe it will make a useful contribution to reducing the high unemployment rates in Ireland. Following the international financial crisis, of which the crisis in the Irish construction sector is a by-product, engineering and architecture activities fell in unprecedented ways. Since the sector is not expected to recover quickly, it seems reasonable for the EU to promote retraining and reintegration for this unemployed workforce.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The crisis in the construction sector in Ireland, which has affected companies and workers throughout the country, cannot but impact related activities, such as engineering and architecture, which have also been hit by the international crisis and exacerbated by the crisis in the euro area. There are 554 workers expecting to benefit from the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. I hope this can be granted in the shortest possible timeframe, so as to be as effective as possible in helping the workers, and without them being penalised because of a delay in the funds being made available.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Having seen the severe social impact of the current economic and financial crisis, the EU created the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) to provide additional assistance to workers affected by changes in the structure of global trade.

On 9 June 2010, Ireland submitted an application, case application EGF/2010/021 IE/Construction 71, based on Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation, supplemented by additional information up to 17 June 2011. On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision, the 21st under the 2011 budget, on the mobilisation of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for Ireland in order to support the reintegration of 842 workers made redundant at 230 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 71, in the regions of Border, Midland and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), in

Ireland. As this is a properly substantiated proposal in legal terms, which is necessary to meet the financial requirements for the EGF's implementation in this region of Ireland, there is nothing that stands in the way of its adoption, as far as I am concerned.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This is yet another case of the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) and, once again, it is for a country with a so-called 'bailout programme', namely Ireland. This is the 21st application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for 842 redundancies, 554 of which are potential beneficiaries of assistance, at 230 enterprises in Division 71 ('architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis'), also between 2009 and 2010.

This succession of applications for mobilisation of the EGF – in other words, this succession of mass redundancies – should be enough to ring alarm bells in the EU institutions. There is a need to change policy, with every effort being made to create jobs, not to destroy them with recessive policies, as has happened in several countries, above all in those being targeted by the programmes of the International Monetary Fund and EU, like Portugal and Ireland.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) In this instance, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is also being mobilised for Ireland. On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis.

This is the 21st application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of the total sum of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for Ireland, for 842 redundancies, 554 of which are targeted for assistance, from 230 enterprises in Division 71 ('architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis'), also between 2009 and 2010. The application was submitted to the Commission on 9 June 2010 and supplemented by additional information up to 17 June 2011. It was based on the criteria for intervention set out in Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation, which requires at least 500 redundancies over a nine-month period in enterprises operating in the same NACE Revision 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level in a Member State.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (SK) The European Union has established appropriate legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional assistance to workers who are feeling the impact of the major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to help them return to the labour market. In accordance with the joint announcement of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, EU financial assistance for the workers made redundant should be made available as quickly and effectively as possible. Ireland has made a request in respect of 842 redundancies (the aid applies to 554 of them) in 230 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 71 (Architecture and engineering activities: technical testing and analysis) in the NUTS II Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02) regions. These two neighbouring regions constitute the whole territory of Ireland. As the request meets the eligibility criteria set out in the regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) and the conditions for a financial appropriation under Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 have been met, the financial assistance should be made available to Ireland. (brief presentation)

**Jim Higgins (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (GA) I welcome this money to provide retraining to those who are unemployed as a result of the economic crisis. We must look at the structure of this scheme, however, because it is not flexible enough at present.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. On 5 October 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Ireland in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. I welcomed this document because this particular case relates to the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States in mid-2007. As an export-oriented economy, Ireland suffered from the effects of the credit crunch on its major trading partners. The credit crunch severely affected the banks in Ireland, with further effects on mortgage loans and the construction sector. The Commission therefore proposes to mobilise an amount of EUR 1 387 819.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted to give the green light to the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist 842 workers in Ireland made redundant due to the economic downturn.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this report and welcome the support provided by the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund in the sum of EUR 1 387 819 to the specialised construction industry. These funds will provide much-needed assistance to those made redundant in this sector as a result of the global economic crisis.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur in the context of globalisation. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers' rights.

The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU countries in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Ireland, which has applied for assistance with regard to 842 redundancies, 554 of which are targeted for assistance, at 230 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 71 ('architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis') in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), in Ireland. These two contiguous regions comprise the entire Republic of Ireland.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – This is the twenty first application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for Ireland. It concerns 842 redundancies, 554 targeted for assistance, in 230 enterprises operating in the field of Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis in Ireland, during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. It is necessary to help Ireland, but the criteria of the fund should be amended to make it available in Latvia. I am in favour.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) In order to mitigate the negative impact of globalisation, the funding available from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund

needs to be used in a targeted manner. It is very important to ensure that assistance for workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible. I welcome the decision to allocate assistance to Ireland in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. I believe that the amount allocated is sufficient to mitigate the consequences of mass redundancy, will create favourable conditions for workers who have suffered to return to the labour market and will enable other active labour market measures to be implemented. This assistance will cover the costs of job search, training and retraining and the promotion of entrepreneurship and will effectively halt the spread of unemployment in the country. Moreover, redundant workers who have received assistance will be encouraged to find work for themselves and take up employment as soon as possible.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade. On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the 21st application to be examined within the framework of the budget for 2011, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 1 387 819 from the EGF for Ireland, with regard to 842 redundancies, 554 of which are targeted for assistance, from 230 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 71 (architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis), in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), in Ireland, during the nine-month reference period between 1 July 2009 and 31 March 2010. As all of the requirements necessary to apply this financial assistance mechanism have been met, I voted for this report.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE),** *in writing.* – (IT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. As a small export-oriented economy, Ireland suffered from the effects of the credit crunch on its major trading partners as a result of the financial crisis, which in this particular case is related to the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States in mid-2007. Given that the credit crunch severely affected the banks in Ireland, with further effects on mortgage loans and building activity in the country, I voted for the proposal for a decision on mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Ireland.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D),** *in writing.* – I am delighted that the European Parliament today cleared the payment of this money, which will assist almost 6 000 construction workers who have lost jobs in the wake of the Irish banking crisis. Our economic collapse had a particularly dramatic affect on the construction sector as the previous government had adopted an unsustainable development model. Roughly half the jobs in the construction sector between 2007 and 2010 were lost, so this money is a critical lifeline to those workers, renewing their hopes of finding employment again. This funding can be used for retraining and upskilling, occupational guidance or support for self-employment and enterprise creation. This can also include support to part-time students or apprentices. Together with the share contributed by the Irish Government, the funding for construction workers adds up to EUR 55 million and is also a welcome development in that it mobilises resources to assist workers from small and medium-size companies. I believe our government will keep in mind the mediocre management of EGF monies by the previous administration, and

manage the programmes in a timely fashion, so as to get the best value for the money and avoid loss of funding due to missed deadlines.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The application submitted by Ireland for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 842 redundancies, 554 of which are targeted for assistance, in 230 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 71 ('architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis'), in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. This application is related to the mortgage crisis, which severely affected Irish banks, with further effects on the construction sector.

According to the Commission's assessment, this application meets all of the legally established eligibility criteria. Indeed, EGF involvement in situations like this is provided for in the EGF Regulation, in which, as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis, there are 'at least 500 redundancies over a period of nine months, particularly in small or medium-sized enterprises, in a NACE 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level'. I therefore voted for this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 established the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy.

I am voting for the report as I am concerned about the 842 redundancies at 230 enterprises in the subsectors of architectural and engineering activities, technical testing and analysis, located in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western, and Southern and Eastern. I believe that the sum of EUR 1 387 819 should be granted quickly to this application, case EGF/2010/021 IE/Construction 71, and that the Commission should support workers made redundant as a result of the mortgage crisis in the US in mid-2007, which has affected Irish exports.

I would also stress that a simple, rapid and efficient procedure should be adopted for approving decisions on the mobilisation of the EGF, in order to provide one-off, time-limited individual support geared towards helping workers made redundant as a result of globalisation and the financial and economic crisis.

#### **Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0376/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Ireland. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. Ireland has requested assistance in respect of 3 382 workers made redundant from 1 560 enterprises involved in specialised construction activities. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 21 664 148.

**Regina Bastos (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade, and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has

been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which has been an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support for those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. That is why I voted for this report on the mobilisation of EUR 21 644 148 from the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 1 560 enterprises operating in Division 43 ('specialised construction activities'), in the regions of Border, Midlands and Western, and Southern and Eastern.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD),** *in writing.* – (IT) The application to mobilise the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in question is part of a broader request by Ireland totalling EUR 35 741 805 for 5 987 redundancies targeted for assistance in 3 272 enterprises operating in the construction sector. More specifically, the application in question, 'Construction 43', requests the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 21 664 148 from the EGF for Ireland in relation to 2 228 redundancies targeted for assistance. Since it does not present any critical issues and it fulfils the eligibility criteria laid down, I voted in favour of this report.

**John Bufton (EFD),** *in writing.* – Although I have great sympathy for those 6000 redundant workers from 300 companies active in construction, architecture, engineering and technical testing in Ireland, I can not support this report. I believe that UK taxpayers' money, which provides a significant contribution to the EU and thus Global Adjustment Fund budget, is better concentrated on providing jobs for unemployed workers in the UK. Unemployment in the UK continues to rise to unexpected levels. Many of our heavy industries have shut down and our workforce is inundated with EU migrants. Many of Brits have lost their jobs in industries that have relocated to other EU countries under EU law to then find that their contributions as taxpayers are being spent by the EU in assisting unemployed people in Ireland. As unemployment continues to rise in the UK, particularly blighting some of the former mining towns in Wales, I cannot justify assenting to aid newly unemployed workers abroad when long-term unemployed people continue to suffer in communities in my constituency. I was elected to support them and make sure their interests are properly represented therefore I cannot agree to that kind of use of British taxpayers' money.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) Given the various repercussions that Ireland has suffered owing to its vulnerability in the face of the financial crisis due to mortgage lending in the US and structural changes in the patterns of world trade, I believed it important to vote for this report, which will provide vital one-off, time-limited assistance to workers who have been made redundant. Furthermore, I believe in the purpose for which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund will be mobilised, to a total of EUR 21 664 148 for Ireland. This support for the reintegration into Ireland's labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis is vital in order to safeguard 2 228 redundancies in 1 560 companies in Division 43.

Of the package of measures proposed by the Commission, I would like to emphasise in particular two which are imperative, namely occupational guidance, whereby one-to-one occupational counselling sessions will be arranged for redundant workers in order to give them advice on steps to be taken towards a return to employment; and also vocational and second-level education and training programmes and income support, which will be

developed for the retraining that is increasingly important in the context of growing competitiveness in an increasingly globalised world.

**Mário David (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Like the position that I took in relation to Report A7-0375/2011 and Report A7-0377/2011, I am voting for this report, as the Irish application has been made within the framework of the support provided for in the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). I would once again reiterate that the EGF is aimed at supporting workers affected by major structural changes in world trade and assisting their reintegration into the labour market. I also hope the EGF will be mobilised swiftly, and that it will have the desired effect, so as to lessen the psychological, social and economic impact on the affected workers.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted for this proposal, as I believe it will make a useful contribution to reducing the high unemployment rate in Ireland. Following the severe global financial crisis, the demand for labour in the Irish civil construction sector fell by around half, and this sector is not expected to recover quickly. In view of this, it is important to help the retraining of some of the country's unemployed workforce, and this justifies the use of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) In the broader context of civil construction, specialised construction activities have not been spared in the economic and financial crisis currently raging in Ireland. In fact, 3 382 workers have lost their jobs. Of these, 2 228 are targeted for assistance from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). I hope that Ireland, like Portugal, Greece and other countries in difficulty, will be able to respond adequately to the problems that it is facing, and that the EGF will be an effective means of helping its workers at a particularly difficult time. It is therefore necessary that the EGF be mobilised in time, and that its use be adequate and proportional to situations of unemployment confirmed to have taken place.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This is yet another report on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), this time for Ireland. This is the 20th application to be examined under the 2011 budget, and it refers to the mobilisation of a total of EUR 21 664 148 from the EGF. The application relates to 3 382 redundancies, 2 228 of which are targeted for assistance, in 1 560 enterprises operating in Division 43 ('specialised construction activities') during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009.

It is situations like this that, in the country that they have been touting as a success story and is one of the victim countries of the programmes of the International Monetary Fund and EU, have led to tens of thousands of people leaving the country every week in search of work elsewhere. This is reminiscent of other waves of emigration which took place in other dark periods in Ireland's history.

The Irish Government says that the credit crisis has severely affected Ireland's banks, with further effects on mortgage loans and construction activity in the country. When the crisis hit, the share of those employed in construction in Ireland dropped from 12.25% in the fourth quarter of 2007 to 9.2% in the first quarter of 2009 and 6.25% in the third quarter of 2010.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This time, the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is also being mobilised for Ireland. On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for

Ireland, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis.

This is the 20th application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 21 664 148 from the EGF for Ireland. This application relates to 3 382 redundancies, 2 228 of which are targeted for assistance, at 1 560 enterprises in Division 43 ('specialised construction activities'), during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009. The application was submitted to the Commission on 9 June 2010 and supplemented by additional information up to 17 June 2011.

The Irish Government says that the credit crisis has severely affected Ireland's banks, with further effects on mortgage loans and construction activity in the country. When the crisis hit, the share of those employed in construction in Ireland dropped from 12.25% in the fourth quarter of 2007 to 9.2% in the first quarter of 2009 and 6.25% in the third quarter of 2010.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission allows the release of funds from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) using the flexibility instrument within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million beyond the relevant rounds of the financial framework. The European Union has set up appropriate legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to help them return to the labour market. In June 2010, Ireland submitted request No EGF/2010/20 IE/Construction 43 for financial assistance from the EGF because of redundancies in 1 560 enterprises (3 328 redundant workers, with the assistance allocated to 2 288 of them) operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 43 (Construction) in the two Irish NUTS II regions, Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02). The request is one of three submitted for the building industry in Ireland. After careful consideration of these requests, the Commission has come to the conclusion that they meet the conditions for a financial contribution and that the request should be granted.

**Jim Higgins (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (GA) I welcome this money to provide retraining to those who are unemployed as a result of the economic crisis. We must look at the structure of this scheme, however, because it is not flexible enough at present.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. On 5 October 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Ireland in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. I welcomed this document because this particular case relates to the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States in mid-2007. As a small export-oriented economy, Ireland suffered from the effects of the credit crunch on its major trading partners. The credit crunch severely affected the banks in Ireland, with further effects on mortgage loans and the construction sector. The Commission therefore proposes to mobilise an amount of EUR 21 664 148.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted to give the green light to the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist 3 382 workers in Ireland who have been made redundant due to the downturn in the construction industry.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this report, by which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has allocated substantial support, some EUR 21 664 148, to Ireland. I welcome this decision to allocate funds to support Irish workers in the sectors of architectural and engineering activities and technical testing and analysis made redundant as a direct result of the global financial crisis. This fund, designed to assist with retraining and back to work programmes, will be a welcome step in the right direction for redundant workers looking to diversify and develop new skill sets.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur in the context of globalisation. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers' rights. The EGF aims to help workers who are victims of the relocation of companies, and it is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU countries in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Ireland, which has applied for assistance with regard to 3 382 redundancies, of which 2 228 are targeted for assistance, at 1 560 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 43 ('specialised construction activities') in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02).

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – This is the twentieth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 21 664 148 from the EGF for Ireland. It concerns 3 382 redundancies, 2 228 targeted for assistance, in 1 560 enterprises operating in the field of Specialised construction activities in Ireland, during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. It is necessary to help Ireland, but the criteria of the fund should be amended to make it available in Latvia. I am in favour.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcome the decision to allocate support to Ireland because this country's construction sector has been hit particularly badly by the economic and financial crisis and hundreds of workers have been made redundant as a result. I believe that the amount allocated is sufficient to mitigate the consequences of mass redundancy, will create favourable conditions for workers who have suffered to return to the labour market and will enable other active labour market measures to be implemented. Moreover, it is very important to ensure that redundant workers who have received assistance are encouraged to find work for themselves and take up employment as quickly as possible. The assistance must therefore be dynamic and made available efficiently so that it covers the costs of job search, training and retraining and the promotion of entrepreneurship, and effectively halts the spread of unemployment in the country.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade.

On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Ireland, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the 20th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of the total sum of EUR 21 664 148 from the EGF for Ireland, with regard to 3 382 redundancies, 2 228 of which are targeted for assistance,

from 1 560 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 43 ('specialised construction activities'), in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), in Ireland, during the nine-month reference period between 1 July 2009 and 31 March 2010. As all of the requirements necessary to apply this financial assistance mechanism have been met, I voted for this report.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Given that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns, the proposal to mobilise the fund for Ireland stems from the need to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. In light of the above and in view of the importance of the proposal for a decision in question, I voted for the proposal for a decision since it can provide for measures for occupational guidance, training programmes and associated training allowances and redundant apprentice on- and off-the-job training and support.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The application submitted by Ireland for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 3 382 redundancies, 2 228 of which are targeted for assistance, in 1 560 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 43 ('specialised construction activities'), in the NUTS II regions of Border, Midlands and Western (IE01) and Southern and Eastern (IE02), during the nine-month reference period from 1 July 2009 to 31 March 2010. This request is related to the mortgage crisis, which has severely affected Irish banks, with further effects on the construction sector. According to the Commission's assessment, this application meets all of the legally established eligibility criteria. Indeed, EGF involvement in situations like this is provided for in the EGF Regulation, in which, as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis, there are 'at least 500 redundancies over a period of nine months, particularly in small or medium-sized enterprises, in a NACE 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level'. I therefore voted for this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 established the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy. I fully support this report, as it is important to safeguard the economic and social conditions for 3 382 workers made redundant as a result of the closure of 1 560 enterprises in the subsector of specialised construction activities. Given that this application complies with the requirements for determining the financial contributions as laid down in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, I agree with the mobilisation of EUR 21 664 148. I would also stress that the EGF should not be a substitute for the legal and financial responsibilities of the enterprises mentioned in case EGF/2010/020 IE/Construction 43, but rather an additional support granted by the EU in order to reduce the social difficulties that these workers will face.

#### **Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0379/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Austria. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. Austria has requested assistance in respect of

2 338 workers made redundant from 706 enterprises involved in land transport and transport via pipelines. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 3 643 770.

**Regina Bastos (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which has been an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support for those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. That is why I voted for this report on the mobilisation of EUR 3 643 770 from the EGF for Austria, with the aim of supporting workers made redundant from 706 enterprises operating in Division 49 ('land transport and transport via pipelines'), in the regions of Niederösterreich and Oberösterreich.

**George Becali (NI)**, *in writing.* – (RO) With regard to this report, I voted in support of the rapporteur's proposal to make available the EUR 3.6 million required to assist the 2 338 persons made redundant in the land transport and transport via pipelines sector in Austria.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is an instrument intended to assist the reintegration of workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the ongoing process of globalisation of world markets. This fund supports workers and does not aim to benefit the business that made the redundancies in any way. With regard to mobilisation of the fund for the case in question, I voted in favour since it does not present any critical issues and it fulfils the eligibility criteria laid down. Austria has requested the mobilisation of EUR 3 643 770 for 502 workers targeted for assistance operating in the 'land transport and transport via pipelines' sector.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Given the various repercussions that Austria has suffered owing to its vulnerability in the face of the financial crisis and structural changes in the patterns of world trade, I believed it important to vote for this report, which will provide vital one-off, time-limited assistance to workers who have been made redundant. I believe in the purpose for which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund will be mobilised, to a total of EUR 3 643 770 for Austria. This support for the reintegration into Austria's labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis is vital in order to safeguard 502 redundancies in 706 companies in Division 49. Of the package of measures proposed by the Commission, I would like to emphasise in particular two which are imperative, namely with regard to occupational orientation, whereby sessions are organised for the development of skills with a view to broadening career prospects, and also small classes on entrepreneurship; and one-week internships in enterprises in the sector, which are essential in order to face a world that is increasingly competitive and where redefining or updating one's professional profile can make the difference.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The marked downturn in the freight business in Austria has suffered a sharp increase, leading to 2 338 workers in the sector being made redundant in the regions of Niederösterreich and Oberösterreich. This reduction is all the

more worrying in terms of the relatively central role that this country plays in the EU context, which would suggest that its freight activity could have been safe from the economic downturn currently being experienced. However, it appears that this is not the case, and that Austria's workers and companies have been hit hard by the crisis. I hope the workers affected will be able to find new jobs as soon as possible, and that the Austrian freight industry, like those of the other Member States, will once again thrive and transport European products to markets inside and outside the EU.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This report, drafted by Ms Matera, concerns the proposal for a regulation of Parliament and the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (application EGF/2011/001 AT/Niederösterreich-Oberösterreich from Austria). On 22 September 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant due to the global crisis. This is the 17th application to be examined under the EU budget for 2011. It was submitted to the Commission on 3 January 2011, and concerns the mobilisation of a sum of EUR 3 643 770, aimed at mitigating the social impact of 2 338 redundancies at 706 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 49 ('land transport and transport via pipelines) in the NUTS II regions of Niederösterreich (AT12) and Oberösterreich (AT31), in Austria. As the legal requirements have been met, I voted for this motion for a resolution, which I hope will revitalise the economic situation in the region.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) There have been a number of requests for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). There has been virtually no sitting in which this House has not been called on to approve this mobilisation of this fund. This is the 17th application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 3 643 770 from the EGF for Austria. It relates to 2 338 redundancies, 502 of which are targeted for assistance, at 706 enterprises in the area of 'land transport and transport via pipelines' in the regions of Niederösterreich and Oberösterreich, in Austria, during the eight-month reference period from 1 February 2010 to 31 October 2010. The application was submitted to the Commission on 3 January 2011.

It was based on the criteria laid down in the EGF Regulation, which makes intervention subject to there being at least 500 redundancies over a nine-month period in one region or two contiguous regions in NUTS II level in a Member State. On 22 September 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This is the 17th application to be examined under the 2011 budget. It refers to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 3 643 770 from the EGF for Austria. It relates to 2 338 redundancies, 502 of which are targeted for assistance, at 706 enterprises operating within NACE Revision 2 Division 49 ('land transport and transport via pipelines') in the NUTS II regions of Niederösterreich (AT12) and Oberösterreich (AT31) in Austria, during the eight-month reference period from 1 February 2010 to 31 October 2010. The application was submitted to the Commission on 3 January 2011 and supplemented by additional information up to 9 June 2011. It was based on the intervention criteria laid down in Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation, which

requires at least 500 redundancies over a nine-month period in enterprises operating in the same NACE Revision 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level in a Member State.

On 22 September 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) The European Union has established appropriate legislative and budgetary instruments to provide additional assistance to workers who are feeling the impact of the major structural changes in world trade patterns due to globalisation and to help them return to the jobs market. For applications submitted after 1 May 2009, the scope of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) has been extended to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the world financial and economic crisis. Point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission allows the release of funds from the EGF using the flexibility instrument within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million beyond the relevant rounds of the financial framework.

On 3 January 2011 Austria submitted request No EGF/2011/AT/Niederösterreich-Oberösterreich for a financial contribution from the EGF because of redundancies in 706 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 division 49 (Land transport and transport via pipelines) in the NUTS II regions of Lower Austria (Niederösterreich) (AT12) and Upper Austria (Oberösterreich) (AT31). After carefully considering these requests, the Commission has come to the conclusion that they meet all the conditions for a financial contribution and that under the relevant regulations the financial contribution should be paid to Austria.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. On 22 September 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Austria in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. I welcomed this document because this particular case concerns the 30-50% decrease in freight business in Austria in July 2009. For lorries with an authorised total weight above 3.5 tonnes, traffic fell by 17% in the first half of 2009 compared to the same period of the previous year. These downward trends continued in 2010, with the result that many Austrian road transport businesses had to lay off workers. Austria argues that the crisis, with its impact on European consumer behaviour and the reduced production of goods, has had a particularly heavy negative impact on the transport sector which has emerged later than was the case for the main industries of the secondary sector. The Commission therefore proposes to mobilise an amount of EUR 3 643 770.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The aim of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is to support the reintegration of European workers affected by redundancies resulting directly from profound changes in international trade. The ultimate aim of the fund is also to help redundant workers find a new job and keep it. Until 31 December 2011, the fund will also provide aid to workers who have lost their job due to the global financial and

economic crisis. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is a vital tool. That is why I voted in favour of this report.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted to give the green light to the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist workers in Austria made redundant due to the global economic downturn.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This report refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 3 643 770 from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund for Austria. It concerns assistance to retrain and up skill workers made redundant in the ‘Land transport and transport via pipelines’ sector. I voted in favour of the report.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur in the context of globalisation. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers’ rights. The EGF, which aims to help workers who fall victim to the relocation of companies, is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU countries in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Austria, which has applied for assistance with regard to 2 338 redundancies, of which 502 are targeted for assistance, at 706 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 49 (‘land transport and transport via pipelines’) in the NUTS II regions of Niederösterreich (AT12) and Oberösterreich (AT31).

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – This is the seventeenth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 3 643 770 from the EGF for Austria. It concerns 2 338 redundancies, of which are 502 targeted for assistance, 706 enterprises operating in the field of Land transport and transport via pipelines in Austria, during the nine-month reference period from 1 February 2010 to 31 October 2010. It is necessary to help Austria, but the criteria of the fund should be amended to make it available in Latvia. I am in favour.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The financial crisis led to a huge decline in the freight sector – in Austria’s case, a decline of between 30% and 50% in July 2009. Traffic involving goods vehicles with a total permissible weight of more than 3.5 tonnes reduced by 17% in the first half of 2009 compared with the same period the previous year. This downward trend continued in 2010, with the result that many Austrian haulage contractors had to make job cuts. The decline in consumption and the reduced production of goods had particularly severe repercussions for the transport sector; compared with the core industries of the secondary sector, there was a time lag before these took effect. I am in favour of resources from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund being used for the imminent training measures.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcome the decision to allocate support to Austria’s transport sector, which has been hit particularly badly by the economic and financial crisis, with hundreds of workers being made redundant as a result. It should be noted that small and very small transport companies have been worst affected by the crisis. I believe that the amount allocated is sufficient to create favourable conditions to return to the labour market and enable other active labour market measures to be implemented which would encourage people who have received assistance to seek work themselves and take up employment as quickly as possible. The assistance must therefore be dynamic and

made available efficiently so that it covers the costs of job search, training and retraining and the promotion of entrepreneurship and effectively halts the spread of unemployment in the country.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade. On 5 October 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Austria, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. This is the 17th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, and relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 3 643 770 from the EGF for Austria, based on 2 338 redundancies, of which 502 are targeted for assistance, at 706 enterprises operating in NACE Revision 2 Division 49 ('land transport and transport via pipelines') in the NUTS II regions of Niederösterreich (AT12) and Oberösterreich (AT31), in Austria, during the eight-month reference period from 1 February 2010 to 31 October 2010. As all the necessary requirements to activate this mechanism for financial assistance have been fulfilled, I voted for this report.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) Given that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns, the proposal to mobilise the fund for Austria stems from the need to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. In light of the above and in view of the importance of the proposal for a decision in question, I voted for the proposal for a decision since it can provide for measures for occupational guidance, training programmes and associated training allowances and redundant apprentice on- and off-the-job training and support.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The application submitted by Austria for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 2 338 redundancies, of which 502 are targeted for assistance, at 706 enterprises in NACE Revision 2 Division 49 ('land transport and transport via pipelines') in the NUTS II regions of Niederösterreich and Oberösterreich, during the reference period from 1 February 2010 to 31 October 2010. This application is related to the decrease in the freight business in Austria of 30-50% in July 2009, as a result of the crisis and its impact on the consumption and production of goods. According to the Commission's assessment, this application meets all of the legally established eligibility criteria. Indeed, EGF involvement in situations like this is provided for in the EGF Regulation, in which, as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis, there are 'at least 500 redundancies over a period of nine months, particularly in small or medium-sized enterprises, in a NACE 2 division in one region or two contiguous regions at NUTS II level'. I therefore voted for this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) When considering Austria's application, the European Commission evaluated the economic and financial crisis which has led to redundancies and major structural changes in world trade patterns. In 2009 in Europe, national full truckload transport fell on average by 25% in terms of journeys and by 27% in terms of turnover, compared with the previous year. International full truckload transport fell on average by 22% while turnover fell by 25%. In this particular case, there

was a decrease in the freight business in Austria of 30-50% in July 2009. For lorries with an authorised total weight above 3.5 tonnes, traffic decreased in the first half of 2009 by 17% compared with the same period of the previous year. These downward trends continued in 2010 with the result that many Austrian road transport businesses had to lay off workers. Indeed the crisis, with its impact on European consumer behaviour and the reduced production of goods, has had a particularly heavy negative impact on the transport sector which has unfolded in a delayed manner in comparison to core industries of the secondary sector.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 established the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy. I am voting for the request for the mobilisation of the EGF submitted by Austria in relation to 2 338 redundancies at 706 enterprises located in the NUTS II regions of Niederösterreich and Oberösterreich. I believe that the Commission should mobilise EUR 3 643 770 to help the employability of workers from the Austrian enterprises in the sector of 'land transport and transport via pipelines'. The financial package that has been adopted should be channelled towards supporting measures of assistance in the areas of occupational orientation, individual training and making general information available through specific employment channels.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I voted for the report on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for the application from Austria in connection with the huge redundancies made in the automotive manufacturing industry. The application concerns the mobilisation from the EGF of a total amount of EUR 3 643 770 for Austria in connection with 2 338 redundancies in 706 enterprises operating in the land transport and transport via pipelines sector in the Austrian regions of Niederösterreich and Oberösterreich. The redundancies were made in the period between 1 February and 31 October 2010. The economic and financial crisis caused a 30-50% decrease in the freight business in Austria in July 2009. For lorries with an authorised maximum total weight above 3.5 tonnes, business dropped in the first half of 2009 by 17% compared with the same period of the previous year. These downward trends continued in 2010, with the result that many Austrian road transport businesses had to lay off some of their workers. I call on the Commission and Member States to simplify the procedures for awarding grants so that those made redundant as a result of the economic and financial crisis can benefit from the European funds available to support their reintegration into the labour market.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) Road freight, which declined by 10% across the EU in 2009, seems to be recovering more slowly than other freight sectors. The Austrian road freight sector was already far more severely affected than other parts of Europe, declining by 30-50% compared with 20-30%, and this downward trend continued in 2010. This negative trend particularly affected small and micro haulage contractors in Oberösterreich and Niederösterreich, which have had to make 2 338 job cuts. Those affected are mainly truck drivers, who have not been able to find other work because of their lack of qualifications; moreover, 51 of the 502 people needing support having long-term health problems or a disability. Occupational further training measures should now provide these people with assistance, the proposed package of measures being coordinated with the sector-specific social partners and monitored by the state labour department. For this reason, I voted in favour.

**Report: Barbara Matera (A7-0378/2011)**

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D),** *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of allocating financial assistance to Greece. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. Greece has requested assistance in respect of 642 workers made redundant from two enterprises involved in the retail sector. This application complies with the requirements for determining financial contributions, and I therefore welcome the mobilisation of an amount of EUR 2 918 500.

**Regina Bastos (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in 2006 in order to provide additional assistance to workers affected by the consequences of significant changes in the structure of international trade and to assist in their reintegration into the labour market. Since 1 May 2009, the remit of the EGF has been expanded to include support for workers made redundant as a direct consequence of the economic, financial and social crisis. At this time of severe crisis, one of the principal consequences of which has been an increase in unemployment, the EU needs to use all the means at its disposal to respond, particularly with regard to providing support for those who find themselves without a job from one day to the next. I therefore voted for this report concerning the mobilisation of EUR 2 918 500 from the EGF for Greece, with the objective of supporting workers made redundant from the company Hellas Supermarket Holding EPE & Assoc. E.E. and one supplier, Thessaloniki Logistics S.A.

**George Becali (NI),** *in writing.* – (RO) This report concerns the assistance expected for reintegrating 642 workers made redundant from the ALDI chain into the labour market. I believe that the Greek authorities are right. These redundancies were caused by the economic and financial crisis. I voted in favour of granting the assistance.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD),** *in writing.* – (IT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is an instrument intended to assist the reintegration of workers who have lost their jobs as a result of the ongoing process of globalisation of world markets. This fund supports workers and does not aim to benefit the business that made the redundancies in any way. With regard to the case in question, I voted in favour since Greece's request to mobilise a total of EUR 2 918 500 from the EGF for 642 redundancies targeted for assistance did not contain any particular critical issues and it fulfilled the criteria required for its activation.

**John Bufton (EFD),** *in writing.* – Although I have great sympathy for redundant workers from ALDI Hellas/Greece, I believe that UK taxpayers' money, which provides a significant contribution to the EU and thus Global Adjustment Fund budget, is better concentrated on providing jobs for unemployed workers in the UK. Unemployment in the UK continues to rise to unexpected levels. Many of our heavy industries have shut down and our workforce is inundated with EU migrants. It is a pure injustice towards hardworking Brits who have lost their jobs in industries that have relocated to other EU countries under EU law to then find that their contributions as taxpayers are being spent by the EU in assisting unemployed people in Greece. Increasingly the UK is becoming a hub for people who have fled their own EU Member States to try to earn more money or claim benefits in the UK, which they often send large proportions of back home rather than inject it into the local economy. As unemployment continues to rise in the UK, particularly blighting some of the former mining towns in Wales, I cannot justify assenting to aid newly unemployed workers abroad when long-term unemployed people continue to suffer in communities in my constituency. My constituents will not accept this, neither can I.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (EL) Although the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is not the real solution to the problem of unemployment, it offers an opportunity to bring relief to hundreds of thousands of unemployed persons and from the problems caused to the workers of Europe by the financial crisis and neoliberal globalisation. However, it is inexplicable why this should be the first request from Greece which, until now, has not asked for the fund to be activated, given the very high unemployment rate (officially 18.4% in August), despite my repeated suggestions. In fact, the present report accepts the request for support for 642 persons made redundant by the supermarket chain ALDI. Despite the fact that the Greek Government has requested a fairly small amount and despite the fact that we have no answer to the question of whether suitable use will be made of the relevant resources and whether another request will follow from Greece, I voted in favour of the report, so that the persons made redundant by ALDI can receive what they are entitled to.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Given the various repercussions that Greece has suffered owing to its vulnerability in the face of the financial crisis and structural changes in the patterns of world trade, I believed it important to vote for this report, which will provide vital one-off, time-limited assistance to workers who have been made redundant. Furthermore, I believe in the purpose for which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund will be mobilised, to a total of EUR 2 918 500 for Greece. This support for the reintegration into Greece's labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis is vital in order to safeguard 642 redundancies at two companies in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier'). Of the package of measures proposed by the Commission, I would like to draw particular attention to two that are imperative, namely the contribution to business start-up, aimed at encouraging redundant workers to set up their own businesses, receiving up to EUR 20 000 as a contribution to cover setting-up costs, and occupational guidance and job-search assistance with sessions for developing skills and CVs, thus assisting with job-search techniques that are essential in an increasingly globalised world.

**Mário David (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Like the position that I took in relation to the Irish and Austrian applications, I am voting for this report, as the Irish application has been made within the framework of the support provided for in the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF). I would once again stress that the EGF is aimed at supporting workers affected by major structural changes in world trade and assisting their reintegration into the labour market. I also hope that the fund will be mobilised swiftly, especially in this case and in view of the difficult period that Greece is currently experiencing, so as to lessen the psychological, social and economic repercussions experienced by the affected workers.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for the report as I believe it very important that the EU support the Member States experiencing great difficulties in their stoic efforts towards economic restructuring. I share the opinion that the resources at issue here, from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, can make an important contribution to reducing the rise of structural unemployment in Greece, and thus mitigate, in a sustained manner, the economic and social crisis that the country is experiencing.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Greece is perhaps the most urgent example of the tension to which citizens, Member States and companies are being subjected in the context of the current crisis in the euro area. This crisis in Europe, linked to the global crisis which has been affecting markets throughout the West, has been causing serious problems for Greek companies and leading to workers from a wide range of economic sectors in that

country being made redundant. Worrying scenes of social conflict are multiplying, and it is difficult to make out a clear or simple path towards escaping all the problems affecting Greece. There are high hopes of the new national unity government, but there are many more unknowns than certainties. A sign that the Greek market is shrinking is its abandonment by the German supermarket chain ALDI a few years after its establishment in Greece, which has led to 642 workers being made redundant. I hope that mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund can mitigate the problems experienced by these workers and enable their reintegration into the labour market.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report relates to the proposal for a decision of Parliament and the Council on the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), in accordance with point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management (application EGF/2011/004 EL/ALDI Hellas from Greece). On 22 September 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Greece, with the aim of supporting the reintegration of workers made redundant due to the global crisis. This is the 18th application submitted under the 2011 EU budget, submitted to the Commission on 10 May 2011, on the mobilisation of a sum of EUR 2 918 500, aimed at mitigating the social impact of the redundancies of 642 workers from the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier') in the regions of Central Macedonia and Attica. I am voting for this proposal as it realises the objectives which led the EU to create the EGF, and I hope that it contributes to the swift recovery of the economy in these regions.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This time, the application for the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is for Greece, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the crisis. This is the 18th application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 2 918 500. It relates to 642 redundancies, all of which are targeted for assistance, at two enterprises in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier') operating in the regions of Central Macedonia and Attica, as well as other Greek regions, such as Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Western Macedonia, Epirus, Western Greece, Mainland Greece and Peloponnese, during the five-month reference period from 4 November 2010 to 4 March 2011.

Of these redundancies, 88 are outside the reference period, but are related to the same collective redundancy procedure and the event which triggered the redundancies during the reference period. As in the previous cases, although I am voting for this mobilisation, I would protest that not enough was done to prevent this being necessary.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report aims to support the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) for Greece. On 22 September 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Greece, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis.

This application related to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 2 918 500 from the EGF for Greece. It concerns 642 redundancies, all of which are targeted for assistance, in two enterprises operating in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier') operating in several regions, during the five-month reference period from 4 November 2010 to 4 March 2011.

Of these redundancies, 88 are outside the reference period, but are related to the same collective redundancy procedure and the event which triggered the redundancies during the reference period. The application was submitted to the Commission on 10 May 2011 and supplemented by additional information up to 22 June 2011; it was based on the specific intervention criteria set out in Article 2(b) of the EGF Regulation.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission allows the release of funds from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) using the flexibility instrument within the annual ceiling of EUR 500 million beyond the relevant rounds of the financial framework. At the beginning of May this year, Greece submitted request EGF/2011/004 EL/ALDI Hellas for a contribution from the EGF with regard to 642 workers made redundant from the firm ALDI Hellas Supermarket Holding EPE & Assoc. E.E. and the haulage company Thessaloniki Logistics S.A. in Greece. After considering the request, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, the Commission has come to the conclusion that they meet the condition for a financial contribution under the regulation. Greece's application for the financial contribution should therefore be granted.

**Marian Harkin (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – I support the allocation of the Globalisation Adjustment Fund to workers in EL/ALDI Hellas/Greece. This is the first application from Greece and it is very important that Greek workers can access the fund. The Globalisation Adjustment Fund was designed as a solidarity instrument and during extremely difficult times in Greece, this is a small sign that the EU is delivering on its message of solidarity.

**Jim Higgins (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I welcome the EGF, but stress the need for a more flexible approach for its administration into the future.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. On 22 September 2011 the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF in favour of Greece in order to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. I welcomed this document because in this particular case Greece argues that the economic and financial crisis has had devastating consequences for the Greek economy. There has also been a decrease in average income in the private sector. An immediate effect of reduced income was a decrease in consumption. In 2009 the private final consumption expenditure figures for Greece followed the same negative trend as the average of the 27 EU Member States. In 2010, there was a recovery in private consumption at EU27 level while the drop in private consumption in Greece was even bigger than that in the previous year. The decrease in private consumption has severely affected the retail sector and in particular supermarkets. The Commission therefore proposes to mobilise an amount of EUR 2 918 500.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted to give the green light to the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to assist workers in the retail sector in Greece made redundant.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This report, the eighteenth such application to be examined under the 2011 European Globalisation Adjustment Fund budget, refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 2 918 500 for Greece. It concerns 642

redundancies, all targeted for assistance, in two enterprises in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier'). I voted in favour of the positive decision in respect of this application.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The EU is an area of solidarity and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) is a part of that. This support is essential for helping the unemployed and victims of company relocations that occur in the context of globalisation. More and more companies are relocating, taking advantage of lower labour costs in a number of countries, particularly China and India, with a damaging effect on those countries that respect workers' rights. The EGF, which aims to help workers who fall victim to the relocation of companies, is essential for facilitating access to new employment. The EGF has been used by other EU Member States in the past, so now it is appropriate to grant this aid to Greece, which has applied for assistance with regard to 642 redundancies, all of which are targeted for assistance, at two enterprises in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier') operating in the regions of Central Macedonia and Attica, where the greatest number of ALDI stores were located. The ALDI chain also reported redundancies in other Greek regions, namely Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Western Macedonia, Epirus, Western Greece, Sterea Ellada and Peloponnese.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – This is the eighteenth application to be examined under the 2011 budget and refers to the mobilisation of a total amount of EUR 2 918 500 from the EGF for Greece. It concerns 642 redundancies, all targeted for assistance, in two enterprises in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier') during the five-month reference period from 4 November 2010 to 4 March 2011. It is necessary to help Greece, but the criteria of the fund should be amended to make it available in Latvia. I am in favour.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) In order to mitigate the negative impact of globalisation, the funding available from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund needs to be used in a targeted manner. It is very important to ensure that assistance for workers made redundant should be dynamic and made available as quickly and efficiently as possible. I welcome the decision to allocate support to companies in Greece operating in the retail sector because hundreds of workers have been made redundant as a result of the economic and financial crisis. I believe that the amount allocated is sufficient to mitigate the consequences of mass redundancy in this sector and will create favourable conditions for workers in this sector who have suffered to return to the labour market. This assistance will cover the costs of job search, training and retraining and the promotion of entrepreneurship and will effectively halt the spread of unemployment in the country.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (EL) I voted in favour of the report. The case of the 642 persons who lost their jobs in Greece following the withdrawal of ALDI from the Greek market is the first Greek request for which the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been activated. The fund has been activated in order to pay one-off individual aid which is limited in time, in order to support the workers made redundant as a result of globalisation and the financial and economic crisis. Greece, which has the second highest unemployment rate in the EU and is constantly losing jobs, must make maximum possible use of the fund, by including many more cases that meet its criteria. Moreover, according to the reply which I received from the Commission to a question, despite the rapid increase in the number of applications for support from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund since the start of the economic crisis, the total amount available has not been used up and, at the moment, Greece has not asked for the fund to be mobilised for cases other than the case referred to.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created to provide additional support for workers affected by the consequences of major structural changes in the patterns of world trade. On 22 September 2011, the Commission adopted a new proposal for a decision on the mobilisation of the EGF for Greece, with the aim of supporting the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant as a result of the global economic and financial crisis. The 18th application to be examined within the framework of the 2011 budget, this relates to the mobilisation of a total sum of EUR 2 918 500 from the EGF for Greece, with regard to 642 redundancies, all of which are targeted for assistance, from two enterprises in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier') operating in the regions of Central Macedonia and Attica, as well as other Greek regions, such as Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Western Macedonia, Epirus, Western Greece, Mainland Greece and Peloponnese, during the five-month reference period from 4 November 2010 to 4 March 2011. As all of the requirements necessary to apply this financial assistance mechanism have been met, I voted for this report.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) Given that the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns, the proposal to mobilise the fund for Greece stems from the need to support the reintegration into the labour market of workers made redundant due to the global financial and economic crisis. In light of the above and in view of the importance of the proposal for a decision in question, I voted for the proposal for a decision since it can provide for measures for occupational guidance, training programmes and associated training allowances and redundant apprentice on- and off-the-job training and support.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The request by Greece for the intervention of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) relates to 642 redundancies at two enterprises in the retail sector ('supermarket and supplier'). This request is related to the devastating impact that the economic and financial crisis has had on the Greek economy, particularly in terms of the fall in private consumption. According to the Commission's assessment, this application meets all of the legally established eligibility criteria. Indeed, EGF involvement in situations like this is provided for in the EGF Regulation, in which, as a direct result of the global financial and economic crisis, there are 'at least 500 redundancies over a period of four months in an enterprise in a Member State, including workers made redundant in its suppliers or downstream producers'. I therefore voted for this resolution, in the hope that the assistance will be made available to the workers who have been made redundant swiftly and efficiently.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The objective of this proposal is undoubtedly to improve the legislative and budgetary instruments in order to provide additional support to all European workers who are suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist their reintegration into the labour market.

In the context of the current economic and market crisis, Greece has requested assistance in respect of a case concerning 642 redundancies, all targeted for assistance, in two enterprises in the retail sector operating in the regions of Central Macedonia and Attica where the greatest number of ALDI stores are located.

The institutions involved must therefore make the necessary efforts to improve procedural and budgetary arrangements in order to accelerate the mobilisation of the EGF. At the same time, it is to be hoped that further improvements in the procedure will be reached in the framework of the upcoming reviews of the EGF and that greater efficiency, transparency and visibility of the fund will be achieved.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006 of Parliament and the Council of 20 December 2006 established the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) with the aim of supporting workers who lose their jobs due to structural changes in the context of the global economy. Greece has submitted a request for the mobilisation of the EGF for 642 redundancies at the enterprise ALDI Hellas Supermarket Holding EPE & Assoc. E.E. and one of its suppliers, Thessaloniki Logistics S.A., both located in the regions of Central Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia-Thrace and Attica. The sum of EUR 2 918 500 is being used to fund professional assistance for individual workers and is not being used to restructure the companies or replace measures that are their sole responsibility by virtue of national law or collective agreements. I believe that the EGF should fund active measures towards re-entering the labour market, allowing new skills to be learnt and these to be adapted to the new work situation.

**Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is a mechanism that should be widely debated. Officially, this fund enables the European Union to fund specific actions to counter the effects of the crisis. It is about as effective as sticking a plaster on a wooden leg.

This mechanism, however, is only used on a case-by-case basis. In reality, it funds redundancy schemes.

Today, in the case of Greece, the ALDI supermarket chain and one of its suppliers have received support from this fund. The champion of hard-discount which rakes in tens of billions in sales each year has laid off over 500 people in two stores in Greece.

At a time when the Greek people are at the mercy of the austerity measures imposed on their government by the European Union, we are encouraging and funding a big business which is laying people off.

I therefore voted against this report and I regret, once again, that European funds are being misused.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) In 2010, the company ALDI Hellas announced the closure of all its branches in the regions of Central Macedonia and Attica, a region severely affected by the crisis. However, ALDI Hellas has been reporting losses since 2005 – so the company's financial situation was in dire straits even before the crisis. For this reason, I voted against the proposal.

**Reports: Barbara Matera (A7-0375/2011), (A7-0377/2011), (A7-0376/2011),**

**Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – I welcome the overwhelming approval today by the European Parliament to approve the allocation of EUR 55 million of EU Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) aid for the retraining of construction industry workers in Ireland. The three Irish North West MEPs initially approached the Irish Government with the proposal to seek funding from Europe. I am very pleased that our efforts have borne fruit and that this funding will now be available to retrain and up skill construction industry workers adversely affected by the slump in their sector. It is an imperative that

every effort is made to ensure that the best possible opportunities are identified to equip workers for future employment opportunities. The three applications on behalf of 5,987 Irish construction industry workers will total EUR 55 million, of which the EU will provide EUR 35 million and Ireland EUR 20 million. The package of measures will include training programmes and training allowances, 2nd and 3rd level education programmes and supports, and redundant apprentices training programmes and supports.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – In favour. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has been created in order to provide additional assistance to workers suffering from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns. According to the provisions of point 28 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 on budgetary discipline and sound financial management and of the Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1927/2006, the fund may not exceed a maximum amount of EUR 500 million, drawn from the margin under the global expenditure ceiling from the previous year, and/or from the cancelled commitment appropriations from the previous two years, excluding those related to Heading 1b. The appropriate amounts are entered into the budget as a provision as soon as the sufficient margins and/or cancelled commitments have been identified.

As concerns the procedure, in order to activate the fund the Commission, in case of a positive assessment of an application, presents to the budgetary authority a proposal for mobilisation of the fund and, at the same time, a corresponding request for transfer. In parallel, a trilogue could be organised in order to find an agreement on the use of the fund and the amounts required. The trilogue can take a simplified form.

**Reports: Barbara Matera (A7-0375/2011), (A7-0378/2011), (A7-0377/2011), (A7-0376/2011), (A7-0379/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this report, as it concerns an application that meets all of the criteria for the mobilisation of this fund. In this time of difficulty, Europe should, more than ever, be a Union of solidarity.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The aim of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is to support the reintegration of European workers affected by redundancies resulting directly from profound changes in international trade. The ultimate aim of the fund is also to help redundant workers find a new job and keep it. Until 31 December 2011, the fund will also provide aid to workers who have lost their job due to the global financial and economic crisis. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is a vital tool. That is why I voted in favour of these reports.

**László Surján (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) Today we approved five payments from the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund: one for Greece, three for Ireland and one for Austria. It is not companies or governments, but the people concerned who receive this assistance. I always vote in favour of such proposals, even though I know that the concept is flawed. It is a displacement activity. As with social policy itself, the management of unemployment, too, falls within the responsibility of the Member States. Of course there is truth in saying that if it is global effects that are responsible for the problem, then global assistance is equitable. However, I hardly believe this to be the real solution, even if all governments could use the extra funds. If a company makes the assessment that it would be more profitable to relocate its production for example to Ukraine, because there it would have to pay, say, one tenth of the wages it has to pay in Greece, it will of course relocate.

As a recompense, the EU contributes to the retraining or assistance of workers laid off and left behind, but the problem still persists. Tomorrow it will be another company that packs up and leaves, and chooses greater profits over its former employees. This is how Europe is slowly becoming like a waiter for the multitudes of Asian tourists, happily snapping away with their cameras, who visit to admire the relics of our past. But there is no production. This phenomenon needs more serious addressing than the granting of a European recompense. We need to act before it is too late.

**Report: Filip Kaczmarek (A7-0315/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this report. I welcome the fact that the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) has succeeded in establishing itself as a key player in North-South cooperation. However, more attention should be given to the results achieved on the ground, to the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, and to consistency between its resolutions and those of the European Parliament.

**Sophie Auconie (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) At an international level, the European Parliament has relations with various geographical areas. Some of these relations are at a more advanced stage, which is true of the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states (ACP). In 2010, the ACP–European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly met on two occasions. During these meetings, the cooperation agreement between the two entities and respect for the commitment of Member States to allocate 0.7% of their GNI to development aid were discussed. As I am convinced that dialogue, based on democratic principles, is the starting point for any good relationship, I voted in favour of the Kaczmarek report.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Mr Kaczmarek's work consists of the annual report on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2010. I voted for the report because I consider that it is well balanced and makes interesting suggestions for the future activities of the Assembly. Indeed, the report urges MEPs to participate more in the work of the Assembly, it encourages African and European countries to cooperate with regard to democratic scrutiny and it calls for monitoring of the situation in Haiti, Madagascar and South Sudan to continue, for a mission to be sent to the Horn of Africa and for election observation to be continued.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because we need to pay more attention to the outcomes of the work of the African, Caribbean, Pacific – European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) and ensure coherence between its resolutions and those of the European Parliament. Through the quality of its work, the JPA has succeeded in establishing itself as a player in North-South cooperation. The European Commission now subjects country and regional strategy papers to parliamentary scrutiny by both the European Parliament and the ACP countries' national parliaments. It is important for the Committee on Development and the JPA to monitor the situation and ensure that effective use is made of this means of parliamentary scrutiny. The Assembly has played, and continues to play, a key role in monitoring the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Hearings of the head negotiators on both sides, meetings with economic and social players (both at formal meetings and at events held alongside them) and interaction between European and southern parliamentarians have helped to make the process more transparent and have made it easier to take local issues into account. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, there can be no doubt that the Assembly's work has had a bearing on the process.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) The ACP-EU partnership has proved to be growing in stature in the context of global partnerships, developing on numerous levels so that it currently encompasses measures on economic cooperation, human rights, trade relations between the EU and six ACP regions, as well as political dialogue. I feel it is appropriate to call on the ACP's national parliaments to increase their involvement in the process of drafting national strategy documents on cooperation between the EU and the relevant countries for the 2008-2013 period. The importance attached to women being involved in resolving social problems such as gender-based violence or human trafficking is also significant.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU represents a comprehensive partnership unique in the world, the content of which has been developed at institutional level, and which now includes aspects such as aid, economic cooperation, human rights, trade relations between the EU and the six ACP regions, and political dialogue. In my view, this wealth makes ACP-EU cooperation a unique model for this kind of partnership in terms of development. I therefore welcome the fact that in 2010 the JPA continued to provide a framework for open, democratic and in-depth dialogue between the EU and the ACP countries, which last year resulted in two meetings, in Tenerife and Kinshasa, although I am bound to regret the EU Council's absence from the latter.

I would stress the importance of the JPA maintaining its pressure on the EU Member States to take steps to honour their commitments to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, of greater national parliament involvement in country and regional strategy papers and in implementing the European Development Fund, of measures for combating poverty and climate change, and of strict adherence to all aspects of human rights.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU is an important forum for debate, discussion and decision making between members of parliaments from both of these regions, and where, under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, they can strengthen their relations and learn more about their respective situations, as well as promoting the exchange of experiences and the adoption of best practices. In this context, the involvement of national parliaments and respective public opinion is crucial in order for what is decided upon to have a real impact on the lives of the people and influence local political debate in a positive way. I regret that the importance of Portuguese language, spoken by no fewer than seven countries in the ACP-EU JPA, has still not been duly recognised, and it has not been granted translation and interpreting facilities or access to documents in a timely manner, unlike English and French. This discrimination is unacceptable and has persisted due to unconvincing arguments about budgets. The damage that this causes to people from Portuguese-speaking countries is far greater than the potential benefits brought about by this kind of stubbornness.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Since its beginning, the European Union has maintained privileged relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) in the area of development cooperation, especially at political, economic and social level. Currently, relations between the EU and the ACP countries fit into the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000. This report, drafted by Mr Kaczmarek, assesses the activities of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), which met twice during 2010, in Tenerife (Spain) and Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo), adopting nine resolutions and the Declaration on the Second Revision of the Cotonou Partnership

Agreement. The ACP-EU JPA has a decisive role in strengthening North-South dialogue. As such, it is essential that Parliament focus on this, so as to achieve our objectives, whether these relate to the rebuilding of post-conflict countries or the functioning of democracy, especially in countries in receipt of international aid. As such, I am voting for this report, I welcome the measures mentioned and I am pleased with the Commission's intention of collaborating in the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL),** *in writing.* – (PT) This report assesses the work of Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU throughout 2010. Some of the most positive aspects of the JPA's operations are identified in this assessment. We also agree with the warning that there is a need to pay greater attention to the JPA's work and the results obtained. It is also crucial for ACP national parliaments to have an active role. However, we believe that some matters needed to be tackled in greater depth. In fact, we did so during the debates in plenary on issues as important as economic partnership agreements, land grabbing, and the weight of external debt and servicing it. However, we disagree on some points of the resolution, such as when it advocates consistency between Parliament's resolutions and those of the JPA. In our opinion, part of the value of the JPA resides in its frequent disagreement on many matters with the position dominant in Parliament. This ends up revealing and helping to denounce the limitations and contradictions – and, frequently, the ulterior motives – of EU development cooperation policy.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL),** *in writing.* – (PT) This report looks at the activities of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU. Not being a member of this JPA, I see this in a positive light, although I do not agree with all of the information it contains. One issue that concerns us is the conclusion of so-called 'economic partnership agreements' (EPAs) and the European Commission's insistence on free trade. As the rapporteur rightly says, more attention needs to be paid to the results of the work of the ACP-EU JPA. In this work it is possible to see the repeated resistance of the ACP countries to EPAs, which is fair, legitimate and entirely understandable.

The way that they have been conceived of means they could be very lucrative for some European multinationals, but will be disastrous for these countries. Lastly, I would like to mention the economic and financial crisis and its effects on the ACP countries, which require the cancelation of the enormous burden This is debt that has already been paid several times over yet is still growing. This debt urgently needs to be cancelled so as to bring an end once and for all to this unacceptable expropriation of wealth, and effectively help these countries to find a sovereign and independent path to development and social progress.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D),** *in writing.* – (SK) In 2010, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly met twice. The nineteenth session was held from 6 to 9 April in Tenerife. In addition to the reports by the standing committees, the session adopted resolutions on post-disaster reconstruction in Haiti and the situation in Southern Sudan. In addition, six sets of conclusions on the Regional Strategy Papers for the six ACP regions were adopted. The twentieth session was held from 30 November to 3 December 2010 in Kinshasa. The Assembly adopted three resolutions contained in the reports by the standing committees and two urgent resolutions on food security and the situation in the Sahel-Saharan region. A declaration on the results of the presidential elections in Cote d'Ivoire was also adopted. A regional meeting in Mahé was also held during the year. After 2009, when no JPA

fact-finding missions were organised, in 2010 the ACP Secretariat was able once again to fund mission expenses for three missions: to Madagascar, Burundi and Haiti.

Thanks to the good work done by the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, it has become a key actor in North-South cooperation. Currently the European Commission has passed the national and regional strategy documents to the European Parliament and the ACP country parliaments for parliamentary control. It is important for the Committee on Development and the JPA to monitor the situation and ensure that effective use is made of this means of parliamentary control.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcomed this document because in 2010 the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) continued to provide a framework for an open, democratic and in-depth dialogue between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, including the issue of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). I believe that we need to pay more attention to the outcomes of the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and ensure coherence between its resolutions and those of the European Parliament. In particular we need to stress the crucial role of the ACP national parliaments, local authorities and non-state actors in managing and monitoring the Country and Regional Strategy Papers and the implementation of the European Development Fund (EDF). I also agree with the opinion that there needs to be close parliamentary scrutiny during the negotiation and conclusion of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The JPA must maintain its pressure on EU Member States to take urgent steps to meet their 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) commitments in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as well as their specific pledges to Africa and the least developed countries. However, these measures must be fully transparent, multiannual, binding and should include legislation. The Commission must supply all available information to the parliaments of the ACP countries and assist them in exercising democratic scrutiny, in particular by means of capacity-building in this area.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) This own-initiative report gives an overview of the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) for 2010. The ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly brings together 78 European and 78 ACP members of parliament. It meets twice a year – once in Europe and once in an ACP country. The 2010 JPA was held in Tenerife (Spain) and in Kinshasa (Congo). Various subject matters were discussed and in particular the impact of climate change in ACP countries, the social impact of the global crisis, food security. As it has been adopted unanimously by the Committee on Development (DEVE) and no problems raised, I voted for this report.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this report which points out that through the quality of its work, the JPA has succeeded in establishing itself as a key player in North-South cooperation. The European Commission now subjects Country and Regional Strategy Papers to parliamentary scrutiny by both the European Parliament and the ACP countries' national parliaments. It is important for the Committee on Development and the JPA to monitor the situation and ensure that effective use is made of this means of parliamentary scrutiny.

The Assembly has played, and continues to play, a key role in monitoring the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Hearings of the head negotiators on both sides, meetings with economic and social players (both at formal meetings and at events held alongside them) and interaction between European and southern parliamentarians

have helped to make the process more transparent and have made it easier to take local issues into account. Whatever the outcome of the negotiations, there can be no doubt that the Assembly's work has had a bearing on the process.

**Clemente Mastella (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) We congratulate the work carried out in 2010 by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) which, through the quality of its work, has succeeded in establishing itself as a key player in North-South cooperation. This Assembly continues to play a key role in monitoring the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). All the hearings of the head negotiators on both sides, meetings with economic and social players and interaction between European and Southern parliamentarians have helped to make the process more transparent and have made it easier to take local issues into account.

