

PEŁNE SPRAWOZDANIE Z OBRAD 17 STYCZNIA 2018 R.

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Spis treści	Strona
1. Otwarcie posiedzenia	3
2. Negocjacje przed pierwszym czytaniem w Parlamencie (zatwierdzenie) (art. 69c Regulaminu): patrz protokół	3
3. Debata nad przypadkami łamania praw człowieka, zasad demokracji i państwa prawa (ogłoszenie o złożonych projektach rezolucji): patrz protokół	3
4. Składanie dokumentów: patrz protokół	3
5. Środki wykonawcze (art. 106 Regulaminu): patrz protokół	3
6. Akty delegowane (art. 105 ust. 6 Regulaminu): patrz protokół	3
7. Przedstawienie programu działań bułgarskiej prezydencji Rady (debata)	3
8. Debata z udziałem premiera Irlandii Leo Varadkara na temat przyszłości Europy (debata)	19
9. Powitanie	43
10. Głosowanie	43
10.1. Kontrola wywozu, transferu, pośrednictwa, pomocy technicznej i tranzytu w odniesieniu do produktów podwójnego zastosowania (A8-0390/2017 - Klaus Buchner) (głosowanie)	43
10.2. Powołanie członka Trybunału Obrachunkowego – Eva Lindström (A8-0003/2018 - Indrek Tarand) (głosowanie)	44

Spis treści	Strona
10.3. Powołanie członka Trybunału Obrachunkowego – Tony James Murphy (A8-0002/2018 - Indrek Tarand) (głosowanie)	44
10.4. Promowanie stosowania energii ze źródeł odnawialnych (A8-0392/2017 - José Blanco López) (głosowanie)	44
10.5. Efektywność energetyczna (A8-0391/2017 - Miroslav Poche) (głosowanie)	44
10.6. Zarządzanie unią energetyczną (A8-0402/2017 - Michèle Rivasi, Claude Turmes) (głosowanie)	45
11. Wyjaśnienia dotyczące sposobu głosowania	45
11.1. Promowanie stosowania energii ze źródeł odnawialnych (A8-0392/2017 - José Blanco López)	45
11.2. Efektywność energetyczna (A8-0391/2017 - Miroslav Poche)	47
11.3. Zarządzanie unią energetyczną (A8-0402/2017 - Michèle Rivasi, Claude Turmes)	48
12. Korekty do głosowania i zamiar głosowania: patrz protokół	49
13. Wznowienie posiedzenia	49
14. Przyjęcie protokołu poprzedniego posiedzenia: patrz protokół	49
15. Akty delegowane i środki wykonawcze (art. 105 ust. 6 oraz art. 106 ust. 4 lit. d) Regulaminu): patrz protokół	49
16. Rosja – wpływ propagandy na państwa członkowskie UE (debata na aktualny temat)	49
17. Wdrażanie Inicjatywy na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych w państwach członkowskich (debata)	69
18. Decyzja w sprawie strategii dotyczącej tworzyw sztucznych (debata)	93
19. Jurysdykcja, uznawanie i wykonywanie orzeczeń w sprawach małżeńskich i w sprawach dotyczących odpowiedzialności rodzicielskiej oraz w sprawie uprowadzenia dziecka za granicę (debata)	106
20. Traktat z Marrakeszu: ułatwienie dostępu do opublikowanych utworów osobom niewidomym, osobom niedowidzącym i osobom z innymi niepełnosprawnościami uniemożliwiającymi zapoznanie się z drukiem (debata)	115
21. Walka z handlem kobietami i dziewczętami w celu wykorzystywania seksualnego i wyzysku w pracy w UE (debata)	122
22. Europejski Rok Dziedzictwa Kulturowego – 2018 (debata)	134
23. Porządek obrad następnego posiedzenia: patrz protokół	142
24. Zamknięcie posiedzenia	142

PEŁNE SPRAWOZDANIE Z OBRAD 17 STYCZNIA 2018 R.**PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. ANTONIO TAJANI***Presidente***1. Otwarcie posiedzenia***(La seduta è aperta alle 9.06)***2. Negocjacje przed pierwszym czytaniem w Parlamencie (zatwierdzenie) (art. 69c Regulaminu): patrz protokół****3. Debata nad przypadkami łamania praw człowieka, zasad demokracji i państwa prawa (ogłoszenie o złożonych projektach rezolucji): patrz protokół****4. Składanie dokumentów: patrz protokół****5. Środki wykonawcze (art. 106 Regulaminu): patrz protokół****6. Akty delegowane (art. 105 ust. 6 Regulaminu): patrz protokół****7. Przedstawienie programu działań bułgarskiej prezydencji Rady (debata)**

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sulle dichiarazioni del Consiglio e della Commissione sulla presentazione del programma di attività della Presidenza bulgara del Consiglio (2017/2910(RSP)).

Colgo l'occasione per dare il benvenuto al Parlamento europeo al Primo ministro bulgaro, Boyko Borissov, e per ringraziarlo. Sicuramente non mancherà la collaborazione con la Presidenza bulgara da parte di questo Parlamento. Naturalmente siamo tutti quanti interessati ad ascoltare le sue parole.

Бойко Борисов, действащ председател на Съвета. – Уважаеми г-н Председател на Европейския парламент Таяни, уважаеми г-н Председател на Европейската комисия Юнкер, уважаеми дами и господа председатели на парламентарни групи, уважаеми европейски депутати,

Голяма чест за нас е да сме тук сред Вас, хората, които коват европейските закони, в най-висшия орган на Европейския съюз, с който през следващите шест месеца се надявам да работим максимално добре. Убеден съм също така, че този Европейски парламент има до следващите избори и малко, но и достатъчно време да свърши много работа по основните закони, които трябва да се приемат.

Убеден съм и искам да Ви уверя в това, че когато Ви е необходима нашата експертиза и по Западните Балкани, и по кохезионната политика, и по миграционния въпрос, сме на Ваше разположение да споделим и нашия опит, разбира се и да поемем и ангажимент, който Вие бихте ни вменили.

Четири са приоритетите на нашето председателство:

бъдещето на Европа и младите хора, като основен приоритет;

европейската перспектива и свързаност на Западните Балкани;

сигурна и стабилна Европа;

дигиталната икономика и уменията, нужни за бъдещето, което има и пряко и важно значение за целия вътрешен пазар.

Предполагам, че след Вашите изказвания и по-късно след въпросите, ще има доста, по което да говорим, но все пак бих искал да споделя с Вас защо и в кои сфери считам, че е важно по време на нашето председателство да има напредък, да има дебат и да търсим най-сериозните и верни решения.

Ние 30 минути сега с председателя Таяни, а и многократно с председателя на Европейската комисия, Жан Клод Юнкер, сме водили дебат относно дъблинските споразумения, относно справянето с миграционния поток. Смяя да твърдя, че България успя в рамките на година да направи така, че миграционният натиск да е нула. Това се постигна с много работа, а и мисля, че на българо-турската граница показахме как заедно с европейската солидарност и помощ – благодаря на Съвета от Братислава, който отпусна 160 милиона евро за технически средства – с усилията на държавата и със споразумението, което имаме с Турция, може да се работи за ограничаване до минимум на миграционния поток. А все пак Вие знаете, че ние имаме огромна морска граница по Черно море с Турция и голяма сухопътна граница. Затова по темата Турция считам, че споразумението трябва да се подпише, трябва да продължи да работи и че трябва да се опитаме – въпреки категоричната позиция, която имаме и която трябва да отстояваме по отношение на правата на медиите в Турция, по отношение на върховенството на закона – прагматично да се опитаме да решим въпроса споразумението за миграцията да продължи да работи, защото там има милиони мигранти, за които се грижи в момента турската страна.

Разбира се, една от основните теми, един от основните спорове между държавите членки е как след това попадналите в Европа мигранти да бъдат релокирани и как да се грижим за тях. Ние ще се опитаме с много такт, с много дипломатичност да решим този въпрос, защото от една страна в няколко държави от Европейския съюз има огромно струпуване на мигранти – те полагат много усилия, харчат огромни ресурси. Други държави пък не искат да участват в този процес, а има и трета група държави, като България, Гърция и Италия, които са на самия вход на мигрантската вълна и мисля, че и за тях трябва да намерим решение за подпомагане за общото пазене на европейската граница.

Решението според мен – нещо, което от години винаги настоявам да се спазва – е така да си охраняваме външните граници, че влизането в Европа да става само през контролно-пропускателните пунктове и там да се прави надлежната проверка. А за тези, които бягат от войни, които бягат от куршумите и от ракетите, за които Европа винаги е била най-хуманна, да се погрижим, но да се знае, че това ще е до края на военните конфликти. Или да се направят центрове, сигурни центрове, които ние да подпомагаме и обезпечаваме финансово близо до военните конфликти, за да могат след това хората да се върнат и да участват във възстановяването на своите страни, защото може би всички сте виждали по новините, степента на разрушение там, където има такава война. А тези, които са икономически мигранти, да бъдат допускани до там, където има нужда от тях. Това са предложенията, които имам за решение, разбира се Вие ще кажете как да стане.

Що се касае до Западните Балкани, има няколко варианта, затова ние предложихме един, който според мен не носи рискове за Европейския съюз. Сигурни сме, знаем, а и Жан-Клод Юнкер само преди няколко дни бе в София – благодаря на председателя Таяни, на Жан-Клод Юнкер и на председателя Туск, че дойдоха в София за откриването на българското председателство – че в мандата на тази Комисия няма да има нови държави членки от Балканите, приети в Европейския съюз. В същото време ние много ясно трябва да им кажем и много честно какви надежди могат да хранят, как във времето биха се разположили вижданията ни за интегрирането им в Европа.

Смея да твърдя, познавайки региона, че това е точният момент, в който трябва да го направим. Вие виждате как вчера един изстрел в Косово буквално взриви целите Балкани, преговорния процес между Косово и Сърбия и веднага настроената станаха други.

В момента народите от Балканите истински очакват и вярват, че бидейки географски и исторически в Европа, накрая ще имат план за присъединяването към Европейския съюз. Някои са по-напред, някои са по-назад. Мисля, че България и бивша югославска република Македония дадоха един изключителен пример, че има държави на Балканите, които с такт и добронамереност могат да решават проблеми и да не идват при Вас с проблемите си. Договорът за добросъседство между България и Македония, който от десетилетия се влачеше или се работеше по него, но така или иначе не се приемаше, само преди няколко дена го подписахме. Завчера съответно македонският парламент го прие, ратифицира, сега, надявам се, следващата седмица и българският, но премиерът Заев беше, както той каза, доста храбър, както и ние. Истински се надяваме сега между Скопие и Атина също да завърши процесът относно името, защото това ще даде голяма перспектива на Скопие. Казвам го не случайно, за да дразня колегите от Гърция, но да се даде перспектива за НАТО и Европейския съюз, защото това е едно място на Балканите, което е като крайгълен камък, този който държи строежите – и ако се размърда, започват да мърдат целите Балкани.

Какво би станало, ако не вземем това решение, не работим по изграждането на инфраструктурата? Аз само напомням, че коридор № 4, коридор № 8 и коридор № 10 са европейски коридори и ние имаме редкия шанс без никакъв риск да си подготвим Западните Балкани и за инвестиции, и за туризъм. Да не позволим те да се обезлюдят, да не позволим младите и квалифицирани хора да напуснат в посока Америка или Европа и там да остане предимно възрастно население, да няма после кой да работи за изплащането на пенсии, които подсиуряват нормален живот. България мина през този път. И тогава се явяват вече съвсем други политически партии и не знам дали процесът ще може да продължи.

Ако ние не го направим – интересът, който има и Русия, и Турция, и Китай, и Саудитска Арабия към Балканите е голям – някой друг ще го направи. Затова сме готови да работим с всеки поотделно, познавам региона, с всичките лидери сме провели многократни срещи и в София, и в Белград, и сега е моментът да им дадем перспектива. Истински се надявам на подкрепата на г-н Таяни, на г-н Юнкер и на всички Вас, защото стабилността на Балканите пряко отговаря за стабилността на Европа. След това ще се чудим откъде са дошли ислямски бойци или откъде се е появил радикален ислям, защото там има много плодородна почва, поради големия процент мюсюлманско население, което живее на Балканите.

Изходът е европейска перспектива. Те го очакват, те го желаят. Така ще може да имаме и необходимото влияние и сигурност в този регион.

Разбира се, по темата Турция казах. Темата Русия, с всичките забележки, които имаме, има държави членки, които държат да паднат санкциите, други са точно обратното – изключително остри, искат още повече да се задълбочат. В края на краищата ние ще се опитаме да търсим с другия ни голям съсед, какъвто е Русия, нормализиране на отношенията, но разбира се това далече надскача нашия праг на възможности. Това ще бъде общоевропейско решение.

Във връзка с всичко това, тъй като вече се работи с комисар Йотингер, с Жан-Клод Юнкер, с председателя Таяни сега разговаряхме дълго, е общият европейски бюджет. Не го слагам като последващ приоритет. Изключително много вярвам и разчитам на Европейския парламент, защото бюджетът на една държава или бюджетът на Европа всъщност прави политиката, дава предизвикателствата и чрез бюджета и финансирането на отделните програми, ще можем да защитим съответно даден приоритет. Важна ли е общата селскостопанска политика? Важна е. Кохезионната политика важна ли е? Изключително важна е. Ако ние, наскоро приетите страни от Централна и Източна Европа, Балканите имаме просперитет – ето тук правя една скоба: България има 4% ръст на икономиката, 6% безработица, нулев бюджетен дефицит, огромен фискален резерв, фиксиран, тъй като имаме валутен борд, курс на лева към еврото, полагаме усилия и мисля, че сме готови за „чакалния“ на еврозоната – за това до голяма степен допринесоха тези политики.

Те допринесоха за това, което успяхме да изградим в областта на инфраструктурата, на конкурентоспособността, образователната инфраструктура, екологията, транспорта, и тук е мястото да благодарим на всички държави донори, които толкова много помогнаха и за България, но мисля и за целия регион. Аз имам впечатления от бившите социалистически страни преди 1989 г., за това как изглеждаха тогава. Сега, когато отидеш в Будапеща, Прага, Братислава или Варшава, разликата е огромна. И мисля, че тук трябва да намерим баланса на взаимното уважение към държавите донори, които дадоха милиарди евро за нашето присъединяване, за това да достигнем и бъдем конкурентоспособни на техните икономики и за всичко останало, и това, което ние не само като пазар, но и като култура, като геостратегическо местоположение имаме, така че мисля, че няма по-добро от това да вървим всички заедно и няма и по-добро място за живеене. Не случайно всички искат да дойдат в Европа, в Европейския съюз. Така че кохезионната политика трябва да продължи.

Бих минал само с две думи и през общата европейска отбрана. При страхотните геополитически предизвикателства, пред които сме изправени в момента, според мен малко се вглеждаме в заплахите. Обикновено реагираме много след като вече са станали. Оставяме цели процеси да се развиват, а ние да бъдем един вид техни зрители. Оставяме президентите на големите държави – Русия, САЩ, Китай, Турция, Иран, да взимат решения по проблеми, с които всъщност ние след това се сблъскваме със страшна сила в Европа. От тези войни идват миграционните потоци. Когато бяха банковите кризи, след това Европа плати голямата цена и ние денонощно – помня, че имаше съвети до 5-6 ч. сутринта – решавахме финансовата криза в Европа. Чест прави на всички, които тогава управляваха Съвета, Комисията и Парламента – извинявам се, ако понякога объркам местата. Това не е от неуважение, просто от желание да използвам времето и да говоря по-бързо. Но успяхме, макар и бавно, да се справим и с финансовата криза. Европа вече има растеж и съм убеден, че няма по-добри от нас, това е сигурно, от единна и силна Европа.

Енергийният съюз, социалният стълб, това, което Жан-Клод Юнкер е предложил вчера... Имам три варианта да изчета, дълги и подредени, но искам от една страна да спестя Вашето време, и в същото време да усетите действително, кое е много важно за нас и кое считаме за приоритет и да може с въпросите след това към нас да уточним, ако има нещо неразбрано.

Да не пропусна Юри и естонското председателство. Мисля, че Естония се справи прекрасно, положила много усилия, бяха много модерни. Ще бъде радост за нас, ако можем да се доближим до доброто представяне на Естония.

И смея да кажа, че с канцлера на Австрия Себастиан Курц, който е следващият председател през 2018 г., вече имаме може би 4-5 телефонни разговора. Той много скоро ще дойде в София и искаме така да работим по българското и австрийското председателство, че 2018 г. всички приоритети, които имаме, и ние и те, да не се прекъсват, а да продължим с Вашата помощ по всички портфолия, за които говорих.

И накрая – за изключително важната роля на Европейския парламент. Знам, че има много парламентарни групи, много различни мнения. Силата ни е в това многообразие, което имаме в Европа. Но в края на краищата най-важното и най-ценното, това, което ние в България сме изписали на нашия парламент, е, че „Съединението прави силата“ Затова предложихме и считаме, че и за Европа това би бил най-подходящият девиз – „Съединението прави силата“.

Presidente. – Grazie soprattutto per aver ribadito, nel corso del suo intervento, la centralità del Parlamento europeo nell'azione a favore dei cittadini, a favore del miglioramento della nostra Unione. Questo è un passo importante e un riconoscimento importante, che ci permetterà di lavorare bene insieme.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the Commission. – Mr President, let me start by saying that one of the most pleasing aspects of the Bulgarian Presidency is that I will get to see my good friend Boyko more often than usual.

As I said to him when he hosted the Commission in Sofia last week, this is a special moment – for Bulgaria, of course, because it is the first Bulgarian Presidency of the Council – but also for me personally. It was under the Luxembourgish Presidency – with myself in the chair of the European Council – that the decisions necessary to launch the overall enlargement process was taken in Luxembourg in December 1997. As President of the European Council once again, I had the honour of signing Bulgaria's accession treaty to the European Union in Luxembourg in April 2005.

I remember the year 2005 for so many reasons, in particular because we signed the accession treaty in April. I remember that day like it was yesterday. I remember the emotion that I felt at seeing Europe's history and geography reconciled. I remember what it meant to a proud European nation to join its friends and allies in our Union. The clocks you had installed everywhere throughout Sofia counting down the days until Bulgaria's EU accession is a picture I always have in my mind. I felt a kind of 'Vorfroide', as the Germans say – 'pre-happiness', to some extent. The hope and joy we all felt on that day must never fade away. I even remember some of the words I used: that day I said (I sometimes say things like that) that 'history without truth is like a day without light', and the truth is that Bulgaria had to come a long way to join our Union. It had to make changes, in a handful of years, that other countries made in decades. It had to be patient; it had to be determined; it had to be courageous, and it was. Today it is with great pride, but also with great expectation, that I look forward to the next six Bulgarian months.

Monsieur le Président, Mesdames, Messieurs, je me félicite que la présidence bulgare se soit particulièrement bien préparée pour ces six mois, car ces six mois bulgares seront cruciaux pour l'Union et pour son avenir.

J'ai pu constater la bonne préparation de la présidence, la semaine passée, lorsque la Commission s'est rendue à Sofia. Pour les Bulgares, pour nous tous, il s'agirait d'abord de finaliser les travaux sur les grands enjeux pour lesquels une action européenne efficace peut véritablement faire la différence. Je pense notamment à la migration, à l'économie numérique et à la sécurité.

Le Premier ministre a fait de la recherche du consensus l'une de ses grandes priorités. C'est toujours, en Europe, un choix judicieux, qui s'impose aujourd'hui plus que jamais.

Depuis novembre 2014, depuis le début du mandat de la Commission, celle-ci a présenté 89 dossiers prioritaires aux colégislateurs, dont 29 ont été adoptés à ce jour. D'ici au mois de mai, toutes nos propositions auront été mises sur la table des colégislateurs afin de permettre au Parlement et au Conseil de terminer le travail législatif avant les prochaines élections européennes.

La grande priorité, voire l'urgence des prochains mois, sera donc de traduire ces propositions en actes législatifs et de mettre cette législation en œuvre, car plus le Parlement et le Conseil parviendront à conclure rapidement le processus législatif, plus nos concitoyens ressentiront rapidement les effets positifs de nos politiques dans leur vie quotidienne.

Le temps presse et j'aimerais vraiment que ce travail aboutisse avant le prochain rendez-vous des Européens avec le suffrage universel. Et puisque le 'B' de Bulgarie veut aussi dire 'budechte', ce qui signifie le futur, il s'agira également de préparer l'avenir en définissant nos ambitions européennes pour les prochaines années, ainsi que le budget qui sera nécessaire pour les réaliser.

Il faudra évidemment faire des choix, décider quels sont les domaines où nous devons dépenser plus et ceux où nous pourrions dépenser moins ou différemment. C'est la raison pour laquelle je plaide pour un débat vertueux qui doit d'abord porter sur le fond des choses, sur les priorités, sur le contenu et puis sur les financements indispensables, et pas l'inverse. Ne commençons pas le débat budgétaire en fixant des plafonds, commençons le débat budgétaire en nous mettant d'accord sur les priorités et sur les contenus.

(Applaudissements)

Herr Präsident, meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren! Bulgarien hat mehrfach unter Beweis gestellt, dass es zu europäischen Kompromissen beitragen und Brücken bauen kann – sowohl im Kreise der jetzigen Mitgliedstaaten als auch hin zu unseren Nachbarn im Westbalkan. Dazu ist Bulgarien geradezu prädestiniert, da es die Region, die Kultur, die Menschen, ihre Eigenarten, ihre Sprachen kennt und selbst erfolgreich durch den schwierigen EU-Erweiterungsprozess gegangen ist. Wann immer ich nach der EU-Erweiterung gefragt werde, verweise ich daher auf Bulgarien, das Großes geleistet hat, unter anderem in Sachen wirtschaftliche Entwicklung.

Die bulgarische Wirtschaft ist im vergangenen Jahr um 3,9 % gewachsen, die Beschäftigung entwickelt sich positiv, Bulgarien hat seinen öffentlichen Schuldenstand und seinen Haushalt hervorragend im Griff, besser als viele Mitgliedstaaten der Eurozone. Das sind beste Voraussetzungen dafür, dass Bulgarien dem Europäischen Wechselkursmechanismus 2 – dem sogenannten ERM II – und in einigen Jahren auch dem Euro beitreten kann.

Nominale Konvergenz ist wichtig, aber reale Konvergenz ist es auch. Hier bleibt noch einiges zu tun, auch was den Kampf gegen Korruption angeht, und ich weiß, dass die bulgarische Regierung sehr intensiv in diese Richtung arbeitet.

Bulgarien ist eine regelrechte Erfolgsgeschichte, die auch unsere Nachbarn im Westbalkan inspirieren kann und inspirieren wird. Deshalb war es richtig, dass der bulgarische Premierminister den Westbalkan und unsere Beziehungen zum Westbalkan zu einem Schwerpunkt seiner Präsidentschaft gemacht hat. Am 17. Mai findet ein Westbalkan-Gipfel in Sofia statt. Das ist die richtige Adresse, um über den Westbalkan und unsere Beziehungen zu den Staaten des Westbalkans zu reden. In Sofia werde ich auch meine Reise durch die Balkanländer beenden, die ich Ende Februar/Anfang März vornehmen werde, denn ich möchte mich vor Ort erkundigen, wie die Erwartungshaltung der verschiedensten Länder ist. Und ich möchte diesen Balkanstaaten auch sagen, was unsere Erwartungen an die Westbalkanländer sind.

Ein Beitritt kommt nicht einfach so – er fällt nicht vom Himmel, er muss erarbeitet werden. Und ich würde hier gerne sagen – freundlich, möglichst freundlich –, dass alle Grenzkonflikte, die es zwischen den Westbalkanländern gibt, vor dem Beitritt geklärt sein müssen. Nicht dass wir, wie jetzt in Sachen Kroatien/Slowenien, erleben, dass erst nach dem Beitritt – Jahre nach dem Beitritt – über die anstehenden Probleme geredet wird. Die Probleme – die Grenzprobleme – müssen geklärt sein, bevor es weitere Beitritte geben wird.

(Beifall)

Die Länder des Westbalkans verdienen es, dass man ihnen eine reale europäische Perspektive gibt. Diese Beitritte werden nicht während der Amtszeit dieses Parlaments und dieser Kommission erfolgen können, weil nicht alle Bedingungen bis dahin erfüllt sein werden. Aber das Ziel muss klar benannt werden: Das Ziel ist der Beitritt der Westbalkanländer, und diese Beitritte können erfolgen, wenn die notwendigen Reformen in diesen Ländern vorgenommen sein werden. Dann wird der Beitritt Stück für Stück näher rücken.

Wir haben gemeinsame Projekte mit den Staaten in dieser Region – Sicherheitsfragen, Migration, Transport, Digitales, Energie und anderes. Die Rechtsstaatlichkeit gehört zu diesen Projekten, weil die Rechtsstaatlichkeit das Fundament ist, auf dem unsere Union, die eine Rechtsgemeinschaft ist, beruht. Sie ist ein so grundlegender Wert, dass nur Staaten, die diese einhalten, beitreten können. Wenn dies vor dem Beitritt gilt, gilt es selbstverständlich, wenn man Mitglied geworden ist, auch nach dem Beitritt.

(Beifall)

Wir befinden uns in einem – ja – konstruktiven Dialog mit der polnischen Regierung. Ich habe den neuen polnischen Premierminister in Brüssel empfangen, und beide haben wir uns Mühe gegeben, unsere Standpunkte sich annähern zu lassen. Wir befinden uns nicht im Krieg mit Polen, wir haben eine Auseinandersetzung mit der polnischen Regierung. Der Rückgriff auf Artikel 7 Absatz 1 des Vertrags ist keine Sanktion. Er ist ein Feststellungs- und Warnungsartikel. Deshalb sollte man aufhören – auch in Polen damit aufhören –, so zu tun, als ob wir wild entschlossen wären, Polen – was auch immer geschehen mag – zu sanktionieren. Das ist nicht der Inhalt des Artikels 7 Absatz 1.

(Beifall)

Ich appelliere an den bulgarischen Premierminister, an Boyko Borissov und seine Regierung, sich konstruktiv und kompromissvorbereitend an diesem Unternehmen in Sachen Rechtsstaatlichkeit in Polen zu beteiligen. Es gehört zu den Aufgaben eines Vorsitzes, Kompromisse zu suchen. Aber es gehört auch zu den Aufgaben des Vorsitzes, beschlossene Entscheidungen des Ministerrats umzusetzen, jedenfalls zu helfen, damit diese umgesetzt werden können.

Ich möchte diese Rede nicht missbrauchen, um nun noch einmal einen langen Brexit-Exkurs zu machen. Aber ich konnte gestern nicht alle Fragen, die gestellt wurden, beantworten, vornehmlich die nicht, die unser Kollege Henkel gestellt hat. Ich bin der Auffassung, dass es in Sachen Brexit keine Gewinner geben wird. Dies ist eine *Lose-lose*-Situation, sowohl für die Briten als auch für die Mitglieder der Europäischen Union und für die Institutionen. Ich empfinde nach wie vor den Austritt Großbritanniens als eine Katastrophe, ja als eine Niederlage, die wir uns alle anheften müssen. Aber die Ursachen für die britische Entscheidung liegen ja tiefer. Wie Frau May selbst gesagt hat, haben die Briten sich nie wohl gefühlt in der Europäischen Union, und man hat ihnen auch 40 Jahre lang nicht Gelegenheit gegeben, sich wohler fühlen zu können. Und deshalb trifft die Schuld viele. Wir – Herr Tusk und ich selbst – haben gestern noch einmal die Hand ausgestreckt und der britischen Regierung bedeutet, dass, falls das britische Volk, das britische Parlament, die britische Regierung sich einen anderen Weg als den des Brexits wünschen würden, wir dann bereit sind, darüber zu reden. Wir werfen die Briten nicht raus. Wir hätten gerne, dass die Briten bleiben. Und wenn sie das wollen, dann sollten sie das tun.

(Beifall)

Aber ich habe gemerkt, dass man in London fast pikiert auf diesen Vorschlag reagiert hat. Sei's drum. Aber auch, wenn die Briten einmal ausgetreten sind nach Artikel 50, gibt es auch einen Artikel 49, der den Wiederbeitritt erlaubt. Das hätte ich gerne, und ich hätte gerne, dass wir jetzt vernünftig miteinander umgehen und nicht versuchen, den jeweils anderen ins Abseits zu stellen.

(Beifall)

Herr Henkel hat gefragt, ob ich mir wirklich wünsche, in die Geschichte einzugehen als derjenige, der den Brexit zu verantworten hat. Das verlangt eine doppelte Antwort. Erst mal bin ich froh, dass Herr Henkel – und wir begleiten uns seit vielen Jahren – davon ausgeht, dass ich in die Geschichte eingehe; das wusste ich bislang nicht. Und in Sachen Brexit habe ich gesagt, was zu sagen war.

Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass die bulgarische Präsidentschaft ihre Sache gut machen wird. Premierminister Borissov ist ein ausgewiesener europäischer Demokrat mit einem festen Willen und mit Überzeugungen und Überzeugungskraft.

(Beifall)

Aus Erfahrung wissen wir, dass es nicht auf die Größe des Landes ankommt, sondern auf die Willensstärke, die eine Regierung beseelt. In Sachen Borissov und in Sachen Bulgarien ist alles stimmig, damit dieser Vorsitz zu einem Erfolg werden kann.

Blagodarya! For those who are less fluent in Bulgarian, that means 'thank you'.

(Anhaltender Beifall)

Presidente. – Ora diamo inizio alla discussione. Normalmente sono flessibile sui tempi, ma vi prego di rispettarli oggi perché la giornata è molto impegnativa. Dopo questo importantissimo dibattito ne avremo un altro molto importante con il Primo ministro irlandese, poi ci saranno le votazioni, poi ci saranno le colazioni di lavoro, quindi non potremo, né io né i Vicepresidenti che mi sostituiranno, essere flessibili per quanto riguarda i tempi. Chiedo anche ai presidenti dei gruppi, ai quali concedo spesso e volentieri qualche secondo in più, di essere oggi un po' più rigorosi.

Manfred Weber, im Namen der PPE-Fraktion. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissionspräsident, Herr Ratspräsident, Herr Premierminister! Willkommen im Europäischen Parlament und willkommen zu einer historischen Stunde: der Übernahme der Ratspräsidentschaft durch Bulgarien. Wenn man das in Bezug setzt mit den letzten 30 Jahren – der Kampf gegen den Kommunismus, der Kampf für die Freiheit und heute die Möglichkeit, dass Bulgarien Europa führt: eine wunderbare Entwicklung, die eingetreten ist.

Die bulgarischen Bürger können darauf stolz sein, weil sie immer proeuropäisch gehandelt haben. Bulgarien als Land kann stolz sein und, Herr Premierminister, ich glaube, Sie dürfen auch stolz sein, weil auch Sie bewiesen haben, dass Sie Bulgarien in diesen Jahren, Jahrzehnten hervorragend führen und viel Vertrauen von Ihren Bürgern bekommen haben.

The first question now we have the Bulgarian Presidency is what can we learn from Bulgaria? I think that is a good starting point, and one of the lessons we can learn is to look to the economy in Bulgaria. The growth rate is double that of neighbouring Serbia, and that shows that being part of Europe means strong economic success.

When you look at Bulgaria, then you can learn that you can count on its values, it has a modernised state that is going forward with European values in the fight against corruption. That is what Bulgaria has been doing in recent years, very successfully. And, finally, we can learn that Bulgaria wants to be a full part of the European Union. It has a clear idea about the next steps ahead: to be part of Schengen and to be part of the euro area. The clear commitments from the Bulgarian Government gives us a clear indication that we should believe in our project.

That is what we can learn from Bulgaria, and now let's have a look at the tasks which are ahead of us. First, I want to underline what Jean-Claude Juncker also said, that the most important thing will certainly be the debate about finances in the European Union. The debate about the multiannual framework of our budget will start in the first half of 2018, and we as the EPP ask for an ambitious approach. We support Jean-Claude Juncker's view that first of all we have to define what the priorities for Europe are, and then we have to talk about the necessary funding.

The second task is migration. A kind of final debate in the European Council about the migration challenge for the European Union is planned in June. Prime Minister Borissov underlined his country's success story in protecting the border. That is one big thing. The second big point in migration management is to practise solidarity inside the European Union. Hopefully we can manage in the next weeks and months to bring these two things together.

On the management of the border, let me finally underline that we are asking for more European engagement, for there not only to be Bulgarian officials standing on the border, but that Frontex should also be more present in the border region. We ask for more Frontex staff.

Finally, dear friends, the Western Balkans is the third task ahead; a really important task. The Western Balkans is part of Europe and has a chance to become a member of the European Union. When we and the Commission look at the Commission proposal on the enlargement process, we are in favour of this perspective for the Western Balkans and we as the EPP want to focus mainly on concrete projects. People must see that it is a benefit, a positive development to be part of the European Union. So let's focus on infrastructure, on railways, on motorways. That is what people expect from us.

There is a lot to do. We wish the Bulgarian Presidency all the best, and the EPP will support our friend Boyko Borissov.

Elena Valenciano, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señor presidente, en primer lugar, y en nombre de mi grupo, quisiera expresar nuestro profundo respeto por Bulgaria y por los ciudadanos búlgaros, que han demostrado su compromiso con los valores europeos y con la integración europea. Llegan ustedes en un momento de batalla ideológica dura. Una batalla ideológica entre el europeísmo abierto y solidario y los peores fantasmas del nacionalismo populista excluyente.

Verán, señorías, escuchar hoy hablar de la defensa de la raza blanca por parte de un líder europeo produce verdaderos escalofríos. Así que tienen ustedes por delante mucha tarea si quieren impulsar la Unión Europea justamente en el camino de la apertura, la solidaridad y el futuro. Han presentado ustedes un programa muy bien armado, y yo quisiera que destacaran, que dejaran su impronta en alguna de esas políticas que ustedes presentan. Si tuviéramos que elegir los socialistas europeos una marca de la presidencia búlgara, nos gustaría que fuera la justicia. La justicia social. El desarrollo del pilar social que tantos europeos y europeas están esperando. La justicia social, que no será posible sin la justicia fiscal. Necesitamos, señores de la Presidencia búlgara, la armonización fiscal en Europa para que sea posible la convergencia, para que sea posible el desarrollo y la lucha contra la desigualdad.

Compartimos su intención de trabajar duramente para desarrollar el mercado único digital.

Y, si hablamos de migración en serio -ayer lo hicimos en esta Cámara, en presencia del Consejo y de la Comisión—, les diré que este Parlamento ha hecho su trabajo. La Comisión, también. Estamos esperando las decisiones del Consejo. El Consejo es el que tiene que tomar ahora las decisiones y sabe usted muy bien, señor Borísov -porque, además, usted es búlgaro y entiende muy bien esta lógica—, que necesitamos un sistema común en Europa de asilo y migración, y que necesitamos reformar el Reglamento de Dublín urgentemente. Contamos con ustedes para eso.

Pero está también el Estado de Derecho, la democracia, la defensa de los valores democráticos —el artículo 7 que ha activado la Comisión con respecto al Gobierno polaco—, la libertad de expresión, la lucha contra la corrupción. Todo eso forma parte de los valores europeos. También es muy esperada su contribución en los Balcanes Occidentales. Europa es una comunidad —esto no es una frase hecha— que tiene que defender los mismos valores en todas partes y los mismos valores para todos los ciudadanos. Mi grupo no aceptará ninguna discriminación. Bulgaria y Rumanía deben formar parte de Schengen. Nada será fácil, pero pueden contar con este grupo si recorren este camino.

Y una última cosa, señor presidente. Quiero pedirles, en nombre de las mujeres de la Unión Europea, pero también de los amigos de las mujeres de la Unión Europea, que la Unión Europea ratifique, de una vez por todas, el Convenio de Estambul, porque la integridad, la libertad y la dignidad de las mujeres merecen todos los esfuerzos de los demócratas europeos.

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. DAVID-MARIA SASSOLI

Vicepresidente

Syed Kamall, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister. *Dobre doshli*. Whilst the Bulgarian Presidency begins the last full year of this parliamentary term, it will be six months which could set the parameters for the future EU-UK relationship.

Mr Juncker, you should not take responsibility for the UK voting to leave. If responsibility lies anywhere, it is with the political class in Britain who, for the last 40 years, have not been honest about the political dimension of the EU, pretending that the EU was only about trade. Whilst Brexit has dominated the agenda of late, the ECR Group believes that the urgent must not crowd out what is important: the need for reform, fiscal responsibility and doing less, but doing it better. The ECR Group hopes that the Brexit negotiations will not just lead to a new EU-UK relationship, but act as a catalyst for a reformed EU. We hope the Bulgarian Presidency will be vocal and resolute in the face of continued Russian aggression in Ukraine. We hope that you will help Western Balkan countries on their journey of reform and, on the migration crisis, that you will ask EU countries what they can do to help – whether giving resources or taking people – rather than telling them what to do. I look forward to working with you and your team and we wish you every success in the six months ahead. *Blagodarya*.

Javier Nart, *en nombre del Grupo ALDE*. – Señor presidente; señor primer ministro, deseamos que afronte con éxito el reto de la implementación efectiva de la reforma —hoy en negociación— de las normas del Sistema Europeo Común de Asilo, para que puedan iniciarse las negociaciones correspondientes lo antes posible. También indicar que no hay inmigración sin integración, y no hay integración sin control de la inmigración. Son dos partes esenciales.

Usted lo ha dicho: Bulgaria conoce directamente la tensión comunal, el enfrentamiento larvado existente en los Balcanes Occidentales. Esta crisis solo tiene un camino: profundizar en los valores europeos de respeto a los derechos humanos, a las libertades democráticas que conforman la Unión Europea. El destino es Europa, y la solución, nuestra casa común. La cumbre Unión Europea-Balcanes del próximo mes de mayo es, por tanto, trascendental para la paz y la estabilidad en la región.