In 2010, an important result was achieved in that certain proposals for the second revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement were negotiated. In fact, this revision provides for the necessary strengthening of the Assembly's role in scrutiny of other institutions, as well as for the regionalisation process. The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the establishment of the European External Action Service will have a huge impact on relations between the JPA and the other institutions. We therefore hope that the absence of the EU Council at the 20th Session will be rectified in 2011 and we encourage closer cooperation between all the European institutions involved.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of Mr Kaczmarek's report. The aspects on which we should continue to work, such as election observation and supporting enterprises, are identified in an appropriate manner.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this report and commend the work of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2010 in continuing to provide a framework for an open, democratic and in-depth dialogue between the European Union and the ACP countries.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) has become increasingly important in the context of global partnerships, as it has been developing in various areas, especially in terms of the institutions and content, and today it encompasses aspects such as aid, economic cooperation, human rights, trade relations between the EU and the six ACP regions, and political dialogue. This broad array of aspects makes ACP-EU cooperation a unique model for this kind of partnership in terms of development. However, it is important that the JPA maintain pressure on the EU Member States to take steps to honour their commitments in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, of greater national parliament involvement in country and regional strategy papers and in implementing the European Development Fund, of measures for combating poverty and climate change, and of strict adherence to all aspects of human rights.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The Joint Parliamentary Assembly is a unique institution in the world, a key player in North/South cooperation, the driving force of a partnership in which elected members respect each other, put across their opinions freely and without taboo to forge a freer, fairer and more humane world. This assembly has successfully created an arena where debate is open, without preconceptions and where mutual respect is the rule, which enables us to have vibrant, lively and enriching debates where all parties are heard. It has a real political impetus. In 2010, therefore, we did not turn down any debate that affected the world's fate, whether that be Millennium

Development Goals (MDG), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), climate change, food security, Haiti, South Sudan ... For instance, in Kinshasa, we congratulated the fantastic work of Doctor Denis Mukwege who is trying to build a new future for female victims of sexual violence, underlining that impunity was unacceptable for this type of wartime practice. In Budapest, we also covered the subject of homosexuality because any minority, regardless of the nature of that which makes it a minority, must enjoy identical rights.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Since the report insists on the importance that the Joint Parliamentary Assembly monitors the situation in Africa, Caribbean Basin and Pacific Region I support it. I am in favour.

**Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for the report on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2010. This very comprehensive report points out the central role of the JPA, particularly following the 2010 revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon. The JPA is a key player in North-South relations. Whether for the European Development Fund (EDF), negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) or controlling and monitoring Regional Strategy Papers (RSP), the Joint Parliamentary Assembly is always at the heart of the process. I would like to remind you of how important it is to include national parliaments more in the democratic process, in preparing RSPs and the EDF. I also want to reiterate the importance of joint election observation missions and fact-finding missions of the JPA. These missions provide real added value in the field. They need to be promoted more. We must maintain our momentum and ensure that the JPA is up to the ambitions that we have assigned it.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) Given the fact that the African, Caribbean, Pacific – European Union (ACP-EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) is the largest parliamentary body encompassing countries of both the North and the South, more attention must be paid to the outcomes of its work. It should be noted that the Assembly has played and continues to play a key role in monitoring the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). We should welcome the fact that an open and democratic dialogue between the European Union and the ACP countries on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement has finally begun. I believe that the parliaments of the ACP countries should be given greater assistance so that they can exercise effective democratic scrutiny. Furthermore, we should also increase efforts to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals as soon as possible.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for this report on the work of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU in 2010. I would stress the increasingly parliamentary – and thus political – character that Parliament gives the JPA in this report. It is also necessary to stress the increasingly active role of the members of the JPA and the improved quality of its debates, which has been a factor in making the JPA's contribution vital to the ACP-EU partnership.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) In addition to the importance of its decisions, such as post-disaster reconstruction in Haiti and monitoring of the situation in South Sudan, and in addition to support for food security and the situation in the Sahel-Saharan region, the major commitments made by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly have enabled the Assembly, through the quality of its work, to establish itself as a key player in

North-South cooperation. In light of the above, and having evaluated the importance of the Assembly, I voted in favour.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I commend this report from Mr. Kaczmarek. I wish to speak on two elements which concern the Africa Caribbean Pacific-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly. First, I endorse the call for a greater role for the national parliaments of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, in the scrutiny and implementation of programmes such as the European Development Fund and the Country and Regional Strategy Papers. I would also call on the Commission to ensure that such an oversight role is formally recognised and protected in both the negotiation and execution of future ACP-EU JPA plans. Secondly, I support the call for EU and ACP countries to promote participation and dialogue on issues concerning gender violence and human trafficking. Frank and honest discussion of experiences common to countries in both the north and south of the globe, will undoubtedly highlight the ever-present danger of sexual crimes in both parts of the world.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the EU convened twice in 2010, in Tenerife and in Kinshasa. For their part, the three standing committees met four times: as well as the two part-sessions, they met twice in the interim in Brussels. As part of the work carried out, resolutions were adopted which, dealt with, *inter alia*, Haiti, Southern Sudan, election results in Côte d'Ivoire and the situation in the Sahel-Saharan region; fact-finding and election-observation missions were also organised. As a result of the assessment of the work from 2010, it is important to highlight that the JPA today has a very valuable role in North-South relations, constituting a good forum for dialogue between the countries of the two hemispheres.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – In favour. The Joint Parliamentary Assembly met twice in 2010. The 19th session was held in Tenerife (Spain) from 6 to 9 April and the 20th session was held in Kinshasa (DRC) from 30 November to 3 December. Nine resolutions and the Declaration on the Second revision of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement were adopted. One regional meeting was also held during the year, in Mahé (Seychelles). In the course of its proceedings, the assembly welcomed the Member of the Commission with responsibility for development, Mr Andris Piebalgs. The successive Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Council also attended the first session but only the ACP Council was represented in Kinshasa.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted for this report because it paints a full and comprehensive picture of the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in 2010. During the various sessions, documents were adopted on extremely delicate issues ranging from the resolution on post-disaster reconstruction in Haiti to the situation in South Sudan, not to mention the adoption of six sets of conclusions on the Regional Strategy Papers for the six ACP regions. The Assembly's objective now is to establish itself as a key player in North-South cooperation, and to play an increasing role in monitoring the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In 2010, the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) convened twice: firstly from 6 June to 9 June in Tenerife, Spain, and, secondly, from 30 November to 3 December in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These meetings resulted in nine resolutions and a declaration on the second review of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. In addition to these meetings, a regional meeting also took place

in Mahé, in the Seychelles. In 2010, the importance of cooperation and partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries was reaffirmed, in order to promote in-depth, open and democratic dialogue on the Cotonou Agreements and on the economic partnership agreements with the six ACP regions. I would stress the importance of the country and regional strategy papers on cooperation with the European Union until 2013, so I call on the JPA to contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, stressing the crucial importance of adopting clear, effective and transparent legislation on the commitments made.

**Recommendation for second reading: Chrysoula Paliadeli (A7-0331/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this report, as it should ensure a solid basis for implementing the European Heritage Label. This initiative will be of immense importance for promoting our continent's history and our culture(s), as well as an important resource for future generations, even from an education perspective. I must stress the natural wealth of the outermost regions, like the Azores, which will certainly feature in the list of sites to which this label will be assigned.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I fully support this report, which welcomes the Commission's proposal to use the European Heritage Label as a tool, among other more efficient ways, to bridge the gap between the European Union and its citizens. The report suggests that, whereas the Commission proposed to award the label each year, Members consider that selecting sites every two years would ensure better quality of the selection process and of the selected sites. It states that transnational sites should be favoured, as they promote commonalities, and they should feature prominently in all Member States' ordinary quota of two proposed sites per year. The report insists that the new label should not be a mere transformation of the old one: no transitional provisions should be needed but the new, well defined criteria must be the object of future negotiations with the Council. The Commission is also asked to inform Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions at each stage of the selection process.

**Roberta Angelilli (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the draft resolution on the European Heritage Label since it strengthens European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union. The label will undoubtedly bring added value to labelled sites, which must have a symbolic value for European integration and the history of the Union. They will be identified from voluntary candidate sites, taking into account the activities they can offer and their educational dimension, especially for young people. The identification of symbolic sites for shared European history and heritage will enhance European identity, not least by means of cooperation instruments that promote intercultural dialogue, the exchange of ideas, projects and good practices, as well as a relationship based on solidarity for the benefit of the whole of Europe.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The European Heritage Label endeavours to enhance the value and profile of the sites which have played a key role in the history and construction of the European Union, so that European citizens gain a better understanding of European integration and their common cultural heritage. The distance between the European Union and its citizens is largely to do with the lack of knowledge about European history, the role of the European Union and the values which it is based on. Therefore, the European Heritage Label is intended to help bring Europe's citizens closer together and strengthen the sense of European identity by improving their knowledge about their shared history and common European heritage, especially among young people.

The European Union's involvement with the European Heritage Label will enhance coordination between Member States and help with devising and applying appropriately common, clear and transparent selection criteria and new procedures for selecting and monitoring the label, thereby ensuring the sites' relevance to the objectives.

**Sophie Auconie (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The purpose of introducing a European Heritage Label from 2013 is to promote European identity through the history and heritage of Europe. This label will be awarded on a voluntary basis for transnational cultural sites. As I support any initiative that seeks to bring the European Union closer to its people, I voted for the Paliadeli report.

**George Becali (NI)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I support the notion of a European Heritage Label and voted in favour of our colleague's report. I hope that this idea will make citizens in the 27 Member States feel that they belong to the European Union and that this means not only diversity, but also shared aspects of history and heritage.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this recommendation because the Council adopted its position at first reading, which is based on the agreement negotiated after Parliament's first reading. Special attention is given in the Commission's proposal to the added value of this label as compared to other initiatives within the field of cultural heritage. The label is not about a site's beauty or its architectural quality, but rather its symbolic value for European integration and the history of the Union. It is not about conservation of sites in itself, but rather about the activities they can offer and their educational dimension, especially for young people. Finally, it will help labelled sites become more effective through working together. The European Parliament and the Council have agreed that each Member State may pre-select up to two sites, a national and a transnational site, every two years. The coordinating country only applies a quota for the transnational site so as not to discourage Member States from actually taking part in these site initiatives. A panel of independent experts will choose a maximum of one site per country to be eligible for the label.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I voted in favour of the report on the European Heritage Label. When we talk about European culture, we generally mean the individual cultural experiences of the various Member States, whereas we rarely refer to our common heritage, namely European heritage, which extends beyond the borders of nations' individual 'histories'. In this regard, the European label is a vitally important initiative that bears witness to Europe's common roots, irrespective of the past sites. The European label will, therefore, strengthen the cohesion, visibility and credibility of the whole of Europe by setting out clear and stringent selection criteria. It will be awarded every two years following approval by an authoritative, independent committee. The yardstick will not be a site's beauty, although this will be subject to assessment, but rather its intrinsic and symbolic value, primarily for European integration. Therefore, the European label is essential to develop a cultural, and not just an economic and political, Europe.

**Corina Crețu (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I voted for the European Parliament legislative resolution on the Council position at first reading with a view to adopting a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label. I support the proposal's aim of strengthening European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage, as well as the valuing of diversity and deepening of intercultural dialogue. The proposal expands an intergovernmental initiative launched five years ago and introduces new

common, clear and transparent criteria for the label, which will be applied by all participating Member States on a voluntary basis. The new selection and monitoring procedures will ensure that the label is awarded only to the most relevant sites, while those which no longer meet the required criteria will lose it.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I welcome the European Union's proposal on creating a European Heritage Label that is different to the UNESCO World Heritage List or to the European Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe because it will enable high-profile monuments in Member States which are less well known at a European level to be promoted better. We also support the involvement of representatives from the Committee of the Regions in the final stage of the selection process, based on the model used to select the European Capitals of Culture.

**Christine De Veyrac (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted in favour of this report establishing a European Union action for awarding the European Heritage Label and which will improve our understanding of our shared history and heritage. The new biennial selection procedure will ensure greater quality in the selection and monitoring of sites adopted, and give our territories the chance to come together and to make the most of our local heritage at European level.

**Diane Dodds (NI)**, *in writing.* – The Commission has stated that the general objectives of the European Heritage Label are to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union. How timely it is, therefore, that we are presented with this report at a time when citizens of Member States across the EU, fed up with the constant interference into their lives and national identity, feel more and more disenchanted with the EU, and at a time when the great EU project of currency harmonisation is blowing an economic tornado across the euro area and, indeed, beyond. MEPs must come to the realisation that people want less Europe, not more. When it comes to heritage, we want to celebrate our own national heritage and that of other nation states, but we do not need an EU narrative imposed upon the rich heritage of countries across Europe, diluting what means so much to each of us.

**Robert Dušek (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (CS) The recommendation for second reading on the decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union (EU) action for the 'European Heritage Label' is primarily intended to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to Europe and, by extension, the EU. Cultural, historical or other sites could be awarded the label 'European heritage' in a selection process which would take place every two years, whereby the main criterion would be its symbolic value for Europe and European integration. There are already many labels for cultural and other sites, however a system of 'European heritage' labels may, with a small financial outlay, bring added value in the form of an increase in tourism. It may thus become another symbol for tourists from Europe and around the world and would thereby contribute, at least in a small way, to economic growth in Europe. I welcome any such initiative, and I have therefore voted for the adoption of the recommendation.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Heritage Label is spread throughout the EU, which has successively experienced Greek, Roman and Judeo-Christian influence, broken down into Jewish, and Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christian traditions; in some cases it was also touched by Arab and Ottoman influences. The European 'label' is specifically the heritage, both built and non-built, which points to the diversity of different civilisations that, layered one on top of the other on the same land, today underlie the

cultures of the Member States. In order to properly talk about a European label, we cannot hide the role of each Member State in the formation and configuration of this same label, and we must resist the temptation to look solely for references that are consensual but that fail to demonstrate the multicultural reality *par excellence* which permeates all so-called European high culture. I welcome the decision to valorise European heritage. I hope this valorisation of European heritage will not take a discriminatory path and will not seek to rewrite history.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report, drafted by Ms Paliadeli, consists of a recommendation for second reading with regard to the Council's position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label. The Commission's proposal, tabled on 9 March 2010, aims to reinforce European citizens' sense of belonging by valorising their history, heritage and intercultural dialogue. Indeed, we are part of the same continent and we share a common history. As such, this label is something we should celebrate and be proud of in this time of economic recession. This label is an achievement essential to European unity and is a way of raising the awareness of young Europeans, so that they are proud of belonging to the Old World. I welcome this initiative, which aims to promote our heritage and our culture through education, and constitutes another step towards a way out of the financial crisis through an effort to increase European cultural tourism. I hope it will be a great success throughout Europe.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The position that we expressed on first reading of this report remains the same on second reading. We would thus like to reiterate the original warnings we put forward: there is no single 'European cultural heritage'. Culture, like all historical phenomena, is not founded on any homogenous and shared identity: quite the contrary, it is the expression of antagonisms, conflicts and situations of cultural domination.

We are still unclear as to the point of defining a 'European Union heritage' on the basis of merely locating the elements of the heritage in question, when we know that 'European' heritage is borrowed from many cultures and could also be claimed by the Islamic world, by the cultures of the Mediterranean or by the cultures subjected to European colonialism.

The rapporteur seeks, through the construction of a symbolic EU cultural dimension, 'to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union'. However, this ignores the fact that the EU is increasingly out of step with the interests and legitimate aspirations of the public. It ignores the terrible consequences of EU policies in many areas, including culture. There are many examples which prove this, as we had occasion to report during the debate.

**Carlo Fidanza (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I welcome the proposal to establish a European Heritage Label. The importance attached to the symbol as an embodiment of values and as a means to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging is well known and widely shared. The sites and symbols which have played a part in European history and integration must be recognisable and disseminated. Thanks precisely to this common core of values that unites the Member States, and on the other hand, to the differences that differentiate us from each other, we need to give special consideration to the evaluation of candidates on the basis of pre-established criteria that are widely endorsed and balanced when it comes to remembering Europe's history.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In this report, culture is viewed as an instrument to, in the words of the rapporteur, ‘strengthen European citizens’ sense of belonging to the European Union’. However, the truth is that there are various cultures. Let us talk, specifically, about the so-called ‘financial bailout’ programmes of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund, which are, in fact, veritable attack programmes; attacks on democratic values, on social and labour rights, and on culture too. It is the heritage being neglected; it is the penury budgets; it is the restrictions on the free creation and enjoyment of culture; it is the closure of schools; it is the increased prices of museums and cultural attractions ...

We are talking about making efforts, on the basis of creating a symbolic cultural dimension, to legitimise integration whose direction is, unfortunately, ever more out of step with the interests and legitimate aspirations of the public. This initiative cannot, therefore, be separated from the intense ideological struggle inherent in the extremely lively social struggle taking place throughout the European Union. However, heritage is a sensitive area, because it cannot be separated from history. We hope this will not be yet another opening for the worrying and shameful processes of rewriting history that we have been witnessing in various countries over the last few years.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) On 9 March 2010 the Commission submitted a draft resolution of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European initiative to support the European Heritage Label. The aim of the proposal is to strengthen European citizens’ sense of belonging to the European Union based on common elements of their history and heritage. Special attention is given to the added value of the label, which is not about a site’s beauty or architectural quality, but rather its symbolic value for European integration and the history of the Union. It is not about conservation of the site itself, but rather about the activities it can offer and its educational dimension, especially for young people. The proposal extends an intergovernmental initiative launched in 2006. It responds to the conclusions adopted by the Council in November 2008, inviting the Commission to submit a proposal transforming the initiative into a formal action of the Union.

Parliament’s legislative resolution, adopted by a large majority at first reading, was accompanied by 62 amendments. The great majority of these amendments dealt with relatively minor issues and contributed to further improving the text. Finally, the Council’s first reading was based on the agreement after Parliament’s first reading. I believe that the Council’s position on the first reading should be adopted without any proposals for amendments and without further delay.

**Lorenzo Fontana (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I think that the new criteria and selection and monitoring procedures will ensure that only the most relevant sites are awarded the label, and that those that no longer meet the requisite criteria will lose it. I therefore voted against it.

**Mikael Gustafsson (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (SV) I abstained in the vote on this report. The purpose of the proposal is said to be to strengthen European citizens’ sense of belonging to the European Union. This is one of many artificial symbolic acts in order to create an EU identity amongst citizens. My abstention is not a defence of nationalism, but a stand against the EU’s attempt to create artificial cultural identities in order to justify the creation of a superpower.

**Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – I am fully supportive of initiatives designed to promote history and cultural heritage and I voted in favour of today's second reading documents which highlight the need to appreciate national and regional diversity. I am dubious however as to whether 'strengthening European citizens sense of belonging to the Union' can or should be fostered by way of legislation. Identities cannot be forced on anyone and political institutions can only survive for as long as they have the support of the people.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The aim of the European Heritage Label is to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage, as well as an appreciation of diversity, and to strengthen intercultural dialogue. I believe that this is a fine initiative which we should foster.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The notion of the European Heritage Label first appeared in 2005. It is now seen as one of the tools that can help bridge the gap between the European Union and its citizens. This will now show that European history is linked to a diverse, rich and complementary shared cultural heritage. It will reinforce the values of the European Union, such as cultural diversity, tolerance and solidarity. Lastly, it will help make the European Union more visible and reinforce its prestige and its credit. Therefore, in the interest of the European Union, I voted in favour of this report.

**Constance Le Grip (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of the report by Chrysoula Paliadeli on the creation of a shared European Heritage Label. From 2013, this label can be awarded to symbolic sites (monuments, natural, industrial or urban sites ...) for European history and integration as well as to contemporary heritage depending on its relevance to shared history and heritage. With this label, the focus can be placed on our shared European history, highlighting in particular the recognition of transnational sites. It is, I hope, a new step forward in the development of a genuine European citizenship and in the recognition of a shared history and future.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The idea of the European Heritage Label is excellent as it will help raise the general public's awareness of our common cultural heritage and boost cultural tourism. The added value supplied by this initiative, compared with the UNESCO World Heritage List, for example, comes from the fact that sites will be chosen which have played a key role in the history of the European Union, and not on the basis of beauty or architectural quality. This initiative will enable a few of the most beautiful buildings in Bucharest to be appreciated, such as the Cantacuzino Palace and the Romanian Athenaeum, along with the Sculptural Ensemble of Constantin Brâncuși at Târgu Jiu.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this proposal which aims to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage, as well as an appreciation of diversity, and to strengthen intercultural dialogue.

**Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (CS) Although I do not begrudge the initiators and authors of the 'European heritage' label programme their entirely good intentions, I believe that the labelling of monuments – after thorough monitoring – with the 'European Heritage Label', is far from being the main thing that, according to the draft report, would 'strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union' and contribute to 'the strengthening of intercultural dialogue'. I consider this to be an unnecessary measure which, however, can be agreed with as, so to speak, it does not harm anybody. Citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, however, is fundamentally shaped by completely

different matters, specifically for example how the EU affects their standard of living, the extent to which they are affected by the democratic deficit and how the EU is managing to address the problems caused by the economic crisis.

**Clemente Mastella (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) We support this proposal to establish a European Heritage Label because it aims to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage, as well as an appreciation of diversity, and in this way to intensify intercultural dialogue.

We believe that the proposal adequately highlights the added value of this label as compared to other initiatives within the field of cultural heritage. It is not in fact about a site's beauty or its architectural quality, but rather its symbolic value for European integration and the history of the Union. It is not, in fact, about conservation of sites in itself, but rather about the activities they can offer and their educational dimension, especially for young people.

Finally, the label will help designated sites become more effective through their working together. We are convinced that awarding the label to sites every two years would ensure better quality of the selection process as well as of the selected sites.

**Barbara Matera (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) Creating a European Heritage Label means creating a common European identity and strengthening the citizens' interest in the Union and its origins, while at the same time reducing the gap separating the European institutions from Europeans. The political objective of the European Heritage Label must be to achieve close cooperation between the labelled sites, with the aim of sharing best practices and launching joint projects, thereby fostering transnational cohesion.

I believe that the European Parliament must play its role in the label award process, not least by closely cooperating with the European Commission in selecting the nominated sites. Within initiatives such as the European Heritage Label, knowledge of Europe's history and participation in actions supporting intercultural dialogue mark a step towards restoring citizens' confidence in Europe. I therefore voted in favour.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) It is important that a European Union action for the European Heritage Label should be established. I agree with the Council's position at first reading and I hope the recommendation will be approved.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Heritage Label is diverse, as it encompasses Greek, Roman, Judeo-Christian and, in certain cases, Arab and Ottoman influences. In short, the European label represents a heritage encompassing all the different cultures of the Member States in all of their diversity. It is extremely important to valorise European heritage.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) The creation of a European Heritage Label puts out a strong message. It is essential to raise awareness of European history and the history of the European people so that the younger generation feel fully engaged in the European project. It is more than just drawing up a list of our finest sites to promote them, it is more about putting in place a genuine educational project sending out a message of peace and democracy. Beauty or excellence is a gift given from one to another. The other being, to some extent, the world.

This label is much more than taking a look at the past, it is also very much a stamp on our present. While some harp on about times of crisis, hardly conducive to the development

of such a label, I believe that continually chipping away at matters of culture is a grave mistake.

Culture is the cornerstone of positive identities, which defines both the individual and the collective, which makes us exist, as mankind and as a people. In a way, it is also a kind of mental glue for social cohesion. Culture is the foundation on which we build our organisation and our work.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Knowledge of the history of our continent; familiarity with its common cultural heritage, which transcends national borders; increased educational awareness for the next generations: these are regarded as key aspects in efforts to bridge the divide between the European Union and its citizens. The label will be granted to sites with strong symbolic and aesthetic value from the point of view of European heritage, and it also intends to contribute to the sustainable economic development of regions by encouraging cultural tourism.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The European Heritage Label is intended to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union by highlighting shared elements, and is particularly aimed at evoking such feelings in young people. The European Heritage Label will be awarded on the basis of criteria that are precisely defined by the Commission. An expert panel (12 members appointed by the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament) shall examine the sites pre-selected and proposed by the individual Member States (two each per year, of which a maximum of one will be awarded the label). The Member States undertake to preserve the sites according to criteria laid down by the Commission. If these criteria are met, which will be examined by the panel, then the label will remain awarded for an indefinite period; if not, the label will be withdrawn after two warnings and a 36-month deadline. Transnational sites will be given priority when judging the pre-selected sites, and sites that have already been awarded the label will be reassessed. I voted in favour of the report because the amendments clearly pay greater attention to the added value of the label as compared to other initiatives within the field of cultural heritage and should also ensure that it is genuinely only the most outstanding sites that are awarded such a label.

**Cristiana Muscardini (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The intergovernmental initiative of 2006 has been successful, and 68 sites in 18 Member States have been awarded the EUROPA label. Political agreement by the Council for a shared action for the European Heritage Label is an important choice as it transforms what has hitherto been a governmental initiative into a formal act of the Union.

The purpose of the label is to acknowledge the aesthetic and/or historical value of a place, and it has an important symbolic value for European cultural heritage, helping to promote the ideals of democracy and human rights that underpin European integration. This initiative represents the concept of excellence to which Europe is linked by its artistic tradition and aesthetic vocation, an excellence that extends to and is embodied by its manufacturing and food industries.

The European Heritage Label will hopefully boost cultural tourism, representing as it does the conviction that there exists a heritage of excellence and beauty worth discovering and promoting. It will be something for Europeans to be proud of and a clear message that the asset should be preserved for future generations. I therefore had no hesitation in voting for the resolution and would like to thank Ms Paliadeli for her excellent work.

**Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) The European Union intends to become the number one tourist destination in the world, based in particular on the quality of its services, but also on the sites of interest – historic or otherwise – hosted by Member States. To achieve this, the EU must become, first and foremost, the biggest and most interesting tourist destination for its own citizens, especially for the younger generation. This is why the European Heritage Label initiative is valuable, and I welcome the proposal's adoption during today's session.

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (ET) Ever since 2006, I have supported the European Union Member States' initiative to highlight the European Union's most important monuments of historical and cultural heritage. To ensure that the said initiative functions effectively and achieves international recognition, it should be made into an official European Union measure. In contrast to the commemorative labels issued in the various Member States themselves, a European cultural heritage label would highlight the most important stages or symbolic values in the history of the formation of the European Union. I believe this to be important both from the point of view of the recording of history and also for the education of young people. In addition, the issuing of such labels would better reveal the common history of Europe, thereby intensifying integration within the European Union. As a result, I support the Paliadeli report concerning the European Union measure for the creation of a European cultural heritage label.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) We must ensure that this initiative does not conflict with existing initiatives, such as the UNESCO World Heritage List. I believe that European countries must be given the right to propose the most important objects and places of cultural heritage, bearing testimony to each country's identity as an integral part of Europe, prominent people and historical events that have played an important role in the history and cultural development of that country and Europe. Consequently, we must set out clear and strict criteria to be used in choosing a heritage site according to its symbolic significance for Europe and educational work carried out, not its beauty or architectural quality. It is also very important to ensure that participation is on a voluntary and equal basis.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report seeks the adoption of the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label. During the vote on the decision of the European Parliament at first reading, I extolled the virtues of this project. Given that the amendments proposed by the Council incorporate, totally, partially or in spirit, the majority of the amendments at first reading by the European Parliament, I voted for this report.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) Despite the importance of strengthening European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage as well as an appreciation of diversity, and in this way to intensify intercultural dialogue, I do not consider this initiative to be of major importance, and therefore I decided to vote against it.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D)**, *in writing.* – I fully support the introduction of the European Heritage Label and the important role it can play in the promotion of tourism in Munster. According to statistics published by Failte Ireland, more than 3 million overseas visitors engaged with cultural and historic sites during the course of their visit in 2009. An estimated 45% of these visitors came from mainland Europe. However, despite these numbers, the

Irish hospitality industry has been substantially weakened by the economic crisis, with 40% of hotels reporting a drop in staffing levels in the Quarterly Barometer published in June 2011. I would argue that the European Heritage Label would not only encourage a greater number of visitors from Europe, but would also incentivise these visitors to go off the beaten tourist trail. I can think of a number of examples, in my own area, of sites which could potentially qualify for such a designation. The Rock of Cashel, in County Tipperary, with its rich history as a European centre for religious and monastic education in the 10th and 11th centuries seems to me to be a perfect example of one such heritage site. It is said that, after graduation from this school, these clerics were sent all over mainland Europe to places such as Regensburg in Germany.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The initiative for the creation of a ‘European Heritage Label’, proposed by the Commission, has the objective of reinforcing European identity, aiming to identify certain locations on the basis of their importance, in order to create a common cultural area. As such, the Council’s position at first reading was subject to Parliament’s assessment. The Council accepted the majority of the amendments proposed by Parliament.

**Frédérique Ries (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I welcome this agreement after 20 very long months of negotiations between the Council, Parliament and the Commission. An agreement based on Article 167 of the Treaty and which reinforces European action in the cultural field with the creation of a ‘European Heritage Label’, an initiative designed to strengthen our shared identity and sense of belonging to the European Union. We already have UNESCO World Heritage sites, ‘National Historic Sites’ in the United States, now we will have European Heritage sites too. Once a year, each Member State can submit a historical landmark to be included in this list. A panel of experts will select the candidate sites according to their cross-border dimension and their role in the history and construction of Europe. At this stage, the EU will only communicate on the initiative and highlight the selected sites, with Member States remaining exclusively responsible for their management. The ultimate goal is for pilgrimages to all of these places that have gone down in the history of the old continent, such as the Roman Forum, the Forest Glade of Compiègne, the Brandenburg Gate, Palos de la Frontera or ... the Lion’s Mound of Waterloo.

**Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) In today’s sitting, Ms Paliadeli’s report was put to the vote. Following the decision taken today, 16 November, a European Heritage Label may be awarded from 2013 on a voluntary basis to places of symbolic value for European integration and the history of the Union. From 2013, each Member State may pre-select up to two sites every two years. The label will guarantee the quality of the selected sites, which may be monuments or natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, culturally rich landscapes, places of remembrance, cultural assets, and intangible heritage or things associated with a place. The label may also be awarded to contemporary heritage of importance to Europe’s history and shared heritage, as well as for architectural or aesthetic merit. Member States will be responsible for managing, safeguarding and promoting the sites. The communication and promotion of the European Heritage Label will, on the other hand, be the responsibility of the Commission, including the creation of a website dedicated to the project and the promotion of activities online for sites that have been awarded the EUROPA label.

**Robert Rochefort (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Education in European History is an absolute must in developing a sense of belonging and in preserving a common memory. In this sense, the major sites associated with major events that have made Europe what it is must

be recognised and valued among citizens. Only a European initiative could provide a framework capable of meeting these goals. I therefore welcome the adoption in plenary of Ms Paliadeli's report on the European Heritage Label. This initiative, which was originally intergovernmental, had to be rolled out across the Union to ensure recognition of its added value and thereby its effectiveness. I particularly welcome the proposed labelling of transnational sites. They will be best placed to represent this shared history and to encourage intercultural dialogue. Finally, lowering the frequency of selection to every two years is quite sensible as it avoids excessive labelling and thereby guarantees the quality of this label in the long run.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – There is no final vote at second reading. However, we voted against the amendments presented by the EFD, which were finally adopted by the majority.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted for this document because I believe it is a highly significant gesture to allow the award of a European Heritage Label from 2013 on a voluntary basis to places of symbolic value for European integration and the history of the 'Old Continent'. The label will guarantee the quality of the selected sites, which may be monuments or natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, culturally rich landscapes, or places of remembrance. This decision is another string to our bow for guaranteeing, promoting and safeguarding Europe's abundant riches, which are so often undervalued.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) I voted in favour of the recommendation by Ms Paliadeli, because I consider that the creation of a European Heritage Label is a positive initiative and will give European citizens a stronger sense of belonging to the European Union, based on common aspects of our history and cultural heritage. The proposal introduces new clear, common transparency criteria for the label that will be applied by all participating Member States.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The public's distance from the European project, and demonstrations of nationalism and populism are proof that action must be taken at European level to create a sense of identification with European integration. The idea is for a European identity that complements the 27 Member States' national identities. The purpose of what the Commission aims to do is to identify emblematic places that are part of the history of European integration. This initiative is voluntary, and, at the request of Parliament, should be carried out every two years, with the Member States' pre-selection of the locations and the final selection to be carried out at European level. I am voting for the report, and I support the idea that Parliament should play an active role in the selection process. I agree with this type of initiative, which aims to bring European institutions closer to the European public, which is all the more important at a time when scepticism and total disbelief are growing.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for the Council position at first reading with a view to adopting a decision establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label. The proposal's aim is to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage, as well as to value diversity and deepen intercultural dialogue. The label does not focus on the sites' beauty or architectural quality, but rather on their symbolic value to European integration and the EU's history, and it is aimed at the activities which they can offer and their educational aspect, especially for young people. The proposal introduces new common,

clear and transparent criteria for the European Heritage Label, which will be applied by all participating Member States. The selection and monitoring procedures will ensure that the label is awarded only to the most relevant sites, while those which no longer meet the required criteria will lose it. Each Member State may pre-select a maximum of two sites every two years, both national and transnational sites. A panel of independent experts will choose one site per country at the most, which can be approved for the label. The first sites will be selected in 2012, and we would like to see as many sites as possible participating from the new Member States as well.

**Thomas Ulmer (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I voted in favour of the report. The attempt to create a European Heritage Label is interesting and of genuine value. It should be borne in mind, however, that cultural heritage labels are already awarded by many institutions – for example, by Unesco. I imagine that after a period of five years a critical evaluation of the label will need to be made to ascertain whether the action has given rise to advantages overall, such as an increase in awareness of the sites awarded the label or more value added through marketing.

**Oldřich Vlasák (ECR)**, *in writing*. – (CS) Currently 17 European Union Member States, including the Czech Republic, are active participants in the intergovernmental project relating to the 'European heritage' label. This label was granted to 64 sites on the basis of mutual agreement between the Member States. The first nominations have been made by each national ministry. It was agreed that each Member State participating in the initiative may propose a maximum of 4 nominations. In the case of the Czech Republic these are Kynžvart castle, Vítkovice Machinery Group (national cultural monument), Zlín - the city of Tomáš Baťa, and the Antonín Dvořák Memorial in Vysoká u Příbrami. The original labels in the form of metal plaques were made and paid for by France. Each plaque bears the label 'European Heritage Label' in three languages, of which one is the national language of the country concerned. Now this project is being moved to European Union level. I support the draft decision because this label plays an important role in respect of the recognition of the cultural traditions of Europe and will promote tourism in these places.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) With its sites and monuments soon to receive the 'European Heritage' stamp, the Union is proving that it is still active, dynamic and indeed a reality, particularly in terms of culture. By highlighting our shared historical heritage in this way, we will be promoting European culture. I fully support this label, which remains relevant in the face of UNESCO's World Heritage sites, as it aims to promote the symbolic European dimension of sites and monuments classified for their historical value, more than just for their beauty and architecture. I therefore welcome the adoption of this recommendation which will increase the sense of European identity among the younger generation of Europeans, and thereby honour our duty of remembrance. Nor must we forget the resultant economic benefits with the subsequent development of tourism in the classified regions. The city of Marseille, from which I hail, and its entire region are familiar with these issues. Indeed, they both represent a stage for raising awareness of the first Greek and Roman European civilisations, which permeate the region's historical heritage, and a window opening out on the Euro-Mediterranean world, advocating intercultural diversity and dialogue.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) In March 2010, the Commission submitted a proposal for a decision on the European Heritage Label, which expands an intergovernmental initiative from 2006. The aim of the proposal is generally to strengthen the feeling of solidarity experienced by European citizens and their sense of belonging to

the European Union by highlighting shared elements of our history and heritage, and strengthening intercultural dialogue.

**Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR)**, *in writing*. – Europe does not need a heritage label for historic sites. At a time of austerity we cannot afford to duplicate the UNESCO World Heritage sites or Member States' own programmes such as English Heritage's Blue Plaque scheme for London. London is my home town and my home constituency and I am proud that it is one of the few cities in the world with four separate UNESCO World Heritage sites. Nevertheless I see no added value in re-branding Westminster Abbey, Kew Gardens, the Tower of London and Maritime Greenwich as EU Heritage Sites. Of course there is no guarantee that London's great historic buildings would qualify for the European Heritage Label. The integrationist tone of this report suggests that special attention should be paid to sites of 'pan-European importance', so perhaps European tourists in the future will be asked to gaze in wonder at the Berlaymont building in Brussels or the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Perhaps a heritage label is what the European Parliament in Strasbourg deserves; at least that way we would be consigning it to history.

**Anna Záborská (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SK) In the discussions on this resolution the French Senate asserts that the principles of subsidiarity were breached. The national parliaments must always be alert during the legislative process. There are already two similar instruments: UNESCO's world heritage list and the Council of Europe's European Cultural Itinerary. Why do we need more of the same? The aim of the European Heritage Label is to draw attention to places and sites and their symbolic value for Europe. Attention will be focused on publicising and providing more detailed information about their European significance and on organised educational activities for young people.

The time has come to draw attention again to the importance of religious heritage in shaping the European consciousness. Labelling is above all an instrument for transplanting national awareness through local heritage and is associated with the European significance of a particular site. If we want to get out of officially supporting our Christian roots, religious sites and buildings should also be labelled. When it comes to the Vendée or Spišské Podhradie, monasteries, churches, towers and cemeteries, all of these shape the way people think and characterise a country. In addition they preserve the values, ideals and symbols of the peoples they belong to.

**Artur Zasada (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I have voted in favour of the resolution (10303/1/2011 – C7-0236/2011 – 2010/0044(COD)) to establish a European Union action for the European Heritage Label. The aim of the proposal is to strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union, based on shared elements of history and heritage, as well as an appreciation of diversity, and to strengthen intercultural dialogue.

I feel that this is imperative to developing a type of 'European culture' where we can all work together and live together and respect and understand our fellow citizen's views and beliefs. In addition, this legislation provides for the foundation in which we can continue our Christian Democratic base and continue to build upon it. As we move forward and accept new Member States we will continue to grow, not only as a Union but more importantly as Europeans.

**Report: Debora Serracchiani (A7-0367/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this report, as reform of the first railway package is of vital importance, particularly on matters such as financing railway

infrastructure and related services, the role of the rail transport sector's regulatory bodies, and the independence of infrastructure management.

**Sophie Auconie (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) During this parliamentary session, there has been talk about reviewing the European legislation of 2001 on the liberalisation of rail services. The rail transport sector has recorded poor results compared with other means of transport. It is therefore a question of encouraging rail transport both for the carriage of goods and passengers. The Serracchiani report, which I supported, advocates a tightening of competition rules to improve rail services and encourage investments in the sector.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this proposal, which is important for the whole rail system in Europe. When debating this issue, I have constantly stressed the need to evaluate the specific characteristics of the Baltic States, where railways not only have a broader track gauge than in the majority of European Union Member States but are also technologically and commercially integrated into the rail networks of third countries. This was reflected in the amendments I tabled. I am pleased that the rapporteur and other MEPs have listened attentively to the differences that exist in the Baltic States and have made an appropriate exception in Parliament's draft report. Parliament has approved the compromise amendment to the report as regards infrastructure charges, including an amendment regarding the possibility of setting higher charges for the carriage of goods to third countries, which is very important for the Baltic States. This will ensure that the Baltic States do not have to subsidise the carriage by rail of goods from third countries and that all costs incurred by rail infrastructure managers are covered when providing carriage services.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted against recasting the directives on rail liberalisation. A complex subject if ever there was one, it was a question of going back over legislation on freight and international passenger transport which was poorly implemented. Yet the text also called on the European Commission to submit proposals in 2012 to finalise ownership unbundling and opening up of the domestic market. The fact is that competition, in this field as in many others, is not a panacea. The effectiveness of vertical separation is far from proven. To indicate my opposition to 2012 being the year in which we forge ahead with further rail liberalisation, I voted against the Serrachiani report.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because it is very important to aim at establishing a more sustainable and greener rail transport system in the European Union. Trains are one of the main modes of transport which are constantly expanding and hold potential for growth. Over a 12-year period from 1996-2008, road freight transport increased around 2%. These rates are low due to increased competition, but looking to the future, we are trying to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the European Union and are also concerned about using resources as efficiently as possible. In order to enlarge the single European railway area and increase the efficiency of trains, it is proposed that action should be taken such as tightening rules on rail transport safety, developing rail infrastructure and using railways more efficiently.

**Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) One of the main reasons for the railway sector's state of stagnation is the many discrepancies between current national rules. Regulations vary far too much to be beneficial to the railway sector. This problem is compounded by the flawed implementation of the first railway package by many Member States. Following Parliament's resolution of 11 June 2010 on this topic, the Commission

has taken 13 Member States to the Court of Justice of the European Union 'for failing to implement correctly the first railway package'. The numerous procedures involved in identifying failure to meet obligations under EU legislation certainly demonstrate the need to clarify and improve legislation.

Another reason for concern is Member States' lack of investment in infrastructure, the quality of which determines to a large degree the sector's competitiveness. Many Member States have neglected the funding of the railway sector, while giving maximum support to the road infrastructure. The recast should help achieve a European railway area. The current reform should go beyond the limits of nationally defined interests in the railway sector. It is time now to construct a proper European railway area where passengers and goods can cross borders effortlessly.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The first railway package approved in 2001 was an attempt, unfortunately disregarded, to stop the decline of railway transport. The entire system has been unable to catch up with other modes of transport, such as road transport, as shown by the figures. Between 1996 and 2008, rail freight transport fell by around 2% to 10.8%, whereas road freight transport increased from 42.1% to 45.9%. There are various reasons for this. Transnational rail services encounter numerous technical, legal and political obstacles, unlike road services. Then there is a lack of investment in railway infrastructure by Member States, whereas they have given maximum support to road infrastructure.

The railway system needs to be strongly supported, also in light of the EU's goal's to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as it still holds considerable potential for growth, whereas road transport shows more and more signs of over-saturation. The report therefore has the merit of promoting a comprehensive and integrated European railway area. For these reasons, I voted in favour.

**Jan Březina (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (CS) I agree with the proposal for a form of separation in order to create independent control of the infrastructure from service operations and to ensure that there is a natural monopoly, by which the network is managed, to the benefit of all service operators. This would lay the basis for more competition, investments and better services. If the EU wants to increase the rail transport's modal share and create a single European railway area it needs coherently unbundled rail systems. I support the Commission's approach to increase the independence and powers of national regulatory bodies and considers the reinforcement of regulatory control vital for the railway sector: efficient regulatory control at national and European level is the indispensable pre-condition to achieve any further integration of national rail markets, as it safeguards the rules of a fair and non-discriminatory railway market. By contrast, I do not believe that the European dimension of regulatory control should be reinforced. I therefore do not support amendments that would lead to the creation of a European network of regulatory bodies which should pave the way to a European regulatory body.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (EL) I voted against the report, because it paves the way for the privatisation of the European railways, with very serious consequences in terms of the public interest, transport safety and passenger rights. The report espouses the prevalent neoliberal philosophy and sets profit as its priority, forgetting that it is the Member States which fund all existing infrastructures and that the public is entitled to a high standard of safe transport. It pushes for further, almost compulsory liberalisation of the railway sector in all the Member States and further divisions between services, operations

and maintenance. It therefore fragments the concept of an integrated and safe transport system and backs the philosophy and practice of subcontracting, thereby undermining the rights of workers and passengers and existing European safety measures. The amendments tabled by the left-wing group in the European Parliament in defence of keeping the railways in the public sector and of making safety the priority over profit were voted down by the other political groups, thereby ceding even more ground to speculative private groups and leaving room for action to circumvent workers' and passengers' rights.

**Lara Comi (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I too should like to join in thanking my colleagues for their work, not just as a formality but because I really mean it. This was a complex task, but I think we can all be pleased with the outcome, especially as regards the development of a new concrete action plan. In this regard I appreciate and support the recast proposal for a global, integrated European railway area because it lays the foundations for going beyond the restrictions of nationally defined interests in the railway sector and finally aims to construct a truly European railway area where passengers and goods can cross borders effortlessly. The report sends a very clear message to our governments, and that is that they need to act in a coordinated fashion whilst ensuring that safety regulations are stringent and effective. Compliance with new safety requirements should therefore play a more important role when operators apply for a licence, and therefore the Commission needs to collect more data. I sincerely hope that this move will enable the railway market to make our economy more efficient and competitive in terms of resources.

**Corina Crețu (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) The reform of the single European railway area is imperative because this sector has been in steady decline for years, while road passenger and freight transport has risen, causing congestion on the roads and deterioration of the environment. Unfortunately, the 2001 railway package targets were not met, which means that measures are required to make this sector more attractive, compared with other modes of transport. Rail freight transport, which has achieved a 10% share, while road freight transport has risen to 45.9%, offers potential for development and can play a key role in the EU fulfilling its objectives in terms of a more sustainable and greener transport system for Europe. With this in mind, measures are required to reduce the numerous discrepancies between current national regulations, as well as to remedy the underfunding of the railway sector due to the lack of infrastructure investment from Member States. In addition, with a view to improving safety, I think that compliance with safety regulations must be an absolute prerequisite for applying for a licence.

**Christine De Veyrac (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) Further opening up of rail transport to competition is a necessary development, which we should consolidate without delay. The text voted on today in the European Parliament should enable us to fight against the many obstacles that hinder the development of competition, in particular by strengthening the resources of regulatory bodies in the railway market. However, I regret that this text overlooks a date for opening up passenger transport on domestic routes to competition: our citizens actually aspire to having a wider range of transport, no longer under the monopoly of a single operator, and which raises the overall quality of the services provided.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted for the report on a single European railway area, because it tables proposals to clarify and improve legislation in the area of rail transport, so as to make it more attractive as a means transporting passengers and goods, and thus contribute to the development of more sustainable transport systems in the EU.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Rail transport has clearly been in decline in some Member States. This situation provokes fears as to its viability and provokes reflection on how to establish a single European railway area able to reverse this tendency towards decline and to promote a means of transporting people and goods which is quick, safe and less polluting than those running on fossil fuels. Member States should closely monitor the implementation of the European railway area and promote the use of this mode of transport domestically, as well as encouraging connectivity between the railway lines of the various Member States. A Europe with a single railway area will be more environmentally friendly and better equipped with goods and services.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In recent years, except for high-speed rail lines in some EU Member States, all other railway projects have been sidelined in terms of investment, with the consequence of significantly increasing road traffic and improving roads. This report, drafted by Ms Serracchiani, concerns the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a single European railway area. We all know how inconvenient it is to arrive at a border and have to change trains because the track gauge is different. Indeed, there are few trains that cross borders. This is a market for transportation, whether of passengers or goods, with an enormous potential for growth since, as well as being cheaper and faster than road transport, it has major environmental benefits. As such, I am pleased with the adoption of this report, I welcome the measures proposed aiming to break down the administrative barriers preventing the market's development at European level, and I hope that we will soon be able to enjoy a single railway area in the EU.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The recast railway package adopted today constitutes a serious threat to public national rail services, making it more difficult to provide high-quality, safe public transport at prices affordable to the general public. Once again, there is an insistence on the same old idea – clearly disproven by experience in several countries – that more market and more competition lead to better services.

This directive will exacerbate the serious consequences for the general public, leaving them with fewer services, which are of worse quality, and which are also more expensive; for workers, owing to an intensification of labour force exploitation at European level; for safety, which will be dangerously jeopardised, subjugated to free competition; and for national interests, which will be sidelined in a strategic sector, and subjugated to the interests of multinationals.

There are certain aspects of the proposal presented today which are particularly serious and even worrying, for instance, the fact that railway transport safety criteria will be subject to single market competition rules.

This is what stems from forcing competent national authorities to submit security protocols to the opinion of a regulatory body which assesses the compliance of established safety rules with competition rules. Furthermore, it is illustrative of the values and principles which inspire the majority of this Parliament.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The recast railway package adopted today by a majority in Parliament – including the Portuguese Members from the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Socialist Party (PS) and the Democratic and Social Centre – People's Party (CDS-PP) – constitutes a serious threat to public national rail services, making it more difficult to provide high-quality, safe public transport at prices affordable to the general public.

This directive will exacerbate the serious consequences for the general public, for workers in the sector and for national economies of the liberalisation and privatisation of the railway sector that has taken place in various countries, with the insistence on the same old idea – which experience has been disproving – that more market and more competition bring better services.

Among the most serious aspects of this directive, the following stand out: the total separation of managing infrastructure and railway operations which is liberalising the railway sector, privatising the profitable areas and leaving to the state areas that require significant finance, like building and maintaining infrastructure.

The proposed fragmentation is tailored to the sector's multinationals, which are taking over railway transport and colonising related service markets in various countries. The example of German multinational Deutsche Bahn, which controls more than 60% of Europe's cargo sector, where liberalisation first took hold, is very enlightening.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) The increasing popularity of road and air travel means that railway transport is becoming correspondingly less popular. In an attempt to remedy the situation, the European Union has adopted a raft of legislative measures aimed at raising interest in railways by gradually establishing the Single European Railway Area. In the past it has put forward several packages and guidelines to state its intention to reform the regulatory framework, ensure integration of the railway sector at European level and thereby help it to compete with other forms of transport. EU transport policy has set itself the aim of building an internal market, in particular by developing common policies, to achieve competitiveness in transport. The recast proposal for the first railway package can make a significant contribution to achieving this by facilitating integration and the development of the European market in railway transport. In my view, we should concentrate our efforts on setting up a comprehensive and integrated European railway area.

The joint interests of the EU as a whole – at least as far as the railway sector is concerned – should take precedence over the interests of individual Member States. We need to build an effective European railway area where passengers and goods can travel without any additional effort. Finally, considerable attention should be given to maintaining safety standards, as this should play an important role when licences are allocated to railway companies.

**Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted against the review of directives governing the organisation and regulation of European railways, because the risk of rail transport being dismantled can only be a cause for concern for the future. A truly objective assessment needs to be carried out by the Commission between now and late 2012 on the question of a complete separation between railway undertakings and infrastructure managers. Regarding rail services and equipment maintenance, we Greens cannot accept the Union obliging incumbent railway undertakings to sacrifice maintenance of their own equipment to new entrants, as it would compromise the ability of incumbent operators to fulfil their public service remit.

**Sylvie Guillaume (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for the report establishing a single European railway area. Nearly 10 years after the first railway package which brought about the opening up and liberalisation of the various European railway operators, we have successfully achieved essential safeguards for the protection of employees and train users in Europe, particularly with the rejection of total unbundling between infrastructure

managers and railway operators, and the removal of the reference to a minimum service level in case of strikes. It also includes a rendezvous clause with the European Commission, which will enable new debate on the legal framework for this single European railway area, and in particular on the status of employees in the sector.

**Jim Higgins (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This report is the first step towards ensuring a more sustainable transport network, with regard to European railways.

**Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – It is appropriate that we voted on this report in the week that the Scottish government launched a major consultation for Scotland's rail network post-2014. The Scottish government is committed to a rail network offering value for money, quality of service and with the passengers' interest at its heart.

**Anna Ibrisagic (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) The report contains a passage that states that the president and governing board of the regulatory body for the railway sector are to be appointed by the national parliament. In Sweden, the Swedish Transport Agency is answerable to the government and it is the government that is responsible for appointments, not the Swedish Parliament. In spite of this passage, we decided to vote in favour of the report, as it contains proposals for important initiatives such as the further opening up of the market, better opportunities for investments, an independent monitoring body and increased transparency. These are key initiatives for achieving a non-discriminatory and competitive European railway sector.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) It is expected that the need to unbundle rail infrastructure and the carriage of freight and passengers would serve the creation of a more effective single EU transport market, ensure the development of the rail sector and improve the quality of services. Lithuania fully supports an integrated rail management model. Our position of principle is that Lithuanian Railways does not need to be split up because the current management model is more beneficial to Lithuania. I was and I am convinced that the provisions of the directive cannot be applied blindly throughout the Community. There need to be clauses that would allow problems specific to individual Member States to be resolved. By pursuing this position we have managed to get the European Commission to reconsider the proposal on the unbundling of the different activities of the rail sector and to draw up a new draft directive by the end of next year. Legislative amendments, which would ensure a more liberal, more competitive rail market, are essential. However, these amendments should not have the opposite effect and must be adopted by evaluating the experience to date of not just the countries in the EU but worldwide. This shows that integrated rail management is often more effective. In countries where the rail sector has been split up, this has not led to the emergence of more effective operators, competition between them has not increased the attractiveness of the rail sector and railways have not conquered a greater share of the transport market. In Lithuania, rail sector issues are even more complicated due to our specific situation. The rail track does not comply with European standards and remains largely integrated into the market of the CIS countries. Consequently, it is particularly important for there to be close liaison between infrastructure and freight transport operators when transporting freight from third countries.

**Kent Johansson, Marit Paulsen, Olle Schmidt and Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) The Member States of the EU have had since 2003 and the first railway package to implement all of the requirements relating to the opening up of the market and other matters that were agreed at that time. The process has nevertheless gone extremely slowly and serious shortcomings have been pointed out by the Commission in a number

of cases. Competition is still not sufficiently free and small market players are still placed at a disadvantage by national traditionally dominant players acting as railway companies and infrastructure managers in one.

Against this background, we are pleased that there is now a proposal to appoint supervisory bodies at national level to scrutinise the implementation of the rules that have been adopted. We believe that, in this situation, it is both valuable and necessary for independent supervisory bodies to support the process to create a more open railway market in Europe.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The first railway package adopted in 2001 was a preliminary attempt to halt the decline in rail transport, integrate the sector and make it more attractive compared with other means of transport. Unfortunately, there has been no great improvement in the situation since this first reform. Adoption of this proposal for a directive was therefore extremely pressing. By merging the three directives already in force, it includes provisions relating to the funding and relevant pricing of rail infrastructure, the conditions of competition in the railway market and the organisational reforms needed to ensure adequate supervision of the market. I voted in favour of this report.

**Jaromír Kohlíček (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (CS) The report by my colleague, Ms Serracchiani, is based on several false assumptions. The first of these is the proposition that in order to ensure effective and non-discriminatory access to the railway infrastructure it is sufficient to separate the infrastructure from the operation. The second mistake is the claim that the creation of a single European railway area is a prerequisite for increasing the share of railway transport in the railway sector. The author completely neglects the necessity of unifying the safety and operating rules between states. On the contrary, it underlines the vague need for compliance with the strictest safety rules, and similarly does not over-obligatorily refer to employment and the working conditions of employees. The introduction of a uniform collection of data on incidents and the endeavour to reflect external costs in prices for the use of the infrastructure are positive steps. At the same time, annex VIII of the report points out the importance of simplification and harmonisation of charges for the use of the infrastructure. The possibility to modify the rules contained in the annexes without parliamentary debate is highly dangerous for the stability of the operation of railway services. Here I agree with the opinion of the rapporteur that annexes II to VIII can only be modified through the normal legislative procedure. The entire report has its usual weaknesses and I have to oppose the constantly repeated claim that further liberalisation is the only correct way to increase the importance of rail transport. Despite this I partially support the report, and I will therefore not vote it down.

**Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PL) I voted in favour of the report, especially with the adopted amendment concerning the exclusion of the LHS line. The directive provides an opportunity to accelerate the process of creating the European railway area, improving the prospects of the rail transport sector in increasing its competitiveness in the transport market of the Member States. The directive strengthens the Community approach and method in the creation of policies and in supervising the adherence to common principles within the EU railway sector. I would like to express my esteem for the rapporteur and the political group coordinators. I hope that the Council will support Parliament's position.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Rail transport has been unable to develop in the same way as the other modes of transport for a variety of reasons. In recent

years, there has been a decline in international rail transport, especially for freight, due to the fact that transnational rail services are facing numerous technical, legal and political obstacles.

I think that rail transport can play a key role in meeting the EU's targets for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and can be very economically efficient. Since we are talking about a sustainable, green transport system for Europe, the Commission must assign a more important role to rail transport and must make every effort to get rid of the many discrepancies between existing national rules.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The first railway package adopted in 2001 was the first serious attempt to stop the steady decline of railway transport and to reform the European regulatory framework. Ten years later we see that this first reform was unable to improve significantly the railway's situation: rail transport was unable catch up with other modes of transport, in particular road transport. For example, between 1996 and 2008 rail freight's share decreased by almost 2% to 10.8%, whereas road freight transport increased from 42.1% to 45.9%. This development is even more worrying against the background of a steady overall growth in freight transport of around 2.3% annually: the railways sector has been unable to profit from an otherwise favourable environment. Where trucks and planes cross borders seamlessly, transnational rail services encounter numerous technical, legal and political obstacles.

Yet while road transport in particular shows more and more signs of saturation, rail transport still holds potential for growth. Moreover, it can play a key role in supporting the EU's goals to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and make its economy more resource efficient. The European Commission in its 2011 White Paper therefore rightly attributes a major role to rail transport in achieving the goals of a more sustainable and greener transport system for Europe.

**Clemente Mastella (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The first railway package adopted in 2001 attempted to reform the European regulatory framework and to ensure integration of the sector, enhancing its attractiveness compared to other modes of transport. Unfortunately, ten years later, we can see that this first reform has been unable to significantly improve the situation of the railways. Rail transport has been unable to catch up with other modes of transport, in particular road transport.

One of the main reasons is the discrepancies in national rules and the flawed implementation of the first railway package by a good number of Member States, many of which have neglected the financing of rail while giving maximum support to road infrastructure. The current system has demonstrated its shortcomings. Rules therefore need to be strengthened and harmonised and new elements need to be added to make railways more attractive as a mode of transport for both passengers and freight.

We therefore support this report because, as amended, it sets itself the ambitious goal of establishing a global, integrated European railway area, a truly European railway area where passengers and goods can cross borders effortlessly.

**Véronique Mathieu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for the report on the single European railway area. Rail transport still offers great potential which we tend to overlook. It is all about making this sector more dynamic and competitive. This requires removing the technical, legal and political obstacles that lie on the track to a European railway area. Transparency must be increased, rules rewritten more clearly and the railway area placed

under fair and strict control. By improving the conditions of competition on the railway market, this report will offer our citizens an efficient and diversified railway network that better meets their needs. It will make it easier and cheaper to take the train to travel within Europe.

**Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I voted against this resolution because it aims to deepen the privatisation of railway services. The separation of related activities as recommended therein invariably leads to the transfer of revenue-generating activities to the private sector and loss-making activities remaining in the public sector. If the European railway network is to once again be the most efficient means of transporting freight over medium and long distances, it needs coordination, integration and investment. This report will not enable this, hence my vote against.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) We urgently need to close the gap between the railway sector and other sectors of transport. Therefore I agree with the rapporteur that the 2001 railway package is no longer sufficient.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing.* – Opening Europe's railways to increased competition could provide consumers with more and better rail services. I voted in favour of this report but stress the importance of safety, which must remain at the heart of any future proposals.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Unfortunately, rail transport usage has been in decline in some Member States. This should cause us some concern, as it is a means of transporting people and goods rapidly, safely and with less pollution than those that use fossil fuels. The establishment of a single European railway area may therefore go some way towards reversing this trend. A Europe with a single railway area will be more environmentally friendly and better supplied with goods and services.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) With freight transport continually on the up, rail transport has not been able to keep up with the other means of transport, particularly road transport. Despite European Union legislation aimed at halting the decline in the railway sector, its ability to compete with other means of transport is still hampered by problems caused by funding and the inadequate pricing of infrastructure, persistent obstacles to competition and the lack of appropriate regulatory supervision. The railway sector can play an important role in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and in introducing a more sustainable transport network. The railway industry must assume its fair share of modal transport. The rules governing it must be reinforced, harmonised and added to to make the train more attractive for passenger and freight transport. Intermodality needs to be encouraged for both passenger and freight transport. It is also important to tighten up safety rules making them as strict as possible.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing.* – Reforming the first railway package involves issues such as financing rail infrastructure, the operation of rail related services, national regulatory bodies' role and the separation of infrastructure management from operations.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) It is clear that there is still a lot of catching up to do when it comes to investment in expansion of the rail network and improving the attractiveness of rail transport as compared with road transport. For this reason, the promotion of important projects such as the development of the Baltic-Adriatic axis should be vigorously pushed forward. Only then can it be ensured that the infrastructure for traffic flows, which will increasingly shift from road to rail in the coming years, is developed

appropriately. However, I fear that the proposed liberalisation of the European railway area will result in a concentration on cross-border passenger and freight transport, and that the regional connections will be forgotten. After all, massive cuts have been made in this area over the past ten years. Moreover, there is also a risk that liberalisation of rail transport could go hand in hand with a concentration on the attractive main routes, with a decline in services to rural regions. Since these developments need to be counteracted, I voted against the report.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Rail transport has still not fully developed its potential at a European level. There is still too much fragmentation and not enough competition, which translates into a disadvantage for all citizens wishing to use this mode of transport which is safe, economical and has a low environmental impact. European mobility is becoming more and more closely linked, and this requires greater harmonisation between the differing sets of national rules, with the ultimate aim of helping the service users, in other words the passengers, by reducing ticket prices and ensuring smoother journeys within the various EU countries. This report highlights these and other priorities worthy of support, which is why I decided to vote in favour of it.

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (ET) In order to guarantee that there is a truly united and competitive railway area in Europe, it is extremely important that the European Union and the Member States increase investment in rail network infrastructure. The condition of European railways differs greatly from one Member State to another, because many Member States invest more in road transport than in the development of more environmentally sustainable rail networks. The condition of the rail network is significantly worse in Eastern Europe, including my home country Estonia, where the track gauge is more closely integrated with the Russian Federation than Western Europe, and as a result road transport is predominantly used for the movement of goods and passengers, thereby causing more pollution of the natural environment and heavily endangering human life. The increase in the proportion of road transport is also at variance with the recommendations of the corresponding European strategies, in which the priority is to increase the relative importance of rail transport as a more environmentally friendly mode of transport. In order to achieve this objective, it is of key importance that the EU support such projects as Rail Baltica to connect the rail networks of Western and Eastern Europe and create a truly united European railway area. I strongly support this report, which aims to do precisely this.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcome the initiative to establish a single European railway area. However, I do not agree with the proposals on the separation of the infrastructure manager, operator and transport services. I believe that the implementation of these proposals will hamper the opening-up of the rail market. Furthermore, there will be a negative impact on the quality of rail transport services. Attention should be drawn to the fact that only a limited range of stakeholders will be able to take advantage of the exception provided for by the proposal applicable to the 1 520mm gauge network. Meanwhile, countries such as Lithuania, where there are integrated companies working on the network connected to third countries, will be prevented from applying the said clause because their lines are part of the trans-European transport (TEN-T) network. Such legal regulation will have a particularly negative impact on Lithuania and its whole rail transport sector.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The first railway package, adopted in 2001, constituted the first serious attempt to halt the decline of railway transport and

reform the European regulatory framework. It intended to ensure the sector's integration and make it more attractive than other modes of transport. This report aims to put forward a new framework to stimulate the growth of the railway sector's modal share, carrying out an in-depth review of the legislation. Since the current system has already shown its weaknesses, it will be necessary to reinforce and harmonise the rules, and to bring together new elements to make rail travel more attractive as a means of transporting both passengers and goods. I voted for this report for these reasons.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Having ascertained that the first railway reform in the shape of the first railway package adopted in 2001, which attempted to stop the steady decline of railway transport, has not had the desired results, having failed to significantly improve the situation of the railways in Europe, a new reform is needed in order to iron out discrepancies in the numerous national rules and to guarantee development of the sector. In order to ensure that employment growth and working conditions in the railway sector play a greater role in the legislation in force, and that safety regulations may be as stringent as possible, I voted in favour of this proposal for a directive, although I do not agree with every point of the wording

**Franck Proust (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) About time too. It is 10 years now since Europe set out the rules to move towards a single railway area. Yet there has been no real progress. Rail expansion has come to a halt. The rail industry has even become the only industry to have lost market shares in recent years. The explosion of low-cost offers for short and medium haul routes has a lot to do with it. However, the train meets a number of our demands: means of transport that are more environmentally-friendly (Europe 2020 goals), more profitable, involved in the sustainable development of our territories while offering solutions to the increased need for speed and intermodality, for both passengers and freight. Today, we now realise that the train was a safe and valid means of transport. We now need to put together the appropriate legal instruments. This is the spirit of this legislative package.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In spite of its potential as an environmentally sustainable mode of transport, rail transport has not managed to impose itself as a preferred means of transporting either people or goods. In this last area, market share was lost to road transport in the period 1996-2008. There is therefore a need for policies enabling the revitalisation of this mode of transport, so reducing obstacles to international transportation – since, in this sector, there are still artificial barriers to freedom of movement – and promoting new entrants into the market. As such, it is necessary to separate the entities dedicated to rail infrastructure from service operation companies, so that they are all on equal terms, so preventing abuse of dominant position by operators with greater economic weight. Since I believe that this reform of the railway area's regulatory framework will contribute to the creation of a European transport network with significant advantages in terms of quality of service, job creation, safety and environmental sustainability, I voted in favour.

**Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I should like to offer my congratulations on the excellent work carried out by Ms Serracchiani. The railway system has to catch up with other modes of transport. At present rail freight has an EU market share of no more than 7%, and passenger services have just 11-12%.

In order to establish a single European railway area we need to tighten the rules on fair competition, particularly with regard to cross-border routes. I believe that every Member

State should guarantee the independence and impartiality of the national regulatory body in order to eliminate discriminatory competitive fare and platform assignment practices and allow access to related services (such as ticket sales, repairs and maintenance facilities, stations, shunting stations and so on). Furthermore, I call on the European Commission to present a legislative proposal by the end of 2012 on the total separation of the management of infrastructures and transport services, as well as the opening up of national passenger railway markets to free competition.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – Abstention. Main text on Amendment 162 (on burden of proof and equitable use of capacity in service facility) was rejected. However, we welcome that MEPs agreed to postpone the question of unbundling until the end of next year when the Commission will present a legislative proposal on the relationship between infrastructure and railway services.

Unfortunately, the EPP and S&D groups nonetheless managed to include an ambiguous new provision on the separation of financial flows that is open for interpretation. This may keep the Transport Council from concentrating on the implementation of strong and independent regulators in all Member States and thereby possibly delay the creation of the Single European Railway Area.

**Licia Ronzulli (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted for this text because I believe it would be useful in encouraging new railway operators to enter the European market and boosting the supply of quality services. The railway system needs to catch up with other modes of transport, and for it to do so the rules on competition need to be strengthened. Every Member State should in fact guarantee the independence and impartiality of the national regulatory body in order to eliminate discriminatory competitive practices, particularly as regards fares, platform assignment and access to related services. Now the European Commission needs to present a legislative proposal on the complete separation of infrastructure and transport services management.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) I voted in favour of the report on the establishment of a single European railway area, as the objective is to safeguard and improve the attractiveness of this sector. One of the main reasons why the railways have stagnated is because of the numerous discrepancies between national laws. If we are to build a competitive EU, the transport sector needs to be improved and coordinated at European level, in order to bring about exponential results and improve the Union's competitiveness. Furthermore, this will safeguard and improve employment and improve working conditions in the railway sector by improving the current legislation.

**Vilja Savisaar-Toomast (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (ET) In today's vote on the report on the revision of the directive establishing a single European railway area, I supported only part of the directive in the final vote. There were, unfortunately, some amendments that I was unable to support. I will comment on these below. Firstly, Parliament approved an amendment that does not offer sufficient clarity regarding the use of public funds. This makes it possible for an entrepreneur who owns both infrastructure and the organisation of freight transport to use government support for purposes other than the development of infrastructure. Secondly, Parliament approved an amendment that adds to the list of direct expenses of organisers of freight transport restaurant and kindergarten expenses, which clearly do not belong there. I am glad that the increasing of the rights and obligations of supervisory organisations was supported under the leadership of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, and the procedure for their funding was

elaborated upon. In addition, parliament supported a proposal to define the rights and obligations of rail service providers and their differentiation from the largest rail enterprises, in order to guarantee the accessibility of services and equal price policies for all market participants.

Although the rapporteur sought complete separation, this was unfortunately not supported in Parliament, and no great breakthrough took place in that area. One noteworthy amendment concerned the Baltic States. This permits the continuation of the existing usage fees system, which avoids the use of public funds for the subsidisation of freight transport originating from third countries.

**Brian Simpson (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I will vote for this report today even though I believe that yet again vested interest from the railway lobby has diluted it in certain key areas. The rapporteur is to be congratulated on doing a difficult job well. It is interesting to see how many votes in the Transport Committee follow political lines. But when it comes to railways Members vote along national lines, defending their own national railways. Perhaps this is why we have failed to deliver the single market in the railway sector, that this sector is still in many Member States dominated by States owned railways, who jealously guard their near monopolistic positions and why progress on interoperability and particularly cross-border traffic has been painfully slow if not lethargic. As we enter 2012 our railways are about to enter 1912. In many areas the speed of trains is now slower than the steam era and international freight is no more than a trickle. What the railways need is a radical shake-up with independent regulation and transparent accounting allied with a can do attitude. Status quo is not an option if we are to deliver on efficient, safe, affordable and transparent pan European train network, yet it seems (...) many railway quarters status quo is what they desire.

*(Explanation of vote abbreviated in accordance with Rule 170)*

**Alf Svensson (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) At the European Parliament's sitting in Strasbourg on 16 November, I voted in favour of a report on establishing a single European railway area. The report contains a passage that states that the president and governing board of the regulatory body for the railway sector are to be appointed by the national parliament. In Sweden, the Swedish Transport Agency is answerable to the government and it is the government that is responsible for appointments, not the Swedish Parliament. In spite of this passage, I decided to vote in favour of the report, as it contains proposals for important initiatives such as the further opening up of the market, better opportunities for investments, an independent monitoring body and increased transparency. These are key initiatives for achieving a non-discriminatory and competitive European railway sector.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The creation of a single European railway area as expressed in the objectives of the 2011 White Paper on Transport requires the harmonisation of national regulations, in order to make the sector highly competitive in relation to other modes of transport. The implementation of the first rail package did not meet the proposed objectives and the text's lack of clarity gave rise to several interpretations and, consequently, infringement proceedings against Member States. In order for the sector to be revitalised, there is a need for clearer, integrated legislation through standardisation of technical and legal regulations and establishment of the conditions needed to make the sector more competitive. The main points of the report are the liberalisation of the national passenger market, the reinforcement of national regulatory bodies' independence and powers, the internalisation of external costs, funding issues, working conditions, and safety

rules. The creation of a European regulatory body will be the next step. In addition, by the end of 2012 the Commission will table two legislative proposals on the vertical separation of the infrastructure manager from the service provider, and on opening a more transparent, fairer and non-discriminatory railway market, so preventing distortions in the sector.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I voted for the proposal for a directive establishing a single European railway area. The main elements of the adopted proposal concern the following: transparent market conditions for competent rail services; ensuring strict separation of accounts between infrastructure manager and railway companies; compliance with legislation on social protection and health by operators and companies in order to avoid the practices of social dumping and unfair competition. The Commission must submit by 31 December 2012 a proposal for a directive containing provisions relating to the separation of infrastructure management and transport operations. I voted for Amendment 125 calling for the obligatory service to be removed in the case of a strike, and for Amendments 51 and 52. They call for the infrastructure manager to manage its own IT services, so as to provide adequate protection for commercially sensitive information. Member States ensure that both railway companies and infrastructure managers, which are not completely independent of each other, are responsible for their own staff policies. We call on the Commission to monitor the use of the networks and the development of framework conditions in the railway sector, in particular infrastructure charging, investments in railway infrastructure, development of prices, quality of rail transport services, as well as employment and social conditions.

**Thomas Ulmer (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (DE) The report is consistent and necessary. Following the amendments in committee, it has a logical structure and contains ideas and proposals aimed at achieving a single efficient rail market in Europe. Common standards coupled with strong, smooth coordination are essential for the European railways of the future. A strong single European regulator is also required. The question of the separation of networks and operators is not decisive for increasing competition, efficiency and quality; rather, the key factor is having transparent, fairly calculated track usage charges. Strict, comprehensive control of this with corresponding sanctions mechanisms will be essential.

**Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (LT) Rail transport is one of the leading modes of transport in Lithuania. Statistics show that last year 4.4 million passengers used services provided by Lithuanian Railways and more than 40 million tonnes of freight was carried by rail. However, the technical level of infrastructure in the Lithuanian rail sector remains lower than that in Europe. Modernisation and technical interoperability between Lithuanian and European railways is essential in order to link up Europe. One of the main tasks of Lithuanian transport policy should be to promote rail transport, drawing particular attention to the passenger transport sector. Currently in Lithuania the freight transport sector is somewhat more developed than the passenger transport sector and passenger numbers are in constant decline. Lithuania and the EU should promote passenger transport by rail more and try to make this mode of transport more attractive – let us not forget that rail journeys are somewhat safer and more environmentally friendly than journeys by other means of transport. I support the rapporteur's call for greater financial transparency and I agree that national regulatory authorities should monitor rail services more closely. I also believe that the European Commission should play a more active role in the coordination of the Rail Baltic project. This is an important strategic project which is designed to link the railways of the Baltic countries and Western Europe. We cannot allow a lack of funds to hinder this project.

**Oldřich Vlasák (ECR)**, *in writing.* – (CS) The proposal for a directive establishing a single European railway area unifies the existing legislation into one legal act which records, compared to the existing arrangement, a large number of fundamental changes. These relate in particular to the financing and charging of the infrastructure, non-discriminatory and transparent conditions for competition in the railway market and the supervision of the railway market. Although I supported the European Parliament's position because I consider it a fragile compromise, I am convinced that the proposed application of the principles of the internalisation of external costs will lead to an unnecessary increase in the regulatory burden. I am also cautious as regards the proposals on the definition of the extent of the powers of the Commission and the extensive transfer of powers relating to the regulation and supervision of competition in the rail industry under one regulatory authority. In this respect, the proposal would merit significant refinements.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) Although rail transport was reformed in 2001 with a specific package of measures aimed at making this mode of transport more attractive, there has been a significant decline in rail freight – which now has a market share of just 10.8%, compared with 45.9% for road freight. The reform was prevented from having its desired effect by legal shortcomings (in 13 Member States the implementation of certain parts of the package of measures had to be brought before the Court of Justice of the European Union), technical inadequacies (due to low levels of investment in appropriate infrastructure) and, not least, a lack of political will to achieve a real change in the *status quo*.

**Artur Zasada (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PL) Once again, I would like to congratulate the rapporteur on her effective work on the document concerning the recast of the first railway package (a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a single European railway area). I did, of course, support the document at the final vote.

I am pleased that Parliament adopted Amendment 135, which I tabled jointly with Mr Marcinkiewicz and 40 other Members from different Member States and different groups. I believe that the support which we have achieved represents a clear signal for the Council and the Commission that the issue of exclusion contained in Amendment 135 is a priority for the European Parliament, and that this fact will be taken into consideration as further work is carried out on the document.

### **Motion for a resolution B7-0571/2011**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (PT) I am voting for this motion for a resolution, as it reinforces the message urging the European Union to publicly and unequivocally confirm its strong commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, and to take all necessary steps to avoid any gap between Kyoto Protocol commitment periods. I therefore support the calls for the EU to declare openly prior to the Durban Climate Change Conference that it is ready to continue with the second commitment period, in line with the Kyoto Protocol. The continuation of measures to combat global warming has an important role for future generations and it is essential to implement environmentally sustainable policies, as is being done in the Azores archipelago, which is setting an example to the world in areas like renewable energy use.

**Sophie Auconie (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) As a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, I voted for the motion for a resolution calling on the European Union and its partners to approach with ambition and determination the next round of climate talks, due to take place in November in Durban, South Africa. I

wholeheartedly agree with the main message of this resolution: we do in fact need 'a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement post-2011' as we need to keep global warming below 2°C and stop it becoming irreversible. In this fight against climate change, I am convinced that the Europeans should lead the way. Moreover, these efforts must not be made at the expense of growth and competitiveness. On the contrary, they will guarantee the creation of more green jobs and innovation in Europe. On this matter, I welcome the fact that the European Commission is proposing that, from 2014 onwards, 20% of the EU cohesion policy fund be used to fight climate change. This will significantly help with the transition of our economy towards greener practices.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this resolution. Climate change is one of the major challenges of the 21st century which can only be addressed through international action. An international agreement has yet to be reached, and a legally binding international agreement consistent with the principle of a common but differentiated responsibility must therefore be concluded as a matter of urgency, recognising the leading role to be played by developed countries and the appropriate contribution to be made by developing countries. The existing commitments and pledges made under the Copenhagen Accord and formalised within the Cancún Agreements are insufficient to meet the objective of limiting the overall global annual mean surface temperature increase to 2°C (the 2°C objective). European countries face critical choices to preserve their future prosperity and security and honour the commitments they have made in the area of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. I support the call for Heads of State or Government worldwide to demonstrate real political leadership and will during the negotiations and for a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement to be concluded, in line with the 2°C objective and the peaking of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) With around 10 days to go before the Durban Climate Change Conference, and at a time when international climate negotiations have reached a critical juncture – between stagnation and progress – the EU must play a leadership role and reaffirm its commitment to implementing the Kyoto Protocol after 2012, and it must do so with one voice. It has finally been acknowledged that if the objective of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gases were achieved, the EU economy would benefit from an increased number of green jobs. This in turn would boost growth. As a result, the economic crisis cannot be used as an excuse for inaction. I voted to support the creation of a road map allowing for the implementation of a global climate treaty by 2015 at the latest, and the inclusion of air transport in the EU emission quota exchange system from 1 January 2012. I would draw attention, however, to the concerns surrounding the huge gap between the international commitments made and the UN objective to limit global warming to 2°C. In view of this, there is little doubt that we must take further action if we are to restrict the rise to 2°C.

**Sergio Berlato (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) The next climate change conference will be held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December. The motion for a resolution in question urges the Union to give its full support to extending the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012, despite the fact that major producers of emissions such as Japan, Canada and Russia have publicly stated they will not sign a second commitment period. Therefore no one thinks that a global agreement can be reached at Durban. The European Commission has declared that the earliest probable date for reaching a global agreement could be 2015 and a transition period is in progress until then.

I would like to point out that the basic premise of the climate and energy package approved in 2008 was that the other major producers of emissions would follow Europe's example and commit themselves to adopting legally binding measures. However, to date the absence of a level playing field at global level for sectors subject to emission limits continues to compound a situation where there is already little competitiveness for European businesses. I believe that the current international context means it is not possible to go beyond the existing goals. The European Union already has a post-2012 commitment, which is to reduce emissions by 20%, in accordance with the energy and climate package.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution because one of the greatest problems this century is climate change and the impact it is having not just on Europe but the whole world. As a result of increased climate change, storms and floods are occurring with greater frequency, winters are becoming ever colder, it has been observed that it is raining more often and the different seasons are coming earlier and earlier. If we fail to take the necessary action, such as limiting the overall annual surface temperature increase to 2°C and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enormous damage will be done to nature and wildlife and normal life may change irreversibly. The European Commission has tabled proposals on how to reduce these problems by 2050, but we need to achieve all of this by 2020. The climate is changing due to man's way of life, poor forest management, that is, deforestation, and many other reasons. In order to ensure our future security, we urgently need to take action to reduce climate change factors.

**Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Parliament's call to those attending the climate change conference in Durban is clear: the parties must conclude a comprehensive, fair, ambitious and binding post-2012 international agreement, building on the rules-based system of the Kyoto Protocol.

The main purpose of this agreement must be to cut greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible at global and national level. To make this wish come true, however, Heads of State and Government worldwide need to demonstrate the spirit of leadership and determination during the negotiations and give this issue the highest priority. At present, there is a gap between the scientific findings and the parties' current commitments.

The Durban Agreement must go beyond the Copenhagen Agreement, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The Durban Conference is vital to implementing further the Cancun Agreements, establishing the peak date for global emissions and setting a global emissions reduction target for 2050 by defining a clear pathway. Last but not least, Durban must say whether the 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction target and the 2°C target are sufficient.

**Alain Cadec (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for the motion for a resolution on the climate change conference in Durban. In particular, I supported the request to introduce a tax on financial transactions.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) It is important that the European Union continue to play a leading role in combating climate change. The Durban Climate Change Conference must produce concrete proposals regarding an agreement on the Kyoto Protocol's second compliance period and regarding the negotiations on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In terms of the UNFCCC negotiations, there is a need to implement what was agreed at the Cancun Climate Change Conference with regard to technology transfer, to training, to forests and to redesigning

the clean development mechanisms for developing countries. In relation to the Kyoto Protocol's second commitment period, Europe must reach an agreement with conditions such as: 1. the existence of a plan with well defined deadlines for a legally binding agreement which includes the major economies; 2. a new separation between industrialised and developing countries; 3. the adoption of a sectoral approach to areas of industry, with the intensive use of energy as a solution to carbon leakage.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (EL) The Commissioner's speech on climate change did not leave much room for a satisfactory result in Durban. She more or less said that an internationally binding agreement was pie in the sky and that this was because of others, not because of us. Contrary to this pessimistic climate, all of us who voted in favour of the resolution on climate change did so in order to send a strong message of political will concerning certain objectives: - to adopt a global, integrated, legally binding framework that includes a strict implementation timetable for containing the rise in temperature of the planet to below 2°C compared with pre-industrial values; - to bridge the yawning gap between the ambitions of the parties and the scientific data, by stopping dirty developments; - to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared with 1990 levels; - to offer developing countries proper financing and technological assistance; - to protect the planet's tropical forests; - to put an end to the millions of climate refugees. The economic crisis should not be used as an alibi for a Copenhagen-type failure. The climate cannot wait, nor can mankind.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this motion for a resolution as a whole. I would like to highlight two points, which I consider to be of the utmost importance for the Durban Climate Change Conference. I agree with the urgency that the EU attaches to a new agreement between the Member States for a post-2012 protocol. It is vital to ensure a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement, so as to secure the objectives of a 26% cut in emissions by 2020, based on 1990 levels, and of limiting the mean global temperature increase to 2°C. It is equally important that the financial architecture of the protocol be restructured, as it presently provides only 5% of the estimated capital that developing countries will need over the coming decades. Otherwise, we may see some unwanted reluctance among these countries as regards their compliance with a new agreement. In view of this, it is important that the EU insist and put pressure on the Member States to create new mechanisms that provide new and supplementary funds, such as, *inter alia*, a financial transaction tax, a green tax, or a tax on maritime or air transportation. I admit that this would require the entire fiscal package to be rethought if it is not to place an excessive burden on people and companies in a time of recession.

**Corina Crețu (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The Copenhagen and Cancun Agreements are inadequate, unfortunately, in terms of meeting the objective of limiting the annual mean surface temperature increase to 2°C. This is why expectations of the Durban Conference are linked to the international legally binding agreement that is so necessary. In this respect, the EU must exert greater efforts and pressure, based on the Commission road map for moving to a competitive, low carbon economy by 2050. Developed countries must commit in a much more responsible and effective way to the collective reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, while it is the duty of emerging countries to assume a role commensurate with the new share of the global economy that they have. At a time when developing and underdeveloped countries are being hit hardest by the impact of climate change and have

the fewest resources to adapt, the principle of climate justice must be established to protect the poor population in the most vulnerable states.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) We are all aware that incontrovertible scientific proof confirms the existence of climate change and its consequences. I think that investment is required in the battle against climate change at every national level of government in the world. I also believe that appropriate and ambitious global measures need to be adopted without delay to tackle this global challenge. All European and global leaders should be focused on raising the public's awareness and mobilising public opinion in support of policies in this area.

I strongly advocate that all these policies must continue to be focused on mitigating the impact of climate change and on adapting to it, and assign the resources needed to achieve these objectives, even during the current economic crisis.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I did, of course, vote for this resolution, to which I tabled a number of amendments in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety last month. The text voted on today seeks the conclusion of a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement post-2012, building on the international rules-based system of the Kyoto Protocol in line with the 2°C objective. It also urges the European Union to confirm its strong commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and to take all necessary steps to avoid any gap between Kyoto Protocol commitment periods. In Durban we must – I repeat, we must – make progress in the implementation of the Cancún Agreements by doing the following: establishing the peak date for global emissions and a global emissions reduction goal for 2050; defining a clear pathway towards 2050, including intermediate global emissions reduction goals; and agreeing on policy instruments to ensure that the objectives set are met. This is vital.

**Ioan Enciu (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I voted for this motion for a resolution as I think that there is a large amount of scientific evidence confirming the existence of climate change and its consequences. This situation requires immediate global action to be taken to tackle one of the key challenges of the 21st century and of our common future.

European countries also need, admittedly, to make crucial, balanced choices to preserve their prosperity and security in the future, and they need to adopt national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, in keeping with EU climate change targets. However, these will lead to a healthier economy, a rise in the number of green jobs, as well as to innovation and significant technological progress.

Last but not least, I support the fact that we need to sign a comprehensive, fair, ambitious and legally binding post-2012 international agreement, building on the international rules-based system of the Kyoto Protocol and aimed at gradually cutting greenhouse gas emissions globally.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) It is essential that the EU create a strategy for addressing climate change, making a serious commitment to sustainable development and seeking to reduce its carbon emissions, without thereby putting its productive activities – especially industry – at risk. Any climate change policy must – particularly against a backdrop of economic and financial crisis – seek economic efficiency and sustainability, putting innovation and research at the service of new techniques and solutions that are more environmentally friendly and equally efficient and competitive. The focus must be on the more efficient use of natural resources and on robust investment in research and cleaner

technologies; this will make it possible to maintain European competitiveness and will allow the creation of more jobs within a framework of green growth.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This motion for a resolution on the EU's position at the next climate change conference, which will take place in Durban, South Africa, between 28 November and 9 December 2011, follows the oral questions to the Council and the Commission by Mr Leinen, Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. The natural disasters that occurred in 2011 and the melting of the ice caps prove the need for us to be very attentive to these situations, and to take action at global level. It is people who have to react to climate change, not the other way around, so we have to limit the mean temperature increase to 2°C and ensure that 2012 is the year when the level of greenhouse gases peaks. It is not enough to adopt the right measures: they need to be actually implemented. I therefore welcome the significant presence of EU representatives at this conference, in order to enforce the recommendations that have been adopted, and I am glad to see the EU's commitment to honouring the Kyoto Protocol and to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than the 20% envisaged by 2020.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This motion for a resolution has some positive aspects, like those that have preceded it, namely those relating to the 15th and 16th Conferences of the Parties. In general terms, it notes the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the need to meet the targets set out under the framework of the United Nations.

However, like the previous resolutions, this one also fails to set out the means by which these goals can be achieved, and also fails in its analysis of the reason why the targets are not being hit, despite conference after conference: the solution to this environmental problem cannot be found within the framework of the irrational economic and social system that caused it.

The failure to acknowledge and discuss this premise and the insistence on a capitalist approach to the problem, in which market instruments such as carbon trading feature prominently, does not give rise to any optimism that the problem can really be solved. This is a problem which, in fact, has far wider-reaching and more complex manifestations than those set out in the resolution, which are born of the increasing and inexorable scarcity of raw materials, on which numerous spheres of activity in contemporary society largely depend.

In addition, it persists in considering the EU a homogenous entity, when the specific situations of the various Member States are, in fact, profoundly heterogeneous, under the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility'.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) We know that the depletion of natural resources at a pace utterly disproportionate to the needs of the world population, air and water pollution, the effects of war, devastation of forests, and intensive agriculture are direct consequences of industrial activity, as well as factors decreasing the general public's quality of life. More serious still is capitalism's distribution of costs and benefits, whereby the areas most affected by the severe exploitation of nature are the exact same areas occupied by the poorest people, and those most deprived of the benefits of technological development and industrial production.

This report has some positive aspects, as it highlights the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the need to hit the established targets. However, it fails to make the

necessary analysis of the reasons why, conference after conference, these targets are not being hit. The solution to this environmental problem cannot be found within the framework of the irrational economic and social system that caused it. Failure to acknowledge and discuss this premise and the insistence on a capitalist approach to this problem, in which market instruments such as carbon emission trading schemes feature prominently, does not give rise to any optimism that the problem can be solved.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Scientific evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates the existence of climate change, and therefore action is necessary to effectively meet this major challenge of the 21st century. There is a need for wider and more effective EU diplomacy by all EU institutions in advance of Durban, which should seek to present a clearer EU profile on climate policy, bringing a new dynamic to the international climate negotiations and encouraging partners throughout the world also to introduce binding reductions in carbon emissions and appropriate climate change and adjustment measures. In my view, it would be beneficial for the EU to play a leading role by implementing an ambitious climate policy which would encourage other countries to follow its example.

Members of civil society, including representatives of gender equality organisations should be given opportunities for active participation in the work of the Green Climate Fund board and all of its sub-boards. Adaptation efforts should systematically and effectively address gender-specific impacts of climate change in the areas of energy, water, food security, agriculture and fisheries, biodiversity and ecosystem services, health, industry, human settlements, disaster management and conflict and security.

**Gaston Franco (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I welcome the motion for a resolution adopted by the European Parliament ahead of the forthcoming climate change conference in Durban. It is vital that we reach an international, legally binding agreement. We call on the European Union to confirm its strong commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and to show its unequivocal support for a second commitment period post-2012. The EU must formally invite all of its international partners to do the same, in order to achieve the objectives set by the Kyoto Protocol, namely reducing greenhouse gas emissions and limiting global warming linked to climate change to 2°C. This resolution has allowed us to turn the spotlight on a subject that is very close to my heart: improving forest management as a prerequisite for reducing deforestation. In particular, we have emphasised the need to implement the mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). Parliament has thus sent a strong message aimed at the establishment of a proper mechanism for combating deforestation, which accounts for some 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Robert Goebbels (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I did not vote for the motion for a resolution on the forthcoming climate change conference in Durban. It is a collection of pious hopes and unrealistic demands – in short, it becomes lost in insignificant details that bear no relation to reality. The EU's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions make up around 10% of the world total, as the rest of the world's emissions are rising even more rapidly. The fact is, Copenhagen and Cancún proved this. There will never be a 'legally binding' agreement.

Instead of acknowledging this and concentrating on what is actually possible, such as the transfer of energy-efficient technology, Europe insists on clinging to a Kyoto Agreement that even the Japanese have abandoned. Instead of wanting to set an 'example' to the rest of the world, the EU should worry about its competitiveness in the field of environmental technology. China has become the world leader in wind turbines and photovoltaics. Europe is the world champion in pious hopes.

**Brice Hortefeux (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The European Parliament has just adopted a resolution outlining its expectations ahead of the climate change conference to be held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December 2011.

In fact, after Kyoto, the Durban Conference will be an unprecedented opportunity to make ambitious commitments that will pave the way for a comprehensive, balanced and, ultimately, legally binding agreement.

The European Union must play a leading role at this meeting. By taking concrete, proactive measures to combat climate change, the European Union is making a firm commitment to an economy based on greener growth and to innovation.

I am sure that the European Union can inspire a new dynamic at Durban and encourage its partners to reach an agreement that offers significant future prospects for our economies.

It is a difficult task, however. The priority in Durban will be to implement that which was agreed at the Cancún Conference, such as keeping global warming below 2°C, setting up a system for monitoring and controlling the actions of developed and developing countries and creating a green climate fund to support developing countries.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this document because scientific evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates the existence of climate change and its impact, thus rendering international action imperative to meet one of the major challenges of the 21st century and beyond. A legally binding international agreement consistent with the principle of a common but differentiated responsibility must remain the overall goal, thus recognising the leading role to be played by developed countries and the appropriate contribution to be made by developing countries. We need to take into account radical changes in the geo-political world in recent decades, with some developing countries now being major economic and political players, leading to a new balance of power and influence, entailing new roles and new responsibilities. I believe that we must urge the conference parties to ensure the conclusion of a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement post-2012, building on the international rules-based system of the Kyoto Protocol in line with the 2°C objective and the peaking of global and national greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) This motion for a resolution is an ambitious and reasonable text. It is all the more interesting because it endorses the principle of a tax on financial transactions. My colleagues and I have therefore voted in favour of this resolution.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted for the motion for a resolution, because I believe that it provides a stimulus to do more to achieve the targets relating strictly to climate change. Rising temperatures caused by pollution are a problem that we have to face and that requires joint action in agreement with the other powers outside Europe. The objectives set for the coming years, in line with European strategies, will only be achievable by moving forwards in cooperation with rapidly growing countries in the rest of the world. For its part, the European Union has often insisted, in deeds as well as words, on its wish to comply with the commitments made on the issue and, if possible, go beyond these by reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions further between now and 2020.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this resolution, being convinced that the EU has to go to Durban with coherent and robust proposals to tackle climate change.

**Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL),** *in writing.* – (PT) The general aim of this motion for a resolution is a legally binding international agreement consistent with the principle of ‘common but differentiated responsibility’. The resolution stipulates that, regardless of the outcome of the international negotiations, it is in the EU’s own interest to aim for a climate protection target of over 20%, since this would have the effect of simultaneously creating green jobs and boosting growth and security. It is vitally important to aim for a reduction in the EU that is higher than the target that it has set itself. This is all the more important given that this is a new approach, regardless of the fact that the global target that will be agreed upon in Durban is likely to be lower. The establishment of a Green Climate Fund is also called for, to support the transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient development in developing countries. I also welcome the inclusion of aviation and transport in the Durban agreement.

I voted in favour for these reasons. However, I must state my opposition to carbon trading mechanisms, and I regret that more weight is being given to intellectual property rights than to combating climate change.

**Mario Mauro (PPE),** *in writing.* – (IT) I find the invitation to develop a principle of ‘climate justice’ an interesting one, as the greatest injustice would occur if the EU did not tackle climate change, because poor people in poor countries would suffer in particular. I voted in favour.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE),** *in writing.* – The upcoming UN Conference in Durban has to achieve a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement aimed at reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change. The aim should be a binding post-Kyoto agreement for the period after 2012, and the EU must devise a comprehensive strategy that brings on board other ‘big countries’. The resolution calls for the transformation of the world economy to be based on sustainable growth. The fight against climate change is not about bashing industry, but a unique opportunity to actively promote structural change leading to a green economy. As Europeans, we need to put more effort into this to avoid being left behind. I supported this resolution.

**Nuno Melo (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) Parliament must be a robust advocate of the Kyoto Protocol and the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions post-2012. The adoption of this resolution on the climate change conference, which will take place in Durban, South Africa, from 28 November to 9 December 2011, places greater responsibility on the EU to go further with the 20% cut in CO<sub>2</sub> by 2020, which could help to stimulate the European economy. Concrete measures are needed to bridge the ‘gigatonne gap’, or the gigatonne difference, between the current levels of ambition and those required to keep global warming below 2°C.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D),** *in writing.* – Official delegations from 196 countries, including Russia, will participate in the conference. Fighting climate change should remain a priority, both at European and international level. The EU should show leadership at the UN climate summit in Durban and provide full support for the conclusion of a comprehensive, international, legally binding agreement post-2012. I am in favour.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI),** *in writing.* – (DE) In the last 100 years, the mean air temperature at ground level has increased by around 0.74 °C. We know this because temperature measurements have been taken for at least 100 years. Over the last 15 years, the more or less scientific doctrine that the recorded increase in temperature is caused by anthropogenic

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions has prevailed. European leaders follow this dogma blindly and want the EU Member States, at the world climate conference that will take place in Durban in 2012, to commit to making European industry and the European economy significantly more low-carbon. However, the fact is that there is absolutely no proof that climate change is anthropogenic in nature. It is also a fact that our climate has been subject to continual oscillations of varying magnitudes since time immemorial. The figures and values put forward by the European leadership team are quite simply theories, which have, however, been declared to be the ultimate reality. This is also the reason why the numerous scientists who hold a different opinion and those people who are critical of this, both in politics and also in the current media landscape, barely get a look in any more or are made out to be disreputable. It should be noted that, for the Eurocrats, this is not about important measures to protect the environment, but about deliberate, profit-making scaremongering. For this reason, I have declined to give this motion my support.

**Katarína Neveďalová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Climate change is one of our greatest environmental, social and economic challenges. Conspiracy theories aside, the warming of the weather system is a proven fact. Global warming is caused by increasing air and sea temperatures and the accelerated melting of snow and ice, resulting in a rise in world sea levels. As with the economy and the world financial crisis, we can clearly see that with respect to climate change we are all in the same boat, because whenever one state makes a particular decision, the whole world feels the results.

At the end of November a key debate on establishing an effective system of global rules will be held in Durban, in South Africa. The requirement, or rather the need to keep the global rise in temperatures below 2°C is one of the European Union's primary tasks with regard to the environment. Unfortunately failure to reach a new climate agreement based on the Kyoto Protocol, and replacing it with a voluntary, non-binding framework will simply not be enough to keep global warming below 2°C. Durban has to send a strong signal, which is that a legally binding approach is needed to solve the problem, as there is no alternative.

**Rareş-Lucian Niculescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution. Item 73 refers to sustainable land management practices, including through forest conservation, sustainable forest management, forestation or sustainable agriculture. In this context, I welcome the recent proposals from the Commission on the common agricultural policy which share these concerns about environmental protection. There is no doubt that measures need to be taken, but we need to be cautious so as not to introduce ridiculous provisions into European legislation which are difficult to meet or too costly in relation to the benefits gained for society. We must guard against jeopardising European agriculture's competitiveness and productivity.

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (ET) I support the positions expressed in the motion for a resolution, as I consider it important that the EU should continue to fight for the Kyoto protocol, and keep CO<sub>2</sub> emissions under control even after 2012. It is regrettable that many developed industrialised countries such as the United States and Australia have not to this day ratified the Kyoto Protocol, fearing that it will have a negative influence on the economy. As a global pioneer in sustainable environmental policy, the European Union, however, has proved that these fears are unfounded and the development and introduction of environmentally friendly technology instead promotes economic growth. For that reason I also support the proposal to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcome this motion for a resolution because at present climate change is one of the world's main problems, which needs to be addressed through consistent and coordinated action at international level. I believe that the EU must publicly commit itself to continuing meeting its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. All EU institutions at the conference in Durban must pursue a strict position and take broader and more effective EU diplomatic action in the area of climate policy. We must also make every effort to ensure the EU's other global partners follow the EU's example, by setting ourselves binding targets for the reduction of pollution. I welcome the roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy by 2050. I believe that the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% by 2050 is realistic and will help maintain future prosperity and security. In order to achieve the objectives set, innovative financial mechanisms must be used on an international scale, along with revenue gained from the future tax on financial transactions. It should be noted that concrete steps must be taken at the Durban Conference in order to implement the Cancún Agreements as regards long-term financing.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for this motion for a resolution on the climate change conference in Durban, which sets out Parliament's concerns and calls on the parties to ensure the conclusion of a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement post-2012, building on the international rules-based system of the Kyoto Protocol, in line with the 2°C objective and the peaking of global and national greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.

**Rovana Plumb (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for this motion for a resolution to support the EU delegation's mandate at the Durban conference. I acknowledge how important it is to adapt proactively to the inevitable consequences of climate change, especially in the regions in the world most affected by climate change and, above all, to protect the most vulnerable groups in society. This is why I call on the EU to make every effort to ensure that a binding agreement is signed in Durban on reducing emissions, with firm financial commitments supporting the implementation of measures for adapting to and mitigating the impact of climate change. This is the only way that the EU can retain its leading position and achieve its 2020 strategy objectives for sustainable growth in order to safeguard its citizens' well-being.

**Phil Prendergast (S&D)**, *in writing*. – According to scientific consensus, average global temperatures are rising by between three and six degrees Celsius. This is well above the 'safe limit' of a two degrees rise, above which life as we know it is most likely unsustainable on earth. It is essential that the EU continue to take action to combat this. More political courage is needed to combat the environmental consequences of this and to prevent the economic costs of climate change. The Kyoto Agreement took years to agree and should not be abandoned on a whim. The EU must tackle this issue head on. We must have a fair agreement, one which respects the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol and guarantees the potential for growth and development for all while at the same time protecting and maintaining the environment.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The next climate change conference – the 17th Conference of the Parties, which will take place in Durban from 28 November to 9 December 2011 – is another opportunity to adopt a political strategy enabling us to tackle climate change. In this context, there are some points that the European Union must take as irrefutable: becoming an area from which to pioneer the adoption of measures for guaranteeing the environmental sustainability of the economy; striving for decision-making

processes anchored in respect for the majority principle; reinforcing support for research into less environmentally pollutant technologies; and supporting the resulting structural change to the economy. I voted in favour because I agree with this course of action.

**Mitro Repo (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (FI) The European Union has an important job to do at the climate conference in Durban. It must show leadership and be able to speak with one voice. Neither the recession, which is holding Europe in its grip, nor the economic crisis should be used as an excuse for doing nothing about important environmental issues that affect the whole world. The danger is that the gulf between international commitments and the UN's targets will widen further.

While the target set by the UN would radically curb global warming, according to UN reports, the industrialised countries would have to be able to reduce their emissions by 25-40% from their levels in 1990 by the year 2020. It is not at all certain that the previous target set of a 20% cut in emissions by 2020 would be sufficient.

It is important at Durban to ensure that the Kyoto climate agreement to cut carbon dioxide emissions continues after 2012. Europe has the potential to demonstrate leadership and be a role model at Durban. The Kyoto Protocol, which is a binding international agreement, must in future oblige the industrialised countries to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Frédérique Ries (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I did, of course, vote for the motion for a resolution on the climate change conference that will open in Durban in late November. Europe's world leadership in this field brings with it a degree of responsibility. We have every reason to stay mobilised, and the current economic crisis must not overshadow the climate challenge and its impact on future generations. However, the comparative failures of Copenhagen and Cancún have badly dented my optimism. Despite the constant increase in greenhouse gas emissions, a wait-and-see attitude is seemingly now being taken in response to the discussion of binding objectives at international level. I willingly support the complementary approach advocated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its latest report; it is a kind of catalogue of common-sense measures for ensuring that the most vulnerable populations – often the poorest – are better protected from extreme weather conditions. These preventive measures relate to cyclones, floods, drought and heatwaves, and include recommendations regarding land management, namely preventing the settlement of areas liable to flooding and preserving mangrove swamps, a form of natural barrier for coastal populations. Finally, they offer advice about reconstruction, which is all too often carried out in haste and to which prior consideration must be given in the long term.

**Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted for the second motion for a resolution, which we voted on today in plenary, two weeks before the United Nations summit in Durban, South Africa, because I believe that the compromise is a success. The EU has shown its intention to fight to continue the process that began with the Kyoto Protocol and to keep CO<sub>2</sub> emissions under control after 2012. The resolution carried by a large majority also states that going beyond the target of reducing emissions by 20% by the end of 2020 could boost the European economy and develop new investments in the renewable energy sectors, thus creating more jobs.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – In favour. The European Parliament has today sent a clear message that the EU needs to stop prevaricating and instead finally commit to continuing with the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012. With the UN climate talks

in a state of protracted limbo, a clear commitment from the EU to Kyoto beyond 2012 would give a new impetus to the talks and the need for a comprehensive binding international climate agreement.

Clearly, resolving the current flaws and loopholes under the Kyoto Protocol – notably on how emissions from forestry and land use are accounted, as well as the issue of hot air or surplus emissions permits – is essential if the protocol is to be environmentally sound. We welcome that Parliament has again made this clear today. The current greenhouse gas target of a 20% reduction by 2020 is clearly at odds with the EU's pledge to limit the increase in global temperatures to below 2 degrees. We welcome that Parliament has highlighted this and the need for the EU to step up its target. It is high time the Commission and EU governments delivered on this.

**Tokia Saïfi (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) With the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Durban, only two weeks away, Parliament had a duty to send a clear message. I voted in favour of this resolution mainly because the text seeks the conclusion of a comprehensive, international, fair, ambitious and legally binding agreement post-2012. It also urges the EU to confirm its strong commitment to the Kyoto Protocol and to take all necessary steps to avoid any gap between commitment periods. We must pursue the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by more than 20% by 2020. The European Union must play a leading role in this context; the future of subsequent generations depends on it.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The Copenhagen experience showed that progress, especially in the context of the economic crisis, is likely to be incremental. Instead of an over-arching international agreement, we are more likely to see a series of sub-global, sector-specific agreements. Good progress was made in Copenhagen on the issue of financing, and we should focus on the successful implementation of this commitment and agreement on similar ones in Durban. We need to see real movement on issues such as aviation and shipping, and in particular a closer cooperation with the International Maritime Organisation. We should also increase the measures to stop deforestation by using incentives from the Green Climate Fund. Other priority areas should be energy efficiency and technology transfer. A comprehensive international agreement is highly desirable, but it is not the only way to make significant progress on emission reductions.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In 2009, the Commission published a White Paper entitled 'Adapting to Climate Change: Towards a European Framework for Action', aimed at reducing the European Union's vulnerability to the impact of climate change, presenting a global strategy, aims and concrete measures, as well as potential funding instruments. I am voting for this motion for a resolution, as it is important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt measures for addressing the impact of climate change. I consider it of the utmost importance for the European Union to set more ambitious targets than the currently stipulated 20% reduction by 2020, and to implement new measures for reducing aviation and maritime emissions, which were not included in the Kyoto Protocol. Finally, I believe that EU institutions should implement a comprehensive strategy enabling the reduction of land and sea temperatures, changing precipitation volume and patterns, controlling the rise in sea levels, and avoiding the risk of coastal erosion and natural disasters related to weather phenomena.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for the motion for a resolution on the climate change conference in Durban. We think that the EU needs to take the

initiative and devise an ambitious EU climate policy which reduces climate change, in order to demonstrate the advantages of such a policy and encourage other countries to follow suit. We call on the EU to define and create a separate budget line for funding climate measures so as to ensure that this funding is actually new and additional. I should emphasise that energy savings enable job creation and economic savings, increase energy security and competitiveness and help reduce polluting emissions. An estimated 2 billion people across the globe continue to lack access to sustainable and affordable energy. I should stress the need to tackle the issue of energy poverty in line with the objectives of the climate change policy. The development and deployment of innovative technologies hold the key to fighting climate change. To convince the EU's partners worldwide that emissions reductions are feasible without losing competitiveness and jobs, I call for an international commitment to increase R&D investments in innovative technologies in the energy-intensive industrial sectors.

**Thomas Ulmer (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I have very deliberately and pointedly rejected the motion for a resolution on the climate change conference in Durban, because the nonsense is continuing just as before. A global climate change conference requires all polluters, including those who up to now have refused to be part of it, to sit down at the same table and decide on common binding targets. Anything else is worthless. As long as deliberate forest fires release more CO<sub>2</sub> than the whole of Europe can save, I do not consider it reasonable for us to burden our daily lives and our industry without it being possible, by doing so, for us to achieve even a zero result.

**Derek Vaughan (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this resolution because it is vital that the EU leads the way at the next UN climate summit in Durban. This will ensure that the fight continues to extend the CO<sub>2</sub>-cutting Kyoto protocol beyond 2012.

I supported this resolution because, like previous climate resolutions adopted by the European Parliament, it states that the EU should be aiming above the current 20% greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020. This would be in the EU's own economic interest and would compliment the EU's strategy for growths and jobs.

There should also be an agreement reached to establish a Green Climate Fund, which would offer support to developing countries.

**Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution which reiterates the need for the Union to be part of a global agreement to follow on from the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012. I am also in favour of the position on ambitious CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions for 2020 and 2050 despite strong objections from within the European Parliament, especially on the right.

I do regret, however, the adoption of some of the passages such as the call for the creation of a global carbon market, the negative effects of which have been proven, or the endorsement of the agreements with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on international property rights, which hinder technology transfer.

I am pleased that the European Parliament has called for an ambitious international solution to bridge the considerable gap between the current ambition levels and those required to keep global warming below 2°C.

This certainly represents a considerable challenge as the economic and financial crisis with its disastrous social impact is being exploited to prevent any ambitious agreement from

being adopted. I also regret that the European Parliament does not condemn the lack of will shown by certain countries in this negotiation more strongly.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions increased by 6% in 2010, therefore reaching an agreement and taking action are matters of urgency. If the negotiations lack ambition, the climate catastrophe will spiral out of control.

**Dominique Vlasto (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I welcome the adoption of this motion for a resolution, which highlights the urgent need for the international community to make solid commitments at the climate change conference in Durban to tackle global warming. Indeed, a 2°C rise in temperature would have irreparable consequences for the environment and would compromise the well-being of future generations. This must be avoided at all costs by extending the Kyoto protocol beyond 2012, as this protocol is the only international legal instrument that obliges countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. In France, we have even surpassed the objectives set by the protocol in 2010, by reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 10% compared to 1990, thanks namely to nuclear energy. While we in the EU have set an example to follow, with the energy and climate package, we cannot keep tackling climate change alone forever. Emerging and developed countries, such as China and the US who are the biggest polluters, simply must contribute to this effort, which can only be global. The situation for our planet is already far too urgent for our partner countries to keep looking the other way.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of the 21st century, which is why this problem must be given top priority. It is therefore essential that a balanced, ambitious and legally binding agreement is concluded at the forthcoming climate conference in Durban, one that builds on the regulations of the Kyoto Protocol. It is important for the EU to speak with one voice. It cannot solve the global climate problem alone, however. Instead, productive international cooperation is needed. Climate protection targets must not be pushed into the background by the current debt crisis. On the contrary, a successful climate protection policy will also contribute to a healthier economy and can go hand in hand with the creation of innovations and green jobs. I have voted in favour.

**Glenis Willmott (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Action on climate change is one of the EU's strongest policy records and a key reason for European citizens to support European integration. The environment does not respect national borders – so only by working together can we tackle the urgent problem of climate change and set an example for the rest of the world. Parliament's resolution urges the EU to play a full role in the upcoming Durban talks and to reaffirm the need for more ambitious, binding targets post-2012. It also calls for all parties to close the 'gigatonne gap' between the reduction in emissions they have committed to, and the reduction they have actually achieved – crucial to the objective of keeping global warming below 2°C. The vote highlighted the weakness of the UK's Conservative MEPs on climate change. After trying and failing to water down the text and remove support for a 30% emissions reduction target – in defiance of their own Government's policy – Conservative MEPs refused to support the resolution calling for action on climate change. I and my Labour colleagues understand the importance of tackling climate change in our own lifetime, and so we are delighted to have voted for this resolution.

**Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR)**, *in writing*. – (PL) The European Union generates only 11% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Over the last dozen years or so, we have been reducing our greenhouse gas emissions every year, and at the same time developing the renewable energy

sector. The cost of such changes is enormous to us. As calculated by scientists from the Kwiatkowski Institute, a 20% reduction in emissions in Poland alone results in an approximate 5% loss of jobs in heavy industry and the energy sector due to the relocation and closure of plants. When making decisions regarding further limits, we did not pay heed to other international entities. Meanwhile, over the past few years, the US, China, India and Brazil have not only not reduced emissions, but have recorded an increase. Today, at last, the time has come to realise that even if Europe, hypothetically speaking, stopped emitting greenhouse gases, it would not have an impact on the improvement of the global climate. Today, global warming can only be halted by a 50% reduction of emissions in China and India. I cannot understand the provisions of this resolution that support the increase of emission limits above 20%. I therefore voted against it.

### **Motion for a resolution B7-0574/2011**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this report. Firstly, I am pleased with the Member States' renewed promise to honour their commitment to give 0.7% of their gross national income in aid. I would stress, however, that in 2010 the European Union was approximately EUR 15 billion short of its official development assistance (ODA) target for that year. Furthermore, I agree with the Council's statement that ODA will not be enough to eradicate global poverty by itself. The goal of European Union development policy should be the elimination of structural obstacles to the goal of eradicating poverty, and its policies on various areas such as agriculture, trade, investment, tax havens, access to raw materials and climate change should be consistent. If the level of commitment is not stepped up, it will not be easy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I would like to congratulate the EU and its Member States for continuing to be the biggest donor of development aid, in spite of the crisis. I also welcome the significant contribution made by aid to sustainable development in the fields of health, education, gender equality and biodiversity. I think that it is vital to unlock certain sources of international development finance, for instance, by promoting innovative taxes, reducing significantly the cost of remittances made by migrants, speeding up the process of combining European Union grants and EIB loans, without this leading to cuts in aid spending, and by promoting schemes for improving access to financial services, such as microfinance schemes in developing countries. The schemes targeted at the poor for improving access to financial services can provide exceptional support to smallholder farmers, particularly women, in achieving food security. I voted in favour of this report.

**Pino Arlacchi (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this resolution because it stresses the fact that mobilising domestic resources in partner countries is the key to sustainable development. I expect the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to produce tangible results as regards more effective aid. Despite the progress noted by the EU Accountability Report 2011 on Financing for Development, Member States must take urgent steps in order to honour their commitment to give 0.7% of their GNI, and they also should improve their donor coordination, joint programming and the division of labour in the field.

The EU development policy should aim to eliminate structural obstacles to the poverty eradication goal by implementing policy coherence for development between EU policies on agriculture, trade, investment, tax havens, access to raw materials and climate change.

In addition to that, the Commission should include, as a matter of priority, the fight against misuse of tax havens and against tax evasion and illicit capital flight in its development policy.

**Sophie Auconie (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution which highlights the need to tackle illegal funding, support international trade and private investment, and help developing countries in the fight against climate change.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (LT) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution. Last year, the Member States gave only 0.43% of their gross national income (GNI) in official development assistance (ODA), despite the Millennium commitment to give 0.7% by 2015 and an interim 2010 target of 0.56%. Failing to keep its aid promises will seriously undermine confidence in the EU and damage its credibility among its partners in the developing world. There is growing pressure on national budgets as a result of the financial and economic crisis and it is therefore necessary to take action so that development assistance is more effective and helps to overcome the issues hindering the development of poor countries. I agree that policy change in industrialised and developing countries is necessary to address the structural causes of poverty and mobilising domestic resources in partner countries is therefore the key to sustainable development. Priority must be given to better tax governance and tax-related transparency, ensuring country-by-country reporting, as well as to combating tax evasion and illicit capital flight, through legislation where necessary. I welcome the call to include the fight against misuse of tax havens and against tax evasion and illicit capital flight among its development policy priorities and to ensure that companies in the extractive industry in developing countries pay proper taxes and that their production meets social and environmental standards.

**Sergio Berlato (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) The next climate change conference will be held in Durban from 28 November to 9 December. The motion for a resolution in question urges the Union to give its full support to extending the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012, despite the fact that major producers of emissions such as Japan, Canada and Russia have publicly stated they will not sign up to a second commitment period. Therefore no one thinks that a global agreement can be reached at Durban. The European Commission has declared that the earliest probable date for reaching a global agreement could be 2015 and a transition period is in progress until then.

I would like to point out that the basic premise of the climate and energy package approved in 2008 was that the other major producers of emissions would follow Europe's example and commit to adopt legally binding measures. However, to date the absence of a level playing field at a global level for sectors subject to emission limits continues to worsen a situation where there is already little competitiveness for European businesses. I believe that the current international context means it is not possible to go beyond the existing goals. The European Union already has a post-2012 commitment, which is to reduce emissions by 20%, in accordance with the energy and climate package.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (EL) The motion for a resolution on the 2011 EU accountability report on financing for development is a move in a progressive direction. It concludes that achieving the global poverty eradication goal will require, above all, policy change in industrialised and developing countries to address the structural causes of poverty. It also acknowledges that it will be impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and that the Member States have failed to honour their pledge to provide economic aid to developing countries, especially those less hard hit by the global

crisis. The resolution endeavours to remind the Member States of the pledges which they have made and, unfortunately, failed to honour, in terms of viable growth and combating climate change. Furthermore, the deep concern expressed in the text about the problem of the acquisition of farmland by government-backed foreign investors, particularly in Africa, is also extremely important. This particular practice is undermining local food security and is a new form of colonisation. It is for all these reasons that I voted in favour of the resolution.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The EU and its Member States are, without doubt, the largest donors of official development assistance (ODA) internationally, in spite of the growing pressure that national budgets are under as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis currently plaguing the world. Nonetheless, I share the rapporteur's concerns that, in the past year, EU Member States have contributed a mere 0.43% of their gross national income (GNI) to ODA, in spite of a commitment to collectively dedicate 0.7% of GNI to ODA by 2015 and the interim objective of 0.56% for 2010.

With a view not only to the EU's credibility, but also because of the specific situation the poorest people have been experiencing, made particularly hard as a consequence of an economic and financial crisis for which they were not responsible, it is crucial that the EU honour its development commitments. Instead of reducing development aid budgets, the EU must take urgent measures to ensure it honours its commitments, using new, innovative funding mechanisms, and must be able to guarantee greater consistency between EU trade policy and development policy.

**Anne Delvaux (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) Last year, Member States donated just 0.43% of their gross national income (GNI) to public development aid despite the commitment made at the Millennium Summit to allocate 0.7% of GNI to the poorest countries in the world by 2015, and the intermediate objective of 0.56% for 2010. Indeed, since then, the financial and economic crisis has put increasing pressure on national budgets and, as a result, in 2009 and 2010, 15 Member States had to revise their budgets for official development assistance (ODA) downwards. The adoption of this report calls for Member States to take measures to honour their commitments and scale up their efforts to ensure the implementation of existing debt relief initiatives for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries. This report however also addresses the effectiveness of allocated aid, because every year the lack of aid effectiveness results in around EUR 6 billion of public money being wasted. The EU is aware of this situation and will address the issue at the forthcoming Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, to be held in Busan, (Korea) in November, at which concrete steps will be outlined to ensure that ODA is more effective and put to better use.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) The European Union's commitment to development is one of the main characteristics of an outward-looking integration process. Despite the difficulties experienced by various Member States, which have motivated several of them to reduce the aid they provide, I would like the EU to maintain its efforts to cooperate with the worst-off peoples and countries. However, I also believe that this aid should be subject to greater transparency, and that it should be channelled towards the people that really need it and scrutinised, not only by the donors, but also by the peoples and parliaments of the countries in receipt of aid. I disagree with the rapporteur on the possibility of instituting a financial transaction tax in order to fund the Member States and boost development aid. I believe that the spread of this measure requires further study and that the potential negative consequences justify particular caution regarding its implementation.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This motion for a resolution on European Union accountability concerning development financing follows oral questions to the Council and the Commission by Ms Striffler, pursuant to Article 115 of the Rules of Procedure, on behalf of the Committee on Development. The current global economic and financial crisis is having a huge impact on developing countries, so there is a need for the EU to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, dedicating 0.7% of gross domestic product in aid to the poorest countries. Public development aid has a fundamental role in securing the survival of many impoverished peoples, with the EU's contribution representing more than half of all aid. As such, as well as guaranteeing that this aid is granted transparently and effectively, taking into account the real needs of these countries, the EU needs to increase the resources available in the next financial framework. As the credibility of the EU cannot be jeopardised, I am voting for this motion for a resolution as I understand that, with the measures approved, the EU will keep its promises to support to developing countries in line with the MDGs.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing.* – (SK) The Member States promised in 2005 to channel 50% of all new aid to sub-Saharan Africa, but have actually given only half of this amount and have also failed to honour their pledge to give 0.15% of their GNI to the least-developed countries by 2010. Failing to keep its aid promises will seriously undermine confidence in the EU and damage its credibility and its partners in the developing world. There is clearly growing pressure on national budgets as a result of the financial and economic crisis. However, I believe that achieving the goal of eradicating poverty will require above all policy change in industrialised and developing countries to address the structural causes of poverty. Mobilising domestic resources in partner countries is the key to sustainable development. It is important that European aid donors step up their efforts to promote tax-related transparency.