Señor primer ministro, el populismo, el nacionalismo excluyente, la corrupción son los enemigos de Europa. Debe dar atención a esos puntos. Quiero también expresarle la solidaridad del Grupo ALDE a usted y al pueblo búlgaro ante los retrasos inaceptables que impiden a su país integrarse en el espacio Schengen. Han trabajado mucho y bien y la espera debe concluir. El Grupo ALDE, este Parlamento, todos los europeos esperan que su Presidencia sea fructífera. En su empeño, primer ministro, puede contar con nosotros.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης, *εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL*. – Κύριε Juncker, κύριε Borissou, η Βουλγαρία, δέκα χρόνια μετά την ένταξή της, αναλαμβάνει για πρώτη φορά την Προεδρία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Είναι μια στιγμή σημαντική και για αυτό θα ήθελα να καλωσορίσω και προσωπικά τον Βούλγαρο πρωθυπουργό στο Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο: «Ντομπρέ ντοσάλ Μινίσταρ-πρεντσεντάτελ!» (Καλώς ήρθες Πρωθυπουργέ!). Αρκετές από τις προτεραιότητες της Βουλγαρικής Προεδρίας είναι ιδιαίτερης σημασίας και για την πολιτική μου ομάδα της Ευρωπαϊκής Αριστεράς: η ανεργία των νέων, το «brain drain» που πρέπει να το κάνουμε «brain game», η κοινωνική οικονομία και η ενίσχυση του κοινωνικού πυλώνα, η εκπαίδευση, τα θέματα της μετανάστευσης. Θα ήθελα όμως να δώσω ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στην ευρωπαϊκή προοπτική των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων. Χαίρομαι γιατί ο Πρόεδρος Juncker επανέλαβε ότι στόχος είναι η ένταξη των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων, αλλά η Βουλγαρική Προεδρία είναι η ιδανική για να κάνουμε βήματα σε αυτά τα θέματα.

Και για να κάνουμε βήματα, πρέπει και τα κράτη των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων και η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να προοδεύσουν με διάλογο στον σεβασμό του κράτους δικαίου, της ελευθερίας της έκφρασης και της πληροφόρησης, τα δικαιώματα των εθνικών και κοινωνικών μειονοτήτων, την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς, των κοινωνικών ανισοτήτων, της ανεργίας, της φτώχειας. Το τελευταίο διάστημα έχουν αναληφθεί μεγάλες πρωτοβουλίες συνεργασίας μέσα στα Βαλκάνια. Η συμφωνία Τσίπρα – Borissou για κοινές επενδύσεις στις υποδομές, ο διάλογος που ξεκινά σήμερα ανάμεσα στις κυβερνήσεις της Αθήνας και των Σκοπίων για μια λύση στο χρονίζον πρόβλημα του ονόματος – που πιστεύω να οδηγήσει σε μία λύση που θα είναι καλή και για την Ελλάδα και για τη FYROM και για τα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια και για την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση – είναι ο δρόμος που μπορεί να μετατρέψει τα Βαλκάνια από πυριτιδαποθήκη της Ευρώπης σε γέφυρα συνεργασίας ανάμεσα στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, την Ανατολική Μεσόγειο, τη Μέση Ανατολή. Η Βουλγαρική Προεδρία τους επόμενους έξι μήνες είναι μία ιδανική ευκαιρία να κάνουμε θετικά βήματα από τα οποία θα κερδίσουν όλοι.

Ska Keller, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister to our plenary. A presidency is always, of course, a very good time for a country to shine in the European Union, but it is also always a great time to shine a light on the country specifically and to have a look at what is happening there. I think we can see a lot of things happening there right now: looking, for example, at the mobilisation of thousands of people on the streets, protesting for the preservation of a unique centuries-old forest – the Pirin National Park – which you are, of course, familiar with. They are protesting against corruption and a very dodgy decision to permit a skiing resort and also commercial logging in this precious natural heritage site, which is also protected by European Union law. Thereby, it is not just an environmental issue, which of course is important, but it is also an issue of how we respect European Union laws and rules. There, I think, as a presidency, you should really lead by good example, and that is one area where I think you can make a big difference.

(Applause)

Eleven years have passed since the accession, but we have also had 11 anti-corruption reports by the European Commission. Bulgaria is still listed as the country with the most corruption in the European Union. That is a great pity. Also, looking at the anti-corruption measures that have been taken in Bulgaria, many of them can be seen as ineffective and even counterproductive. For example, looking at the most recent anti-corruption law, which will say that whistle-blowers, i.e. people who from inside the administration highlight corruption cases, will face the danger of being persecuted. Citizens may still have to pay bribes for access to public services, and there is still a problem with high influence on public life and media from very obscure circles. The Commission cannot ignore all of those issues. I think the Presidency is a great chance for you to improve not only that image, but also the situation itself, to go deep and really take on the fight against corruption, which will also greatly benefit the citizens of Bulgaria. Let us know how we can also support you in this very important issue.

2018 is a very important year for the European Union, with the elections coming up. Many issues that have been highlighted – the eurozone, finally getting real on climate change, social issues, the rule of law – are very important issues. You have picked a very interesting motto: United we Stand Strong. I think this is very correct and true: we have to be united and we have to be strong in order to address those issues. We also have to be strong as a European Union of values which is fighting for democracy and against racism and xenophobia. I hope all of your ministers could sign that statement. If you are following through on this motto, then we are very much ready to support you all the way through.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, *a nome del gruppo EFDD*. – Signor Presidente, signor Primo ministro, onorevoli colleghi, ho molto apprezzato la scelta delle priorità della Presidenza bulgara.

Negli ultimi anni l'Europa si è ammalata cronicamente di fuga di cervelli e di disoccupazione giovanile. Nonostante la tanto sbandierata ripresa i dati continuano a far paura: la media dei tre fanalini di coda – Grecia, Spagna e Italia – si aggira intorno al 36 %. I giovani, noi giovani, continuiamo a risentire degli effetti della crisi economica e questo mina alla base non solo la crescita e la capacità dell'Europa di innovare ed innovarsi, ma le stesse basi del nostro progetto. È necessario lavorare insieme per trovare soluzioni concrete ed efficaci e implementare al più presto una politica espansiva, anticiclica e keynesiana che dia priorità al lavoro e all'innovazione. Ieri era già tardi.

Quella bulgara è stata poi battezzata anche come «Presidenza balcanica». Anch'io sono convinto sostenitore dell'assoluta necessità di rilanciare il processo di adesione dei Balcani occidentali, la cui stabilità e prosperità sono di fondamentale importanza per tutti noi. Faro ed esempio del processo di integrazione è senz'altro oggi il Montenegro, che è sempre più vicino a raggiungere la nostra grande famiglia europea, e sarà compito nostro assistere tutti i paesi dell'area, applicando il principio del «more for more»: premiare chi si impegna maggiormente nel processo di riforme necessarie senza, tuttavia, abbandonare gli altri.

Infine plaudo alla scelta di continuità con la Presidenza estone uscente, imperniata sulla rivoluzione digitale che, con costi inferiori e con una maggiore efficienza, è un pilastro dell'Europa che sogniamo, un'Europa meno vetusta e burocratica, un'Europa digitale, democratica e all'avanguardia.

Nicolas Bay, au nom du groupe ENF. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Premier Ministre, lors de nos échanges, il y a quelques semaines à Sofia, dans le cadre de la Conférence des Présidents, vous avez indiqué que la question des frontières extérieures et de leur nécessaire contrôle était sans doute le grand défi pour l'Europe aujourd'hui, et vous l'avez d'ailleurs réaffirmé il y a quelques minutes.

Si beaucoup de chefs d'État ou de gouvernement en Europe occidentale ont fait preuve d'un consternant angélisme et d'un laxisme total en organisant littéralement la submersion migratoire de l'Europe, il existe heureusement des chefs de gouvernement en Europe centrale et en Europe de l'Est qui sont déterminés à mener le combat pour l'identité et la sécurité. C'est le cas de vos voisins hongrois, de la Pologne, de la République tchèque et, désormais, de l'Autriche.

Au commencement de ces six mois de présidence bulgare, vous avez donc un rôle essentiel et une responsabilité. Vous pouvez impulser, en effet, une véritable volonté politique, totalement absente aujourd'hui des institutions européennes, pour dissuader l'immigration, anéantir les filières mafieuses et renforcer les protections.

La Bulgarie détient la frontière terrestre la plus importante avec la Turquie et à l'heure actuelle, votre gouvernement, Monsieur Borissov, a fait preuve d'une fermeté qui a été payante car vous avez obtenu de très bons résultats, ce que vous avez rappelé tout à l'heure.

La Bulgarie compte parmi les anciennes nations de notre continent, c'est un véritable pays depuis 681, qui a traversé l'histoire, les épreuves et les guerres; votre peuple est fort, et l'Europe a besoin de cette force et de cette fermeté pour lutter contre l'immigration, le fondamentalisme et préserver nos valeurs de civilisation.

Enfin, nous avons un grand défi à relever: c'est celui de la concurrence économique. Nous devons nous prémunir de la concurrence déloyale, qu'elle vienne de l'extérieur de l'Union européenne ou de l'intérieur de l'Union européenne, et enfin, Monsieur le Premier Ministre, je me réjouis de votre volonté exprimée clairement tout à l'heure de normaliser les relations avec la Russie. Il faut en effet – vous avez raison – en finir avec l'agressivité absurde des institutions européennes à l'égard de cette grande puissance voisine.

Андрей Ковачев (PPE). – Благодаря г-н Председател. Уважаеми г-н Министър-председател, добре дошли! За първи път премиер на България е тук в дома на европейската демокрация. България застава начело на Съвета в нелек за Европейския съюз момент: миграционна криза, Брексит, популизъм, несигурност около нашите външни граници. Убеден съм, че България ще бъде не само добър посредник, но и добър лидер при намирането на решения на настоящите предизвикателства.

Присъединяването на страната ни към ЕС преди 11 години беше най-голямото събитие в най-новата история на България. Ние принадлежим към европейската цивилизация, но комунистическата диктатура ни беше отделила за десетилетия, както нас, така и голяма част от източна Европа от европейското семейство. Пътят, предначертан от нашите възрожденци, които искаха България да бъде равна с другите европейски народи, има много общо с визията за обединена и свободна Европа.

На Балканите историята, особено на 20-и век, отвори дълбоки идеологически рани между народите на нашия регион. Европейската интеграция е най-доброто лекарство за преодоляване на тези исторически и идеологически разделения и заздравяването на отворените рани. Затова приветствам Вашето решение, г-н Премиер, един от основните приоритети на българското председателство да бъде Западните Балкани. Ние трябва да затворим тези рани, и не да се конкурираме кой е по-велик, а да вървим заедно в общия европейски дом. Историята ни учи, че Европа се дестабилизира много лесно чрез Балканите. Само една искра, както казахте, само едно убийство, е възможно да върне нещата с десетилетия назад.

Желяз успех на българското председателство и на българската администрация. Благодаря Ви и Вие имате нашата подкрепа.

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Spoštovani premier, imate izjemno razumevanje za nadaljevanje širitve na Zahodni Balkan. Strinjava se, da je to zelo krhko območje. Včerajšnji umor spoštovanega srbskega politika Oliverja Ivanovića je stresel regijo. Izrekam sožalje njegovim svojcem in pristojne organe pozivam, naj čim prej razsvetlijo okoliščine atentata. To brutalno dejanje je potrdilo, kako dejansko daleč smo od vladavine prava v tej regiji.

Mladi danes množično zapuščajo Balkan in regija potrebuje priložnost, ampak priznajmo, da vladavina prava peša tudi v Uniji in težko bomo Balkan prepričali v varovanje pravne države, če tega ne bomo uspeli v Uniji. Če gre za spoštovanje arbitražnega sporazuma med Slovenijo in Hrvaško, ki lahko resno ogrozi nadaljnje širitve na Balkan, ali Madžarsko, Poljsko. V primeru Poljske vas pozivam, da ste odločni pri uporabi člena 7 Pogodbe zaradi kršitve vladavine prava. Le tako bomo s spoštovanjem temeljnih vrednot, kot ste dejali, sami skupaj tudi obstali.

Николай Барекв (ECR). – Първо на добър час на моята родина България! Г-н Премиер, чудесно е, че говорите за перспективата, защото мнозинството от българските граждани не я виждат. Те са губещи от Европейския съюз за сметка на шепа хора. Говорим за бедността, опасната симбиоза с корупцията. В България тази симбиоза е смъртоносна за обществото.

Нека като европейските бюрократи на г-н Юнкер не си заравяме като шрауси главите в пясъка. Действайте с перспектива, но от Вас очакваме и възмездие, г-н Премиер.

Опасното е, че шепа олигарси, ноторно известни у нас и в чужбина, обогатени от европейските фондове и приватизацията, станаха морални ментори на нашето общество от името на Европейския съюз. Приключиха със свободата.

Сега или никога, г-н Борисов! Винаги съм бил откровен с Вас. Все още нямаме вкаран в затвора за корупция политик или олигарх. Бандити като Иво Прокопиев, Огнян Донев, заедно с някои бивши Ваши министри, чакат присъди от съда за стотици милиони обществени кражби. Кога ще ги видим в затвора? Действайте, защото подобни индивиди не могат да бъдат символ на европейските ценности.

Обещахте и перспектива, пожелавам Ви я! Да не остане само красива приказка.

Илхан Кючюк (ALDE). – Уважаеми г-н Председател, г-н Юнкер, госпожи и господа комисари, колеги. Уважаеми г-н Борисов, и аз на свой ред се присъединявам към пожеланията за успех. Безспорно българското председателство на Съвета на Европейския съюз идва в момент, когато Европа е на кръстопът. В дневния ред на Съюза присъстват важни теми. Наред с това заложените от България приоритети поставят на масата и други важни теми, като продължаването на кохезионната политика като основен инструмент срещу разделението и дезинтеграцията в Съюза и европейската перспектива на Западните Балкани.

Оценявам факта, че темата за Западните Балкани се придвижи на едно по-високо ниво в европейския дневен ред, но само по себе си това няма да реши проблемите на региона. Шестте държави се нуждаят от системна, политическа и финансова подкрепа. За да постигнат истински напредък, те имат нужда от ясна, разписана пътна карта. Тя може да бъде изготвена по време на българското председателство, като в нея се заложи предложението от Европейската комисия срок до 2025 година.

Европа не трябва да се притеснява от Западните Балкани, а трябва да провежда политика за Западните Балкани. Само с интеграция на региона ние можем да заявим, че сме завършили проекта на Европа като зона, свободна от етнонационализма. Но нека не се заблуждаваме, г-н Борисов. Тези каузи могат да бъдат обречени, ако продължавате да разчитате на крайните националисти в България и да водите Европа с тях.

Изпълнете със съдържание кредита на доверие, който Ви даде г-н Юнкер. Бъдете демократ, освободете се от тях, освободете се от оковите на крайния национализъм! Направете го за България, но и за Европа! Разчитам на Вас.

Νεοκλής Σουλκιώτης (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρος, παρατηρούμε με απογοήτευση ότι το πρόγραμμα της Βουλγαρικής Προεδρίας αποτελεί συνέχεια των αδιέξοδων νεοφιλελεύθερων πολιτικών λιτότητας της Ένωσης, οι οποίες ήδη οδήγησαν τους λαούς της σε φτωχοποίηση και τους νέους στην ανεργία και τη μετανάστευση. Στις πολιτικές του ψηφιακού θεματολογίου συνεχίζει τη φιλοσοφία του ανταγωνισμού, με κάθε κοινωνικό και εργασιακό κόστος, ενώ στα θέματα ασφάλειας και ασύλου ακολουθεί πιστά την πορεία περαιτέρω στρατιωτικοποίησης της Ένωσης. Παρ' όλα αυτά, χαιρετίζουμε τη δέσμευση της Βουλγαρικής Προεδρίας για κοινωνική συνοχή και αναγνωρίζουμε το δύσκολο έργο που ανέλαβε για τις διαπραγματεύσεις για το Πολυετές Δημοσιονομικό Πλαίσιο. Ως ομάδα της Ενωτικής Αριστεράς, επιμένουμε στις θέσεις μας για μακροπρόθεσμες δημόσιες επενδύσεις σε βιομηχανικούς τομείς, που θα δημιουργήσουν νέες ασφαλείς και μόνιμες θέσεις εργασίας με πλήρη εργασιακά δικαιώματα. Είμαστε ενάντια στην περαιτέρω στρατιωτικοποίηση, είμαστε υπέρ της ανθρωπιστικής, στη βάση της αλληλεγγύης, διαχείρισης των προσφυγικών και μεταναστευτικών ροών, με τη δημιουργία ενός δίκαιου και δεσμευτικού συστήματος ανακατανομής των προσφύγων.

Rolandas Paksas (EFDD). – Nagi taip, Estijos pirmininkavime buvo gerų dalykų, pavyzdžiui, dėl pastatų energetinio naudingumo direktyvos, atliekų tvarkymo taisyklių. Tokių pat gerų, tikiu, bus ir pirmininkaujant Bulgarijai. Man patinka jos pasirinktas šūkis „Susijungę mes tapsime stiprūs!“. Ir siekis tapti piliečiams kuo atviresne Sąjunga yra gera nuostata. Tačiau ne pirmą kartą tenka užduoti retorinius klausimus. Kodėl tie gražūs žodžiai dažniausiai netampa darbais? Kodėl vienos ar kitos šalies ambicingi pirmininkavimo tikslai tyliai užgesta biurokratinėje Europos Sąjungos mašinoje? Kodėl, kai mes kuo daugiau kalbame apie skaitmeninę ekonomiką, įprastos ekonomikos priemonėmis vis mažiau sugebame užtikrinti bent minimalias pajamas labiausiai pažeidžiamiems socialiniams sluoksniams? Susidaro įspūdis, kad prioritetai lieka pirmininkaujančioms valstybėms, o reali politika atitenka kitiems.

Harald Vilimsky (ENF). – Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Ich möchte zunächst die Gelegenheit ergreifen, dem bulgarischen Volk und Staat alles Gute im neuen Jahr zu wünschen und viel Glück für die Ratspräsidentschaft. Wir wissen, dass die Europäische Union seit gut einem Jahr in einem Reformprozess stecken geblieben ist und sich nichts bewegt. Das fing an mit dem Referendum in Großbritannien, wo danach Schockstarre eingekehrt ist, und wir seit über einem Jahr fünf Szenarien auf dem Tisch liegen haben, von weniger Kooperation bis hin zur völligen Zentralisierung, wo doch endlich die Staaten, die Parlamente, die Völker, die Institutionen darüber reden sollten, wohin wir uns in Zukunft entwickeln sollen.

Diese Festlegung vermisse ich, und ich kann nur hoffen, dass nicht das eintritt, was gestern passiert ist, nämlich dass Großbritannien das Angebot erhalten hat, hier zu verbleiben, während es das gar nicht will. Dass nicht noch einmal das eintritt, was passiert ist in Irland mit der Abstimmung über Lissabon, wo ein Ergebnis nicht gefallen hat und man das Ergebnis und die Abstimmung so lange wiederholt, bis es gefällt – das ist nicht der richtige Weg! Ich hoffe, dass Bulgarien ein Reformpartner ist. Ich wünsche Ihnen alles Gute und danke Ihnen für Ihr Engagement.

Daniel Caspary (PPE). – Herr Präsident! Sehr geehrter Herr Ministerpräsident, Ihre Ratspräsidentschaft liegt ein Jahr vor der Europawahl, und in diesem bulgarischen Halbjahr können wir gemeinsam beweisen, dass die EU handlungsfähig ist, und wir können gemeinsam Vertrauen bei den Menschen gewinnen.

Wenn wir es erstens schaffen, die Weichen zu stellen, dass die mittelfristige Finanzplanung – gerade auch wegen des Brexits – bis zur Europawahl beschlossen werden kann, wenn wir es zweitens schaffen, auf dem Westbalkan Stabilität und Zukunftsperspektive zu fördern und als Europäische Union deutlich präsenter zu sein, wenn wir es drittens schaffen, die Herausforderung der Migrationsbewegungen über einen noch verlässlicheren Außengrenzschutz, über Solidarität innerhalb Europas bei der Lastenverteilung und wirksame Hilfe bei der Fluchtursachenbekämpfung zu lösen, wenn wir es viertens schaffen, die Währungsunion weiter zu stabilisieren, unsere Wettbewerbsfähigkeit zu steigern und Perspektiven für die Jugend Europas zu schaffen, dann können Sie und Ihr Land auf eine erfolgreiche Ratspräsidentschaft stolz sein, und dann können wir zuversichtlicher in Europas Zukunft schauen. Viel Erfolg und Glückauf!

Петър Курумбашев (S&D). – За моето поколение присъединяването към европейското демократично семейство беше мечта. Мечтата стана реалност, но някак си неусетно разбрахме, че нито демокрацията, нито членството в Европейския съюз, са застраховка срещу злоупотребата с власт, срещу корупцията.

България през 2005 г. беше на 30-то място в класацията на Репортери без граници за медийна свобода, а днес е на 109-то място. България в началото на прехода беше 9 милиона, а в момента е 7 милиона. Надявам се, че под председателството на България, ние ще имаме своя принос да не говорим за обезлюдяващи се райони, камо ли да говорим за обезлюдяващи се държави. Надявам се, че след шест месеца моите колеги в Европейския парламент ще могат да кажат, че България е бил един достоен и работещ председател на Европейския съюз. На добър час!

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Уважаеми председатели, комисари, колеги, уважаеми г-н Борисов, поздравявам Ви за постижението да сте първи български министър-председател в тази зала! Предстои ни за шест месеца изключително много работа: по промяната на дъблинските регламенти и защитата на нашия интерес там; по промяната в защитата на външните граници и Шенген – това засяга освен нас и Румъния и Хърватска; по присъединяването на братска Македония и Западните Балкани; по постигането на честна сделка с нашите приятели от Обединеното кралство и нашите съмишленици от Полша, по борбата с двойните стандарти в храните, в доходите, в правата на превозвачите и т.н. Тази борба, уважаеми г-н Министър-председател, трябва да се води умно, последователно, упорито и със самочувствие. Самочувствието на хора, които са изградили държавата си преди 1300 години на Балканите и, както я пазиха през 717 година от нашествие при Константинопол, я пазят и днес.

Желяя Ви успех, желяя упорита работа, която да ни накара след шест месеца да можем спокойно да се погледнем в очите и да се похвалим с постигнати успехи, защото такава е волята на българските граждани. Поздравления и успех!

Knut Fleckenstein (S&D). – Herr Präsident, Herr Premierminister! Über Ihrem Parlament stehen die drei Worte: Einheit macht stark. Ich wünsche Ihnen, dass Sie diese drei Worte jeden Morgen Ihren 27 Kollegen zur Begrüßung des Tages per SMS schicken. Aber ich freue mich besonders darüber, dass Sie eben nicht nur die Staaten der EU gemeint haben, sondern auch die des westlichen Balkans. Hier finden Sie über die Partei- und Fraktionsgrenzen hinweg viele Freunde dafür. Nutzen Sie unsere Unterstützung, wir werden sie garantiert unterstützen, hier im Parlament und wichtig für uns alle – auch zu Hause und vor Ort.

Es geht um konkrete Schritte für Serbien und Montenegro, die Aufnahme von Verhandlungen mit Albanien und auch die Würdigung der guten Arbeit Ihrer mazedonischen Nachbarn. Der Weg ist nicht einfach, und deshalb müssen wir den Menschen sagen, dass wir sie auch wirklich wollen. Roaming und andere Maßnahmen wären ein guter Beitrag dazu. Herr Premierminister, Sie haben uns gesagt, Sie möchten auch die Beziehungen zu Russland normalisieren. Meine Unterstützung haben Sie dafür, es wird höchste Zeit.

Jean-Claude Juncker, Präsident der Kommission. – Herr Präsident! Ich bin wirklich fast überglücklich, dass ich immer wieder das Wort kriege, auch wenn ich eigentlich nicht weiß, was ich dem hinzufügen könnte, was ich Ihnen vor der Debatte gesagt habe. Deshalb möchte ich noch einmal meiner Hoffnung Ausdruck geben, dass die bulgarische Präsidentschaft ein vollumfänglicher Erfolg wird. Das wird sie werden, und ich möchte mich auch bei allen Kollegen hier im Hause bedanken – die heute morgen etwas zahlreicher sind als gestern –, dass so eine fast interaktive Debatte stattgefunden hat. Glückauf!

Бойко Борисов, действащ председател на Съвета. – Благодаря, г-н Председател, благодаря, г-н Юнкер за добрите оценки и, разбира се, благодаря на шефовете на всички парламентарни групи и на останалите депутати, които се изказаха. Специално искам да отговоря на Зелените, защото аз самият съм зелен човек.

Опазването на българската природа е, мисля, в огромна степен защитена от нашето правителство. Аз изпитвам голямо уважение към нашите природозащитни организации и само преди десетина дни се срещях с тях. Спирал съм инфраструктурни проекти с години, за да може да се излюпят новите щъркелчета, заради едно щъркелово гнездо. Карал съм министрите да пренасят лично блатни кокичета, за да не остане нито един стрък смачкан от валяк. Всичките ни европейски инфраструктурни проекти са с тунели за мечки, за вълци, за костенурки. Трасета сме променяли и мисля, че те към мен нямат претенции.

Това, което са Ви казали – искам пред Вас да гарантирам, и да им предадете и Ви е – става въпрос за втори лифт, един единствен лифт на курорта в десетката на Европа – Банско. Сега има само един лифт и с часове туристите чакат на опашка. Мога да Ви подпиша и да Ви гарантирам тук, че става въпрос само за втори лифт. Защо е нужен? Не само заради туристите. Сега тези хиляди туристи се качват по път с автомобилите си до върха на планината и оттам се спускат. За да поддържаме този път във възможност да вървят автомобилите, ние го осояваме непрекъснато, както правят и в Страсбург, предполагам. Десетки дървета около него загиват. Аз Ви гарантирам, че не само няма да се допусне незаконна сеч, а – само тук отварям една скоба – през последните години България е първа в Европа по нови гори и единствената, може би, която е разширила горите си от всички европейски държави. За каква незаконна сеч говорим тук? Ние водим такава битка с това, а каква по-голяма гаранция, че когато има втори лифт, и този туризъм кой инвеститор ще даде да му отсекаят боровете? Така че имате моята гаранция, че освен втори лифт, една керемида повече няма да сложи там.

Да отговоря на тези колеги, които поставиха въпроса с корупцията. Корупция има навсякъде, ние водим огромна битка. И пак ще я свържа със Зелените. Аз съм избран 10 или 11 пъти, заедно с моята партия като победители в избори в България. И от опозиция сме тръгвали, и от нулата сме тръгвали. В София имаше безпрецедентна криза с боклука, когато станах кмет. Нямахме завод, нямахме преработка, нямаше нищо. Изхвърляше се в деретата в Суходол. Заехме се и сега София е най-добре организираната, мисля, че след Цюрих, благодарение и на Вашата европейска солидарност, с изцяло компостиране, преработка, със завод за битови отпадъци, с депа – всичко, както пише в европейските книги.

В същото време, ако има такава корупция, за която казвате, ще има ли такъв ръст на икономиката, повече инвестиции и този растеж? Как ще ни избират хората все нас на първо място? А мен като полицаи ме избраха за кмет на София заради това, което съм правил в тази сфера. И аз Ви гарантирам, че така, както сме се заели сега, както с боклука на София, до 2-3 години ние ще се справим. И ще се справим добре. И с новото законодателство, и с волята, и с Вашата помощ и усилия. Моля Ви, тези наши приятели, които протестират, те ми бяха и коалиционни партньори. Те се разделиха на изборите на три партии, да имат трима вожди, и не можах да влязат в парламента само преди шест месеца. Те са нашият най-естествен партньор. Аз не съм им виновен, че се разделиха на три партии, за да имат трима лидери. Не съм виновен, че спечелих изборите и то при правителство на избрания от социалистите президент. Те проведоха изборите и ние победихме. Извинявайте, не съм виновен.

В същото време искам да отговоря за Истанбулската конвенция, която само миналата сряда българското правителство в мое лице прие. Но именно българските социалисти на пленум в неделя взеха решение да не я подкрепят в парламента. Аз ще положа всички усилия да мине в парламента и да я подкрепим, защото насилието над жените и децата е чудовишно не само в България, но и в цяла Европа. Затова можете да разчитате и считам, че и тук Зелените биха ме подкрепили ... надявам се.

На всички бих искал да отговоря. Нарочно исках да се концентрирам там, където е основната критика. На колегата от ДПС искам да кажа, че с Обединените патриоти работим така, ясно сме се разбрали, че етническата толерантност, етническият модел и именно това, което България десетилетия наред, благодарение и на Вас, е постигнала, ние ще го пазим като зеницата на окото си, защото така България е пример за попражнение на целите Балкани, със своята етническа толерантност. А с Мишел Барние по Брексит също поемам ангажимент да работя.

Благодаря за всичко. Готов съм да подпиша за Вас, че става въпрос само за втори лифт, за нищо друго.

Presidente. – La discussione è chiusa.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Nicola Caputo (S&D), per iscritto. – La presidenza della Bulgaria giunge in un momento importante per l'Unione europea, quando più urgente è la necessità di produrre risultati riguardo alle tre preoccupazioni principali dei cittadini: immigrazione, sicurezza e creazione di occupazione per i giovani.

A metà dicembre il governo di Sofia ha presentato il suo programma per la Presidenza del Consiglio dell'Unione europea. Delle quattro priorità individuate, nessuna tratta dei diritti umani, né ci sono riferimenti alla Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea. Viene citata spesso la «gestione dell'immigrazione», con l'obiettivo di aumentare l'efficacia delle «politiche sui rimpatri» e della «gestione del controllo delle frontiere», ma nessuna menzione viene fatta della riforma del regolamento di Dublino, né della redistribuzione dei migranti.

Sono sinceramente preoccupato che il lavoro del Parlamento su questo tema possa avere una brusca battuta d'arresto. Su sicurezza e occupazione i propositi della nuova Presidenza mi sembrano convincenti – crescita economica e coesione sociale devono essere al centro dell'agenda politica, così come la lotta al terrorismo – ma credo sia il caso di ricordare, a tutti noi e alla nuova Presidenza, che sul problema dell'immigrazione è in gioco la tenuta stessa dell'Unione europea.

Andor Deli (PPE), írásban. – Örömmel és elégedettséggel állapítottam meg, hogy a bolgár elnökség programjának egyik prioritása a nyugat-balkáni régió európai perspektívája. A 2018-as év az újjáéledés éve lehet az elfáradt bővítési politikának. A térség geostratégiai jelentősége miatt több globális hatalmi központ is igyekszik befolyást szerezni a Nyugat-Balkánon. Az EU-nak ezt nem szabad megengednie. Következetes politikai üzenetekre és kézzelfogható eredményekre van szükség. Ezek megléte pedig nem csak a tagjelölt országok felelőssége, hanem az Európai Unióé is. Magyarország elkötelezett támogatója az EU nyugat-balkáni bővítésének. Bízom abban, hogy a bolgár elnökség és Bulgária, mint a régió egyik országa, új energiát visz a bővítés politikába. Ebben számíthat Magyarország és az Európai Parlament néppárti magyar delegációjának támogatására. Egyúttal kérem az Elnökséget, hogy gyorsítsák fel Szerbia vonatkozásában a fejezetek megnyitásának dinamikáját, mivel a jelenlegi tempó mellett nehezen tartható a Juncker elnök úr által megállapított 2025-ös csatlakozási határidő.

Kinga Gál (PPE), írásban. – A legnagyobb kihívás, amivel a bolgár elnökségnek meg kell küzdenie, az a migráció kérdésének kezelése. Az nem vezethet további megosztottsághoz a tagállamok között, a migránsokat nem szabad kötelező betelepítési kvóták szerint szétosztani Európában. Az illegális migráció kapcsán figyelembe kell venni egyre több európai polgár akaratát: a külső határainkat meg kell tudnunk védeni. Ez elsődleges felelőségünk. A külső határvédelemre fordított milliók Magyarország részéről is a szolidaritás fogalomkörébe kell tartozzanak. A valódi menekülteket az Unión kívül kell elválasztani a migránsok tízezreitől, segíteni pedig ott kell a világban, ahol a baj van, nem pedig behozni Európába. Az Eurobarometer által közzétett felmérések alapján az Európai Uniónak a megkérdoztetek 82%-a szerint határozottabban kell fellépnie a terrorizmus ellen.

A most készülő Európai Utasinformációs és Engedélyezési Rendszer (ETIAS) ezeket az aggályokat fogja orvosolni, valamint nagymértékben hozzá fog járulni a terrorellenes és az illegális migráció ellenes küzdelemhez, ezáltal növelve az európai állampolgárok biztonságát. Örülök, hogy decemberben ideiglenes megállapodás született az ész elnökséggel és remélem, hogy a bolgár elnökség alatt sikerül véglegesen lezárni dossziét.

András Gyürk (PPE), írásban. – Örömmel hallok, hogy a bolgár elnökség programjában kiemelt prioritással szerepel az energetikai infrastruktúra továbbfejlesztése, és ezen belül a szükséges gázinfrastruktúra kiépítése. Akik ezzel a témával foglalkoznak, jól tudják azt, hogy hosszú évek óta téma nálunk az energiabiztonság és azt is, hogy még mindig nem készült el az összes olyan projekt, amely garantálni tudná a megfelelő gáz-ellátásbiztonságot. Erre példa Közép-Kelet-Európa, ahol a függőség jelenleg is a legnagyobb, ugyanakkor gázvezeték-összekötők, illetve LNG terminálok építése még hiányzik. Sajnos a szakbizottságomban – az Ipari, Kutatási és Energiaügyi Szakbizottságban – az utóbbi időben megjelent egy olyan irány, ami megkérdőjelezi azt, hogy szükség van-e fosszilis infrastruktúra projektekre a közös érdekű projektek listáján (PCI lista). Nem elég hangsúlyozni azt, hogy bár lehet, hogy a megújuló energiáé a jövő, de a ma és a holnap kérdéseire nem ad választ a megújuló energia. Gázdiverzifikációra szükség van; egy ország nem tudja egyik napról a másikra átállítani a fűtési módját. Ennek fényében üdvözlöm, hogy a gázinfrastruktúra fejlesztés hangsúlyos az elnökség programjában.

Kati Piri (S&D), schriftelijk. – Naar aanleiding van het debat in het Europees Parlement met de Bulgaarse premier Boyko Borisov roept de PvdA-Eurodelegatie Bulgarije op om zich als EU-voorzitter hard te maken voor een politiek akkoord inzake de verschillende migratiedossiers. Met name inzake het voorstel voor de geregleerde hervestiging van kwetsbare vluchtelingen, waarvoor Kati Piri schaduwrapporteur is namens de sociaaldemocraten, is een akkoord hard nodig zodat de EU eindelijk op een veilige en legale manier asiel kan bieden aan vluchtelingen die dat het hardst nodig hebben. Daarnaast is het van belang dat Bulgarije meer doet om corruptie in het land aan te pakken, aangezien ook veel andere Europese burgers daar last van hebben.

Evelyn Regner (S&D), schriftlich. – Das Motto der bulgarischen Ratspräsidentschaft „united we stand strong“ ist ein schönes, um die wichtigen Herausforderungen der nächsten Monate anzupacken, denn nur vereint und gemeinsam können wir es schaffen, Europa stark zu machen. Es wird auch darum gehen müssen, die Rechtsstaatlichkeit in Europa zu verteidigen, die zunehmend in einzelnen Mitgliedstaaten bedroht ist. Schon in 6 Monaten wird Österreich als nächstes die Ratspräsidentschaft übernehmen. Und es stehen große Aufgaben vor uns: Vom Abschluss der Brexit-Verhandlungen, der EU-weiten Steuerharmonisierung bis hin zum dringenden Schmieden von Allianzen für ein soziales Europa. Mit den Vorstellungen eines Minimal-Europas von Schwarz-Blau in Österreich werden wir hier nicht weiterkommen. Das ist ein Schlag in die Gesichter der Europäerinnen und Europäer. Wenn wir die immer größeren Unterschiede bei Wohlstand, Arbeitsrechten oder Aufstiegschancen nicht verkleinern, droht Europa zu zerbrechen. Die „Österreich-Zuerst“-Keule ist der falsche Ansatz für die wichtigen Aufgaben Österreichs, um Europa handlungsfähig zu machen.

Alfred Sant (S&D), in writing. – The first months of 2018 may crucially affect next year's elections to the European Parliament. The tone could be set by the outcome of the Italian and Hungarian elections in coming weeks. Moreover, while entering the second year of negotiations, Brexit talks still remain a huge source of uncertainty. In this transitional context, which usually induces a legislative slowdown, the Bulgarian Presidency has presented a strong programme. By prioritising the deepening of regional relations, starting with the Balkans, this Presidency could further raise awareness of the state of peripheral countries, whose full inclusion in policymaking is key to ensuring economic and social cohesion in Europe. I also especially welcome the emphasis on the digital agenda. This issue is crucial, especially regarding SMEs. We should ensure that the development of the digital single market includes the needs of real users, who must adapt as they realise the possibilities afforded by technology. Lastly, tax-related concerns should remain important in this first half of 2018. Parliament has recently questioned the unanimity principle. Strong emphasis should remain on tax transparency and on the necessary tax flexibility for countries at the margin of Europe. Bulgaria is well placed to highlight this crucial issue.