Development policy needs to include the fight against misuse of tax havens and against tax evasion and illicit capital flight. In addition, EU policies such as those on agriculture, fisheries, migration and security must under the Treaty of Lisbon be consistent with EU development policy goals, and policy coherence must be implemented for development in order to address the structural problem of eradicating poverty.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing.* – (LT) Last year, the Member States gave only 0.43% of their gross national income (GNI) in official development assistance (ODA), despite the Millennium commitment to give 0.7% by 2015 and an interim 2010 target of 0.56%. In 2005 the Member States promised to channel 50% of all new aid to sub-Saharan Africa, but they have given only half this amount. The EU Member States have also failed to honour their pledge to give 0.15% of their GNI to least-developed countries (LDCs) by 2010. I agree that failing to keep its aid promises will seriously undermine confidence in the EU and damage its credibility among its partners in the developing world, while, on the other hand, honouring those commitments would send a powerful, unequivocal signal to poor nations and other donors. We call on the Member States to take urgent steps to honour their commitment to give 0.7% of their GNI, as well as their specific pledges to Africa and the LDCs, and recommend fully transparent, binding, multiannual measures, including legislation. At the same time, I am convinced that we must strive for more effective aid which provides better value for money, because ineffective aid wastes up to EUR 6 billion of every year.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) I supported this motion for a resolution drafted by Ms Striffler. First and foremost, this resolution highlights the enormous contribution

made in developing countries, thanks in particular to good management of sustainable development aid in the fields of health, education, gender equality, biodiversity and many other areas. However, it is quite clear that the European Union must continue its efforts. This resolution proposes ways of improving aid, development funding, and political dialogue with the emerging economies on development cooperation. I voted in favour of this positive resolution.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) In recent years, against the backdrop of the economic and financial crisis, Member States have reduced their aid budgets considerably due to the immense pressure exerted on their national budgets, thereby making it difficult to eradicate poverty. I think that donors from the EU need to improve their political dialogue with the emerging economies on development cooperation and try to increase the involvement of these states which have substantial resources.

In addition, the aim of the European Union's development policy must be to remove all the structural obstacles undermining its efforts to achieve its objective of reducing poverty. In this regard, I recommend adopting a coherent approach to development in all EU policies in the areas of agriculture, industry, raw materials or trade.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing*. – I voted for this Resolution which urges the Commission to include the fight against misuse of tax havens and against tax evasion and illicit capital flight in its development policy as a matter of priority.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Achieving the poverty eradication goal will require a policy change in industrialised and developing countries. I am in favour of approving this motion for a resolution because, despite the crisis, the European Union has a duty to continue, in fact to improve, its strategy of development aid for developing countries.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this report and welcome the Commission's communication on the EU Accountability Report 2011 on Financing for Development as an extremely useful exercise in transparency and peer review. While fully recognising the financial crisis and the increasing pressure on national budgets, I believe that achieving the poverty eradication goal will require, above all, policy change in industrialised and developing countries to address the structural causes of poverty.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The EU and its Member States are the largest donors of official development assistance internationally, in spite of the restrictions on their budgets, as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis currently plaguing the world. In spite of all the difficulties, it is crucial that the EU honour its commitment to development. Instead of reducing development aid budgets, the EU must take urgent measures to honour its commitments using new innovative financing mechanisms, and must be able to guarantee greater consistency between EU trade policy and development policy.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The report analyses how the EU and its Member States have attempted to meet their commitments for more and better financing for development. The purpose of this oral question and resolution is to press the Council and the Commission on what action they intend to take following the main findings of the report, including: 1) Promoting good governance in tax matters and fighting illegal financial flows. 2) Supporting international trade and increasing private investment, remittances and other private flows for development. 3) Increasing aid and climate change finance in line with commitments. 4) Spending aid effectively, support debt sustainability in developing countries and create a more conducive international architecture for development.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) On the one hand, the EU is the world's largest donor of development assistance, while on the other, its commitment within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, namely to achieve an interim target of 0.56% by 2010, was not met. Last year, the amount given was a mere 0.43% of the GNI of the Member States. The target to be achieved by 2015 was 0.7%. On account of the fact that the funds to be provided for development assistance are measured as a percentage of GNI, the economic crisis would not explain the failure to achieve the targets. Less developed countries in particular, where poverty remains the main problem, need the financial assistance of the West in order to be able to tackle this poverty consistently. I abstained in the vote, because trade-related assistance nevertheless amounted to EUR 3 billion and was thus well above target. Moreover, the financial uncertainties in the individual Member States also need to be taken into account at the present time.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I welcome this motion for a resolution. It should be noted that last year the Member States gave much less in assistance despite their Millennium commitment. Furthermore, ineffective aid wastes up to EUR 6 billion every year. There is therefore a real danger that the EU will fail to keep its aid promises. Such a situation would undermine confidence in the EU as far as its partners in the developing world are concerned. In order to allay such doubts and enhance its image as a credible and stable partner, the EU must, when providing aid, unlock other sources of international development finance besides overseas development assistance (ODA). In its political dialogue with developing countries, the Commission should also include the issue of land grabbing as one of the most pressing issues of today.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (EL) The increased pressure on national budgets due to the financial and economic crisis should not be used either as an excuse or as a reason for reducing European humanitarian aid. Recent IMF forecasts of a 23 million increase in 2012 in the number of people living in poverty in the developing world, due to the crisis in the developed world, brings Europe face to face with its responsibilities. The EU is still the biggest donor in the world; however, there was a EUR 15 billion reduction in funds in the European budget in 2010. At the same time, its mission is not confined solely to financial aid.

Problems such as the acquisition of farmland by government-backed foreign investors, particularly in Africa, are undermining local economies and weakening their productive fabric. Europe therefore needs to control, evaluate and intervene in cases that undermine real support and development in the countries that need it. This is one of the issues underlined in the resolution, which I supported.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for this European Parliament resolution, of 16 November 2011, on the accountability report on financing for development. In this resolution, Parliament welcomes the Commission's communication on the EU Accountability Report 2011 on Financing for Development as an extremely useful exercise in transparency and peer review. I would like to join Parliament in expressing my pleasure at the fact that the report urges EU donors to upgrade policy dialogue with emerging economies on development cooperation, and encourages the Member States to support South-South and triangular development cooperation initiatives, believing there is no longer any justification for aid in the form of grants to cash-rich nations.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The European Union presents itself as the world's leading player in terms of development aid. However, the fact is that recent economic and

financial disturbances have caused problems in this area. In fact, the crisis has been leading Member States to be reluctant to free up funds for development aid. It should, therefore, find a compromise solution, which, without jeopardising the balance of the various Member States' economies, does not sacrifice development aid. Regardless of the funds provided, it is equally important for an effort to be made to optimise the amounts granted for aid; ineffective public aid comes to a total of EUR 6 billion per year. As I consider development aid to be one of the pillars of EU external action, I voted in favour.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – In favour. The European Parliament welcomes the Commission's communication on the EU Accountability Report 2011 on Financing for Development as an extremely useful exercise in transparency and peer review.

It acknowledges the growing pressure on national budgets as a result of the financial and economic crisis. It believes, however, that achieving the poverty eradication goal will require, above all, policy change in industrialised and developing countries to address the structural causes of poverty.

It also reiterates its deep concern about the current acquisition of farmland by government-backed foreign investors, particularly in Africa, which is liable to undermine local food security, and urges the Commission to include the issue of land grabbing in its policy dialogue with developing countries so as to make policy coherence the cornerstone of development cooperation at both national and international level and prevent the expropriation of small farmers and unsustainable land and water use.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Achieving the poverty eradication goal in countries around the world will require, above all, a policy change in industrialised and developing countries to address the structural causes of poverty.

All Member States should therefore adopt urgent measures to meet the commitment of devoting 0.7% of their gross national income to official development assistance and to keep their specific pledges to Africa and the least developed countries by adopting fully transparent, binding, multiannual packages of measures, including legislation. Mobilising domestic resources in partner countries is in fact the key to sustainable development. EU donors should therefore prioritise capacity-building in this area, especially as regards stronger tax systems and better tax governance, and step up efforts worldwide to promote tax-related transparency and country-by-country reporting and combat tax evasion and illicit capital flight, through legislation where necessary.

**Alf Svensson (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) In the vote on the aforementioned text, I voted in favour. As a member of the Committee on Development, it is natural for me to support a motion for a resolution that contains many positive points concerning EU aid, such as the passage concerning transparency within the extractive industries and the growing support for trade-related assistance. However, I would like to use this explanation of vote to express my opposition to the part of paragraph 12 that refers to the introduction of an international financial transaction tax. It is my firm conviction that the introduction of such a tax is not the right approach to take, as it would place a considerable barrier in the way of poor countries that would hinder their chances of development.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In overall terms, the EU and its Member States are the largest donors of official development assistance internationally, in spite of the economic and social crisis that its countries are facing. However, last year the Member States and the Union did not honour their commitments to the Millennium Development

Goals. In view of this, it is necessary to do more and do it better. I am pleased with Member States' commitment to grant 0.7% of gross national income in aid from 2015 onwards, at a time when there is much social turmoil in European societies themselves. Yet we must move beyond direct finance. We must commit to policies in the areas of agriculture, trade, investment, access to raw materials and combating climate change that are consistent with the development prospects of the world's poorest countries. What is more, we must establish other sources of funding, in particular through the European Investment Bank, microfinance and a financial transaction tax, intended for development aid. Private sector support for development must also be stepped up, so that solidarity with the poorest people is not only forged through public policy. At the same time, we should demand accountability and transparency from the countries in receipt of aid.

**Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of this report which highlights the EU's responsibility with regard to funding development in third countries.

In this report, Member States are urged to meet the objectives they set for themselves on funding development aid. These objectives are not so difficult to attain: every Member State must contribute 0.7% of its gross national income (GNI) to this aid.

Yet, to date, we have only managed to contribute 0.43%, and this with difficulty. Countries which we know to be in urgent need of funding for the implementation of health and education policies are being left several billion dollars short.

The economic and financial crisis means that northern countries and especially those in Europe have duties towards the people of southern countries. Europe should demonstrate its values of solidarity, human progress and openness to the world by supporting these countries.

Europe should at last rise to the challenges of development aid. There is still a long way to go.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) I broadly welcome the new accountability report on financing for development as an opportunity to filter out and purposefully strengthen effective aid instruments and to expose ineffective assistance as such. The EU is the world's largest donor of official development assistance, but the commitments made to give 0.7% of GNI in development assistance by 2015 will probably not be achieved. As the motion for a resolution rightly states, a policy change (also in the developing countries) would essentially be needed in order to address the structural causes of poverty. Furthermore, the motion for a resolution calls, above all, for EU development policy to eliminate these obstacles. It reiterates the concern about the progressive acquisition of farmland by foreign investors and calls on the Member States to step up their efforts and also to seek policy dialogue with developing countries with regard to development cooperation. I voted in favour of this position.

#### **Report: Piotr Borys (A7-0366/2011)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I am voting for this report, as it draws particular attention to the needs of the EU's smallest, independent and art-house cinemas, which should be adequately supported with the digitisation process underway.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**, *in writing*. – I am in favour of this report. It aims to support and sustain European cinema – which is an important branch of European industry

– both in terms of its richness and with regard to granting the widest possible access, in the interests of unity and freedom of thought. Through this resolution, Members call on the Member States and the Commission to provide financial support for the full digitisation of equipment in EU cinemas, to establish European and national programmes to support the transition to digital technologies as quickly as possible, and to encourage the circulation of European films in an audiovisual sector that is globally very competitive.

Members recommend the standardisation of systems based on ISO standards in the areas of production, distribution and film screening, and also emphasise the need for public and private investment as the cinema sector enters the digital era. They stress that, in order to ease the digitisation process, diversified financing, both public and private, should be made available at local, regional, national and European level, particularly to support small and independent cinemas. They recommend that the financing of digitisation projects from the EU Structural Funds should be linked to a commitment on the part of supported cinemas to screen European films.

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The European audiovisual sector is an important part of the European Union's economy and should be more competitive globally. European film is an important part of culture, promoting dialogue and understanding, integrating and showing European values inside and outside the European Union, while playing a significant role in preserving and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity.

I would like to stress that film education helps develop an analytical mind and improve the general knowledge of young people and older generations, while it also enables them to learn about cinema heritage and become aware of the complexity of the world of images and sounds. Cinema culture and language allow citizens to gain a critical understanding of different mass media forms, thereby increasing and enhancing the resources and opportunities offered by 'digital literacy'.

**Sophie Auconie (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) In this digital era, the cinema industry faces several challenges including the standardisation of reels which is forcing all distribution networks to change their projection system. While the large operators have already made the move to digital, this is proving to be more difficult for small cinemas. That is why the Borys report, which I endorsed, advocates the implementation of a European framework to help achieve this transition, in particular by providing for EU financial support, and to help promote European cinema.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) The European audiovisual sector, including cinema, constitutes a significant part of the EU economy. The European shift to digital cinema should aim at creating new opportunities for the distribution of European films, maintaining the diversity of European production and enhancing its accessibility for European citizens. The digital era brings new opportunities for the audiovisual sector, in particular in the film industry as regards more effective distribution, screening and availability of films and as regards the higher audio and visual quality that it offers for European audiences, but it also creates some serious challenges for European cinema in the transition to digital technologies, particularly with regard to finance. European cinema should be more competitive at global level, and I therefore welcome the call on the Member States and the Commission to financially support the full digitisation of equipment in EU cinemas and to establish European and national programmes to support the transition to digital technologies as quickly as possible.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) • I voted for this resolution because I realise that sound, effective and well-coordinated public policies are required to support European cinema. Technological advances offer a challenge and opportunity at the same time. Coordinated action is vital at EU level to ensure that the new opportunities provided by the digital era are fully utilised. I welcome the proposals on the funding models and measures for promoting European films. I regard the commitment made by the President of the Commission to maintain and further strengthen the MEDIA programme as a particularly positive step. I should emphasise the cultural, social, artistic and educational role played by cinema, along with the economic value provided by the cinema industry. I would like to mention in this context the value of Romanian cinema, which demonstrates some of these features. I should highlight the need to support the various film schools in European countries, as well as provision of the widest possible access to the cinema in every region in the EU, including rural areas.

**George Becali (NI)**, *in writing.* – (RO) I am no expert in this area, but I think that I am, like all of us, an informed consumer. Cinema is obviously a cultural tool, but it is also an important sector of European industry. Modern technology poses a huge challenge and cinema must be supported in addressing it. Film education must become an objective which we allocate European money to. We in Romania debate on almost a daily basis in the media how the young generation are affected by the battle, which has almost been lost, between television and cinema. I voted for this report and I hope that it will make a rapid impact.

**Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) European cinema plays two fundamental roles in European society: the first is linked to cultural development and the second to creating economic dynamism. The transition to digital technology represents a major financial challenge for European cinemas, especially small independent cinemas, as this development appears to be unavoidable. This is quite a sensitive issue: as independent cinemas reflect our European cinematographic style, it is essential to ensure that the investment required to achieve this technical transition does not jeopardise the existence of these cinemas or their programming independence. It is also necessary to take account of the differences in infrastructure across Europe and therefore accessibility: there are 16 102 people per screen in Western Europe compared with 40 750 in Central and Eastern Europe.

In this regard, the report by Piotr Borys on European cinema in the digital era, which I endorse, is a step in the right direction in that it aims to protect cinemas and European film production and to even out the 'divide' in the accessibility of cinema in Europe. I hope that these proposals will be taken on board in order to protect the cultural and economic capital of our film production industry.

**Adam Bielan (ECR)**, *in writing.* – (PL) Cinema and film production constitute an important branch of industry, in Europe also. However, for any country, cinema and film production represent, first and foremost, part of the country's culture and a tool for creating cultural heritage. Viewed as a product, they are also inseparably intertwined with technological progress, which, today, essentially implies digitisation.

Supporting the European film industry, which in itself is very desirable, cannot take place in isolation from the global heritage of this cultural sector. The report suggests solutions that openly discriminate against American film, for example, preferring measures which plainly favour cinemas that specialise in the projection of European films. Maintaining

small cinemas, often sharing a long-standing history, is a positive measure. However, the increase of financial outlays for such operators cannot take place when based on discrimination due to the character and origin of the projected films. The aforementioned regulations form the basis of my reservations; therefore I decided to abstain from voting.

**Mara Bizzotto (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report because, in addressing the transformation of cinema from the analogue to the digital era, it responsibly takes into consideration the problems that small, independent cinemas in rural areas will have to face. Given the high cost of equipping cinemas with digital projectors, most small cinemas will not be able to cope with the change; they will be forced out of the market and will have to close down. That is likely to severely limit access to culture in rural areas, which generally only have this kind of small, independent cinema, not to mention the adverse effects on jobs.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this report because I agree that European cinema needs support to ensure its distribution and accessibility. This art form helps people to acknowledge one another and share the same human experience and helps to create the identity of Europe as a community of nations. It is now more than 100 years since cinema was invented and, with changes in technology, the digital format has become popular. This is very costly to produce but 10 times cheaper to copy than producing film tape. I also agree that EU financial support is necessary, not just for film-makers but also for the development of cinemas being digitised. Only in this way will we maintain access to cultural diversity and availability on multiple platforms. The digital format also enables film copies to be produced in different languages. It is clear that in future people will follow the latest technologies, and cinemas which have not been digitised will be pushed out of the market and will close. European assistance is therefore essential.

**Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) European cinema is facing its biggest challenge to date: coping with the requirements of modern technology. The future of cinema is inextricably linked to the advent of the digital era. Modern technologies are changing the audiovisual sector, creating challenges and opportunities for production, distribution and the accessibility of European cinema, as well as certain risks in the transition from analogue to digital systems. The transformation process should be completed rapidly and be coordinated at both national and European level. Participation in this process should be the responsibility of both the public and the private sector.

European cinema obviously offers huge potential. There are approximately 30 000 screens in the European Union, most of which are small cinemas consisting of just one or two screens. In recent years, we have witnessed an acceleration in the digitisation process in cinemas, stemming from the production of digital films, mostly originating from the US, as well as the ever-increasing public demand for films made using 3D technology. European cinemas have sold nearly 1 billion tickets for European films, accounting for 27% of the market. However, the European cinema market, with all its potential, is still not integrated, and film distribution within the EU proves difficult.

**Vito Bonsignore (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report because I am convinced that European cinema must be supported in tackling the huge challenge of entering the digital era. European cinema has enormous potential, which it is vital to support. There are approximately 30 000 screens in the European Union. In 2010 there were 1 203 films made here (compared to 754 in the United States) and nearly a billion tickets were sold, with European films accounting for 27% of the market.

However, switching from celluloid to digital involves considerably higher costs for both producers and cinema owners. It is important, therefore, to support different ways of financing the digitisation of cinema – by using structural funds, for example – in order to prevent a crisis in the sector and its associated industries.

It is also essential to foster mechanisms to integrate distributors and cinema operators in order to lower the costs of investment. Lastly, we should continue to monitor the provision of financial support both for cinema itself and for culture and education in general.

**Jan Březina (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (CS) I support the different ways of financing the digitisation of cinema on a political level, and I consider the Structural Funds to be one of the most important instruments in financing. Therefore, an appropriate level of support needs to be included in the new financial perspective 2014-2020. The European Regional Development Fund has already allowed some studio cinemas to better face the challenges of digitisation. Another significant instrument is the availability of preferential credit rates offered by the European Investment Bank to cinemas with insufficient funds for the digitisation process. I appreciate the significance of the MEDIA programme which, from its conception 20 years ago, has promoted favourable financial conditions for European distributors and considerably contributed to the development and promotion of European films. New initiatives need to be taken up within the MEDIA programme aimed at improving and promoting translation, dubbing, subtitling and surtitling as well as training programmes directed at the representatives of the audiovisual and film sectors in order to adapt their expertise to digital technologies.

**David Campbell Bannerman (ECR)**, *in writing*. – My hobby is writing film scripts so I declare an interest in this subject.

But whilst this report might claim to be about new ‘Cinema Paradiso’s, it is more likely to lead to ‘Cinema Disastroso’.

Why does the EU want to discriminate against non-European films?

Firstly, this is a form of non-tariff barrier and against WTO rules.

Second, filmmaking is incredibly international these days – defining a non-European film is difficult: is Harry Potter or James Bond an American film for its production, finance and distribution, or British by dint of talent, theme, location and studios used? The ‘Fifth Element’ may be directed by Frenchman Luc Besson but Bruce Willis is the star. Even the iconic French film ‘Chocolat’ had substantial US support.

Third, you simply cannot force people to watch films they do not want to see. European movies can be winners without giving away seats: ‘Chocolat’ took USD 71 million at the box office, ‘Amélie’ USD 152 million and “The King’s Speech” USD 386 million.

Any support for film is better targeted on developing good stories or in skills development, not in seeking to prop up films no one wants to see. That is why on principle I could not vote for this report, whilst being very much in support of the film industry.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) European cinema is currently facing one of its greatest challenges: coping with the requirements of modern technology. The audiovisual sector is inseparably tied to the new challenges of the digital era, which has repercussions for the production, distribution and accessibility of European cinema. In the face of increasing production of digital films, as well as increased public demand for films made using 3D technology, we have witnessed an acceleration of the process of cinema digitisation

in recent years, entailing costs for the sector's producers and cinema owners, since they must provide for compliance by the analogue and digital sectors. I therefore believe adequate support for the process of cinema digitisation to be important, both from the Member States and from the Structural Funds.

Let us not forget that European cinema, alongside the economic benefits it brings, plays a key role in terms of culture and society, and in terms of developing a European cultural identity. It should, however, respond to and preserve programming diversity and the cultural facilities of the EU, and should not result in the closure of small and art-house cinemas to the benefit of multiplexes. Innovation must be at the service of cultural heritage, rather than the other way around.

**Lara Comi (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I have to endorse this excellent report, which is full of interesting points for reflection. As a film fan, I very much welcome the priorities listed by the rapporteur, especially the point about the digitisation of all our precious film material to preserve the art, quality, culture, emotions, descriptions, sensitivity, history and pictorial heritage that only European cinema can offer – and not only to Europeans but to the whole world. Investing in this area means looking beyond the merely economic and employment aspects: cinema is nothing if not an effective method of putting culture and learning across to people, helping them from a young age to develop their sensitivity and knowledge in an agreeable way by providing media skills to improve their understanding of the most varied subjects. While this report is an important outcome, the willingness and ongoing commitment shown by our institutions in promoting film education are even more important in ensuring that cinema enriches our culture and fuels European industry.

**Corina Crețu (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Faced with the biggest challenge in its history, posed by new technologies, European cinema must be supported during the process of adopting to digital technology and to public demands for 3D screens. In addition, there are still major disparities between West and East in the EU in terms of public access to cinemas: there is one screen per 16 102 persons in Western Europe, compared with one screen per 40 750 persons in Central and Eastern Europe. Given the educational role and cultural and social impact that cinema has, I voted in favour of increased support for the transition from analogue to digital technologies, as well as for backing European film production and independent cinemas devoted to European films.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for the report on European cinema in the digital era, as I believe that adequate funding should be made available to enable the transition to digital technology, principally in small cinemas. It is important to ensure that European cinema is internationally competitive, while at the same time maintaining its identity and continuing to promote cultural and linguistic diversity.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) As the report states, European cinema has two very important dimensions: on the one hand, it represents European cultural expression, and, on the other, it is a creative industry with enormous economic potential. This double dimension means that investment in European cinema and its adaptation to the digital era are crucial, from both a cultural perspective and an economic one.

The figures are impressive: in 2010, European cinema produced 1 203 films, as opposed to 754 produced in the US. However, we still continue to immediately associate the word cinema with Hollywood, even though the majority of cinema production now takes place outside the US.

Today, we are awarding the LUX prize, created specifically to support European cinema, to a French film which deals with the themes of loyalty, solidarity and morality. We hope that this prize will serve to raise awareness, to encourage the European cinema industry to continue producing good films, and to encourage cinemagoers to choose good European productions.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Cultural industries make an essential contribution to local development because they make regions more attractive, promote sustainable tourism and generate new job opportunities. Europeans are among the biggest consumers of cultural products, so the cinema industry deserves particular attention from all of us. This is not only due to its cultural dimension, having a fundamental role in the protection, promotion and spreading of local and regional cultural identities, but is also due to its economic value. At a time of technological transformation, in which we are witnessing cinema's transition from its analogue phase into the digital era, it is crucial that the EU not be left behind and that it take advantage of new opportunities, so as to draw in new audiences and link together the different European regions. I therefore welcome the adoption of this report, drafted by Mr Borys, on European cinema in the digital era, especially on the day that Parliament is awarding the LUX prize to a film dealing with European values.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report concerns European cinema in the digital era and the issue of the European cinema industry. Socially, culturally and economically, cinema is of vital importance.

Nonetheless, European cinema's modernisation gives rise to certain concerns, especially with regard to related costs. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to various small, independent cinemas that are already experiencing serious difficulties surviving, owing to a lack of support, to constant cuts to culture and to the general public's reduced standard of living.

However, when highlighting the importance of cinema and support for this industry, we are bound to point out the responsibility of EU-imposed budgetary policies, which greatly reduce support for various kinds of artistic creativity, including cinema, affecting the living conditions of countless workers in the performing arts throughout Europe.

The words spoken today in Parliament, which were symbolically uttered by the director of the film which won the LUX award, aimed at an EU 'too focused on markets and not enough on people', should be taken very seriously.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing.* – (PT) This report concerns European cinema in the digital era and the issue of the European cinema industry. Socially, culturally and economically, cinema is of vital importance.

Nonetheless, European cinema's modernisation gives rise to certain concerns, especially with regard to related costs. This is particularly pertinent when it comes to various small, independent cinemas that are already experiencing serious difficulties surviving, owing to a lack of support, to constant cuts to culture and to the general public's reduced standard of living.

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**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Culture lies at the foundation of European identity and our common values. It is at the heart of contemporary debates on identity, social cohesion and the development of a knowledge-based economy. The European audiovisual sector, including cinema, constitutes a significant part of the EU economy, so efforts should be made to increase its competitiveness. European film is an important part of culture, promoting dialogue and understanding, embodying and showing European values within and outside the EU whilst playing a significant role in preserving and supporting cultural and linguistic diversity. The digital era is bringing new opportunities to the sector, particularly as regards the more effective distribution, screening and availability of films and as regards higher-quality images and sounds. However, it has also created some serious challenges to European cinema in the process of moving to digital technologies, particularly with regard to finance. The high costs of converting to digital technology, even though this means long-term commercial gains, is a significant burden on many independent cinemas. The Commission should therefore propose specific measures to provide support. In addition to the economic dynamics, European cinema is an important factor in the cultural development and identity of Europe. I firmly believe that we should make efforts not only to sustain European cinema in its richness but also to grant the widest possible access to citizens in the name of unity and freedom of thought.

**Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PL) Digital cinemas have gained great popularity in the United States, and currently the demand for similar projects is also increasing in Europe, which produces approximately one third more films than the US. Digital equipment used in film projection is approximately 25% to 30% cheaper than previous-generation models, and will therefore be more accessible to a greater number of cinemas, and thus to a wider audience. Investment in digital cinemas also supports the film industry, through both better distribution as well as the quality of projected image and sound. I am pleased that the funding provided for the modernisation of cinemas comes from the Cohesion Fund, as it not only allows for the promotion of our European film heritage, but also supports an important industry sector. Culture is no longer merely a 'higher need', but a sector which generates an increasingly larger share of the EU Member States' GDP, providing an ever-growing number of new jobs. In this aspect also, new cinemas contribute to the revitalisation of urban areas, for example, and, consequently, to the improved quality of life of people who live there. The transition from the analogue to the digital era may also ensure the wider participation of the citizens of a united Europe in cultural life. As with the digitisation of libraries and archives, the digitisation of cinema will ensure easier access to a common cultural heritage.

**Ian Hudghton (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – This report rightly highlights the importance of European cinema. Scotland has a vibrant and important cultural scene and the Scottish government is committed to promoting fully our creative industries. Scotland's cultural bodies have an important role to play in the wider European cultural scene – just as an Independent Scotland will have an important role to play in the wider EU.

**Juozas Imbrasas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) This issue was debated broadly at the Dijon Film Forum attended by prominent figures from European cinema, politicians and representatives from the European Commission who made it happen. There were discussions on how to stress and support the digitisation of cinemas in the digital age,

because other cinema markets that compete with the European film industry, such as the US cinema market, may take advantage of it. It is very important for the accent on support to have safeguards (in the next stage following the adoption of this document), so that the potential of European films and their distribution grows with it (for example, a certain quota of support for digitisation for cinemas only showing European cinema, and so on). This document would thus strengthen the European cinema industry and make it more competitive. It is very important for measures and support for digitisation to promote not just the technical process but for there to be an emphasis on who should receive this assistance. In my opinion, assistance must be allocated to European content, quantity, quality, diversity and multi-dimensional distribution. I am pleased that this document is aimed at supporting and sustaining European cinema in its richness as well as granting the widest possible access to citizens in the name of unity and freedom of thought.

**Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D)**, *in writing*. – European cinema has evolved considerably in the last years. Education through film allows citizens to have a critical understanding of the societies they live in. European cinema has to become more visible on the world scene, to match the American and the growing Indian cinema.

Related to the way movies are projected, I believe that digital cinema is the answer and we should focus on this. The conversion from analogue to digital has many advantages. The existing system is very expensive and the use of both analogue and digital is complicated. These are the reasons why I believe European cinema has to evolve in the digital era and I endorse the resolution of Piotr Borys.

**Philippe Juvin (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) This report was adopted unanimously by the Committee on Culture and Education. It points out the opportunities open to European cinema and the challenges it faces, particularly with regard to production, distribution and accessibility. The transition from analogue to digital systems should be achieved as urgently as possible, be coordinated at both national and European level and be part of a process involving public and private partnership. There was an urgent need to implement a European framework for this sector in order to guarantee the flexibility and transparency of the standardisation process, the digitisation of cinemas and the promotion of European cinema. I therefore voted in favour of this report.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) European cinema is an economic and cultural resource to be protected and supported by policies that take account of the latest technological advances and the prospects for growth in outlying and rural areas. I voted in favour of the report because ensuring that the MEDIA programme and the whole European film industry move with the times may, in my view, be the right way to come to the aid of a sector that has proved able to attract large numbers of Europeans despite the current crisis. I think we need to invest and focus our efforts in several areas: implementation of digital technologies, copyright enforcement, consumer protection, promotion of culture, screenings in rural areas and encouragement for the production of films that take account of diversity within the European Union while preserving its spirit of unity. Given the number of these aspects covered by European policies on the subject, the film industry will be able to look to the future with renewed economic and cultural vision.

**Constance Le Grip (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of the report by Piotr Borys on European cinema in the digital era. There had been no work on this subject by European Parliament for over 10 years despite the many significant changes that have taken place

in the cinema industry over the past few years with the arrival of digital technology. Our task as MEPs is to call for a gentle transition towards new digital technology and in particular to provide more help to small cinemas so that they can invest in new production, archiving or projection infrastructure. I feel that it is also important to promote diversity in European film production and the cinema network as this diversity truly reflects Europe's wide range of cultural identities. Making the MEDIA programme permanent in the years to come, in particular, would be one way of achieving this.

**Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (DA) I have today voted in favour of the report on European cinema in the digital era, as I essentially agree that we should prepare cinemas for the digitisation of film. However, I would like to emphasise that I believe that it should be up to the market to find solutions for this. It is therefore regrettable that the Structural Funds are mentioned as a possible means of supporting cinemas. I do not believe that this is a practicable solution, and it could have been avoided if we had worked at reaching compromises. Overall, however, the report contains a lot of good proposals, indicating solutions for strengthening cinemas in the digital era.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) In 2010 almost 1 billion cinema tickets were sold in the EU, highlighting the huge financial potential offered by European cinema. As the cinema sector enters the digital era, both public and private investment will be required, however, for the transition to a newer format. The Structural Funds may provide a possible financing solution. The European Regional Development Fund has already been accessed by several cinema studios in Poland and Portugal in order to address the challenges posed by digitisation. Therefore, one solution would be for the new financial perspective for 2014-2020 to include funds earmarked for this sector.

**David Martin (S&D)**, *in writing.* – European cinema is facing its biggest challenge to date: coping with the requirements of modern technology. The future of cinema is inseparably tied to the arrival of the digital era. Modern technologies change the audiovisual sector, creating challenges and possibilities for production, distribution and the accessibility of European cinema as well as certain dangers in the transition from analogue to digital systems. The transformation process should be achieved expeditiously and be coordinated on a national as well as European level. Participation in this process should be the responsibility of both the public and the private sectors.

**Clemente Mastella (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) This report invites us to consider the very function of cinema in Europe and its role in the creation and sustainability of a civil society. We are called on to support it and to commit to granting the widest possible access to citizens in the name of unity and freedom of thought.

European cinema is facing its biggest challenge to date: coping with the requirements of modern technology, including the arrival of the digital era. Modern technologies are changing the audiovisual sector, creating challenges and possibilities for production, distribution and accessibility. In this transition from analogue to digital cinema, operators in both the public and the private sectors in all the Member States should unite at a national as well as an EU level.

Parliament should initiate this paradigm shift by making a financial input. One of the most important financing instruments is the Structural Funds. Therefore, we call for an appropriate level of support to be included in the new multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020. Another significant instrument is the availability of preferential credit

rates offered by the European Investment Bank to cinemas with insufficient funds for the digitisation process.

**Iosif Matula (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (RO) At a time of profound social change, we must ask ourselves what actual function cinema serves nowadays. There is no doubt that cinema productions can help create a common European identity and strengthen the ties between citizens who belong to the European area, at a time when most of the productions viewed in the EU are made on the American continent.

Apart from its cultural value, cinema also has an important economic aspect. In light of this, it is vital to adapt to the technological changes, as they provide substantial benefits for this industry: better quality, faster, easier and less expensive distribution. However, the transition to the digital era is an exorbitant process, putting a strain on cinema theatres with a small number of screens.

I therefore advocate support for European cinema by allocating funds not only via the MEDIA programme, but also using the Structural Funds, in the 2014-2020 financial perspective. Making this effort provides support for education and culture. At the same time, it is our duty to introduce serious media training for the public which needs to learn to judge and appreciate the content of European cinema productions. We must also focus appropriate attention on the impact that 3D cinema productions can have on consumer health, as this phenomenon is steadily growing.

**Mario Mauro (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) For a continually expanding industry that makes a substantial contribution to technological and digital progress and to job creation, it would be excellent to have more showings of European films in our cinemas. I am voting in favour.

**Erminia Mazzoni (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) I believe deeply in the need to promote culture in order to stimulate social and economic growth. Cinema is a key form of culture and needs to be able to benefit from innovation without losing its traditional value. Progress does not always lead to advancement but sometimes distorts important pillars of our civilisation to the extent of destroying them.

In this case, however, it is reasonable to support the initiative to speed up the switchover from analogue to digital in cinemas through additional financing instruments and earmarked funds within the EU budget. This modernisation needs to be supported through investment during the launch phase. The product is highly remunerative in terms of wider and faster dissemination, lower management costs and market access for a vast audience of talented young people, who are currently penalised by the costs of distribution.

I voted in favour in order not to allow culture and social policies to always get tangled up in the crisis, victims of an outmoded way of thinking that is unable to calculate the huge returns and savings that those sectors produce.

**Emma McClarkin (ECR)**, *in writing.* – I abstained on this report because it does not address the real needs of either European cinemas or European filmmakers. We all want our local cinemas to survive and we all want films made in Europe to be successful, but you cannot create a European identity through films. Forcing cinemas to show a certain proportion of European films, regardless of whether anyone wants to watch them or not, is the quickest way to send even more of our cinemas out of business. Our cinemas cannot be immune from market forces nor can they be propped up by the types of subsidies proposed in this report. We live in a modern and fast moving digital age where cinemas must compete against a variety of new services. They still occupy a vital place in the market

and play an important social role, but there is little in this report that will help them to survive or adapt. The ECR Group therefore tabled a number of separate votes on these points and voted against their inclusion in the report. However, as they remain in the report, I can not support it.

**Nuno Melo (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) European cinema is facing its biggest challenge to date: coping with the requirements of modern technology. The future of cinema is inseparably tied to the arrival of the digital era. Modern technologies are transforming the audiovisual sector, creating challenges and possibilities for the production, distribution and accessibility of European cinema, as well as certain dangers in the transition from analogue to digital systems. Participation in this process should be the responsibility of both the public and the private sector. European cinema has enormous potential. According to data from the European Audiovisual Observatory, there are approximately 30 000 screens in the European Union. Most of these are small cinemas consisting of just one or two screens. In recent years, we have witnessed an acceleration of the process of digitisation of cinemas stemming from production of digital films, mainly from the US, as well as increased public demand for films made using 3D technology. It is expected that in the near future most cinemas will have to switch to digital technology and copies of films will not be available on 35mm reels any more.

**Louis Michel (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The European audiovisual sector, including the cinema industry, accounts for a significant share of the EU economy. In today's society, European cinema plays a dual role that is both cultural and economic. Cinema therefore needs to be looked at in two different ways, on the one hand as a tool of culture where investments produce long-term intangible results and, on the other hand as an important branch of European industry. An acceleration in the digitisation of cinemas has been witnessed in recent years stemming from the production of digital films, mainly from the United States, as well as the increased public demand for films made using 3D technology. European cinema is facing a considerable challenge: coping with the requirements of modern technology. The complete digitisation of both the European film industry and its cinemas must be accomplished urgently, to avoid reduced access to cultural diversity and should be supported at European and national level. European cinema is a large and vital industry, which could help to achieve the EU's objectives for 2020. It is therefore essential to support it during this transition period.

**Alexander Mirsky (S&D)**, *in writing*. – It is known that the report considers both the economic and cultural aspects of European cinema, taking the view that European Cinema should be more competitive at a global level but must be sure to retain its European identity and continue to promote cultural and linguistic diversity. It is also necessary to provide funds for popularisation and the protection of copyrights of cinema producers to make the process have the economic aspect. I am in favour.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) According to the report, European cinema can be regarded as something that helps to establish the European identity. In other words, films produced in Europe can be used to address subjects that can and should encourage subsequent discussion. An important issue relating to European cinema is the economic aspect. Thus, European productions bring in money for the Member States while they are being shown and also serve to make viewers aware of a wide range of different regions. In 2010, 1 203 films were produced in Europe. In the US there were 'only' 754. Twenty-seven per cent of the one billion cinema tickets sold were for European films. However, as a result of the rapid advances in technology (digital, 3D and so on), some cinemas, small ones

located in rural regions in particular, are being forced to close because they are unable to finance a technology conversion or upgrade. This will mean that in future it will no longer be possible to ensure that cinemas are found right throughout the Union. I did not vote in favour of the report, as I believe that this issue should be taken up at national level rather than European level.

**Rolandas Paksas (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted in favour of this resolution because currently the increasing distribution of popular, particularly US, films is threatening not just the diversity of films in Europe but also the existence of small cinemas. Above all, if they want to remain in the market and be able to compete, they cannot choose freely which films to include in their programme and which ones not. Furthermore, due to the high costs of digitisation, many of these independent cinemas may find themselves on the brink of survival or be forced to cease trading altogether. Consequently, we must establish targeted funding mechanisms which would ensure assistance for these cinemas as well as the distribution of European films. Particular attention should be paid to cinemas in more sparsely populated areas. It is also very important for the Member States themselves to use education programmes to cultivate an audience that appreciates European films and to ensure adequate and effective mechanisms to enforce intellectual property rights. There is a need to promote European cinema more internationally and to strengthen the European cinema industry so that it becomes more competitive. I believe that assistance for digital technologies must not only promote the development of the technological process but also the high quality, quantity, diversity and distribution of European cinema.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (EL) I voted in favour of the report. There can be no doubt that the viability of European cinema depends to a large degree on its ability to adapt to new technologies. In practical terms, this means moving from the analogue to the digital era and, even though necessary, such a move will be expensive. By the end of 2010, only 8 682 of the 30 000 cinemas in Europe had purchased digital projectors. The high cost (approximately EUR 100 000 per screen) is felt most in hard times by small, regional and local cinemas. The European Structural Funds therefore provide them with vital support. The European Parliament's proposal is absolutely clear-cut. An appropriate amount in financial aid must be budgeted in the financial perspective 2014-2020 and the assistance currently provided by the European Regional Development Fund must be increased.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) According to data from the European Audiovisual Observatory, there are approximately 30 000 screens in the European Union. Most of them are small cinemas consisting of just one or two screens. In recent years we have witnessed an acceleration of the process of digitisation of cinemas stemming from production of digital films, mainly from the US, as well as the increased public demand for films made using 3D technology. These figures indicate that European cinema has great potential. The promotion of cinema is also the promotion of dialogue between cultures, and of multilingualism. Parliament is also contributing to achieving these goals, through the initiatives of the LUX Film Prize and the forthcoming LUX Film Festival. The benefit of a cultural initiative like the one being promoted by Parliament is that they generate debate on topics which need discussing and which are important to the citizens of the Member States. The films screened deal with important European values, the strength of which lies in expressing themselves in diversity. I voted for this report for these reasons.

**Aldo Patriciello (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Having assessed the relative importance of cinema in passing on values and characters to shape and create a 'European soul', and having also

assessed the important role of cinema in creating and sustaining a civil society, I think it is appropriate to support European cinema at this time when it is facing the unavoidable challenge of adapting to modern technology. In view of the change in modern technology for the audiovisual sector designed to expand the possibilities for European cinema in terms of production, distribution and accessibility, in order to support the switchover, which needs to be completed quickly and should be coordinated at both national and EU levels, and as I agree with the text in its entirety, I am voting in favour.

**Paulo Rangel (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (PT) Cinema is one of the main ways of sharing and disseminating cultural values. In spite of the fact that 1 203 films were produced in Europe in 2010, as opposed to 754 productions in the US, European cinema represents a mere 27% of tickets sold. Moreover, demand for cinema is greater in the countries of the West than those in the East. On top of these obstacles, technological developments have led to an abrupt transition from analogue to digital technology, meaning that new problems have emerged for European cinema's distribution. As such, a public policy supporting technological adaptation, which aims to support cinema as an integral part of European education and culture, is justified, without losing sight of the enormous financial difficulties at this point in time. I voted in favour for these reasons.

**Frédérique Ries (ALDE)**, *in writing.* – (FR) Almost 1 billion cinema tickets were sold in some 30 000 EU cinemas in 2010. In 2010, there were 1 203 films made in Europe, compared with 754 in the United States: the EU cinema industry is therefore in good health. Today, in voting in favour of the Borys report on European cinema in the digital era, the European Parliament has offered to accept the challenge of adapting the cinema industry to modern technology. The digitisation of cinemas is now inevitable: with lower costs for the film industry, digitisation will help to safeguard the competitiveness of European cinema and meet the growing public demand for high quality films. These are all reasons to support the digital transition process financially, through the MEDIA programme in particular. Cinema is above all an important cultural vehicle and it is also the EU's role to promote creation. Incidentally, today the European Parliament awarded the LUX Prize, which rewards works of film that illustrate European values. It is therefore absolutely natural that formats and projection methods begin to be harmonised, if only to encourage greater circulation of films in the European Union, to promote cultural diversity or simply to offer cinema tickets at an affordable price.

**Crescenzo Rivellini (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) In today's sitting, Mr Borys's report was put to the vote. The resolution points out that it is too expensive for small, independent cinemas to purchase all the digital equipment they need to keep abreast of the digital revolution.

The European Union is being asked to provide specific subsidies to help these businesses invest in production and the ability to screen films in 3D and using HDTV or Blu-Ray technology. EU and national subsidies for European cinema should encourage the diversification of film production and the cinema circuit so as to promote the continent's varied cultural identities. Parliament is therefore calling for an increase in state aid and for money to be made available from the European Structural Funds and the new MEDIA programme to support the digitisation of production and distribution of European cinema.

According to Parliament, the key challenge facing European cinema today is to encourage people to go to the small, independent cinemas in small towns and rural areas, which are

particularly vulnerable financially and need help to keep up with current technological developments.

**Robert Rochefort (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The transition to digital technology represents a major financial challenge for European cinemas, especially for small independent cinemas, of which there are many in the EU. These kinds of cinema, however, are key to conserving European cultural diversity and the investment required to achieve the technical transition should not jeopardise their existence or restrict their programming. I therefore welcome the report by Piotr Borys on European cinema in the digital era, which I endorsed. It is indeed essential to protect European cinemas and film production. I particularly support the rapporteur's wish to see financial support for investment towards digitisation in independent cinemas and in less well populated areas, namely through the MEDIA programme and Structural Funds, and also film education from a young age and the promotion of European cinema. I hope that these proposals will be taken on board in order to protect the cultural and economic capital of our film production industry.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE)**, *in writing*. – In favour. Cinema must be perceived as a political act aiming at shaping the European soul, as argued by Wim Wenders: "Europe has its own soul, anchored in culture. And this culture is 'shaped' by an instrument that is the cornerstone of our individual and collective consciousness, which in turn creates a European hope. This instrument has a name: cinema." Wim Wenders' words should be the guiding principle of any attempt to shape the future of European cinema.

The redefining of the function of the cinema in the European context, 'European cinema in the digital area' puts into question the public policies implemented to support the European cinema.

Cinema needs to be looked at in two different ways, on the one hand as a tool of culture where investments produce long-term intangible results, on the other hand as an important branch of the European industry. Creation is the heart of culture whereas industry is its lungs.

**Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (EL) I voted in favour of the report on European cinema in the digital era, because it aims to support and maintain the richness of European cinema and to ensure the broadest possible public access to it. European cinema has huge potential; there are approximately 30 000 cinemas in the European Union. I think that we need to support this sector, so that it can respond to the demands of modern technology. Operators in all the Member States must join forces in this process to move from analogue to digital cinema at national and Community level and in the public and private sector and I think that the European Investment Bank could help here by granting soft loans.

**Christel Schaldemose, Dan Jørgensen, Britta Thomsen and Ole Christensen (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (DA) We voted in favour of the report on European cinema in the digital era, as it contains several good initiatives and we recognise cinema as being important in shaping European culture.

We support the process of the digitisation of European film and we believe that public funds should be used to finance part of this conversion process. However, we are against the calls – as envisaged in certain places in the report – for a considerable increase in EU funds for this digitisation, as we are in the midst of a crisis. We need to be careful with, and stringently prioritise how we use, taxpayers' money.

**Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Cinema is a means of explaining the changes in society. That is the spirit of the motion for a resolution on European cinema in the digital era. The cultural cinema industry is therefore able to transmit and deal with European public policies. For that to happen, it is essential to support production, cinemas and film festivals. The future of cinema is inseparably tied to the arrival of the digital era. European cinema has enormous potential. According to data from the European Audiovisual Observatory, there are approximately 30 000 screens in the European Union. The number of cinemas with digital projectors in 2010 was 8 682, more than double the 4 129 that existed in 2009.

One of the channels for promotion and investment in the popularisation of European cinema in Europe is through film festivals. Member States and European institutions are encouraged to promote, support and distribute the most valuable films by organising special events and festivals. An excellent example of promoting multiculturalism is the European Parliament initiatives of the LUX Film Prize and the forthcoming LUX Film Festival.

**Nicole Sinclair (NI)**, *in writing*. – Cinema is an important cultural medium, but I cannot support this report, which calls for state funding for ‘European films’ and the cinemas that show them. It calls for ‘European cinema’ to be taught as a subject in schools. In the Soviet Union this was called *nashe kino* – ‘our cinema’. It was state propaganda, and it was part of an overall campaign of indoctrination. Thank you to comrade Borys for reminding us of another political project that collapsed in economic ruin.

**Csaba Sógor (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) We are often faced with the question whether there is a European identity, and whether a common European mindset alongside or above the various national identities can be created to bind the peoples of the continent together and to assist us in realising our common efforts in line with the objectives of European integration. Of course I am not the one to answer this question either, but one thing is certain: we can promote this goal by supporting European films, because European filmmaking draws nourishment from the diversity of cultures, and a Europe of multiple nationalities is reflected in the works of the European filmmaking industry. We are all familiar with the specific legal aspects of the institution of European citizenship, but what does it mean in everyday life and what are citizens’ experiences in this regard? European films can help us understand this as well, as films always represent a mirror of society. This was the case back when, for example, in the Eastern part of Europe social criticism could be expressed in films only in a very cautious and veiled manner, and this is the case even today when artists are free to depict society and the everyday life of Europe in ways they deem authentic. Europeans need European films, and films need support in order to be able to adapt to the challenges of the modern day.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) European cinema, in all its diversity and richness, is a vehicle for promoting European identity and, at the same time, European industry. For these two reasons, we should support the production of European films as much as possible. This report focuses on the challenge that producers and cinema owners face regarding the transition from an analogue system to the digital era. These additional and high costs will have harmful consequences for the cinema industry. As such, there is a call for participation in this process by both the public sector and, crucially, the private sector. Establishing a truly European cinema industry requires greater integration within the EU. Financial support through programmes like MEDIA and MEDIA MUNDUS, and the Structural Funds, are fundamental for cinema and image media, as borne out by the example of Alentejo and

the north of Portugal. I am voting in favour, as I believe that cinema is an extremely important aspect of culture, in which Europe can make a difference. I also support the promotion and creation of European film festivals, with 100% European films.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for the resolution on European cinema in the digital era because I think that the digital era is creating new opportunities for the audiovisual sector, especially in the film industry. It will therefore ensure more effective distribution, screening and availability of films, while also offering higher audio and visual quality to the European public. I voted for paragraph 92 which calls on Member States to include film education in their national education programmes. Even though European cinema provided more than 30 000 jobs in 2010 and almost 1 billion cinema tickets were sold in the EU, there is still a geographical imbalance in Europe in the accessibility of cinemas and films to the public, which is more noticeable in Eastern Europe and rural areas. Digitisation of the European film industry and its cinemas must be supported at European and national level, thereby avoiding restrictions on access to cultural diversity and on availability. I support the need to standardise systems based on ISO standards in the areas of production, distribution and film screening and to ensure interoperability of digital projection systems and materials, as well as other devices. The development of digital cinema requires respect for intellectual property and the related rights in the Information Society.

**Róża Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) The European Parliament's report on European cinema in the digital era is a clear appeal for the accelerated digitisation of cinemas within the European Union. The European film industry faces many challenges relating to the need to switch to digital production technology, distribution and film projection. Digitisation is inevitable and necessary; it will reduce the cost of producing and distributing films. In this way, it will strengthen the potential of the European film sector. Therefore, we have to increase funding for the European film industry, so that it has the ability to adapt to present challenges. The continuation of the MEDIA programme and the creation of an effective funding system constitute our objectives for the nearest future. Investment in culture shapes European identity. Culture forms the foundation of European values. In the report, we emphasise the necessity for film education in schools, which will assist young people in making competent use of the media and help them function within European society in the best possible way. All citizens of the European Union have a right to participate in cultural life. This is why I endorsed the report.

**Thomas Ulmer (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (DE) The digitisation of European films is important in order to strengthen and increase the potential of European filmmakers. Europe has its own soul and culture that can be made known through cinema. Digitisation will entail a significant increase in availability as well as in reproduction media, and it is an important building block.

**Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution which calls for Member States to support European cinema in coping with the challenges of the digital era.

This report highlights the social and educational role of cinema and stresses the need to conserve its diversity. The digital challenge should therefore be beneficial for all. Unfortunately, however, the good health of the cinema industry in Europe virtually only benefits large multiplex cinemas and leaves the rest of the profession, which is made up mostly of small entities, in a very weak position within an extremely competitive

environment. It is therefore essential to protect small cinemas, in particular art-house cinemas and those in rural areas, which are not mutually exclusive, through strong support from Member States.

We should also support 'film education' for as many people as possible namely by promoting the widest possible distribution of films within Europe. The report also calls for better use of the European digital library 'Europeana' for film and all other multimedia works.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI)**, *in writing.* – (DE) Cinema as a cultural tool means the expansion of knowledge, awareness, imagination and, as a result, one's own thinking and the ability to express an opinion. However, small, independent cinemas can barely afford to finance the conversion from analogue to digital, and therefore the proposal to establish exhibitors that will enable cooperation between these cinemas should be supported.

**Iva Zanicchi (PPE)**, *in writing.* – (IT) Technology has changed and is still changing our lifestyles very rapidly. Like other industries, European cinema too is having to face up to the challenges posed by the digital era. One need only compare the cost of producing a film on celluloid and that of producing a digital copy, which is 10 times lower. The digital copy can also potentially be distributed more quickly and translated more easily into different language versions. There is no doubt, therefore, that the digital version can facilitate independent, low-cost production. Cinema is art and creativity, but it must not be forgotten that cinema is also an important branch of European industry and needs public support in order to remain a valid tool for disseminating culture. Those, then, are the reasons why I voted in favour.

## **8. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes**

*(The sitting was suspended at 13.50 and resumed at 15.00)*

### **IN THE CHAIR: JERZY BUZEK**

*President*

## **9. Signature of acts adopted under the ordinary legislative procedure**

**President.** – I would like to welcome everyone to the afternoon period of our sitting. Prior to commencing our proceedings a legislative procedure will take place, namely the signing of a legislative act. This is standard practice in the case of an ordinary legislative procedure. The act is signed by the President of the European Parliament and the representative of the Presidency acting on behalf of the Council. On this occasion, the act that we are signing is extremely important as it concerns economic governance. We also spoke about it this morning and, undoubtedly, we will speak about it on many more occasions. These decisions are key to the future of Europe. The act will be signed by Minister Szczuka, on behalf of the Council; the European Commission is represented by Vice-President Rehn; we are also grateful to the Commissioner for being here with us.

I would now like to read a declaration which is important for the signing of this act, as it relates to the fulfilment of all the provisions, which we have established together during our negotiations. I will read it in English, as I do not have the translation, and it is important that the content is expressed precisely, in the manner which the European Parliament desires for such declarations.

As the President of the European Parliament signing this law today, I would like to underline that the Commission's declaration attached to the Parliament resolution of 28 September on the 'six pack' stated that 'macroeconomic surveillance covers countries with current account deficits and surpluses with appropriate differentiation as regards the urgency of policy responses and the type of corrective actions required'. This declaration paved the way for a final agreement on the 'six pack', so we can trust the Commission to remain fully committed to it.

Any conclusions of the Council cannot limit the legal rights of the Commission in this respect, including the Ecofin Council conclusions of 8 November on excessive surpluses. The 'comply-or-explain' principle is now integrated in the preventive and corrective arm of the Stability and Growth Pact. From now onwards, the Council must either follow the Commission recommendations or explain itself in public in the European Parliament.

**Wiesław Szczuka**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (PL) Mr President, it is with great pleasure and satisfaction that today, on behalf of the Council of the European Union, I am signing the legislative acts which strengthen the economic governance of the European Union. On behalf of the Polish Presidency, I would like to express gratitude to all those who have contributed to the successful conclusion of the negotiations, which, in my opinion, should also be acknowledged as a mark of the success of the Community method. This has been made possible thanks to the active engagement of the European Parliament, the European Commission and all Member States.

I would like to convey special appreciation to all the negotiators, including, in particular, the Chair of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament, and the rapporteurs, as well as to Commissioner Rehn and his collaborators in the European Commission. We should also give special mention to the important contribution made by the predecessors to the Polish Presidency, namely the Hungarian and the Belgian Presidencies.

I believe that the implementation of this package of new regulations will be an important step towards the strengthening of not only European economic governance, but also the EU integration process itself. In adopting these acts, we have succeeded in proving that the European Union is capable of working quickly and efficiently, and in a spirit of solidarity and unity. Although the new regulations form part of the wider framework of measures undertaken as a response to the economic and financial crisis, their implementation should also serve the purpose of ensuring long-term economic stability for all Member States.

**President**. – Minister Szczuka, thank you for your remarks. You were giving your remarks on behalf of the Polish Presidency and also on behalf of the Council. I would like to invite you to sign our legislative package. I would also like to invite the Chair, Ms Sharon Bowles, and the rapporteurs, Ms Corien Wortmann-Kool, Elisa Ferreira, Sylvie Goulard, Carl Haglund, Vicky Ford, Diogo Feio, and of course the Vice-President of the European Commission, Mr Olli Rehn. We will meet around the table to sign the document.

**IN THE CHAIR: ROBERTA ANGELILLI**

*Vice-President*

**10. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting : see Minutes**

## 11. EU-US summit of 28 November 2011 (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the EU-US summit of 28 November 2011 (2011/2870(RSP)).

**Karel De Gucht,** *Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Madam President, in the absence of Catherine Ashton, I have the pleasure of informing you on the state of play of the EU-US Summit. I will also cover the Transatlantic Economic Council, which I chair, and which this year takes place back-to-back with the Summit. We expect the Summit to send a strong signal, reasserting the great depth and breadth of the EU-US partnership, based on common values, which is particularly important at a time when gloomy economic times have taken hold on both sides of the Atlantic and around the world more generally.

The European Parliament is an active contributor to the development of EU-US relations, as we can judge from the reports and resolutions on transatlantic relations, the delegations travelling to the US and the many high-level visitors from the United States that are welcomed in this House.

The EU and the US economies are still suffering, with pessimistic forecasts for 2012 growth and unemployment levels. Therefore, the economy and the need for jobs and growth will be at the heart of this Summit. We will start by reviewing relevant results of the G20 Summit, and will discuss our respective contributions to a sustainable and balanced global recovery.

The 2008 financial crisis in the US, and now the euro area crisis, have demonstrated how deeply the EU and US economies are interdependent, and that we need to support each others' efforts to resolve the economic crisis. At the Summit, EU and US leaders must convey confidence in economic governance on both sides of the Atlantic. They will also seek a renewed impetus to transatlantic efforts to boost jobs and growth.

During the discussions we want to ensure that we look at all the critical economic issues beyond the euro area crisis. We are doing our homework. So far, President Obama is supporting EU efforts, and we trust that this support will continue.

However, having the euro area house in order is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for global growth. One should not forget that the EU is not contributing to global imbalances: the EU has no large current account deficits, continues to have low inflation and has generally lower debt levels than some of our major trading partners, and the euro area has an exchange rate which is driven by market forces.

As the crisis is global, nobody can bear the full burden of the solution on their own, neither the EU nor any other economy. At the Summit we will ask the US to play its part too. We welcome the US commitment at the G20 to pursue fiscal consolidation.

Financial regulation reform remains at the core of sustainable and balanced growth. A lot has been done on both sides of the Atlantic, but further work is needed, and we need to ensure that what has been decided is implemented effectively. Again, Europe is doing its homework by implementing rules on bank bonuses and Basel III swiftly.

In the light of the G20 outcome, we also want the Summit to underline the need for the EU and US to rally behind the multilateral trading system, to resist protectionism at home and abroad, and to ensure that we both go to the Geneva WTO Ministerial Conference in December with the will to make progress wherever possible with a fresh approach to the Doha Development Agenda mandate.

The Summit will also focus, as I said, on expanding the economic benefits of the transatlantic economy. As regards the Transatlantic European Council, the TEC, I very much welcome most of the ideas expressed in the resolution.

I fully agree with you that there is – now more than ever – an urgent need for closer economic cooperation between the EU and the United States to help our economies out of the crisis. The strategic and political impulse provided by the TEC process is key in this respect. While it will not provide an immediate remedy for acute economic problems, it is the prime vehicle for the EU and the US to promote further integration of the transatlantic marketplace.

As outlined in the resolution, regulatory coherence is a key objective of our cooperation in the TEC, especially in new areas such as nanotechnology and cloud computing, or promising economic sectors such as electric vehicles, in order to create a favourable environment for growth and jobs.

The TEC has had a productive year since its last meeting. At the 29 November TEC meeting in Washington, we expect to demonstrate good results in a number of important economic sectors, including e-mobility, secure trade, the information and communication technology services sector, and basic industries (raw materials).

US TEC co-Chair Michael Froman and I will provide a joint report to the Summit and we expect Summit leaders to identify, and give us direction on, the main forward-looking priorities for transatlantic cooperation. We will also seek to present a strategy on how to promote the joint ICT regulatory principles with third countries and take a renewed commitment on our transatlantic investment cooperation.

In my view, the TEC should put its weight behind a few high-profile issues, showing our capacity to work together and set benchmarks at global level. Success breeds success: if our 'flagship' projects work – for example, our cooperation on electric cars – they can serve as a model for other areas. I rely on you to convey this message to European standard-setting organisations.

The TEC's role is to further develop the enormous potential of the transatlantic marketplace. This is all the more important in times of economic crisis and financial market instability, to counter protectionist reflexes. But the TEC will not be able to meet its objectives without the support of legislators. The vital motor of convergence will be your cooperation with the US Congress on key issues of transatlantic interest. I therefore welcome the decision by the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) to initiate cooperation between committee chairs on both sides of the Atlantic in three central areas: financial services, transport security and agriculture (food safety). I am also looking forward to meeting members of the TLD Steering Group next week, on 21 November, to discuss other key areas of common interest which are mentioned in your resolution.

Let me tell you why I think the TEC is so important. The EU and the US are the world's most integrated economies. We are each other's largest trade and investment partners. We share common values and responsibilities for tackling global challenges on a variety of

issues, be it innovation and environmental challenges, energy security or access to raw materials. That is why we need to think together about how the transatlantic marketplace should look in 2020.

The Summit will also address the global challenges we are facing together: climate change will be in focus again in the run-up to the 17th Conference of Parties in Durban. There is deep concern amongst our citizens about the impact of global climate change. Durban will be an important opportunity to make progress on shaping multilateral action to combat climate change. The Summit must send a message that the EU and US will work together to put decisions taken at Cancun last year into operation and ensure that Durban is a success.

One cannot talk about climate change, the economy or foreign policy without talking about energy. With a growing global population and a finite supply of fossil fuels, energy security is a vital concern. Given the supply shocks of the past year and the fragility of economic recovery, we will engage the US further on a joint agenda of work with a view both to increasing our energy interdependence and to promoting green growth and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

On development, the EU and the US are the world's leading aid donors. However, the current climate of austerity, where we have to do more with less, underlines more than ever the need for complementarity and increased attention to aid effectiveness. We need to work closely on coordinating our efforts in recipient countries so as to maximise the effectiveness and impact of our aid and avoid duplication of effort. We will also seek to build on existing work in the EU-US development dialogue on food security, climate change and the MDGs, especially health. As the Summit will take place on the eve of the High-Level Conference in Busan, a positive message on aid effectiveness could not be more timely.

The US is our global partner also in CFSP and CSDP. On the foreign policy side, the 'Arab Spring' is an obvious area of focus. We will continue our close coordination and seek to maximise our joint impact on the ground. We also must support the Middle East peace process, with the aim of achieving a framework for agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. On Iran and Syria, the EU has delivered on tougher sanctions while stressing that we remain committed to engagement on the right terms. Iran's nuclear programme remains a concern. We are consulting internally, and with our partners, to work on an appropriate reaction by the IAEA Board of Governors to the new report.

We will look towards Europe's East as well. In Belarus, developments during September – notably the release of 25 political prisoners – were going in the right direction. The 'mending of fences' with the West now seems to have come to an abrupt halt. Instead, the regime is increasingly tightening the screws on civil society and the political opposition. EU-US cooperation on Belarus has been excellent and should continue. We will coordinate our messages and policies to get maximum impact, where possible. Also, in the case of Ukraine, the US and EU have worked very well together on pushing the path of reform and will continue to do so. We need to build on things that work even more.

As for security and defence, on 18 May this year, during her visit to Washington, Catherine Ashton signed with Secretary Clinton the Framework Participation Agreement to facilitate future US engagement in the EU's CSDP missions. This is a major step in the right direction, especially at times when the pooling of resources is essential. As a consequence, our cooperation in the field of crisis management has been further increased, and nowadays around 60 American citizens already serve in our CSDP civilian missions in Kosovo and

Afghanistan. This is clear evidence that the EU is taking the lead and is regarded as a global partner.

On domestic security, recognising that fundamental rights and the security of citizens are complementary and mutually reinforcing, we need to ensure that there is a good balance between the two in all of our work. The EU and US must also reinforce our work together to tackle new threats to the global networks, such as cyber attacks and cyber crime, in a more comprehensive way.

We are also determined to finalise in 2012 negotiations on a comprehensive EU-US data protection agreement that provides a high level of protection for all our citizens and thereby facilitates the exchange of data needed for law enforcement purposes.

Overall, the Summit must affirm the continued importance of a modern and forward-looking EU-US relationship in an increasingly multi-polar world. I look forward to the debate that will now follow.

**Elmar Brok**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the forthcoming summit and the subsequent meeting of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) are extremely important, because we are in a situation where we recognise, now more than ever, that cooperation between the United States and Europe is necessary once again. The matters at issue are the Middle East and the Quartet, Iran, energy security and many more.

However, right now I would like to talk about the issue of the financial and economic crisis. The industrialised democracies of the US, Europe and Japan are the ones that are currently experiencing major problems, and China is really pleased and is asking how it can help. In order to restore confidence, we need to show that we can overcome this crisis alone. That is why this growth and jobs initiative is so important, so that we once again obtain more for our citizens, generate growth and create jobs. The removal of the non-tariff barriers to trade with the United States alone would generate growth of 3%, which would be an important and positive message. That is why we need to make progress here under political leadership and not merely with the technical negotiating skills of the bureaucrats. This should be achieved in particular by removing the non-tariff barriers to trade, setting standards and common approaches in connection with such highlights as *e-mobility*, as they call it, but also, with regard to our common power to implement standards at a global level, we as Americans and Europeans, who still have over 60% of the gross national product of the world, now have the power to implement these things in a way that is in our interests. This is our opportunity to do that.

That is why we believe, and want to express this in this resolution – which I believe has the support of a broad majority in this House – that we should ask President Barroso and President Van Rompuy to discuss this very clearly with the United States.

I can tell you that we have recently been in much more intensive talks with our colleagues in the US Congress, who, for similar reasons, are also now showing themselves to be much more open to this development and this is, accordingly, also being talked about much more in the US. That is why, Commissioner, your initiative for the TEC is now receiving broader support on the other side than was the case to start with, following the change of government in the US. I believe that, via the TEC, you will be able to make progress with regard to the practical aspects underpinning the overarching political objectives and, in

this way, give Europe and the US a future in which their citizens can find economic and social security.

**Hannes Swoboda**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, thank you for your detailed report. As you and Mr Brok have said, both Europe and the United States are indeed in a difficult economic situation. In Europe it is perhaps more obvious, but it is clearly the case in the United States, too. At the G20 it was a little distressing, if the information is to be believed, to see that some countries – Argentina and others – were telling us what to do. Previously, we were always the ones who instructed others. Now we are being taught by the others, and that has to give us and our citizens reason to reflect on the fact that we really should do everything we can now to put our economic situation in order.

However, what we certainly can do together with the US is to form innovation communities in various different areas. We touch on this in our resolution, for example in the energy sector. In the area of energy saving and energy efficiency in particular we are many times better than the United States, but we can still carry out research together in this area. Another example is the area of rare earths – I assume my fellow Member will also speak about this – there are a number of possible areas where the United States and Europe can work together and also make their mark globally.

Thirdly, I would ask you, Commissioner, to insist that we, naturally, also discuss the issue of international regulation and the regulatory framework. With regard to the financial markets, we know that, in Europe too, we have to do whatever we can. However, if we do not work with the United States, at least in certain areas, and then together also convince China and others that we need more regulation – particularly on the financial markets – it will not be possible. I believe that this also includes the financial transaction tax. I know that this has not even been accepted in Europe yet, but it is also a subject that needs to be discussed in talks with the United States.

My last point relates to foreign policy. Commissioner, you rightly pointed out that there are a lot of good areas for cooperation. As far as the Middle East is concerned, we have very often been left high and dry by the United States, particularly last summer when several delegations from Parliament were in the US and we noticed that Baroness Ashton did not receive full support. She only received it long after it was already too late in many respects. We could have handled the whole Palestine issue better with the United Nations. However, what we as a group absolutely reject and are highly critical of is the behaviour of the United States in connection with UNESCO in particular. Penalising democratic decisions, democratic majority decisions, with sanctions or the withdrawal of funds is no way to establish peace in the Middle East. That is something that the European Union should also make very clear to the United States at the summit.

**Sarah Ludford**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, I am privileged to serve as Vice-Chair of the Delegation for Relations with the US, under the strong leadership of Elmar Brok. My own knowledge and expertise is principally in the area of justice, human rights and security. Naturally, therefore, I put a great deal of emphasis on the parts of our resolution which stress the shared transatlantic values of liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and also the cooperation we are pursuing to guarantee liberty and security.

I do feel that we fall into the danger of taking each other too much for granted. Despite, or perhaps because of, how interdependent we are, we do not invest in the EU-US

relationship to the extent it requires. But the economic crisis demands that we prioritise jobs and growth, so the great interest in a transatlantic initiative for jobs and growth, which MEPs expressed already in a resolution in September and repeat in the present resolution, is fully justified. The remarks made by Commissioner De Gucht suggest the determination that the text should take up on that.

Cutting barriers to mutual trade and investment is a 'no-brainer' when you look at the figures. It was a Commission study in 2009 which talked about the huge sums that could be added to the US economy, and even more to the EU economy, if we freed up transatlantic trade. In the case of the EU, the figure was USD 158 billion; the US figure was USD 53 billion. As Commissioner De Gucht said, the transatlantic legislative dialogue pushed firmly by our Chair is adopting a very focused and business-like working method. We, quite rightly, have to justify our overseas trips to our constituents; I believe we can do so by showing that, by meeting our Congressional counterparts, MEPs can improve our constituents' job prospects and their ease of travel and doing business.

**Reinhard Bütikofer,** *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, I completely agree with you when you say that this summit is extremely important. I would perhaps put it this way: it should be extremely important. I am not sure whether we will actually have a partner with the capacity to act on the US side.

The US Administration is largely paralysed and Congress is for the most part divided. As much as the necessity for additional sustainable growth on both sides of the Atlantic is beyond dispute, there is very little evidence of anything being done with any real energy. The US Administration cannot even manage to get this half way there on the domestic front.

It would depend all the more on the European side making a great effort now to inject life into this partnership commensurate with its importance. I know that you, Commissioner, are doing everything you can in the TEC to make this happen, and I also know that, as Chair of the Delegation for relations with the United States, Mr Brok is doing everything he can at his level. Regretfully, I have to say, however, that the resolution that has been presented to us here is half-baked and it is a text that somehow fails to establish a focus.

Let me give you three examples. It quite rightly addresses the issue of raw materials policy and rare earths. In fact, the US, Europe and indeed Japan, too, could collaborate very well in this regard, not only on research projects, but also in the creation of global economic governance for these structures. Compare what we have in the way of international governance structures in the oil sector, for example, with what we have for metals and minerals, and then you will quickly see that we can do something here. That is not even mentioned, however.

Another example is the subject of the Middle East. Israel and the Palestinians have reached an impasse. Israel is currently turning off the taps where money is concerned for the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority. In the meantime, Israel is even turning off the money supplies for its own human rights organisations. However, our resolution refuses to address this matter explicitly. That is half-baked, it is not ambitious and at this level we cannot even envisage any form of sensible cooperation with the US.

With regard to the last example of climate change, you said one thing: we must put decisions taken in Durban into operation. There is too little ambition there for this cooperation, particularly when the US is in such a poor position, as we know that the IEA has just said

that we are heading for a warming of six degrees. I think that we should really take this seriously, as you said, but not in a half-baked way, as is sadly the case here.

**Charles Tannock**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, the unique and historical relationship between the United States and the European Union is based on shared values, such as free market economics and a long-standing commitment to fundamental respect for human rights and democratic forms of governance. A close and integrated relationship between the EU and the US is essential, given the interdependence of the transatlantic economic partnership, the biggest in the world.

It is from this base that a significant proportion of global trade can actually take place and, due to this close relationship, vast levels of global wealth are constantly being formed in a well-regulated environment, which is rule-based and transparent for all.

America is also an essential ally militarily. It brings to the international arena a unique and unparalleled military capability, as we saw recently in action over the Libyan theatre. As the leading NATO power, it is indispensable to European security. I welcome, for example, the recent announcement that a joint EU-US cyber security exercise will be conducted by the end of this year, helping prepare the way against a potential terrorist cyber attack on businesses and national infrastructures.

It is also extremely important that a coordinated approach across the Atlantic, between the USA and EU Member States, continues to be taken to many of today's most pressing foreign policy questions – from containing Iranian nuclear ambitions to dealing with troublesome North Korea, and of course the promotion and support for the UN Quartet, of which the EU and the US are members, as a meaningful mechanism to deliver peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The EU-US partnership is also essential to dealing with global climate change and energy security, particularly making sure that countries from which we draw our energy supplies are stable and secure in the Middle East, South America, Africa and elsewhere, as well as the economic challenges posed by the rising phenomena of BRICs, the economic powers of today and the future, and in particular the challenge posed by massive China, both militarily and economically.

EU-US collaboration has borne many mutually beneficial fruits in the past. In my view and in the view of the ECR Group, it will long continue to do so in future.

**Helmut Scholz**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, in the last few weeks there has at last been a positive signal from the US that has made the world sit up and listen. However, this signal did not come from the White House, nor from the Capitol, but from the street. With the Occupy movement, the American people have set an example of resistance against the dictates of financial capitalism that have been followed and seized upon throughout the world. Yesterday, the tents of the protesters were cleared away and numerous people were arrested by the police under the cover of darkness throughout the US in what was clearly a concerted action on the part of the mayors. That is also a signal, indicating the refusal of those in power to take up the demands of the people. However, this is precisely the demand that my group would make of a transatlantic summit. It is not the people who should be arrested, but the fraudsters who are becoming ever richer on profits from subprime credits.

The summit, coming just after the G20 summit, ought to consider how wide the gap is now getting between the poor majority of the population and the super rich. The summit

ought to take firm decisions concerning the prohibition of usurious interest, whether for private individuals or for entire states. It ought to open its eyes and see that 10% of the population of the United States and the Member States of the EU is now out of work. A quarter of young people have no prospects, and in many regions the figure is even higher than 40%. The financial markets suck the necessary investment capital out of the real economy and out of the national exchequers and deprive them of profits. These enormous problems must be addressed at the summit. To solve these problems we need a new high-quality partnership for cooperation between the US Congress, the European Parliament and the parliaments of the EU Member States in order to define common approaches for the legislation that is urgently needed. An expanded TLD would also be the appropriate forum for addressing further differences between the EU and the US, whether this is – using the list of topics that you mentioned – in peace policy, climate policy or in connection with rights to privacy.

As Mr Bütikofer said, the resolution is a long way from achieving this. As a group, therefore, we cannot give the resolution our backing.

**Niki Tzavela**, *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (EL) Madam President, we have seen close cooperation between Europe and the United States over this past year. The main reason was the economic crisis, which has hit both sides of the Atlantic. This is therefore the perfect time for taking advantage of this momentum to establish real cooperation. If we want to be practical, the body we have is the Transatlantic Economic Council. As the Commissioner said, the Transatlantic Economic Council is crucial; two sectors which could help to develop the EU-Atlantic economy are trade and new investments. To date we have operated correctively, in terms of legislation, on both sides of the Atlantic.

With the effort now being made by the Delegation for Relations with the United States, we have started to work on certain issues jointly with Congress. This means that we are trying, preventively, to operate and arrange or prepare a friendly institutional framework within which we can develop our economic relations.

Therefore, Commissioner, I would say that we need to use the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) delegates in the TEC, because the legislature and its executive share responsibility for overseeing and applying most of the decisions by the TEC. This would improve EU-Atlantic consultations and would certainly strengthen the rules of new technology and emerging economic sectors. With coordinated work, the TEC, with the help of the TLD, could make a great deal of headway in rationalising legislation, which is something we definitely need.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner De Gucht, since the negotiations on PNR data are yet to reach a successful conclusion, I believe it is even more important for us at least to call for better rights for EU citizens in connection with data processing on US soil at the EU-US summit. After all, we Europeans have a kind of second-class data protection over there compared to US citizens. It is also clear, in my view, that the US plans for a transpacific partnership are sure to have an impact on transatlantic relations and a whole host of EU agreements. Brussels should prepare itself for this and for new disagreements in the fight for dominance in South East Asia between the US and China. Perhaps the current complaints from South East Asia over Beijing's involvement in territorial conflicts will soon be replaced by such complaints about Washington. Then the EU ought to be able to score a few points as an impartial mediator.

In the dispute over the controversial Iranian nuclear programme there needs to be a clear European position to the effect that this dispute will not be resolved by military means. So-called preventive military strikes contravene international law and should definitely be rejected. In view of the growing risk of war, Brussels needs to exert a moderating effect on all sides – starting with Israel, then Iran and finally the US, the United Kingdom and France. As a consequence of the IAEA report, more stringent sanctions imposed by the international community are, in my view, the only real answer.

**José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE).** – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, it is clear that the next EU-US summit will be determined by the economic and financial crisis.

I believe that both parties should adopt a modest approach and apply that Chinese proverb that, before launching ourselves into the task of putting the world to rights, we should first take a look at our own house. This means weighing up the global influence of each party and highlighting the role and the economic, commercial, financial and industrial weight of the European Union.

Beyond the economic and financial problems, I believe that it is important to consider the lessons learned in Libya, after Operation Unified Protector, where the European Union was criticised. We should also consider the situation in Syria, after today's meeting of the Arab League and try to move forward the search for a resolution in the Security Council of the United Nations. Then there is the peace process in the Middle East, which the Commissioner referred to, and the Palestinian question, in which the European Union gave a pitiful performance at the vote in UNESCO. We should also ask for greater consistency between words and deeds after the speech of President Obama in the United States.

It is clear, Madam President, that the European Union and the United States are two partners who have a shared vision of the world, and although this is not always identical, they have a duty to understand and respect each other. Therefore it must be accepted that in today's globalised world, in the face of challenges and threats that affect us all equally – whether it is the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking or organised crime, the economic and financial crisis or unemployment, protecting the environment and natural resources or emigration – we must search for responses to all of these equally. It must also be accepted that unilateralism, even for the most prosperous and the most powerful, is an impossible dream.

**Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D).** – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner, I would like to refer to a very specific matter contained in the resolution we will vote on tomorrow. It concerns cooperation in the area of research and innovation, the so-called R+D+I (Research, Development and Innovation).

We are all convinced that in order to overcome the current economic crisis, the European Union must strengthen its international alliances and strategies in priority areas, such as, it goes without saying, growth and employment. Innovation, however, is the cornerstone around which the specific proposals must revolve in order to forge a new global economic model that is more sustainable, intelligent, fair and lasting.

One of the flagship initiatives of the 2020 strategy is the Innovation Union, which highlights the need to concentrate our efforts in the area of innovation so as to promote a healthier, more prosperous and stable economy, and also a fairer, more dynamic society. In that

sense, investment in R+D+I leads, on the one hand, to a more efficient and sustainable use of energy resources, and on the other, to an improvement in the quality of life of citizens.

However, above all, it makes knowledge and creativity the driving forces for society. I think that a firm commitment to education and training, as well as the transfer of innovation in working conditions, can result in the fairer, more sustainable global economy we are all looking for. In order to achieve this, it is clearly imperative that our strategic alliance with the United States should also incorporate the common flag of innovation.

**Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE).** – (DE) Madam President, I believe there is cause for concern with regard to this summit. The role of the US in the global economy is far from agreeable. While we here in Europe have learnt from the debt crisis to be responsible with our public finances, we see the American Central Bank continuing to open the floodgates and flood the American market with dollars.

Easy money was one of the causes of the crisis in 2008. The whole affair is, unfortunately, continuing along the same path, just like the US public debt situation. The risk of inflation must not be ignored. I also think it is regrettable that the US has still not managed to carry out any permanent reform of its Medicare, Medicaid and social security systems.

In this context ahead of an election year in 2012, a weaker dollar is, of course, not what the US wants. A revaluation would absolutely not fit in with President Obama's jobs programme. The advice to Europeans to please stabilise the euro should also be seen against this background. After all, if the euro loses value against the dollar, US exports will have a harder time on the global markets.

At the same time, there is a rise in protectionist efforts in the US – this is also a trend that we absolutely must counter, and therefore it is good that the Commissioner for Trade has spoken here today. I consider this to be extremely important. We Europeans and Americans still have the most significant trade and investment relations with one another.

A second point that is important for my group is the fact that, with Google, eBay, Apple and Amazon, so-called information empires have arisen. With regard to the handing of the data, it is important for us, together with the US, to find a new approach for these private players too, and I believe that this is of great interest to our citizens. This matter must be addressed seriously. I forgot to mention Facebook, which should clearly also be included here.

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

**Paul Rübzig (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Lambsdorff, as we all know there will be elections next November in the US. How do you see finance policy developing in future if the Democrats win or if the Republicans win? What do you think a change in strategy in Europe would then mean for the US elections?

**Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE).** – (DE) Mr Rübzig, I wish I could give you an encouraging answer. My fear is simply that if the Republicans actually manage to remove President Obama from office, we will not see any particular improvement in the US public finances in terms of revenue, whereas if things were to go on as before, the Democrats will continue their irresponsible policy in relation to expenditure. Therefore, I do not believe that the macroeconomic situation in the US will take a turn for the better. We will have to humbly wait and see who the Americans ultimately vote for next November.

**Tarja Cronberg (Verts/ALE).** - Madam President, as the Chair of the Parliament's Iran Delegation, I am very worried about the reports that have come now saying that Iran is maybe considering withdrawing from the NPT Treaty. As a result of the International Atomic Energy Agency's report, there have been indications that Iran may have a military dimension in its nuclear technology development. On the other hand, Iran is saying that it is only for peaceful use.

Now faced with sanctions, military strikes and so forth, the Iranian Parliament is putting pressure on the Iranian Government to withdraw from the NPT. Countries that have developed nuclear weapons – Israel, India, Pakistan – have done so outside the NPT Treaty, and international efforts have not convinced them to return to the NPT regime. This has happened without sanctions even, so I think, in the context of the EU-US Summit, it is very necessary to define a policy which keeps Iran in the NPT regime so that there is no risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons. Iran may have developed nuclear devices, but probably on a threshold level. If we cannot find a policy, then there will be the problem also of the failure of the NPT.

**Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL)** . – (EL) Madam President, the summit is being held against the background of the synchronised global capitalist crisis. This crisis is exacerbating competition between the two basic imperialist centres and with emerging economic powers as to who will get out of the crisis least scathed. This – now open – clash of interests between the American, European, Russian and Chinese monopolies in all sectors is expressed at every opportunity and at every international meeting, including at the recent G20 summit.

The anti-grassroots EU 2020 strategy and the reactionary measures by the Obama Administration illustrate that both imperialist centres are united more than even on the demand by capital that the workers should pay for the crisis, by accepting starvation wages and handing social infrastructures over to the monopolies. The capitalist crisis is making imperialism even more dangerous for the people.

The European Union, the United States and NATO are equally to blame for the crimes committed in the war in Libya and for the escalation in imperialist interventions in the Middle East and North Africa. They are jointly undermining the independent Palestinian state and are now preparing for a new war on the grounds of the nuclear programme in Iran. It is perfectly clear to us that capitalism has nothing left to give the world, which is why the ghost of communism is hovering over the entire world.

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

**Daniel Caspary (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Angourakis, have I understood you correctly or was the interpretation wrong in stating that you ascribed responsibility for the war in Libya to the European Union and the United States and that you do not consider the responsibility to lie with the former dictator in the country?

**Charalampos Angourakis (GUE/NGL).** – (DE) You have understood correctly. I merely forgot to include NATO. I would like to take this opportunity to refer to the most recent statement by the NATO Secretary General, who was very pleased that this was the most successful NATO operation in history, regardless of the fact, of course, that 60 000 people have paid for this war with their lives.

I am sure that you are also aware that the International Criminal Court has brought charges against NATO on account of this war. In this light, it is absolutely clear what the aims of this war were and who is to blame for these victims.

**Andrew Henry William Brons (NI).** - Madam President, one policy issue that will be discussed will be the planned action against Iran, possibly involving an attack by Israel with the support of the United States. The pretext of course would be the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which concluded that Iran was indeed developing nuclear weapons. Reuters has reported that its sources of information were the same security service sources that provided the untruthful evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

One of the older sources of Iran's alleged intentions is the so-called 'lap-top of death', supposedly provided to the US intelligence service in 2005 by one unidentified person, who apparently received it from a different unidentified person in Iran, and which contained plans for a missile with a nuclear warhead. More recent evidence about highly-enriched uranium comes from the American Enterprise Institute, a NeoCon group with links to Israeli lobbyists.

It must be remembered that some of the evidence produced in the run-up to the war against Iraq, for example the alleged purchase of uranium from Nigeria, was completely fabricated. If the conflict should lead to the closure of the Gulf of Hormuz by Iran, this could lead to a rise in the price of crude oil to USD 200 or more a barrel, aggravating the recession severely. If people are not concerned about the loss of lives in this impending conflict, perhaps they will spare a moment or two for the loss of euros, pounds and dollars.

**Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE).** - (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the markets in the West are growing ever closer together, even if we experience the occasional setback. Without doubt, trade between the EU and the US still has the potential for further substantial growth on both sides of the Atlantic. I therefore welcome the settlement of the dispute that has been ongoing for many years over the import of hormone-treated beef from the US, which is currently awaiting legislative implementation by the European Parliament.

At the same time, however, I call on the US to implement the WTO panel reports that are still outstanding and to remove further barriers to trade: firstly, for example, to not introduce an obligation for a 100% container scan; secondly, to implement the decision of the WTO appeals board as quickly as possible and to suspend the practice of 'zeroing' in connection with the enacting of anti-dumping measures; thirdly - an important issue for Europe - to significantly improve the protection of geographical designations of origin - we can agree on there being no champagne made in the USA; fourthly, to finally lift the ban on the import of European beef to the US on account of the supposed risk of BSE; fifthly and lastly, the US must essentially refrain from introducing a 'buy American' obligation.

We see that protectionism and foreclosure come to nothing in the end, as is evident from the economic and labour market data in the United States. Therefore, I would appeal for more openness in matters relating to trade on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Corina Crețu (S&D).** - Madam President, the European Union's relations with the United States of America are one of the most important stabilising factors at global level.

Although there have been some negative aspects to go with the positive ones, these relations are stable and based on a fundamental set of values which are becoming universal. It would

be unrealistic to say that these relations have not been affected by the economic crisis. Our position differs from theirs on certain aspects of the crisis, because its effects have been different on the two sides of the Atlantic, but I hope that these natural differences will not endanger our good relations.

It would be unproductive to reduce these transatlantic relations to just the economic dimension; both the EU and US are engaged in management processes such as globalisation and sustainable development, combating the effects of climate change, maintaining global stability and promoting democratisation all over the world.

We need to support the development of free and open democracies and promote peace and stability, especially in the Middle Eastern and North African countries. We also need to make substantial efforts to finally find a sustainable solution to the Palestinian issue. We also need to cooperate more closely to solve the Iranian nuclear file and to radically change the human rights situation in Iran and Syria.

As Vice-Chair of the Development Committee, I consider that urgent coordinating measures are needed in order to provide the necessary funds for continuation of the existing programmes in the poorest countries of Africa and Central America in particular. We are the world's biggest donors, and this dialogue is very important from this point of view.

**Marietje Schaake (ALDE).** - Madam President, the campaign season has clearly started in the United States, which means that there is less and less focus on the rest of the world. In Europe, even though unfortunately we cannot elect the President of the Commission or the Council, we are equally inward-focused. This is undesirable and even dangerous.

In times of crisis – and perhaps especially in times of crisis – we must work hard and work together to resist nationalism and protectionism and to break down existing non-tariff barriers specifically. This House has voiced its concern with the 'Buy American' clauses that are being proposed in the context of growth and job acts in the United States. There is already a huge discrepancy between the openness of the European public procurement space for US bidders compared to the closed US market for EU-based companies to bid on tenders. The US business community is also worried that 'Buy American' clauses will hurt exports and would undermine growth instead of fostering it. The US should not alienate, but rather embrace, its European allies. This is the moment to work towards a comprehensive transatlantic jobs and growth initiative.

Europe's digital single market desperately needs to be completed. This would open up benefits for our own consumers, SMEs and businesses, but it would also allow for a more healthy trade relation with the US, and growth of our digital economies. One of the key issues on which the US and the EU should cooperate is therefore internet freedom and the free flow of information. When we think of a transatlantic market space, let us begin online where borders should matter least.

As my colleague, Mr Lambsdorff said, we are worried about the information monopolies of certain companies. We must cooperate on standards, but I urge the Americans to think twice before adopting the PROTECT IP Act or the Stop Online Piracy Act, which would lead the arms of US law enforcement to span the entire world and it would make the US lose its moral authority. Imagine what the responses would be if China were to take down websites in the US or in Europe itself. We do not want this to happen.

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

**Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (ALDE).** – (DE) Madam President, Ms Schaake is one of our most competent Members when it comes to issues relating to the Internet, freedom of information and data protection. I would like to take the opportunity to ask you whether you think it would make sense to draw up an action plan with the US that would ensure the protection of data and the privacy of users of these major providers. Could this be an objective for this or another EU-US summit? In my view, it could be. I would like to hear your opinion on this and perhaps a few elements that could be agreed on in such an action plan.

**Marietje Schaake (ALDE).** - Madam President, indeed we should work together to ensure that there is Internet freedom.

On the one hand, data protection is an important subject, and a subject on which we have experts in the Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe. On the other hand, Internet freedom also impinges on the strategic foreign policy interests of both the United States and Europe, and is a matter on which we could cooperate much more intensely. This would, for example, mean that we would stop Western-based companies from providing the most serious infiltrating surveillance technologies to repressive regimes. It would also mean that we would prioritise expression and access to information, including on the Internet.

So there is room for cooperation, and I will bring it up during the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue in Florida next month.

**Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, once again the word crisis is used in the context of discussion on current relations between the EU and the US. For this is an unprecedented situation in EU-US relations as well as in historical relations between Europe and the US, when so much depends on economic cooperation. However, I think that when speaking about the crisis and trying to identify the underlying causes, we have to reach out to what is most important, namely, to common roots, and to republican, economic and free market values. This is what we have been greatly missing over the past few years, as there has been a lack of trust between the EU and the US. We need to say frankly that unless we resolve the political weakness which was supposed to be tackled by the democratic administration in the US, we will not overcome the crisis together, but we might cause a number of other problems for many parts of the world. I therefore appeal for a new openness, a new way of thinking when dealing with our relations with the US. This also applies to the US Administration, the elimination of the numerous barriers that you have spoken about here, and to the waiver on visa requirements for some European countries. I say this as a Pole, coming from a country which, despite its good relations with the US, is still subject to a visa requirement. This issue needs to be addressed. I believe that other Members will also speak about this. Today, however, it is not sufficient to speak about the crisis in economic terms; it has to be said that we need to overcome the political crisis in our relations with the US.

**Nicole Sinclair (NI).** - Madam President, the EU clearly has a credibility problem. The EU purports to be a player in world affairs, and this statement wants greater cooperation with the United States on many different levels. I wonder what our American friends make of Catherine Ashton who has never received a single vote in her life. Now the EU is dismantling troublesome democratically-elected governments and replacing them with unelected technocrats, like Mr Monti in Italy, and we have the disgraceful actions of unelected Council President Van Rompuy, who poured scorn on calls for a referendum and fresh elections in Greece because we the people means something completely different

to the United States than it does to the European Union. When Americans refer to 'the people' they mean the masses, but in the EU the only people who really count are the technocrats. Before you talk about promoting democracy in the European Neighbourhood, you should allow it to be reinstated in Member States.

**Daniel Caspary (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, it is good that this summit is taking place, as it is high time that we coordinated matters better in connection with our transatlantic relations. In 2000, the European Union and the United States together were responsible for 50% of global economic output. That was 10 years ago, and in 10 years' time we will, together, only account for 35%.

On the other hand, the two largest emerging countries, China and India, accounted for only 10% of global economic output 10 years ago, and in 10 years' time that figure will have risen to 25%. That means that, in relative terms, our importance and also the importance of the US are diminishing, and we urgently need finally to stand together in this regard.

The TEC has already achieved a few results, but if I consider *e*-mobility, for example, there is undoubtedly potential for further development. Commissioner, what I am very disappointed about is the fact that you have just mentioned the subject of nanotechnology, which, fortunately, is also a subject that the TEC is concerned about. However, on the subject of nanotechnology, the Commission issued its own definition just a few days ago. I do not believe that it is very conducive to transatlantic cooperation if we place this subject on the agenda of the TEC, but then the European Commission issues a definition. If we have already defined something, there is little point in still discussing it at transatlantic level, as the matter is, unfortunately, already settled.

With regard to the current crisis, it is clear that we are attempting to deal with it using similar programmes, but the programmes are not coordinated with one another at all. It is not simply that we do not know what negative impact our programmes could have on each other, but we are seeing that some programmes on either side of the Atlantic are actually working against each other. Thus, if I look at the American Jobs Act – Ms Schaake has already mentioned this – then it is certainly not what we would envisage in relation to a transatlantic partnership. Therefore, I would be very grateful if you could take up the issue of this transatlantic initiative for growth and jobs that we will also call for once again in Parliament tomorrow, and also if we could make progress in this regard and I hope this initiative will not go the same way as the integrated transatlantic market that we as the European Parliament called for in 2008 in the report by Mr Brok and Ms Mann. Nothing has happened on this in the last three years, and it would be a shame if we did not make any headway on this joint initiative for growth and jobs.

**Roberto Gualtieri (S&D).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, cooperation between the European Union and the United States is certainly going to play an increasingly important role in transatlantic relations. Dialogue with the European Parliament has a crucial and growing part to play in this cooperation, which is something our friends across the Atlantic have grasped perfectly well and often better than many national governments and parliaments. This dialogue is first and foremost legislative in nature, but there is also political and strategic dialogue on major economic and foreign policy issues, areas in which this House intends to strengthen its actions and make the most of its prerogatives.

One of the issues that I would like to highlight is a matter of great importance which has been positively taken up in the joint resolution. I am referring to the Middle East question.

We are committed to supporting the efforts by the High Representative and the Quartet to resume the negotiations between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government, because we all know that if the parties do not negotiate there will be no peace and no two-state solution. At the same time, however, we believe that recognising the Palestinians' aspirations to be represented in the United Nations as a state does not negate the need for the talks but instead may strengthen them.

We therefore call on the Member States and the United States to come up with pragmatic measures to achieve this recognition. In the context of the budget procedure, we are committed to increasing EU economic support for the Palestinian Authority and believe that the Unesco boycott is a misguided and counterproductive reaction.

**Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE).** - Madam President, the United States remains the main foreign partner of the EU. At the same time, the strategic emphasis of the EU is moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It is clear that the EU must also form strong relations with emerging powers. I hope that this can be done without weakening the transatlantic relationship.

Most of the daily business between the United States and the EU consists of trade and investment. The volume is huge and they are mutually beneficial. It should be our top priority to avoid calls for protectionism in these economically challenging times. I think this is something that we can all agree on.

In a multipolar world it is harder and harder to reach agreements on global problems, but if the US and the EU do not stand for human rights and freedom, no one will. In this respect, the top issue should now be North Africa where everything should be done to guarantee human rights and the establishment of working and open democracies.

**James Elles (ECR).** - Madam President, the economic fates of the United States and the European Union are inextricably linked. The need for closer economic cooperation has never been greater. For this reason, I warmly welcome the statement by the Commissioner that jobs and growth will be at the heart of the Summit, as requested in the Caspary report in our House in September.

There is a great opportunity to show that the transatlantic partnership is addressing the common concerns of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic, and will be of real value to their futures. Ultimately, the central question is whether we have in the European Union and the United States, as a multipolar world emerges, the vision and the resolve to reshape and deepen the transatlantic partnership for the 21st century.

For this reason, I urge the Commission and the United States administration to make it visible at the Summit that there is a major initiative under way for jobs and growth. In this way, the Transatlantic Economic Council can be shown the way ahead, involving business and political leaders in the process.

**Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE).** – (ES) Madam President, Europe and the United States are going through a severe economic crisis.

Both our economies are very interconnected and during the next summit, we have to commit to act in a more coordinated manner and to implement the commitments that were made at the G20.

In a globalised economy, the solutions should be global, but it is also necessary for everyone to fulfil their responsibilities in their own area.

The United States should reduce its trade and fiscal deficits and China should reevaluate its currency. We Europeans should finally solve the Greek crisis and the sovereign debt issues in several of our countries. Otherwise, we would not have any credibility as effective partners.

The fleeting presence of President Obama in Europe to attend the G20 meeting in Cannes contrasts with the time he is dedicating to the Asia-Pacific region this week. It appears to symbolise the rise of Asia and the decline of Europe.

It is not only economic challenges that we Europeans and Americans have to tackle, however, but also many others: climate change, nuclear proliferation, energy, terrorism, poverty; and regional issues such as the Arab Spring and the conflict in the Middle East.

We should consult and coordinate and stop the concept of the 'West' or the 'transatlantic community' increasingly losing value to Asia's benefit.

Asia should also take part in global governance, but not by taking the role of Europe. For that we need a true Europe, a solid European Union, an efficient global player, and not a fragile set of countries that do not know how to resolve the sovereign debt crisis.

This is what the United States expects and is also what our citizens want.

**Dimitrios Droutsas (S&D).** – (EL) Madam President, the US is without doubt a traditional ally of Europe and, as such, we must expand our cooperation thematically and deepen it politically. I am, of course, delighted that the US is increasingly recognising the crucial role played by the European Parliament, including in decision-taking within the European Union. However, I consider that the US could attach even greater importance to the European Union. We must avoid the prevailing image and we must be honest with ourselves about the fact that summits with the European Union are, if you will pardon the expression, something of a chore for the US, even in these times of economic crisis in Europe.

However, we must not forget that we have comparative advantages in numerous sectors that make us an attractive interlocutor to the US, and not just the US; developments in the Middle East and the Arab world are just one of numerous examples of this. However, I am sad to see that the European Union has not managed to play and highlight its particular role in the area and, as a result, other countries, such as Turkey, see themselves and are also seen by the US, as a stronger and more important voice in the area than Europe. This must change at once and I believe that the next summit offers a good opportunity here.

Allow me to close by underlining that, as regards cooperation in the important security sector, a crucial point for us is the agreement on personal data protection and, on this very delicate issue for the European public, we must respect and emphasise the principles and practices on which our European family is based. We MEPs wish this issue to be raised as a priority item on the summit's agenda.

**Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, the United States is the most important strategic partner of the European Union, both in political and economic terms. Close cooperation with the US is a condition for the effective resolution of the current problems, such as overcoming the economic crisis, ensuring stability, establishing energy security and combating terrorism. The attempt to develop common armed forces on the basis of the Treaty of Lisbon cannot undermine the real cooperation as part of NATO.

There are, naturally, a number of technical issues which need to be resolved with the United States over the course of the upcoming summit. The issue of visas emerges here once again,

namely, the discrimination on the part of the US in its visa policy towards four Member States of the European Union, including Poland. Currently, there is no justification for the visa requirement for the citizens of these Member States. Therefore, I yet again appeal for this issue to be re-addressed at the next summit.

**Eduard Kukan (PPE).** - Madam President, I am going to speak about one of the important specific issues in the broad scale of EU-US cooperation.

Before this Summit, I would like to encourage the High Representative to work more intensively on strengthening the EU-US partnership in foreign policy, especially in the development of democratisation.

The United States, our strategic partner in this field, is together with the EU the largest provider of development and democracy assistance globally. The outcome of the current wave of democratic uprisings in the Arab world showed that we need to bring democracy development back to the international agenda.

We have seen that the international response to these events is decisive in shaping perception of democracy support in the future. We will need more cooperation and coordination with the United States on these issues. The EU and US should shift towards an approach to democracy which is based on viewing other regions and countries as real partners on an equal basis. The Summit should be a good chance to put these issues firmly back on the table.

**Ana Gomes (S&D).** - Madam President, the transatlantic partnership must act against this crisis, taking lessons from the deregulatory madness inherent in the casino economy it allowed to flourish. The EU and US must then implement commitments made at the G20, including the control of tax havens, which continue to divert staggering resources from investment in economic growth and job creation. Only in this way will the EU and US ensure strategic security for their democracies and also encourage the rule of law and human rights to take root at global level, countering negative designs by powers whose governments do not account to their peoples, such as China and Russia.

Pressing a solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is central for the US and the EU to assist the Arab Spring in disarming dictatorships, fundamentalisms and terrorisms, including in non-Arab Iran. Israel will not survive without creating an interest for its own security in its region and, in particular, in its neighbouring state of Palestine. The EU and the US should not delay any longer in recognising it.

**Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, the EU and the United States are connected by a special relationship built on common values and historic cooperation in many fields, starting with the economy and ending with security. The Union should continue to engage in building effective and good relations within the framework of its partnership with the United States, and dialogue between the EU and the USA should aim for even greater cooperation and coordination in matters of regional and global concern, particularly in the area of promoting respect for democracy and human rights.

However, the Union should also take advantage of these mutual relations in order to turn our partners' attentions to issues that are important from the point of view of some Member States. Citizens of four Member States of the European Union, including Poland, still have to apply for a visa entitling them to enter the territory of the United States. I would like this question to be raised at the forthcoming summit. The proposed resolution on which we will vote tomorrow also calls on the EU and the United States to do everything in their

power to restore direct peace talks between Israel and Palestine, because this is the only way to achieve a lasting peace in the Middle East. I hope that this issue, too, will be duly discussed with the US administration. Thank you.

**Krzysztof Lisiek (PPE).** - (PL) Madam President, Commissioner, it is clear that there is no need or necessity to convince anyone of the importance of US-EU relations. All the speakers have underlined that they affect both issues of economy and trade, and of security and foreign policy. As Vice-Chairman of the Subcommittee on Security and Defence, I would like to focus on matters of security.

Today, as reflected in the resolution, the best guarantee of security is the development of stable, democratic countries and, in this context, cooperation between the United States, the Member States of the European Union and the institutions of the European Union must be ensured. We all have to devote more time to working together, exchanging information and sometimes avoiding a duplication of our efforts. This also applies to actions in the field of development aid. The United States and the European Union together provide a total of 80% of development aid worldwide. This requires coordination and cooperation in order to – as I tend to say – save money and spend it more efficiently.

Of course, as a Pole I cannot avoid joining those of my fellow Members who have referred to the regrettable issue that continues to affect four countries, that is the issue of the visa-waiver programme, or rather the lack of visa-free movement. This is incomprehensible and, as my fellow Members have said, there are no rational arguments for continuing to obstruct the visa-free movement of the citizens of these four Member States of the European Union.

**Ioan Mircea Paşcu (S&D).** - Madam President, the current financial crisis is by far the gravest challenge we face in common. We are being challenged both separately – Europe in its very integration, the US in its world-leading role – but most importantly together as the West.

However, given the complexity of our relations, we need a more strategic dialogue, educating the new elites on both sides of the Atlantic on our common stakes regarding primarily the current financial crisis, the Middle East, the revolutions in the Arab world, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Iran as well as the BRIC countries.

In security terms, due to the absence of major threats to Europe and the shift of US attention towards the Pacific, we run the risk of a diminished US participation in ensuring the security of our continent. To avoid it, one needs to increase, not decrease our own defence efforts in both the UN and NATO and address the potential negative impact of decision-making fragmentation.

**Kay Swinburne (ECR).** - Madam President, I am hugely supportive of transatlantic dialogue. In today's global markets, the EU must be talking at all levels to its key partners around the world.

When, in September 2010, the Heads of State of the G20 got together to agree to better regulate the world's financial markets, they set out a few broad principles for the reform of the derivatives markets. It has now fallen upon legislators and regulatory bodies to make these principles a reality.

Parliament, together with the Council and Commission, have added much of the detail and have fleshed out many of those principles agreed at G20, so as to create better-regulated, more stable and fairer derivative markets.

However, we must not forget that this was a G20 commitment. The significance of this is that we must ensure that all the G20 markets not only implement those commitments, but also implement them in a way which allows them to fit together globally.

We must not get caught up in making our markets so secure that no one outside of Europe can access them. Likewise, the Dodd-Frank Act needs to be interpreted in a non-protectionist way.

I urge all those attending the EU-US summit not to get caught up in equivalence and comparability of legislation or, worse, reciprocity, but instead to look at ways of bringing together disparate systems so they can interact in a smooth and predictable way.

While we must work to ensure that Dodd-Frank in the US and EMIR and MiFID in the EU fit together, we must not forget about the other members of G20 and their financial market regulation, making certain that Asian, American and European capital can flow through the system in a transparent and safe way. This should be our ultimate goal.

**Salvatore Iacolino (PPE).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the EU-US summit undoubtedly takes on a fundamental role, especially in such troubled times of market turbulence, international crisis and a search by both the United States and the European Union for security for their citizens on one hand and, on the other, for prosperity in such complex circumstances.

Terrorism and organised crime must be tackled vigorously, and we must not forget that the negotiations to draw up the Passenger Name Record (PNR) Agreement once and for all have just begun; this agreement should result in greater exchange of information and an increasingly decisive clampdown on terrorism. The transatlantic dialogue is fundamental for our citizens' well-being and also to help developing countries more effectively through targeted and coordinated actions. We call for fewer tariff barriers, greater economic competitiveness and real cooperation based on trust. We want to see public procurement procedures that acknowledge the principle of reciprocity, as may happen reasonably soon in an EU-Canada trade agreement, which is currently at an advanced stage. Increasingly high levels of consumer protection are needed; there is also an agreement on gambling, which at the moment is still under consideration and ought to be taken forward. Companies in the European regions and Member States need access to the privileged market – so to speak – in the United States in order to ensure growth and competitive development. At the same time, we must keep an eye on the countries suffering in the Mediterranean, not least to sustain this wind of freedom. Another area is legal migration and protection for the labour market. Dialogue is needed to stabilise the euro area and protect it, with US support, from world market turbulence. Furthermore, information must be able to flow in the field of research, based on innovation, to ensure the health of both European and US citizens, and on real, concrete cooperation.

**Judith A. Merkies (S&D).** – (NL) Madam President, Commissioner, I would like to draw your attention to a report that you have also been involved with yourself, namely the report on raw materials. I have still not heard you speak on this subject, while everyone knows that, at this point in time, prices for raw materials are very high, with major scarcity on the horizon. We really need to do something about this. Will you also discuss this matter?

Alongside many other crises – the economic crisis, the climate crisis – there is, of course, also the raw materials shortage crisis, which we can solve in a variety of ways.

I also have a question about energy efficiency and the energy saving agenda. It is very important for climate change that, all over the world, we look not only to renewable energy, but also to energy efficiency, in our own countries and also in developing countries. Is this also on the agenda for ourselves, as well as the funds to support this in the developing world?

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** - Madam President, I have listened to the debate very closely and it is certainly very important to have a close relationship between the US and the European Union. As a member of the EU-US Delegation, I am pleased to be involved, partially at least, in that whole area and looking forward to a visit to Jacksonville in a couple of weeks.

However, one of the downsides in democracy is the fact that people have to be re-elected. As somebody said recently in regard to Europe, we know what to do but the problem is that, if we do it, we will not be re-elected. That will probably come into play, particularly with the American Presidential election now upcoming.

Nevertheless, we have to grasp the opportunity to deal with matters that can be of use to people when they are going to be re-elected, and particularly in relation to job creation and the issues of climate change and security. I think they are the areas that we need to focus on in particular at this Summit. It is also a great opportunity to give status and recognition to new instruments, President Van Rompuy in particular.

#### IN THE CHAIR: DIANA WALLIS

*Vice-President*

**Kristiina Ojuland (ALDE).** - Madam President, last week the ALDE Group held a conference in Helsinki that addressed the deterioration of human rights and democracy in Russia, the conclusions of which the High Representative is familiar with. We decided to call for reconsidering the EU policy towards Russia if the Parliamentary and Presidential elections are not held in line with the standards for free and fair elections – which seems to be the case.

As a member of the Council of Europe and the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe), Russia has taken international obligations upon itself. Therefore, the elections cannot be regarded as an internal matter of the country. The rise of authoritarianism in Russia requires an unequivocal international response, which is why I would ask the High Representative to raise this issue at the EU-US summit in Washington DC.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** –(PT) Madam President, it is important to clarify two issues in this debate. The first is regarding Cuba. We know that the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has once again almost unanimously condemned the unacceptable economic embargo of the United States on Cuba. This embargo is Cuba's main obstacle to economic and social progress, and is a flagrant and systematic violation of the Cuban people's human rights. Taking this into consideration, I would like to ask you if you do not consider there to be an urgent need, in the context of a dialogue between the EU and the US, for the EU to adopt an autonomous position and advocate an end to the economic embargo on Cuba?

Do you not believe that this condemnation of the embargo also, once again, makes clear the injustice of maintaining a common EU position on Cuba?

The second issue is Palestine. Do you not believe it is time to immediately recognise the Palestinian State and accept its request to join the UN, as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation has already done, in spite of the embargo that the US continues to uphold?

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Madam President, the United States is Europe's most important international partner. The November summit should therefore help us to make progress on the majority of unresolved issues.

The discussions on the agreement with the US to provide data on air travellers have been ongoing for some time now, as the previous version of the agreement infringes the relevant EU legislation on personal data protection. Our divergent views on security systems using body scans and the ban on taking liquids on board planes also affect air travel.

Another unresolved issue is the fact that most EU countries have not been included in the visa-free programmes with the United States. We regard the European Union as a common area of 27 associated states holding common democratic values, which is why the differentiated approach of the US to some Member States is unjustified.

It would also be a good idea to discuss our mutual positions on the political changes in the Arab world. Perhaps then we would be able to better coordinate some of our steps in this environment.

**Karel De Gucht,** *Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy* . – Madam President, I have taken good note of all the remarks that have been made and I will forward them to Catherine Ashton. Let me very briefly go into a number of topics.

I had some questions on zeroing. We are making good progress on that. It is a very technical topic; it is about import duties, and you have the cases of the future, the present and the past. For the future, it will be resolved in the coming days because it is going through Congress, most probably before the end of the year. There are also very good prospects for the existing cases and how they will be translated into the new system. Concerning the past, there is still a discussion on damages that should be paid state to state by the US to the European Union. So we are making steady progress with respect to that.

On nanotechnology: there was an interesting question, because we are discussing with the US a common definition of nanotechnology. In the meantime, the Commission has put forward a definition. There is a good reason for doing so because, in several directives that you have been discussing and that you have voted on in Parliament, you have different definitions of nanotechnology. To try at least to come up with a common definition, we should of course start from one European definition and not from five different ones; that is the reason why we have presented a definition of nanotechnology.

On raw materials: yes, we are working together with the US on raw materials, and that is in the 2010 TEC. The EU and US have launched the EU-US Innovation Action Partnership, which is a framework for developing trade policy strategies to eliminate barriers and to improve the investment and innovation climate by working together on research, recycling, use, transport and extraction of raw materials. The business community has shown a lot of interest in these issues and is pushing for results. Four work streams were proposed by

the TABD in their letter of 10 May: trade, material flaws research, recycling and waste. They constitute a good basis, but they need to be operationalised.

The European Union and the US are working on an EU-US roadmap on raw materials. It will build on the elements in the IAP but include concrete action items and timelines, and it could be endorsed by TEC principles. You will also know that we have together been fighting a case against China before the WTO, and that we won it, on raw materials.

Another topic that has come to the fore a couple of times is visas. The Commission attaches great importance to the admission of the four remaining EU Member States – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland and Romania – to the US visa waiver programme and we are continuing to work with US counterparts on solving this issue.

In relation to the introduction of the ESTA fee for travel under the visa waiver programme, the Commission has repeatedly voiced concern that these new requirements are inconsistent with US commitments to facilitate transatlantic mobility and constitute an additional burden for European citizens travelling to the US.

Is Iran going to be discussed at the Summit? The situation in Iran is worrying and we are cooperating with the US closely. We shall continue discussions among the E3+3 concerning Iran's nuclear programme. In view of the deteriorating human rights situation, we have reinforced the EU's restrictive measures against persons responsible for serious human rights violations in Iran, adding 29 persons to the list of those targeted by an assets freeze and a visa ban.

In light of the new IAEA report, which is to be considered by the Board of Governors, there are increasing concerns over the Iranian nuclear programme and the lack of progress in diplomatic efforts. The EU condemns the continuous expansion of Iran's enrichment programme and we are particularly concerned at the findings of the IAEA report. We are urging Iran to address international concerns over the nature of its nuclear programme through full cooperation with the IAEA and by demonstrating readiness to engage seriously in concrete discussions on confidence-building steps, as proposed by the High Representative/Vice-President on behalf of the E3+3.

There were a lot of questions also on data protection and how long it will take to finalise the negotiations. The negotiations started just six months ago. We have identified a number of important issues that will probably require several rounds of further discussions. Considering the complexity of many of the issues and the diverging points of view, negotiations will continue until the agreement is ripe to conclude, especially if we want to achieve added value for our citizens. It will take time, but that is the effort I believe that we have to make.

**Franz Obermayr (NI).** – (DE) Madam President, unfortunately, I must once again bring up the old familiar subject of 'catch the eye'. The EU-US summit on 28 November is not just any old issue – it is not a trivial matter – it is a very important one. Therefore, I cannot understand why more time has not been allowed for catch the eye. Secondly, Madam President, for you and your predecessor: I cannot understand why you are so tolerant when speakers exceed their speaking time by 30 to 40 seconds – I have noted it exactly – with the result that there is no time left for those who sit here and may wish to take the floor under the catch-the-eye procedure. I would like to make the point once again that that is not fair. In my opinion, those colleagues in particular who gladly talk about solidarity, but then exceed their speaking time by 40 seconds are, in so doing, acting

improperly. That ought to be noted accordingly by you and by the President so that a balance is maintained here and, above all, the same standards are applied to everyone.

**President.** – Mr Obermayr, you will know that I have only just taken over the chair. I was about to make a statement at the beginning of the next debate which said that we are running very, very late and will all colleagues, as I often say, please respect the speaking time, because I will be using this. If you do not, you infringe upon the speaking rights of your other colleagues exactly. So I will be watching, and I will be banging this thing which I hate to do, but we are going to have to do so today. I am sorry to end this debate on that note.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow (17 November 2011).

### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Ágnes Hankiss (PPE),** *in writing.* – (HU) The tracking and processing of both banking and passenger traffic data provides law enforcement agencies with an effective tool in their fight against terrorism and organised crime. It is welcome that agreements on both the TFTP and the PNR have been concluded or are in the process of being concluded between the EU and its allies, and address most of the human rights concerns expressed by the European Parliament, incorporating guarantees for the prevention and ex-post remediation of potential infringements into these conventions. I would like to highlight, not for the first time, one aspect: the need for mutuality. The EU should not only give, but also receive information essential for law enforcement from the US based on reciprocity and as an equal partner. This, however, would require the EU to clarify to the US which one of its bodies or agencies, invested with full powers, is capable of receiving and evaluating data from the US in line with the fusion principle, and of continuously supplying Member States with information relevant to them.

**Tunne Kelam (PPE),** *in writing.* – Both the EU and the USA are not only facing an economic and financial crisis, but also a crisis of values and value-driven politics. It is high time that both sides agreed on the need to conduct a common value-driven policy at a global level. Being the two biggest economies in the world, the EU and USA can efficiently cooperate to solve the crisis only on condition of re-enforcing the moral and ethical basis of their actions. I call on the EU to put greater effort into strengthening and enhancing EU-US relations and to step up the Transatlantic partnership. It is highly important that the Transatlantic economic area and Transatlantic market be given key priority in the EU's agenda. As the Commission has underlined, the EU and US economies are interlinked and this calls for common efforts. Both sides have to realize the crucial importance and strategic value of their partnership while acting on the global scene. Close relations with China and Russia are important, but can never replace the unique bond and partnership the EU and USA have been sharing for decades. This will help us, among other issues, to successfully and rapidly harmonize differences concerning security measures applied to passengers and cargoes.

**Cristian Dan Preda (PPE),** *in writing.* – (RO) I would like to welcome today's debate on the EU-US Summit to be held on 28 November 2011. Transatlantic relations have been and still are of paramount importance to Europe as the United States is our natural ally, with not only a common history, but also important values binding us. This is why, during times of economic and financial crisis, it is crucial that both these transatlantic partners

adopt a coordinated response to the global economic challenges and devise together new strategies for promoting economic growth and job creation.

At the same time, the events in the southern Mediterranean make us reflect together on the ways to promote common values in this region, such as democracy, pluralism and human rights. However, the recent challenges must not make us lose sight of certain fundamental issues in EU-US relations. I would therefore like to draw attention to item 24 of the resolution, which I initiated, and which stresses the need to raise with the US, both at technical and political level, the issue of admitting the four remaining EU Member States to the visa waiver programme. In Romania's case, this is an issue which must be dealt with urgently.

**Fiorello Provera (EFD)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Iran continues to claim that it wants to develop a nuclear programme for civilian purposes. In fact, however, it has carried out research and set up facilities for military purposes, as verified in recent inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Its nuclear ambitions, which in themselves are worrying, are accompanied by a policy of internal repression and aggression towards other countries in the area, such as Saudi Arabia and particularly Israel. This threat has not only political and military repercussions but also economic and strategic ones, because it may affect oil production and thus have economic and financial consequences that would have a direct impact on us as well. A global threat needs a global response. It is therefore crucial to establish very close cooperation with the United States regarding all measures that may from time to time become necessary, such as imposing further, more incisive sanctions on Tehran. I hope it is not already too late.

## 12. The open Internet and net neutrality in Europe (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the debate on

– the oral question to the Council on the open internet and net neutrality in Europe by Herbert Reul, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (O-000243/2011 – B7-0641/2011), and

– the oral question to the Commission on the open internet and net neutrality in Europe by Malcolm Harbour, Andreas Schwab, Evelyne Gebhardt, Jürgen Creutzmann, Heide Rühle, Adam Bielan, Cornelis de Jong, on behalf of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (O-000261/2011 – B7-0653/2011).

**Herbert Reul**, *author*. – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, ladies and gentlemen, net neutrality is the description of the neutral transfer that we want to see on the Internet, irrespective of origin and the content being sent. This is currently the case.

However, we have an obvious problem in that the global data volume will, according to estimates, potentially quadruple to 767 exabytes by 2014, and fixed network data traffic will increase by 35% a year and mobile data traffic by 107% a year. It will become congested on the data highways, and temporary overloads and blockages may result in a loss of quality.

That means, firstly, that the networks urgently need to be expanded. This Parliament has already taken many initiatives in this regard, most recently under the leadership of Mr Hökmark. We have a problem in connection with the expansion of the networks that

also results from the fact that telecommunications companies pay for the expansion of the network, but Internet service providers pay nothing towards this. That is part of the reason why a debate has now been taking place over the last few years where it is increasingly being asked: are there now particular responses by operators that allow restrictions to be implemented in the network? The Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) carried out a corresponding study among its members at the beginning of 2010 and discovered that certain operators do not always handle all data equally – in other words in connection with limiting speed, collection or blocking or the collection of additional fees, to give a few examples.

At European level there is – and this is where the debate currently stands – no fixed uniform definition of what net neutrality is. The principle applies that end users must be able to call up and disseminate information or use any particular applications and services. That has also been laid down in everything that we have so far adopted here, for example in the framework directive of 2002 and also in the telecommunications reform package from 2009. That was a very difficult negotiation. Ms Trautmann will remember this well. Here, too, the Commission once again made it clear that keeping the open and neutral nature of the Internet is extremely important and that net neutrality must be retained. It stated that this is a political objective that should also be stipulated by the national regulatory authorities.

The issue at hand that we have been giving our attention to – and that is also the reason why not only the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, but also the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection is currently looking at this issue – is the fact that, in individual Member States, we are already seeing reactions to this and legislative decisions already exist. On the other hand, there is the study by BEREC and the Commission has the additional task of examining the data once again in more detail in order to determine what problems exist and where they lie. Overall, the Commission is clearly of the opinion that no major problems exist.