Ivan Štefanec (PPE), *písomne*. – Predseda EÚ Komisie J. P. Juncker v rámci uvedenia bulharského predsedníctva vyhlásil: „Pamätám si, že Bulharsko prechádzalo relatívne rýchlymi a intenzívnymi zmenami pred vstupom do EÚ, no etablovalo sa úspešne, preto od neho máme aj teraz vysoké očakávania.“ Pre Bulharsko je to historická premiéra, avšak so zapálením si stanovilo hlavné prioritné témy, ktoré chce v rámci líderstva EÚ riešiť, a tými sú: bezpečnosť Európy, mladí ľudia, stabilita v jednotnej EÚ, perspektíva pre západný Balkán a digitálna ekonomika. Význam týchto okruhov je zároveň spoločným menovateľom vyhlásení predstaviteľov Bulharska, EÚ Rady, Komisie a Parlamentu, kde práve reformy azylového systému a bezpečnostnej politiky Blízkeho východu (čo sa nepodarilo 4 predchádzajúcim predsedníctvám), úspešné sfunkčnenie jednotného digitálneho trhu (spolu s nasledujúcimi 2 predsedníctvami EÚ) či hlbšie prepojenie Balkánu s EÚ v oblastiach energetiky, telekomunikácií a vzdelávania, prispievajú k intenzívnejšej a efektívnejšej spolupráci na viacerých úrovniach. Bulharským predsedníctvom sa dá viacero dôležitých vecí do pohybu a prispieje to k lepšiemu fungovaniu ako EÚ, tak aj samotných členských štátov.

Claudia Țapardel (S&D), *în scris*. – Președinția bulgară va avea implicații importante asupra regiunii de sud-est a Europei și va aduce în prim-plan subiecte importante, precum viitorul politicilor de coeziune și securitate. Există, de asemenea, așteptări ca guvernul bulgar să pună presiune pentru extinderea spațiului Schengen pentru Bulgaria și România, dar și în ceea ce privește ridicarea Mecanismului de Verificare și Cooperare asupra celor două țări. Președinția bulgară vine însă și cu un suflu nou în ceea ce privește integrarea europeană și respinge posibilitatea unei Europe cu două viteze. Ca țări aflate la granița Uniunii Europene, Bulgaria și România pot aduce o perspectivă diferită privind viitorul proiectului european, mizând pe ideea de solidaritate. Convingerea mea este că avem nevoie de mai multă cooperare între statele membre, dar în egală măsură și de consolidarea relațiilor cu vecinii Uniunii. Ca membru în Comisia pentru Transporturi și Turism, voi monitoriza de asemenea și poziționarea Președinției bulgare în ceea ce privește obiectivele de conectivitate. Având interese comune privind dezvoltarea infrastructurii, îmi doresc ca Bulgaria și România să prioritizeze realizarea unei strategii dedicate Europei de sud-est, care să identifice problemele de conectivitate și să coreleze politicile de transport cu cele de turism.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D), *por escrito*. – O ano em curso será um ano de grandes desafios para a União Europeia. A preparação das perspetivas financeiras pós 2020 e a conclusão das reformas económicas e financeiras de que a União Europeia necessita são o contexto sob o qual decorre a presidência búlgara. As prioridades definidas, designadamente a mobilização dos jovens, a estabilização dos Balcãs, a aposta nas competências digitais e a promoção do mercado interno, da segurança e da estabilidade num quadro de coesão e convergência, são adequadas para que as diferentes instituições europeias e para que os Estados-Membros possam prosseguir o trabalho que têm que realizar para tornar a União Europeia mais robusta, mais competitiva e mais capaz de responder aos desafios globais que enfrenta. As presidências rotativas do Conselho da União Europeia constituem uma dupla oportunidade. Permitem às presidências aplicarem uma visão global sobre o futuro da União e ao mesmo tempo contribuir para a estabilização das relações da União com os territórios e povos que lhe são mais próximos. Nas relações com os Balcãs, com a Rússia e com a Turquia, entre outros, a Bulgária poderá dar um contributo fundamental, sendo importante que essa prioridade constitua um dos pilares da sua Presidência.

(La seduta, sospesa alle 10.30, è ripresa alle 10.38)

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. ANTONIO TAJANI

Presidente

8. **Debata z udziałem premiera Irlandii Leo Varadkara na temat przyszłości Europy (debata)**

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sul futuro dell'Europa con Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach (primo ministro) dell'Irlanda (2017/3023(RSP)).

Come sapete, questa è la prima discussione sul futuro dell'Europa che il Parlamento europeo ha deciso di organizzare, invitando i Primi ministri e i più grandi protagonisti dell'Europa per un confronto concreto, non con discorsi formali ma con la possibilità di interagire per conoscere il pensiero e le proposte dei leader europei.

Voglio ringraziare il Taoiseach, il Primo ministro d'Irlanda, per aver risposto con grande sollecitudine al nostro invito. Sarà il primo ad intervenire con questa nuova formula. Sarà nostro grande interesse ascoltarlo, anche perché l'Irlanda è un paese protagonista della nuova fase che stiamo affrontando, quindi la sua presenza nella sede del Parlamento europeo e nell'emiciclo è di grande rilievo. Lo ringrazio per essere stato il primo a rispondere con grande disponibilità e sollecitudine alla possibilità di confrontarsi con il Parlamento europeo.

Quindi è con grande piacere che gli do la parola perché possa indirizzarsi a voi e iniziare questa discussione costruttiva sul futuro dell'Europa.

Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach. – Mr President, Vice-Presidents, President Juncker, Commissioner Hogan, distinguished leaders of the political groups, Members of the European Parliament, dear friends, I want to say that it is a great privilege to be the first speaker in your series of debates with Heads of Government on the future of the European Union.

I believe that the European Union is at a decisive point now in our history. Despite all of the upheavals in recent years, the rise of populism and euroscepticism, nationalism and anti-democratic forces, we meet today in solidarity and with a renewed sense of purpose. The European ideal has always been inspired by a spirit of optimism and a belief in a better future. While that ideal has been tested, it has not been broken. Based on the achievements of the past, we have a renewed appetite to face the challenges of the future.

Back in 1947, representatives from 16 countries met in Paris to discuss how, in the words of Jean Monnet, they could resist economic decline and preserve political freedom.

En 1947, des représentants de seize pays se sont réunis à Paris pour discuter de la manière dont, selon les termes de Jean Monnet, ils pourraient résister au déclin économique et préserver la liberté politique. L'Irlande était l'un de ces seize pays. La sagesse de la prédiction de Monnet selon laquelle 'il n'y a pas d'avenir pour les peuples d'Europe autre que dans l'union' s'est vite fait jour.

Dès le début, les petits pays ont contribué de manière non négligeable au développement de l'Europe.

Dans les années cinquante, Joseph Bech, luxembourgeois et grand architecte de l'intégration, a joué un rôle capital dans la création de la Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier, et dans la tenue de la conférence de Messine en Sicile. Interrogé sur la présence de politiciens européens réunis en Sicile en 1955, un haut dirigeant politique britannique rétorqua que ces derniers avaient pris part aux fouilles archéologiques! Des fouilles qui ont servi de base au traité de Rome.

Wir sehen die Stärke der europäischen Wertvorstellungen im Erbe der Persönlichkeiten wie Konrad Adenauer und Hans Dietrich-Genscher, deren Vision für Versöhnung und Integration in ganz Europa so wichtig war. Wir sehen sie in der Arbeit Helmut Kohls und seinem Glauben, die Bedürfnisse und Gleichberechtigung kleinerer Nationen zu beachten. Und wir sehen sie in der Vision Jacques Delors' und seinem Glauben an einen tieferen Sinn Europas – eine Seele für Europa –, ohne den das ganze Projekt scheitern würde. Seine Arbeit bei der Schaffung einer gemeinsamen Währung, des Euro, ist ein bedeutsames Erbe. Seine Aufgabe an uns, einen größeren Sinn anzustreben, ist noch bedeutsamer.

Mr President, the promise of a better future has motivated people to work for the European ideal since the very beginning. And speaking in this chamber today I am reminded of one of the greatest figures in Irish politics, and one of the greatest figures in politics from Northern Ireland, John Hume, whose birthday it is tomorrow and who served as a Member of this great Parliament for 25 years.

John Hume spoke many times about the symbolism of the bridge not too far from here, connecting Strasbourg to Kehl just across the border in Germany. He spoke about how easy and ordinary it was to walk across that bridge, and given Europe's dark history how remarkable and profound that ordinariness was.

In the European Union John Hume saw a model and a vision for how a lasting peace, however improbable, could be fostered and built. and he saw how that model of people working together with a shared purpose and endeavour, spilling their sweat instead of their blood, as he put it, could provide an inspiration for my own country.

Today there is a peace bridge crossing the river Foyle, bringing together the divided communities in John's native city of Derry in Northern Ireland, a bridge that the European Union helped to build.

Dear friends, it is hard to imagine the Good Friday Agreement being made without our shared membership of the European Union and its single market, and in Ireland we are now having to contemplate our future without that foundation which underpinned it and made it possible.

That's why the government which I lead has been so determined to protect the Good Friday Agreement in all its parts and all that flows from it. And it is why we have insisted that there cannot be a return to a hard border on our island, no new barriers to the movement of people or to trade. And it is why we are so deeply grateful for the remarkable solidarity and support from other Member States. It is everything we hoped for and proof-positive of why small countries benefit so much from membership of this Union.

(Applause)

And so the Irish people are profoundly grateful for the unwavering support of this Parliament, and in particular I want to thank your President, Antonio Tajani, your Brexit coordinator, Guy Verhofstadt, the leader of the PPE Group, Manfred Weber, and all of the other political groups that have been so supportive.

The solidarity of Parliament has been matched by the Commission and the Council. I'd also like to extend my thanks to President Juncker, to the lead Commission negotiator, Michel Barnier, and also to Council President Donald Tusk.

The European Union has consistently recognised the unique position of Northern Ireland and the unique situation in which it finds itself given the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. A decision which we respect.

Notwithstanding that, the majority of people in Northern Ireland voted to remain in the European Union, the majority of the representative elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly want to remain in the customs union and the single market, and it is likely that the majority of people living in Northern Ireland will remain European citizens after Brexit, because of their unique status under the Good Friday Agreement which allows them to be British citizens, Irish citizens or both.

The breakthrough achieved before Christmas means that the United Kingdom has guaranteed that whatever the future relationship with the European Union is, a hard border on the island will be avoided, and the common travel area and all the associated rights that flow from it will be maintained.

As the negotiations move forward into phase 2 we will continue to rely on your support and solidarity as we work to ensure that what has been promised in theory is delivered in practice, and there can be no backsliding on this.

So it is important that these commitments are fully reflected in the legal text of the withdrawal agreement and firmly embedded in the UK's future relationship with the European Union, whatever shape that ultimately takes.

For my part I hope that the new relationship that exists between the United Kingdom and the European Union is as close and as deep as is possible, but consistent with the needs of the Union to protect our internal market and customs union.

Mr President, I was born European and am part of a new generation of political leaders who were born after our countries joined the European Union or its predecessors. We treasure what has been achieved and share the vision of the founders for further integration and cooperation.

While I've always lived with the benefits of European membership, I've never taken them for granted. I very much value what was hard won by past generations and what they sacrificed for us. That vision delivered peace in Europe and opened the door to peace and prosperity in my own country.

These values of solidarity, partnership and cooperation which are essential to the European project have brought Ireland from the position of being one of the least-developed Member States when we joined the Union to one of the most prosperous today. And for us Europe enabled our transformation from being a country on the periphery to an island at the centre of the world, at the heart of this common European home which we helped to build.

The promise of Europe unlocked the potential of Ireland and it allowed us to take our place among the nations of the world. So, along with other Member States who've benefited so much from the European Union, I believe we have a particular responsibility now to lead on the future of Europe debate. We have much to offer and also much to give, and I firmly believe it is our responsibility and relish the opportunity.

So we should approach, all of us, the debate on the future of Europe with a positive attitude, talking about what we want to achieve for our citizens rather than what we want to block or resist. Many of the policy challenges we face are increasingly global and they cannot be met by nation-states acting alone.

Issues such as uncontrolled mass migration, climate change, cybersecurity, international trade, the regulation of medicines and major corporations, many of whom are now bigger than states, cannot be solved by 28 countries coming up with 28 different solutions. In unity there is security, in cooperation there is strength. As we say in the Irish language '*ní neart go cur le chéile*', there's no strength without being together.

So we should, I believe, welcome those who aspire to and who are ready to take on the responsibilities and obligations of membership. The prospect of membership of the European Union can be a powerful motivator for those who seek to build peace and freedom and prosperity and democracy in the Western Balkans and these countries should, I believe, be given a pathway to membership.

Mr President, I believe that in the Europe of the future all European countries and all Member States will be small states, even though perhaps they don't realise it yet, and you only need to look at the list of the top 60 cities in the world in terms of population, only one of the top 60 is in the European Union, and it is currently getting ready to leave.

In terms of population now there is only one country in Europe that is in the top 20 in the world, and its population is falling. So in a global context, we are very much now a union of small countries. And I know that population doesn't equate to economic power or military strength, but there can be no doubt that these are also shifting east and south globally. So I think we need to stick together if we are to protect what we have and continue to export our values and worldview.

(Applause)

A Europe worth building is a Europe worth defending and with the launch of the Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence (PESCO) in December, which Ireland was pleased to join, we are coming together to answer new threats in an inclusive way. The threats we face in the 21st century include cyberterrorism, international terrorism, uncontrolled mass migration, natural disasters and drug and human trafficking, and we want to be involved in European actions against all of these. We definitely can't do it on our own.

My country also has a very proud history of military neutrality, participating in UN peacekeeping operations and EU common security and defence policy operations, and we are not members of NATO, so we will participate in PESCO in a way that is consistent with those traditions as other countries will too.

President, I believe the Europe of the future must do four things. First of all, we should continue to do what we currently do well. Secondly, we should focus on the big new challenges facing Europe and its citizens. Thirdly, where appropriate, we should devolve some powers back to Member States, municipalities and regions. And, fourthly, we should engage more with citizens in direct democracy.

Ireland, as you know, has moved from being a net beneficiary of the EU budget to one that is now a net contributor. Nonetheless, we're open to contributing more, but only if it is spent on things that contribute to the advancement of the European deal and the European project. For example, structural funds for Central and Eastern Europe to enable them to unlock their economic potential as we did.

The European Union should also continue to fund well programmes and policies that work and have stood the test of time, such as the common agricultural policy and providing funding for research, innovation, Erasmus, Interreg and the European Investment Bank, among others.

Budgets for these, in my view, should be protected. Europe can do new things and Europe should do new things, but new programmes require new money. Ireland is a founder-member of the euro and a founder-member of the single market, and we were among the first to open our labour market to Europeans from Central and Eastern Europe. We now want to see the completion of the single market and the digital single market and, above all, a single market that serves the interests of all our citizens, and not just corporations.

So I want to commend this Parliament on the work it has done to make the lives of Europeans better by removing roaming charges on mobile phones within the European Union. That helps bring people together. Your recent action on credit card charges and, likewise, I commend the way you've championed air passenger rights and your plans for interrail.

Now is the time to fulfil the promise of the single market in other areas. For example, take financial services, insurance, mortgages and loans, so that people can get cheaper loans from European lenders and insurers if needs be. I'd ask the Parliament to work on this in the period ahead, and I think it is something that would very much be welcomed by our citizens.

I also believe we should work much more closely on the cost of medicines, and new, innovative medicines in particular. This could save billions for taxpayers, freeing up funding to ensure that modern medicines are available to patients in every country at the same time, and countries are not played off against each other. So let's pool the buying power of 450 million people to do so.

I also believe in more free trade agreements with third countries and in completing monetary union, and I believe in a banking union to protect citizens' savings on a pan-European basis and reduce exposure to individual Member States. And I also think that a capital markets union would provide the building blocks for an integrated capital market across Europe.

In terms of improving democracy within the EU, I support a Europe-wide list for the European Parliament. I'd like to get people in cafes in Naples and restaurants in Galway talking about the same election choices. Perhaps that's an ambitious idea, but I think it is one we should strive for.

(Applause)

And I believe we should also make permanent the Spitzenkandidat system and democratise the choosing of candidates for other leading positions within the EU. And let's establish as well a common asylum policy and system to replace the current system, which we all know is not working. Too few countries have shouldered the responsibility of providing refugees with a fresh start in Europe, we can all do more and we must.

(Applause)

And let's put fire back into the engine of our social Europe by following through on the proclamation that we issued in Gothenburg last year on jobs, employment rights and pensions, among other things. Whatever our future holds, Europe needs to be competitive economically. And one of the ways to ensure this is by allowing competition among Member States, and I think this is particularly important for peripheral and less developed countries whose domestic markets are small and need inward investment.

My strong view is that national taxes that fund national budgets should be determined by national parliaments and governments, but equally strong is my view that corporations should pay their fair share of tax, and we cannot tolerate a situation where large companies avoid paying any taxes anywhere. And that's true for American tech companies as it is true for European car manufacturers and international aerospace and defence companies.

(Applause)

Ireland has already taken steps to close loopholes in our tax laws and will do more in the years ahead, but we strongly believe this should be done on an international basis through the OECD, as Europe should not give advantages to our competitors on other continents by acting unilaterally.

Mr President, as a community we must also look outwards, offering leadership and partnership, especially when it comes to Africa, a continent which is only eight kilometres from Europe. And I believe that Europe must show much greater leadership on Africa, and I support the idea of an EU Marshall plan for that continent.

We've already witnessed the terrible impact that chaos in Syria and Lebanon has had on people in those countries and its impact on Europe. Libya and Syria are small countries, imagine what would happen if similar events were to unfold in massive countries with massive populations, like Egypt or Nigeria. The consequences are too awful to contemplate for us and for them. By contrast, we can look east to Asia and the successful development of those countries in East Asia who have transformed themselves from countries to which we gave aid, to countries with which we now trade.

So in the 21st century Africa must succeed. It is in our interest and it is in theirs, so let's make it part of our mission as Europeans.

I also strongly support the subsidiarity and proportionality task force. It is interesting to me and for many of us who travel the world that on many matters and many issues US states and Canadian provinces, and even counties and municipalities, have greater autonomy and greater variation among themselves than EU Member States currently have.

So do we have the balance right? Not always. And does everything have to be harmonised and standardised? I don't think so. So, Mr President, in making decisions I think it is vital that our citizens are engaged.

In Ireland we've launched a national debate, a citizens' dialogue on Europe and our starting point is to focus on the hopes and dreams of our citizens. Led by our minister for Europe we're undertaking a series of regional meetings and other initiatives across the country between now and Europe Day on 9 May, and I strongly encourage other countries to do the same.

Mr President, it is been an honour, a great honour, to be the first European head of state or government to speak to the European Parliament on this hugely important topic of the future of Europe. All of you across all political groupings have enormous political experience, insight and knowledge. There is a mass of wisdom in this chamber and also imagination, and I believe it is the perfect place to debate our future as we move forward and to ensure that into the future that parliaments and governments are more connected to each other.

I know that under the guidance of President Tajani you've already started to discuss the issues in a thoughtful and productive manner, and even before the Commission's white paper you adopted three resolutions on our future. I hope that this first debate in this series and the others to follow will be lively and spontaneous, and I look forward to engaging with you during the course of this session.

The European Union has always offered the promise of a better future. It is a future that will not be handed to us, we must work to create it. We can achieve a more perfect union and we can speak to Europe's soul. Our values, like peace, friendship, freedom, justice, opportunity and cooperation, are the values we are committed to in advancing on the island of Ireland within our European family and in our relations in the wider world.

Europe has been a great success and we owe its achievements – peace, individual rights, equality before the law and prosperity – to that political creativity and the friendship that we've built together. I believe that Europe is the outcome of one of the greatest acts of political creativity in human history, and that same creativity and vision of the founders should drive our work today.

The European ideal took flight in the second part of the 20th century when people imagined a world joined by mutual interest, trust and affection replacing one that was torn apart by jealousy, fear and animosity.

Building on the great successes and achievements of the past, I believe that with our imagination, with creativity, with courage, we can provide a soul and a heart for Europe, creating opportunities for all of our citizens, and we can ensure that the European ideal that took flight in the last century will soar in the 21st.

Mr President, I want to conclude with a few words in the first official language of my country.

A Uachtaráin, creidim gurb í an spiorad dearfach agus creideamh i dtodhchaí níos fearr ba chúis le hinspioráid an idéil Eorpaigh i gcónaí. Murach an Eoraip, ní chuirfí ár dtír i gcuntas i measc náisiúin na cruinne.

Táimid buíoch do Bhallstáit na hEorpa as a ndlúthpháirtíocht agus as an aire a thugann siad dúinn le linn chomhráite Brexit. Deimhníonn sin an fáth a bhfaigheann tíortha beaga tairbhe as a mballraíocht in AE.

Anois tá an deis againn Eoraip na todhchaí a shamhlú. Ba mhaith liom leanúint ar aghaidh leis an dul chun cinn atá á dhéanamh againn, agus díriú ar na dúshláin mhóra nua atá i gceist. Ba mhaith liom go mbeadh páirt níos gníomhaí ag saoránaigh i ndaonlathas díreach. Tá súil agam go léireoidh an Eoraip níos mó treorach faoi chúrsaí na hAfraice.

Tacaím leis an smaoineamh maidir le 'Marshall Plan' don Afraic.

Agus muidne ag cur le rathúlacht na laethanta atá thart, creidim, le samhlaíocht agus le misneach go mbeimid in ann anam agus croí a chur ar fáil don Eoraip, agus deiseanna a chruthú dár saoránaigh go léir.

President. – Taoiseach, thank you very much for your speech, a large majority of the European Parliament is happy. It is now very important for us to hear the first reaction from the President of the Commission, Mr Jean-Claude Juncker.

Jean-Claude Juncker, *Member of the Commission.* – Mr President, to be very short, I could not agree more. But I have to deliver a speech because the disappointment would be too great if I did not do so.

I wanted to say that I am delighted that my good friend Leo comes before this House today, and I would like to thank President Tajani and the Parliament for holding this timely debate on the future of our Union. This is the first of its kind and I hope the first of many. Since he became Prime Minister, Leo has proven to be a committed European. I knew this before, but he has proven it by being where he is for the time being.

It is fitting that today we remember with sadness another true Irish and European statesman. I would like to pay my personal tribute to Peter Sutherland. He was the first ever Commissioner to receive the gold medal from this House. I was deeply saddened to hear of his passing. Peter Sutherland was a proud Irishman, another giant of European politics and a friend of so many. He will be missed, but his legacy lives on. As Peter in the past shaped our policies of today, so can we shape the policies of the future with the choices we make today.

It was less than a year ago that I presented to you the White Paper on the future of Europe: five possible scenarios for our project. Since then, the debate has picked up in all corners of Europe. The White Paper set a new approach – debate, not dictate – and the White Paper and the different scenarios are still inspiring the debate across Europe. However, the future of Europe cannot remain a scenario. The time to take decisions is now, because citizens will head to the polls in May 2019 and, in doing so, they should have a clear understanding of how the European Union will develop over the years to come.

Last September, I therefore presented to you my very own vision for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union: a Union where solidarity and responsibility go hand in hand in all policy areas, from migration to the banking and monetary union, from energy to our common budget; a Union where the rule of law is not optional but the very basis of everything we do, from implementing decisions jointly taken to preparing enlargements; a Union of equals where the euro and Schengen, the most visible expressions of European integration, continue to unite our continent.

Since the publication of the White Paper, a lot has happened. The Commission has organised hundreds of citizens' dialogues – six of them in Ireland, which is important. I am happy to see that the Taoiseach himself has launched citizens' dialogues on the future of Europe across Ireland, from Galway to Dublin. This is how it should be. To succeed in Europe, we have to put an end to this eternal artificial opposition between the Union and its Member States. Our Union can only be built with our Member States and never against them.

This is why the invitation of the national leaders to this House, President Tajani, is so important. I am delighted to see the commitment from the European Council. It has agreed the leaders' agenda: 17 summits in the next 18 months on the road to Sibiu (Hermannstadt) to chart our common future. This is even more than we had at the height of the eurozone crisis, but with one important difference: this time we are not repairing the burning plane while flying, as we had to do during the crisis. Instead, we are now fixing the roof of our European house while the sun is shining. We know what we need to do together: completing our economic and monetary union; securing our borders; delivering on our social agenda; making our tax system fairer; reforming our asylum system; getting back to Schengen; and completing the digital market and the energy union.

In all these talks on Europe's future, I have been privileged to have a close working relationship with the Taoiseach, and there is no better example than to say that we worked during the first phase of negotiations with the United Kingdom. When it comes to the issue of Ireland in these negotiations, Europe is united. It is all for one and one for all. The Commission and the Irish Government worked tirelessly, side by side, to help us reach the sufficient progress needed to move onto the next phase of the talks. This partnership will continue and will grow stronger as we work on the future of our Union at 27.

I read with pleasure Leo's speech at the Citizens' Dialogue last November, when he set out his vision for 'a Europe that continues to do well what it does well, that focuses on big things and that, where appropriate, devolves some powers back to Member States' municipalities and regions'. For me, this is more than just a beautiful poem. These are the essential questions we all need to answer when going into the negotiations for the next European budget. This debate on the budget will be an open and honest discussion and one that goes right to the heart of the debate on the future of the European Union. If we want the European Union to have nothing more than a single market, a single small budget will be sufficient. But if we want a European border and coast guard to protect our external borders or European civil protection teams to help in the case of floods or fires, then the answer is simple. Member States must put their money where their mouths are.

(Applause)

Herr Präsident! Genau weil diese Zukunftsfragen jetzt in Angriff genommen werden müssen, haben wir vorgeschlagen, unter der Leitung von Vizepräsident Timmermans eine Taskforce zu Subsidiarität und Proportionalität einzurichten. Im nächsten Wahlkampf wird das genau so sein wie im letzten Wahlkampf. Nur wenige haben den Mut, in Bürgerversammlungen, auf öffentlichen Plätzen, im Bierzelt oder sonst wo aufzustehen, wenn es heißt, die Europäische Union und die europäische Politik in Gänze zu verteidigen.

Man wird immer wieder den Bürgern sagen: Europa macht zu viel, und Europa muss weniger tun. Es gibt Bereiche, wo Europa mehr tun muss – ich habe sie oft hier erwähnt. Es gibt aber auch Bereiche, wo wir uns zurücknehmen sollen, wo weniger mehr wäre und wo weniger Tatendrang mehr Fortschritt brächte als blindes Losstürmen hin zu Zielen, die für uns eigentlich – von unserem Instrumentarium her – unerreichbar sind.

Deshalb wäre es mein Wunsch, dass das Europäische Parlament sich an dieser Taskforce beteiligt. Mir wird berichtet – *but this is a house full of rumours*, dass das Europäische Parlament an dieser Taskforce nicht teilnehmen werde und wolle – das ist ein grober Fehler! Denn wir brauchen das Europäische Parlament, wenn wir darüber reden, welche Kompetenzen der Europäischen Union in die Mitgliedstaaten zurückverlagert werden können.

Dies wird eine Debatte sein, wo man dann natürlich auch darüber reden muss, was wir besser machen können, indem wir mehr tun. Auch über neue Kompetenzen muss geredet werden. Aber die Hauptaufgabe ist, Ordnung zu bringen in das Zuständigkeitsgerangel zwischen Europäischer Union und den Mitgliedstaaten. Ich bitte deshalb herzlich – vor allem die großen Fraktionsführer dieser Welt –, diesen Beschluss – falls es ihn dann gibt – zu überprüfen, weil es nicht im Interesse des Europäischen Parlaments ist, dass die Kommission und die Vertreter der Mitgliedstaaten sich alleine, ohne das Mittun des Europäischen Parlaments, mit diesen Fragen beschäftigen.

Mr President, since 1999 the Good Friday Agreement has preserved peace and enabled progress where once there was bloodshed and discord. We all know that peace can be fragile, and I see no more important use of our new budget than guaranteeing and financing the peace process in Ireland.

This is an unconditional European commitment. This is what the Commission will deliver with its proposal on the next Multiannual Financial Framework in May. Our new budget must be as ambitious as the goals we set ourselves and as flexible as possible in order to adapt to new and unforeseen challenges. Our future cannot wait. Together with Leo, with the Irish, and with others, we will swim in that direction.

(Applause)

Presidente. – Non credo che sia stata un errore la decisione del Parlamento di non partecipare ad un gruppo di lavoro organizzato dalla Commissione europea dove tre deputati sarebbero stati parte, insieme ad altri funzionari, di uno studio.

Noi condividiamo l'ipotesi e la necessità di legiferare meglio, di ridurre il numero di norme, ma devo ricordare che in base al trattato il Parlamento è la prima istituzione dell'Unione europea e non può essere trattato come un qualsiasi consulente che partecipa con tre parlamentari ad un gruppo di lavoro. Non è una questione di dignità, è una questione di rispetto dei trattati. Nessuna acrimonia nei confronti della Commissione, tutt'altro: noi vogliamo collaborare con la Commissione, ma all'unanimità la Conferenza dei presidenti – nessun gruppo escluso, tutti d'accordo – ha deciso di non partecipare. Questo non significa che non intendiamo collaborare con la Commissione per legiferare meglio e per lavorare nell'interesse dei nostri concittadini. Anche questo fa parte del dibattito.

Ora cominciamo con gli interventi dei leader dei gruppi politici: vi prego di rispettare il tempo a voi assegnato. Dopo gli interventi dei leader ci sarà una risposta del Taoiseach, poi cominciamo con il «catch-the-eye» e ci sarà un'altra risposta del Taoiseach. Siccome alle 12.30 dobbiamo iniziare le votazioni, vi prego di rispettare i tempi a voi assegnati.

Manfred Weber, on behalf of the PPE Group. – Mr President, it was a good decision to ask Leo Varadkar, the Irish Prime Minister, to start our debate in the European Parliament on the future of Europe. It was a great speech and a great contribution to our debate. We can first of all conclude from this speech that it is good to follow the Irish example, because when I look at the past years, Irish politicians – Enda Kenny, Leo Varadkar – didn't point the finger at others when it was taking on responsibility for cleaning up the budget and making the necessary reforms. They simply did their job. The Irish Government also showed in the past few days how big and how strong you can be if you are part of the European Union in the Brexit negotiations. This is another example where the Irish point is a good point.

And finally, I must say that the tradition of referendums in Ireland helps a lot in explaining to people what Europe is all about. It is not blaming and shaming Brussels, but explaining what is going on in Brussels and explaining what is going on in Strasbourg. That is great. There are a few aspects that I see when I look to Ireland and the future of Europe, but now Europe stands at a crossroads between hate and hope. Demagogues play with people's fears, and for their selfish goals they are spreading hate. That is our challenge.

We have to bring hope to the people. We know that the Europeans do not want to live in anger. They are proud of their European culture, of their achievements, and they want to protect the European way of life. They want to combine prosperity with fairness; they want to combine freedom with security, and cultural identity with tolerance. That is what Europe is all about.

And then we have to keep this in mind, I think we have to make concrete what Leo said in his speech. We have to talk about job security, social fairness, quality of life and whether we can protect this in a globalised world. This promise has to be founded. We have to give good arguments for this. It is either a Europe which is fair, or not a Europe at all.

Furthermore, we see in times of Putin and IS that people are looking for protection, for security. That is why your statement on the future of European defence is a great statement. A few months ago, I was in Estonia and I visited the NATO air base there. A Belgian pilot told me what he was doing with air policing towards the Russian border. I asked him whether it would be a problem for him if there was no longer a Belgian flag on his uniform. What would he say if there were only a European flag in the future? And this young pilot said to me, for him it made no difference. For him it was always clear that he defended our European values when in his aircraft. Dear colleagues, it is either a Europe that is strong in defence or it is not a Europe at all.

Finally, about culture, I think we have to be aware that the whole world is listening to European music, is reading our literature. Europe is the leading cultural continent in the world, and Europe provides cultural diversity instead of the commercial mishmash from Hollywood. The question now is: how can we protect this? How can we bring this into a globalised and a digital world? The idea of Emmanuel Macron to create a European Netflix, to bring all our cultural heritage in one digital form together, with free access for everybody, would probably be a good idea in this regard. It is either a Europe sticking to its cultural richness, or not a Europe at all.

There are lots of things to do, but having our fundamental ideas for the European Union in mind, our founding fathers – De Gasperi, Kohl and others – were always aware that European integration was ambitious. It was always concrete in terms of projects, and that is why we have to look for these concrete projects in the days, weeks and years to come. Let's get things done. It is either an ambitious Europe, or it is not a Europe at all.

Jeppe Kofod, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, I wish to thank Taoiseach Varadkar for an excellent speech, for his commitment to Europe and for his commitment to cooperation. The European Union is the foundation of our prosperity, our security in Europe. Ireland and my own country, Denmark, share a similar history. We joined the European Community at the same time – 1 January 1973 – 45 years ago. Both of our countries have seen tremendous changes. We have benefited from the single market, from the wealth of trade agreements with third countries, and from EU funding and cooperation throughout its history. But for us as Socialist and Democrats, Europe is much more than trade and profits. It is about solidarity. It is about the prosperity of our people. It is about protecting strong welfare states where no citizen is left behind. Solidarity is the future of Europe, and working together to help each other to overcome shared challenges in the 21st century. Globalisation, climate change, the refugee crisis – all of these we have to face together.

Next year the United Kingdom will leave the European Union.

(Applause from certain quarters)

This, of course, will have a special impact on Ireland and the people of Ireland. Let me be absolutely clear: the European Parliament will stand firm on upholding the Good Friday Agreement and securing peace, cooperation and prosperity throughout the Emerald Isle. It is very important.

(Applause)

We also expect solidarity from the Irish Government – and I must take the opportunity this debate offers to express this – and the same commitment to solidarity, fairness and cooperation on other issues. So when we build a single market in Europe, with the free flow of capital, goods, services and people, it is also important that we fight tax evasion and avoidance, protect our tax bases, our welfare states, our people, against the tax evasion we are seeing. What we have seen in Europe – and I have also to give the example of Ireland – when Apple only pays EUR 50 per EUR 1 million it earns on its profits, is a disgrace. It is not acceptable. We need to change that behaviour.

(Applause)

We need to stop the never-ending race to the bottom on corporate taxation. We need to protect our welfare state. We need a common rule book in Europe on corporate taxation, and that is also why I am asking you, Prime Minister, to fight for the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, creating a tax system in the 21st century that is fair, that serves our states, that serves our citizens.

I also want to say we share a lot of challenges. We also need to build a Europe, as you said, Mr Varadkar, that will protect the citizens of Europe, the workers. Good decent work and good salaries are the basis of our societies, and therefore also the social Europe you mentioned is part of that agenda and we need to see action in that field as well.

We also need to ensure, when we do trade liberalisation and make trade agreements, that these trade agreements also follow our values, our rules on sustainable development, protecting the environment, protecting labour rights, protecting human rights, and ensuring that big corporations pay their fair taxes. This is equally important.

In building a Europe of the 21st century we are, as you said, much stronger together than apart. That is true. And you said the single market is not just for all of our citizens if we do not also protect our citizens against, for example, big corporations, against people that take advantage of a single market to undermine our society. That is very important.

So, Mr Prime Minister, I have to commend you for standing up for Europe, but I think we also need to talk about what type of fair Europe we can create for the future. Thank you so much for this and I look forward to working with you and all others who want to change Europe for the better of the people.

(Applause)

Peter van Dalen, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Dit debat heeft als titel “De toekomst van Europa”. Dat is mij eerlijk gezegd wat abstract. Het gaat over de toekomst van onze burgers! Het is logisch dat in aanwezigheid van de Ierse premier de brexit centraal staat. Het antwoord van veel Europese leiders daarop is: “*never waste a good crisis*”, vol gas vooruit naar meer Europa.

Ik denk dat doorduwen naar een steeds hechtere Unie “*penny wise but pound foolish*” is en bij onze burgers het tegenovergestelde effect zal hebben. Ja, het klopt, de laatste Eurobarometer-peilingen laten zien dat men wat positiever denkt over Europa. Maar vergeet niet dat de laatste jaren elk referendum over Europa verkeerd uitpakte voor de pro-Europeanen. Denk aan het referendum over justitiële samenwerking in Denemarken, het referendum over de associatieovereenkomst met Oekraïne in Nederland en het brexitreferendum in het Verenigd Koninkrijk.

Als de burgers dan positiever denken over Europa, waarom dan toch steeds die tegenstemmen? Ik denk dat onze burgers een Europa willen zien dat écht werkt. Maar dat doet het nog niet! Wij voerden de euro in op basis van de no-bail-out-clausule en het stabiliteits- en groeipact. Vervolgens negeren we die twee en gaan we tot in detail elkaars nationale begrotingen uitpluizen. Dat is natuurlijk een vrij nutteloze oefening als handhaving tegen de structurele begrotingszondaars, zoals Frankrijk, al jaren ontbreekt.

En dan moeten we ook nog beginnen aan een eurozonebegroting en Europese schuldpapieren? Dat lijkt me de uitgelezen route om opnieuw een nee van onze burgers en een lage opkomst bij de Europese verkiezingen te zien. Wat dan wel? Ik denk een pas op de plaats. En eerst beginnen met handhaven en vooral nakomen van wat we met elkaar hebben afgesproken. Op die manier winnen we weer het vertrouwen van de burgers. Dat is échte solidariteit en het bieden van echte hoop!

Guy Verhofstadt, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, Taoiseach, I think that our European Union can learn a lot from Ireland. When I say that, I am not talking about the weather forecast, naturally. I am talking about what I call the Irish capacity to transform and to reinvent itself, as has happened over the last decades. I think that is exactly what we need in Europe today: this capacity to transform ourselves and to reinvent ourselves – and not to destroy ourselves, as some of our colleagues want.

Thirty years ago, Ireland was a very different country. I think only 7% were born abroad. Today, that figure is more than 70%. I think that Ireland today has become one of the most diverse nations of the European Union. The Irish economy has successfully integrated migrants from all over the world – from Poland, from Nigeria. Ireland has also become the home country for a number of big companies, such as international IT giants. Today, Ireland is no longer a country of emigration; it has become a destination country and also a country with many pro-Europeans – sometimes very critical but always constructive, and that is absolutely key.

What I hope to see in this debate is that Ireland can show the same European leadership as happened in the past. Let me remind you that in 1985/1986 it was Garret FitzGerald, your predecessor, who gave the final support to the Single European Act. That support was crucial, because it was the first time that Ireland broke away from the British position and made it possible to push forward the European agenda. It is the Single European Act that later resulted in the single market, and that is now seen as the biggest European achievement. Even Margaret Thatcher found it the biggest achievement of European politics. The same thing happened in 2004 and 2007. After the enlargement of the European Union, it was Ireland who championed, in fact, the freedom of movement of all people in the European Union, including the Polish plumber and the Romanian doctor. I hope that Ireland continues to have such a commitment to reform the European Union now. Your voice is critical in this debate.

I see four things to do. The first is the new governance for the eurozone. The second is the European Defence Union. The third is the new European asylum and migration policy. We have to get rid of Dublin – not of Joyce's city, naturally, but the Dublin Regulation on migration. We need to have something completely different, where Italy and Greece do not bear all the burden. Finally, I think we also need a deep democratic reform, with a transnational democracy. I thank you for your support on that important reform, which I hope we can achieve in the coming weeks.

Lastly – and the President of the Commission is right – we need a budget that goes in parallel with this. It is impossible to say to the citizens: 'Look, citizens, you're right: we need more this and we need more that; we need more European action' but, at the same time, we do not give the necessary instruments and the necessary budget.

Finally, President, I think there is a new generation of politicians in Europe who are standing up. You need to know one thing. It is the last thing I am going to say, and it is on Brexit. Whatever stance you take, Taoiseach, Europe will always be behind you. We know what is at stake in these Brexit negotiations. We know how existential it is for you, but know that we will always be behind you. In these negotiations, we are all Irish, and you have to know that.

Gabriele Zimmer, *im Namen der GUE/NGL-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Herzlich willkommen, Taoiseach, zu unserer Debatte hier im Europäischen Parlament! Spätestens seit dem Brexit erahnen wir, welche Folgen ein solcher Austritt hinsichtlich der sozialen Rechte und Bürgerrechte für die betroffenen Menschen hat – nicht nur in Großbritannien selbst, sondern auf der irischen Insel und in der gesamten EU. Ein Zurück zu erneuten harten Grenzen in Europa kann es für uns nicht geben; wir werden uns dem immer verweigern. Meine Fraktion wird auch alles dafür tun, das Karfreitagsabkommen in all seinen Bestandteilen zu verteidigen.

Ein Zusammenwachsen und der Aufbau Europas sind aus meiner Sicht unausweichlich. Und doch steht die Frage, weil wir über den Brexit und die Verhandlungen zum Brexit hinaus denken müssen, ob das heutige Europa, die heutige Europäische Union mit ihren Verträgen, mit ihren Strukturen, mit ihren Institutionen geeignet ist, um wirklich die Hoffnungen der Menschen auf ein soziales, solidarisches Miteinander, auf einen Kampf gegen den Klimawandel tatsächlich auch umzusetzen. Wir sagen in meiner Fraktion: Wir haben erhebliche Zweifel daran, dass das so funktionieren wird. Ich möchte gar nicht aufzählen, mit welchen Problemen die EU gegenwärtig konfrontiert ist. Das haben wir hier oft genug getan. Ich möchte nur dazu sagen, dass es wichtig ist, dass wir uns den Ungleichheiten zwischen den Mitgliedsländern und den Ungleichheiten zwischen Bevölkerungsgruppen stellen, dass wir den Kampf gegen Armut endlich ernsthaft anstreben, und da brauchen wir Formen der Regierbarkeit der Europäischen Union. Ich habe den Eindruck, dass die Europäische Union in einigen entscheidenden Fragen nicht regierungsfähig und nicht regierbar ist. Das ist die Migrationsfrage, das ist der Kampf gegen die Steueroasen, das ist der Kampf gegen die soziale Ungleichheit.

Und die EU befindet sich in einer Legitimationskrise. Sie haben vorhin gesagt, wir müssen den EU-Bürger wieder in den Vordergrund stellen. Ja! Dazu müssen die Bürger die entsprechenden Instrumente bekommen, die entsprechenden Rechte bekommen. Sie müssen der Mittelpunkt unserer Debatte um die Zukunft der Europäischen Union werden. Sie müssen die Europäische Union mitgestalten, weil diese nicht einfach von oben verändert werden kann. Wir müssen radikal ran an die Wurzeln. Wir müssen auch über Vertragsänderungen nachdenken. Und da bitte ich Sie um die entsprechende Unterstützung.

Philippe Lamberts, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, it is a real pleasure to welcome the Prime Minister. Taoiseach, you have demonstrated again in your speech the depth of your country's and your own commitment to the European project. We all got familiar with your name on the occasion of the Brexit debate, and Ireland is obviously the Member State that will be most affected by it – not just for economic reasons but because this is about peace on the island. Let me just say this: we are at your side on this. Letting violence erupt again in Ireland will not just spell disaster for the communities concerned, but it would be an arrow through Europe's heart because the European Union is, and remains, a peace project.

Brexit is a challenge we could have avoided, but it should not detract us from those challenges that are existential to the future of Europe. Allow me, Taoiseach, to mention two of them that I find particularly relevant to Ireland. First, all societies need to find ways to live within the biophysical constraints that nature sets us. There is simply no way around it. Europe has a choice here – either to become leaders in the ecological transition of all societies, thereby becoming solution providers to the rest of the world – or to stick with the past, thereby becoming solution takers from the rest of the world. From a young, entrepreneurial Prime Minister such as you, I would expect the first option.

Yet, Taoiseach, your government has been sorely lacking ambition on tackling climate change. You said when you became Prime Minister that climate action would be your first priority. Yet it doesn't really show. This year Ireland was ranked as Europe's worst performer in tackling climate change. It is one of only two countries in the EU that will miss its 2020 emission reduction targets. And now your government seeks special deals and exemptions from the quite modest 2030 targets.

On a similar line, Prime Minister, your government opposes the waste reduction bill proposed by the Irish Greens, which only aims at bringing your country on a par with best practices across Europe on the way to a more circular economy. Come on, Taoiseach, with its abundant resources for renewable energy, Ireland has the potential to be a pioneer in green transformation. Your country and Europe's prosperity depend on it.

You will hardly be surprised by the second topic that I want to raise which is, of course, taxation. If we want our single market and single currency to thrive and to deliver benefits to all and not just the richest, we need to stop this race to the bottom on taxation and on social protection. And you know that Ireland often comes to the fore as a tax haven for corporates. Of course, you would argue – and I would agree with you – that several Member States offer real taxation rates to multinationals that are way lower than the Irish nominal 12.5%. And you would say that Ireland should be allowed to find ways to make up for geographical disadvantage. I agree with all of this, but surely the alternative cannot be between a one-size-fits-all taxation system that would work for the central big and core European countries to the detriment of everyone else and the no-holds-barred tax competition that we have right now. Instead of playing hold-out, instead of fighting European Commission decisions in court, I would expect Ireland to be at the core of efforts to better cooperate on tax matters in order to give tax justice a chance in Europe. It is not just our excessive ecological footprint, but also ballooning inequalities that threaten the very existence of all civilised societies.

Taoiseach, the European Project is about establishing a lasting peace on our continent through shared prosperity on the one hand and, on the other, through anchoring our societies in the values of freedom, democracy and human rights. I am very glad that your government wants to ensure the right of women to control their own bodies. I hope that the upcoming referendum will allow your country to make progress in that direction at a time where we see progress in the other direction in too many parts of Europe.

Taoiseach, if you can deploy the same leadership on ecological transition and on tax justice as the one that you have deployed here, you will have done a lot for the European Union. I am sure you can do it.

(Applause)

Nigel Farage, *on behalf of the EFDD Group*. – Thank you, Mr President. Well, Mr Varadkar, you are very popular here! A standing ovation from left and centre and right; Mr Juncker looking joyous! In fact this European project could have no greater, stronger devotee for a militarised, expansionist United States of Europe.

You, of course, worked here as a young man; you're a devotee. In fact, we should call you, I think, a European Unionist – whatever the cost to Ireland may be. Normally, of course, small countries count for nothing here. It's run by the big boys, but right at the minute you are important and you're useful, because you have helped with the obstructionism and the delay of Brexit. Firstly, on the Good Friday Agreement, where, as you know, the European Union had little or nothing to do with it. They were written in at a later stage, but of course, as everyone knows, nothing binds either side to continued membership of the Union, and you know the UK Government intends to fully uphold it.

The border issue has been put up as a problem, but I think your predecessor Bertie Ahern has said, look, in practical terms we don't face a problem. There has been a common travel area between us, of course, for decades, but it is on trade where that border could in some ways be challenged. And of course, when you think that nearly 50% of exports from Irish-owned companies go to the United Kingdom and in agriculture in some sectors it's as high as 90%, you potentially have quite a lot to lose. And yet, despite the fact that no one should be fighting harder for a genuine rounded trade deal than you, that doesn't appear to be the case. In fact, I'd even go further and say that if there was no trade deal between the European Union and the United Kingdom, an exception should be made for Ireland because of political sensitivity, and it's something that the World Trade Organisation, I have no doubt, would back up.

And yet it seems to me that you are prepared to put your devotion to the European project above the interest of Irish farmers and other companies too, and I wonder why. Well, let's cast our minds back a short distance: the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish. A second referendum forced on their people, conducted on the most unfair, undemocratic lines that I have ever seen. You are part, of course, of a big attempt here and elsewhere to frustrate and to attempt to overturn Brexit. You don't want Britain to leave, because you know if they do, others will leave too. And I would just say this to you: I don't want a second referendum on Brexit – absolutely not. But I fear that you are all working together with Tony Blair and Nick Clegg to make sure we get the worst possible deal. I say that because I've seen it all before. The difference is, if you force the Brits do it again, there will be a different outcome.

Marcel de Graaff, *on behalf of the ENF Group*. – Mr President, let me give you a scenario that's not in the White Book of Mr Juncker. When the EU continues on its present course, the future of Europe will be Islamic. That is the objective of the Islamic world, and that is the objective of the EU elite. It is the aim of the open border policy and it is the aim of this criminal mass immigration. Of course there are casualties of abuse, murder and rape. That's the price to pay for the extermination of national identities. That is deliberate EU policy.

There is only one obstacle on the road to the European caliphate, and that is the patriotic citizens who vote for patriotic parties. The EU has declared these parties their enemies, their biggest threat. In the EU, the rule of law do not apply to patriots. They are *homo sacer*. The future of Europe is the caliphate, unless the citizens rise and defend their culture and identity.

Diane Dodds (NI). – Mr President, Taoiseach, thank you for your vision of the future of Europe. Obviously, it is a future with the United Kingdom outside of these institutions, but an important partner in trade, security, research and many other areas. As in the relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, that future should be characterised by close links, shared values and cooperation. The outcome of Brexit on the ties between our two countries will serve as a wider test of the credentials of any deal reached between the United Kingdom and the European Union. You have rightly stressed that there should be no hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We agree, but, Mr Varadkar, I hope you recognise that it is not in the Irish Republic's interest to see Northern Ireland suffer. That would be the case if barriers were erected within the United Kingdom internal market, disrupting almost 60% of local sales that go to Great Britain. The union that matters most to Northern Ireland, both constitutionally and economically, is within the United Kingdom. In focusing on the border, Mr Varadkar, you must not forget the pre-existing relationships, east and west, that are of vital importance to both of our countries. 2018 will be a pivotal

year for relationships between the European Union and the United Kingdom, and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. I hope that we can continue to build that positive future which is vital for peace, security and economic prosperity.

Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach. – Mr President, thank you very much. I've written down a few notes. I mightn't be able to answer everyone but I'll do my best to touch on as many topics as I can.

First of all, I particularly want to thank almost all the speakers here today for their ongoing support and solidarity with Ireland. That's very much recognised, and we are very grateful for that. I think Ms Zimmer spoke about the need to reduce inequality among Member States, and I think that's something that I can very much sign up to as well.

It's been a long time since enlargement and there is still a huge gap in prosperity between Western Europe, on the one hand, and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, on the other. That's why it is so important that the next multiannual financial framework and the next European budget contain adequate funding to continue to improve the infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe, and also to support the common agricultural policy.

That's why it is so important as well, as I mentioned in my speech earlier, that we put forward a realistic pathway to European membership for the Western Balkans. I think the best way we can stabilise that part of Europe, those countries that used to be part of Yugoslavia and Albania, is to give them a pathway towards joining the European Union.

On tax, which I know is an issue of contention between many people in this Chamber and in Ireland, the view that we take as a government – and I think it is shared by a lot of governments – is that national taxes should fund national budgets. That's, therefore, a national competence and a matter of national sovereignty.

We do have European taxes at the moment that fund the European budget, or at least in. We have that with customs, we had that to a degree with VAT, and that's something that I am not opposed to at all. If you look at the model that exists in the United States, which is a federation after all, there is a lot of tax competition between Member States.

There are federal income taxes and there are state income taxes. There are different sales taxes in different Member States. So if the United States, the most successful economy in the world, can have tax competition among Member States, why can't we have the same? As I have said, we have a number of federal taxes, European taxes, already, that fund the EU budget, and that is something that I think works quite well.

In terms of the Apple case, it is important not to forget that it is a state-aid case. Technically it is not a tax case, but a state-aid case, and the contention is that Ireland had a special deal with one particular company. Quite frankly, we didn't. That is why that case is being appealed both by Apple and by the Irish Government.

Ultimately, the European courts and the European Court of Justice will make a judgment on that and, whatever that judgment is, our government will accept it. We're establishing an escrow account, we will collect the money, or at least start collecting it, in the second quarter of this year. And the money will be held in the escrow account until that decision is made by the European Court of Justice.

But it is our contention and it is our belief that we did not have a special arrangement with that company, and we can't say that we did when we know that we didn't. But, ultimately, that is going to be a matter for those courts to decide.

I want to say that Ireland is not a tax haven, we don't want to be a tax haven, and we certainly don't want to be seen or perceived as a tax haven. We have no interest, in fact, in a race to the bottom. Our low corporation tax rate, 12.5%, has been around for 20 or 30 years now. We haven't increased it, we haven't reduced it, but we've just kept it exactly as it is now.

Ireland won't win a race to the bottom. It's already the case that a number of countries have a lower tax rate for corporations than we do – Hungary and Bulgaria, just to give two examples. So if this is a race to the bottom, it is not one that Ireland is going to win. As was mentioned by other speakers, countries like France, just to use one example, have a high corporation profit tax on paper but have so many exemptions and so many different ways not to pay tax that, according to the OECD, their effective tax rate is actually lower than ours.

So if it is a race the bottom, it is not one that Ireland is going to win and, therefore, it is not one that we want to participate in. The future of our economy and the future of our prosperity is going to be much more about human capital and attracting talent and people than attracting companies based on corporate tax rate.

We have already made a number of big changes to our tax policy. We've abolished the 'double Irish', got rid of stateless corporations, and we've started taxing intellectual property again just this year. We'll continue to make steps in those directions and close loopholes, but we want other countries to do that as well, quite frankly. There is a bit of hypocrisy about that when you look at the amount of money that we actually collect in terms of corporate taxes versus other countries who collect so much less but yet on paper have a higher tax rate. I think that needs to be challenged.

(Applause)

It's also very much my strong contention that the progress that we make on this should be done at international level through the OECD process. I say that for a very obvious reason: Europeans should not do something unilaterally that only causes other countries that are not part of the European Union to gain an advantage over us, whether it is the United States, Japan, or whether it is the United Kingdom, which, of course, is going to leave. We need to bear that in mind in anything that we do.

On climate change, Ireland is somewhat unusual compared to other countries in that a huge amount of our greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture. That's because we have never really had heavy industry. We never had those big heavy industries that other countries have decommissioned and shut down, and achieved their targets in that way. That's not something we can do. As far as I am concerned, we are a laggard.

I am not proud of Ireland's performance on climate change. We need to do a lot more, and one of the things my government will do in the next few months is to publish our 10-year investment plan, our capital investment plan for Ireland over the next 10 years. Central to that will be the kind of things that we want to do around climate change to make sure we meet those targets in 2030.

That includes things such as, in transport, electrifying our railways. We only have one small part of our railway that is electrified. It's about transitioning our public transport and our bus fleet to low emissions. It's about electric cars, in particular, where we have put in some incentives, but have not got the results that we would like. There are lots of things that we intend to do so that we can meet those targets. It's something that I am very committed to, and certainly my generation of politicians is committed to. It's not just the right thing to do; it makes sense economically, I think, in the longer term as well.

In terms of the contribution of Ms Dodds, which I very much welcome, certainly I have no wish to see any borders between Northern Ireland and Ireland. I also have no wish to see any new borders or barriers between Britain and Ireland, or between Northern Ireland and Britain. That's why I did not want Brexit, because I do not want any borders.

(Applause)

Certainly, we will do everything we can to avoid any of that taking place. I know what you said and I understand what you said, that the union that is most important for you is the United Kingdom, and the single market that is most important to you is the single market of the United Kingdom, and 70% of Northern Ireland's trade is with the rest of the United Kingdom. I acknowledge that, but it should not be a choice between the 70% and the 30%.

Why not take the hundred per cent? It's possible to have special arrangements for Northern Ireland, if needs be, that allow Northern Ireland to have that because of its unique situation. That is something that I work for and something that I hope that politicians from all sides in Northern Ireland will be open to. If 100% is possible, take that, not 70% instead of 30%. I hope it is possible for us to have that discussion. It'll be more in the future.

In relation to Mr Farage's contribution, as a matter of information I have never worked here, by the way. I have worked in Ireland and the United States. I have never worked in Europe or for a European institution.

(Applause)

But in relation to small countries, I really have to disagree because I experienced that in a very personal way, not just in relation to the support that we have received on Brexit from the European institutions but also when, for the first time, I attended a European Council meeting of the prime ministers and presidents of Europe. It's a really interesting and humbling experience to get to do that.

I know some of you who have been prime ministers will have had that experience, but for Council ministers it is very different. You go into this massive room, you sit there, the ambassador sits beside you, you have six officials behind you and it is a very different experience when you go into the Council of Ministers. I went into the Council of Ministers for the first time last year. I sat around the table. There were no officials there. The only people there were the President of the Council, the President of the Commission and the heads of government of 26, 27 or 28 Member States.

I come from a country that has only 4.5 million people. We're a small country. There are many provinces, even cities, in other European countries that have more people than mine, have a bigger economy than mine, and I was sitting around the table as an equal with the President of France, the Chancellor of Germany, the Prime Minister of Spain, the Prime Minister of Italy, these really big countries, and that isn't the way Europe used to work. Before the European Union, the big countries would get together, decide what was right for Europe, and would tell the rest of us. That doesn't happen any more because of the European Council and because of these European institutions.

I am not so naive as to think that a country like Ireland, with 4.5 million people, can ever have the power or importance of a country like Germany, with 80 million people and its massive economy. But the European Union allows small countries to have a seat at the table when decisions are made, as opposed to having no say at all. That's why I believe small countries are so much better off in this Union.

(Applause)

Finally, in relation to Britain, I want to say that Britain is a country that I care a lot about. Irish people are very close to British people in so many ways, even though sometimes we don't like to admit that. In so many ways we have a shared culture and a shared history, and that's very much the experience of my family as well.

My parents met, fell in love and got married in England. She's an Irish nurse and he's a doctor from India. They both went to Britain to build a new life and that's where they met, that's where they married, and that's where they fell in love. That's where my sister was born. She still lives there, in London, with my niece and nephew, who are English kids.

They point at the Union Jack, and they say, 'Leo, that's our flag'. That's how close Irish people in many ways are to British people. We are connected by blood in so many different ways and that's why I really regret the decision that has been made on Brexit, because so much will be lost. Young people will lose the right to live, work and study anywhere in the European Union, losing those rights as European citizens. My niece and nephew won't, because they are entitled to Irish passports, but the other kids in their class will, and I think that's a real shame.

British businesses could lose their access to the biggest market in the world. Farmers, food producers, even the beer makers that you and I are so fond of, could lose the subsidies that they currently benefit from, which are not guaranteed beyond this Parliament. I am also conscious of British veterans, very brave people who fought on the beaches of France not just for Britain but also for European democracy and for European values, and people like that are always in my mind.

So, notwithstanding the decision to leave, and I respect that decision, I will absolutely fight hard to ensure that we can have a partnership and relationship between the UK and the EU that are as close as possible. It's in Ireland's interests and I think it is in the interests of British people and in the interests of the European Union as well.

We should conclude a new partnership and a new agreement with the UK. But fundamentally what we have to move away from is any idea that any country can have a relationship that involves taking all the benefits and none of the responsibilities and obligations. That's the fundamental thing that we need to insist on.

(Applause)

Procedura catch-the-eye

Seán Kelly (PPE). – A Uachtaráin, mar cheannaire Fhine Gael sa Pharlaimint ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur roimh ár dTaoiseach, Leo Varadkar, anseo inniu agus comhghairdeas a ghabháil leis as ucht an aithisc iontaigh a thug sé dúinn. Agus buíochas duitse, a Uasail Tajani, agus Manfred Weber agus na ceannairí eile a thug an deis dó a bheith linn anseo inniu chun caint agus díospóireacht a dhéanamh ar thodhchaí na hEorpa.

I was going to ask a question about climate change but that has been dealt with, so there is no need to repeat it, even though we will have a vote shortly on the renewable energy file, for which I am honoured to be a rapporteur. My question to him is very simple. He spoke about Ireland being one the most prosperous countries in Europe right now, but unfortunately we have a history of going from boom to bust, and bust to boom. What can he do, as a result of the prosperity we now enjoy, due to good leadership by him and his predecessor, and the cooperation of the European Union, to ensure we do not go into a bust situation again and particularly avoid auction politics at general elections, which has often been the root cause of this?

Go raibh maith agat, a Uachtaráin, agus fáilte romhat arís, Leo. Táimid bródúil asat!

Nessa Childers (S&D). – Mr President, I must start by thanking the Taoiseach for his continued efforts and commitment to preserve the peace process and to prevent the formation of barriers within the island of Ireland on foot of the UK's decision to withdraw from the Union. However, Taoiseach, I do not share your ideology in other ways, so I must also follow that with a plea to you, as Taoiseach of Ireland and as a member of the European political force whose world view and power has most considerably shaped both the emergence of the financial and economic crisis a decade ago and the measures taken in response to it since. That plea is that you work to mend the frayed social contract that combined together our communities at national and European level.

Just as the conflict in the north of Ireland hid inequality and deprivation of basic rights under a cloak of ethno-religious hatred, so today the march of disillusioned citizens draws much energy from the losers of globalisation and the losers of our response to a crisis of globalisation.

We saved finance and strived for a return to the status quo ante in a transfer of wealth without precedent, and I agree with Mr Kofod's view of our corporate taxation regime. Fair taxation – even a modicum of taxation in some cases – might just help us to do what I have already suggested and, who knows, make the case for the retrospective bank recapitalisation that we never saw.

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Το μέλλον της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης είναι άμεσα συυφασμένο με την αναγκαιότητα βαθιών αλλαγών στη δομή της ευρωζώνης. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό, πρέπει να καταργηθεί το δρακόντειο σύμφωνο σταθερότητας. Επιπλέον, η Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα πρέπει να μετατραπεί σε ύστατο δανειστή και το Ευρωπαϊκό Σύστημα Κεντρικών Τραπεζών να αποκεντρωθεί περαιτέρω. Στις αλλαγές της ευρωζώνης πρέπει να περιλαμβάνεται πρόβλεψη για την ανάκτηση εθνικής νομισματικής κυριαρχίας ούτως ώστε κάθε εθνική κεντρική τράπεζα να μπορεί να ασκεί τη νομισματική της πολιτική βάσει των αναγκών του κράτους της και μέχρι του ποσοστού συμμετοχής της εθνικής κεντρικής τράπεζας στο κεφάλαιο της ΕΚΤ. Οι δομικές αλλαγές στην ΟΝΕ πρέπει να συμπληρωθούν με αύξηση της διαφάνειας και της λογοδοσίας της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας με ενίσχυση των εξουσιών του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και των εθνικών κοινοβουλίων. Απαιτείται επίσης γενναία αύξηση του προϋπολογισμού της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Marian Harkin (ALDE). – Mr President, good morning Taoiseach, and welcome – and I see you've brought the snow with you! Three things: this morning you spoke of direct democracy. You said it was one of our four challenges. You supported an EU-wide list and the Spitzenkandidat. But Taoiseach, that is representative democracy, not direct democracy. Direct democracy is something like the citizens' initiative, where one million citizens from seven Member States call on the EU to act. So will you support real direct democracy?

Secondly, you spoke of Ireland's commitment to Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). You said that we won't be part of a single European defence budget. But do you envisage that the commitment we have made will mean increased defence and security spending in Ireland?

Finally, tax justice. You said twice this morning the EU cannot act unilaterally. But the EU often acts unilaterally in trying to shape global policy. Do you see Ireland as having any role in shaping this policy, where all – citizens and multinationals – pay their fair share of tax?

Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, fáilte Taoiseach. Today's uncertain present will shape the future of the EU. Brexit threatens to rip our island apart, dilute rights and freedoms we all enjoy, and stunt the economic and social development of our island. It threatens to harden the border, reinforce partition and undermine the Good Friday Agreement. So therefore I welcome your comments today about a special arrangement for the North being possible.

Sinn Féin MEPs Liadh Ní Riada, Lynn Boylan, Matt Carthy and I also welcome your comments that the people of the North will never again be left behind by the Irish government. You must hold firm to this, Taoiseach. You must also commit to a Europe that serves people, not multinationals. The civil, workers', European, environmental, linguistic and human rights of all citizens needs to be protected and indeed enhanced. They won't be achieved by a non-compassionate, faceless Europe. It won't be achieved in a Europe where the gap between the rich and the poor grows, or in a Europe of homelessness and housing waiting lists. And it certainly won't be achieved in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and in any manifestation of an aggressive, militaristic Europe.

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, Taoiseach, as we discuss with you the future of Europe – a future which I firmly believe must be based on more and stronger and political integration in a number of areas – the Catalan Parliament is meeting for the first time, again with a majority of members in favour of a Catalan Republic. But eight members of this newly elected parliament cannot be there right now, sitting in the Catalan Chamber, because they are either in jail or in exile. So the question is: do you envisage a European Union where honest politicians can be sent into exile or must be forced into jail because they fulfil a democratic mandate? Do you envisage a European Union where, again, peaceful people are beaten by police forces just because they want to vote – to exercise a basic right? Do you envisage a European Union that looks the other way when it comes to democracy and basic rights within its borders?

Paulo Rangel (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to thank the Taoiseach very much for such an inspiring and positive contribution. As far as I have understood, Mr Varadkar, you would consider – and even appreciate – the creation of a transnational list and a single European constituency. Speaking as a true federalist and European, that is apparently a romantic and generous idea but it threatens a very delicate compromise among EU Member States.

Let me put to you a couple of short questions to stimulate your reflection on this issue. Are you aware that the United States, Switzerland and Germany, which are true and historic federations, do not have a single national constituency? Are we more Catholic than the Pope? These countries have true, successful histories of integration. Are you aware that this will reinforce the weight of the big states because it is natural that in the first place on each list there will be nationals from the bigger states? This will jeopardise the position of Ireland and Portugal. You should reflect on these things.

Mercedes Bresso (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, mi permetta, Primo ministro, di ringraziarLa per il Suo intervento e anche di contestare quello che dice il collega Rengel: non sarà affatto così, le liste transnazionali, come sempre in Europa, se ci saranno, rispetteranno l'equilibrio fra paesi grandi, piccoli e medi.

Io La ringrazio per il Suo discorso. Ne parliamo, siamo qui per parlarne, avremo un dibattito fra di noi su questo. La ringrazio per il Suo discorso e volevo porLe il problema, che alcuni altri hanno già posto, di una più grande evoluzione democratica del sistema europeo. Io credo che un'equivalenza fra un Parlamento e un Consiglio che diventi un vero Senato europeo, con eguali poteri, con voto a maggioranza, permetterebbe di avere una vera, chiara e trasparente democrazia europea.

E naturalmente l'evoluzione del futuro dell'Europa deve anche garantire questo ai cittadini europei: una comprensibilità, una democraticità, una trasparenza del sistema. Credo che gli aspetti istituzionali siano altrettanto importanti di quelli economici di cui altri hanno parlato.

James Nicholson (ECR). – Mr President, I would like to say to the Taoiseach that he is very welcome here in the European Parliament today.

Taoiseach, your visit is rather timely, given that we have just reached agreement on phase one of the Brexit negotiations, and I welcome the fact that you were able to reach an agreement on that phase one and can proceed to talking about the future relationship within the European Union. I do not want to return to the borders of the past or the divisions of the past. Mr Lamberts, please do not speak about Northern Ireland ever returning to violence in my presence again, because we are not.

I listened to your comments, Ms Dodds. I was very concerned about Brexit for those very reasons, and I certainly hope that we can move forward, east-west, north-south and equally. If we can achieve that one hundred percent you speak about, Taoiseach, then I will welcome that.

Can I say, on a final point – and I hope you will agree with me – that the key to this agreement is to move things forward in Northern Ireland and get the Northern Ireland Executive back up and running again at Stormont. That, Sir, is the key to the future of Northern Ireland and the future of our relationships within the context of Brexit.

Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, I would like to say the following to the Taoiseach. In 2013, you said there would not be another cent for the banks. Last year, on your watch, our Central Bank destroyed EUR 4 billion, and in the last years EUR 9.5 billion at a time when Ireland is suffering unprecedented crisis in housing and in health. This ongoing destruction of billions is the promissory note legacy, a direct result of the full bail-out of an insolvent Anglo Irish Bank, that bail-out at a time of crisis in the EU, a time when Ireland was left isolated on the front line by its so-called friends.

So tell me, what do you think happens if there is another crisis in the EU? A crisis, let's say, on the eastern borders. In the banking crisis the EU institutions thought nothing about bending and breaking the rules. Today you say that PESCO doesn't impact on our neutrality.

In the past you said what you said on the banks but you betrayed us. You will attempt to betray us on a neutrality but you will not succeed. You will not get away it. Taoiseach, the future of Europe, as currently envisioned, is a full federal united states. That is not what we envisioned or looked at when we joined what was a community. You do not have a mandate for what you ask for. Listen to the people.

Florian Philippot (EFDD). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Premier ministre, mes chers collègues, l'avenir de l'Europe est un sujet essentiel et l'on voit bien que les peuples ne l'envisagent pas de la même manière que les élites autoproclamées et les institutions européennes, «le machin», comme aurait pu dire le général de Gaulle.

Ici, beaucoup répètent chaque jour, presque religieusement, qu'il faut plus d'Europe, avec son credo, ses blasphèmes, son bas et son haut clergés. En réalité, les citoyens des différents pays n'en peuvent plus de cette Europe. Ce qu'ils veulent, c'est d'abord la démocratie. Or, la démocratie repose par définition sur la souveraineté des peuples et on ne crée pas de peuple en regroupant artificiellement, sous la férule d'une bureaucratie tatillonne, des gens qui n'ont pour seule visée, seule espérance, qu'un marché unique organisé autour d'une concurrence sauvage déloyale, d'une immigration incontrôlée, au profit de quelques grands groupes et de lobbies hostiles à la démocratie.

Vous les Irlandais, vous le savez bien, Monsieur le Premier ministre, vivre dans un pays libre, cela n'a pas de prix, c'est un trésor. Vous avez parfois des différends avec les Britanniques – nous en avons eu nous aussi par le passé – mais nous savons que le Brexit est aujourd'hui la voie de l'avenir; nous devons la suivre pour une paix durable, pour la prospérité et surtout pour la liberté et la souveraineté de nos peuples.

Gilles Lebreton (ENF). – Monsieur le Président, en mars 2017, la Commission européenne a publié un livre blanc sur l'avenir de l'Europe. Cinq scénarios y sont envisagés, qui vont d'une Union européenne réduite à son marché unique à un État fédéral omnipotent. Cette ouverture d'esprit paraît louable, mais elle est en réalité trompeuse.

L'Union veut continuer à procéder à une intégration européenne à marche forcée. C'est le seul scénario qui vaille à ses yeux. La création d'un groupe de travail sur la subsidiarité, dont vient de parler M. Juncker, n'est qu'un grossier subterfuge.

Le Brexit aurait pourtant dû amener l'Union à se remettre en cause. Comme le peuple britannique, d'autres peuples européens ne veulent plus de cette Union européenne autoritaire, arrogante et immigrationniste. Si l'on veut préserver une forme loyale et intelligente de coopération européenne, il faut repenser l'Union et rendre aux États leur souveraineté. Il faut remplacer l'Union européenne par une union des nations européennes.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Mr President, welcome, Taoiseach, to the Parliament. There are many voices and views, as you have already heard. I am responsible for dialogue with national parliaments, and this is something that we need to do better. What are your thoughts about how the European Parliament and national parliaments operate, and would you have any guidance or advice for us?

I have to say you have set a high standard for those who come after you, and that is excellent, not just because you are Irish but because it is an important debate. You were disarmingly honest in relation to climate and the actions in Ireland, and we hope and want to make progress. You were equally frank about where taxation needs to be dealt with, and that is at the OECD level. Mr President, you are also to be congratulated for this initiative.

It is a good start to our work here in January that we have the opportunity to have an open and frank debate with the leader of my country, An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, and that that process will continue. So let's make it beneficial.

Seb Dance (S&D). – Mr President, Taoiseach, thank you for your speech. I too, like your nephew and niece, was born European, and you very kindly mention the one world city that will be leaving the European Union. Of course, there are people up and down the United Kingdom who are fighting Brexit, who are campaigning in towns and cities across the country, so don't count us out yet. As Mr Farage has said, this issue is not settled, and how dare Mr Farage say that the European Union had nothing to do with the peace process. I worked in the Northern Ireland Office under the last government. I sat in the meetings with the victims and the families of the victims of the Omagh bombing, and what I witnessed was their incredible dignity. They did not have anger; they did not have hatred, just a sense that no one should ever go through this again.

It was not the common travel area that got rid of the checks on the border: it was the creation of the single market; it was the creation of free movement; it was the values espoused in this place and put into action that removed those barriers. We should never forget that. And a warning: there are people who just want Brexit at any cost. They will try to undo what was agreed in phase one. Let's not let them do it.

Alojz Peterle (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to say the following to the Taoiseach. More than a thousand years ago, Irish monks reached Slovenians and other peoples in central Europe. Today you are the first prime minister to speak about the future of Europe in the European Parliament. My congratulations on your – and Ireland's – strong European spirit. You used three key words: heart, soul and citizens. We can make progress only if the European project is supported by European citizens in all Member States.

Prime Minister, we can agree on many concrete projects, but first of all we need a strong and uniting European narrative. What could, in your opinion, inspire and motivate European citizens for more Europe?

On Brexit, I don't believe in this expensive and hazardous exercise. British citizens decided in the first referendum without knowing the consequences. They have a right to know the consequences and to have the chance to decide in a second referendum when they are acquainted with the consequences.

Ana Gomes (S&D). – Mr President, I say to Mr Varadkar: thank you for your enlightened words for Europe. As the child of a migrant, what would you tell citizens and European leaders about the rejuvenation, regeneration that migrants actually bring to Europe? How would you impress on the EU Council the importance of full social integration for migrants and for refugees and their children?

On taxation, you said that you want a single market that serves citizens and not just corporations and you said that corporation should pay their fair share of taxes and that countries should not be played off against each other. So, are you in favour of a common cooperate consolidated tax base in the EU so that the race to the bottom does not continue?

Will you also push in the Council for a financial transaction tax so that capital is not escaping taxes while citizens and SMEs are overburdened, and so that we will have a level playing field in the single market, and ensure that our own resources for the EU and for our Member States will increase?

Esther de Lange (PPE). – Mr President, I apologise to the House for the state of my voice. Maybe a good Irish whiskey would help.

At the end of this debate, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for honouring the past but looking towards the future. This is exactly what Europe needs right now. Sometimes the current situation in Europe reminds me of that famous poem 'The Second Coming' by the great Irish poet Yeats, in which he describes a falcon moving further and further away from the falconer until it can no longer hear him, and then comes the famous line 'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold'. These centrifugal forces are, of course, also at play in the EU, culminating in Brexit which will impact your country, Mr Varadkar. I'm aware of that. And it will impact my country, the Netherlands, and we should limit that impact as far as we can.

But this – I am glad to say – was not a debate about Brexit: it was a debate about the future. It was a debate about making the centre hold on those issues where we stand no chance of defending our values and interests alone. By only acting alone and by only flying a national flag, as you said, we will in the end all be small Member States.

Thank you for your outstretched hand. We in the European Parliament will gladly take it.

(Applause)

(Fine della procedura catch-the-eye)

Leo Varadkar, Taoiseach. – Mr President, I would like to thank the honourable Members again for their interesting questions and contributions.

I was asked how we can avoid boom and bust again, and I think there are two things here. First of all, it is ensuring that we do not have credit bubbles again in Europe, and the European Central Bank is best placed to do that. And it is also around fiscal policy: balancing the books for the first year in 10 years, Ireland will not have a budget deficit this year.

It is about reducing our debt so that we can ensure we have the capacity to borrow again in future if we need to, and it is also about setting up a rainy-day fund – which we have set up – to put some of our budget surplus into, to prepare for a future downturn, which inevitably happens at some point.

Ms Childers asked about the social contract and social Europe. I think the best thing we can do to put fire back into the engine of social Europe is to build on what was agreed in Gothenburg. We actually agreed a really good political statement in Gothenburg and I would like to see us turn that into reality by using the proclamation made there to guide European legislation in those areas in the years to come. I am delighted to see we are joined by Commissioner Thyssen for this particular part of the discussion.