In view of the fact that the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council will meet in December, we are of the opinion that we as Parliament must consider this matter in advance of this, and we have therefore brought the matter up here in connection with the debate on the task of the Member States to implement the provisions of the Telecoms Package by 25 May 2011. Two questions need to be answered by the Council. We would like to know what impact the Council thinks this reform package from 2009 will have in terms of guaranteeing an open Internet and net neutrality in Europe and how the Council intends to ensure a common approach in respect of the open Internet and net neutrality throughout the EU.

For us as a committee it is important that we are of the opinion that there needs to be a common European basis here, that we cannot have a fragmented space and that we must therefore assess, analyse and then also draw the necessary conclusions from the situation, where necessary. We will be receiving a document from the Commission and we are now waiting for the answers to our questions.

**Malcolm Harbour**, *author*. – Madam President, it is a privilege to be working once again with my distinguished colleagues on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, because we had a very fruitful partnership in the reform of the telecoms package. I am very pleased that Mrs Trautmann and Mrs Pilar del Castillo Vera, who were jointly, with me,

the three rapporteurs on the Telecoms Directive – sometimes rather unkindly known as the three musketeers for some reason – are together again and addressing this issue.

My colleagues will remember that, from the side of the consumers' and users' rights reforms, together with the basic principles in the framework directive we spent a huge amount of time and energy crafting amendments to the existing telecoms framework to deal with some of the potential issues that might arise in a framework in which broadband speeds, access to much greater bandwidth of communications and ability to offer different ranges and types of services on the Internet might bring about the sort of anti-competitive behaviour which would restrict the rights of consumers to access and distribute content and services of their choice.

That indeed was the fundamental piece that was introduced into the framework directive itself. It is worth just recalling that – that ability of end users to access and distribute information and to run applications and services of their choice is absolutely at the heart of this whole debate about so-called net neutrality and the choices that were put on the table.

The Commission, at our invitation, has been following this very closely, but of course my fellow chairman, Herbert Reul, is quite right in saying that the test at the moment is to see how the reforms that we put in place in the Telecoms Package are actually working out in practice.

What were the issues that were put on the table to deal with ensuring that this open character of the Internet is maintained and continues to be delivered?

First of all there was the whole principle of ensuring competition – giving consumers choice of services, but above all actually being able to switch providers if they did not like the types of services that were on offer or indeed any restrictions that might be placed on access to certain types of services. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with having offers that may be limited in choice at a lower price, provided that consumers know what they are getting. That is the crucial point here. So within the universal service and users' rights element we ensured that the ability to switch easily – and particularly if it was a voice service to take your number or indeed your internet address very speedily and quickly within one day – was enshrined within that.

Secondly, the transparency of the offers that consumers are getting is absolutely fundamental. The Commission has been consulting about, and a number of regulators have been looking at, the whole issue of what the actual advertised delivery speed of one's connection is, what the management measures are and what service providers are doing to deal with times where there may be limitations of capacity in times of network overload. That applies particularly to mobile operators – as many of us will know.

That transparency of contract terms is a fundamental requirement of the telecoms package and we have asked the Commission to make sure that, in every country, regulators are enforcing those transparency and information requirements alongside the switching aspect.

Finally, in terms of what we put in – and colleagues will remember the famous Article 21 of the reform on the Users' Rights Directive – we have actually given regulators, for the first time, the ability to intervene in the marketplace if they see that an operator is actively discriminating against a content carried on its networks that competes with content of its own. In other words, if an operator actually artificially degrades the quality of service provision for a particular service where it is providing a competing service. I think we

would all agree that this is absolutely unacceptable. That is clearly discriminatory behaviour as regards quality of service on the Internet and undermines the whole principle of net neutrality.

We have given the regulators those powers and they are invited to use them. Of course, one of the major achievements of the telecoms package was to have a body of European regulators – the BEREC that was in Mrs del Castillo Vera's proposal – and they are the people whose job it is to ensure that that is being carried out.

There is a lot on the table. This is a good report and a good resolution, but the proof of the pudding will be in the implementation of what we have asked for.

**Magdalena Gaj**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (PL) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, to begin with, I would like to thank both committees and both Chairs, Mr Reul and Mr Harbour, for the questions. It is extraordinarily important for us to be able to have this discussion today on the 2009 Telecoms Package, and in particular on the key issues of the open Internet and the principle of net neutrality. These issues are extremely important, particularly today, when the Internet and all information and communication tools have become the engine driving our economy and might perhaps be among the tools that will help Europe, or even the whole world, to overcome the crisis. In my opinion, the success of the Internet is a success achieved through openness and the opportunity for each of our citizens to use it in a simple, straightforward and clear way. That is why this discussion is of particular importance, in my view, as the President-in-Office of the Council.

Regarding the first part of the question relating to the assessment of the implementation of this package in the Member States, I would first of all like to point out that we are all aware of the fact that since the adoption of the new EU legislation on telecommunications in November 2009, the national regulatory authorities have been required to promote access to information and the use of selected applications and services among end users. The promotion of these opportunities is achieved by supporting the requirements for transparency of the information provided to subscribers. Moreover, national regulatory authorities have also been granted a very important right to set the minimum requirements with regard to the quality of services. The Member States recognise the importance of the effective implementation of these requirements while maintaining the open nature of the Internet and guaranteeing the general availability of a stable Internet. The Member States are also aware of some concerns as regards discriminatory forms of management and handling of data, transparency of prices and quality of services, both in the network, and with regard to the protection of personal data. The Member States therefore underline the importance of providing consumers with transparent information so as to enable everyone to make a conscious choice, whether they choose a limited service, or a full service at a different price – the consumer must, however, be aware of the service which is to be provided. Furthermore, the Member States emphasise the need to address the issues of discrimination and deterioration of service quality, which may be the result of certain practices in the management of traffic in the network. In connection with this, the Council stresses the important role of BEREC and of the European Commission, together with national regulatory authorities in the field of market analysis and assessment of the conformity of the operators' activities with the rules of the regulatory framework.

What has happened so far? Of course, we know that not all Member States have implemented the package yet – we need to remember that there are several extensive directives that require profound analysis, and these implementation processes are coming

to an end in each Member State. However, the introduction of the principle of net neutrality, and of all of the transparency requirements, has already caused great debates in various Member States. Such debates were held for example in Poland, or in France – debates involving market participants and the participants in the Internet chain, namely telecommunication operators, content providers, and individual market participants, and these debates make it possible that in the not too distant future we will also be able to discuss partial self-regulation, which is very important. Thus, these regulations are already beginning to function.

In respect of the second part of the question, I would like to point out that the Council, noting the need for a uniform approach to this matter, has prepared its conclusions to the Commission's communication on the open Internet and net neutrality. Therefore, during the next meeting of the Council of Ministers on 13 December 2011, we will adopt these Council conclusions, and I think that it will provide a common approach to this topic, which is linked to the amended regulatory framework. The Council welcomes the Commission's commitment to monitor the process of implementing the EU's regulatory framework as well as its readiness to examine further those aspects of net neutrality, which are associated with significant and persistent problems, and urges the Commission and BEREC to monitor current practices, in order to eliminate cases of poor traffic management. If traffic management is already in place, it should be done with due regard to proportionality, transparency and the provision of smooth transfer, and guarantee price transparency and service-quality requirements which do not affect net neutrality.

In its conclusions, the Council supports the Commission's stated intention to assess the need for publishing additional guidance or adopting further regulations, on the basis of data derived from the BEREC study. Should such a necessity arise, these documents will be prepared, and the Council will deal with these documents in accordance with the legislative competences to which it is entitled. I apologise for exceeding my time limit. Thank you very much.

**Karel De Gucht**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I am pleased to be here to respond on behalf of the Commission in the absence of Neelie Kroes, who has had to go to Warsaw.

Open internet is an issue that affects every one of us and is increasingly an economic essential. The Commission has stressed on several occasions the importance of having an open internet, accessible to everyone, from the innovators who provide content, to those who use it.

The Commission thinks that the best way to deliver an open internet is through competitive markets. But for competition to work properly, consumers need to make informed choices, and to know exactly what service they are getting. They also need to be able to switch operators easily and quickly.

The new telecoms rules approved in 2009 specifically require operators to be transparent about the service they offer and the traffic management techniques they apply. They also help their consumers to switch operator, in particular by improving number portability procedures and conditions for contract subscription and termination. If needed, they empower national regulators to set minimum quality of service requirements.

These rules, which had to be implemented by May this year, have not yet been fully transposed in all Member States. The Commission is vigilantly monitoring their

implementation. This will allow us to ensure that open and neutral internet principles are respected in practice.

In addition, the Commission has asked the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC), in which all the Member States' telecoms regulators are represented, to undertake a rigorous fact-finding exercise on these issues, including barriers to changing operators, blocking or throttling of internet traffic, voice over internet services, transparency and quality of service.

We need to know what the situation is: whether customers really do know what service they are signing up to, whether throttling and blocking are really common practices and what the impact is on the service quality delivered to the end-user. We also want to make sure that consumers can switch providers easily, if they do not like the service they are getting.

In parallel, BEREC is working on guidance and transparency. It is working on a framework for net neutrality and quality of service, which looks specifically into how to use minimum quality of service requirements as specified in Article 22 (3) of the Universal Service Directive. It is also working on the competition issues relating to net neutrality.

Building on BEREC's and any industry's inputs and based on its own analysis, the Commission will decide whether additional guidance or more stringent measures regarding open internet and net neutrality are necessary – and by the way, as the Council has rightly stated, we will make public BEREC's findings.

It is very important that we have the facts and figures before acting. If we do need to act, we must do so in a coordinated way across Europe. I would therefore urge national regulators to collaborate with their peers and the Commission when considering regulatory action in this area, and to act on the basis of facts.

At this stage, I cannot yet tell Members yet whether the Commission will develop additional guidance or general legislative measures to enhance competition and consumer choice, such as by further facilitating consumer switching. However, we are very confident we will receive all the necessary input to make an informed decision. The House can be sure that any proposal in this area will be subject to an in-depth assessment of their impact, including on fundamental rights.

Much is at stake in the area of open internet and net neutrality. The Commission wants to make sure that sound policy initiatives are developed that help deliver the objectives of the Digital Agenda for Europe.

**Lambert van Nistelrooij**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (NL) Madam President, representatives of the Council and the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) has put net neutrality at the heart of its policy as a key principle and supported it in the 2009 telecoms package. In so doing, we wanted to stimulate innovation and increase the number of Internet services. Even in these times of crisis, this is working exceptionally well. The number of jobs is increasing vigorously and this is a true growth sector, possibly even the largest growth sector in Europe. Broadband opens up a new world, a world of jobs for citizens, for businesses and for governments. In this case, fun and function emphatically do go hand in hand.

Now we come to implementation in the Member States. There are network managers that really do block new service providers and give them unnecessarily high bills. This has also

happened in the Netherlands. Mr Reul just gave us other examples, too. Skype and WhatsApp, for example, were impeded. For that reason, a supplementary legislative proposal is in preparation in the Netherlands. There is nothing wrong with that in itself, but we cannot allow the situation to develop where every country develops its own legislation so that ultimately we end up surrendering again when it comes to a single Internet space for Europe. The added value of the single digital area, an open Internet, is something that, for us, is beyond dispute.

Finally, both committees are now sending a signal to the Member States to be clear when it comes to implementation. Secondly, for us, for the PPE Group, new regulation need not be the answer if more focused implementation can actually be achieved. In principle we support net neutrality, we have high expectations when it comes to innovations and jobs. That is what this is about for us.

**Catherine Trautmann,** *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, Minister, ladies and gentlemen, during the negotiations on the telecoms package, the European Parliament already advocated the need to respect the Internet's neutrality.

Transparency on how traffic is managed in times of network overload and a minimum quality of service are basic requirements, but the persistent blocking of Internet content, as was just mentioned, or applications shows that these requirements are not enough. Let us therefore remember the essential nature of the Internet for fundamental rights and media pluralism and the need to ensure the confidentiality of communications and people's private lives.

Telecoms operators can contribute to economic recovery. They must be given the opportunity to innovate and invest in the development of new services, but the quality of basic Internet services, with which we are familiar, must not under any circumstances be allowed to decline in favour of paid services.

We oppose the creation of a two-speed Internet which would be discriminatory for the most modest-income households, who are already hard-hit by the crisis.

Finally, if the findings of the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) require it, we would ask the Commission to assume its responsibilities and produce a binding text which ensures the Internet's neutrality.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi,** *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – Madam President, without a shadow of doubt, the Internet has radically changed our societies and our lives and has been a driver for competitiveness, innovation and economic growth in Europe over the past years. It has boosted cross-border trade through e-commerce, contributing to the development of the internal market, and it has allowed for the development of online services to the benefit of European consumers.

What we have achieved so far has been possible to a large extent thanks to the openness of the Internet. We should continue on this path and take all necessary measures to preserve the open internet, which will help us further develop the digital single market.

Of course, traffic management is necessary in order to be able to provide an adequate quality for different services. But this should not be a pretext for anti-competitive practices such as blocking, throttling and so on. We have all witnessed cases where mobile Voice-through-IP services have been blocked. I therefore call on the Commission, BEREC

and the national regulatory authorities (NRAs) to closely monitor traffic management measures, especially for mobile internet, and take the necessary measures where anti-competitive behaviour is proved.

In my view, the revised telecoms framework agreed in 2009 provides the necessary safeguards against such anti-competitive practices, but we probably need more active NRAs, which use their prerogatives to set minimum quality-of-service requirements.

Potential abuse in traffic management can be harmful to competition and can also affect freedom of expression and the freedom to conduct business, which are of the utmost importance. Consumers should also be more effectively protected against misleading advertising, namely on the speed of the Internet. I believe that some additional guidelines from the Commission on these questions could help Member States to better apply EU legislation and would enable consumers and businesses to profit from the open internet.

**Philippe Lamberts**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (FR) Madam President, I remain somewhat astounded by the fact that although we are in Europe, with respect to telecoms, we are acting as though we were the sum of 27 micro-markets. We saw this on the radio spectrum issue with Gunnar Hökmark and we are seeing it on the roaming issue with Angelika Niebler. We still do not have a single European market even though, quite frankly, for telecoms – I stress this is telecommunications we are talking about – this is clearly the level at which we should be working, including for legislation.

It is true, as Mr van Nistelrooij said, that the Netherlands are taking an initiative to protect the web's neutrality. I will not re-emphasise how important this issue is for us and I will probably not share the conclusions of this Dutch initiative. It is certainly important for the European Union to take an initiative on this.

This initiative would avoid us ending up with 27 different pieces of legislation all aimed at protecting a shared resource that, I believe, is of importance to all of us in this Parliament, 27 different pieces of legislation which would give network operators so many opportunities to bypass rules by exploiting the differences in regulatory arbitration between one country and another. Therefore, I personally will support the idea of a European legislative initiative that would help to avoid this situation.

I would like to tell the Presidency that, when I hear talk of self-regulation, even if it is just partial self-regulation, it makes me extremely angry, because when we see the extent of market operators' concern for public good – we can cite the banking sector as an example here, but also telecoms operators – I would definitely not put my trust in them.

**Adam Bielan**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – (PL) Madam President, I welcome the Commission's communication on the need to maintain the open nature of the Internet and its neutrality as the main driving force of innovation. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure the high quality of Internet services based on intellectual property rights, the freedom of expression and the freedom of establishment.

The speed and security of data transmitted and the quality of these services is inseparably linked with access to the Internet. The difference between declared and actual connection speeds has become a permanent problem. Consumers must therefore be able to make decisions about selecting a service provider on the basis of clear-cut rules, and also be able to switch to a supplier who will best suit their preferences. It is therefore necessary for the Commission to publish guidelines on the right to change operators. I am also counting on the Commission launching a broad forum for debate on the future of the Internet in the

Union, and on it keeping Parliament informed about matters of day-to-day management of information flow, the market for interconnections and network congestion.

**Marisa Matias**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (PT) Madam President, Internet access should today be considered a fundamental right for citizens, and not merely an object of commerce. Many essentials are dependent on this right, such as freedom of expression, access to and sharing of information, access to and sharing of culture and knowledge, and democratic and media plurality.

It is for this reason that Internet access cannot be subjected to speculative tariffs or contracts which block free choice and the possibility of changing provider, particularly in the world of mobile telecommunications, as we know so well.

Active citizenship therefore requires that complete and transparent information be provided. Blocking free Internet usage is not exclusive to political regimes which fear their people. It can also occur as a result of economic choices, through the offer of privileges to special customers and a less equal treatment of customers that are not so profitable.

For these reasons I support Parliament when it positions itself on the side of Internet neutrality and the defence of its total openness.

**Juozas Imbrasas**, *on behalf on the EFD Group.* – (LT) Madam President, in the Digital Agenda for Europe broadband and the Internet are particularly important drivers for economic growth, job creation and enhancing European competitiveness at global level. Furthermore, Europe will only be able to fully exploit the potential of the digital economy once a well-functioning internal market is established in this area. I believe that transparency, the quality of services and ease of switching operators are preconditions for net neutrality, and also guarantee freedom of choice for end consumers. It is important to stress that we need to safeguard an open Internet and at the same time provide high quality services, in accordance with legislation which would promote and respect fundamental rights, such as intellectual property rights, free speech and the freedom to conduct business. We must eliminate the obstacles people face when they try to switch operators, end the practices of blocking and throttling and the discrimination operated by the dominant market players.

**Angelika Niebler (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure we all agree that our objective is an open, fair Internet. That has already been mentioned by many fellow Members. We need this not only for our citizens, for users of the network and for the economy – the Commission mentioned this – but we also need it for our policies and for democratisation processes. I need only remind you of the Arab Spring. We would not have been able to find out about many of the developments in the North African states and in the Middle East if it had not been for the Internet.

How will we achieve this? I would like to refer to what Mr van Nistelrooij said. The Netherlands has gone ahead with a regulation on net neutrality. That is – please forgive me, Mr van Nistelrooij – the wrong approach to take. I think it is important for us to take a genuine European approach here, for us not to propose 27 separate regulations in this regard, but at least in Europe to seek to take a unified, harmonised approach to this issue. Therefore, I would, above all, ask the Commission, after careful analysis of the facts and with the involvement of BEREC and the national regulators, to present a proposal as quickly as possible. In one sub-area – roaming – we are currently having this debate. Structural changes are already underway in this area in connection with switching operators. I believe

that this is the right course to take. Perhaps we do not need any horizontal regulation of net neutrality at all. Roaming provides a good example here.

I would like to make one final point. As I see it, the most important thing for our citizens at home is that there should be no misleading advertising in respect of fast transmission rates. Many providers entice customers with offers that promise extremely fast data transmission speeds. However, these offers can only be exploited at three o'clock on the morning. At other times, the transmission rates do not reach anywhere near the speeds frequently promised in the advertisements. I would be grateful – to you, too, Ms Gaj – if you could check once again with BEREC and get back to us as to whether the subject of 'no misleading advertising in respect of fast transmission rates' is also being addressed.

**Marita Ulvskog (S&D).** - (SV) Madam President, net neutrality can, in simple terms, be described as a question of freedom. Complete freedom for the market and its players often entails the risk that there will be less freedom for users and consumers. For that reason, net neutrality was extremely important in the negotiations on the telecoms package, and that is why it was also one of the decisive questions put to Ms Kroes when she was questioned by Parliament in relation to her candidacy for the post of Commissioner. In light of this, possible hints of partial self-regulation or the very weak answer from the Commissioner are clearly insufficient.

My request is therefore that she should come back with precise answers to a serious question from the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy. The question is an important one, not only for the committee, but also for very many citizens of the EU. Therefore, please also come back with the precise binding texts that Ms Trautmann requested.

**Alexander Alvaro (ALDE).** – (DE) Madam President, the Internet is based on two essential pillars, namely openness and transparency, and if, when he invented the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee had not deliberately chosen not to patent HTML and HTTP, we would probably not have an open Internet. However, by making the decisions that he did, he laid the foundation for the idea of a free and open Internet.

The second pillar is the question of transparency. A popular acronym on the Internet is WYSIWYG – what you see is what you get – and that needs to apply just as much to providers, too. It is good to hear that we are all in agreement here as regards the principle that the Internet does not belong to anyone, or to put in another way, the Internet belongs to all of us. This makes the question of net neutrality crucial for ensuring that the Internet continues to be available to those who develop ideas, are creative or simply want to participate in society.

In conclusion, however, I have to say that there is one thing that surprised me. The Council's document of 7 November states:

wysiwyg – what you see is what you get.

(DE) Previously, instead of the word 'considers', the word 'enshrines' was used. Perhaps the Council could explain to us why that has been changed.

**Sandrine Bélier (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Madam President, this European Parliament resolution on the neutrality of the Internet shows our capacity to play a concrete role in the transformation from an industrial economy to a knowledge economy. Ensuring that fundamental rights are respected in this new economy is crucial from all points of view.

We are therefore delighted with the spirit of this resolution, which considers the Internet as a new area of democracy and which points out the importance of ensuring respect for fundamental rights related to or dependent on the web's neutrality, such as freedom of expression, the protection of private data and media pluralism. It also highlights the importance of ensuring respect for values such as the sharing of and access to knowledge for the greatest number of people and of allowing no exceptions in the application of legal proceedings that enforce the respect of these rights.

We hope that this resolution will lead us towards the recognition and enshrinement of the right to Internet access in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Finally, we also hope that this resolution will find support within the Commission and the Council so as to strengthen the European regulatory framework, and in particular, its application in all of the Member States to truly ensure an open and free Internet for every European citizen.

**Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, as with many areas of life, there are certain risks associated with the Internet, and this is obvious for those who speak today. This applies both to intellectual property rights and other kinds of crimes.

The fundamental issue is to realise what the Internet is today, to look around in the world. Today, the Internet is a place for equalising opportunities; today the Internet is the place where the real fight for democracy takes place. Thanks to the Internet the world is changing before our eyes, North Africa is changing – let us not forget about this. Therefore, these fundamental things – free, unhindered access to high-quality Internet, so that the Internet, which was meant to help equalise opportunities, does not become the new cause of social divisions, and so that what was meant to become an impetus for democratisation does not lead to certain restrictions being placed on freedom. Thus, it must be stated very clearly today that the choice regarding the contents and the use of the Internet should lie always and exclusively with the recipient.

#### IN THE CHAIR: MIGUEL ANGEL MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ

*Vice-President*

**Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE).** – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, President-in-Office of the Council, we are faced with one of the issues that forms the basis for the success of the Internet, namely the competitive nature and neutral character of the network. In this sense, everything that is related to that aspect is extremely important.

I would say that the resolution we are proposing and debating this afternoon is, without a doubt, particularly balanced. It is in accordance with the Commission, in the sense that, when information exists that gives us an indication that a change is occurring to the neutral character of the network, then that would be the moment to propose some kind of legislative action, but that, in the meantime, it is necessary to wait to see what is contained in the report from the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications.

I would like to add something else: there are three conditions *sine qua non*, which, in my view, are essential for guaranteeing neutrality on the network. Firstly, there needs to be a truly competitive market for service and telecommunications operators.

Secondly, the user needs to be able to change supplier quickly and easily. Otherwise, without a doubt, the market will be very weak from a competitive point of view.

Third is transparency. Transparency means, however, that users must be properly informed of all the criteria used by network operators, so that they can really know whether or not they are of interest to them or, on the contrary, whether or not it is of interest to them to switch supplier, as was previously commented.

**Patrizia Toia (S&D).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Internet applications and services still have great potential both for the economy and for a more informed and inclusive society. Now that the telecoms package is being transposed into national legislation, there is a risk that the European framework may become fragmented. The Commission's monitoring role will therefore be important. I would also say that the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC) will have an important part to play, and some of us would have liked it to have been stronger during the drafting of the telecoms package as well.

The priorities that we want to emphasise in this debate are: a guarantee of net neutrality, development of broadband infrastructure and of more open software, security of access and interoperability of systems, promotion of the use of digital technologies throughout industry and the services sector, production of digital content and new services, inclusion of people who are currently excluded – I am thinking of people with disabilities, amongst others – and support for pluralism in information provision and culture.

It should also be laid down and guaranteed that operators cannot adopt blocking or throttling practices or discriminate against users and that they should ensure the utmost transparency in their commercial offers and in all their business activities.

**Marietje Schaake (ALDE).** - Mr President, the Internet was created with no specific use in mind other than the efficient transfer of information. Over the last 20 years, the Internet and technology have developed at an extremely rapid pace, giving rise to huge economic and social benefits. The key driver of this unprecedented innovation has been that all information flows and services are treated more or less equally, conforming with the principle of net neutrality.

Recently, a major telecoms provider in the Netherlands bragged to shareholders about its throttling of the voice over IP and messaging services that directly compete with its core business of selling text messages and calling minutes. Within hours it became known that all major providers in the Netherlands did the same. The Dutch Parliament was quick to react and legally ensured net neutrality. It is not the job of governments to protect certain business models, and the Dutch minister said that the company had clearly overplayed its hand.

Consumers pay too much, and transparency clearly has not worked in practice. I do not imagine that Dutch telecom providers are the only ones guilty of these practices, and we need to ensure that there is an EU-wide level playing field.

The research by BEREC will show what is happening, and perhaps the Dutch example can serve as an EU-wide example. In any case, the wait-and-see approach of the Commission with regard to net neutrality is hurting consumers, innovation, competition and society as a whole.

Transparency from providers and the ability for consumers to switch easily between providers are not enough on their own, and deep-packet traffic inspection methods are threatening fundamental rights.

**Gunnar Hökmark (PPE).** - Mr President, the open internet and net neutrality have been a precondition for the rapid change in development of the Internet and change in our societies. This should be underlined because, if we are to have the same rapid change in the future, we need to ensure that Europe can be the home of innovative development in internet and broadband services.

I get a little bit worried when I hear the Swedish representative of the Socialist Group calling for some sort of regulation because, if the Internet had been regulated ten years ago, we would not have seen the same development of new services as we have seen.

The impact and strength of the Internet lie in its freedom, as we have seen in other parts of the world, and as we can see from the change in our own European Union, with all the opportunities this has created for citizens.

Net neutrality offers us the opportunity to create a digital single market – not 27 different markets, but an open market – where we can get rid of such things as international roaming in the European Union, and where we can ensure that network congestion is dealt with by increasing capacity. We can develop new and better kinds of broadband, as we have done together with the Polish Presidency. We can ensure that we lead the world in mobile data traffic.

That is the way we shall face the future and that is the way we shall ensure net neutrality and a free and open internet: not by regulating but by being open to new innovations, because then Europe can take the lead.

**Petra Kammerevert (S&D).** – (DE) Mr President, an open Internet and the guarantee of non-discriminatory access for everyone are essential prerequisites for the freedom of communication, the freedom of information, media pluralism and diversity of opinion.

We are therefore sending an important and appropriate signal to the Commission and also to the Member States that we want the ‘best effort’ principle as well as fundamental transparency regulations to be laid down. However, I would have liked us to call on the Commission today to clearly define net neutrality and to enshrine it in law. If we wait any longer, we run the risk that network operators will create a version of reality that will be very difficult to put right later on.

I would also have liked to have seen a very clear ban on the control of the content of data packets. I would have liked the back door that this resolution leaves open to be closed today, and from the discussion, I sense that many fellow Members agree with me here. I believe that we should continue to work on this.

**Andreas Schwab (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the resolution that is on the table, and on which the Commission has commented, has put some very specific questions to the European Commission, but up to now we have taken a relatively general approach to this matter. Obviously, it is to be welcomed that the European Commission wishes to carry out a fact-finding exercise with regard to the open Internet in order to ensure transparency and openness, but Parliament will certainly look very closely to see whether it should stop there or whether legislation or other measures might be necessary in one or more areas.

As regards the openness and transparency of the Internet, we have already made a good deal of progress in the European Union, although we have to say that there are some Member States that are lagging behind somewhat in the distribution of the infrastructure.

With regard to the open Internet, I believe that we need to attach importance to preserving openness in such a way that efficient access is actually increased in rural areas and valuable telecommunications services are guaranteed, and, in light of this, I particularly welcome the communication from Commissioner Kroes in this area, because otherwise openness will simply become a principle that does not apply everywhere in Europe.

Secondly, transparency will certainly not be created simply by the European Commission carrying out fact-finding exercises. Mr Harbour pointed out that the Universal Service Directive confers basic rights on consumers in various areas. Only through these rights is effective competition possible in order to achieve greater transparency through information, in particular in the area of data flow.

Protection of intellectual property rights must not be forgotten here. This enables European consumers to benefit from affordable prices, informed choices and the option of switching providers, as well as high-quality services. I believe that we need to try to formulate these principles in a uniform way in the European Union. In order to do this, it would be good if the European Commission not only examined the facts with regard to the Internet, but also looked to see what measures the Member States are taking.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, the open Internet and net neutrality in Europe are priorities for establishing the digital single market. The Internet must provide high-quality services within a framework that also promotes respect for fundamental rights. We urge the Commission to ensure that Internet service providers do not block, discriminate against, impair or degrade the ability of any person to use a service and access, use, send, post, receive or offer any legal content, application or service of their choice, irrespective of source or target.

We call on the Commission to provide Parliament with information on current traffic-management practices, the interconnection market and network congestion. We urge the Commission to monitor closely the adoption of any national regulations on net neutrality, in terms of their effects on both the internal market and national markets. We think that effective competition in electronic communication services, transparent traffic management and quality of service, as well as the option to switch providers easily are the minimum prerequisites for net neutrality.

**Ivailo Kalfin (S&D).** – (BG) Mr President, I want to welcome the motion for a resolution which has been tabled. We are pinning great hopes on technological development, especially the Internet, revitalising the European economy. At the same time, we must not forget that the Internet is a medium which guarantees both the rights and freedoms of Europe's citizens. This also includes many of the new media.

When we are talking about net neutrality, I think that two things need to be very clear. Firstly, Internet providers must not restrict Internet access in any way or the use of particular information. Secondly, however, the opportunity must be provided for proper management of the Internet so that there are no bottlenecks or disruption.

I am completely relying on the European Commission and BEREC – the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications – to be able to finish their work and strike this balance, also by including these issues in the future cyber security strategy.

**Judith A. Merkies (S&D).** – (NL) Mr President, Commissioner, are Mr De Gucht and Ms Kroes saying that there are no measures to be expected in the near future? That is exactly what the European Parliament wants.

The Netherlands had to adopt a kind of emergency law in June of this year legally prescribing net neutrality – and it was the first country in the European Union to do so – as a direct consequence of the fact that our largest telecoms operator KPN wanted to have customers pay to use the online services of competitors such as Skype and WhatsApp even though it had already been stipulated in the first telecoms package back in 2009 that the net must be neutral throughout Europe. Apparently – and this is a bit crazy – we have to specify that ‘neutral’ does not really mean neutral, and that it is not up to the company in question to interpret neutrality, but up to us, the legislators, and that we have to guarantee it, and that services must not be blocked or surcharged as a result of changed habits on the part of consumers.

I really would advocate, however, that we avoid having 27 different interpretations of net neutrality. We need to step in now, we do not want to see some sort of emergency laws, as a free and neutral Internet is the economic, communications backbone of our society and needs to be transparent, high quality and neutral.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE).** - Mr President, the European Parliament can today show its leadership in promoting human rights and entrepreneurship both in Europe and worldwide. Net neutrality is about freedom of speech, freedom to access and share information and freedom of choice for consumers.

The internet governs our lives, whether we are talking about individuals, about companies or about institutions. We need a rich content of information and to facilitate access to information which could improve our lives and lead to concrete economic growth.

However, we also need to protect our citizens and institutions from misuses of the Internet, like cyber attacks, which could lead to dangerous effects on society. We have to keep the balance between protection and censorship, and at the same time to ensure that as much information as possible is accessible via the Internet, in order to develop our society.

**Ioan Enciu (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, the principle of net neutrality is fundamental to preserving the Internet’s innovative nature and free competition, and to respect for human rights. We need to enjoy net neutrality, at European and not national level, which allows users not to have conditions restricting their access to applications or services. Transparency, quality of service, eliminating false advertising, as well as the option for consumers to switch Internet providers must be supported and increased with a view to protecting neutrality and citizens’ rights.

In some Member States, like Romania, there is a significant regional disparity in terms of Internet access. Many areas are not covered by any providers, while those which are covered do not offer good-quality services in most cases. We must take into account regional cohesion at European level with regard to Internet access, since there is a great risk of creating ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Mr President, the aim of the European Union’s telecommunications reforms from 2009 was to enhance the competitive environment for telecommunications services on the internal market. It also set out a legal definition of Internet neutrality and the public’s right to open access to the Internet. The deadline for implementing the new telecommunications rules expired in May this year. In April this year the Commission adopted another communication on Internet neutrality.

It is therefore a good time to take a look together to see whether these recast regulations have brought the expected changes and have been applied in Member States to provide users with more product information and transparency, better quality of services and easy ways to switch operators if they are dissatisfied with one operator's services. In particular, the regulator should rule out problems with weakening signals or network outages which could be regarded as loss of quality of the services provided by...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Franz Obermayr (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, net neutrality obliges providers to treat all Internet traffic equally, without regulating it. However, many network providers attempt to exploit their position in order to exclude other market operators, in Internet telephony for example. The speed of access for foreign providers is purposely reduced so as not to put their own telephone services at risk. This obviously restricts competition and freedom of expression. We therefore need guidelines for the mobile telephony market in order to ensure net neutrality there, too.

Secondly, we need more transparency for end users, in other words information on providers and services, because there is often a discrepancy between advertising and reality, particularly with regard to Internet speed.

Thirdly, at the end of the day, all users should have the opportunity to switch to a new provider without any problems.

**Evelyn Regner (S&D).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, representative of the Polish Presidency, the Internet is the extension of the analogue world into the digital world, and not the wild west. Values, rights and basic democratic freedoms apply there as they do here.

In order to guarantee the freedom of the network it is necessary to preserve, as far as possible, the technological neutrality and service neutrality of the Internet infrastructure in respect of data, content and protocols. Our goal should and must be to prohibit access providers from discriminating against certain data content by transmitting it at different speeds, and we should do this at European and/or national level. Self regulation is not something in which I would necessarily have much confidence in this area.

Compliance with these prohibitions should genuinely be monitored by the appropriate authorities, and – as in the analogue world – they should be provided with the appropriate control mechanisms.

**Monika Flašíková Beňová (S&D).** – (SK) Mr President, the principle of net neutrality and the main issues being debated are based, above all, on how best to keep the openness of the Internet and guarantee so that high-quality services can continue to be provided for everybody and innovation can develop. Net neutrality affects a whole range of rights and principles enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, particularly with regard to privacy and the right to a family life, personal data protection and freedom of expression and information.

For this reason, any legislative proposal in this area would have to be studied carefully on the basis of the law and for compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights. If net neutrality is not preserved, this would be a significant threat for example in the form of anti-competitive practices, blocking innovation, restricting freedom of expression and

plurality of the media, as well as lack of consumer information and breaches of privacy. It would harm enterprises, consumers and democratic society as a whole.

**Androulla Vassiliou**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, first of all let me express the regrets of my colleague Mr De Gucht, who has had to leave for the airport, so has asked me to read his closing remarks. And please be assured that I will convey what I have heard here to my colleague Mrs Kroes.

My colleague thanks you for this very interesting exchange of views. Your views and your commitment in the area of the open internet and net neutrality are essential. The Commission looks forward to seeing the outcome of your deliberations and to read the motion for a resolution which will be voted on tomorrow.

The Commission will reflect on the important messages that emerged from today's exchange of views and assures you that such messages will shape any proposal that is brought forward. Overall, the Commission will be vigilant that new EU telecoms rules on transparency, quality of service and the ability to switch operator are applied in a way that ensures that open and neutral internet principles are respected in practice.

The Commission will also publish evidence from BEREC's investigation, including any instances of blocking or throttling certain types of traffic. If BEREC's findings and other feedback indicate outstanding problems, it will assess the need for more stringent measures. In parallel, the Commission will continue its dialogue with the Member States and stakeholders to ensure the rapid development of broadband, which is essential to reduce the pressure on internet traffic.

**Magdalena Gaj**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (PL) Mr President, Commissioner, thank you very much for this debate. As I said before, it is extremely important for the Presidency, but also for you and for all our citizens, because, as you have all said here in turn, regardless of party affiliation, and as I shall now say, we are all in favour of an open and neutral Internet. This is a fundamental value and we cannot abandon it. We must guarantee our citizens transparency of choice, an awareness of choice and provision of the best quality services everywhere.

Many of you referred to fundamental rights, issues relating to the protection of consumers, the protection of personal data and unfair advertising. The Council too is aware of all these issues and takes note of them in its conclusions. What Mr Reul and Mr Hökmark spoke about, the construction of next-generation networks and the use of additional frequency resources – this is what we were able to accomplish during the Polish Presidency. The excellent cooperation with Parliament, and the completion of work on the first radio spectrum policy programme and the making available and harmonisation of the state-owned 800 MHz frequency, will allow us to provide Internet access everywhere, even in difficult areas with low population densities.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Member States consider the open and neutral character of the Internet to be one of the major policy objectives. Mr Alvaro has asked why the Council departed from this objective and changed its conclusions. There was absolutely no change, and I can quote it right now: 'The Council underlines the need to preserve the open and neutral character of the Internet and consider net neutrality as a policy objective.' There has been absolutely no change made here. 'The Council underlines the importance of ensuring efficient transparency, that is, enabling consumers to make better and informed choices, and the importance of addressing the issues of discrimination and degradation of

service that may arise.' These Council conclusions will be adopted at the next meeting of the Council of Ministers on 13 December 2011.

**President.** – To conclude the debate, I have received one motion for a resolution <sup>(1)</sup> pursuant to Rule 115 (5), of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow at 12.00.

### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PL) Internet service providers are utility companies, just like suppliers of water or gas. Such companies should not tell us that the water in the kitchen will flow faster than in the bathroom, or that the light in the bedroom will only be half as bright as that in the hall. The provider's task is to maintain the pipes and wires, and the role of the consumer is to decide on their use. The contents of the Internet should be equal and equally available. The role of the supplier is limited here to charging the user in a manner appropriate to the use of the services. If the provider wants to offer an unlimited calling plan, and the consumer is ready to pay for it, everything is right and fine. However, this unlimited plan must indeed be free of any restrictions. We are all aware of the fact that from time to time we may have to deal with an outage in the supply of water or electricity due to an accident or maintenance. Sometimes our Internet connection is slower than usual. However, this should be an exception, not the rule. Internet services and the security of the contents must be inseparable. Thus, as is the case for Europe, we cannot afford to have a two-speed Internet.

### **13. Situation of the Roma in Member States (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the debate on

- the oral question to the Council on Roma rights in the EU – tackling anti-Gypsyism, by Raül Romeva i Rueda, Hélène Flautre, Franziska Keller, Rui Tavares, Jean Lambert, Barbara Lochbihler, Catherine Grèze, Karima Delli, Malika Benarab-Attou, on behalf of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (O-000236/2011 - B7-0649/2011),

- the oral question to the Commission on Roma rights in the EU – tackling anti-Gypsyism, by Raül Romeva i Rueda, Hélène Flautre, Franziska Keller, Rui Tavares, Jean Lambert, Barbara Lochbihler, Catherine Grèze, Karima Delli, Malika Benarab-Attou, on behalf of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (O-000237/2011 - B7-0650/2011),

- the oral question to the Council on EU measures on Roma, by Cornelia Ernst, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Marisa Matias, Patrick Le Hyaric, Mikael Gustafsson, Miguel Portas, on behalf of the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (O-000241/2011 - B7-0651/2011),

- the oral question to the Commission on EU measures on Roma, by Cornelia Ernst, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Marisa Matias, Patrick Le Hyaric, Mikael Gustafsson, Miguel Portas, on behalf of the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (O-000242/2011 - B7-0652/2011),

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<sup>(1)</sup> See Minutes.

- the oral question to the Council on the situation of the Roma in Member States, by Monika Flašíková Beňová, Hannes Swoboda, Claude Moraes, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Kinga Göncz, Emine Bozkurt, Ioan Enciu, on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (O-000259/2011 - B7-0644/2011),
- the oral question to the Commission on the situation of the Roma in Member States, by Monika Flašíková Beňová, Hannes Swoboda, Claude Moraes, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Kinga Göncz, Emine Bozkurt, Ioan Enciu, on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (O-000260/2011 - B7-0645/2011),
- the oral question to the Council on discrimination against, and persecution of, Roma in EU Member States and EU framework strategy, guidelines and actions, by Renate Weber, Sophia in 't Veld, Gianni Vattimo, Sonia Alfano, Baroness Sarah Ludford, Marielle De Sarnez, Jan Mulder, Cecilia Wikström, Alexander Alvaro, Nathalie Griesbeck, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Stanimir Ilchev, Louis Michel, on behalf of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (O-000274/2011 - B7-0646/2011),
- the oral question to the Commission on discrimination against, and persecution of, Roma in EU Member States and EU framework strategy, guidelines and actions, by Renate Weber, Sophia in 't Veld, Gianni Vattimo, Sonia Alfano, Baroness Sarah Ludford, Marielle De Sarnez, Jan Mulder, Cecilia Wikström, Alexander Alvaro, Nathalie Griesbeck, Ramon Tremosa i Balcells, Stanimir Ilchev, Louis Michel, on behalf of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (O-000275/2011 - B7-0647/2011),
- the oral question to the Council on abolition of Roma discrimination, by Livia Járóka, Simon Busuttil, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (O-000288/2011 - B7-0654/2011),
- the oral question to the Commission on abolition of Roma discrimination, by Livia Járóka, Simon Busuttil, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) (O-000289/2011 - B7-0655/2011),
- the oral question to the Council on implementation of the Roma strategy, by Mara Bizzotto, Jaroslav Paška, on behalf of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (O-000291/2011 - B7-0656/2011),
- the oral question to the Commission on implementation of the Roma strategy, by Mara Bizzotto, Jaroslav Paška, on behalf of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group (O-000292/2011 - B7-0657/2011).

**Hélène Flautre**, *author.* – (FR) Mr President, neither the European Parliament nor the European Commission, nor even the Council, I was going to say, have stood helplessly by in the face of the extremely serious discrimination suffered by the Roma. Parliament is well known for its resolutions on this subject. The European Commission set up a Roma Task Force and issued a Communication on the issue in April 2011, and the Council adopted a European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies for each Member State at the end of June.

Nevertheless, I feel that this text certainly has inherent weaknesses, attention to which was drawn at the time. This weakness concerned the goals that were set concerning the fight against anti-Gypsyism and discrimination. Consequently, now, with just one month to go before Member States must submit their strategies to the European Commission, we have grave doubts about the efforts governments have made to include stakeholders, local and

regional authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Roma populations themselves in drawing up their national strategies.

Above all, however, I have the feeling that day after day, an extremely worrying situation is emerging from the press, from eye-witness accounts, from facts related by NGOs and from reports. They speak of violence and hateful anti-Roma demonstrations, attempts on their freedom of movement, segregation at school, forced expulsions, human trafficking, forced sterilisation of women, and of the way that anti-Roma rhetoric has become commonplace in political circles.

Faced with this, I believe that our positive, inclusive agenda must categorically go hand in hand with the utmost vigilance and be rigorously enforced. I believe that the European Commission must use all the means at its disposal to be extremely strict towards Member States in its role as guardian of the *acquis communautaire* and of the Treaties.

Let me quote you an example. The massive expulsions that took place in France have just been unambiguously condemned by the Council of Europe as 'an aggravated violation of human rights'. In its defence, the French Government cited the decision of the European Commission, which, as the French Government saw it, found the evictions to be completely compatible with European law. I believe that Member States should no longer be able to resort to this type of argument and that the Commission must be extremely strict.

As for us, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that we too must do more. In addition to our extremely important work, we should set up a monitoring group to include members of national parliaments, in association with NGOs, so that we can in any case fight much more effectively against the discrimination suffered by the Roma.

**Cornelia Ernst**, *author.* – (DE) Mr President, a few hours ago, an important prize was awarded here in this Chamber. It was said that freedom, justice and solidarity are pillars of the European Union.

However, I would like to ask you: how can that be reconciled with the fact that racist violence against the Roma is to a certain degree the order of the day in very many Member States and is a constant state of affairs in Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Slovakia and the Balkans? It is also the case that Roma, who are EU citizens, are being expelled not only from France, but also from Denmark, Italy, Germany and Finland. However, freedom, solidarity and justice, of which we speak so often here, should apply universally or not at all. It is scandalous – I cannot put it any better – if, despite an EU framework strategy, despite numerous promises by the Member States, the largest minority in Europe continues to be discriminated against.

In the Czech Republic, I spoke with Roma families that were utterly shocked and, above all, frightened because anti-Roma demonstrations had been taking place for months right outside their front door – and with banners containing the words: 'gas the Roma'! That is shocking, not just as a neighbour of these Roma, but it also not worthy of our history when we simply tolerate such a thing or attempt to change it with the use a few more police officers.

In the Czech Republic, as in many other countries, Roma children still attend separate schools – and in the Czech Republic, for example, they go to schools with disabled children. As a left-leaning politician, I say to you that the Roma do not belong in separate schools, and neither do disabled children. That violates human rights and I believe that that needs

to be said in this regard. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that separate schools for Roma are illegal. Despite this, these schools merrily continue.

As we all know, the European Roma Rights Centre has examined 44 cases in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia and found that violent attacks on Roma were utterly inadequately prosecuted and that no convictions were brought at all. Many law enforcement agencies are totally blind when it comes to the Roma. Moreover, the Czech Senate unabashedly confirmed recently that it will not participate in a Roma strategy. That is apartheid in action at the heart of Europe. We have to do something about this.

There will also be a price to pay for the fact that the Roma framework strategy does not lay down any binding requirements and that the subject of anti-racism does not form part of this strategy. I can say to you quite honestly that enough is enough.; I would ask the Commission how long it intends to continue to sit back and watch. Where is the consistency in its actions when it comes, for example, to framework decisions for combating racism and the Anti-discrimination Directive being implemented – properly implemented – in the Member States?

Article 7 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union provides for the possibility of action being taken against Member States that have seriously breached the values of the EU. I therefore call on you most urgently to make use of this provision. After all, we must defend the rights and freedoms of the Roma as European citizens. Who will do that if we do not?

**Monika Flašíková Beňová,** *author.* – (SK) Mr President, first of all, I would like to say how disappointed I am that Mrs Reding is not present, as she is the competent person on this issue in the Commission. I would like to point out that despite all our efforts – and these efforts have been all the greater since the new Member States joined the European Union – and despite the Commission framework of April 2011, fundamentally nothing has changed in resolving the Roma issue in the European Union. Quite simply, it always boils down to discrimination against the Roma minority and, paradoxically, increasing animosity towards Roma among the non-Roma majority. Clearly this situation is compounded by the economic crisis and its social repercussions in the European Union Member States. The majority of the population often feels – and not just those who openly demonstrate and protest against the Roma community, but also the majority population, where this is concealed – that the Roma community abuses the social system and has no desire or ambition to become an integrated part of mainstream society.

As I have frequently said in many of the debates we have had on solving the Roma issue, I believe that to solve it requires not just the involvement of national governments, but also of the regions and politicians at local level, which means mayors who are best aware of the situations in their towns and municipalities, and who have taken individual approaches which have sometimes had positive and sometimes not so positive results.

I would also like to say that if we are to be consistent, it would prove very problematic to implement the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union as regards the rights of children in Roma communities. If we really wanted to ensure that the Charter were properly implemented, we would have to remove children from their families, because often they live in poor hygienic and social conditions, and they are brought up in conditions which make their education impossible.

I would therefore like to call on the Commission, despite Mrs Reding's absence today, to treat the Roma issue not just as a formality, but in a way which would allow us to take decisions to make the funding more flexible so that it could, for example, be used to support Roma assistants in schools. This would mean that Roma children would not have to go to special schools but could stay in normal schools where they could not go without a Roma assistant. We should also use these resources for special recipients of social benefits.

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Renate Weber**, *author*. – Mr President, first of all please allow me to welcome the presence of Commissioner Vassiliou in this plenary, although the topic we are talking about today is not within her mandate. You will see that there are good reasons for me to mention this.

For quite some time we have been waiting for the European Commission to prove that Roma integration is not just a trendy word but a policy we are genuinely committed to. Providing money is one aspect; important but not enough. We have been waiting in vain for the Commission to demonstrate full respect for fundamental rights, as enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights, in relation to Roma evictions and expulsions from France.

The beauty of being in Europe is that the Council of Europe also exists and its European Committee for Social Rights, in the decision taken in June this year, considered the French measures 'incompatible with human dignity' and 'an aggravated violation of human rights'. It also stated that such violations represent a threat to the 'shared fundamental standards of all the Council of Europe's member states, namely those of human rights, democracy and the rule of law'.

How was it possible for the European Commission not to see this, since respect for human dignity represents the foundation of the European Union?

The French Constitutional Council saw it in its decision of March. The French *Conseil d'Etat* noted it in its judgment of April this year and stated that the French authorities did not have the right, in contravention of the principle of equality before the law, to implement the policy of evacuating unlawful settlements by designating their occupants on the basis of ethnic origin.

Our European Commission did not see the discriminatory behaviour of the French authorities, thus allowing the French Government to defend its actions invoking not the French Constitutional Council, nor the *Conseil d'Etat*, but the European Commission's conclusions that the evictions and expulsions were compatible with European law. What an embarrassment!

**Livia Járóka**, *author*. – Mr President, half a year ago, after the adoption of the European Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies, we all agreed that the strategy was not the end, but the beginning, of our work. Let me share with you the four most important tasks and areas that await us in the very near future and that are essential for this strategy to be a success in the end.

Firstly, the institutional and coordination starting line is to be finalised. For this purpose, the Commission's confirmation to Parliament at the end of October that, despite any political upheaval or budgetary hardship in Member States, it was expecting the national Roma inclusion strategies to be submitted by the end of this year was of great importance.

The Commission also confirmed that, after a thorough evaluation covering the professional substantiation, complexity and financial feasibility of the national strategies, the Commission would also present specific recommendations for their revision, and would report annually on the progress of the integration to Parliament and to the Council.

On 8 April 2010 in Budapest, Vice-President Reding promised that the Commission would keep a close eye on the actions of all the Member States and would not tolerate any window-dressing regarding the national strategies.

Secondly, Parliament's report called for the establishment of a so-called crisis map to identify and measure the under-developed areas which are struggling with serious structural disadvantages. This will enable complex and holistic development programmes for immediate intervention under the cross-sectoral integrated approach. I truly hope that the poverty mapping carried out by the Fundamental Rights Agency will fulfil these requirements.

Thirdly, last year Parliament proposed serious and important changes to the next Multiannual Financial Framework in order to ensure that EU and national funds can contribute to the substantial and enduring improvement of living conditions for the Roma.

Complex, flexible and sustainable programmes are necessary, with longer time coverage and greater territorial relevance, focusing on the most disadvantaged micro-regions. The scope of EU funding must be extended in the near future so that provision of quality public services can also become eligible.

The rules of cofinancing should be revised and possibly differentiated so that projects targeting the Roma could possibly be required to be funded with a lower proportion of national cofinancing and a higher share from the EU. The idea of performance, that Parliament stood so firmly behind last year, should remain on the agenda.

The fourth point that I would like to raise is also related to the European Parliament's report last year, when we stated that the EU policy to improve the socio-economic status of the European Roma must not compromise, but complement, anti-discrimination legislation. Therefore, Directive 2000/43/EC on equal treatment must be finally implemented in the Member States and enforced by the Commission. The national equality bodies must be strengthened and all violations of these legal principles must be immediately reported and sanctioned.

**Mara Bizzotto,** *author.* – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, there is talk of an increase in violence towards Roma communities and specific measures are being called for to combat the kinds of discrimination that the Roma are said to suffer in many European countries. In short, for many years it has seemed that for Parliament and the Commission the Roma are the only minority worthy of attention and protection. Europe-wide strategies need to be drawn up for them, with pots of ad hoc funding for their social inclusion; European and national plans need to be promoted for Roma children to be integrated at school; and so on. To me, all this smacks of hypocrisy.

Nobody has the courage to raise the problem of crime due to the Roma community; nobody wants to mention how difficult it is for other European citizens to live next to Roma camps; nobody talks about the violence that Roma children suffer within their own communities; nobody mentions the exploitation of Roma children by their own parents, who use threats to force them to go and steal from houses or beg in the streets; and nobody speaks of the abuse of which Roma children are victims within their own ethnic community.

Like so many European citizens, I would like to understand why Europe has made the Roma a minority to be protected and supported at all costs, when there are countless groups of disadvantaged people to help, particularly during a crisis. I would like to understand why more is not done for the disabled in the labour market, for women, for mothers, for young people who want to start a family, for old people and for the unemployed. I would like to understand why, after throwing away hundreds of millions of euros on Roma integration schemes, Europe does not spend that kind of money on helping groups that are in real difficulties in our society.

I really want to hear from the Commission and the Council how much they plan to spend on implementing the umpteenth new European strategy for the integration of the Roma, given that the Roma are in any case an ethnic group and a people that does not want to integrate. By their very nature they are nomadic people who move around and do not want to settle in one country and, hence, do not want to integrate. We need to base our approach on this actual fact.

**Elżbieta Radziszewska**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (PL) Mr President, please allow me to express my gratitude on behalf of the Presidency for the opportunity to address such a serious issue as the integration of the Roma, to which the Council and Parliament have recently devoted so much attention. I am thinking mainly of the report that you – the Members of Parliament – adopted in March this year, and which was drafted by Ms Járóka, and I know that it has attracted a lot of response. Thank you very much.

There are two main facts that are important in this entire matter. Firstly, approximately 10 million of our fellow citizens in the European Union are Roma and Sinti. This is more than the population of several of the smaller Member States put together – 10 million men, women and children. Many of them live in conditions of extreme poverty, and the opportunities they have are very severely limited. Some of them do not have any opportunities at all and cannot hope to have a life that all of us here in this House today consider to be normal and a matter of course. We all think that this is unfair and that for us – European citizens – it is a reason to be ashamed. The resolutions which the European Parliament has adopted over the last few years describe the seriousness of the situation clearly.

Secondly, Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union states that the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, so the European Union is a community of values which are not only enshrined in law, but are also respected in life. The emphasis that the Treaty places on the rights of minorities is also a reflection of the fact that we share an awareness of our common history, which is several centuries old. There were those who not so long ago – several decades ago – survived the work of Nazism and the Roma holocaust, and their children and grandchildren are now watching in horror at what is happening in the countries of modern Europe. They are astonished at the level of discrimination, racism and violence against Roma and Sinti, and are asking the citizens of Europe for protection and assistance, including legal aid. We – the world and citizens of modern Europe – cannot make light of these problems. Our common commitments to respect human dignity, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, cannot remain a dead law. That is why the Council has actively dealt with the transformation of this commitment into the tangible protection of our citizens who are of Roma origin. In May this year, the Council held a special meeting devoted exclusively to the issue of the

integration of the Roma. In response to the appeals of the Commission and Parliament, the Council invited the Member States to achieve objectives in four key areas: education, employment, healthcare and housing.

Elimination of the differences which affect the marginalised Roma community and the general population of Europe is our common objective. We all have social problems in our countries, we all have social problems in Europe, but those who are most affected by them are those who are both marginalised and who are Roma. The main reason for this is poverty, and, as we know, this is a very complex problem which can be overcome only when action is taken on all possible fronts. After all, all citizens need good schools, decent jobs, good health care and, quite simply, a decent place to live. In Europe we consider these things to be a matter of course. We would be outraged if any of us were refused even one of these rights, while some of our fellow citizens, including many people of Roma origin, still do not have access to any of these four rights, and we can consider this as unacceptable in the 21st century.

Recognising the urgent need for action in May this year, the Council invited all Member States to develop national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of policy measures for improving the situation of the Roma. The deadline for their preparation is the end of this year. The Council is giving its strong political support to this process. Please allow me to remind you that the European Council has approved the report drafted by the Hungarian Presidency, noted its high significance and appealed for swift implementation of the Council conclusions from May. The Commission is advising the Member States on this matter, and the Commission will also be assessing their progress in the coming months and years.

The political position of the Council is clear – and the Council is also a legislator and co-legislator – and we all know that over 10 years ago the Council adopted a directive prohibiting discrimination based on ethnic or racial origin. This directive covers the conditions for access to employment, vocational training, social protection, including social security and healthcare, education and access to and supply of goods and services, including housing. These provisions protect all ethnic groups, including the Roma. For many years this directive has been a pillar for anti-discrimination policies on which Member States can rely in the creation of their own national strategies for Roma inclusion. This directive also enables Member States actively to adopt measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages linked to racial or ethnic origin.

As you know, we also have a directive establishing the right of citizens to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. Of course, it is the Member States that are required to implement the directives and apply their provisions in practice. The Commission is responsible for monitoring the transposition and implementation in practice of European legislation, and is authorised to institute proceedings in the case of misconduct, while the task of law enforcement belongs to the national courts and the relevant national and European authorities. The Council advocates an integrated approach, whereby problems relating to education, employment, health care and housing will be solved simultaneously. This also means integrated activities in all European countries simultaneously. These will be the main aspects of the national strategies and resources for Roma inclusion which are being prepared. The Council can only agree with you that we have to improve access to education – broadly-understood education – and we have to ensure that the Roma become the beneficiaries of employment policies. The Council advocates an integrating approach in these four key areas. In particular, the Council has invited the Member States to provide real equal access to high-quality services. One of the key conditions necessary for success,

in particular at a local level and in relation to the planning and implementation of strategies, is of course the active participation of Roma communities themselves. The Council has stressed that a fundamental role here is played by civil society.

The segregation of Roma is not acceptable. In all policies we must therefore clearly promote desegregation. No place in Europe can accept that one ethnic group be channelled to special schools or receive a lower level of education. The same applies to ethnically-segregated housing, for example in slums. To summarise, segregation must be overcome.

Given the task of monitoring racist attacks in Europe, I would like to remind you that the Council has appointed a special authority, whose task it is to provide the appropriate institutions with support and knowledge relating to fundamental rights. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, which was established in 2007, collects and analyses information. It has drawn attention to the problems being faced by minorities in Europe, and this also includes the Roma. It is through the work of this agency that we know very well that, unfortunately, we have no reason to be complacent.

Three years ago, the Council also adopted a framework decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law. Article 6 of the Treaty states that the Union recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which shall have the same legal value as the Treaties. The rights recognised in Article 20, that is equality, in Article 21, that is non-discrimination and in Article 22, that is cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, are particularly significant for the inclusion of Roma. The Council has reaffirmed the importance of these fundamental rights in recent conclusions. Let me quote: 'The protection of fundamental rights, notably by combating discrimination and segregation, in accordance with existing EU legislation and the international commitments of the Member States, is essential for improving the situation of marginalised communities including Roma'.

The Member States are responsible for ensuring respect for the rule of law in their own countries. However, let us not dismiss the importance of our common legal framework, which provides real guarantees at European level. The Council and Parliament have been working together for many years to strengthen this framework. Here each institution has its own role to play, which has been set out in law. The Commission monitors each institution's compliance with this law, and the Court of Justice of the European Union also plays a role here.

However, above all, it is the Member States that are responsible for respecting the values and principles which they themselves have adopted.

During the last two days – yesterday and the day before yesterday – the 5th Equality Summit took place in Poznań, Poland. We discussed how to translate these European and national policies into local and regional action. The local and regional areas are where we can effectively reach the individual citizen whose rights are being violated.

In each country we must show special sensitivity in our actions because we are dealing with diversities within the Roma community. In some countries, such as Poland, 0.1% of the community is Roma; however we do have countries in which this figure is almost 10%. We have to take into account the ethnic diversity among the Roma themselves and act so as to persuade them to cooperate with us, and not to alienate them. We need to remember that they have been living with us in Europe for 600 years, and we still have a lot to do, and that is why each country needs to prepare an action plan of its own.

Our fellow citizens of Roma origin have the same rights, the same hopes and the same expectations as we do. They are counting on our continued help. I wish to express my appreciation to Parliament for the fact that this issue has such an important place in Parliament's work, and to thank you very much for today's meeting and for this discussion on the situation of the Roma in Europe.