To Ms Harkin, I have to say that I like the idea of a citizens' initiative. I think it is a good idea. It would be a good example of direct democracy though we would also have to have safeguards because, while one million people is a lot, in the European Union of 500 million it is also a small minority. So we would have to make sure that any citizens' initiative was not a loud minority, but was actually reflective of a majority view, and that is what representatives do best.

To be frank, it is our intention to increase defence spending. We are not going to increase defence spending to anything like the level that you see in other European countries, but we intend to do it for two reasons: first of all, because a lot of the members of our defence forces – our air corps, our soldiers, people in our navy – are quite poorly paid. We are now restoring and increasing their pay and, of course, that involves an increase in defence spending. We also need to replace a lot of out-of-date equipment – our fishery protection vessels, some of our helicopters – so, yes, there will be an increase in defence spending, but it something that we would have been doing anyway even if we were not involved in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

On Catalonia – one of my favourite parts of the world, and Barcelona is one of my favourite cities – I think the only solution is dialogue, and I hope that the central Government in Madrid will engage in dialogue with the new Government in Catalonia.

Mr Rangel asked me to reflect on a few things in relation to a single European constituency. He makes some good points, notably that the United States, which is a federation, does not have a single constituency for anything. They elect their president, for example, through an electoral college. But perhaps they should have a single constituency because, on two occasions out of four now, the candidate who got the second highest amount of votes won the presidency. That, of course, is a matter for them.

I am not entirely sure that transnational lists would necessarily benefit big countries because I see what is here in front of me – the heads of groups – and I see that a number of the people who are heads of their groups are actually from small and medium-sized countries. So why might that not also happen on a list? But I think we have an opportunity now. The UK is leaving, there are seats that are free, so it is possible to have a transnational constituency without any individual Member State losing any positions, and it gives people two votes: one vote for their MEP, who represents them in their region, and a second vote for a European party, challenging people to think about those ideas. It is a big challenge and I imagine a lot of people would cast a blank vote the first time round. In time, however, people would get used to the idea.

To Mr Nicholson, I just want to thank you very much for your constructive comments. I concur totally with what you said about the new relationship and also the need to get the executive and assembly up and running. The Tánaiste and the Secretary of State have already met on this, and I will be in touch with the Prime Minister on it as well. We really want to drive that forward.

Finally, Mr Peterle asked about how we can inspire Europeans. Perhaps one of the ways we can do that is something I touched on in my speech, which is really to take action in relation to Africa, to make a part of Europe's mission to improve Africa, to stabilise it, and to make it prosperous in the way that much of Asia has become prosperous. That is a way in which I think we can turn a thought into a feeling and really give people in Europe a positive feeling about what Europe can do.

Thank you very much again for your contributions. It has been a real pleasure and a real honour to have the opportunity here to speak to the Parliament and to answer some of your questions. Thank you again.

(Applause)

President. – Taoiseach, thank you very much for your participation, thank you for your cooperation with the European Parliament. We will work together for a better Europe.

The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 162)

Francisco Assis (S&D), *por escrito*. – A UE é um dos projetos mais bem-sucedidos da história da Humanidade: proporcionou o mais longo período de paz na Europa, aproximou os povos, promoveu os direitos humanos e a abertura ao mundo, a prosperidade e a convergência, a partilha de conhecimento e a circulação de ideias, aboliu fronteiras e divisões. As complexidades desta extraordinária construção supranacional tornam, porém, qualquer mudança substancial num processo moroso e por vezes tortuoso, povoado de impasses. Essa morosidade contrasta com a aceleração do tempo que caracteriza o mundo de hoje, confrontado com profundas mutações de ordem tecnológica, energética, económica e laboral, entre outras, as quais geram angústia e insegurança entre os europeus. Em simultâneo, persistem fraturas internas surgidas ou descobertas nos últimos anos, ainda que mitigadas, e a retórica soberanista regressou em força ao espaço mediático. Apesar de todas estas dificuldades, o balanço do percurso histórico deste projeto político não pode deixar de ser francamente positivo. O grande desafio da UE passa por se manter firme na afirmação da superioridade dos valores da liberdade, da abertura, da solidariedade e da moderação, recusando soçobrar ao fechamento, ao egoísmo e ao extremismo.

Carlos Coelho (PPE), *por escrito*. – O Parlamento Europeu organiza um conjunto de debates sobre o futuro da Europa com personalidades destacadas. Esta iniciativa é bem-vinda, mas as instituições precisam concentrar esforços na tomada célere de decisões estruturantes para os próximos anos. Acompanho, genericamente, a visão de Leo Varadkar sobre os principais desafios para o futuro.

No que respeita ao Brexit, subscrevo na íntegra a necessidade de salvaguardar os Acordos de Sexta-feira Santa, integrando este compromisso em qualquer acordo de saída ou de futuras relações UE-Reino Unido. Concordo com a proposta de partir da Cooperação Estruturada Permanente, agora lançada, para uma integração mais profunda na defesa, para combater desafios comuns como a cibersegurança ou o tráfico de droga e armas. Partilho o entendimento da necessidade de aprofundar o mercado interno, construindo um Mercado Único Digital que compreenda a dimensão dos serviços financeiros. Neste aspeto, saúdo o compromisso do Taoiseach no sentido da defesa de uma maior integração no plano fiscal, para combate à fraude e evasão. Embora não perspetive um alargamento para breve, acompanho o entendimento da necessidade de aprofundar as relações com a vizinhança, designadamente com países dos Balcãs. Subscrevo o alerta para a necessidade de rapidez na construção do novo Sistema Comum de Asilo.

Ангел Джамбазки (ЕКР), *в писмена форма*. – Подкрепям позицията, изразена от г-н Вардакар, за нуждата за по-демократична Европа, но за да постигнем това, трябва да бъдем по-близо да гражданите си. Смятам, че предприетият път за по-централизирана Европа или, иначе казано, федеративната идея за Европейски съюз, е грешен. Множеството варианти за реформа ни дават поле за размисъл.

Моята позиция е, че в рамките на ЕС, трябва да бъде премахнат двойният стандарт и най-вече да бъдат върнати компетенции на държавите членки. Виждаме, че в цяла Европа нарастват настроенята на хората, които искат институциите да са по-близо до тях. Виждаме какво се случва в Каталуня, но в крайна сметка това е нормално. Хората искат силни национални държави. Затова пътят за реформа на ЕС е не повече, а по-малко ЕС, по-силни национални държави. По-малко бюрокрация, повече работа в името на хората.

Eva Maydell (PPE), *in writing*. – As an MEP and President of the European Movement International, my take on the 'future of Europe' debate is that we don't need to rebuild the whole house anew. The EU has a great body of achievements and we need to defend those that are valuable to EU citizens – such as freedom of movement, solidarity of cohesion policy or the EMU. But we also need a Europe that is able to change and adapt.

We have a historic chance to establish a new relationship with citizens, and the wind is indeed in our sails. The levels of support for the EU have returned to those of before the crisis: 57% of Europeans today support their country's membership in the EU, and 64% believe EU membership has benefited their country. In fact, many Europeans today are asking for a more engaged EU in spheres like migration management, security and defence and even social policy.

The agenda that we set today is an indication of what kind of Europe we aspire to – a Europe that protects, a Europe that offers solutions to its citizens in disadvantaged regions, a Europe that has clear and uniform rules for citizens of third countries, an EU that creates stability for its immediate neighbours.

IN THE CHAIR: PAVEL TELIČKA*Vice-President***9. Powitanie**

President. – Colleagues, it is my pleasure to inform you that the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean will meet today Mr Adel Al Asoomi, Vice-President of the Arab Parliament, and Mr Ahmed Mechergui, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and National Security. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr Al Asoomi and Mr Mechergui and take the opportunity to stress the importance that we attach to cooperation between the European Parliament and the Arab Parliament, so a warm welcome to you, gentlemen.

(Applause)

I see requests for the floor for points of order, but I underline that I will accept only points of order with reference to the rule in the Rules of Procedure, otherwise I will not give the floor so that we can proceed with the vote.

Ivo Vajgl (ALDE). – Mr President, I think you will realise that this is an important issue on which I would like to say a couple of words. One of the most respected and moderate political leaders of Kosovo...

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – Mr Vajgl, I am sorry but this is not a point of order. You have not cited the rule under which you want to speak. As I have said, due to the length of the vote that we will have today on key items and key packages, I will only accept points of order. I do apologise, but hopefully we will have the time tomorrow.

Ana Gomes (S&D). – I would like to inform you that Professor Merera Gudina has been released in Ethiopia. We in this Parliament called for his release. That is very good.

President. – Once again, note taken but we will now proceed with the vote. None of these were points of order.

10. Głosowanie

President. – The next item is the vote.

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

10.1. Kontrola wywozu, transferu, pośrednictwa, pomocy technicznej i tranzytu w odniesieniu do produktów podwójnego zastosowania (A8-0390/2017 - Klaus Buchner) (głosowanie)

President. – I give the floor to Mr Tarand just to make his point.

Indrek Tarand. – Mr President, this is not a point of order, and I understand colleagues hate their rapporteurs grandstanding in the midst of votes, but it's important. We have two very good candidates to be nominated to the Court of Auditors in Luxembourg, and they both deserve at least mentioning before a vote, and Ms Eva Linström from Sweden, among many other good qualities, also improves the gender balance in Luxembourg....

(The President cut off the speaker)

President. – Mr Tarand, we are not there yet. We are still on the report by Mr Buchner.

After the vote:

Klaus Buchner, *rapporteur*. – Mr President, I would like to request that we do not conclude the first reading but send a draft legislative act back to the Committee on International Trade in accordance with Rule 59(4) for interinstitutional negotiations based on the amendments adopted. Can we please vote on that?

(Parliament approved the request)

10.2. Powołanie członka Trybunału Obrachunkowego – Eva Lindström (A8-0003/2018 - Indrek Tarand) (głosowanie)

— *Before the vote:*

Indrek Tarand, *rapporteur*. – Mr President, I apologise for my first intervention. Statistically obviously I get two speeches in plenary now! The important thing is that we have two very good candidates, as I said, from Sweden and from Ireland, but in particular, I would like to draw your attention to the Irish method, which was an open public competition for the nomination. I would like to make an oral amendment to this report. I shall read it: ‘Calls on Member States to pay attention to, and if possible take inspiration from, the open competition model used by Ireland when selecting their nominees;’.

(The oral amendment was accepted)

10.3. Powołanie członka Trybunału Obrachunkowego – Tony James Murphy (A8-0002/2018 - Indrek Tarand) (głosowanie)

(The oral amendment was accepted)

10.4. Promowanie stosowania energii ze źródeł odnawialnych (A8-0392/2017 - José Blanco López) (głosowanie)

— *After the vote on Article 26(6)(2):*

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D). – Mr President, unfortunately it was not at all clear when we proceeded to the voting on Amendment 240 CP and the article. On our list, for example, it was not clear at all.

President. – Ms Kumpula-Natri, I made it clear on the first one, and on the second I specified the Article and the paragraph, so in my opinion that was absolutely clear. (So then the original text falls and we will now proceed with Amendment 317.)

— *After the vote:*

José Blanco López, *ponente*. – Señor presidente, después de este mandato claro e inequívoco a favor de la energía limpia, propongo, de acuerdo con el artículo 59 del Reglamento interno, la devolución del asunto a la comisión para poder empezar las negociaciones con el resto de las instituciones.

(Parliament approved the request)

10.5. Efektywność energetyczna (A8-0391/2017 - Miroslav Poche) (głosowanie)

— *After the vote on Amendment 6:*

Markus Pieper (PPE). – Herr Präsident! In dieser Erwägung haben wir über 40 % abgestimmt. Und nach meinem Verständnis muss das fallen, weil wir vorher über 35 % Zielsetzung abgestimmt haben. Das passt also nicht zusammen. Also über diesen Änderungsantrag, über diese Erwägung, hätten wir nicht abstimmen dürfen.

President. – Mr Pieper, the problem is that in consistency with the vote and according to the voting list, if the vote has taken place like that then it has been voted. I am afraid that is the case, so we will now proceed with the vote on Amendment 102.

— *After the vote:*

Miroslav Poche, zpravodaj. – Já bych stejně jako ostatní zpravodajové rád požádal o vrácení k projednání do výboru pro zahájení interinstitucionálního vyjednávání.

(Parliament approved the request)

10.6. Zarządzanie unią energetyczną (A8-0402/2017 - Michèle Rivasi, Claude Turmes) (głosowanie)

— *After the vote:*

Claude Turmes, rapporteur. – Mr President, good day, sunshine. Good day, Paris Agreement. The people of this planet thank you for this vote. Dear President, dear Pavel, on behalf of the co-rapporteur, Michèle Rivasi, and myself, I would like to request a referral of the matter back to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy for interinstitutional negotiations in accordance with Rule 59, paragraph 4, subparagraph 4 of the Rules of Procedure.

(Parliament approved the request)

President. — That concludes the vote.

11. Wyjaśnienia dotyczące sposobu głosowania

11.1. Promowanie stosowania energii ze źródeł odnawialnych (A8-0392/2017 - José Blanco López)

Oral explanations of vote

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Mr President, cui bono. In whose benefit is this ban on biofuels? It is presented to us, as these things always are, as being in the interests of the planet and ecologically friendly and all the rest of it. But the reality is that this is a vote driven by the interests of rape seed producers here in Europe, specifically the biofuels industry at home.

It is a much less efficient product. Producing rapeseed is in terms of the ratio of tonnage to energy about five times more costly than using palm oil, and yet it is being presented to us as being all about saving virgin forests and orangutans, and so on, to the extent that if there is any interest in Malaysia and the other producing countries in this kind of ban, it comes from the large producers who are trying to squeeze their smaller competitors out of business. The reality is that we should have a market based on choice; we should trust consumers to use their own ethics and their own judgment; and we should not have cartels dictating European policy yet again.

Alex Mayer (S&D). – Thank you Mr President. I am proud to back increased binding targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency. We are getting greener. For the first time since the Industrial Revolution, last year the UK had a day without using any coal power to generate electricity. British wind farms, such as Ranson Moor in Fenland – which has a flat landscape, great for wind – and which I had the pleasure of visiting on Friday, generated more electricity than coal plants on more than 75% of days last year. Indeed, already this year, the compact Cambridgeshire site has powered over a hundred homes.

But past success is no guarantee for the future. I believe that Britain needs to retain membership of the internal energy market, and our government needs to set a long-term consistent vision for energy, drop its opposition to onshore, and embrace these ambitious targets. We must not be blown off course. Rather, let us embrace the winds of change.

Gilles Pargneaux (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, aujourd'hui le Parlement européen a adopté la révision de la directive «Énergies renouvelables». Ce vote est crucial pour l'environnement et la santé des Européennes et des Européens, mais également pour les industries et les agriculteurs européens.

Sur la question importante des biocarburants de première génération, je me réjouis de l'adoption d'une position claire, cohérente et surtout, réaliste. Cette directive nous mènera vers une réduction progressive des biocarburants de première génération qui tient compte des inquiétudes exprimées par les 100 000 agriculteurs producteurs de colza en France et les 20 000 salariés de la filière biodiesel française. De plus, cette directive tend et mène vers une interdiction totale des biocarburants produits à base d'huile de palme issue de la déforestation d'ici à 2021.

Deuxième plus grand importateur mondial d'huile de palme, l'Union européenne doit être ferme et légiférer sur les importations d'huile de palme issue de la déforestation. J'espère sincèrement que nous parviendrons vite à un accord avec le Conseil européen sur cette directive majeure.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Já bych chtěla vysvětlit, proč jsem nakonec hlasovala pro návrh směrnice o podpoře obnovitelných zdrojů.

Souhlasím s navýšením podílu obnovitelných zdrojů na 35 %, a to v závazném cíli pro celou EU, ale s flexibilitou pro národní státy. Obnovitelné zdroje jsou vhodným způsobem boje proti změnám klimatu a znečištění ovzduší. Samozřejmě jsou také příležitostí pro ekonomický rozvoj a inovace. Ale je třeba ponechat členským státům dostatečnou flexibilitu. Hlasovala jsem také pro rozšíření působnosti směrnice na letectví, protože jak víme, letectví je jedním z velkých znečišťovatelů.

Naopak jsem nepodpořila příliš striktní přístup vůči biopalivům. Jsem pro zastopování první generace biopaliv na stav roku 2017, což je do budoucna omezí, ale neohrozí negativně už vynaložené investice. EP tedy přijal návrh, který je realistický a umožňuje dobré vyjednávací pozice.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Η προώθηση της χρήσης ενέργειας από ανανεώσιμες πηγές θα μπορούσε να συμβάλει στην αντιμετώπιση των προκλήσεων λόγω της υπερθέρμανσης του πλανήτη. Ταυτόχρονα όμως η εγκατάσταση μονάδων ΑΠΕ και ιδίως αιολικών πάρκων πρέπει να γίνεται με σεβασμό προς το περιβάλλον. Κάτι τέτοιο δεν ισχύει για την εγκατάσταση αιολικών πάρκων στη Νότια Καρυστία, μια περιοχή που προστατεύεται από το δίκτυο Natura: σχεδιάζεται να εγκατασταθούν εκεί 42 αιολικά πάρκα ισχύος 700MW, αριθμός μεγαλύτερος από το επιτρεπόμενο όριο για οποιαδήποτε περιοχή της Ελλάδος. Η κατασκευή νέων δρόμων για τη μεταφορά ανεμογεννητριών στις κορυφές της Όχης θα διαταράξει την οικολογική ισορροπία. Η ηλεκτρομαγνητική ακτινοβολία που εκπέμπουν οι πυλώνες που γειτνιάζουν με κατοικημένες περιοχές δημιουργούν τεράστιο κίνδυνο για την υγεία των κατοίκων. Με παρεμβάσεις μας στο Σώμα και με ερώτηση καταγγείλαμε την παραβίαση της νομοθεσίας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για την προστασία της υγείας των κατοίκων και του περιβάλλοντος. Δεδομένου ότι η Επιτροπή ενημέρωσε ότι ξεκίνησε η διαδικασία παραπομπής της Ελλάδας στο Δικαστήριο για το ζήτημα αυτό, αναμένουμε τα πρακτικά αποτελέσματα αυτής της ενέργειας. Οψόμεθα!

Molly Scott Cato (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, many Members of this House seem to have forgotten the devastation caused by the Renewable Energy Directive in 2009, when binding targets for biofuels led to a sharp spike in land grabs and deforestation to grow crops for biofuels. As profits in the biofuels sector increase, so does their influence over policy-making, and their destructive impact was evident today. By increasing the cap on biofuels in the transport sector, Parliament is incentivising the land for fuel policy that has led to global food insecurity. Biofuel crops grown on peatland and deforested land contribute almost as much in carbon emissions as fossil fuels.

I welcome the ban on palm oil for fuel, but crops like soybean, rapeseed and sunflower have carbon footprints that are almost as high as oil from tar sands.

The 35% ceiling on biofuels by 2030 can be celebrated, but it is the fine detail in this directive that will have those in the biofuel lobby rubbing their hands in glee as they prepare to cash in on the land of the world's most vulnerable people, land that should be managed for the good of the climate and for biodiversity.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Úr! Szavazatommal támogattam a megújuló energiával kapcsolatos jelentést, ami szerves részét képezi a „Tiszta energia” csomagnak. A bioüzemanyagokra vonatkozó részeknél – sajnálatos módon több esetben – a pálmaolaj és az első generációs bioüzemanyagok összemossásra kerültek. Ezeknél a pontoknál konzekvensen úgy szavaztam, hogy kiküszöböljük a félreértéseket. Fontos pontnak tartom, hogy a javaslat magában foglalt egy követelést, amely szerint tilthatóvá tennénk az energia-önellátás adóztatását, büntetését. Ezzel megfordíthatnánk azt a magyar kormány által is elindított értelmetlen gyakorlatot, amikor is a megújulóenergia-termelést extra adókkal büntetik. Konkrét példaként említeném a napелеmek adóztatását. Meg kell értetni minden kormánnyal, hogy a megújulóenergia-termelést, az okos megoldásokat és a diverzifikációt ösztönözni és nem gátolni kell.

11.2. Efektywność energetyczna (A8-0391/2017 - Miroslav Poche)

Oral explanations of vote

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Dovolte, abych se tedy vyjádřila, jak nakonec dopadlo hlasování o návrhu směrnice o energetické účinnosti. Já jsem hlasovala pro návrh, protože považuji energetické úspory za vhodný nástroj ke zlepšení ekologie. Postup ale nesmí být více rychlý, než je výzkum a inovace. Rozhodně také podporuji flexibilitu ke stanovení a k posuzování plnění vnitrostátních cílů v této energetické účinnosti. Nemohla jsem podpořit zvýšení fixního závazného cíle na 40 %, což naštěstí neprošlo, a také jsem nehlasovala pro zvýšení cíle a pro rozšíření povinnosti renovací na všechny veřejné budovy. To považuji za příliš velký dopad do státních rozpočtů.

Vzhledem k tomu, že prošla řada dobrých pozměňovacích návrhů, tak jsem v závěru mohla hlasovat pro návrh směrnice.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, συζητούμε για την ενεργειακή απόδοση τη στιγμή που το κυρίαρχο πρόβλημα σε όλη την Ευρώπη είναι η ενεργειακή φτώχεια. Ενεργειακή φτώχεια που πλήττει εκατομμύρια ανέργους και φτωχούς. Στην Ελλάδα το πρόβλημα έχει κορυφωθεί. Πάνω από 100.000 νοικοκυριά δεν έχουν τη δυνατότητα να πληρώσουν τους λογαριασμούς του ηλεκτρικού ρεύματος. Πέρυσι έγιναν 35.000 διακοπές ρεύματος σε φτωχά νοικοκυριά τα οποία, λόγω της αδυναμίας τους, είχαν χρέη προς τη ΔΕΗ. Ταυτόχρονα, έχουμε αυξημένο φόρο προστιθέμενης αξίας στην παροχή ηλεκτρικού ρεύματος ενώ πρόκειται για υπηρεσία κοινής ωφέλειας. Το πετρέλαιο θέρμανσης έχει πάει στα ύψη μια και η τρόικα επέβαλε την αύξηση του ειδικού φόρου κατανάλωσης. Αποτέλεσμα είναι να ξεπαγιάζει η Ελλάδα και οι συμπολίτες μας να καίνε ό,τι βρουν, πραγματικά, με αποτέλεσμα να έχουμε αύξηση της αιθαλομίχλης. Είναι πλέον απαράδεκτη η κατάσταση που ισχύει στην Ελλάδα με την ενεργειακή φτώχεια.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Úr! Üdvözlöm a „Tiszta energia mindenkinek” című csomagot, amely figyelembe vesz részben olyan fontos ügyeket is, mint az energiaszegénység és a klímapolitika aspektusai. Az energiahatékonyság esetében nem kérdés, hogy nagy hangsúlyt kell fektetnünk az intelligens vagy az okos technológiákra, eljárásokra. Üdvözlöm tehát az erre vonatkozó módosításokat, hisz a Bizottság által is becsült több mint 100 milliárd eurós beruházást csak így módon lehet elkölteni. Egy dologra hívnám fel a figyelmet: azokban a régiókban, ahol a megélhetés gondot jelent nem elsődleges, hogy az energiahatékonysággal foglalkozzanak az emberek, hisz az olcsóbb termékek vásárlása kerül előtérbe érthető okokból. Természetesen megértem, hogy az innovációt meg kell fizetni, de ezen a téren is megoldásokat sürgetek.

11.3. Zarządzanie unią energetyczną (A8-0402/2017 - Michèle Rivasi, Claude Turmes)

Oral explanations of vote

Rosa D'Amato (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, oggi quando si valutano le scelte nel settore dell'energia che sono compiute dall'Unione europea si ha un'immagine in chiaroscuro tutt'altro che esaltante, basti pensare a quanto sta avvenendo in Italia, nella mia regione, con il TAP e a quanto è in dirittura di arrivo con la progettazione del Poseidon: si continua cioè a insistere su nuove devastanti realizzazioni legate al fossile anziché spingere sulle rinnovabili.

In questo caso, però, nonostante la levata di scudi della maggioranza di quanti siedono qui al Parlamento rispetto all'eliminazione totale dei sussidi al fossile, che noi abbiamo invece chiesto a gran voce, la proposta sulla governance dell'Unione dell'energia sembra fare un passo avanti grazie alla maggiore partecipazione e trasparenza nella pianificazione e all'aggiornamento dei piani nazionali legati al clima e all'energia, sfruttando il potenziale delle città, delle regioni, dei cittadini e delle imprese.

Inoltre l'inserimento degli obiettivi di efficienza energetica, il ruolo della decarbonizzazione e la maggiore diffusione delle rinnovabili vanno sicuramente nella giusta direzione. È per questo motivo che abbiamo votato positivamente.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Já bych se chtěla vyjádřit k návrhu, který je posledním ze tří. Je to návrh nařízení o správě energetické unie a my jsme ho hlasovali jako poslední, protože vlastně uzavíral to hlasování tří legislativ, které se týkají energetického balíčku. Bohužel jsem v závěru nemohla podpořit tento návrh nařízení. Obecně samozřejmě podporuji flexibilní přístup pro jednotlivé státy, a proto jsem očekávala, že to bude zohledněno více i při hlasování o pozměňovacích návrzích, např. nepodpořila jsem striktní lhůty pro národní energetické a klimatické strategie. Hlasovala jsem proti závaznému charakteru národních cílů energetické účinnosti. Já se prostě domnívám, že tady je potřeba ponechat větší flexibilitu.

Bohužel tento třetí návrh legislativy, tedy nařízení, neodpovídá zcela těm dvěma předchozím, které umožňovaly větší flexibilitu, větší racionalitu.

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η διακυβέρνηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης οφείλει να σέβεται την ίδια τη Συνθήκη. Αυτό σημαίνει ότι οφείλει να σέβεται τις αρμοδιότητες των κρατών μελών και οφείλει η διαδικασία διακυβέρνησης της Ενεργειακής Ένωσης να σέβεται και την αρχή των δοτών εξουσιών, που σημαίνει ότι τα όργανα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης έχουν τόσες εξουσίες όσες τους απονέμει η Συνθήκη. Όμως, αυτό που βλέπουμε είναι ότι επιχειρείται να αφαιρεθεί η εξουσία των κρατών μελών στον τομέα αυτό. Αυτό γίνεται με έμμεσο τρόπο από την Επιτροπή, η οποία θέλει να επιβάλει μία εκ των προτέρων έγκριση οποιωνδήποτε διεθνών συνθηκών θα υπογράψουν τα κράτη μέλη. Στην ουσία, πρόκειται για υπαρφαγή κυριαρχών εξουσιών από τα κράτη μέλη. Τώρα έχουμε μια δεύτερη περίπτωση με τη θεσμοθέτηση των μακρο-περιφερειών όπου, και μέσα από αυτόν τον θεσμό, επιχειρείται επίσης η συρρίκνωση και η αφαίρεση κυριαρχών αρμοδιοτήτων των κρατών μελών στο πεδίο αυτό. Είμαι κάθετα αντίθετος με αυτή τη διαδικασία.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Úr! Üdvözlöm a „Tiszta energia mindenkinek” csomagot, főleg annak Európai Unióra vonatkozó jelentését. Támogatom a közös törekvéseket, hiszen ez a kérdés is olyan, amelyet csak közösen tudunk sikeresen megoldani. A tagállamok gyakran elfelejtik, hogy a szabad tagállami energiamix kialakításának ma is van közös koncepciója, így az energiabiztonság, a szolidaritás, az energiahatékonyság, az energiatakarékosság, az energiahálózatok összekapcsolása, illetve az új és megújuló energiaforrások arányának növelését is szem előtt kell tartani. Azt is megfogalmazza ez a jelentés, hogy kerülni kell a költséges, magas szennyezéssel járó beruházásokat, hogy biztonságot és kiszámíthatóságot kell biztosítani a fosszilis energiáktól mentes beruházásoknak. Fontosnak tartom, hogy a nukleáris energiát ne számolhassák el a tagállamok megújuló energiaként, hisz a nukleáris energia nem tiszta és nem biztonságos energia. Mindezeket figyelembe véve a jelentést szavazatommal támogattam.

12. Korekty do głosowania i zamiar głosowania: patrz protokół

(The sitting was suspended at 14.08)

Președinte: IOAN MIRCEA PAȘCU

Vicepreședinte

13. Wznowienie posiedzenia

(Ședința a fost reluată la ora 15.00)

14. Przyjęcie protokołu poprzedniego posiedzenia: patrz protokół

15. Akty delegowane i środki wykonawcze (art. 105 ust. 6 oraz art. 106 ust. 4 lit. d) Regulaminu): patrz protokół

16. Rosja – wpływ propagandy na państwa członkowskie UE (debata na aktualny temat)

Președintele. – Următorul punct de pe ordinea de zi este dezbaterea tematică privind Rusia – influența propagandei asupra statelor din UE (2018/2507(RSP)).

Aș dori să vă informez pe toți că în această dezbateră nu se aplică procedura „catch the eye” și nu se acceptă cartonașe albastre.

Sandra Kalniete (PPE). – Mr President, Commissioner, colleagues, I will not try to describe all the impacts of Russian propaganda on European countries and societies: instead I will focus on what should be our response.

First we have to recognise, and then to raise awareness and share expertise within the Union. I commend the work of the European External Action Service (EEAS) East StratCom Task Force, the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and the Centres of Excellence for Strategic Communication and for Countering Hybrid Threats, but I regret that the EU capacities are under-funded and under-staffed. The Commission and the EEAS have not heard the alarm bells that have been ringing in this House and in the European capitals since the war against Ukraine.

I invite Commission Vice-President and High Representative Mogherini and other EU leaders to balance their meetings with Lavrov and Putin with due attention to the Kremlin's attempts to weaken and undermine our democracies and alliances.

Secondly, we have to make our societies more resilient. There are many aspects to this but some require swift legislative action by the House. Through the revised Audiovisual Services Directive we have to mandate national media regulators to adopt a zero tolerance policy against hate speech, irrespective of the media platform, and there is a need for significantly increased transparency of media ownership so that citizens know who's who in the media they use.

Freedom of speech should be defended against those who use it against our fundamental values. Transparency and stricter regulation are the key words for political-party and campaign funding in the Member States. The EPP Group has called for a major review looking into indirect Kremlin funding of European political protagonists, and particularly into shady support for anti-European and anti-democratic forces in our societies. This is closely linked to the need for enhanced investigation and prevention of money laundering by Kremlin-linked entities through European banks and companies.

Thirdly, we have to consider how we credibly deter the Kremlin from cyber meddling and disinformation operations. When told in no uncertain terms that it will face unpleasant consequences and bear significant costs, the Kremlin tends to listen. But any deterrent is credible only if it is based on capacities and the political will to deploy the instruments available, and once again we need adequate resources at European level. The EU Cyber Security Agency is in its infancy and, if we want to be serious about it, its budget should be increased not twofold but tenfold.

One key to our capacity building in the cyber domain is trans-Atlantic cooperation and NATO, and, given the political dynamics in Washington, European states have to take the lead in any collective action vis-à-vis the Kremlin, as well as in setting international rules for cyber space. Europe drives the global agreement on climate change and it should be among the rule makers for cyber space.

Fourthly, there is no substitute for independent and fact-based journalism. The world's richest and most powerful publisher, Facebook, has replaced editors with algorithms, shifting entire societies away from critical thinking while making billions from our clicks. I am convinced that quality journalism should be supported by governments, and by the EU, because otherwise it would disappear and leave us all at the mercy of Kremlin and other trolls who have learned how to play the social media game.

(Applause)

Monika Panayotova, *Présidente en exercice du Conseil*. – Monsieur le Président, honorables membres du Parlement européen, Monsieur le Commissaire, avant de présenter mon discours sur le sujet du débat, comme je prends la parole pour la première fois devant vous, au nom du Conseil, je voudrais tout d'abord vous dire que je suis ravie d'être à votre disposition au cours de la présidence bulgare.

En tant qu'ancienne députée européenne, je sais très bien à quel point il est important de travailler ensemble, en étroite coopération, pour pouvoir répondre aux attentes de nos citoyens et garantir la légitimité démocratique de l'agenda européen et des politiques de l'Union européenne. Comme nous le rappelle la devise de notre présidence en bulgare, l'union fait la force.

Now I will switch to the language of Shakespeare in order to thank you for inviting the Presidency to intervene on behalf of the Council in this topical debate and on this very topical issue. In this Chamber you have indeed discussed the issue of propaganda and fake news several times in recent months.

As regards Russia, in March 2015, the European Council stressed the need to challenge that country's ongoing disinformation campaigns. It invited the High Representative, in cooperation with Member States and the European Union institutions, to prepare an action plan on strategic communication. It noted at the same time that the establishment of the communication team was the first step in this regard. As a result, the East StratCom Task Force was launched in September 2015. It has been engaged in developing communication products and campaigns, focused on explaining EU policies in the Eastern Partnership region. This includes proactive communication campaigns, as well as analysing disinformation trends, explaining disinformation narratives and myth-busting.

In November last year, EU Foreign Ministers took stock of the current work on EU strategic communications, in particular as regards outreach to the Eastern Partnership region, the southern neighbourhood and the Western Balkans. They agreed to enhance work further and expressed their support for the development of all three task forces. In December 2017, they decided to reinforce cooperation with NATO partners on countering hybrid threats. Member States have also underlined the importance of expressing positive EU messages in the EU neighbourhood, as well as the need to counter disinformation where and when needed. I am sure that today you will discuss the work and the findings of the East StratCom Task Force, as well as the influence of the reported activities in EU countries.

In their joint communication on resilience in the EU's external action last June, the High Representative and the Commission noted that the European Union, as well as some of its partner countries, was targeted by external disinformation activities that discredit the political and social systems that are central to our identity, security and stability. They underlined the importance of further developing measures to increase citizens' resilience to disinformation, notably by raising awareness and by supporting greater media plurality and professionalism.

Indeed, the challenges posed by the proliferation – including online and on social media – of new sources of disinformation need to be addressed on many different levels. We must, for instance, not forget the important role of education and the need to develop democratic resilience, media literacy, tolerance and critical thinking. These efforts have become key to fighting off propaganda and manipulation through fake news, which threaten the very foundation of our societies as citizens elect their representatives on the basis of political views shaped by an open and fair debate. These issues were discussed notably during the third annual rule of law dialogue in the General Affairs Council in October last year, when Ministers discuss the topic of media pluralism and rule of law in the digital age.

Finally, I would also like to refer to the High-Level Expert Group on fake news launched by the Commission. Its first meeting was held at the beginning of this week. It will help define the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders and formulate recommendations. Its work will be of interest to all of us.

I look forward to your debate which I will follow attentively.

Julian King, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, thank you for organising this topical debate on a subject which is, as we have already heard, of the highest importance, not only to the EU but also to all our citizens. On behalf of the Commission, I welcome the analysis set out in Parliament's resolution on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against the Union by third parties.

There seems, frankly, little doubt that the pro-Kremlin disinformation campaign is an orchestrated strategy, delivering the same disinformation stories in as many languages as possible, through as many channels as possible, as often as possible. This conclusion is based on two years' work by the EU's East StratCom Task Force, which has gathered more than 3 500 examples of pro-Kremlin disinformation, contradicting publicly available facts, repeated in many languages on many occasions.

Russian authorities are not exactly shy about the goals of this disinformation campaign and disinformation activity. In Russia's official military doctrine, as well as statements by top Russian generals, they describe the use of false data and destabilising propaganda as legitimate tools, and information as another type of armed force. While EU Member States are obviously in the front line for such Russian disinformation, the Commission's main role is to try and head off any fragmentation that might arise from differing Member State responses to such activities. That is why we place great emphasis on the role of the East StratCom Task Force under High Representative / Vice-President Mogherini, responsible for countering disinformation in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. Its objectives, as we have already heard, are to ensure more effective communication and promotion of EU policies towards these neighbourhoods and EU Member States, to contribute to a strengthened media environment in these neighbourhoods and Member States, and to improve EU capacity to forecast, address and respond to disinformation activities by external actors.

In terms of positive communication, the Task Force supports and advises EU delegations in the Eastern Partnership, Russia and Central Asia on how to improve their communications. It provides media products to support that activity: for example, the team was responsible for the communications campaign in the run-up to, and during, last November's Eastern Partnership Summit. The Task Force works closely with the Commission and EU delegations in the eastern neighbourhood in support of independent media.

The Task Force is a permanent member of all the relevant donor committees supporting independent media. It has also launched a Russian-language service from Brussels, providing updates and fact-based background information about the Union for Russian-language journalists. The aim is to increase visibility and more accurate representation of EU policies in the Russian media.

Lastly, the Task Force produces a weekly disinformation review. Its Twitter account ensures that the Task Force's products reach up to two million people per month, in addition, obviously, to regular background briefings, including to international media, think-tanks and academics. This work is very important. That is why I welcome the proposal that Parliament has advanced to strengthen both our East and South StratCom Task Forces.

We have heard about the importance of cyber security. I have had the occasion to address this House on cyber security previously, and I am afraid time does not allow me today to go into details but, from the Commission side, as set out in the proposals last September, we strongly support measures to build our cyber resilience and our cyber deterrence.

Rightly, there has been a focus on the wider phenomenon of fake news. It is one of the Commission's priorities for the coming year. As we have heard, in November last year we established a high-level expert group, which has now started its work to advise the Commission on scoping the phenomenon, grasping its international dimension, defining the roles and responsibilities of relevant stakeholders and presenting recommendations. The group will contribute to the preparation of a strategy addressing the challenge of fake news, which we will issue in spring this year.

The Commission has also launched a public consultation on fake news, which is open until 23 February. There are two questionnaires available – one for our citizens and one targeted at legal entities and journalists to draw on their professional experience. We will see what those consultations highlight, but we believe that strong media literacy and promoting quality media are important elements of meeting the challenge of fake news, because media freedom and pluralism are pillars of our of our democracy. They are fundamental rights and they are crucial guarantees for open and free democratic debate.

It is primarily for Member States to guarantee media freedom and pluralism. That said, the Commission is aware of existing challenges and is taking a number of measures, within our competence, to strengthen media freedom and pluralism across the Union, including, further to an initiative of this Parliament, funding the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom in Leipzig to address violations of media freedom.

We have to remain vigilant. The purpose of a disinformation campaign is to get people to believe that the disinformation is fact, is credible. If we look at opinion polls measuring how many people accept obvious disinformation planted in pro-Kremlin media, then unfortunately we have to conclude that Russian disinformation can be extremely successful. That is why we need to redouble our efforts to debunk this propaganda and why we welcome the debate today.

President. – You are right, because if we do not pay proper attention it means that fake news becomes truth and then truth becomes fake news. With your permission, I would draw your attention to an article which has been published in the latest issue of *the Atlantic* which deals with the subject.

Esteban González Pons, en nombre del Grupo PPE. — Señor presidente, los nacional-populistas del mundo ven nuestra democracia representativa y nuestro sistema de vida europeo como su peor rival ideológico, y piensan que la desinformación es útil, que la desinformación es su continuación de la guerra contra nosotros en internet. Por eso los enemigos de Europa practican la desinformación, para desequilibrarnos y demoler aquellos principios democráticos que la Unión Europea representa. Si la Unión Europea no fuera un faro de democracia, la Unión Europea jamás sería atacada con *fake news*. Es porque somos demócratas por lo que nos atacan, no por ser europeos.

En el caso de Rusia debo decir que no hablamos de un enemigo, aunque a veces Rusia nos trate como si lo fuéramos. El Kremlin dispone de 1 000 millones de euros al año en medios públicos, una red de televisiones en cien países y treinta y tres idiomas y un ejército de cuentas fantasmas listas para expandir *fake news*. Y las utilizan en el terreno de la Unión Europea. La Unión Europea, para defenderse, cuenta, sin embargo, solo con un millón de euros de presupuesto y la *Task Force*, que son diecisiete personas. Diecisiete personas frente a 1 000 millones de euros al año en medios públicos. Estamos realmente bastante indefensos.

Cada vez que la Unión Europea tiene un problema, aparecen *fake news*, aparecen los ataques informáticos, se roban correos electrónicos y entran en acción los medios de comunicación rusos. Debemos empezar a reaccionar más en serio. En los últimos sucesos en Cataluña, por ejemplo, se han detectado actuando a favor de la ruptura de España más de 4 800 robots que difundían de forma constante información falsa o manipulada en internet. Algunas televisiones rusas llegaron a abrir sus informativos en España con imágenes de carros de combate, de tanques dirigiéndose a Barcelona, que solo existían en la imaginación del editor.

Por lo tanto, termino con dos ideas. Primero, las campañas de desinformación y de propaganda son una amenaza para la democracia, y como tal debemos tratarlas. Y, segundo, los europeos no queremos imponer nuestro estilo de vida a nadie, pero debemos saber defenderlo, incluso en internet. Estamos orgullosos de nuestra democracia, de la separación de poderes, de la libertad de expresión, del Estado de Derecho y de la prensa libre, pero esa debe ser una fortaleza, y jamás una debilidad. Europa es una inteligencia incómoda para los enemigos de la verdad, y posverdad solo es otro nombre de mentira.

Liisa Jaakonsaari, S&D-ryhmän puolesta. – Arvoisa puhemies, on fakta, että Venäjän strateginen viestintä Euroopassa on laajaa, ja aggressiivinen käyttäytyminen verkoissa on kasvanut. Puhutaan informaatiotosodasta. Tosi on tietenkin, että informaatiotosotaa on aina ollut sekä rauhan että sodan aikana.

Euroopan unionin ja Venäjän välit ovat huonot ja tulehtuneet. Tässä yhteydessä oikeastaan vetoaisinkin arvoisiin puhe-miehiin, että Te tekisitte kaikkenne, että olisi mahdollisuus duuman ja Euroopan parlamentin vuoropuheluun. Tällä hetkellä sitä ei ole.

Mutta tähän asiaan. Mitä nyt tehdä disinformaation ja valeutisten torjumiseksi? Aivan kuten täällä on käynyt ilmi, niin ilman muuta Euroopan unionin strategista viestintää pitää vahvistaa ja sille pitää antaa enemmän resursseja. Mutta myös media, sosiaalinen media, tutkiva journalismi, ajatushautomot ja kansalaisjärjestöt, kaikilla on oma tehtävänsä auttaa ihmisiä erottamaan faktat ja valheet. Ja kuten täällä on todettu, medialukutaito on nyt erittäin tärkeä.

Euroopan unioni ei yksin pysty, myös jäsenvaltioitten täytyy olla tässä mukana. Mainio uutinen olikin, että Ruotsin pääministeri Stefan Löfven ilmoitti viime viikolla Sälénin turvallisuuskonferenssissa, että Ruotsiin perustetaan psykologi-sen puolustuksen yksikkö. Kun Euroopan unionissa nyt vahvistetaan omaa puolustusta, meidänkin pitää perustaa psy-kologisen puolustuksen yksikkö – *psychological defense* – olkoon se avainsana.

Roberts Zīle, ECR grupas vārdā. – Priekšsēdētāj! Atceros, kā pirms gadiem četriem — vēl pirms krievu Krimas okupā-cijas — runāju ar savu kolēģi no Rietumeiropas šeit pat, Parlamentā, par to, ka “Sputņiks” tiek reģistrēts viņu valstī, ka viņš sāk raidīt ļoti daudzās valodās, un viņa atbilde bija: “Mēs vienmēr esam par vārda brīvību, mēs par to neuztrauca-mies”.

Es domāju, ka šis ir piemērs tam, kā daudzas Rietumu demokrātijas nenovērtēja to, ko dara Kremļa administrācija, Putinam nonākot pie varas, tehnoloģiju jomā un IT iespēju jomā — sākot no kiberuzbrukumiem, no noplūžu radītājiem par Rietumu demokrātiem, kuri pēc tam slēpjas Krievijā vai tai draudzīgās valstīs, līdz pat pavisam attīstīta līmeņa propogandai. Un daudziem rietumvalstīs, manuprāt, likās, ka tā ir Baltijas valstu vai bijušā Austrumu bloka valstu problēma, ka Krievijas pasaules koncepts sāk strādāt kā propagandas elements.

Diemžēl mēs redzam, ka Krievija ir spējīga iejaukties ar propogandas un daudziem citiem ieročiem informatīvajā karā, kā tas nupat bija ASV, nemaz nerunājot par vairākām Eiropas Savienības valstīm — viņu politiskajos procesos. Būtiskākais, ka te netika novērtēts tas, ka var jaukt melus ar patiesību dažādās proporcijās — līdz pat simts procentiem melu un nullei procentu patiesības. Un to dara pat Kremļa vadītājs, kurš mierīgi var pastāstīt, ka mūsu “jautrie lāči” un citi, teiksim, hakeri un tie cilvēki, kas strādā ar informatīvajām programmām, to dara kā brīvmākslinieki, par to nesaņemot atalgojumu.

Un tas, kas tika minēts par robotiem vai datoriem, kas īstenībā rada šo sociālo informāciju propagandas karā, tad šeit mums jāatceras, ka, runājot par vārda brīvību, robotiem un datoriem nav tiesību uz vārda brīvību. Uz vārda brīvību tiesības ir cilvēkiem. Un tā ir būtiska lieta, kas mums jāņem vērā saprotot to, ar kādu pretinieku mēs pašlaik sastopa-mies.

Tāpēc, manuprāt, ir ārkārtīgi svarīgi saprast, ka mūsu zālēm pret Krievijas propagandu jābūt ļoti netradicionālām un diezgan ātrām. Pretējā gadījumā mēs to neuzvarēsim.

Johannes Cornelis van Baalen, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Mr President, fake news is, of course, an issue affecting all ages. It has always been there. It comes from many states, as well as from private actors. But today in the internet age, people are very unclear as to where it comes from and who has sent this news. Indeed, as the Commissioner said, in order to have media literacy, it should be clear who has written these messages.

What is interesting is that those who were at Maidan Square to support the democratic revolution against – let me say – the cronies of Mr Putin, find ourselves back on internet. I have seen myself at Maidan Square with big guns in my hands, but the guns were so big that they were bigger than my hands themselves. Normally, you would say that it's nonsense, but people believe it. Why were you at Maidan Square with a gun? Well, again, I was not there. That is why I am sympathetic to the idea of President Macron of France that there must be transparency, on the platforms too, as to where the news comes from.

This is not intended to have a negative impact on news; there should be freedom of news, but there should be transparency as to where it comes from. You also have to see who sponsors it, because if you read something on the internet, you should know if it is supported by the state or by a private agency. Therefore, there must be transparency, and that is the most important thing concerning this. Once again, the best thing is that we provide not counter propaganda, but facts, facts and more facts, so that not only the Russians, but also the Chinese people and others, can have access to sources that they don't normally have access to. Again, let us try to be active and not selective. It is not only Russia, but also China and others.

Barbara Spinelli, *a nome del gruppo GUE/NGL*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, espressioni quali fake news vanno maneggiate con grande cautela, perché sono ambigue e rischiano di essere usate a fini di propaganda e censura.

Non intendo con questo difendere il regime russo, sono però scettica verso la tendenza ad attribuirgli interferenze nelle elezioni in USA ed Europa. Non esistono prove di tali interferenze ma solo smentite venute dal Winsconsin, dalla California, dall'Agenzia francese per la cibernsicurezza e dal Digital Society Institute di Berlino.

Le fake news non nascono poi solo in Internet. Nella guerra in Iraq fu la stampa mainstream a diffondere menzogne devastanti sulle armi di distruzione di massa. Non possiamo nasconderci che chi con più veemenza denuncia oggi le notizie false e vuole censurare Internet è a sua volta divulgatore di fake news che ricominciano una pericolosa guerra fredda con la Russia.

Rebecca Harms, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, sehr geehrte Kollegen! Wir wissen seit langer Zeit, dass nicht nur die Propagandamedien Russlands, sondern auch Teile der Politik Russlands darauf angelegt sind, Spaltungen und Polarisierung in der Europäischen Union voranzutreiben, demokratische Debatten zu unterminieren und die Europaskepsis zu stärken. Dabei sind Fake News in den sozialen Medien ein ganz besonders beliebtes Mittel geworden. Aber interessant ist auch, dass der Kreml systematisch anti-europäische Parteien, rechtsextreme Populisten wie zum Beispiel auch Fünf Sterne, aber auch linksnationalistische Parteien unterstützt und in diese Propaganda Aktivitäten gegen die Europäische Union einbaut. Wir haben das wahrgenommen in der Brexit-Auseinandersetzung, wir haben Belege dafür, Frau Spinelli, aus Frankreich. Und in den deutschen Wahlen gab es eine extrem interessante Zusammenarbeit zwischen Bots aus Nischni Nowgorod und der amerikanischen Alt-Right-Bewegung zur Stärkung der Alternative für Deutschland.

Wie gehen wir mit so etwas um? Die Auseinandersetzung, die wir darum führen, dient nicht dazu, den Kreml irgendwie zu schlagen, sondern die Auseinandersetzung, die wir führen, dient dazu, unsere Gesellschaften in ihrer demokratischen Verfasstheit zu stärken. Deswegen glaube ich, dass es richtig ist, dass wir die DG StratCom haben. Die ist aber zu klein, und die Vernetzung mit der nationalen Ebene ist nicht gut genug.

Über dieses Aufspüren von Propaganda und von Lügen in der Propaganda hinaus glaube ich, dass die Europäische Union dringend den Journalismus stärken muss. Darüber müssen wir eine Debatte führen, denn der Journalismus ist in den letzten Jahren geschwächt worden. Dabei haben wir zugeguckt.

Und eine letzte Sache möchte ich noch sagen, um den Kommissar zu stärken: Wenn soziale Medien anfangen, Nachrichten zu machen, wie Facebook oder Twitter oder Google das tun, dann müssen sie ähnlichen Regeln gehorchen wie auch Medienunternehmen und die Presse. Das ist eine Aufgabe, der wir uns stellen müssen.

Jörg Meuthen, *im Namen der EFDD-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Wir reden heute erstens über Fake News, den Kampf begriff, mit dem die Etablierten alle unerwünschten Fakten und Meinungen zu diskreditieren versuchen. Zweitens über Russland, das dieselben Etablierten zum Sündenbock für alles Schlechte in der Welt auserkoren haben. Die heutige Debatte über angebliche Wahlbeeinflussung durch russische Fake News ist für die Etablierten daher wie Ostern und Weihnachten an einem Tag. Ich werde Sie eh nicht davon abhalten können, sich in Tiraden über Rechtspopulisten, Russen und die angeblich nötige Regulierung von Meinungen zu ergehen – wir haben es gerade von Frau Harms gehört.

Das ist pure Heuchelei, denn dieses Parlament wird bei der Europawahl 2019 einen Wahlkampf im Eigeninteresse führen. Eigene Slogans mit EU-Beamten als Wahlkämpfern, die dann eigene Wahrheiten produzieren, nach der Devise: „*quality news should be supported by the government*“. Das ist Propaganda vom Allerfeinsten! Wer so etwas macht, hat gar kein Recht, sich über angebliche Wahlbeeinflussung durch Russland zu beklagen. Wenn Frau Kalniete hier mit Recht auf freie Meinungsäußerung pocht, dann schauen Sie sich exemplarisch mal das Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz in Deutschland an – warum in die Ferne schweifen, wenn das Böse liegt so nah. Sie sitzen hier im Glashaus, werfen Sie deshalb lieber nicht mit Steinen.

Mario Borghesio, *a nome del gruppo ENF*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, l'interlocutore naturale di questa nostra discussione, a cui potremmo rivolgere i dubbi, tutti i dubbi, che sono stati espressi, è la Duma ed è veramente sconcertante che questo Parlamento non dialoghi con quello che è l'interlocutore naturale del più grande paese che, tra l'altro, fa parte dell'Europa, non dell'Unione europea ma chiaramente dell'Europa, molto più della Turchia.

Fake news: ci continuate a parlare di questo problema che, di per sé, sarebbe grave. Recentissimamente è stato detto che ci sarebbero delle fortissime influenze della Russia nei confronti dell'elettorato italiano. I servizi di sicurezza italiani l'hanno smentito immediatamente, non esiste nulla di tutto questo, allora bisogna andarci molto cauti.

Si dice che c'è stata un'influenza sul voto della Brexit, sull'esplosione democratica della volontà del popolo catalano. Ma allora mi dovete spiegare: siete così lontani dal sentire dei popoli da pensare che quando votano, votano perché c'è un'influenza di Mosca? No, c'è la voce dei popoli che si esprime col voto, fino a prova contraria.

Janusz Korwin-Mikke (NI). – Słucham tego wszystkiego, zwłaszcza pierwszych przemówień, i czuję się, jakbym był na obradach Komitetu Centralnego Komunistycznej Partii Związku Sowieckiego: dokładnie ta sama frazeologia, że trzeba wzmocnić naszych dziennikarzy, prawda, że nie można dopuścić, żeby każdy mówił, co chce, tylko my tu musimy sterować tym wszystkim, że wróg grozi naszej demokracji socjalistycznej. To samo mówiono w Związku Sowieckim, ja to pamiętam, ja mam 75 lat, ja to pamiętam, jak to było. Mówicie dokładnie tak samo jak oni.

Propaganda rosyjska opiera się częściowo na sowieckich wzorach, i dlatego jest na szczęście jeszcze trochę niezgrabna, ale europejska opiera się na wzorach doktora Goebbelsa: kłamie się i kłamie nieustannie. Wszystkie dzienniki mówią to samo w całej Europie. Tutaj pan van Baalen mówił o strzałach na Majdanie. Kto, przepraszam bardzo, powiedział o tym, że to strzelali nasi ludzie? Pan Paet, Pana kolega (tam siedzi pan Paet), powiedział w telefonie do pani baronowej Ashton, że to od nas ludzie strzelali na Majdanie. Tu są kłamstwa podstawowe i skończmy z kłamstwami. To jest pierwsza sprawa.

David McAllister (PPE). – Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, as previous speakers have already pointed out, Russian disinformation campaigns are intended to undermine objective or ethical journalism while casting all information as biased or as an instrument of political power. I agree we have to tackle these challenges; it is high time to build up the resilience of our Union.

In my opinion this should include four points. Firstly, to thoroughly investigate Russian interferences in election campaigns. Secondly, to impose targeted sanctions against hacking and falsified publication of sensitive data. Thirdly to turn the East StratCom task force into a permanent EU structure with adequate funding and increased personnel. And, fourthly, to develop an effective, well-targeted and tailor-made strategy on how to communicate and promote our European policies and values.

In all our actions we ought to keep in mind that the European Union's main strength when facing hostile influence from Russia is information rather than criminalisation. And, Mr President, a final remark. As a European Parliament we could perhaps improve things in our own House too.

I observed in 2017 a few of our Members using the technical infrastructure of this Parliament to broadcast discussions and interviews on Kremlin-backed news channels such as Russia Today. I'm not quite sure if you can really, on the one hand, criticise disinformation campaigns backed and facilitated by Russian media outlets and, on the other hand, allow active support to them with our very own parliamentary infrastructure. This is inconsistent, this should stop.

(Applause)

Eugen Freund (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Wir wissen seit einiger Zeit – genau seit fast einem Jahr –, dass die Verbreitung von Lügen und Fake News auch vom Weißen Haus aus möglich ist. Dennoch ist es ein Unterschied, ob ein egozentrischer Politiker glaubt, damit sein eigenes *standing* zu verbessern, oder ob ausländische Medienunternehmen gezielt falsche Informationen verbreiten, um Länder zu destabilisieren.

Als Schattenberichterstatter meiner Fraktion für den Bericht des Europäischen Parlaments über gegen die EU gerichtete Propaganda habe ich mich intensiv mit dieser Propaganda und den gezielten Falschinformationen auseinandergesetzt. Dabei war klar, dass einige Unternehmen wie Sputnik oder Russia Today dabei wesentlich zur Verbreitung von Falschinformationen beitragen. Dass der Kreml dieser Verbreitung von Propaganda nicht abgeneigt ist, vor allem wenn er Sender wie Russia Today finanziert, bleibt freilich unbestritten.

Europa benötigt daher eine schlagkräftige Strategie. Das ist besonders wichtig, um sich gegen Einflussnahme von außen zu schützen und der Verunsicherung und der Radikalisierung von europäischen Bürgerinnen und Bürgern entgegenzuwirken.

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga (ECR). – Mr President, the best way to deter Russian propaganda is to remain consistent. Every time we feel the temptation for a rapprochement with Russia, we have to know that there are necessary prices to be paid, usually by the weakest among us.

Eight years ago, the Smolensk catastrophe happened. The Russian propaganda in the first quarter of an hour afterwards was extremely successful all over the world, including in our countries. Listen to the sound of silence whenever I even mention this thing nowadays. We have to know that next time we wish to go into deeper dialogue over the heads of others, there will be victims. This time, they will probably be among Ukrainian children.

Morten Løkkegaard (ALDE). – Hr. formand! Kolleger! Fake news blev jo ikke opfundet i Rusland, og debatten om fake news er meget bredere end Rusland. Der er ingen tvivl om, at Rusland har været med til at indlede den seneste og vigtigste runde af debatten, og at Rusland også bliver det sted, hvor denne debat ender et eller andet sted. Men i Den Liberale Gruppe har vi gjort os nogle anstrengelser for at komme frem til en bredspektret plan med en masse forslag til, hvordan man rent faktisk kan gøre noget ved det. En flerstrengt plan. Vi skal sætte ind over for databeskyttelse og gennemsigtighed, herunder begrænsning af misbrug af personlige data – et utroligt vigtigt område! Vi skal have fokus på en langt bedre uddannelse af de unge mennesker, så de bliver i stand til at færdes på nettet på en ordentlig måde. Vi skal have indført et online-medieansvar. Vi skal sørge for, at de aktører, der er på markedet, indfører en form for selvregulering. Vi skal sørge for, at der findes støttemekanismer for ordentlig journalistik, for grænseoverskridende journalistik.

Endelig skal vi selvfølgelig sørge for at sætte ind – som flere kolleger har været inde på – over for deciderede fake news fra blandt andre Rusland. Det kan vi gøre ved også at støtte – som flere kolleger peger på – denne East Stratcom taskforce, som vi allerede har oprettet i Unionen. Den er vi også tilhængere af at styrke. Med disse punkter skulle vi kunne adressere dette problem på en fornuftig måde.

Javier Couso Permuy (GUE/NGL). – Señor presidente, decía Einstein: «Dos cosas son infinitas: la estupidez humana y el universo; y no estoy seguro de lo segundo.». La patética obsesión de los medios de la derecha europea contra la supuesta injerencia rusa está alcanzando grados de estupidez que sonrojarian al propio científico.

El pasado noviembre el ministro de Asuntos Exteriores español denunció ante la Unión Europea la injerencia rusa y venezolana en el debate sobre Cataluña, y afirmó poseer datos. Estamos esperando todavía esos datos. Porque no los hay. Los medios de comunicación interesados en repetir este mantra tienen ejemplos sonrojantes: cuentas de Twitter radicadas en San Petersburgo, noticias falsas. Pero, si nos vamos a los hechos, veamos, si ustedes tienen interés.

El pasado noviembre el Centro Nacional de Inteligencia, a través de su jefe de ciberseguridad, afirmaba que el CNI no había detectado ningún ciberataque del Gobierno ruso. Tampoco los organismos alemanes encontraron una actividad significativa rusa, ni la autoridad cibernética francesa. Es decir, detrás de esta patética paranoia se esconde una estrategia política clara, es decir, impedir la buena vecindad con Rusia.

¡Dejen las paranoias, señores!

Bronis Ropė (Verts/ALE). – Net ir tie, kas nėra girdėję žymiosios nacių propagandos ministro Gebelso frazės, jog milijoną kartų pakartotas melas tampa tiesa, jos teisingumu gali įsitikinti pažiūrėję dabartinio Kremliaus režimo valdomas televizijas. Padėtis verčia susirūpinti. Net ir nukentėjusi nuo naftos kainų smukimo ir kur kas mažiau nuo Europos Sąjungos sankcijų, Rusija kasmet už dešimtis milijonų eurų išleidžia tūkstančius melagingų ir neapykantą kurstančių žinučių. Beje, Putino režimo įkaite tapusi Rusija nėra vienintelis tokios grėsmės šaltinis. Radikalių religinių judėjimų keliamą informacinę grėsmę pastaruoju laikotarpiu sumažėjo, bet tai nereiškia, kad ji išnyko. Džiugina kol kas tik tiek, kad čia, Europos Sąjungos institucijose, jau suvoktas priešiškos propagandos keliamas pavojus. Dar prieš porą metų apie tokias informacines grėsmes kalbėjo tik atskiros pavienės valstybės narės. Esu įsitikinęs, kad stiprindami strateginę komunikaciją, einame teisingu keliu. Kartu norėčiau atkreipti dėmesį į tai, kad Europos atsparumą propagandai turime pradėti stiprinti nuo paties pagrindo – nuo piliečių sąmoningumo didinimo.

Gerard Batten (EFDD). – Mr President, thank you very much. Now just so there's no misunderstanding about my position on Russia, I'll repeat what I've said many times before. Mr Putin is a gangster that runs a gangster state. The old Soviet Union used to spend millions on infiltrating and undermining Western governments and societies, and it has to be said they were very successful at it.

So there's nothing new going on, but you are seeking to create a scapegoat for your own unpopularity with the peoples of Europe. Now, don't blame the Russians for your own mistakes.

To give you two examples, you're unpopular because of economic stagnation on austerity due to the eurozone and mass uncontrolled immigration and the Islamisation of our societies due to that immigration. Now you seek a distraction and you found it in Russian propaganda. You give Mr Putin too much credit. He is not the author of your unpopularity, you are the authors of your own unpopularity.

Auke Zijlstra (ENF). – Dank u wel, Voorzitter. Dit debat is gebaseerd op valse aannames, nepnieuw. De verantwoordelijke Nederlandse minister, mevrouw Ollongren, kon in de Tweede Kamer geen enkel serieus voorbeeld noemen van Russische beïnvloeding van de mening van de Nederlandse burger. Beïnvloeding vindt wel plaats door de Europese Commissie. Dat is niet toegestaan maar gebeurt stelselmatig: bij verkiezingen in Italië en Spanje en bij het brexit-referendum. Want zoals de heer Juncker verklaarde: een democratische stem tegen de Unie is niet mogelijk.

Brussel heeft schrikbarend weinig vertrouwen in de kiezer en ziet dus niet zoveel in democratie. Alleen maar lastig, die wisselende voorkeuren. Daarom zijn we op weg naar Europese censuurwetten. Doodeng. Dit gaat niet goed aflopen. Niet voor de media, niet voor de burger en niet voor de vrijheid van meningsuiting.

Voorzitter, we moeten kiezen: deze Europese Unie of onze vrijheid. Ik heb al gekozen. Dank u wel.

Udo Voigt (NI). – Herr Präsident, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich fühle mich wieder erneut zurückversetzt in die Achtzigerjahre: Die kalten Krieger sind aufgewacht, die Transatlantiker sind wieder da. Herr King, wenn Sie schon davon sprechen, dass die russischen Medien falsche Zahlen und Fakten liefern, ja dann sagen Sie doch mal, wann die Russen falsche Zahlen geliefert haben. Wann haben sie falsche Fakten geliefert? Ich habe die Ereignisse und die Kriege in Libyen, in Afghanistan, in Serbien, im Irak und in Syrien verfolgt, und in all diesen Dingen habe ich also gesehen, dass unsere transatlantischen Lügenmedien falsch berichten, nicht aber die russischen Nachrichten wie Sputnik oder RT. Ich konnte mich selber bei zwei Besuchen in Syrien davon überzeugen, wer die Wahrheit berichtet. Warum sind Sie nicht mutig genug, um auf Russland zuzugehen, den Dialog zu suchen, statt einen Propagandakrieg auszulösen? Die Zukunft Europas – eines Europas der Vaterländer – liegt in der Gemeinschaft mit Russland und nicht mit der raumfremden Macht USA.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – Domnule preşedinte, propaganda lui Putin conţine un discurs anti-occidental, caută să influenţeze alegeri şi cultivă o imagine pozitivă a autocraţiei din Rusia. Înainte de anul nou a fost inaugurat un nou sediu pentru trolii lui Putin de pe internet, un mediu propice pentru propagandă.

În România, munca acestor troluri este uşurată de numeroase figuri publice, oameni politici sau preţinşi jurnalişti. Fostul deputat european Adrian Severin, de pildă, publică texte pe site-urile propagandei ruseşti *Sputnik* şi *Russia Today*, care preiau *in extenso* şi poziţiile lui Sorin Roşca Stănescu, fost senator PNL, şi ale lui Adrian Năstase, fost prim-ministru socialist. Punctul lor comun: contestarea condamnărilor pentru fapte de corupţie. Propaganda pro-rusă a devenit în context românesc o unealtă a luptei împotriva instituţiilor de justiţie, a legislaţiei anticorupţie, a influenţei Uniunii Europene şi a Statelor Unite.

Relaţia specială dintre socialişti şi propaganda rusă este confirmată şi de politicieni în funcţie, precum deputatul PSD de Bucureşti Liviu Pleşoianu, care se luptă şi el cu justiţia românească şi difuzează discursuri ultranaţionaliste. Lumea jurnalismului nu e, nici ea, iertată de păcatul flirtului cu dezinformarea de origine rusă. Informaţiile de la Kremlin sunt uneori prezentate ca veridice, fără niciun fel de spirit critic. Există şi aici, în Parlamentul European, colegi de-ai mei din grupul S&D care susţin exact aceleaşi puncte de vedere ca şi propaganda rusă. O văd, de pildă, pe doamna Grapini, chiar aici alături de noi.

President. – You cannot combat fake news with other fake news.

Jeppe Kofod (S&D). – Mr President, next year the citizens of Europe will elect a new European Parliament. This raises an uncomfortable question: how many seats will Russia get? Let us not kid ourselves; Russian meddling in democratic elections is no longer the exception – it is becoming the norm.

From the US Presidential election to Brexit, the hands of Kremlin have been busily dancing along keyboards, churning out disinformation – the *real* fake news and propaganda – the full extent of which is yet to be uncovered and the consequences yet to be fully understood. In the EU alone, we know for a fact that Russia has conducted propaganda and misinformation campaigns in several countries: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the UK, France, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy and so on. All of these EU member states have been – and continue to be – the target of Russian misinformation and propaganda campaigns.

Our best defence is to stand firm on European values, principles and ideals: Democracy, freedom of the press, speaking the truth to power. The EEAS and this East StratCom team is doing a tremendous job, as several have noted. They are the front line, defending democracy and the free press, but they are caught in an uneven fight and that is why I am calling for a marked strengthening of East StratCom and an EU action plan for countering Russian meddling in the 2019 European election.

And so I return to my original question: ‘How many seats will Russia win in the European Parliament?’ Let’s make sure they win no seats.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-н Председател, г-жо Министър, уважаеми колеги, социалните мрежи са новите медии и такава е реалността, независимо дали ни харесва или не. Живеем във време, в което всяка публикация може да достигне до всяка точка на света, до стотици хиляди, до милиони потребители за броени секунди. Колкото е по-скандална, по-невероятна и по-измислена една фалшива новина, толкова по-бързо се разпространява тя. От това се възползват както вражеските пропаганди, така и агресивни малочислени общности, които се смятат за носители на последна истина от последна инстанция.

И в този законодателен дом има последователи на един съвременен културен марксизъм, които се опитват да налагат цензура и да стигматизират носителите на различни от тях мнения. Да, фалшиви новини има, но отговорът им не е в това да се налага цензура или да се пишат норми за това какво може да се пише или да не се пише в социалните мрежи и защо това е невъзможно. Не е и в насилственото променяне на културни модели и традиции. Отговорът на фалшивите новини е това да се казва истината, колкото се може по-бързо, по-организирано, по-спокойно и подкрепено с факти. Това трябва да прави всеки един от нас.

Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE). – Mr President, Mr Commissioner, colleagues, a massive wave of Kremlin-produced propaganda flooded the continent, from Vladivostok to Lisbon. It finally ended up across the Atlantic, just to find Washington DC equally unprepared. This was also the case with the political waters in London, Paris, Madrid and Barcelona.

I particularly appreciate the title of today's debate on Russia. It is precise concerning the Russian propaganda which aims to influence EU countries, meaning us! The EU's response to this hybrid warfare will not be policing the media. Our response must be an effective EU media policy set up to defend our liberal European democracy, basic values and way of life.

Lastly, in shaping the EU's media policy, we must certainly not be limited only to election periods as Putin's foreign services, troll factories and bots are on duty 24/7.

Benedek Jávor (Verts/ALE). – Elnök Úr! Az orosz propaganda befolyása egyre aggasztóbb méreteket ölt. Az EU propagandaellenes kampányainak megerősítése rendkívül fontos és jó irány, azonban mit sem ér azokban az országokban, ahol maguk a kormányok az orosz propaganda legfőbb fogyasztói és egyben terjesztői is. Magyarország kormánya az elmúlt években folyamatosan Oroszország mellett állt ki, nemcsak gazdasági és politikai szövetségben Vlagyimir Putyin Oroszországgal, hanem jelentős szerepet vállalt az orosz hamis hírek és propaganda terjesztésében Magyarországon és azon kívül. Az orosz, hamis híreket terjesztő csatornák – a Szputnyik, a Russia Today – nem csak a hivatalos csatornákon működnek, hanem természetesen az online felületeken is. Trollok ezrei segítik a hamis híreknek, a propagandának a terjesztését.

Magyarországon és néhány más tagállamban jelentős támogatást kapnak az állami és a közszolgálati médiától, amelyeknek a politikailag független, elfogulatlan, valós hírek fórumának kéne lenniük. Ezért az Európai Unió nem mehet el a továbbiakban szó nélkül azok mellett az országok mellett, ahol maga az állami közszolgálati média és maga a kormány a legfőbb fogyasztója és terjesztője ezeknek a hamis híreknek. Ehhez pedig arra van szükség, hogy az EU felismerje azt, hogy elkerülhetetlen a független, szabad, elfogulatlan média támogatása jogszabályokkal és pénzügyileg is.

David Coburn (EFDD). – Mr President, we are again discussing the influence of so-called Russian propaganda in EU countries. What about the millions, the millions in EU propaganda to pervert the democratic decisions of the Irish, the Dutch and the French on the Lisbon Treaty? And you spent millions on EU propaganda to prevent Brexit, aided and abetted of course by the BBC, the Brussels Broadcasting Corporation, which also receives largesse I believe from the EU. This destroys any impartiality or credibility that they might have had. Fortunately the British public saw through that one.

But the EU is still trying to do this by setting up the Orwellian propaganda machine to push the EU project and subvert national democracies, in your own words: 'challenging Euroscepticism'. Well, it is pure Pravda as the old Soviet Union called it, pure Pravda.

I am more concerned with EU propaganda than the clunky Russian version, and I assure you so are most other people. Mr McAllister talked about Russia Today, well Russia Today gave UKIP a voice in the days when we could not get it on the BBC. So perhaps they are defending freedom and a freedom you lot want to close down. So thank God for them.

President. – Mr Coburn, you practically managed to transform a blue card into a speech at the end of your intervention. That is not allowed. We have to respect the time limit because otherwise other colleagues would not be able to exercise their democratic right to speak.

Marcus Pretzell (ENF). – Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Dass Regierungen Propaganda verbreiten – und zwar so ziemlich überall auf der Welt – ist nichts besonders Neues, und dass auch Russland sich daran beteiligt, ist nicht besonders überraschend. Allerdings muss man feststellen, dass vermutlich über 90 % der europäischen Bevölkerung mit dieser Propaganda noch nie in Berührung gekommen sind. Denn diese Form von Propaganda, die es gibt, ist doch eher eine Randerscheinung – gerade wenn wir auf Sputnik oder Russia Today rekurrieren.

Es war heute auch schon zu hören, es sei russische Militärdoktrin, Falschinformationen zu verbreiten, und ich erinnere ganz gerne nochmal an den Irakkrieg, an dem sich übrigens neben den USA und Großbritannien auch Spanien und Italien und einige andere Staaten beteiligt haben. Vielleicht erinnern Sie sich an die Fake News, die zu Beginn dieses Krieges standen. Wenn Sie politisch über Wahrheit oder Lüge entscheiden wollen und es eben nicht mehr zum politischen Kampf gehört, Sie zu entscheiden, was Wahrheit oder Lüge ist, dann verlassen Sie den demokratischen Konsens. So funktioniert es in demokratischen Gesellschaften üblicherweise nicht.

Elmar Brok (PPE). – Herr Präsident, Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Russland ist ein autoritäres Regime, in dem wirklich freie Wahlen unter den Chancen der Gleichberechtigung nicht stattfinden. Ich sehe, dass hier Kollegen wie Meuthen und Pretzell und Coburn und Couso Permuy und all diese Leute dieses Russland in diesem System verteidigen, weil dieses auch ihrer eigenen Ideologie, die nicht freier, liberaler Demokratie entspricht, entspricht. Und das dekouviert sie als wirkliche Gegner von Freiheit.

Zweitens müssen wir deutlich machen, dass wir nicht mit derselben Methode zurückschlagen können, wie Russland und deren Freunde in Europa das tun, sondern dass wir eine freie Gesellschaft mit freien Medien sind und nicht mit staatlichen Instrumenten darauf antworten können. Aus diesem Grund ist es der beste Weg, den westlichen freien Medien, aber auch den dort eventuell noch existierenden, Möglichkeiten in solchen Ländern zu geben, und zwar auch den neuen Medien. Wir selbst müssen gegenüber unserer eigenen Bevölkerung deutlich machen, wie Lügen gemacht werden. Und es muss klar sein, dass wir Wege finden müssen zu erklären, wenn Lügen Lügen sind. Das ist das Entscheidende. Es kann nicht sein, dass Wahrheit und Lüge gleichwertig nebeneinander stehen und dies dann von Herrn Pretzell als demokratischer Diskurs dargestellt wird. Das ist das Gegenteil davon.

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Spoštovani, jeseni 2016 smo v Evropskem parlamentu izglasovali resolucijo za boj proti ruski propagandi. Sama sem bila takrat zadržana in še danes razmišljam enako. Strinjam se, da je spremljanje medijskega vplivanja držav na politiko in družbo potrebno, pri čemer je treba prepoznati tudi prepletenost medijev s političnimi strankami in gospodarskimi družbami, zato imam nekaj kritičnih opozoril.

Prvič, zakaj se ukvarjamo zgolj z rusko propagando? Kakšen odnos imamo do novic ameriškega FOX Newsa? Nas motijo kapitalski vložki ameriških medijskih korporacij v evropske medijske postaje? Čigava stališča nam sporočajo kanali Al Jazeera? In če ostanemo v Evropi, kaj menimo o nacionalnih medijih, ki so v lasti neke stranke, njenih funkcionarjev in z njimi povezanih oseb? V Sloveniji tak medij imamo. So njihova politična sporočila propaganda?

In druga pripomba, nemara bi v sporočanju Sputnika in RT, čemur rečemo ruska propaganda, bolj kot doslej morali prepoznati uspeli poskus Rusije, da si po dolgih letih zahodne medijske dominacije s posnemanjem obstoječih vzorcev poišče svoj položaj v medijskem svetu.

Upam, da bo ustanovitev dragega oddelka za boj proti ruski propagandi prinesla rezultate, a če naj naš plenum ohrani verodostojnost, moramo vsako medijsko propagando, posebej lažno propagando, obravnavati enako.