**Androulla Vassiliou**, *Member of the Commission*. – I would like to start by expressing, on behalf of the Commission, our deepest concern over the difficult situation that Roma people in Europe still face today. This issue is of great concern, not only to Mrs Reding, but to the whole Commission, and I personally am a member of the task force that was set up especially for this purpose. You will hear that I have also taken some very positive steps towards alleviating the position of the Roma population.

The Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority – and perhaps the least understood. They are certainly European citizens and they have exactly the same rights as we all have. Wherever they live, the Roma are often surrounded by an atmosphere of isolation, sometimes by outright hostility. This is a community that is regularly denied equal access to education, housing and employment.

We cannot accept this situation in Europe. We will not accept it. It goes against everything that Europe stands for – our values and our vision of a fair and inclusive society, free of discrimination, where every citizen can play a full part in social and economic life. We have to really help the Roma people take a full part in our life and in our communities.

At the same time, this year we have witnessed unprecedented progress in the development of a common EU approach in tackling the exclusion of the Roma from our societies. I am confident that this will lead to tangible improvements in the lives of the Roma people.

This progress is the result of the joint efforts of all the European institutions to improve the social and economic integration of Roma people in our society. The 'EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies' reflects a strong political commitment by all key players. For the first time, the Council in its conclusions calls on Member States to adopt an effective approach on Roma integration through national strategies or a set of policy measures.

The Commission has managed to keep Roma integration high on the political agenda, including in the current economic and financial context. Many of my colleagues have been involved and have ensured an inter-disciplinary approach to tackle this complex matter.

On 7 September 2010, the Commission set up a Roma Task Force in which several Commissioners (Reding, Andor, Malmström, Hahn and myself) worked hand in hand to assess how effectively Member States were using the available funds. The report of the Task Force, in December 2010, showed that there was no evidence of strong and proportionate measures in place in Member States to tackle the social and economic problems of a large part of the EU's Roma population. The Commission concluded that this situation was neither acceptable nor sustainable.

This House – with support from the whole political spectrum – called for an EU Strategy and the Commission responded. We all agreed that there was a need for effective policy planning and implementation and there was a need for a strategic approach. For this reason, the Commission decided to set out an 'EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies'.

This EU Framework was welcomed by all Member States, who recognised it as an important step towards a more socially cohesive Europe and expressed their commitment to its implementation at the highest political level of Heads of State and Governments. We have now reached the moment of truth about these commitments from Member States, who are expected to present their strategies by the end of this year.

I would like to stress that the EU Framework calls on all Member States to ensure first of all that Roma are treated like any other EU citizen, with equal access to all fundamental rights. It also calls for the social inclusion of the Roma on such crucial issues as education, employment, health and housing. The EU Framework expresses the idea that the social and economic aspects of integration are complementary to the existing EU legislation and policies in the areas of non-discrimination, fundamental rights and free movement of persons. The Commission will not forget this aspect when assessing the national Roma integration strategies and reporting to Parliament and Council.

In addition to these policy developments, the Commission has redoubled its efforts to make sure Member States correctly transpose and implement the existing legislation protecting the rights of the Roma people.

Firstly, the Commission is strictly monitoring the implementation and application of the Racial Equality Directive across all Member States.

Secondly, the Commission has taken all necessary measures within its power to ensure that all Member States respect the safeguards for citizens in the Free Movement Directive, but please let us not mix up evictions with expulsions. The various media reports concern both evictions and expulsions. As regards expulsions from the territory of a Member State, the Commission has no information about expulsions having taken place after the entry into force of the new French law, which is now considered to be in line with the Free Movement Directive. The evictions are subject to national law.

Thirdly, the Commission is closely monitoring the transposition and implementation of the Council Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia. This Decision obliges Member States to penalise the intentional public incitement to violence and hatred against groups or individuals by reference to their race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin.

More generally, the Commission is following closely recent developments in the EU Member States and strongly condemns all forms of racism and xenophobia, as these phenomena violate the most basic values of the European Union. Public authorities must unequivocally distance themselves from, and actively fight against, racist and xenophobic behaviour.

Last but not least, I would like to stress that the involvement of civil society and the active participation of the Roma in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of policies are crucial to the success of Roma inclusion.

Earlier this year, I signed an agreement with the Council of Europe to train 1 000 Roma mediators. Up to now we have already trained 600 of them. These people will work with local communities across Europe, building trust and helping Roma families to enjoy their full economic and social rights.

When we assess the Member States' national strategies, the Commission will pay special attention to how Roma civil society is involved in policy-making and implementation.

Finally, let me welcome the European Parliament's support for the preparation of the National Roma Integration Strategies. I know that you hosted a conference on this theme last week, and I congratulate you for your work.

I hope you will agree that the challenges facing our Roma citizens demand a joint effort from all EU institutions. While Member States carry the heaviest responsibility to guarantee the Roma people's fundamental rights, the EU will both support their work and continue to ensure that European laws are fully respected.

**President.** – Thank you very much, Commissioner. I would like to highlight that, in this debate, the six authors of the oral questions and both the representatives of the Council and the Commission are women, which is statistically significant, especially with respect to the nature of the issue under debate.

**Roberta Angelilli,** *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to focus on just one point, which is Roma children. The latest statistics show that only 40% of Roma children finish their primary education, while the figure for secondary education is barely 10%. This in my view is a fundamental point, because children who do not go to school are children who will never have a future. As adults they will be condemned to certain poverty, social exclusion and unemployment, and in the worst-case scenario they are likely to end up in a web of exploitation and crime. Education and training must therefore be the priorities.

In my view the Member States must guarantee the right to education and at the same time force Roma parents to fulfil their duty of sending their children to school. Such a measure is also to prevent children from being exploited as beggars, which many of them are in fact forced to become. Unless we take vigorous and urgent action on this front, all our plans and investments will be in vain. Therefore I think that, alongside these children's right to health and vaccinations, stopping them from dropping out of school must be an absolute priority in the new strategy.

**Hannes Swoboda,** *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – (DE) Mr President, although I am not a woman, I am nevertheless also committed to the cause of the Roma. We have heard some very good speeches. However, President-in-Office of the Council, Commissioner, we actually wanted to hear facts in relation to how you see the current situation. After all, how many national strategies are there? What are these national strategies like that you already have access to? What are their shortcomings, what are their positive points?

Commissioner, I am grateful for you mentioning the conference that we held in the European Parliament. At this conference, the civil society organisations spoke quite differently about the national strategies. They were extremely critical of many of them. You say that you will invite them to get involved in monitoring, but how will you do this? Will you organise an event in every country where you also invite civil society and ask what they actually think of their national strategies?

This is not the first debate that we have had on this matter. It is as if we are sitting here for the first time and need to be informed of what the Roma problem is. We are aware of these problems. We want to see action and initiatives. I do not mean to criticise you personally, but please tell your members of staff who write your speeches that they should now indicate concrete measures and state where the mistakes are and which national strategies are failing and which ones are good. We also want to see good examples. It is not about trying to create outrage by only giving negative examples. We have looked at these matters ourselves

and we have seen good examples as well. It is possible to do something, also with the support of the European Union. However, the relationship between the money spent and what has actually changed in recent years is unacceptable. The amount of money that has been spent and what it has actually achieved is something the citizens would not understand either – perhaps also because many NGOs have received money that has not actually reached the Roma.

My final request is: please give us tangible facts next time rather than generalisations that we are already familiar with. As I said before, I say this with all due respect to you both as individuals.

**Cecilia Wikström**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group.* – (SV) Mr President, the EU rests on a foundation of respect for human rights. We often criticise countries outside our Union for violations of these rights, but we forget that we need to put our own house in order. It is painful to discover that systematic discrimination on ethnic grounds still exists in the EU.

The Roma are a group that has been persecuted right throughout history. I do not believe that a single one of our Member States is free from guilt in this regard. The EU institutions have made up their minds to put a stop to this abuse. Still, there is a constant stream of racist statements and decisions that discriminate against this group. The Commission has condemned such incidents. It is now high time to ensure that the Commission also follows up its promises with specific action and measures against those Member States that continue to discriminate against the Roma, disregarding the EU's fundamental values.

**Raül Romeva i Rueda**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – Mr President, the Roma are Europeans. The EU Framework for National Roma Strategies is no doubt the most advanced document produced by the Commission on improving the socio-economic inclusion.

But there is something very important lacking: the anti-discrimination targets and measures. Stop violence against the Roma. There are a lot of cases where we see anti-Roma and anti-gypsy violence: physical and psychological violence against the Roma.

It has happened in many Member States and worst of all is the impunity that is behind all these cases. On some occasions, it is even political and public servants who are doing this with no response from the European institutions.

Roma rights must be respected. Combating discrimination is a pre-condition for economic inclusion. Adopting a combination of a minority-rights approach with an anti-discrimination approach is necessary for achieving substantive equality.

This is why I agree with all those who explain and defend the approach that we have to take here. We must treat anti-gypsyism in the same way we treat anti-Semitism.

**Marie-Christine Vergiat**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (FR) Mr President, it is impossible not to be appalled by the 'anti-Gypsyism' that holds sway, and is to a certain extent increasing again, particularly in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria. It is also, unfortunately, on the rise on certain benches in this Chamber, where it is fed by xenophobic remarks from a certain number of politicians.

I should like to come back, once more, to the French situation.

I am sorry that Ms Reding is absent. It is not part of your brief, Commissioner, but I should have liked her to reply to us in person. A few weeks ago, she took some satisfaction, in fact, from [the fact that] – and I quote – 'France has fully addressed the Commission's

concerns and introduced the necessary changes in the law', including, and I quote again, 'with regard to the safeguards protecting EU citizens from arbitrary expulsions and discriminatory treatment'.

I would say that the Council of Europe has just quite clearly contradicted Ms Reding's remarks. I am calling on you, if you have not done so already, and on Ms Reding and Ms Radziszewska, to read the report of the European Committee of Social Rights. Some of my fellow Members have already quoted from it. This report contains an exhaustive catalogue of aggravated violations of human rights committed by the French authorities during the summer of 2010 and which continue today in the same circumstances. It has been brought to the attention of the Commission; NGOs have systematically apprised the Commission of these facts. They can be found in their entirety in the report, but the Commission has refused to initiate infringement proceedings on the grounds of discrimination, as had been the intention last autumn.

Is the Commission going to wait for the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union? The Charter of Fundamental Rights is now legally binding. The Commission is the guardian of the treaties, it would seem. Under circumstances such as these, what is the point of the Anti-Discrimination Directive? How, Commissioner, does the Commission hope that it will be possible for national strategies to be implemented under such circumstances in France? Your services have not even been able to identify an interlocutor, yet they have to submit their report by the end of the year. This is self-delusion, a way of deferring the problem ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Jaroslav Paška**, on behalf of the EFD Group. – (SK) Mr President, at the beginning of this year, the Commission presented the first Union strategy for integrating Roma into the majority of society. In just under nine years, the Commission hopes to resolve a problem which the majority of Member States have been unable to resolve for generations.. I do not wish to comment on the professionalism of the European Union with regard to internal Roma integration strategies; indeed, I would like to help our officials in the Commission to grasp the problem they have undertaken to resolve.

At Nitra's Constantine the Philosopher University in the Slovak Republic, for more than twenty years now university lecturers and staff of the Department of Roma Culture have been working in various ways to assist the Roma ethnic group. They train and educate Roma teachers for elementary schools and specialist social workers to operate in Roma communities. I firmly believe that the experience of the staff at this unique workplace in Europe, who have been working with the Roma community for more than fifty years, could be very useful in helping our officials to draft a Roma strategy.

**Csaba Sógor (PPE)**. – (HU) Mr President, Roma communities in Europe are facing specific problems today the solution of which requires tremendous efforts from the EU, the Member States, and also from the Roma communities. Unemployment, the often complete lack of education and skills required on the labour market, and the associated discrimination and social exclusion leaves its mark on the future of the Roma within Europe as well. We can only fight their discrimination if we eliminate all such adverse conditions in the EU as for example certain Member States denying the existence of minorities within their territories, or some Member States even having laws in force that are based on the collective culpability of minorities. This, however, is not enough.

We must also finance programmes that contribute to the social inclusion of Roma communities. We could do so by facilitating their entry to the labour market. Although the responsibility lies mainly with Member States having large Roma populations, the problem is a common one. The way on which we now embark towards the integration of the Roma people will influence the future of the whole of Europe. I sincerely hope that one decade from now we will be able to report significant success in this area, and that the changes will not only be measurable in statistical indicators but also in the everyday lives of the local communities.

**Kinga Göncz (S&D).** – (HU) Mr President, I, too, am happy that Commissioner Vassiliou is present, but I deeply miss Commissioner Reding, who has been virtually invisible in this matter since the summer of last year. When she does speak, it is much more about expressing her satisfaction than addressing the problems. Meanwhile, the forceful expulsion of Roma continues in France. This affected nearly 600 people between April and October 2011. In Slovakia, there is a legislative draft offering Roma women free contraception and sterilisation. In the Northern Czech Republic, protesters have attacked a settlement inhabited by Roma. In Bulgaria, there has been a series of anti-Roma protests involving threats and radical demands. In Italy, 26% of Roma women reported having experienced police violence and humiliating treatment.

In almost all of Europe segregation in education and housing, and violence and hate speech against the Roma are commonplace. The Commission remains silent and, as mentioned here, is awaiting our Roma strategies, with regard to which we know that several Member States have indicated that they do not see their preparation as necessary. No sanctions exist. The anti-discrimination aspect of the whole strategy is very weak, almost nonexistent, and will therefore not be enforceable either. Member States will have to come up with anti-poverty social measures, the monitoring of which the Commission foresees to be fulfilled by the Fundamental Rights Agency, which has neither the capacity nor the experience necessary for this task. We are stating this on time: we expect the Commission to take action against all expressions of discrimination and arrange for the effective implementation of the strategy.

**Catherine Grèze (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner. Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia. It is a long list. Violent assaults, human trafficking, expulsions, sterilisations. While all these instances of discrimination are suffered by the Roma in several countries in the European Union, I should like to remind you that the term 'Roma' also includes travellers. Now, travellers do not have the right to choose their place of abode, and expulsions are an everyday event.

In France, the '*carnet de circulation*' makes them second-class citizens. They have to stay on insalubrious sites, with no public transport, no refuse collections and no school-bus service, although the funding exists. Last month, at Dale Farm, near London, travellers had to fight not to be evicted to Basildon. In Toulouse, where I live myself, the family of Frédéric Levy, a Frenchman, of fixed abode, and owner of the land on which the family was living, all of whose children are at school, became, like many other families, subject to a court order requiring it to demolish its home.

Now, Commissioner, like my fellow Members, I ask you quite specifically this: what pressure are you going to put on Member States, what specific measures are you going to take finally to put an end to this intolerable discrimination?

**Bastiaan Belder (EFD).** – (NL) Mr President, what can the European institutions do for the Roma in the Member States? Yesterday I received a number of very clear and specific entreaties from Bulgaria from experts directly involved that I sincerely share and am going to also pass on to you. Firstly, support NGOs and churches, in particular, in their Roma projects, as they foster fewer prejudices and work hard for Roma successes. Secondly, help to provide good education in safe and secure schools within the Roma communities. You need to be aware that in some Bulgarian villages only 80 out of the 2 000 children may get the chance to take the bus to school in the local town. Thirdly, give Roma children the opportunity to grow accustomed to an ordinary primary education from their fourth or fifth year. Include in this, above all, their parents and education both in Roma and Bulgarian cultural practice. Fourthly, push the Bulgarian authorities to recognise and actively support the role of Roma churches as bridge-builders between the Roma and Bulgarians, as rays of light in Roma ghettos that provide reinvigoration and courage.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Mr President, this debate allows us to send a strong message to Member States, just a month before they present their own strategies to the European Commission. I must point out that the Romanian Government has made major progress in drafting its national Roma inclusion strategy. In the six sectoral areas, the competent ministries – Labour, Education, Regional Development, Economy, Agriculture, Health, Culture and Interior – along with the local authorities will adopt roughly 63 clearly defined measures. I should emphasise that funding will be provided from each ministry's budget. The strategy will not have its own budget. Its implementation and monitoring will be coordinated by the deputy prime minister, the General Secretariat of the Government and the National Agency for the Roma.

We are all aware of the problems that the Roma face. However, Romania's responsibility is especially great as it has the largest Roma minority population in Europe. However, the way in which they are represented matters. This is why I would perhaps recommend that, in future European Parliament elections, the political parties offer a place eligible for a citizen of Roma origin. Commissioner, I would like to believe that this strategy will be successful throughout the EU. However, after seeing the populist and extremely non-European response by some governments when the issue was raised about Romania and Bulgaria joining the Schengen area, allow me to have some reservations.

### IN THE CHAIR: László TÓKÉS

*Vice-President*

**Ioan Enciu (S&D).** – (RO) Mr President, the recent violent incidents against the Roma minority prove the point that we have maintained even before adopting the EU Roma strategy, which is that it will only remain a declaration of good intentions unless it is implemented properly and effectively. Simply adopting a non-binding European strategy is not effective. This has been proven by the fact that most Member States have not yet produced a national Roma inclusion strategy. Some Member States are not even considering adopting a strategy. The European Commission urgently needs to make them do this and not wait until the end of the year.

It is time for the Roma integration issue to feature on the European agenda again, at the highest level. This is why I think that all these European taskforces which the Commissioner mentioned here before us also need to deal with the Roma issue as a specific matter, and not as an additional task. At the same time, the presidents of the Commission, Parliament and the European Council should also be involved in these taskforces. These Roma

taskforces should ensure proper coordination between the agencies involved at European and national level and the involvement of local authorities and Roma communities, as main decision-makers, in the strategy's effective implementation.

We can no longer afford to resort to half measures for dealing with this deep-rooted, shameful issue concerning the Roma situation which the European Union is facing. It is time for us to put words into action because, otherwise, we risk the European Union losing its credibility for good.

**Anna Záborská (PPE).** – (SK) Mr President, The proposed policies to improve the integration of the Roma into the majority of society have one fundamental drawback. They are based on the assumption that there are specific Roma problems that have to be resolved. However, they are not Roma problems, but the problems of all families living on the verge of extreme poverty. These families have problems with house, employment, and proper nutrition. They have limited access to education, health care and justice. They have problems with social acceptance. And ultimately they give up any efforts to get out of their dire situation.

We will not resolve any of these issues if we divide those affected into groups and pay special attention to each group. By speaking only of the Roma we are ignoring the facts. The fact is that many Roma have managed to make their mark professionally, are respected in their communities and are responsible parents. It is also a fact that there are many non-Roma homeless who have been pushed to the fringes of society, or have been abusing the social systems for a long time. If we want every citizen of the European Union to have equal access to fundamental rights, we should look at their social status, not their ethnicity. The so-called 'inclusion' of the Roma can only come about by getting rid of extreme poverty and its effects.

**Emine Bozkurt (S&D).** – (NL) Mr President, I have often called in this House for an effective and common European policy to be put in place in order to better integrate the Roma in the EU, as the reality on the ground in some Member States leaves far too much to be desired.

In April, the European Commission chose the option of European guidelines and national strategies. In December, the Member States will provide a plan, all being well. I would ask the Commission how far planning has got, are you confident that this will succeed and how will you ensure this? I ask this because, while we wait, we are far too often hearing quite alarming reports of things like an attack on Roma at a bus stop in Bulgaria with knuckledusters and slogans like 'filthy gypsies'. In some Member States, far right political parties and politicians are ratcheting up an anti-Roma rhetoric and actions. Discrimination and violent attacks against the Roma are still happening all too often. Forced evictions also remain a major problem.

It is sad that nowhere in the EU is the situation rosy for Europe's biggest minority. The need for strategies was absolutely critical. Nevertheless, aims and intentions are not enough. Some Member States, for example, do not want a target group policy. The Netherlands is one such State.

How will the Commission guarantee, with 27 different strategies, that sound and efficient solutions to the Roma issue will emerge? How does the Commissioner plan to coordinate this? The Roma are EU citizens with the same rights as all other citizens.

**Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE).** – (FR) Mr President, Ms Radziszewska, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, once again we find ourselves discussing the question of the Roma and their integration. Once again, we are having to be reminded that neither Europe nor the Member States are doing enough to improve the conditions in which these marginalised people find themselves.

The persistence of severe poverty, exclusion and discrimination is broadly accepted. However, the measures that have been taken so far remain inadequate to the challenges. To a great degree, we are familiar with the answers to these problems. In addition to the fight for equal treatment and against all forms of discrimination, through ensuring full application of the *acquis communautaire*, we must promote quality of life, inclusion and access to rights (particularly for children), the fight against organised crime and human trafficking, the effectiveness of women's rights, access to quality education for all children, the encouragement of economic activity through training and integration through employment, and the effective mobilisation of European funds for specific projects.

We therefore need realistic projects, clear commitments and targets backed up by figures on the part of Member States before we can really see what progress has been made.

However, I should like to point out that it is no use blaming this or that authority or looking for scapegoats. We must all roll up our sleeves, work together, and give witness, by our specific actions, to our political determination to make progress, for not only is integration a right, but it also brings with it obligations. That means that all of us must play our full part as partners.

It is up to us to find pragmatic answers to essential questions. How are we to come up with real strategies? How are we to support project organisers effectively? What concrete measures can Europe offer?

**Sylvie Guillaume (S&D).** – (FR) Mr President, as several Members have already forcefully said, the conditions of the Roma in Europe are as much a cause for concern as ever.

That makes us wonder whether the European integration strategy launched by the Commission, which leaves Member States with a great deal of room for manoeuvre, will enable real progress to be made against discrimination and as regards the economic and social condition of the Roma.

Although the Council of Europe recently held the collective expulsions of Roma in France that began in summer 2010 to be discriminatory and contrary to human dignity on the grounds that they were based on ethnic origin, the expulsions are still taking place. Now, we know that they are utterly pointless, since the camps are rebuilt a stone's throw away, in even worse conditions.

We are therefore forced to conclude that the European Commission's shows of disapproval have not led to any tangible results. Given that this is the case, how can you assure us that the Commission will take appropriate measures to penalise a state that deviates from the European strategy and the goals set by the Member States themselves?

Finally, because, in my view, it is somewhat easy to make the country of origin solely responsible for integrating the Roma, I am relying on the Commission to act forcefully towards the host country as well. All European states have a responsibility to bear. To be sure, this position is not really the flavour of the month at a time when European solidarity has been found wanting.

I accordingly insist, Commissioner, that Ms Reding have sufficient determination when this deadline falls due. Not only is it essential that Member States submit their strategies by 10 December but we must above all also ensure that there is a genuine follow-up of how these strategies are effectively put into practice. The fact is that we can no longer be satisfied with words alone.

**Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE).** – (EL) Mr President, one of the most important poems by Kostis Palamas, the world-renowned Greek poet who wrote the words of the Olympic Anthem, is called ‘Twelve Lays of the Gypsy’. This poem is a hymn to what drives the members of the Roma ethnic group. It symbolises man who refuses to bow to anything, man who is constantly on the move, constantly looking for opportunities to create something new; it symbolises cosmopolitanism.

In 21<sup>st</sup>-century Europe, the Roma are, unfortunately a minority – as all the previous speakers have said – which is often repressed and excluded from society and from the structures of the State in which they live and move. Our very society often ignores and overlooks their rights. They are very often denied the right to live with us, a denial which obviously causes problems and which is recognised in the strategy we approved here in Parliament a few months ago, for which we have Mr Járóka to thank. That strategy sets the integration of the Roma as the Union objective for 2020.

In light of the national programmes for Roma which we expect to come out of this framework this year, the Commission must look on their social integration as a huge challenge and we are expecting much of the Commission on this point, Commissioner. We need to find practical ways of eliminating discrimination against them and to learn from those aspects of their way of life that tend to go beyond national borders within the European Union.

As the performer of Palamas’s poem said in 1907: ‘and if we have a motherland, it stretches as far as the kingdom of the sun’.

**Iliana Malinova Iotova (S&D).** – (BG) Mr President, today’s debate is about the extent to which and how the Roma policy is being implemented in Member States. The European Commission sought with its strategy national concepts and plans for resolving these issues by the end of this calendar year.

Unfortunately, policy in this area is only on paper at the moment, and Commissioner Reding’s absence today is further proof that the Commission is distancing itself from this policy. The national strategies adopted fail to reflect the specific nature of the Roma’s problems in Member States. They only represent the formal transfer of the framework with four key areas – education, health care, employment and housing policy.

In actual fact, some governments in Europe are pursuing, instead of real integration, a policy of ever-growing isolation of the Roma population because they provide cheap votes during elections. There is no clear-cut stance taken against political groups which openly advocate xenophobia and discrimination.

The inaction of the institutions generates ethnic hatred and tension, which has unpredictable consequences, as happened recently in Bulgaria. At the time, the European media were really outraged, but the Commission remained silent.

My question today is: will there be sufficient exact criteria and controls from the European Commission and Council, which can be used to evaluate Member States in spring 2012 in terms of their Roma strategy?

**Bernd Posselt (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, I agree with Mr Swoboda that we have largely heard empty words from the Council and Commission today. However, our debate also leaves me dissatisfied, because I have to say that we do not want to fight a French election campaign here. Nor is it enough to spout anti-discrimination rhetoric, and indeed not even traditional minority policy will solve the problem.

This is not a side issue. It is a problem that affects millions of people from the Šluknov Hook in Northern Bohemia right down to Bulgaria – millions of citizens of the European Union! Therefore, it is a European problem, and a serious European problem at that.

I agree with Ms Băsescu that we need more representatives of the Roma in the political institutions. If I look at what Ms Járóka is doing, I would say that we need more people like her. If I look at what the Hungarian Government is doing under Secretary of State Zoltán Balogh then I would say that we need more governments that take the situation that seriously and do not simply talk about strategies. We urgently need to ensure that Roma children are given access to the education systems, including both vocational training and school education. The family must be supported. Jobs must be created.

All of this is only possible with systematic deliberations that take a cross-border view, and also with the necessary resources, but not with the kind of rhetoric that we have heard in some cases here today. We need practical measures, not just more words.

**Bogusław Sonik (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, in the summer of this year, the Council approved the European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, recommending that the Member States develop their strategies by the end of 2011. The adoption of this document is undoubtedly an important step toward ending discrimination against the Roma in Europe, which has gone on for many years. Nevertheless, this document lacks concrete objectives and measures which would help to counteract people's aversion to the Roma. In certain Member States, this aversion is reaching worrying proportions, in the form of persecution of representatives of this ethnic group.

I would therefore call for the Agency for Fundamental Rights to be asked to prepare a new, up-to-date report on the situation of the Roma in the European Union, together with conclusions and proposals. There is quite an odd situation in our Parliament: every Thursday we debate human rights violations around the world. However, there is no standing forum where breaches of such rights in the Member States of the European Union would be put up for debate. An analysis of the functioning of the Agency for Fundamental Rights in Vienna should be carried out in this respect. The Agency should submit an analysis of violations of minority rights in the Member States as soon as possible. This concerns not only the situation of the Roma, but also for example that of the Poles in Lithuania, or the Hungarians.

**Monika Smolková (S&D).** – (SK) Mr President, I am very familiar with the situation of the Roma in Slovakia, because where I live in eastern Slovakia they are most numerous. I agree with those who say that there is discrimination against the Roma. However, we must also acknowledge that they themselves often contribute to discrimination against them. They are responsible for not integrating, for not educating their children, for neglecting their health, and so on. However at the same time we must say that not all Roma are happy

with their lives – they want a better life, they want to work and want a better future for their children.

Last week, I visited a community in the town of Moldava nad Bodvou, where the shacks of four families were burned down in August. Thanks to contributions by the town, which leased them land, and to a non-profit making organisation, the Roma themselves are now building proper houses from reclaimed building materials. I described the efforts of these particular families in a short document which shows that the Roma want a better life, but do not know how to help themselves. So if we want to solve the Roma problem, we have to solve it together with them.

**Catherine Bearder (ALDE).** - Mr President, I want to draw attention to the topic of human trafficking within the Roma community. The poverty of the Roma and the fact that they are marginalised feeds directly into the trafficking of large numbers of their population around Europe. This cycle of crime continues, with trafficked victims being used for crimes ranging from pick-pocketing to prostitution and large-scale benefit fraud.

The scale of this problem was highlighted by the EU joint police investigation, Operation Golf. A raid in just one village in Romania last year saw the arrest of 26 people responsible for the trafficking of 272 Roma children from one village.

The sooner the Roma community are accepted and welcomed fully into communities and given opportunities to become full financial participants in society, the sooner they will be able to resist the predatory behaviour of the gangs that traffic them. The EU has much work to do and a duty to ensure that their rights are upheld.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to know whether the Roma themselves are interested in the European Union's integration strategy. The Roma are by their very nature and their own admission a separate ethnic group, with very different rules, organisation and traditions from our own. They choose to live on the margins of society so that they can act freely according to their own rules, and conforming to our regulations is the last of their concerns.

In Tuscany, the region I come from, a number of agreed repatriations were carried out, paid for out of everyone's pockets. After agreeing to these repatriations – with ample compensation – these Roma people returned to the very same sites that they had left, making fools of everyone and the region most of all.

Besides, one cannot expect much from a culture in which theft is tolerated, if not actually admired. I therefore think it is pointless to carry on with this misguided European do-goodism. Over the centuries, history has taught us the true nature of the Roma.

**Bernd Posselt (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, I am sorry, although I am a strong advocate of freedom of expression, those were racist remarks and I would ask my fellow Member to withdraw them.

**Claudio Morganti (EFD).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I have merely restated what happened in my region. There are newspaper articles that document it. I have just reported the facts. Since I spend a lot of time in my region and know how the Roma behave there, I have merely reported their behaviour to this House. I do not think what I said was racist. Indeed, I think reporting what actually happens in our regions is the most important thing for Parliament.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE).** – (RO) Mr President, major economic and social disparities persist between the European Union's different regions and a significant proportion of the Roma community live in regions which are among the least economically and socially advantaged in the European Union. The Structural Funds provide the main source for narrowing the economic and social disparities. I regard their use for Roma integration as highly significant. These funds can help improve the infrastructure in poor communities, most often inhabited by Roma. This is why I think that, subsequently, the Commission needs to call on Member States to use the operational programmes which will be provided to them for the future programming period to achieve synergy with the national Roma integration strategies, thereby improving their existence.

**Androulla Vassiliou,** *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, one thing I want to assure this House of is that we shall not content ourselves with empty words.

Let me remind you that the strategy that we have adopted asks Member States to submit their national strategies by the end of the year. We have to wait until the end of the year to evaluate these national strategies, and we shall report to this House at the beginning of 2012.

And this is just the beginning. I assure you that these strategies will not remain empty promises. To take the case of the Free Movement Directive, the majority of Member States, including France, have already modified their laws or announced amendments – or at least this is what we have been told.

The Commission is closely monitoring how these Member States are delivering on their commitments. For those Member States not yet there, the Commission has made full use of its powers under the Treaty, and between April and October of this year launched infringement proceedings against 12 Member States.

The Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia obliging Member States to penalise public incitement to violence or hatred against groups obliges Member States to provide that racist or xenophobic motivation of any offence constitutes an aggravating circumstance, or obliges judges to take this element into account in determining penalties.

This is particularly pertinent for attacks against Roma people, such as those which have taken place recently in Member States, but let me remind you that it is the national courts which will determine whether these statements were inciting hatred – not the Commission.

Member States were obliged to transpose the framework decision into their national legislation by 28 November. 22 Member States have notified their implementing measures, which the Commission is analysing. The missing five are Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Spain and Poland.

The fact that the other 22 have notified does not, of course, mean that they have transposed the framework decision. What we have done is appoint a group of experts to follow closely its transposition and implementation. The implementation report will be presented to us in 2013.

Let me remind you that under the Treaty of Lisbon there is a transition period, and we cannot currently enforce the framework decision. We can only do this after 2013. So we shall have the report of the expert group by 2013. In 2014, we can take infringement measures against those countries which have not duly transposed this directive.

So I want to assure you that we shall not be sitting idle, waiting for things to happen on their own. We shall follow and monitor the issues very closely. Once we have received the national strategies at the end of the year, we shall monitor the situation and we shall decide what other measures to take next year.

**Elżbieta Radziszewska**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (PL) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I deeply believe and I am full of hope that the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, which was adopted in May with the strong support of the European Parliament, will certainly bring about a change in the situation. Thus, as Mrs Járóka said before, this is just the beginning of the road, but it is important that we, all 27 countries together and at all levels of work within the framework of the European Union, have taken this first step, because what is really important is that these changes we are making, these measures we are implementing, yield results, so that the everyday life of each Roma child will improve; we will give support to every adult person – women and men – and we will improve the situation of Roma families. It is important, however, to carry out all this with a gentle touch and a great deal of sensitivity and to try not to generalise and to stigmatise, because there is no collective responsibility. As in any other community there are good and bad, noble and less noble people and there are those, who do not want to do anything, but there are also exceptional talents. By failing to work with this community, we lose all those who deserve to be supported and lose all these unique rough diamonds, which might someday become jewels. There is no large Roma community in Poland and we have a programme for the Roma community, which has been running for 10 years now, so we are managing quite well, although this does not mean that there is not a lot more to be done. In connection with the activities in the framework of the Presidency in October of this year, when we held a Convention of the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, and just two days ago in Poznań, where the European Equality Summit took place, we talked about the effectiveness of measures targeting excluded groups, including among others the Roma community, in order to include this aspect of local and regional activities, together with checks on the effectiveness of these measures on the ground, in order to reach out to every single person and in order to utilise European funds more effectively at local and regional level, in order to ensure a long-lasting effect. It is important that in Brussels, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, we will also have a meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion, which will be the sixth such meeting. I hope that these annual meetings and the two-day discussions will also contribute to more effective measures aimed at the integration of the Roma community in the broad sense.

I would like to speak about one more thing: I am a member of the Polish Sejm, and this year we adopted a resolution which proclaimed 2 August to be a Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust of the Roma and Sinti. On 2 August 1944, the final liquidation of the Gipsy camp in the German concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau took place. This is a day which will commemorate the Holocaust of the Roma as a community, a community which was stigmatised throughout the Second World War and liquidated only on grounds of their ethnic origin. We as the Polish Presidency have submitted a request to the President of Parliament, Jerzy Buzek, for the European Parliament also to adopt this day as the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust of Roma and Sinti. I would like to take this opportunity to ask all of you, ladies and gentlemen, to support this initiative, in order to value the existence of the Roma and the tragedy they have experienced just a couple of decades ago, here in Europe.

In conclusion, I thank you very much for placing this item – that is, the integration of the Roma – on the agenda of the European Parliament. I know that these are long-term

challenges. We must not forget about such difficult problems even in the most difficult times, particularly because we are already facing a crisis in every European country on an everyday basis. Therefore, we need all the more to increase our efforts to utilise funds effectively so that we are indeed effective in our actions, so that our European Roma really feel at home in Europe, in our countries. I would like to express great appreciation for the role which the European Parliament plays in this respect. Thank you very much.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

**Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Carlos Coelho (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PT) In April of this year, I voted for the Commission's initiative to create a European strategy on the inclusion of the Roma, who constitute the EU's largest ethnic minority. I believe that this is the only way we will manage to coordinate efforts to combat the historical tendency to exclude this group. This strategy sets out a series of common principles and objectives which must be followed either at EU level, or at Member State level, identifying four fundamental areas: education, employment, health and housing. Taking into account the fact that primary responsibility falls to the Member States, they need to make the required efforts to align their national strategies with the objectives set out in the European strategy. It is regrettable that, in the intervening months, we have seen very few positive changes and that merely a small fraction of available EU funds have been put to use by the Member States in projects for Roma inclusion. On the contrary, there have been various registered cases in recent months of violence and discrimination against Roma and certain Member States, like France and Hungary, have adopted allegedly discriminatory measures.

**Richard Falbr (S&D),** *in writing.* – (CS) I greatly appreciate almost all the contributions that have been made in the debate on the issue of the coexistence of the Roma with the majority population of the Member States. Unlike previous debates on this topic, I welcomed the openness with which some colleagues talked about matters which have so far been taboo. The search for a solution for the Roma minority, representing 10 million people in the EU, will not be an easy one. Due to the fact that the attitude of the inhabitants of each country towards the Roma differs also on the basis of historical experience, it will be very difficult to search for a uniform strategy that is applicable across all Member States.

**Jaroslav Kalinowski (PPE),** *in writing.* – (PL) I would like to refer to the Commission's guidelines on Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. I think that more pressure should be put on the Member States and that changes should be introduced in this area. Discrimination against the Roma is still apparent, and the failure to implement the existing regulations has become one of the reasons for the low standard of living of Roma communities. All citizens of the European Union should have equal access to education, health and employment. Through appropriate socialisation, early years education and the promotion of cultural identity, it will be possible in the future to prevent poverty and other problems which are currently common among the Roma.

I therefore support the continuation of measures as well as all new ventures seeking to discourage discrimination against this community in the Member States of the European Union.

**Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE),** *in writing.* – (RO) The European Union must tackle the real situation of the Roma community, one which is dictated by the Roma's economic situation in general, but especially by aspects relating to their nomadic lifestyle and low

level of education. The main problem facing the Roma population is the low level of education and, by extension, the lack of professional qualifications. Education presents an opportunity to gain a qualification, a profession and a job, which are prerequisites for Roma social integration. I believe that this is the main issue which the national strategies need to resolve. A national approach to this issue is not enough. Education programmes also need to adopt a cross-border approach to influence the section of the Roma population which has remained faithful to their nomadic traditions. The Member States of origin must make the biggest contribution to the Roma integration process, but the EU also has an extremely important role to play. The framework programmes must be devised and implemented in a similar manner in all Member States. Coordination is vital between the national Roma contact points. Exchanging information is also of paramount importance. Projects and measures which have achieved positive results in one Member State must be adopted and replicated in the other Member States.

**Rovana Plumb (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The EU Framework missed an opportunity to call for the elimination, not just of school segregation but of inappropriate placement of Roma children in special schools, to help reduce the gap in educational achievement between Roma and other EU citizens at secondary and tertiary levels.

Promotion graduation of Roma at university level is crucial to empower Roma. Roma youth will be in a much more effective position to achieve social inclusion if they have good education. The significant participation of Roma professionals in formulating an implementing Roma policy is essential to their success. The EPSCO Conclusions included this essential element, but inclusion is not possible without participation.

While robust monitoring is outlined in the Framework, the mechanisms to ensure it need to be further developed. Effective monitoring would be easier if the role of the National Contact Points on Roma were clearer. In the EU Framework, these Contact Points are given a coordination and development role but the EPSCO Conclusions only refer to a monitoring role. The solution would be for another independent commission to undertake the evaluation. Experience in some Eastern European countries has shown that if the same body implements, monitors and develops policy; poor policy implementation is likely to result.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) We have been talking about a Roma strategy for years on end. It was finally adopted this year, but their situation remains critical in some Member States. Even today discrimination and social exclusion, poverty, unemployment and prejudice are typical aspects of the situation of the European Union's largest ethnic minority. What is even more serious is that European citizens of Roma origin are being denied the freedoms and rights guaranteed to EU citizens by the Treaties. They continue to be expelled without any right of appeal and treated as second-class citizens. Unfortunately, even the press sometimes contributes to their stigmatisation and to increasing the prejudices which are already deep-rooted in the minds of many. Greater involvement is required from the European Commission, the authorities in Member States and Roma community leaders in order to make a real improvement to their situation. I would like to end by asking the Commission to ensure that the fundamental rights of European citizens are respected, regardless of their ethnic origin.

**László Tóké (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) It is well known that EU Member States should be submitting their national strategies as part of the framework of the European Roma Strategy for the social inclusion of the Roma by the end of this year. It is extremely

disheartening, and makes one wonder, that despite the fact that the deadline is fast approaching, so far only Hungary and Romania have completed their ten-year strategic programmes, with Sweden having prepared a legislative draft on the subject. This unfortunate situation rightly reminds us of the shameful failure of the European programme entitled 'Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015,' which the EU framework for Roma inclusion was actually meant to rectify and replace. It would be time for the European Union and its Member States to finally take not only the Gipsy population of over ten million who have been forced to the peripheries of society and are living in abject poverty, but at least as much themselves and their own commitments seriously. It is disgraceful that we cannot, or perhaps do not really wish to, give effect to our own decisions and agreements. Both from a moral and from an economic and political standpoint it is in our common European interest, and in the national interest of each Member State, that we put an end to this situation and set to work to put a commonly adopted EU Roma strategy into practice.

#### **14. Banning cluster munitions (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the statement of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on banning cluster munitions [2011/2913(RSP)].

**Androulla Vassiliou,** *Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Mr President, on behalf of the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, I thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to discuss the issue of cluster munitions with you at such a timely moment when negotiations are ongoing in the framework of the United Nations to finally ban these terrible weapons on a universal scale.

In July 2010, the European Parliament welcomed the forthcoming entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 1 August 2010. Subsequently, in November 2010, the First Meeting of States Parties took place in Laos and the Vientiane Action Plan was adopted.

This was a commendable first step to support the full implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Both at the meeting in Vientiane last year and at the Second Meeting of States Parties in Beirut in September this year, the EU has been a committed supporter of the international efforts to address the overwhelming humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions. Today, 66 states are party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. 108 states have signed it. This is tremendous progress in a very short period of time.

Nonetheless, much remains to be done to include the world's largest possessors and manufacturers of cluster munitions in the overall divestment effort and to improve the situation on the ground. Sadly, this year has shown that this is more important than ever.

The High Representative, for instance, was deeply concerned about the use of cluster munitions against the civilian population in Libya and called upon the armed forces of Muammar Al-Gaddafi to refrain from using force against the civilian population, whether through cluster munitions or any other means. All necessary steps must be taken to ensure that civilians are protected from the effects of such munitions, including unexploded remnants of cluster munitions.

This and next week, negotiations are ongoing on a Protocol on cluster munitions in Geneva in the framework of the Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – the CCW. The EU firmly believes that any new instruments that may be created under the CCW must meet the objective of strengthening international humanitarian law.

The High Representative and I have taken due note of the fact that the European Parliament, in resolutions in 2008 and 2010 and again this year, has urged EU Member States to sign and ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions, while not jeopardising or circumventing this Convention by adopting, endorsing or ratifying a CCW Protocol VI allowing for the use of cluster munitions which would not be compatible with the prohibition of such munitions under Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

It is our firm conviction that, regarding the ongoing negotiations on a CCW Protocol on cluster munitions, such negotiations should lead to substantial improvements on the ground – taking into account both humanitarian and military aspects – which should be compatible with, and complementary to, the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We expect such an instrument to include provisions on cooperation and assistance and to make a significant humanitarian contribution, containing an immediate prohibition on the use, production or transfer of cluster munitions. This would allow the international community to make a decisive step in the right direction and to get closer to achieving our humanitarian objectives.

As long as this overall goal is clearly pursued, the EU should actively join these efforts and contribute to the greatest extent possible to this important work to seek to enhance the relevance of CCW to international humanitarian law and to reinforce its fundamental rule that the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose their methods or means of warfare is not unlimited.

The very nature of cluster munitions stands against all basic humanitarian principles. This is the reason why the European Union as a whole is fully committed to tackling the impact of cluster munitions on civilian populations through all possible means. Although not all EU Member States are currently parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, there is a firm understanding that the EU should play a role in implementing the humanitarian goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions through efficient and effective delivery of aid.

During operations on the ground, as regards assistance to cluster bomb victims or victims of mines, the EU makes no distinction. Full compliance with the obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions will be a huge challenge for many State Parties worldwide.

The EU is aware of the complexity of the tasks involved. It stands ready to provide assistance to states in their efforts to implement their national plans effectively, to comply with the Convention and to ensure synergies with other equally pertinent international instruments. The EU is thus very much committed to helping turn the legal obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions into concrete action.

**Michael Gahler,** *on behalf of the PPE Group.* – (DE) Mr President, it is good that, in the context of this resolution on the upcoming Fourth CCW Review Conference, our Parliament is debating the subject of a worldwide renunciation of cluster munitions. In this regard, the text of the resolution should be seen as an additional parliamentary contribution to

the continuation of our humanitarian efforts in the area of conventional disarmament and arms control.

In my view, the resolution reflects two key European demands directed at the High Representative and the Member States for their participation in the Fourth Review Conference: adherence to the core element of the renunciation that has been achieved in the context of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and adherence to the worldwide renunciation of cluster munitions.

Allow me first of all to weigh up the main military argument for the use of cluster munitions against the political-humanitarian argument for a worldwide ban. Purely from the point of view of military operations, cluster munitions are one of the most effective conventional weapons, as a wide area can be affected with the deployment of very few resources. Cluster munitions are deployed against military targets such as roads, runways or relevant infrastructure in general. That is the purely military point of view, which has to take second place to the political-humanitarian assessment of this type of weapon. From this point of view, the worldwide renunciation of cluster munitions must be strengthened, as aimed at in the Convention.

The crucial problem with cluster munitions is the fact that, from a humanitarian point of view, their use is often associated with an unacceptably high rate of unexploded submunitions. These unexploded submunitions sometimes constitute 15% of the munitions deployed. The Libyan people are currently facing this problem of a high rate of unexploded submunitions, because, as Baroness Ashton reported back in April, Gaddafi forces also used cluster munitions.

The high rate of unexploded submunitions in the target area is a clear threat to the civilian population in post-conflict situations, as undetonated munitions clearly no longer serve the purpose of fighting opponents. The humanitarian threat posed by a high rate of unexploded submunitions can also be an enormous burden on the efforts for speedy reconstruction and rapid economic recovery. In my view, this can only mean that the Convention on Cluster Munitions must be adhered to as the international standard for the worldwide renunciation of cluster munitions and that the EU and its Member States must duly work to ensure that this happens. In this context, it is also good that the EU is stepping up its efforts to support third countries in the destruction of stockpiles of fragmentation weapons, thereby alleviating the negative humanitarian effects of the use of fragmentation weapons.

**Roberto Gualtieri**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as Mr Gahler has just explained, cluster munitions are terrible, fiendish instruments of death for the civilian population. Banning them is therefore a battle for civilisation to which this House has been committed for some time.

The entry into force of the Oslo Convention was a major success, but now, little more than a year later, we are faced with a dangerous attempt to undermine its outcomes through an additional protocol to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons – the review of which is currently being negotiated in Geneva – which would again allow the use of cluster munitions. This is a protocol that must not and cannot be signed by countries that have already signed up to the Oslo Convention, because, as you said yourself, Commissioner, it is clearly incompatible with the Convention and would open up a dangerous loophole, not least for those other countries that want to continue to produce, stockpile and use

these types of munitions. Moreover, it would create a very serious precedent and would be a blow to international law.

The argument by those who say that the protocol would in any case improve the situation, because it would be signed by countries that have not signed the Oslo Convention, sounds decidedly specious to us, and on this point we would perhaps have liked to hear a rather clearer and less equivocal statement from Ms Ashton's representative. Protocol VI would undermine the Convention because it would allow for the use of munitions produced after 1980, which form the great majority of them; it foresees a long transition period; it would allow for the use of types of cluster bomb that are extremely dangerous to civilians; and it would not set out any clear obligation to destroy individual countries' stockpiles.

It is therefore crucial that all the Member States do not support the entry into force of this protocol and that the High Representative commits herself to ensuring that all the countries in the Union adopt a clear, united position in favour of a definitive ban on cluster munitions. The joint resolution that we are about to adopt on this issue is an important political signal, and we are certain that it will be adopted in its entirety by a large majority.

**Marietje Schaake**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, I can fully agree with the previous two speakers with whom we have worked on this joint motion for a resolution. The Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force in 2010 and most Member States were included. It is important to ban the use of cluster munitions because they cause excessive and indiscriminate damage to civilians. From a humanitarian point of view, cluster munitions are a disaster. Regrettably some Member States believe that cluster munitions are important for their security and their economy.

I will not dispute the importance of security, but there are more sophisticated and less damaging ways to ensure it. Apart from use, there is trade. Most recently, we heard reports of the use of cluster munitions in Libya and apparently some Member States were involved in providing them.

There will shortly be a discussion on Protocol VI during the Review Conference of Certain Conventional Weapons. This Protocol is not compatible with commitments made by Member States. On the contrary, instead of undermining the Convention on Cluster Munitions, we want more Member States to subscribe. They would join Member States who will not use, develop, produce, stockpile or transfer cluster munitions or engage in any of these prohibited activities.

The EU should press Member States and candidate Member States, and be a force for a global ban on cluster munitions. If we want to be a credible actor in pushing for this important goal, we must lead by example with the inclusion of all Member States.

**Ulrike Lunacek**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I very much agree with the colleagues who have spoken already.

Cluster munitions are one of the cruelest weapons. Imagine a child going around, picking up one of the colourful bomblets which explodes, thereby hurting them, taking away part of their body and leaving them severely injured. One-third of the victims are children. 60% of casualties get injured while undertaking normal activities – as recently happened in Libya, as some of us have said already.

Many of us – parliamentarians, civil society and victims' organisations – have struggled to get the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions signed in 2008. This ban on cluster

munitions is in danger at the moment. Right now in Geneva, at the UN Review Conference on Certain Conventional Weapons, some non-signatories want to water down the Convention via Protocol VI and they want to water down humanitarian law and humanitarian international law. We cannot and will not let that happen.

I would like to thank the Commissioner and also the High Representative – our Foreign Minister – for the very clear words she has said today. I would also like to thank all my colleagues in the five Groups who have agreed on a very good resolution. We have had very close cooperation. I am convinced that the united voice of the European Parliament, together with our Foreign Minister Catherine Ashton, will be heard in Geneva by EU Member States – those who have signed and ratified the Convention and also those who have not yet signed – and by others who defend the struggle against this cruel weapon.

**Sabine Lösing**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (DE) Mr President, on behalf of my group, the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left, I welcome the excellent cross-party cooperation and majority support for the joint resolution on banning cluster munitions. The resolution constitutes an important and strong signal in the fight against these deadly weapons. We must not forget that cluster munitions and bombs were used in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, and – I would like to remind this Parliament – also by EU Member States. There is no justification for continuing to use these weapons or to store or produce them – none whatsoever – not for defence and not for protecting borders.

I urgently call on all Member States not to support the proposed draft text of the new Protocol VI to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects. This draft would entail a dramatic step backwards. This draft text prohibits – and this cannot be said clearly enough – cluster munitions and bombs made prior to 1980. That would mean that cluster munitions produced after this date would continue to be permitted and could also continue to be used in future. That is something that we must not accept. The Convention on Cluster Munitions that entered into force in August 2010 prohibits all cluster bombs and munitions, and that must be the benchmark.

**Androulla Vassiliou**, *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, I would like to thank all Members for their contribution and for giving us the opportunity to discuss these crucial aspects of our work in addressing the overwhelming humanitarian concerns of cluster munitions.

I wish to underline that the European Union will maintain its engagement to attain a ban on cluster munitions through active political outreach in the framework both of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and I express our strong commitment to continuing future efforts to increase the number of signatures and ratifications and to turn our ambitions into practical realities.

The EU will also continue to provide international cooperation and assistance by streamlining activities against cluster munitions in our development and cooperation policies.

The EU is aware of the complexity of the tasks involved. Both the implementation of the CCM and delivering on the Vientiane Action Plan require financial resources and political commitment. The EU stands ready to assist states in these endeavours.

**President.** – I have received six motions for resolutions <sup>(2)</sup> submitted in accordance with Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 17 November 2011.

### **15. Modernisation of VAT legislation in order to boost the digital single market (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the debate on the question for oral answer to the Commission by Marielle Gallo, Doris Pack, Jürgen Creutzmann, Olle Ludvigsson, António Fernando Correia De Campos, Arlene McCarthy, Phil Prendergast, Ashley Fox, Louis Michel, Jean-Paul Gauzès, Jean-Marie Cavada, Nadja Hirsch, Diana Wallis, Bill Newton Dunn, Tadeusz Zwiefka, Constance Le Grip, David Casa, Jean-Pierre Audy, Pablo Arias Echeverría, Philippe Juvin, Piotr Borys, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Angelika Niebler, Axel Voss, Françoise Grossetête, Ivo Belet, Katarína Neveďalová, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Silvia Costa, Alajos Mészáros, Toine Manders, Damien Abad, Hannu Takkula, Ioannis A. Tsoukalas, Helga Trüpel, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Cornelis de Jong, Raffaele Baldassarre, Cecilia Wikström, Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Klaus-Heiner Lehne and Niki Tzavela on the modernisation of the VAT legislation in order to boost the digital single market (O-000226/2011 – B7-0648/2011).

**Marielle Gallo, author.** – (FR) Mr President, in the economic crisis we are experiencing, there is a definite need for austerity and balanced budgets. However, stabilising the public finances is only the first step. It is indeed indispensable, but it is a first step that must of necessity be followed by a second step, and that is the competitiveness of the European Union.

In order to think ahead, to guarantee economic growth, to maintain employment, we must act quickly. Achieving the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy is absolutely essential, as is fulfilling the goals of the digital agenda. We cannot afford to lay ourselves open to failure, as was the case with the Lisbon Strategy.

The digital economy has enormous growth potential. Information and communications technologies have sparked off a real revolution. In the United States, for example, sales of *e-books now outstrip sales of printed books. In contrast, the European market is weak and fragmented, and this situation is partly attributable to indirect taxation.*

Why is that? The current legal framework does not recognise digital cultural goods, because they are treated as supplies of services. If I take the example of a book, a printed book is subject to value added tax (VAT) of 5.5%, whereas an *e-book is subject to standard-rate VAT, which is never less than 15%.* I should add that, for the partially sighted, a category that comprises several millions of European citizens, the *e-book is a genuine revelation and a revolution.*

This fiscal discrimination is, therefore, prejudicial to the digital single market. I believe that the Americans understood this clearly, well before us, as President Clinton took the initiative in 1998 to impose a moratorium, which indeed he renewed three times, under which individual states were prohibited from imposing a higher sales tax on any electronic goods.

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(2) See Minutes.

The result, which can clearly be seen today, is that the digital market is completely dominated, precisely, by the Americans.

I therefore believe that the European Union must quickly mobilise the means to enable it to achieve these objectives and, specifically, this involves the introduction of a reduced rate of VAT for the whole category of digital cultural goods. In this way, we can obtain a reduction in the cost of the lawful supply of these goods. By cutting costs, we make these goods much more accessible to the public. This would also provide a much greater range of choice for European consumers. It is the way to combat piracy. In broadening the range of lawfully supplied goods and making them more accessible, we should clearly reduce the temptation to indulge in digital piracy. Moreover, countries' tax revenues can only increase as consumption increases.

The final point I should like to emphasise is that the single digital market must benefit all Member States. In order to achieve this, I ask the Commission to bring forward the amendment to the place of supply rules for VAT, scheduled for 1 January 2015, to ensure that VAT is payable in the country of purchase of the goods, instead of in the country where the vendor is established.

I think that if we manage to implement at least these tax rules quickly, the digital single market is bound to develop. We are again way behind the United States, as I have explained, and I believe that we no longer have a choice. We must act today without fail and proceed with this alignment, so that we can avoid and finally do away with this discrimination against digital goods with a cultural content.

**Androulla Vassiliou**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, the Commission agrees with you that – as an economic principle – online and offline products with the same content should be treated in the same way. Of course you will understand that I personally, as Commissioner responsible for education and culture, am particularly interested in this issue.

However, the application of the standard VAT rate is the general principle set out in EU VAT law, whereas the application of reduced VAT rates remains an option for Member States and is limited to certain categories of goods and services.

As for cultural goods, the current option to apply a reduced rate is limited to the supplies of traditional books printed on paper, as well as to books engraved on physical means of support such as diskettes, CDs, DVDs, etc. On the other hand, supplies of e-books, as well as supplies of online newspapers and online periodicals, qualify as electronically supplied services, to which the reduced rates do not apply.

As far as the place of taxable transactions is concerned, until 2015 the supply of electronic services to final consumers within the EU is taxed in the country of the supplier. From January 2015, those electronic services will be taxed in the country of the customer.

An optional application of reduced rates by the Member States to these products, such as e-books, not only is not permitted under the current rules, but it should also be excluded in the short and medium term as it would lead to distortions in the internal market if only some countries use the option.

With your second question, you suggest advancing the date of 1 January 2015 by which the rules on the place of supply will change.

The adoption of the Directive, as regards the place of supply of services, was the result of long negotiations in Council which started in 2003. The entry-into-force date of 1 January 2015 was an essential part of this unanimous agreement, and Member States have already indicated that they are not prepared to review this two years after its adoption.

As regards your last question, the Commission is of the opinion that a political discussion on the current VAT rates structure will be necessary in the broader framework of the review of the EU VAT system.

This review was launched with the Green Paper on the future of VAT in December last year. Parliament contributed to the debate with the resolution on the future of VAT adopted last month. The Commission intends to present, before the end of this year, a Communication setting out the priorities for future work on VAT. This will be an open discussion and in 2012 we shall decide, according to the results of this Communication, what measures we should take.

**Andreas Schwab**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the digital single market, or what has been called the fifth basic freedom of the European Union, is – as has already been mentioned – of considerable economic importance for undertakings and consumers alike. Even beyond the 20-year existence of the single market, this is an area that must be driven forward over the long term. Therefore, all remaining barriers and market distortions, even those that are tax-related, must continue to be broken down in order to promote cross-border trade and enable a fair distribution of income between the Member States.

The example that we are discussing here today demonstrates two things: firstly, allowing the Member States to vary tax conditions for certain products, in particular to reduce tax, can also create an incentive for undertakings to use this to trade in a host of products in their own Member States. I think both the Commission and the Council know what we are talking about here. Secondly, the matter that we are discussing today also demonstrates that further harmonisation – as Ms Wallis is here, I can also cite the Consumer Rights Directive – is also needed in areas other than value added tax. It will make a number of additional measures necessary if we really want to achieve a genuinely uniform single market.

One of the examples presented here is the differences that have been observed in the way comparable product groups or services are treated with respect to VAT. Whereas Member States have the option, for example, of applying a reduced tax rate to cultural goods and books, according to the VAT Directive, standard rates must be applied to competing online services such as e-books. This unequal treatment cannot be justified objectively, however. The market for e-books has enormous economic potential for the digital single market and it is still an extremely new, but nevertheless rapidly developing segment in which the price plays an important role.

Therefore, Commissioner, we will look very closely not only at any further proposals from Mr Šemeta, but also at the public consultation on VAT that you mentioned. I also believe that, particularly in view of the current problems, it is in the interests of the single market that we bring about further harmonisation in this area. However, this will require political leadership from the Commission.

**Olle Ludvigsson**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (SV) Mr President, Europe is currently in dire need of strong and sustainable growth. Without higher growth rates it will be difficult

to solve the acute debt crisis and cope with global competition in the slightly longer term. In this situation, we cannot afford to miss a single opportunity to improve the growth potential of the European economy. We must leave no stone unturned in our efforts to get the internal market to operate more effectively.

One area with a particularly large amount of potential is the digital sector. If the existing barriers to digital services on the internal market were removed, the exchange of this type of service in Europe would be likely to increase the market. This would have a direct economic value, promote the development of digital services and also give important international competitive advantages to those European companies operating in this area.

A significant barrier to the digital internal market is posed by the rules contained in the VAT Directive, which state that services of cultural content must not have the same low VAT rate when supplied digitally as when they are supplied in physical form. These rules are out of date and need amending without delay. Books, newspapers and music that are provided in digital form clearly should be given the same tax conditions as the physical equivalents.

**Diana Wallis**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, I am really grateful to Ms Gallo for raising this issue and for setting out so carefully and properly the challenge that we face in her introduction. I would also like to thank the Commissioner for her careful but – from our point of view – rather unsatisfactory answer.

I want to keep this dead simple. I have here a pile of books. They are not very pretty or wonderful books, but they are books. I love books and I will have a whole lot of real books on my Christmas list this Christmas.

But why should it be that these books pay less VAT than e-content? I can carry a whole library around on my e-reader. Both of them are cultural content, but there is a huge difference in the VAT to which they are subject.