Zbigniew Kuźmiuk (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Zabierając głos w tej debacie, chcę zwrócić uwagę na trzy kwestie. Po pierwsze, na wagę sprawozdania przyjętego przez Parlament w listopadzie 2016 r., przygotowanego przez polską posłankę Annę Fotygę, które właśnie było w dużej mierze poświęcone rosyjskiej propagandzie, i na jego konkluzje, które z pewnymi oporami, ale jednak są wprowadzane w życie.

Po drugie, na powołanie instytucji StratComu zajmującej się badaniem technik dywersji, przeciwdziałaniem dezinformacji, prowadzeniem akcji edukacyjnych, przy czym wydaje się, że ta instytucja powinna być raczej wyłączona z unijnej służby zagranicznej. Powinna być po prostu samodzielną instytucją, samodzielną unijną agencją.

I wreszcie po trzecie, chciałbym pochwalić zwiększenie środków na walkę z rosyjską propagandą o milion euro, ale jednocześnie przypomnieć, że Rosja na jedną swoją telewizję, Russia Today, przeznaczą tysiąc razy więcej rocznie.

Yana Toom (ALDE). – Mr President, I'm listening to this debate with a strong feeling of déjà vu. I was born in the Soviet Union and when I was a child I heard about anti-Soviet propaganda each and every day. If there were no meat or coffee, books or cars, we always knew who was guilty: Western capitalism and, personally, Ronald Reagan.

Today when the European Union is facing challenges, crisis in Catalonia, problems with democratic institutions in a Member State or a low level of trust in Europe as such, some of my colleagues know exactly who is guilty: anti-European propaganda and, personally, Vladimir Putin.

As a former journalist, I cannot agree with such a black and white approach. And the main solution I see in terms of counter-propaganda is an honest, open and professional media. A media which is free from censorship and which is not regulated or directed by politicians. We should not make the mistakes of Soviet leaders but today, sorry, I have a strong feeling that we're dangerously close to that. And of course I fully agree with Mr van Baalen, the media have to be transparent.

But it also concerns Statcom, where you will find not a single name of these guys who are writing this information review.

Steeve Briois (ENF). – Monsieur le Président, lutter contre la désinformation par la désinformation, voilà un beau sujet de philosophie qui résume un peu l'état de l'Union européenne.

Je suis particulièrement stupéfait par ce que j'ai pu entendre de la part de la Commission. Je trouve scandaleux que vous puissiez stigmatiser ainsi la Russie. Les *fake news* ont toujours existé, y compris chez nous. Si l'Union européenne souhaite faire la chasse aux *fake news*, eh bien, qu'elle commence déjà par le faire chez elle, qu'elle balaie devant sa porte, qu'elle le fasse avec certains médias qui, eux, sont gavés d'argent public et qui, bien souvent, diffusent de fausses informations par lesquelles, évidemment, ils influencent les élections dans les États membres.

L'Union européenne accuse le Kremlin de financer une campagne de désinformation contre l'Europe. S'attaquer à la Russie, c'est bien, c'est dans l'air du temps. Vous n'aurez pas beaucoup d'ennemis, au moins, avec cela. La Russie est vraiment le bon bouc émissaire pour vous car en réalité, ce que ne vous ne supportez pas, c'est que quelqu'un puisse avoir une voix dissidente par rapport à ce que vous dites. Plutôt que de faire la chasse à la Russie, commencez à le faire avec la propagande islamiste.

Esther de Lange (PPE). – Dit debat gaat helemaal niet over Rusland alleen. Het gaat veel dieper dan dat. In de publieke ruimte vinden we het normaal dat we weten met wie wij te maken hebben. Op het internet en sociale media, daarentegen, kun je anoniem allerlei onwaarheden verkondigen, of zoals de ontmaskerde Nederlandse trol die actief was tijdens het Oekraïne-referendum zei: "Natuurlijk lieg ik over de Oekraïne".

Werkgevers, bedrijven en onderwijzers zullen de handen ineen moeten slaan om mensen de tools te geven om meningen van feiten en echt van nep te onderscheiden. De Commissie zou ik willen vragen hoe we anonimiteit op internet kunnen aanpakken en wat daarbij de juiste balans is tussen privacy en transparantie. Als Twitter met een blauw vinkje kan aangeven wie de échte Beyoncé is tussen alle nepaccounts, waarom kunnen we dan niet aangeven van wie de identiteit bekend is, van wie niet, en wie overduidelijk gewoon een computer is?

Deze uitdaging raakt volgens mij het hart van onze democratie.

Let me underline this, especially for our colleagues in the ENF Group, with a short quote from Hannah Arendt: "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not a convinced nazi or a dedicated communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction, true or false, no longer exists".

President. – I am afraid that technology today has eliminated our privacy, that is my belief.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il lavoro fatto in questi mesi dall'Unione per contrastare i fenomeni di interferenza esterna si sta intensificando. La creazione delle task force sulle fake news da parte della commissaria Mariya Gabriel è certamente un fatto positivo, accanto al lavoro già avviato dall'Alto rappresentante Federica Mogherini in seno al Servizio di azione esterna con la East StratCom per migliorare la comunicazione europea nei paesi del vicinato orientale e individuare le operazioni di disinformazione.

Allo stesso tempo, tuttavia, dobbiamo fare attenzione a non focalizzarci sulla sola Russia, con la quale deve essere mantenuto un dialogo politico proprio per non aiutare involontariamente la presa autoritaria di Putin e la sua narrazione nazionalista. Il fenomeno della controinformazione per destabilizzare l'Europa, infatti, è un tema certamente grave e provato, ma di portata globale, non ascrivibile a un solo paese, e che ci interroga sulla necessità di far sì che l'Unione europea faccia un salto di qualità istituzionale verso una vera federazione, che sappia contrastare questi fenomeni con più efficacia.

Monica Macovei (ECR). – Domnule președinte, discutăm de mult timp despre propaganda falsă rusească și facem asta pentru că da, este reală, este adevărat, și este o amenințare. Chiar acum o săptămână, senatorii americani au detaliat într-un raport de peste 200 de pagini practicile Kremlinului de influențare a alegerilor în state din mai multe continente. Încă o dată, se reconfirmă că Moscova nu are niciun fel de ezitare să controleze alegerile și să intervină chiar și în democrații consolidate.

La Kremlin, manipularea, dezinformarea și minciuna sunt politică de stat pentru a controla deciziile de politică internă și externă în cât mai multe state ale lumii, dacă se poate, în toate. Iar la noi, Serviciul de Acțiune Externă are doar 14 angajați în East StratCom, care ar trebui să combată mii și mii de troli ai propagandei false rusești. Evident, este o glumă și este total insuficient.

Și, ca să-i răspund unui coleg de mai devreme care spunea că speră ca la alegeri să nu fie agenți ai Federației Ruse în Parlamentul European, vreau să vă spun că avem și astăzi agenți ai Federației Ruse în Parlamentul European și am avut și în mandatul trecut.

Ca să închei, oamenii au murit pentru democrație și pentru alegeri libere. Deci, trebuie să le respectăm această dorință, vrem să trăim în democrație și politicienii care colaborează cu Rusia pentru diverse interese ne trădează.

Marietje Schaake (ALDE). – Mr President, propaganda is nothing new, but with the Kremlin, and certainly other governments and non-state actors also actively seeking to influence European audiences and undermine democratic values, we should not be naive. What is new is the exponential spread through social media, the lack of transparency of political advertisements online, and the selection of the order in which information is presented by unaccountable companies' algorithms. This impacts people's access to information and thus democratic resilience. But in the quest for solutions, the worst thing we can do is to erode the very freedoms we need to defend.

A few action points: we need transparency rules for political advertisements online. We need algorithmic accountability and the tackling of botnets and trolls. We should actively try to reach Russian-speaking minorities in Europe and populations in the countries around Europe directly in Russian language with pluralist sources and opinions. We should defend and promote democratic values in Europe and abroad and not compromise them.

Андрей Ковачев (PPE). – Фалшивите новини, особено в последните години, придобиват глобален размер. С напредването на дигиталните технологии и увеличаването на свързаността, една информация стига до всяко кътче на планетата за секунди. Това е мощно оръжие, което лесно и много по-евтино може да печели умове и сърца на милиони хора.

В геополитическата надпревара това оръжие се използва все по-масово за постигане на политически цели. Целите на този пропаганден натиск са изопачаване на истината, провокиране на страх, съмнение и разделение в Европейския съюз. Големият въпрос е какъв е нашият демократичен отговор срещу подобни практики. Отговорът може да бъде само един единствен – истината. На всяка фалшива информация трябва моментално да се отговаря с истината.

Затова призовавам, както европейските институции, така и страните членки да инвестират много повече средства, ресурси и хора в този отговор на пропагандата и на фалшивите новини. Примерите от моята страна са насочени срещу Европейския съюз, НАТО и нейния геополитически избор. Западните Балкани са особено застрашени от пропагандата, чиято цел е да промени обществените нагласи.

Kati Piri (S&D). – Dank u, Voorzitter. De Russische president Poetin heeft in zijn arsenaal tegen het democratische Westen een nieuw wapen: het bewust verspreiden van desinformatie. Dat gebeurt onder andere via sociale media, maar ook – zoals we vandaag tijdens het debat merkten – via het financieren van politieke partijen in Europa om op die manier democratische processen te verstoren. De grootste dreiging is er voor de buurlanden van Rusland, veelal jonge democratieën. Maar we hebben ook gezien hoe Russische propaganda effectief was bij de brexit en bij de Amerikaanse verkiezingen.

Allereerst moeten we erkennen dat Russische propaganda een serieuze bedreiging is voor onze open democratische samenlevingen. Dat is het geval. We moeten dan ook meer doen om onze burgers hiertegen te beschermen. De Europese Commissie komt in het voorjaar met aanbevelingen. Technologische bedrijven als Facebook zullen meer transparantie moeten geven over adverteerders en over algoritmes die bepalen wat wij überhaupt te zien krijgen. Om de ernst van de zaak te onderstrepen en meer bewustwording te creëren, zouden we in het Europees Parlement jaarlijks een debat moeten organiseren om op basis van informatie (onder andere van StratCom) het debat met elkaar aan te gaan. Dank u wel

Marek Jurek (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Fundamentem naszego bezpieczeństwa na wschodzie, również fundamentem bezpieczeństwa i niepodległości państw, które tam z nami sąsiadują, jest nasza realna, a nie wirtualna solidarność, przede wszystkim solidarność w polityce bezpieczeństwa. My dzisiaj na tej sali słyszeliśmy przedstawiciela niemieckiej socjaldemokracji, a więc jednej z największych partii politycznych w Europie, jak mówił i przekonywał o tym Radę Europejską, że czas na normalizację stosunków z Rosją. Krym jest okupowany, Rosja nie chce zwrócić samolotu, w którym zginął polski prezydent i który stanowi główny dowód w śledztwie, które w tej sprawie się toczy, a my mówimy o normalizacji? Czym ma być ta norma, o której dzisiaj mówił nasz kolega siedzący w samym centrum tego parlamentu? To ma być kariera kanclerza Schrödera, jego wybitna rola ekspercka, którą ciągle kontynuuje u boku prezydenta Putina?

Ivo Vajgl (ALDE). – Spoštovani, nisem prepričan o tem, da je potrebno, da se tolikokrat vračamo na to temo v Parlamentu. Mislim, da imamo veliko pomembnejših stvari, o katerih bi se lahko pogovarjali.

Ustvarjanje lažnih zgodb, tendencioznih novic, vključno z zgodbami in dejanji, ki pomenijo poskus vplivanja na demokratske volitve in procese v drugih državah, vse to vodi v zaostrene mednarodne razmere. Verjamem pa, da propaganda iz tujine, iz Rusije ali od koder koli drugje, ne more omajati zaupanja državljanov Evropske unije v Unijo samo in njene vrednote.

Gre za instrumente hladne vojne in hladna vojna je predigra pravih spopadov običajno. Zato sta potrebni dve enako aktivni in motivirani strani. Ko opozarjamo na nesprejemljivo početje drugih, ne smemo sami postati udeleženci v tej nevarni igri, ki postaja spricho novih in prodornih sredstev, ki so na razpolago, čedalje bolj zagrizena in na žalost tudi čedalje bolj učinkovita.

Gunnar Hökmark (PPE). – Mr President, it is quite interesting that the communists and the extremist nationalists in this Chamber can't see Russian disinformation. Of course you can't, but we can see you. We see that you are giving the same message of extremism, conflicts and dislike for democracy as Russian disinformation tries to impose on our societies.

The difference between Russian disinformation and a lot of the other disinformation we see is that Russian disinformation is part of a broader warfare against Europe and European democracies. It cannot be seen as isolated from all the other things that Russia does. It must be defeated and disclosed, and we must tell them that we will win and they will lose.

(Applause)

Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D). – Panie Przewodniczący! Dziękuję za działania w moim interesie.

Nie ma się co dziwić: propaganda i działalność propagandowa przeciwko obcym, drugim zawsze występowała i występuje. Czy dziwicie się, że Rosja nie jest zadowolona, jeżeli Unia Europejska się umacnia? A jak ma być zadowolona, skoro utraciła Litwę, Łotwę, Estonię, Polskę, Czechy, Węgry i tak dalej? Wiadomo, że będzie działać w tym kierunku, żeby osłabić wewnątrz Unię Europejską. Odnoszę wrażenie, że jeżeli my pokażemy, że umiemy być dumni z Unii Europejskiej jako pięknego projektu, to zwiększy to naszą odporność. Mamy nowy instrument czyli media społeczne, które są rzeczywiście niekontrolowane, bo sami tego chcemy, które są ogólnodostępne, natomiast jeżeli się znajdą zapisy, chociażby z naszej dzisiejszej dyskusji, że Russia Today czy Sputnik informowały lepiej niż BBC, Agence France czy Polska Agencja Prasowa, i jeżeli to przekażemy społeczeństwu, to będzie zachęta – oglądajcie Russia Today. Więc tego nie powinniśmy robić. Jeżeli będą zapisy – tutaj słyszeliśmy kolegów: „Zanim będziecie mówić o Rosji, uporządkujcie swoje sprawy, bo w samej Unii jest niedobrze” – no to sami dajemy paliwo. Ważne, żeby z naszej debaty nie wystąpiła przesłanka niemocy – rozmawiali, ale nic nie mogą. Tutaj powinniśmy wesprzeć starania Komisji. Także w Parlamencie Europejskim czynimy działania, żeby nie być tymi, którzy nie mogą.

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Ja uważam, że sprawa, która się tutaj najczęściej przewija, czyli fake news, to jest tylko jeden z przykładów propagandy rosyjskiej i kanałów propagandy rosyjskiej, wcale nie najważniejszy. Powinniśmy się głębiej zastanowić nad tym problemem, który koledzy poruszali na marginesie: na wpływie Rosji i propagandy rosyjskiej na politykę i polityków europejskich, a też na rolę niektórych polityków europejskich czy w krajach europejskich w szerzeniu propagandy rosyjskiej. Nie chodzi tylko wcale o populistów, nacjonalistów i inne tego rodzaju osoby określane tym mianem. Weźmy przykład wspomniany przez posła Jurka: byłego kanclerza Niemiec Gerharda Schrödera. Czy on jest nacjonalistą, populistą? Nie – jest człowiekiem, który przecież wypowiada się – podobnie jak jego partia – zawsze bardzo pozytywnie na temat Unii Europejskiej. A co sądzić o jego działalności? Otóż uważam, że jest ona o wiele bardziej niebezpieczna niż te wszystkie fake news. Podobnie ci wszyscy politycy, którzy twierdzą, że NordStream jest tylko projektem gospodarczym, szerzą propagandę rosyjską.

Javier Nart (ALDE). – Señor presidente, hay unos hechos que son determinantes. Uno, existen servidores informáticos con sede en la Federación Rusa que generan, difunden y multiplican mensajes falsos, intoxicando las redes. Dos, estos mensajes tienen como objetivo fracturar las sociedades occidentales. Tres, los servidores requieren altas inversiones en instalaciones y personal. Cuatro, la financiación exigida no es conocida ni se justifica, ya que no tiene publicidad. Cinco, los servicios policiales y de inteligencia de la Federación Rusa son extraordinariamente eficaces. Seis, ciertamente esta situación no beneficia a las relaciones entre la Unión Europea y la Federación Rusa, que entiendo no pueden seguir congeladas. Siete, ¿por qué las autoridades rusas permiten esta actividad?

Y, en conclusión: si el presidente Macron ha tenido el sentido común de establecer una legislación que bloquee estas informaciones ficticias, estas informaciones intoxicantes, ¿qué va a hacer la Unión Europea para realizar una actividad semejante?

Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE). – Já si dovolím takovou jednu historickou paralelu. Před druhou světovou válkou žili dohromady mnohé národy a Židé. Co se stalo? Co Židé udělali jiného, že mnoho lidí během nástupu nacistů úplně změnili o Židech mínění a pak spolupracovali, bili je, vydávali je nacistům napospas? Prostě uvěřili propagandě a to je i ten důvod, proč tu dnes musíme toto téma otevřít.

Vážený kolegové, stokrát opakovaná lež o EU se stává pravdou, a jestli si toto neuvědomíme, tak EU nemá tady vůbec svoje místo v budoucnosti. A to já si osobně nepřeji. Proto jsem rád za tuto debatu, proto jsem rád za to, že se k tomu můžeme vyjádřit, a proto jsem rád za to, že můžu apelovat na pana komisaře a na paní komisařku, abychom navýšili peníze na organizace a na způsoby boje proti jakékoliv propagandě.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señor presidente, señor comisario King, una vez Henry Kissinger le dijo a Robert McNamara: *«Do you know, Bob? The fact that I'm a paranoid doesn't mean that I don't have real enemies»*.

Podemos discutir si la estrategia es errática, pero no que la amenaza es real. Porque la propaganda como forma de hacer política no se extinguió con los totalitarismos que se enfrentaron en la Segunda Guerra Mundial, sino que continúa amenazando los valores fundacionales de la Unión Europea, en un híbrido de ciberterrorismo, *fake news*, intoxicación y chantaje. Y es cierto que la amenaza no proviene solamente de Rusia ni afecta solamente a los países de su directa vecindad, pero también que los estudios y los informes del Congreso de los Estados Unidos y de la comisión de investigación puesta en marcha en el Reino Unido y de las agencias de inteligencia europeas señalan a miles de cuentas automatizadas, radicadas en Rusia, que atacan los valores fundacionales de las sociedades democráticas, como se puso de manifiesto recientemente en Cataluña, para sembrar caos y confusión, favoreciendo la causa de la secesión.

Es imprescindible que la Unión Europea haga honor a la declaración de Praga de la comisaría Mogherini e invierta y se equipe para hacer frente a esta amenaza, que es absolutamente real.

Kosma Złotowski (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Cieszy mnie, że dzisiaj większość z nas tu na sali Parlamentu Europejskiego dostrzega coś takiego jak propaganda rosyjska i jej szkodliwość dla Unii Europejskiej, dla demokracji w ogóle, ale oczywiście ciężko byłoby wyjść z tej sali i mówić: „No, powiedzieliśmy i nic nie możemy”, tak jak tu wskazywał nam pan poseł Liberadzki. Otóż my musimy coś zrobić. Propaganda rosyjska oczywiście to jest wiele, wiele fortepianów, ale wskazywaliśmy tu wszyscy na jeden z nich, a mianowicie Russia Today. Owszem, oni chcą wpłynąć na opinię publiczną w Unii Europejskiej, czy w ogóle szerzej na świecie, ale my też musimy wpływać na ich opinię publiczną. Europe Today – to powinna być nasza odpowiedź. Mamy doświadczenie, mamy Radio Wolna Europa. Są zresztą takie inicjatywy i Unia Europejska, Komisja Europejska powinny je wesprzeć.

Urmas Paet (ALDE). – Mr President, tensions between Western societies and Russia have given rise to the flow of fake news that aims to weaken the European Union. Europe must become less naive to be able to defend itself given this surge of false news and propaganda. A few examples. Most European hotels show the TV Russia Today alongside ordinary channels. Some months ago, in this very same European Parliament building an exhibition was opened showcasing Russian views on the events in Syria. Would anyone imagine having the same kind of EU exhibition in the Russian State Duma right now?

Also, European journalists have to be very professional. There is a need to go back to classical journalism rules. All facts must be checked. You must be critical of your sources and No Russian media channel should be considered a trustworthy source. One must be able to distinguish between propaganda channels and real journalists, and it is not that difficult actually. So Europe itself can do a lot to protect its societies from propaganda attacks by using common sense and being less naive.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to thank first of all our StratCom team for their excellent efforts which should be taken extremely seriously by our governments and foreign policy leaders. Still, they are too small and need much more funding.

But one field where Russian propaganda has had a lasting effect: it has succeeded to make us believe that the Russian Duma is freely elected, not a Putin selected body and that by fostering personal contacts with Duma members we can exercise some influence on the conduct of Russian rulers.

I think the opposite is true: Duma members are instruments of Putin par excellence. They have a very clear programme and they are ten times better prepared for spreading disinformation among European parliamentarians than we are. We should keep this in mind.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospodine predsjedniče, utjecaj ruske propagande na građane država članica Unije sigurno nije zanemariv, no veliko je pitanje koliko je presudan u njihovom donošenju odluka na izborima i referendumima. Uvjeren sam da nije toliko.

Čini mi se da europski politički mainstream koji ubrzano gubi povjerenje građana, a time i političku moć, želi u Moskvi pronaći svog Pedra, nekoga koga može kriviti za sve. Da, Moskva sigurno želi ostvariti određeni utjecaj u Europi, ali ne – nije glavna odgovorna za razočaranje naših građana.

Danas se ne događa ništa što se nije događalo i ranije. Uvijek su velike sile koristile razne metode kako bi jedna drugu destabilizirale. Danas se samo koriste druga sredstva za iste ciljeve.

Naravno da to ne bismo trebali šutke promatrati i dozvoliti da nas se destabilizira, ali ne mislim ni da je uputno Putinu pripisivati nadljudske osobine kako bi se prikrilo ili ublažilo vlastiti nerad, nekompetenciju i očite pogreške.

PRÉSIDENCE DE MME Sylvie GUILLAUME

Vice-présidente

Dubravka Šuica (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče, poznati Collins Dictionary je proglasio riječju godine 2017. fake news. U usporedbi s 2016. ovaj je pojam korišten 360 % više. Znači, to nam isto nešto govori o čemu se radi.

Gospodo Caliente, hvala Vam lijepo što ste uspjeli ovu temu podići na današnji dnevni red i slažem se s Vama da želimo nultu toleranciju kada je u pitanju govor mržnje. Isto tako, nikako ne možemo dozvoliti da se podrivaju demokratske europske vrijednosti koje smo postigli, i putem ruske propagande. Želimo se boriti protiv mitova, manipulacija, hibridnih ratova. Iz ovoga svega proizlazi da je cilj destabilizirati Europsku uniju.

Gospodine Gonzales, slažem se s Vama. Nećemo nikome nametati naš način življenja, ali želimo očuvati naš način življenja i želimo se boriti protiv propagande. Istina je da su uvijek velike sile, ne velike nego nedemokratske sile, koristile propagandu za svoj utjecaj. Mi moramo sačuvati naš i drago mi je da Europska unija poduzima sve moguće aktivnosti kako bismo spriječili lažne vijesti i hibridne ratove.

Laima Liucija Andrikiene (PPE). – Europos Sąjungos atsakas į Rusijos agresijos grėsmę iki šiol buvo silpnas, nes didelė mūsų politinio elito dalis, ypač Europos vakaruose, vis dar nepripažįsta šios grėsmės. Agresyvūs Kremliaus veiksmai yra precedento neturintys po Šaltojo karo. Tai svetimų teritorijų okupacija ir aneksija panaudojant jėgą, nuolatiniai kitų valstybių sienų ir oro erdvės pažeidimai, tai precedento neturintis dezinformacijos naudojimas, priešiškas kišimasis į demokratinius rinkimus ir nuolatiniai kibernetiniai išpuoliai. Faktas, kad, kai Jungtinės Valstijos tyrinėja aiškiai priešišką prasiškerbimą į savo demokratijos tvirtovę, rinkimų procesą, tokie tyrimai Europoje niekur nebuvo pradėti, nors Rusijos įsikišimo atvejai Nyderlanduose, Jungtinėje Karalystėje, Prancūzijoje, Vokietijoje yra akivaizdūs. Todėl privalome įvardinti Rusiją kaip pagrindinį priešiškos dezinformacijos šaltinį ir nedelsiant imtis praktinių veiksmų: 1) pripažinti

grėsmę, 2) ištirti ir viešai demaskuoti priešišką Rusijos veiklą, 3) padidinti STRATCOMM pajėgumus iki reikiamo lygio ir 4) skleisti supratimą už specialistų bendruomenės ribų.

Dariusz Rosati (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! W ciągu ostatnich miesięcy byliśmy świadkami prób manipulowania opinią publiczną i wpływania na wyniki demokratycznych wyborów w Unii Europejskiej i poza nią. Wiele z tych prób było dziełem Federacji Rosyjskiej.

Rosja rozwinęła strategię kłamliwej propagandy, której głównym celem jest osłabienie i rozbięcie Unii Europejskiej, między innymi przez wspieranie tendencji antyeuropejskich i wzmocnienie partii nacjonalistycznych i populistycznych w poszczególnych państwach członkowskich i w państwach sąsiadujących. Przykro stwierdzić, ale również i na tej sali znajdują się przedstawiciele partii, którzy bronią tego postępowania Federacji Rosyjskiej.

Przykład Ukrainy jest szczególnie wymowny. Pod wpływem kłamstw rozpowszechnianych przez kontrolowane przez Kreml media, fundacje, internetowe boty i armię trolli wielu obywateli państw unijnych uwierzyło, że to Ukraina ponosi odpowiedzialność za krwawą wojnę prowadzoną na jej terytorium przez Rosję.

Pani Przewodnicząca! W obliczu tej wojny informacyjnej musimy zacząć działać natychmiast i zdecydowanie. Apeluję do Komisji Europejskiej i do przedstawicieli państw członkowskich o podjęcie działań zmierzających do wypracowania skutecznej strategii walki z tym zjawiskiem.

Michael Gahler (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich glaube ein wichtiger Punkt ist, dass wir im Rahmen dieser Debatte in unsere Öffentlichkeit das Bewusstsein tragen, dass in diesem Bereich etwas geschieht – dass also überhaupt Russland auf diesem Weg unterwegs ist. Wenn wir es geschehen lassen, dass Herr Putin Erfolg hat in der Form, dass er die Grenze zwischen Wahrheit und Lüge verschiebt, oder, dass wir es akzeptieren, dass, jeder eben seine Wahrheit hat, dann hätte er gewonnen.

Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass wir aus der Kraft unserer Demokratie heraus die Stärke haben, klarzumachen: Wir machen nichts gegen eine russische Politik, wir machen keine Gegenpropaganda, sondern aus meiner Sicht ist das probateste Mittel gegen solche Fake News einfach die schlichte Wahrheit. Wenn wir die rüberbringen, dann haben diejenigen, die die Wahrheit verfälschen wollen, keine Chance.

Jaromír Štětina (PPE). – S lítostí a roztrpčením sleduji, kolik škody napáchal kremelský trolling na naší půdě, na půdě členských států EU. Tým, který bojuje s vyvracením desinformací na straně EU, působí od roku 2015 a má o něco více než 10 členů. Ano, došlo k rozšíření týmu *East StratCom* po nesčetných výzvách tohoto Parlamentu o 2 členy.

Paní vysoká představitelka zde – eufemisticky řečeno – podcenila situaci a s její nápravou nezodpovědně nespíchá. Má země ČR je zaplavena nesmyslnými lživými informacemi o EU. Před druhým kolem prezidentské volby se tak na slušného protikandidáta současného prezidenta Zemana valí smršť prefabrikovaných lží z dílny AC 24, Aeronetu, Sputniku a mnoha dalších. Zamysleme se prosím nad naší taktikou vůči Kremlu.

Lars Adaktusson (PPE). – Madam President, a number of EU Member States have been subjected to severe disinformation attacks from Russia. Russian deception is aimed at weakening, destabilising and dividing the European Union. In essence, we are talking about an attack on democracy.

When it comes to confronting this, the High Representative has stated that the External Action Service has taken proper action. However, many experts beg to disagree. The EU instantly needs to raise public awareness, to streamline the exchange of intelligence and to allocate necessary resources to institutions like Europol and StratCom. In order to protect and preserve fundamental values we need an effective strategy. We need political courage to counter the forces for whom misrepresentations and lies are the principal political instrument.

Ramona Nicole Mănescu (PPE). – Madam President, the chief editor of Russia Today said that Russia Today is capable of conducting an information war against the whole western world: to conquer and to grow an audience in order to make use of this audience at critical moments. It seems that the Kremlin decided a long time ago that the EU is an enemy of Russian interests and should be treated accordingly, by any means.

But our lack of action shows that the EU does not perceive Russia as a real threat and we are not doing enough. We must end this *dolce farniente* and decide more quickly about our position on strategic communication and counter propaganda; such a decision must be followed by actions with an appropriate budget.

Either we respond on the same scale or we start an open dialogue with Russia based on our interests and priorities. We must understand that this is not about an ideological conflict. The Kremlin's propaganda is targeting very concrete files, such as the energy file and, using the old, but effective, strategy of *divide et impera*. It will clearly win this game if we do not take firm action today.

(Applause)

Julian King, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, on behalf of the Commission, can I just express our appreciation for the work that this Parliament does to address the issues around this phenomenon, this challenge of disinformation. Today's debate obviously, but not just starting today, going back some time, a number of you have mentioned the resolution that Ms Fotyga was rapporteur for in 2016.

Deliberate disinformation raises the stakes. It raises the stakes both for freedom of expression and for our properly functioning democracies. The challenge for public authorities at all levels is to find ways of tackling disinformation without having an adverse effect on freedom of expression, as a number of you have underlined. It is no good our seeking to counter disinformation or fake news by setting up some kind of 1984-style Ministry of Truth; and we are not going to do that.

As I said earlier, the Commission is looking at what more might be done to address the challenge of hostile propaganda, fake news and online disinformation, always bearing in mind that balance between countering disinformation and respecting our democratic rights including crucially freedom of expression.

So we are reinforcing our StratCom's efforts. We will continue our support to media freedom of expression. We will come forward with proposals focusing on this challenge of fake news later this spring. We are looking at what more we can do with the big Internet platforms to address these issues and we are pursuing, with you, the measures that need to be taken to reinforce our cybersecurity, our cyber resilience and deterrence. Those are concrete steps that we are taking on these issues.

Honourable Members, this has been a most timely debate.

Monika Panayotova, *Présidente en exercice du Conseil*. – Madame la Présidente, je vous remercie.

Madam President, thank you again for inviting me to this debate. I have followed it closely, and it has again illustrated the topical character and the scale of the challenge posed by disinformation and propaganda.

As some Members have mentioned, the tools we already have, such as East StratCom, are proving to be valuable in raising awareness of disinformation, but it is clear that they are only a part of the response to such challenges. Today's debate also further highlighted the need for EU institutions and Member States to further cooperate. Supporting greater media literacy and media plurality is also essential, and here all Member States have a role to play too. The European Union should further communicate positive narratives and fact-based messages and develop resilience among its citizens towards propaganda and disinformation. In this way people will not feel confused or insecure and will be able to engage in critical thinking, distinguishing facts from propaganda.

(Applause)

La Présidente. – Le débat est clos.

Je reviens vers vous, M^{me} Grapini. On m'a déjà prévenue deux fois que vous aviez demandé la parole pour «un fait personnel». Il n'y a pas de souci, je vais vous la donner.

Je vous rappelle juste qu'au titre de l'article 164, vous ne pouvez pas vous exprimer sur le fond du débat, mais simplement, ce qui n'est déjà pas mal, je crois, réfuter soit des propos tenus au cours du débat vous concernant personnellement, soit des opinions qui vous sont prêtées, ou encore, vous pouvez rectifier vos propres déclarations. Vous avez pour ce faire trois minutes maximum.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, nu am să mă refer la fond, am vrut doar ca, în baza acestui articol pe care dumneavoastră l-ați spus, să mă refer la lucruri mincinoase spuse. A fost pronunțat numele meu. Colegul Cristian Preda, care, de altfel, a plecat din sală, și-a folosit timpul de vorbire în această dezbatere extrem de importantă pe o temă foarte importantă, acuzându-mă că aș fi pro-rus.

Eu sunt un pro-european demonstrat în țară și aici, prin activitatea mea. Și în țară și aici am demonstrat acest lucru și cred că nu putem să dezbaterem despre știri false alimentând colegii din Parlament, Comisia, Consiliul cu informații false. Și cred că este neetic, este un om care nu se bucură de nicio popularitate, nu mai face parte dintr-un partid politic, este decredibilizat total și nu cred că este normal să acuze fără argumente. Și cred că ar fi bine să încercăm să găsim o soluție prin care cei care vin aici cu acuzații – ar trebui să beneficiem și noi de prezumția de nevinovăție – să vină și cu dovezi. Eu cred că aceasta ar fi calea etică într-un forum, așa cum este Parlamentul European, și nu este prima dată când domnul Cristian Preda face acest lucru.

Ar trebui totuși să rezumăm și să spunem celor care iau cuvântul să facă referire la subiectul în dezbatere. Este un subiect important și eu cred foarte mult în tot ce a spus și domnul comisar și Consiliul și mulți colegi de aici din cadrul dezbaterilor că noi, Uniunea Europeană, Comisia Europeană, Parlamentul putem să facem mai mult pentru evitarea știrilor false. De altfel, sunt membră a comisiei LIBE și știți – și dumneavoastră sunteți membră – că sunt implicată și am apreciat raportul din proprie inițiativă al Tanjei Fajon, care dorește să găsim împreună o soluție pentru combaterea știrilor false. Vă mulțumesc – intervenția mea a avut legătură doar cu un atac absolut rușinos.

La Présidente. – Vous avez eu l'occasion de vous exprimer, Madame, effectivement, sur ce sujet.

Déclarations écrites (article 162)

Javi López (S&D), por escrito. – Este debate sin resolución trata el impacto de la propaganda rusa en la seguridad de los Estados miembros y la interferencia en sus procesos políticos y electorales. Rusia está llevando a cabo y alentando acciones para desestabilizar tanto los gobiernos y las sociedades europeas como a la UE y a la OTAN. Varios Estados miembros han expresado su preocupación por los efectos de esta propaganda y sus potenciales efectos políticos dramáticos, más teniendo en cuenta que Hungría e Italia celebrarán elecciones este año, o los vínculos geográficos e históricos existentes en los países del Este. Este tema tiene una gran relevancia desde la perspectiva de la defensa, ya que la relación con Rusia es uno de los puntos cruciales en la confección de la Unión Europea de la Defensa. La UE ha considerado este tema como clave y se ha establecido una unidad especializada para abordarlo. Además, se firmó en Praga una Declaración que urgía a la alta representante a adoptar medidas al respecto y se ha ido incrementado el presupuesto para luchar contra la injerencia externa y las noticias falsas.

Artis Pabriks (PPE), rakstiski. – Informācijas telpa ir pārvērtusies par modernu kaujas lauku, tai skaitā Eiropā un Latvijā. Mēs Baltijas valstīs to pamanījām pirmie, tādēļ 2015. gadā Rīgā tapa StratCom. Šodien, lielā mērā pateicoties deputātiem no Baltijas, šis jautājums ir nokļuvis Parlamenta dienas kārtībā. Krievija ir viena no valstīm, kas šo informācijas telpu izmanto aktīvi un iedarbīgi. Kamēr Krievijas varas iestādes neslēpj, ka viltus ziņas un nepatiesa informācija ir militāri rīki, arvien pamatotākas kļūst bažas, ka Krievija ir bijusi iesaistīta gan vēlēšanās ASV, gan Brexit referendumā. Šim informācijas kaujas laukam un nepatiesu ziņu izplatīšanai sociālie tīkli ir kļuvuši par pateicīgu augsni. Krievijas propagandas mašīnā ir ieguldīti astronomiski līdzekļi. ES ir radījusi ES Austrumu StratCom, kas aktīvi un veiksmīgi izplata informāciju par atklātajām Krievijas dezinformācijas kampaņām un viltus ziņām, cenšoties atspēkot Kremļa propagandu. Tādēļ ir nepieciešams palielināt šī centra resursus un kapacitāti. Tāpat mums ir jādomā, kā mazināt šādas informācijas izplatību sociālajos tīklos, kādas privātuma un vārda brīvības robežas šeit pieļaujamas, vai komentāri internetā var būt anonīmi. Mums ir jābūt gataviem mēģinājumiem ietekmēt ne tikai nacionālo, bet arī Eiropas Parlamenta vēlēšanu rezultātus. Vēlos vēl piebilst, ka Krievijas propagandas ietekme jūtama arī Eiropas Parlamentā, jo ir novēroti atkārtoti mēģinājumi Krievijai interesējošus jautājumus iekļaut Parlamenta dienas kārtībā.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D), *írásban*. – Fontosnak tartom ezt a vitát, mert 2016. novemberi állásfoglalásunk után azt a felismerést tükrözi, hogy az azóta eltelt időszakban a helyzet csak súlyosbodott, az EU belső kohézióját és atlanti szövetségi rendszerét a nyílt provokációk, burkolt fenyegetések, álhírek és megosztási kísérletek széles eszköztárával bomlasztani törekvő putyini expanziós politika mára az Európai Unió biztonságát fenyegető egyik legveszélyesebb külső kihívássá fajult. Üdvözlöm a Bizottság szándékát, hogy az orosz propaganda ellensúlyozásában az Unió a tagállamokat az eddigit jelentősen meghaladó közösségi forrásokkal, korszerű, konkrét akciótervekkel segíti. Moszkva ugyanis célzott álhírével, s a piszkos „hibrid háború” sok más eszközével egész Európa biztonságát, értékeit, demokratikus jogállami berendezkedését támadja: megszállás alatt tartja egy szuverén ország területét, határain harcokat szít, másutt uniós tagállamokat provokál, manipulálni próbálja belső viszonyainkat, sajtónkat.