We talk about an internal market, we talk about a digital revolution. It seems to me that our Member States have something to learn from what has happened in America in these terms. A pile of books or e-content. Let us be modern, let us be equal.

**Rolandas Paksas**, *on behalf on the EFD Group*. – (LT) Mr President, I agree entirely with the ideas of the author, Marielle Gallo, and it seems to me that in this case the Commissioner's position is a little too cautious. Ladies and gentlemen, the different value added tax (VAT) rates applied to digital and physical goods really are a serious problem today, preventing the potential for growth and the wide range of goods and services that the digital market can provide from being fully exploited. Furthermore, this is leading to discriminatory treatment where the benefits of the single market only apply to physical goods. Consequently, I believe that the Commission must take immediate action so that the reduced rate of VAT is applied to cultural goods and services provided in a physical format or over the Internet, and VAT rules are simplified and harmonised. Particular attention should be paid to e-books, which are currently subject to the general VAT rate, while physical books are subject to a lower rate (15% and 5% respectively). I believe that the implementation of these measures will create a more favourable environment for the development of digital resources in the cultural sphere and the effective functioning of the digital single market. This market is very important and essential for modernising business and providing better services to citizens in the Community, and is making a major

contribution to the further development of e-commerce and electronic services. Remaining barriers to the single digital market must therefore be eliminated as quickly as possible.

**Saïd El Khadraoui (S&D).** – (NL) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the resolution before us is important and should be given the consideration due to it. VAT is indeed an important policy instrument and can play a major role in the choices that consumers make in relation to whether or not to buy goods.

In the books sector, specifically, this can be seen in striking fashion. The numbers speak for themselves. The author has already hinted at the enormous potential of ebooks by making reference to what has happened in the United States, where there is an enormous market for these products. If we really do want to give the digital sector a chance, we in Europe need to follow the same path. I will give a couple of examples. In Italy, supposedly only around seven thousand books are available digitally. The VAT rate for printed books is 4%, whereas for ebooks it is 20%. In Germany, the number of titles is apparently larger, at around 30-40 000. There, too, there is an enormous difference in VAT rates: 7% for printed books but 19% for ebooks.

We therefore advocate the application of the lower tariff to this category of books. I believe that, alongside the internal market argument, which we have already heard about quite a number of times, there is also a cultural argument. More and more young people actually come into contact with the world of books, of literature, through the digital route. They have grown up with it. I think it is important that we take account of the fact that young people, who have less money in their pockets, also continue to have access to literature and to books in general.

**Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE).** - Mr President, I can only agree with my colleagues from all political parties that have spoken before me, and I also agree with my friend Diana Wallis that many of our friends and many European consumers are going to get a nasty shock when they go shopping for Christmas. Electronic books, which are growing in popularity thanks to readers such as – maybe I should not enumerate them – Kindle, iPads, etc. are subject to a much higher VAT rate than their paper cousins (which we love, I agree with you, Diana).

The so-called VAT gap – the difference between the reduced VAT rate applied to books in 25 of 27 Member States and the standard VAT rate to which e-books are subject – is stifling the development of the digital single market. It is going in the opposite direction to what we are striving for.

The problem is very simple. Our EU law is out of date. There is no reason why a difference in VAT rate should be applied to the same product simply due to the means of its delivery. It has been said many times that in Europe e-commerce and other digital services lag behind those in many other parts of the world. This blocks the great potential for their growth. Cultural goods should be made as widely available as possible, and we must support the digitalisation of books. I fully agree with my colleagues.

E-books are a new way of reading, maybe especially for the young generation, and we must care about them and give them a chance. This VAT rate reduces the incentive to publishers to further develop the area and for consumers to buy e-books. This will cause us to read less – and we care about our European culture.

So I am sure that, if the European Commission puts forward a reasonable proposal to have the same VAT rate for paper products and digitalised products, we will all support you with great joy.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Mr President, although I do not consider cuts in VAT on some goods and services as a proper systemic solution, I respect the fact that the majority of governments are using tax cuts to stimulate certain activities or products. If a country applies cuts in VAT on books, it should also implement the same reduction for *e*-books.

Unlike my colleague Mrs Gallo, I see the main point of reducing prices less in terms of their cultural as in terms of their educational impact. When we look at the multitude of textbooks, exercise books and set texts of recommended reading which our children have to go through during their education, I firmly believe that electronic versions of school books and workbooks downloaded in the standard manner onto high-quality readers which are now very affordable and of good quality can greatly help schoolchildren and students in their academic work. This would be a good reason to introduce this rate cut.

**Androulla Vassiliou, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, let me say that I started by saying that I do agree with all of you about this irregularity, but we cannot get away from the facts. These discussions with Member States started in 2003 and were completed in 2008 with the adoption of certain decisions. At that time – even in 2008 – there was probably not a correct evaluation of the value of online books, periodicals etc. Technology advances so rapidly and we can now see that this evaluation was lacking.

What we need is a political discussion on the current VAT rates and structure. This is necessary in the broader framework of the review of the EU VAT system, and the Commission intends to initiate this discussion with the Communication that we shall adopt in December. As I said, this Communication will cover all aspects of VAT, including the issues that we have been discussing, and I hope that this will lead to some decisions to be taken for action next year.

**President.** – I have received four motions for resolutions <sup>(3)</sup> submitted in accordance with Rule 115(5) of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 17 November 2011.

*(The sitting suspended at 20.30 will be resumed at 21.00.)*

### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Elena Băsescu (PPE), in writing.** – (RO) A viable digital single market could improve competitiveness and stimulate economic growth in the EU. This is vital for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe. Confidence in online transactions needs to be strengthened.

At the moment, only 54% of Internet users in Europe buy or sell goods in the virtual marketplace. At the same time, *e*-commerce has a role to play in supporting cross-border trade. It is important to remove all the barriers preventing the use of *e*-commerce. Fiscal obstacles in particular must be removed.

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<sup>(3)</sup> See Minutes.

Discrimination must be avoided between the provision of online services and the provision of goods. For example, the same VAT rate must be applied to both printed books and e-books.

My country is 10th in the world based on the ratio of connection quality to Internet access. A series of projects targeting coverage in broadband white areas is due to be launched, which will be allocated EUR 84 million in European funding.

### IN THE CHAIR: DIANA WALLIS

*Vice-President*

#### **16. Composition of committees and delegations : see Minutes**

#### **17. Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for nuclear research and training activities (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the report by Jan Březina, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, on the proposal for a Council decision concerning the Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for nuclear research and training activities (2012 – 2013) (COM(2011)0072 – C7-0077/2011 – 2011/0046(NLE)) (A7-0360/2011).

**Jan Březina, rapporteur.** – (CS) Madam President, the aim of the legislation on which we voted in part on Tuesday, when we passed three of the four proposed legislative standards, is to ensure the continuation of the programme for nuclear research for the years 2012 and 2013. The Seventh Framework Programme for science and research covers a seven-year period, the Seventh Euratom Framework Programme has a five-year period, and it was therefore necessary to ensure funding for two years.

The Euratom Framework Programme concerns research activities in the field of nuclear energy, nuclear fusion and nuclear fission, radiation protection and the development of expertise in these areas. It is part of the legislative package which contains the draft Council Decisions for the Framework Programme, two specific programmes for direct and indirect actions and rules for the participation in the programme. As rapporteur I had the opportunity to cooperate with the other shadow rapporteurs and I greatly thank them for their cooperation. I would like to also thank the other institutions with which I have worked, including the Joint Research Centre, which provided me with a professional background and valuable information throughout.

Throughout my work on the reports, I emphasised that this legislation concerns research into, rather than the use of nuclear energy. There are various opinions regarding the use of nuclear energy for electricity production and in the energy mix, which we must all respect. It is the Member States that have the supreme authority in this area. The field of nuclear research is, by contrast, different. There is a need to gather together scientific knowledge and fund the next phase of research, simply because these events are part of the reality of the world. If we do not carry out research, it will be done by our competitors from other continents, which will have an adverse impact on our competitiveness and will lead to us being behind the times.

In my report I have attempted to also reflect the world after the Fukushima tragedy. I have tried to highlight the topics for the benefit of countries which have opted for the phasing

out of nuclear energy. I have emphasised the importance of research associated with the dismantling of nuclear power stations, enhanced safety and safe management of nuclear waste. In this context, I would like to emphasise one thing. Since the beginning of the negotiations on these four reports our colleagues from the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance have tabled a large number of amendments aimed at the elimination of the budgetary items in this programme and the maximum restriction thereof. The vast majority of these proposals were rejected when voting in Committee; yesterday, unfortunately, when voting on the direct actions conducted by the Joint Research Centre, Amendment 9 was approved, which partially restricts the original text of the Commission on research into actinides. This research is in fact absolutely essential and could lead to such processing of nuclear waste which would significantly reduce the quantity of the isotopes with a longer half-life, thereby greatly contributing to the protection of the environment. This research is also important for the development of new medical applications which are used for the benefit of all Europeans. Ladies and gentlemen, European nuclear research and training are essential to foster European competitiveness, economic growth and to achieve scientific excellence. I therefore invite you to support this programme.

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I am delighted to have this opportunity to have an exchange of views before the final vote on the proposal for a Council decision concerning the Framework Programme of the Euratom programme for 2012 and 2013.

I congratulate the rapporteur, Mr Březina, for this excellent and enriching document. I would also like, as he did, to thank the shadow rapporteurs of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy who contributed, and also those of the Committee on Budgets who delivered its opinion.

Parliament has been showing great interest in this whole issue of research activity funded under the Euratom Treaty. The Commission welcomes these important and useful reports. I wish to underline that the report on the Framework Programme, and the other reports, recognise the importance of research funded under the Euratom Treaty for vital objectives such as enhancing the safety of nuclear energy and improving the management of nuclear waste.

Each Member State, as Mr Březina rightly said, is free to determine its own energy supply mix, and some of the largest EU countries do use nuclear energy, but some of the consequences of those choices do not stop at one's own borders. In the current European and international context, Europe certainly needs more, not less, EU-level funding for research into nuclear safety and security, and this is the focus of the Framework Programme.

As the rapporteur correctly underlined, this proposal is coherent with the overall political strategy of the European Union, as expressed in particular through the Europe 2020 and the Energy 2020 strategies, the SET-plan and the European Sustainable Nuclear Industrial Initiative. The aim is to work towards a more sustainable energy mix for the future, and this programme contributes to that effort. Giving a strong priority to nuclear safety and security in the programme is a point of convergence between the three institutions. The Council has already clearly given its orientation, Parliament is now doing so, and the Commission shares this view and will rigorously apply it in the implementation of the programme.

The report recommends measures for the simplification of the implementation of research funding, and I could not agree more with Parliament that this simplification is absolutely

essential. As you know, this is the clear direction we are taking, especially in the context of preparing Horizon 2020. However, some practical results of our simplification policy are already visible in this proposal. In particular, it integrates a number of measures adopted by the Commission decision last January to cut red tape through simplification.

Let me also address your recommendation for the focus areas on which the Framework Programme should concentrate its efforts. I have already mentioned the nuclear safety and security aspect. Beyond that, the Commission agrees that most of the areas listed in your reports are of major importance, such as radiation protection – a research area that is also important beyond the energy sector, in particular in the field of medicine.

Training will also be a principle activity of this programme, since the EU urgently needs to address some human capital issues within this sector. While implementing the programme, the Commission will certainly give priority to these areas to the extent allowed by the availability of funds and to the overall priority of safety.

This report also supports funding for research activities in the field of fusion energy, including the ITER project. Fusion is a promising research field that aims to provide a totally new energy source for the future. This programme seeks to pave the way for the success of ITER and establishes a set of accompanying measures to ensure that Europe will continue to be the major player in this field. Prominent among these measures is the funding of JET, located in the UK – a facility that is set to make major scientific contributions to ITER.

Regarding ITER specifically, this report also contains Parliament's position regarding the financing of this project for 2012 and 2013. The Commission welcomes this position and takes note of the ongoing negotiations to reach an interinstitutional agreement on this proposal. It is absolutely urgent, as the House knows, that this decision be taken as soon as possible. As long as a decision is not taken, the Framework Programme cannot be adopted. That creates uncertainty for a lot of researchers all around Europe who do not know if they will continue to receive funding from 1 January. I am thinking in particular about those employed in JET. Europe cannot afford to lose these researchers or lose their knowledge and their competences. We also need this decision to maintain our credibility vis-à-vis our international partners. For example, tomorrow the European Commission will represent the EU at an ITER Council meeting with our international partners, while the next triologue meeting takes place on Friday.

Europe fought for years to be the host of this project and now, after more than one year of debate, we have not yet been able to take the financing decision needed to bring this project forward. It is difficult to explain this to our international partners and I urge the House therefore, on the basis of tomorrow's vote, to strike a deal with the Council as soon as possible.

**Carl Haglund**, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Budgets*. – Madam President, allow me first of all to express my gratitude on behalf of our committee to the rapporteur. He has done a very thorough and good job.

I think all of us also appreciate the fact that nuclear safety gets a totally new emphasis in this report, something that is very important after the events in Fukushima.

We all know, and the Commissioner has very rightly just stated, how important the Euratom community is, and the activities mainly around ITER, are for us, and therefore the report outlines a very good path for the future.

The Committee on Budgets has of course focused on the economic aspects of the activities and here we have some challenges which were also well outlined by the Commissioner.

Of course, we should not endanger one of the largest research projects in the world by internal European quarrelling on the budget; that is very clear. At the same time Parliament has wanted to underline the fact that this whole ITER project for Euratom was not foreseen in this way when this current MMF was agreed upon and this, of course, has affected the situation.

We have a challenging proposal before us for ITER to be financed through redeployment from FP7, something that Parliament has not seen as a good solution. On Friday, the Committee on Budgets and its representatives will continue negotiating on the 2012 budget with the Council. These issues will be on the table. I am sure we can find a constructive solution. That, however, also requires the Council to understand that financing ITER cannot happen at the expense of other important research activities within the Framework Programme.

**Vladimir Urutchev**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (BG) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the funding of the research for the Euratom Framework Programme must also continue in 2012-13 at least, for the following reasons.

Firstly, research is targeted at improving the safety of nuclear facilities, both existing reactors and those from a future fourth generation. This is an area where Europe has the highest standards and it must retain its leading position.

Secondly, these funds will help improve nuclear technologies in medicine, which is one of their most important areas of application, via radiotherapy. There can hardly be any doubt about the need for their beneficial application in this area.

Thirdly, we have already launched specific scientific research projects of paramount importance to Europe, which will contribute to a more efficient use of resources and to meeting the short- and long-term energy and environmental objectives which we have stood firm on.

Fourthly, we must be consistent when implementing our decisions, which also includes our commitment to the ITER fusion project. It is important that we do not stop its funding because our aim is to find a possible energy source of the future which is, at the same time, safe, sustainable, low carbon and environmentally friendly.

The scale of the majority of nuclear research projects is such that few Member States could provide the necessary resources and expertise alone. Indeed, we have economic problems, but we cannot afford the luxury of wasting long years of efforts and benefits that we still have. We must think about social progress and the debt crisis, but we must also clearly recognise the contribution made by nuclear energy to the European economy's competitiveness, a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions and energy supply security.

**Teresa Riera Madurell**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner, although this reports only deals with the redefinition of the Euratom Framework Programme over the next two years, with the objective of temporarily realigning the two European Research Framework Programmes, it is important to take into account that, since 2006, when the current Euratom programme was approved, two events of great significance have occurred: the nuclear accident at Fukushima and the announcement by several European countries that the useful life of power stations will not be extended.

Contrary to how it may first appear, the medium-term prospect of dismantling nuclear power stations in some EU countries does not mean we should cut back on nuclear research. Even if all the nuclear power stations were to close tomorrow, we would still have to manage the waste, improve how it is stored and decontaminated, and reduce the volume, among many other issues that have already been mentioned and which require sufficient investment in research and development.

For that reason, to be able to provide answers to these significant challenges, it is also vital that the best scientists continue to be involved in nuclear research. Investing in the training of human capital is therefore also of the utmost importance and something that is also considered in the Euratom Programme.

On the other hand, if one thing is clear after Fukushima, it is that the scientific basis for taking on the risks of operating the power station was not solid enough, which shows the importance of guaranteeing the safety of the reactors that are currently in use and the safety of the spent fuel cycle through the results of an in-depth, rigorous investigation; more than enough reasons to support the need to strengthen these lines of research in the current Euratom Framework Programme.

Finally, Commissioner, I too should like to mention the urgent need to find a definitive solution for the funding of the ITER programme, a solution which, as the report clearly states, does not mean a reallocation of funds from the Seventh Framework Programme, but rather an increase in the Multiannual Financial Framework for the years 2012-2013, by increasing the ceiling of heading 1a.

Madam President, Commissioner, with respect to the ITER project, our group wishes for a sensible compromise to be reached with the Council as soon as possible, which allows for the early adoption of this dossier.

**Adina-Ioana Vălean**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, despite diverging views political groups might have about nuclear technology, it is good to see there is a wide convergence and agreement in this Parliament on the need to continue investing in nuclear research and development.

It is worrying to see the decreasing interest of science students in nuclear engineering. Do we really think we can afford to disregard our nuclear needs in energy consumption, in medical applications and in nuclear safety with the managed decommissioning and dismantling of nuclear power stations for the decades to come?

Unfortunately, contrary to what some populists would have us believe, in the case of nuclear energy you cannot decide to just switch off the power and hope that all related problems magically disappear. We will need more scientists and engineers to deal with the challenges posed by nuclear power, but also to make the most of the opportunities it offers for growth, innovation, health and many other applications. That is why we must dedicate more investment to training and we must change public perception to attract students and encourage scientific careers and excellence in this field.

In research, one always invests without knowing if and when the scientific breakthrough will be made. As regards the ITER project, we either say we have already spent too much money – and if we decided to stop it here it would be lost – or we continue investing and keep the faith. I believe the last option is the one we should take. However, I do not agree that this project should continue to get massive financial injections without ensuring any kind of democratic control.

Now, Parliament is required to agree on additional funding of EUR 1.3 billion over two years without knowing how these funds will be spent. I believe the minimum we should demand is to be regularly informed and updated on the construction progress and have access to internal audit documents. In addition, we must make sure that such a cost explosion does not occur in the future and have it ring-fenced in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

Lastly, the Commission will soon make its proposal on the modernisation of public procurement, and I believe that proper and transparent public procurement should also be a part of a European nuclear safety policy because corruption and mismanagement in building nuclear power plants could have unimaginable – or imaginable – consequences.

I hope the Commission will take this aspect into consideration when drafting that proposal.

**Evžen Tošenovský**, *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – (CS) Madam President, first of all I would like to add my appreciation in respect of the presented material and the work of the rapporteur, Mr Březina. It is hard to have a rational discussion at this time, when the approach to nuclear technology is accompanied by the often exaggerated and even hysterical atmosphere triggered by the events in Fukushima. Fortunately, this does not apply here in this Chamber. The argument that it is important to pay more attention to nuclear research and development of new technology following the events in Japan, which is put forward in this report, is correct. New approaches and technological processes not only increase the operational safety of nuclear installations, but move knowledge forward which can also be used in other areas. Nuclear installations do not only consist of power plants, but they are used in many other fields, and are indispensable in the health sector or in material research, genetics and other areas. I therefore fully stand by the cited thesis that following Fukushima there is a need for more nuclear research rather than a simple condemnation of such technology.

As shadow rapporteur I am glad that the text also includes support for Generation IV fast-neutron reactor technology. These reactors have higher safety levels and are also more efficient in the use of uranium fuel whilst reducing the amount of radioactive waste. One of the largest research programmes in which the European Union is participating is the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project. Nuclear fusion is probably the best hope for resolving the world's growing energy needs. Very good coordination and financial control is required for this project due to its huge financial cost. Supervision of this project is essential in order that it does not become mere research without the resultant effect. As shadow rapporteur for the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group, I fully support and recommend the report of my colleague, Mr Březina.

**Vladimír Remek**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group.* – (CS) Madam President, I would also like to add my appreciation in respect of the work of my colleague, Mr Březina. I consider the document to be high-quality and balanced, especially in this atmosphere following the events in Fukushima. Nuclear energy is regarded with a considerable veneer of emotion and populism, and under such pressure many react irrationally, without specialist knowledge or an argument-based approach. Meanwhile the issues of nuclear fission and fusion, as well as the management of the products of these processes, require the most prudent and responsible attitude possible in the interest of safety levels which are justifiably required. Perhaps it is a paradox that we need still more research and

development as well as maintenance of the level of training, and then we need sufficient funding for all of this.

I disagree with the requirements - due to the decision by some countries to downgrade their nuclear programmes - to restrict these activities. Logically, a sufficient number of trained specialists will play a significant role in the actual decommissioning of the nuclear power plants. After all, it is clear that we cannot shut down a nuclear power plant at the flick of a switch, as my colleague, Ms Vălean, stated before me. We all understand that such an energy resource does not come to an end when the gatekeeper locks the doors of the company. One of the amendments in the document supports the enhancement of the supply of information to the public. I consider this to be of utmost importance, because information on the developments in nuclear power can literally be used as a weapon. Incidentally, opponents of this carbon-free energy resource often very skilfully 'shoot' using distorting information as ammunition.

For the sake of the future and competitiveness, we have no other option than to find new resources, and the European Union is involved in the nuclear fusion project. The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project does not only involve the building of a new leading edge industry, as it also brings new jobs. I consider the finding of funding for the continuation of the ITER project to be our duty as well as funding for the experimental Joint European Torus (JET), which is its laboratory. I gave myself the task of becoming acquainted with the successful activities of the international team directly in Culham, UK. We should ensure the financial perspective for this team not only for the year 2012. Under pressure from the crisis, we cannot just brandish the need for cuts in budgets. We must have clear priorities for the future, otherwise we will remain in crisis forever, and a Europe without power, including that produced by nuclear fission and fusion, will not go anywhere.

**Jaroslav Paška** , *on behalf of the EFD Group.* – (SK) Madam President, the Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for nuclear research and training activities extends the atomic research and development measures of the 7th Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for 2007 – 2011. In accordance with the current financial perspectives and in line with the timeframe of the EU Seventh Framework Programme the proposals will only cover the two years up to 2013, although they are clearly linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 and Energy 2020 strategies.

Even though the destruction of the Fukushima nuclear energy plant by the tsunami has triggered significant debate on the continued use of atomic energy and most EU countries have decided to limit or end their use, nuclear research continues to be an important part of the Community's innovation policy. Research into fission in particular will bring new knowledge and more effective and safer opportunities to achieve a stable carbon-free source of energy.

The new fourth generation fast neutron reactors technology will be about 50 times more efficient than current systems and their use of currently known and accessible uranium resources will be sufficient for thousands of years. That is why the European Union and the United States, Russia and China believe it is necessary to continue atomic research, including research into fission and nuclear synthesis.

The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor and its accompanying R&D programmes has the best perspectives with its major potential for safe, environmental,

sustainable and cheap sources of energy for Europe. The new regulations for implementing this research will now allow us to carry on at least until 2013.

**Béla Kovács (NI).** – (HU) Madam President, any sane person whose house is on fire is not going to go watering the walnut sapling in his garden hoping that it will maybe produce a yield in 15 years' time, but will use all the water at his disposal to put out the flames. Scientists of international renown in the field of energy have been warning us for years that our planet is running out of hydrocarbon and carbon reserves, and that this will lead to a global energy crisis within ten years, the effects of which can unfortunately be felt already now. Sensible Greens also know that the only way out of this situation is to immediately accelerate the construction of third generation nuclear power plants that are currently the subject of investments, to restart deactivated reactors, and then to widely spread the application of environmentally friendly fourth generation breeder reactor and molten salt plants as soon as possible, so that we can produce electricity without having to burn carbon and hydrocarbons.

This would at once solve the issue of hydrocarbon emissions as well. Ladies and gentlemen, already now we are late by 10-15 years. That is why we need training, too, to focus on immediately preparing experts for the operation of plants, rather than for their decommissioning, as there is a massive shortage of the former. Furthermore, fourth generation research must be immensely accelerated without delay. We could reallocate the resources for this from research into fusion, because the latter makes as much sense today as watering the sapling instead of extinguishing the flames. Thank you for your attention.

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE).** – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, my first words will be to congratulate the rapporteur, my friend Jean Březina, on his excellent work.

The European Council meeting of 4 February 2011, known as the EU 'Energy' Council, adopted an ambitious European energy policy, intended to assure the people of Europe that they would have safe, sustainable energy at the best price, whose supply would be guaranteed and which would contribute to Europe's competitiveness. This policy, born out of the Europe 2020 strategy, provides for investment in the development of low-carbon technologies. Nuclear fission and nuclear fusion are included in these energy technologies that we Europeans must maintain, develop and implement. We must do so all the more since we are the undisputed and world-recognised leaders in this field thanks to our businesses, our universities, our engineers, our specialist workers and our research centres.

I should like Ms Geoghegan-Quinn, to congratulate the European Commission, for having quickly tabled this proposal on 7 March 2011, before the tragedy at Fukushima.

I should like to support this proposal for five reasons. First, it aligns the schedules for research programmes with the Multiannual Financial Framework 2007-2013. Second, it stresses safety, which is an essential component of the confidence that the operators of this form of energy have a duty to provide to our fellow citizens. We are pleased that the Union can continue to invest in the area of safety, which is evolving with advances in science and the expectations of our fellow citizens. Third, this proposal allows us to maintain our status as world leaders in the nuclear sciences. Fourth, we are supporting our universities, our research centres and, notably, I want to emphasise this, the European Joint Research Centre, all of which are doing a remarkable job. Finally, it allows us to resolve a part of the cost of the ITER project, which is going to demonstrate the industrial feasibility

of producing electricity by nuclear fusion. This will allow us to honour our international commitments to our partners in the ITER project – China, the United States, Russia, Japan and South Korea.

Well done, Commissioner, you have our support and thanks.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, I welcome the proposal for a Council decision concerning the Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community for nuclear research and training activities, and I congratulate the rapporteur Mr Březina. Given the potential cross-border impact of nuclear incidents, increasing nuclear safety and, if necessary, security aspects must be a priority. The overall objectives of the 2012-2013 Framework Programme focus in particular on nuclear safety, improving nuclear waste management, security and radiation protection, and help create the Innovation Union and build the European Research Area. Standardisation activities will be included in the project work programme.

I think that it is essential to maintain within the EU a high level of skills and proper working conditions in the nuclear sector. Particular attention must be paid to initiatives ancillary to core nuclear research, especially with regard to investment in human capital and suitable working conditions, and to actions aimed at addressing the risk of skills shortages in the coming years. Member States must carry out a review of professional qualifications, training and skills in the nuclear sector within the EU, so as to give an overall picture of the current situation and enable appropriate solutions to be identified and implemented.

Furthermore, continued support is required in retaining and ensuring staff's professional development, which is necessary to maintain the EU's nuclear independence and a consistent level in terms of ensuring and improving nuclear safety. It is crucial to maintain the expertise in the EU for dealing with radiation protection and decommissioning nuclear facilities, as nuclear energy will play a key role in the EU's energy mix, including decommissioning and long-term waste management activities. Particular attention should be given to long-lived nuclear waste when decommissioning obsolete systems.

**Oldřich Vlasák (ECR).** - (CS) Madam President, first of all, please allow me to add my appreciation to the report of my colleague, Mr Březina. The extension of the Seventh Framework Programme for nuclear energy is a logical step. It concerns the ensuring of compatibility with the existing financial perspective valid until 2013. We all here know that the compromise proposal, which I personally support and which contains many improvements in the field of nuclear safety, was drawn up in the Council with great difficulty and at great length. I appreciate the many improvements regarding the simplification of the programme, including the reduction in the administrative burden. Austria and Luxembourg, which had long blocked the agreement, had some fundamental observations concerning in particular security aspects, and negotiations had reached stalemate. These Member States even considered the compromise proposal put forward by the Hungarian Presidency to be not responsive enough to their requirements. Now it is important, however, that the legislative proposal be passed as quickly as possible, but not later than the end of 2011, in order that the programme may continue in 2012. The European Parliament should therefore not complicate matters by pussyfooting around, bringing politics into a matter that should be left to the experts, and should approve the text without emotion.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE).** – (PT) Madam President, Commissioner, I shall begin by congratulating the rapporteur, our colleague, Mr Březina.

The aim of the ITER project is to develop fusion energy. It will be a clean and sustainable form of energy, and will contribute to the fight against climate change, and to security of supply. ITER is the biggest international cooperation project led by Europe, involving research centres, universities and companies, and it is of the utmost importance for the development of scientific research in Europe.

Europe should therefore continue to support this project, but I would like to draw attention to several mistakes that have been made in the past, particularly in terms of management. There is a need to ensure careful and responsible management in the future. It is important to find solutions and means of funding that enable the continuation of the project. However, I am opposed to solutions that make use of the funding allocated to the Framework Programme for Research, as this puts the rest of the programme's priorities at risk.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, I would first of all like to congratulate Mr Březina for this highly technical report, which is important to Europe, at a time when the future of nuclear energy is closely linked to the guarantees that we can give our citizens that this energy form is safe for all inhabitants, regardless of whether their country owns such power plants or not. I am saying this because, in the aftermath of the accident in Japan, security and nuclear safety are becoming even more of a priority, given the potential cross-border impact of possible nuclear incidents.

I also think that it is vital for the EU to focus particular attention on human capital initiatives because the young people who are going to take over need time to receive suitable specialist training. It is important to reassess the specialist professional qualification programmes, as well as training and skills in the nuclear sector in the EU. We must avoid skills shortages, regardless of whether we are talking about industrial nuclear facilities or about medical facilities which are no less important to Europe's citizens and especially to their health.

Another important aspect in this area is the professional experience of those at the end of their career, who can pass on the knowledge they have acquired during years of working. Last but not least, it is important for us to find the most suitable solutions for managing long-lived radioactive waste as safely as possible. This is an area where research has a vital role to play, which is why the EU must provide the necessary funding.

**Alajos Mészáros (PPE).** – (HU) Madam President, first of all please allow me to congratulate Mr Březina for the excellent job he has done. Thank you very much. In the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster the European Union needs increased nuclear research and development. I am saying this despite the fact that some Member States have decided to partially abolish nuclear energy. Central European countries, such as Slovakia, are highly dependent on nuclear energy. 30% of the electricity demand of the EU, and 50% of that of Slovakia is covered by this resource. With appropriate coordination and knowledge sharing we could demonstrate the safety of nuclear fission, which would not only improve the competitiveness of Europe, but would stimulate research in other areas as well. The cofinanced research put forward by Euratom greatly facilitates fission-based energy production.

There is also a clear link between the proposals for a framework programme and the objectives of the Europe 2020 and Energy 2020 strategies, which contribute to job creation in several areas. The framework programme not only aims at training new experts, but also enhances the competitiveness of the existing nuclear industry, especially in the field of fusion energy. The construction of the ITER is an immense challenge, and not just from a financial, but also from a technical standpoint. We must do everything in our power to

ensure success. This includes ensuring that the currently emerging financing difficulties are resolved as soon as possible. As we all know, the budget has exceeded the original estimates. We need reliable and secure sources until the end of the project life cycle, because fusion energy could provide a sustainable solution for the energy problems of both Europe and the world.

**Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE).** - (SL) Madam President, nuclear energy is an important low-carbon resource but it also offers cost and import stability. Although not all Member States use it, we cannot give up research at a European level, simply because this form of energy is too important.

Special mention should be given to areas of research such as the sustainable and efficient use of resources (particularly for fourth generation reactors), processing of nuclear fuel, nuclear safety, nuclear waste disposal and the decommissioning of power plants.

A particularly important area is the provision of personnel, because this form of energy has long been neglected and as such, does not hold any distinct prospects for young people. With regard to Project ITER: I think that we must ensure long-term, stable financing.

I have one final point to make: in the Seventh Framework Programme, the results of the study on the disbursement of funds from this programme were very interesting and it would also be very good to have information on how funds are spent in the Euratom programme.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** - (RO) Madam President, nuclear energy will play a strategic role in Europe's energy mix for at least another 50 years. In light of this, it is vital to create a new state-of-the-art technological sector in the field of fusion energy. Europe needs safe, sustainable, green and viable energy. At the same time, the safety and efficiency of using nuclear resources must be increased. Providing long-term waste management solutions is of paramount importance.

The European Union must allocate sufficient funds to achieve these objectives. In Romania the largest low-temperature laboratory in Europe is going to be created for specific technical applications. Financed using European funds, the laboratory in Râmnicu Vâlcea will help create the first nuclear fusion reactor at Cadarache.

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn,** *Member of the Commission.* - Madam President, I am encouraged by the debate that has unfolded here this evening.

Nuclear energy, as many people mentioned, is always a source of political debate, but we must not forget that the proposal we are discussing today is for funding research to enhance the future of nuclear safety in Europe, to improve the management of nuclear waste, also mentioned by a lot of Members, to make progress in the whole area of radiation protection, and to create the human capital needed by the nuclear sector.

I think it is vital that the importance of these research areas for the European Union in general goes beyond specific political choices.

The Commission thanks Parliament for issuing this important report and for the clear support that it gives to Euratom-funded research. I can guarantee that very many elements contained in the report will be taken into account during the implementation of the Framework Programme over the next two years and we hope we will have the opportunity to explain this to the institution.

We pay very close attention, as you know, to the opinion of this arm of the budgetary authority.

As I said before, it is absolutely urgent that the decision is taken as soon as possible. As long as the decision is not taken, the Framework Programme cannot be adopted.

Last but not least, let me thank you for the strong support that you give to the Commission's proposal on the specific programme for the direct actions of the Joint Research Centre in this area.

The Commission will continue to strengthen the role of the JRC to provide in-house expertise in support of the Union's policies in the areas of nuclear safety and security, environmental protection and decommissioning.

**Jan Březina**, *rapporteur*. – (CS) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, let me thank you once again for what you have brought to this topic. Whenever you referred to any of the elements of this very wide field of research, it was always constructive, or whether it concerned the inclusion of nuclear research which is implemented by means of the European Sustainable Nuclear Industrial Initiative (ESNII) or the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-plan) in the 2020 strategy, or whether you emphasised the urgency of addressing budgetary matters in relation to the Joint European Torus (JET) project, and to the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) programme, or whether you emphasised training and the necessity for the education of technicians or the advantages of the Generation IV nuclear reactors, it was all positive. Thank you very much for these comments, but allow me to add one general comment. This debate was initiated by the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, and actually should not have taken place because originally this report, or indeed these four reports, was supposed to have been discussed without debate. I have addressed the proposed amendments made by this group throughout and this was not a problem for me, as I respect my colleagues' different political views. However, the fact that somebody calls a debate and then not a single member of that group participates in that debate, smacks to me of a certain contempt of democratic principles. I felt a sort of inner need to say this.

**President**. – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow (Thursday, 17 November 2011).

#### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Edit Herczog (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (HU) With the Euratom dossier at hand our aim is to complement miscellaneous research policy actions of the EU required for the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, in particular actions relating to education, training and employment, competitiveness, innovation and environmental protection, with a view to simplifying them.

##### 1. Education, training and employment

First of all, increased attention and budget spending are needed for initiatives ancillary to core nuclear research, in particular as regards investment in human capital and actions aimed at addressing the risk of skills shortages in the coming years (for example grants to researchers in the nuclear field).

##### 2. Competitiveness, innovation and environmental protection

Secondly, the framework programme should contribute to achieving the Innovation Union, which is one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy. It should reinforce competition with a view to scientific excellence in order to accelerate the implementation of key innovations in the field of nuclear energy, while also playing a part in meeting the challenges of the energy sector and climate change. The implementation of ITER in Europe will expand new research infrastructures that have a significant European dimension, and in connection with the European complementary programme it will result in the creation of a new research infrastructure to support ITER experiments.

### 3. Simplification

Thirdly, the implementation of the Framework Programme (2012–2013) should be based on the principles of simplicity, stability, transparency, legal certainty, consistency, excellence and trust following the recommendations of the European Parliament in its Report on simplifying the implementation of the Research Framework Programmes.

## 18. EU support for the International Criminal Court (short presentation)

**President.** – The next item is the report by Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, on EU support for the ICC: facing challenges and overcoming difficulties (2011/2109(INI)) (A7-0368/2011).

**Wolfgang Kreissl-Dörfler, rapporteur.** – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, tomorrow we will vote on how the European Union can better support the International Criminal Court, or the ICC for short. This subject could not be more relevant at the moment. We only need to look at Libya and, in particular, Syria for this to be abundantly clear.

One thing I would like to know is: what actually happens, following sanctions like travel bans and frozen accounts, with regard to the war criminals and their accomplices? Recall what has just recently happened in Libya. A dictator, Muammar Al-Gaddafi, mercilessly allowed men, women and children to be shot down purely because they were demanding freedom, self-determination and justice. Thousands lost their lives, were mutilated or tortured to death in prisons. The same is happening now in Syria as a result of Bashar Al-Assad. With international support, Libya's freedom movement was able to win the battle. In Syria, the outcome is still undecided.

Now the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, as it is unfortunately no longer possible to arrest his father, and the intelligence chief Abdullah Al-Senussi. We must give our very clear support to the following message: war criminals can no longer feel safe! They will be brought to justice. There is no safe haven left for them and their atrocities are not subject to any statute of limitations. All the victims of horrific crimes under international law and their relatives rightly expect that.

In order to be able to achieve these objectives, the ICC must also have the appropriate ability to act. That means that funding for the ICC must be ensured and improved. While the number of investigations and cases has been increasing, the budget has remained the same. It is good that the UN, in its resolutions on Libya, for example, instructed the ICC to take action. However, this is only possible with an increase in financial support. The witness and victim protection program also requires more funding. The EU and its Member States are one of the main pillars of the ICC and that is something that should be appreciated.

In this report, we have presented a few key demands. We call on the EU and the Member States to work to encourage more ratifications. Up to now, 119 states have acceded to the Rome Statute, including Tunisia in June. That is great and it is an important signal to the other states in the region. Turkey, as an EU candidate country, should follow this example as quickly as possible. Incidentally, we also expect this of major states like China, Russia and the US.

We welcome the Commission's action plan and hope that it will start to be implemented very quickly. In this regard, it is particularly important that we apply a Europe-wide code of conduct with regard to the handling of people for whom an arrest warrant has been issued. After all, we in the EU must set an example to other signatory states. It must be clear that wanted criminals must not be received with military honours and Champagne, but dutifully handed over to the International Criminal Court. It is important for the EU to help those states that still do not have a functional legal system to develop one so that in future they can try and pass sentence on serious crimes themselves according to the criteria of the rule of law.

The case law of the ICC will be enhanced in future when, from 2017 onwards, the crime of aggression will be included in the list of criminal offences. This is a further necessary and important step towards a comprehensive international prosecution process. The signatory states are called on here to ratify the amendment and transpose it into national law quickly. With this report, the European Parliament can make its support for the work of the ICC unmistakably clear.

At this point, I would like to thank the shadow rapporteurs, the cooperation with whom worked extremely well, the secretariat and my personal as well as group colleagues. I hope that we, as the European Parliament, will be able to help to take justice a step further forward at international level. After all, anyone who commits a crime against humanity crosses a boundary beyond which he can no longer expect the forbearance or disinterest of the international community.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Madam President, the International Criminal Court (ICC) plays a key role in strengthening peace and security, as it is the only permanent international criminal court. The EU must continue to support the ICC in fulfilling its mission. It is important that Europe's diplomatic tools are applied in a systematic manner, as recommended by item 31 in the report. With regard to the financial aspects, I urge Member States and the EEAS to examine the proposal about the European Development Fund included in item 59.

I should also point out that Law, Justice and Development Week started on Monday in Washington, organised by the World Bank Group. Invited to give the opening speech, the President of the ICC emphasised the importance of cooperation between international justice and development. I welcome that following the Kampala Review Conference, eight new states ratified the criminal court's statute, including the Republic of Moldova.

**Barbara Lochbihler (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Madam President, this really is a very good, comprehensive report. It demonstrates the will of the EU and also the obligation of the EU to support this International Criminal Court as much as it can – financially as well as politically.

It is impressive that, since 2007, more than EUR 4 million has been paid directly to the International Criminal Court. A further EUR 11 million has been allocated to civil society worldwide to support its work.

From a political point of view, it is very important that the EU continues to canvass for more ratifications. In particular, we still need considerably more ratifications in the Asian region. We also need to work together with major nations like Russia, China and the United States to get them to reconsider their position in relation to the ICC and also ratify this in future.

I think that this report constitutes an excellent basis and preparation for the 10th anniversary of the International Criminal Court at the beginning of next year.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Madam President, the report on European Union support for the International Criminal Court has raised some important issues which impede the functioning of this court. Since 2002 the ICC has been prosecuting perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Under its mandate, it is conducting proceedings in Congo, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Sudan and Libya.

However, this extensive agenda is not backed up by stable and comprehensive funding. For this reason the EU and its Member States must raise the legitimate question of further financial support for this prominent legal institution with its world-wide mandate for protecting humanity from genocide and criminality at the upcoming December meeting of the Assembly of States Parties in New York.

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn,** *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, as you know, the EU stands in the strong tradition of being a staunch supporter of the International Criminal Court. The Commission views an effective court as an indispensable instrument of the international community to combat impunity and to promote a law-based international order. The ICC will remain an important priority for the EU in the years to come. It is also a personal commitment of the Vice-President/High Representative.

In this context, the Commission very much welcomes the report drafted by the honourable Member, Mr Kreissl-Dörfler. The active engagement of the European Parliament on this important human rights and international justice topic is crucial. The Commission very much welcomes Parliament's strong interest on ICC-related issues. As the report rightly points out, EU action is currently very much focussed on the implementation of the four pledges it made at the ICC review conference in Kampala. In this respect, it is particularly good to see that the updating and reviewing of the EU instruments in support of the Court are in full motion, with the new Council decision on the ICC adopted on 21 March including a reviewed EU action plan.

It is also in the context of the Kampala pledges that the EU has committed to produce a practical guide book on how to better integrate the fight against the most serious crimes into relevant EU rule of law and development programmes based on existing good practices, the so-called complementarity tool kit.

On this basis, the EU will continue to support the ICC both politically and diplomatically as well as logistically and financially. As a concrete example of the political support, the European Parliament report rightly mentions the EU's engagement towards the universality of the Rome Statute and promoting a better understanding of the ICC's mandate. The EU continues to make every effort to further this process with third states, in particular during its regular human rights dialogues with some 40 countries through systematic *demarche*

campaigns worldwide, through the organisation of dedicated local or regional seminars, through the systematic inclusion of an ICC clause in agreements with third countries, and through financial support to civil society organisations lobbying for the universality of the Rome Statute.

When it comes to the concrete steps towards ratifying and implementing the Rome Statute and related instruments, it is of course parliamentarians who play a key role, considering their prerogative as law and policymakers. That is why the Vice-President/High Representative, the Commission and their services closely cooperate with the Members of the European Parliament and with parliamentarians from around the world in the common goal of achieving universality of the Rome Statute and ensuring the putting in place of adequate implementing legislation.

Summing up, the Commission very much welcomes the report and feels encouraged to further consolidate and intensify the strong policy support to the ICC, jointly with the European Parliament.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow (Thursday, 17 November 2011).

### **19. Negotiations of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (short presentation)**

**President.** – The next item is the report by Krzysztof Lisek, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, containing the European Parliament's recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the EEAS on the negotiations of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (2011/2133(INI)) (A7-0374/2011).

**Krzysztof Lisek, rapporteur.** – (PL) Madam President, Commissioner, this is a report which, among many reports adopted in the European Parliament, is of extreme importance in my view. It is significant not only for us – the European Union, the European institutions and the Member States – but above all it is of great importance for the Georgian state and the Georgian nation, which pins great hopes on this report and the future of cooperation within the European Union, and perhaps one day as a member of the European Union. This report concerns, *sensu stricto*, the Association Agreement and everything that takes place in negotiations between the negotiating team of the European Union and that of the Georgian state. However, the report which I have tabled before Parliament cannot, of course, avoid the difficult issues associated with the current functioning of the Georgian state or the problems that emerged from the conflict with the Russian Federation in 2008.

I am very glad that the report, in the version which has been tabled, has gained very broad political support in the Committee on Foreign Affairs. In the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament, 35 Members voted for this version, which is more or less likely to be adopted, and I hope it will be adopted; no one voted against, and there was one abstention, which to me, as rapporteur, means that all the main political forces of the European Parliament, all the political groups, supported this version of the report in the Committee on Foreign Affairs. This report, in draft form of course, has already been called a very bold project by the media.

This is a draft which according to us, Members of the European Parliament – and I can speak now also on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, because it has adopted it – does not mince its words about certain issues. I am referring here to the difficult situation

in the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are, of course, acknowledged by the Russian Federation as independent states (though according to our opinion – by which today I mean the Committee on Foreign Affairs for certain, but I hope that tomorrow this will include the whole Parliament), and our report calls on the Russian Federation to respect international law. This situation – in which thousands of Russian soldiers are, as we believe, staying contrary to international law and also contrary to the agreements signed in 2008 between Russia and Georgia, which were in a sense also initialled by President Sarkozy, who represented the then Presidency of the European Union – we consider today as something that does not yet exist in the vocabulary of the European Commission, but already exists in the vocabulary of the European Parliament. A few months ago we used the term in a document on the Black Sea Strategy of the Black Sea, and the term is occupation.

We believe that everything that is happening in Abkhazia and South Ossetia unfortunately has to be regarded as occupation. These territories, which we consider an integral part of Georgia, are occupied territories. In my view, this is the most important political fact resulting from this report. Apart from that, there are many other things about which the Commissioner surely knows, concerning the extended free trade agreement, which we would like to introduce as soon as possible, but as my time is running out, of course, I am unable to continue and expand on these topics.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, the European Union has supported and is supporting Georgia's aspirations and commitment to the common values and principles of democracy, rule of law, human rights and good governance, not only through its neighbourhood policy but also through the parliamentary aspect of the Eastern Partnership, during the meetings of the European Parliament delegation at the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly. I only hope that the Georgian authorities will do everything depending on them to implement all the necessary reforms which will allow an environment to be developed that is conducive to the application of European standards in the areas of the social market economy and education, not only to ensure better integration for national minorities but also to apply the reforms required for the economy's deregulation.

At the same time, constructive political dialogue is required with opposition representatives, which includes them having non-discriminatory, unrestricted access to the media. Europe is not only a model but also a partner for Georgia. In order to improve Georgia's links with the European Union, this country's citizens need to be able to have easy access to the visas they need to travel in the EU area.

**Elena Băsescu (PPE).** – (RO) Madam President, I too would like to congratulate my colleague Mr Lisek for drafting this report. Georgia has made great strides on the path of democratic reforms. Cooperation with the EU provides a strong incentive for them to continue. I support the recommendations on Georgia's European perspective, maintaining the rate of progress of the Association Agreement negotiations and initiating negotiations on an expanded, comprehensive free trade area. I should stress how important it is for Europe to take a more active involvement in settling unresolved conflicts, in keeping with the Joint Communication on 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood'.

I welcome the extension to the mandate of the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM), given the role it is playing in safeguarding stability. Steps must continue to be taken to guarantee full access to the occupied territories. I should also point out the positive nature of the

recent agreement between Georgia and Russia on accession to the WTO. I hope that this will pave the way to a lasting solution to the situation in the region.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Madam President, Georgia is one of many countries that separated from the Soviet Union and started to build its futures from the ashes of the former Soviet Union. However, for many years building a democratic state was overshadowed by the ingrained traditions of the former communist regime, and lack of democratic dialogue between the administration and opposition groups frequently blew up into civil unrest.

A further impediment to stability is the dispute about Abkhazia, which separated from Georgia following the example of Kosovo in Europe, and which sees its future under Russian protection. Democracy in Georgia really does deserve our support. However, I have my doubts as to whether our influence in the region will be effective and powerful enough.

**Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE).** - Madam President, I would also like to commend and thank Mr Lisek for his report. It is a very good report, reflecting good cooperation with the various Groups. For our part, the Greens supported the report in the Committee on Foreign Affairs and we will support it again tomorrow.

I would like to highlight one issue that I find important. While I am, and have been, critical and have claimed that Russia is responsible for occupying territories which are an integral territorial part of Georgia, nevertheless we have to look into exactly what happened in 2008. The Tagliavini International Commission report is one that we have amendments to, and we want to include reference to that in the report.

Georgia also needs to show more cooperation with the International Criminal Court. I have here – and I have sent it to some of my colleagues today – a report by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee which clearly states that the Georgian authorities must pay more attention to what happened in the period before and after the activities and the war of 2008, and that they are at least – and I quote – both ‘partly unable and partly unwilling to conduct an effective investigation into international crimes allegedly committed during and after the August 2008 war’.

Condoleezza Rice is quoted in yesterday’s newspapers in Georgia as saying that Georgian President Saakashvili ‘alienated potential NATO allies in 2008 by letting the Russians provoke him into starting a war over South Ossetia’. I do not know exactly what happened, but it has to be investigated. Georgia also needs to be cooperative when it comes to war crimes and to allegations of human rights violations.

**Máire Geoghegan-Quinn,** *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, I would like to thank you for this opportunity and to welcome the interest and engagement demonstrated by the European Parliament as regards the negotiations on an Association Agreement with Georgia.

We had an intensive and regular exchange with the rapporteurs, which, I believe, has helped in preparing a well-structured and balanced report. The recommendations of this report will be very helpful in our further negotiations with Georgia.

Successful negotiations and conclusion of the agreement will be a major step towards Georgia’s political association and economic integration with the EU and will bring our relations to a new level. We acknowledge the importance Georgia attaches to its European identity. As you know, any reference to Article 49 remains controversial among Member States and is therefore impossible to offer, but what is important for Georgia at this stage

is to seize a maximum of the many opportunities which political association and economic integration will offer to change relations now: in short, to create more of Europe within Georgia.

Using this opportunity, let me briefly inform you about the state of play in the negotiations. Together with our Georgian counterparts, we are working intensely to advance the negotiations. Since the launch of these negotiations in July 2010, talks have been conducted in plenary sessions covering political dialogue and foreign and security policy, justice, freedom and security issues, and economic and sectoral cooperation. Seven plenary sessions have already taken place and the eighth round is due to take place soon.

Good progress was made on the preamble, the objectives and general principles of the agreement. We have been able provisionally to agree on a large part of the text. Provisional agreement was also reached on a number of elements relating to political dialogue and foreign and security policy. It is not surprising that security and stability, as a result of a peaceful resolution of the existing conflicts over South Ossetia and Abkhazia, are the core issues for Georgia. We have achieved substantial progress on justice, freedom and security as well.

The sides also advanced on economic and sectoral cooperation – 19 chapters have been provisionally closed out of 28.

The EU is committed to starting the negotiations with Georgia on a deep and comprehensive free trade area (DCFTA), as an integral part of the future Association Agreement, as soon as possible. This commitment was also made at the Eastern Partnership Summit of 29-30 September in Warsaw. The launch of negotiations is conditional upon Georgia making sufficient progress in the implementation of certain 'key recommendations'. The EU appreciates all the efforts that Georgia has undertaken to address the issues and take the necessary steps to prepare for the negotiations. We are now in the final stages of the process, which should allow the Commission to make its formal recommendation to the EU Member States before the end of the year.

Last week, an important agreement was reached between Georgia and Russia on Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization. The EU welcomes and appreciates Georgia's acceptance of a compromise. It is in everyone's interests – including those of the EU and Georgia – to have Russia inside the rules-based WTO system.

The Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, is visiting Georgia today and meeting President Saakashvili. The main aim of this visit is to reinforce the message of the EU's continuing commitment to Georgia, and to demonstrate that the political and economic ties between the EU and Georgia are being further strengthened.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow (Thursday, 17 November 2011).

#### **Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Jaromír Kohlíček (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (CS) The EU-Georgia Association Agreement is a highly contradictory piece of material. In it the European Union has accepted the thesis that the main consideration is a change in legislation and verbal consent to any of the EU negotiators' requirements. The rest will surely come about one day. The important thing is to criticise Russia, not to grant autonomy to South Ossetia and Abkhazia and to declare

that Georgia is a European state. I consider this to be one of the many unnecessary arguments with which this report abounds. In the document there is no mention at all of the cancelled third autonomous unit (in addition to South Ossetia and Abkhazia). Its destruction apparently escaped the negotiators' attention. This is a pity, as it would be interesting to find out how in this case the exemplary application of democratic principles as required in the text is proceeding in the so-called occupied territories. Each chapter provides a good indication of the breadth of issues that needs to be gradually addressed. This concerns virtually all areas of law, justice and security. Similarly, in the chapter on the economy and sectoral cooperation it is clear that the country is only at the beginning of a complex journey and is finding it difficult to deal with the basic requirements of international standards. The road towards assimilation with the European Union is clearly still a very long and winding one. The rigging of citizenship, about which we are finding out, is certainly not a good omen along this road. Despite this, neither the GUE/NGL (European United Left/Nordic Green Left) group, nor I personally, will reject the Agreement.

**Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D),** *in writing.* – (LT) This report on the negotiations for the EU-Georgia Association Agreement is a very important document for the European Union and the Georgian State. For this country it is a step towards EU membership. We welcome Georgia's European perspective and the progress of negotiations. It is important for the EU to continue to mediate to resolve the 2008 territorial conflict between Russia and Georgia. We call on Georgia to cooperate more closely with the International Criminal Court in investigating war crimes committed in 2008. I agree with the rapporteur that an agreement between Russia and Georgia should be reached as soon as possible on Russia's membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We expect the Georgian authorities to take all the necessary steps to respect all EU standards by strengthening the rule of law, the social market economy and human rights in the country. Together with the rapporteur, I call on the Georgian Government to enter more broadly into a constructive political dialogue with opposition forces and to further develop a democratic environment for freedom of speech, especially the accessibility of public media for all political parties. I also urge the Georgian authorities to give a firmer commitment to employment policies and social cohesion and to continue creating an environment conducive to EU standards of the social market economy.

## **20. Gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (short presentation)**

**President.** – The next item is the report by Mikael Gustafsson, on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, on gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament (2011/2151(INI)) (A7-0351/2011).

**Mikael Gustafsson,** *rapporteur.* – (SV) Madam President, I am very pleased to be presenting this report, which is about strengthening our work to promote gender equality throughout the European Parliament. I have taken over the responsibility for this report from the former rapporteur for the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Eva-Britt Svensson, a member of my own party and a source of inspiration in our ongoing work to promote equality here in the European Parliament.

Ms Svensson was very careful to emphasise that we need to get all actors on board if we are to make progress in terms of increasing equality between women and men. Gender mainstreaming is aimed at doing just that, namely ensuring that all policy areas and our own organisation and governing bodies incorporate an equality-based approach.

In the context of equality, we usually talk about the importance of a dual strategy. By this, we mean on the one hand that there is a need for specific equality policy measures, specially earmarked resources in the budget for equality-related investments and specific bodies such as our committee here in Parliament.

On the other hand, the gender perspective must permeate everything we do, with regard to both how our organisation operates and how we work in the various policy areas. All policy areas – and I mean all – can have a gender perspective. Labour market and social policy are perhaps the most obvious, but areas like transport policy, climate change, cultural policy, education policy and so on also clearly have one, too. We need a gender perspective in all areas if we are to succeed in formulating a policy that creates more equality and that is able to ensure that our common policy and our solutions are based on, and meet, the needs of both women and men.

Often, work begins at home, in one's own house, and for us that means in this House, our Parliament. We cannot be credible in our work and in the demands that we make of others outside Parliament if we are not at the same time prepared to practise what we preach. This means that the most fundamental principles of gender equality must be found in our House.

This report identifies several extremely important measures, for example:

adopting and implementing a policy plan for gender mainstreaming in Parliament;

the systematic use of gender-budgeting, that is to say analysing the budget from a gender perspective in order to see how the various measures affect men and women;

strengthening the gender perspective in all committee work; the situation at present varies considerably, with some committees working extremely well as far as this is concerned and others being undeniably in need of improvement;

increasing the proportion of women in decision-making positions in our governing bodies, in delegations and in leading roles in committees;

ensuring that gender issues permeate the work in Parliament's various delegations and our dialogue with developing countries;

making use of the expertise produced and found in the European Institute for Gender Equality.

Gender mainstreaming is a concept which could result in major change, but which could, unfortunately, also be ineffective if it is not provided with political will and tangible measures. I therefore look forward with great pleasure to Parliament supporting this report. It will send out a clear message that we, as democratically elected representatives, are prepared to take an extra step to strengthen our work for the equality of men and women, equal rights and equal opportunities – within all policy areas and in Parliament's internal ways of working and its governing bodies.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D).** – (RO) Madam President, gender mainstreaming in the European Parliament's structures is a necessary and welcome measure which will ensure representation that is appropriate to the needs, aspirations and experiences of the whole of society. As long as we adopt and promote regulatory acts aimed at ensuring equal opportunities not only throughout the EU, but also in third countries, as MEPs and representatives of Europe's citizens, we must be the first to set an example on promoting

this policy because we cannot ask others to apply an equal opportunities policy without us doing the same throughout Parliament.

I also think that a balance needs to be struck between the proportion of women and men at decision-making level in all Parliament's governing bodies and in the bureaux of political groups, committees and delegations. In addition, we need to prevent discrimination against women who would like to pursue a career within the EU's structures, be a mother at the same time and have a well-balanced family life.

**Ulrike Lunacek (Verts/ALE).** - Madam President, I would also like to thank the rapporteur for having taken over this work from Ms Svensson, who I also miss very dearly at Parliament, because of the very good work she has been doing.

I hope the report will continue in the same manner with you, Mr Gustafsson, and thank you for what you have said.

I very much appreciate what you said about the work having to begin at home. I remember when I came to Parliament, and to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I realised there were only men on the presidency of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. I thought to myself, 'where am I?', because I had been working in foreign affairs in the Austrian Parliament for a long time and I very often was the only women. However, given that gender mainstreaming has been such an important issue at Parliament and at EU level for such a long time, we really have to start here to make sure that delegations are led by women and men in equal numbers. If we go to different parts of the world, be it neighbourhood countries or other continents, what example do we want to set? One where men still rule everything, or one where women are important?

So, I very much appreciate the work of the rapporteur, and I hope and I trust as well in the presidency of Parliament and at all levels, even in our own Groups, that this work will continue and the plan that is being proposed will be put into practice, because we need to set a good example ourselves.

**Jaroslav Paška (EFD).** – (SK) Madam President, I shall be brief. I admit that I am surprised that the issue of gender mainstreaming in the work of the European Parliament has only come onto the agenda now. The European Parliament has championed gender equality for a long time now, with its recommendations being incorporated into all the documents it adopts. It is therefore natural that it should formalise this equality policy on home ground. This is the only way to give the European Parliament credibility in the eyes of those whom its documents require to observe gender equality. When the tabled report has been adopted, the main principles accepted will be consistently implemented. And that, I think, is the main point of this proposal.

**Mikael Gustafsson,** *rapporteur.* – (SV) Madam President, I would like to thank the speakers for the excellent points that they have made. They emphasised what is already contained in the report. I would like to take the opportunity once again to emphasise the fact that I cannot in any way take the credit for the content of this report. I took over the report from Eva-Britt Svensson. However, I am just as determined as Ms Svensson when it comes to ensuring that this will become a reality. I am just as determined in my work to ensure that the European Parliament genuinely acquires a gender perspective.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow (Thursday, 17 November 2011).

**Written statements (Rule 149)**

**Jim Higgins (PPE)**, *in writing*. – Gender mainstreaming is a very important issue and in order for Parliament to be taken seriously in this regard we need to ensure that we practise what we preach. The Parliament must truly reflect the needs, aspirations and experiences of all society. Gender mainstreaming is firmly established in Article 8 of the Treaty of Lisbon and I welcome this report as a first step towards the mainstreaming of the institutions.

**21. Agenda of the next sitting : see Minutes**

**22. Closure of the sitting**

*(The sitting closed at 22.25)*