Tapasztaltuk, hogy Putyin a józan ész és a diplomácia nyelvét nem érti, csak az erőét. Ezért tagállamonként differenciált eszközökkel, de a helyzet súlyosságának megfelelően a demokratikus közösség erejét felmutató együttes EU fellépésre van szükség. Ugyanakkor magyar politikusként sajnálattal látom, hogy ebben az uniós egység leggyengébb láncszeme éppen Magyarország, pontosabban az Orbán-kormány politikája: egy tagállam vezetése személyes politikai számításból kiszolgáltatja hazája és szövetségesei biztonságát, elárulja gazdasági, pénzügyi, energiaellátási érdekeit Putyin céljainak szolgálatában. Magyarország nem válhat Moszkva hídfőállásává az EU-n belül!

Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – As we all know, fighting the influences of Russian propaganda, or any disinformation campaign for that matter, is not exactly straightforward. Since we do not want a ministry of truth, we need a more sophisticated approach. I myself am not susceptible to Russian propaganda, having lived half of my life in the Soviet Union I have no trouble discerning facts from fiction, but there are plenty of impressionable people out there, especially on the internet. Some studies indicate that six out of ten people do not even read the articles that they share and repost on social media. The Geier / Tarand report on the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2017 decided to create ‘a Strategic Communication Capacity budget item in line with the European Council conclusions of March 2015 and equip the EEAS with adequate staff and tools to face the challenge of disinformation from third states and non-state actors.’ We might indeed need to provide the EEAS East StratCom Task Force with more financial and human resources, but before we do that I would like to see a thorough impact assessment of their work so far, especially considering the complex nature of combating this problem.

17. Wdrażanie Inicjatywy na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych w państwach członkowskich (debata)

La Présidente. – L'ordre du jour appelle le débat sur le rapport de Romana Tomc, au nom de la commission de l'emploi et des affaires sociales, sur la mise en œuvre de l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes dans les États membres (2017/2039(INI)) (A8-0406/2017).

Romana Tomc, *Poročevalka*. – Seveda bi se najprej rada zahvalila vsem poročevalcem v senci in vsem kolegom, ki ste prispevali h končni verziji poročila, ki ga imamo danes pred sabo in o katerem bomo jutri glasovali. Zahvalila se bom tudi seveda vsem strokovnim sodelavcem, ki so s svojim delom res prispevali k temu, da je poročilo dobro.

Pred letom dni smo imeli prve sestanke in zato, da bi videli kakšne so izkušnje tudi na terenu, smo izvedli tudi poizvedovalno misijo v Slovenijo in na Hrvaško. Na poročilo je bilo vloženih 224 amandmajev in mislim, da smo v njih in v poročilu samem zajeli vse glavne ugotovitve in opozorili na izzive, s katerimi se bomo morali soočiti v prihodnosti, ko bomo nadaljevali s pobudo za zaposlovanje mladih.

Kaj sploh je pobuda za zaposlovanje mladih? Gre za finančni program, ki podpira projekt, ki ga je lansirala Evropska komisija leta 2012. Takrat je bila dana zaveza, da bomo mladim Evropejcem v štirih mesecih po tem, ko izgubijo zaposlitev ali končajo izobraževanje, zagotovili kakovostno ponudbo za zaposlitev, nadaljnje izobraževanje, vajeništvo ali pripravništvo.

S pobudo za zaposlovanje mladih, s tem programom, ki ima na razpolago 7,6 milijarde evrov, bomo ta cilj lažje dosegli. Ampak pomembno pri tem seveda je, da je denar učinkovito porabljen in da zajame najbolj ranljive skupine mladih. Vendar, razpoložljivi podatki na žalost kažejo, da je bil zajet le manjši delež tistih, ki so neaktivni. Kljub nekaterim pomanjkljivostim, ki se nanašajo predvsem na ciljne skupine in na merjenje ter spremljanje rezultatov, pa so se končni rezultati izvajanja pobude pokazali kot zelo pozitivni.

Najpomembnejše vprašanje, ki ostaja izziv za prihodnost tega programa, pa je vprašanje stroškovne učinkovitosti. Torej, kako se porablja denar, učinkovito ali ne, in na to je opozorilo tudi Računsko sodišče. Ena izmed ugotovitev je tudi ta, da države članice sredstva iz pobude namesto kot dodatni vir uporabljajo kot osnovni vir, in pravzaprav jih nadomeščajo s tistimi nacionalnimi viri, ki bi jih morale sicer same prispevati.

Zelo zahteven in žal nepoisten je tudi postopek spremljanja in vrednotenja, zato danes ne razpolagamo z zelo eksaktnimi dokazi, ali gre za dobro ali za malo manj dobro učinkovitost, in na to sem seveda v poročilu tudi posebej opozorila.

Eno izmed ključnih vprašanj tega poročila in tudi sicer naše debate je bilo vprašanje kakovosti ponudb delovnih mest. Te ponudbe so namreč ponavadi oziroma pogosto zelo vprašljive, posebej danes, ko prevladujejo atipične oblike zaposlovanja, je to težava. Zato sem vesela, da smo tudi okoli tega, kaj pomeni kakovostna ponudba, dosegli ustrezen kompromis.

Moram na koncu dodati še to, da so ukrepi pobude podprli več kot 1,6 milijona mladih v Evropski uniji. Zato potrebujemo sigurno strategijo, s katero bi pobudo preoblikovali v bolj stabilen in bolj trajen instrument financiranja tudi po letu 2020. Takrat se bomo namreč najbrž soočali z drugačnimi izzivi na trgu dela, ampak vedno, zares vedno, bo potrebno na trgu dela poskrbeti za tiste, ki so naša prihodnost, to se pravi za naše mlade.

Marianne Thyssen, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I would like to thank Ms Tomc for her report, which stresses that youth employment is, and remains, a top priority at Union level. Your report, Ms Tomc, comes at the right moment to take stock, four years into the launch of the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative. As you know, there are two sides of the coin: the policy and the financial support dedicated to young people not in employment, education or training, the so-called NEETs.

Setting up the Youth Guarantee required commitment and political support from Member States, building new partnerships, as well as significant reforms of the labour market, education and training policies. Back in 2014, only a few Member States had fully set up their implementation structures and launched measures to benefit from this dedicated funding. Given their budgetary constraints, many Member States were struggling to ensure sufficient financial liquidity so that measures could take off. Therefore, my first action as a Commissioner was to address this shortage by proposing to release 30% of the Youth Employment Initiative resources directly as advance payments to the Member States.

These efforts are now bearing fruit. Since the launch of the Youth Guarantee, around 11 million young people have received an offer. The Youth Employment Initiative has directly helped at least 1.7 million young people to receive job training or a further education opportunity.

In parallel, we observe a strong decrease in the youth employment rate, from a peak of 24% in January 2013 to 16.2% last November. There are now two million fewer young unemployed in the Union and one million fewer young people who are not in employment, education or training. I believe that the combination of the Youth Guarantee, the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund (ESF) has contributed to this remarkable improvement. Together, they have created new opportunities for young people and acted as a powerful driver for structural reforms in all Member States.

However, I agree with you that our work should not stop here. Youth unemployment is still far too high in many Member States, and the figures diverge, from 5% in the Czech Republic or 6.6% in Germany to around, yes, 39% in Greece, and also, still, more than 30% in Italy and Spain. Inactivity among young people, as well as untapped potential, remains a reality across the Union and, as your report and also the report of the Court of Auditors highlight, not all young people have benefited equally from these initiatives.

Let me stress a few aspects that we will further concentrate on. We need to step up efforts to reach out and to support the low-skilled and those with fewer opportunities. We know that young people with disabilities, those with a migration background and young parents with caring responsibilities remain much more at risk of becoming NEETs.

I agree with you that we have to expand the pool of good-quality offers. We need to ensure that they really help young people to get a solid foothold in the labour market. For the second phase of the Youth Employment Initiative's implementation, until the end of the current financial framework, we will pay close attention to this quality aspect.

The Commission is already helping Member States to improve the quality of their job and training offers and to design outreach measures. This is the case for the 'find-bind-mind' outreach method that certain Member States already use successfully to ensure that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people are given special attention and receive the personalised assistance they need. And let us not forget that the ESF can also be used. It can be used as an additional support for an integrated approach to these young people. It can also invest in the reform of services and the setting up of the so-called one-stop-shop approach, offering young people a single contact point for all formalities and assistance provided by several services – social, employment or education.

In order to offer policy guidance to Member States and stakeholders, we adopted a proposal for a European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships. We are also working to increase the supply, quality and image of apprenticeships through the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, and we will continue our efforts with the social partners on promoting the implementation of the quality framework for traineeships.

As regards monitoring the Youth Employment Initiative progress, we continue providing guidance on a regular basis and requesting Member States' feedback on data collection and monitoring. In 2019, we will report to you and to the Council on the main findings of the Member States' evaluations of the Youth Employment Initiative, which they are currently carrying out.

The Commission will also continue to support mutual learning and dissemination of good practices among Member States. Last October, for instance, we organised a Youth Guarantee learning forum that brought together Youth Guarantee policy coordinators from Member States and Youth Employment Initiative managing authorities. The aim was to disseminate good practices, take stock of the lessons learned so far and come up with proposals for the future.

Your draft report confirms that the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative are, and will remain, important instruments for fighting youth unemployment in Europe. As the Court of Auditors pointed out, we need to reach out further to the NEETs far away from the education and labour market, and ensure the quality of the offers provided. The Commission and the Member States are committed to improve further the outcome of these schemes.

Finally, let me thank Parliament once again for supporting the increase in the Youth Employment Initiative resources until 2020. This additional EUR 1.2 billion will allow Member States to support around one million more young people until 2020, in the Member States and regions most affected by youth unemployment.

Andrey Novakov, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Budgets*. – Madam President, I am happy that this debate is coming just a few hours after the presentation of the Bulgarian Presidency and its priorities. One of those priorities is youngsters, and it is good to have youngsters as a priority because we have to fight for each and every one of them. They deserve it. No matter what crisis is going to hit us post-2020, no matter how hard it will be, no matter how impossible it looks, we have to find enough resources to provide ourselves with the tools to fight youth unemployment.

And it is not just empty talk. It is obvious that our Youth Employment Initiative is working well and delivering results. For example, in my own country, the country I know best, the youth unemployment rate dropped almost 5% in just few years, and this is how we are going to proceed. So we are obliged!

Youngsters deserve our support and the next Multiannual Financial Framework should find enough resources, no matter which country decides to leave this Union, to provide those resources.

Derek Vaughan, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Budgetary Control*. – Madam President, despite the initial delays in implementing the initiative the youth employment scheme, we believe, has been a huge success. However the Budgetary Control Committee would like to make a few suggestions for the future.

We believe that labour market demands and skills training should be better linked together. We also believe there should be a quality offer made to all young people and that there should be a definition of quality; we believe the definition so far is good but it could be improved upon.

We also believe there should be more of a focus on the results of the programme. So far example, better indicators and monitoring of permanent contracts given to all young people who are on the programme. In other words we need to make sure that although we are spending this money and we are spending it on good things, we need to make sure this programme in particular is seen as effective.

So in short President, we would say the programme has been a huge success but of course there is room for improvement.

Момчил Неков, *докладчик по становището на комисията по култура и образование*. – Г-жо Председател, г-жо Тайсен, достъпът до схемата „Гаранция за младежта“ е селективен. Това показва оценката за изпълнението на инициативата за младежка заетост от държавите членки. Данните сочат, че от програмата се възползват предимно образовани и висококвалифицирани млади хора. Хората с увреждания, по-ниско образование и трайно безработните остават извън тази статистика.

В моята страна България ситуацията е сходна. От схемата се възползват почти изцяло млади хора със средно и висше образование за сметка на нискоквалифицираните. Младите хора, които имат регистрация в бюрата по труда, са по-скоро рядко явление. Затова трябва да мислим за алтернативни решения.

Едно от предложенията ми като докладчик от комисията по образование и култура е създаването на единни информационни гишета. Там младите хора ще могат да получават информация за различни възможности за обучение, стаж или работа на едно място.

Всеки млад човек, независимо от икономическата и социална ситуация, в която се намира, трябва да има информация и достъп до подобен тип програми. Именно осигуряването на равен достъп ще бъде крайтъгълният камък за успеха на инициативата.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, *Moterų teisių ir lyčių lygybės komiteto nuomonės referentė*. – FEMM komitetas pripažįsta Jaunimo iniciatyvos indėlį mažinant jaunimo nedarbą, užtikrinant lyčių lygybę, nes šios iniciatyvos suteikiamomis galimybėmis pasinaudojo apytiksliai apie 48 proc. vyrų ir 52 proc. moterų. Bet kartu vistiek matome, kad trūksta pagal lytį suskirstytų statistinių duomenų, todėl, siekiant tikslesnio vaizdo, kaip ši iniciatyva prisideda sprendžiant jaunų moterų ir vyrų nedarbo problemas ir kas dar papildomai galėtų ir turėtų būti daroma, svarbu, kad valstybės narės rinktų tikslesnius duomenis, o Komisija atliktų atitinkamą poveikio įvertinimą. Taip pat raginu valstybes nares parengti naujus novatoriškus ir labiau asmeniniams poreikiams pritaikytus metodus, kurie būtų ir kokybiški, ir tvarūs ir kurie pagerintų jaunų moterų galimybes sugrįžti į darbo rinką ar mokymąsi, pavyzdžiui, per vaikų priežiūros ir suaugusiųjų priežiūros paslaugų užtikrinimą. Nemažiau, žinoma, svarbu ir remti mergaičių ir moterų įtraukimą į visus ekonomikos sektorius ir vis tiksliai, nepaisant esamos pažangos Jaunimo užimtumo iniciatyvoje, būtina ir toliau tęsti šią iniciatyvą su papildomu finansavimu.

David Casa, *fisem il-grupp PPE*. – Qed nitkellmu dwar li l-informazzjoni u l-istatistika li ghandna qieghda turina li r-rata tal-qghad fost iż-żgħażgħ qieghda tinzel però, naturalment, mhux b'rata konsistenti madwar l-Ewropa kollha. Għalhekk huwa importanti li nkomplu nahdmu biex nilhqu l-miri tagħna fuq dan is-sugġett u ninsab kuntent hafna anke jien li l-Presidenza Bulgara qieghda tagħmel dan is-sugġett bħala wiehed mill-prijoritajiet tagħha.

Dan ir-rapport jesponi ċertu nuqqasijiet dwar l-implimentazzjoni, kif nafu, tal-Youth Unemployment Initiative, u forsi giet implimentata wkoll b'mod mghaġġel għalkemm b'riżultati pożittivi. Irridu nammettu li forsi ma rfinajniex din l-inizjattiva biex inżidu iżjed stejjer ta' suċċess u hemm bżonn li nerġgħu nibnu, kif qalet il-Kummissarju, u ntejbu din l-inizjattiva biex niżguraw li tkompli trendi fit-tul u mhux biss għall-futur immedjat.

Jiena nemmen illi m'ghandniex inharsu lejn din il-problema tal-qghad fost iż-żgħażaġh mill-aspett ekonomiku biss. Ir-rwol tagħna hu li nifhmu u nindirizzaw x'inhuma verament il-problemi. Ejjew nagħrfu li hemm konsegwenzi oħra fuq iż-żgħażaġh li jkunu jinsabu mingħajr impjieg. Allura dan irridu nkunu nafu x'inhuma dawn il-problemi, x'inhuma dawn il-konsegwenzi u naturalment nindirizzawhom.

Irid ikun hemm iżjed commitment allura min-naha tagħhna kif ukoll mill-Istati Membri biex din l-inizjattiva tkun suċċess. Dan ifisser illi jrid isir iżjed xogħol biex iż-żgħażaġh li mhumiex jahdmu, li mhumiex jistudjaw jew li mhumiex imharrġa, jkunu jistgħu jagħrfu li din l-inizjattiva tista' tgħinhom u li jista' jkollhom suċċess permezz tagħha.

L-effetti tal-qghad fost iż-żgħażaġh u n-nies li huma l-futur, fl-aħħar mill-aħħar, tal-Unjoni Ewropea huma kbar u l-konsegwenzi jinħassu fit-tul. U għalhekk huwa importanti iżjed minn qatt qabel illi nilhqu l-għanijiet tagħhna flimkien u naslu għal din l-inizjattiva b'suċċess.

Brando Benifei, *a nome del gruppo S&D*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, i miei più sinceri ringraziamenti alla relatrice Tomc per il suo lavoro svolto su questo fascicolo.

Credo che anche grazie al contributo dei colleghi relatori dei gruppi abbiamo di fronte, alla fine, un testo ambizioso, che presenta una fotografia puntuale dell'attuazione di questo fondamentale programma europeo di contrasto alla disoccupazione e alla inattività giovanile, non soltanto perché se ne analizzano nei dettagli i dati disponibili e l'impatto delle risorse messe in campo per il raggiungimento degli obiettivi di Garanzia giovani, ma anche perché se ne valutano con attenzione gli elementi che richiedono invece una considerazione più critica, proponendo raccomandazioni specifiche su come affrontarli.

Sono fortemente convinto, infatti, che oggi sia necessaria una riforma di Garanzia giovani e del suo strumento finanziario, l'Iniziativa per l'occupazione giovanile, che sappia fare tesoro dell'esperienza accumulata in questi ultimi anni. L'obiettivo di tale riforma deve concentrarsi soprattutto su tre fronti: in primo luogo potenziare il suo raggio d'azione, dimostrando di coinvolgere meglio proprio coloro che più ne hanno bisogno, ovvero i «NEET», quei giovani inattivi che non studiano e non lavorano, che si trovano ai margini del mercato del lavoro.

In secondo luogo, bisogna semplificare i meccanismi burocratici, permettendo un maggior coinvolgimento delle imprese e delle organizzazioni giovanili e sindacali, e potenziare l'efficienza dei servizi pubblici per l'impiego.

Infine, serve lavorare sulla qualità delle offerte, partendo dall'elaborazione di una definizione a livello europeo di offerta di qualità. Mi sono battuto, anche in dissenso da alcuni colleghi, affinché la definizione contenesse principi chiari e molto netti, tra cui l'obbligatorietà della remunerazione dei tirocini, l'accesso completo ai servizi sociali per i tirocinanti e il rispetto dei diritti e delle norme sul lavoro in maniera completa.

L'obiettivo finale delle misure finanziate dall'Iniziativa per l'occupazione giovanile deve essere l'integrazione di lungo periodo nel mercato del lavoro e non può limitarsi al finanziamento di tirocini di breve durata che ad esempio, nel mio paese, sono stati preponderanti in alcune regioni.

È dunque oggi necessario dotarsi di strumenti per prevenire ogni possibile abuso, come il ritardo dei pagamenti o la violazione delle condizioni contrattuali e dei diritti dei partecipanti, che danneggia non soltanto il processo formativo e professionale dei tanti giovani beneficiari ma anche la reputazione dell'Unione europea nella sua azione di contrasto alla disoccupazione giovanile.

Per questa ragione ho proposto che venga istituita una linea diretta dell'Unione europea contro la violazione dei diritti dei giovani, che consenta loro di comunicare direttamente alla Commissione un'eventuale esperienza negativa nel corso della loro partecipazione al programma, consentendo l'indagine delle eventuali pratiche abusive nell'utilizzo delle politiche finanziate dall'UE.

Un elemento fondamentale nella discussione riguarda i fondi da assegnare nel dopo 2020. Io credo fortemente che da strumento straordinario anticrisi l'Iniziativa per l'occupazione giovanile debba diventare un meccanismo permanente, che finanzia la Garanzia giovani negli anni a venire. Si aprono a breve le discussioni sul nuovo quadro finanziario pluriennale: il Parlamento europeo dovrà battersi affinché questo programma rimanga una priorità assoluta dell'azione dell'Unione. Il futuro dei giovani è il futuro dell'Europa, non dobbiamo dimenticarlo.

Jana Žitňanská, za skupinu ECR. – Vážená pani predsedajúca, dovoľte mi stručne vysvetliť moju pozíciu k dnešnej správe. V prvom rade by som rada vyzdvihla prácu spravodajkyne, pani poslankyne Tomc. Naša spolupráca od začiatku zahŕňala dôsledné konzultácie a otvorený prístup. Takisto ďakujem aj všetkým ostatným kolegom, ktorí spolupracovali na tejto téme.

Súhlasím s mnohými návrhmi v texte správy. Súhlasím, že potrebujeme lepšiu výmenu porovnateľných údajov a aktívnejší prístup k zraniteľnejším mladým ľuďom alebo mladým ľuďom mimo väčších miest. Je pre mňa dôležité, že správa varuje pred rizikom, že finančné prostriedky Európskej únie môžu – a občas aj majú tendenciu – nahrádzať vnútroštátne finančné prostriedky. Iniciatíva však má byť motorom reforiem. Nesmie nahrádzať vlastné politiky a nápady členských štátov. Preto som veľmi opatrná pri súhlase s budúcim záväzkom v podobe návrhu iniciatívy ako dlhodobého nástroja Európskej únie pred tým, než jasne vyvrátíme všetky nedostatky fungovania, na ktoré poukázal napríklad aj Dvor audítorov.

Martina Dlabajová, za skupinu ALDE. – Ďakujem predovšetkým pani zpravodajce Tomcové za úsilí a čas, ktorý této zprávě věnovala. Velmi si její snahy vážím. Můžeme o Iniciativě na podporu zaměstnanosti mladých mluvit mnoha krásnými slovy a argumentovat čísly a statistikami. Pro mne je ale hlavní cíl zcela jednoduchý, musíme naučit mladé lidi pracovat. Pracovat je normální. To je můj vzkaz absolventům škol, kterým je iniciativa určena. I když programy financované z této iniciativy nenahrazují pracovní úvazky, mají velký smysl. Vítám snahy o přeměnu iniciativy na trvalejší finanční nástroj k řešení nezaměstnanosti v období po roce 2020. Projednávání v rámci víceletého finančního rámce zajistí programu potřebnou kontinuitu.

Členské státy by měly naplno využít nejen možností iniciativy, ale také samy investovat do podpory pracovní mobility, jejíž potenciál zůstává stále nevyužit. Pracovní sílu EU tvoří asi 243 milionů osob, ale jen 8,5 milionu z nich pracuje v rámci Evropy v zahraničí. Přitom mladí lidé jsou ti, kteří mají největší ochotu se za prací stěhovat. Podporujeme je! Vždyť už z pohádek dobře víme, že úspěch a štěstí čekalo jen na toho Honzu, který se vydal do světa na zkušenou. Problém vidím také v tom, že se naše firmy nemohou opřít o fungující systém vzdělávání, který by vybavil mladé absolventy dovednostmi odpovídajícími potřebám trhu práce. Propojujme tedy úspěšné firmy a vzdělávací instituce s mladými lidmi, kteří se aktivně starají o svoji budoucnost. Jedině tak můžeme napomoci k řešení mezery dovedností, která je jednou z hlavních příčin vysokých čísel nezaměstnanosti mladých.

Spojme své síly ve vlastních zemích, komunikujme s národními orgány, které mohou pro lepší využívání iniciativy udělat nejvíce. Podanou ruku bychom neměli ignorovat, ale pevně stisknout. Naučme tedy mladé lidi, že chodit do práce, sbírat zkušenosti a učit se nové věci je skvělé. Odměnou nám možná nebude princezna a půl království, ale fungující ekonomika také není k zahoezení.

Tania González Peñas, en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL. – Señora presidenta, las cifras que este informe revela sobre la implementación de la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil suponen un tirón de orejas para la Comisión Europea, porque lo que en un principio parecía una buena idea para combatir el desempleo juvenil, ha terminado poniendo de relieve graves problemas en su diseño, en su financiación y en su implementación.

Como los problemas a la hora de movilizar los fondos, porque no llegaban a los países precisamente que más los necesitaban, los problemas en los diseños de los propios programas y, como colofón, el hecho de que los pocos datos que tenemos nos dicen que esta política no está siendo efectiva. Y hay que decir que es una vergüenza que España, habiendo recibido 1 000 millones de euros, no aporte apenas datos de dónde ha aplicado los fondos.

La Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil debería servir para que los jóvenes pudieran hacer una correcta transición al mercado de trabajo y, sin embargo, hemos visto cómo bajo esta Iniciativa proliferan casos de explotación, reemplazo de trabajadores fijos, eventualidad y precariedad. Señorías, el problema de los jóvenes no es la falta de empleabilidad, y quienes hablan de ninis hoy en esta Cámara creo que no han entendido esto y que, de hecho, no entienden cuáles son las soluciones para el futuro de nuestra sociedad.

Creemos que si este informe se aprueba obligará a la Comisión y a los Estados miembros a reaccionar para cumplir los objetivos sociales para 2020, porque, de momento, la Garantía Juvenil en países como el mío tiene un rotundo suspenso.

Terry Reintke, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, young people in Europe count on us, and it is true what some of the colleagues have mentioned: that the numbers have slightly decreased. But we cannot deny that youth unemployment is still a massive problem within the European Union, and we cannot let one more day pass in which we do not put all our efforts into fighting against this, because it is one of the crucial questions about whether we have a future in a united Europe or not.

Yes, the Youth Employment Initiative has been presented as the answer, or at least partly the solution to this big problem of youth unemployment, and young people all over Europe have put their hopes into this initiative. It is true that some of them have been satisfied; their expectations have been met. But we must also say that many young people have been disappointed, and that there is a big gap in implementation and the success of implementation in different Member States.

We have Member States where the numbers have gone down and we have Member States where the numbers have not gone down, and where I believe the wrong proposals have been made in order to fight against youth unemployment.

One of the crucial questions is whether Member States have actually provided high-quality sustainable offers to young people, because the Youth Employment Initiative is not about giving something to do to young people who don't know what to do with their time. It is about giving perspectives to young people; quality and sustainable offers so that they can enter the labour market.

I believe that if we want these quality offers to be meaningful, they should, for example, also be remunerated. That is why it is important for the report to very clearly state that we need quality offers and why we should have a definition at European level as to what these quality offers mean.

Lastly, I think as the European Parliament we can take a very concrete measure in order to show how sincere and how clear we are in our demands to fight youth unemployment, and that is to finally implement fair internships and to treat the interns here in this House fairly and to remunerate the internships that are being done in this House.

Tiziana Beghin, *a nome del gruppo EFDD*. – Signora Presidente, signora Commissaria, onorevoli colleghi, decidere cosa fare dell'Iniziativa per l'occupazione giovanile significa scegliere se essere un paese all'altezza dei problemi che ha o continuare a vivere in balia di una politica nazionale e locale vittima di se stessa, vittima di una malagestione imprigionata da logiche clientelari, piccoli interessi da difendere e nutrire come si può.

Garanzia giovani non è la soluzione alla disoccupazione giovanile, non è la panacea per arginare la fuga dei cervelli dal nostro paese verso luoghi che ne riconoscono e apprezzano il potenziale, ma può essere un supporto a una nuova politica di valorizzazione delle nostre ricchezze, perché i giovani sono la ricchezza del nostro paese.

Il nostro lavoro su questo documento è stato propositivo, perché serve un monitoraggio assiduo e costante sull'utilizzo delle risorse, serve un lavoro capillare nei territori per comprendere le necessità del tessuto produttivo, diventando capaci di dare soluzioni concrete ed efficaci. La formazione deve essere specifica per le figure professionali, non può venire a mancare il rispetto delle condizioni di lavoro e deve essere contrastato con ogni mezzo l'abuso di questo strumento a vantaggio dell'occupazione sommersa.

Servono visione, trasparenza e coerenza, serve strategia e serve essere all'altezza dei bisogni dei cittadini per utilizzare al meglio ogni minima risorsa. Ogni singolo euro sprecato correndo dietro a logiche clientelari dimostrerà che non si è all'altezza del ruolo che, come legislatori, abbiamo.

Joëlle Mélin, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Madame la Présidente, tout dispositif destiné à venir au secours de l'emploi, sauf dans des cas très particuliers, est la preuve d'un échec des politiques nationales et, en l'occurrence, européennes en la matière. Cela est d'autant plus vrai que la dernière crise économique a eu lieu il y a maintenant plus de dix ans.

Il s'agit donc d'un assistantat sur des fonds publics destiné aussi à pallier les difficultés des entrepreneurs privés dans leur recherche de collaborateurs qualifiés.

Dans ce cas précis, le dispositif de l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes mérite pourtant d'être examiné de plus près. En effet, si sur le plan financier et budgétaire, il faut être très circonspect, comme le recommande le rapport de la Cour des comptes, et si son abord sous des angles doctrinaux de type égalité hommes-femmes peut sembler excessif, sa mise en application nous permet de conclure à la nécessité de poursuivre plus avant.

Notre groupe et moi-même avons pu le vérifier sur le terrain, aussi bien en France qu'à l'étranger, grâce à la rapporteure M^{me} Tomc. Les conditions nécessaires à sa mise en application sont des financements mieux contrôlés et mieux gérés qui ne se substituent pas aux fonds nationaux et qui bénéficient d'une évaluation régulière de qualité. Ce dispositif ne doit surtout pas devenir définitif. Pour l'aspect positif, il doit utiliser utilement les fonds européens de soutien à nos jeunes les plus précaires dans leur apprentissage et dans l'emploi, et il peut éviter la fuite de talents de leur pays.

Très attentifs et positivement critiques, nous soutiendrons ce rapport de mise en application.

Λάμπρος Φουντούλης (NI). – Πόσες φορές ακόμη θα πρέπει να συζητήσουμε σ' αυτήν εδώ την αίθουσα για την ανεργία των νέων χωρίς να έχουμε καταφέρει να βελτιώσουμε την κατάσταση έστω και κατ' ελάχιστο; Η ίδια η έκθεση παραδέχεται πως τα μέτρα λιτότητας που επέβαλε η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση στα διάφορα κράτη μέλη είχαν ως άμεσο αποτέλεσμα τη δραματική αύξηση ανεργίας των νέων. Αυτό που δεν παραδέχεται η έκθεση είναι πως η δράση που ανέλαβε η Ένωση με σκοπό τη μείωση της ανεργίας είχαν μηδενικό αποτέλεσμα. Η σχετική μείωση της ανεργίας που παρατηρείται τα τελευταία χρόνια, δεν είναι τίποτα παραπάνω από ευέλικτες μορφές απασχόλησης και η εκ περιτροπής εργασία, που έχουν γίνει κανόνας στα περισσότερα κράτη μέλη με ό,τι αυτό συνεπάγεται, δηλαδή προσωρινές θέσεις εργασίας αμειβόμενες με μισθούς πείνας και ελάχιστα δικαιώματα για τους εργαζόμενους. Ας μην ξεχνάμε πως η Επιτροπή, μέσω της τρόικα, επέβαλε στην Ελλάδα να θεσπίσει, ως δημοσιονομική μεταρρύθμιση, ξεχωριστό χαμηλότερο βασικό μισθό για τους νέους εργαζόμενους. Και μετά μιλάμε για προστασία των νέων, ενώ οι περισσότεροι εγκαταλείπουν τη χώρα αναζητώντας εργασία στο εξωτερικό. Απαίτησή μας: σταθερές θέσεις απασχόλησης αξιοπρεπώς αμειβόμενες, πλήρης ασφαλιστική κάλυψη και προστασία των δικαιωμάτων των εργαζομένων.

Tom Vandenkendelaere (PPE). – Voorzitter, commissaris, collega's, we weten het allemaal. Het is de jeugd, mijn generatie, die de hoogste prijs betaald heeft voor de crisis. Zij was en is terecht een topprioriteit van deze legislatuur. Europa heeft echt geprobeerd om van de jeugdgarantie en het jeugdwerkgelegenheidsinitiatief een succes te maken en dat leverde resultaat op. Ook in mijn land. Zo daalde de jeugdwerkloosheid in Brussel voor de 55e keer op rij. Maar toch blijft de jeugdwerkloosheid met 24 % veel te hoog. Hoe komt dat?

De economie gaat richting kruissnelheid. Werkgevers zijn op zoek naar de gepaste talenten en ook mijn overheid goochelt met cijfers over de geweldige jobcreatie. Het probleem ligt hem echter bij de mismatch. Hoe goed onze bedoelingen ook zijn, de echte doelgroep – de werkloze jongeren die geen opleiding volgen – wordt nog te weinig bereikt. Daarom steun ik de oproep aan de lidstaten voor meer gegevens en meer resultaatgericht werk. Toon ons waar het geld naartoe gaat en lever ook kwaliteit. Elke -24-jarige verdient de kans op een echte, fatsoenlijke baan en ik ben blij dat de Commissie daar straks ook op wil gaan toezien.

Collega's, het debat over de meerjarenbegroting voor de periode na 2020 gaat nu al over besparingen. Wel ik zeg u duidelijk: laat jongeren geen besparingspost zijn. Integendeel, meer middelen zullen nodig zijn, bijvoorbeeld voor jeugdwerkgelegenheid, Erasmus+ en andere programma's. Met de Europese sociale pijler hebben we een kompas in handen. Laten we dat kompas goed gebruiken richting de toekomst, richting de jeugd. Dank u.

Agnes Jongerius (S&D). – Madam President, some years ago a number of adults – or should I say people pretending to be adults – created a global financial crisis because of their greed and immaturity. The crisis turned into an economic crisis which affected millions of young people. They had no part in causing it, yet the effects will affect their lives profoundly. This is why I think it is no more than normal that the EU Member States have together committed themselves to protecting young people through the Youth Guarantee. It is not an issue of charity, but one of decency.

Luckily unemployment is decreasing now – and I am very glad that it is – but youth unemployment in Member States, such as Greece, Spain and Italy, which have already been mentioned by the Commissioner, are still shocking, so we are not there yet. We owe it to young people to keep assisting them. Firstly, we have to insist that jobs and traineeships made possible throughout our initiative hit the spot. This initiative should not only guarantee the development of skills among young people and ensure their integration on the labour market, because it is not only for jobs – the initiative is for life. I want to remind Member States that it is not about lip service, but the future of their young people.

Secondly, I think the Youth Employment Initiative needs to be transformed from an anti-crisis instrument into a more stable financing instrument for tackling youth unemployment. We need not only to maintain the initiative after 2020, but we need to increase the funding. May I remind you that the ILO fund, which guarantees young people a job or training, costs EUR 45 million, whereas the current initiative has only EUR 9 million to spend.

Ulrike Trebesius (ECR). – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kommissarin! Natürlich ist es wichtig, insbesondere junge Menschen in Arbeit zu bringen. Aber ist die Beschäftigungsinitiative der richtige Weg? Ich fürchte: nein. Das Programm hat nicht für eine Trendwende insbesondere in Südeuropa gesorgt.

Zum Beispiel Spanien: Hier wurde das meiste Geld, nämlich 943 Millionen, für diese Initiative bereitgestellt. Spanien hat nach wie vor eine Jugendarbeitslosigkeit von 40 %. Insgesamt ist der Arbeitsmarkt in Spanien aber eher ein positives Beispiel. Spaniens gesamte Arbeitslosigkeit hat nämlich deutlich abgenommen. Zusammengefasst: Obwohl Spanien insgesamt sehr erfolgreich ist und das meiste Geld für die Jugendinitiative bekommt, ist der Rückgang der Arbeitslosigkeit bei jungen Menschen besonders niedrig. Dieses sehr schlechte Ergebnis für Spanien wird auch durch die Analyse der Kommission selbst bestätigt.

Fazit: Das Programm funktioniert nicht. Auch der Europäische Rechnungshof bestätigt, dass die Effizienz der eingesetzten Mittel höchst fraglich ist. Deshalb sollte hier nicht weiter erhöht werden.

Jean Arthuis (ALDE). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Commissaire, mes chers collègues, le chômage des jeunes en Europe est un scandale et c'est pour tenter de répondre à ce mal, à ce fléau, que nos chefs d'État ou de gouvernement en 2013 ont imaginé le programme *Youth Employment Initiative*, laissant aux États membres le soin de mettre en œuvre les dispositions appropriées.

Si de réels progrès ont pu être constatés, convenons que l'évaluation s'avère délicate. Dans de nombreux cas, il s'agit de parer au plus pressé, selon l'urgence des situations locales.

Madame la Commissaire, nous avons besoin de mesures structurelles et je me permets d'insister sur la formation professionnelle, qui est un vrai investissement d'avenir.

Prenons l'exemple de pays qui ont une tradition d'apprentissage: l'Allemagne, les Pays-Bas, l'Autriche, ou encore le Danemark. Ces pays n'ont pratiquement pas de chômage des jeunes, et donc je souhaite que l'on puisse, s'inspirant de ces bonnes pratiques, développer, Madame la Commissaire, un programme spécifique pour la formation professionnelle et l'apprentissage.

Je rends hommage à votre initiative, puisqu'au début du mois d'octobre, vous avez mis sur la table, à l'attention des gouvernements et du Conseil, un cadre unique de ce qui pourrait être, en Europe, un apprentissage efficace et de qualité.

Je souhaite donc qu'il y ait un programme de formation professionnelle et d'apprentissage et ce, dans la perspective du prochain cadre financier pluriannuel.

J'aspire aussi à ce que, pour plus d'efficacité, il y ait une véritable mission de formation professionnelle et d'apprentissage au sein des services de la Commission de sorte à mieux coordonner les interventions de votre direction générale, mais également de la direction culture et éducation, pour les bourses Erasmus, et aussi de la direction générale REGIO, puisqu'il s'agit de mobiliser des Fonds de développement régional et le Fonds social européen.

Je pense que, s'engageant dans cette voie, l'Union européenne parlera aux Européens; c'est évidemment une voie d'avenir.

Νεοκλής Σουλκιώτης (GUE/NGL). – Επιτρέψτε μου κατ' αρχάς να συγχαρώ την εισηγήτρια και τους σκιάδεις εισηγητές για το έργο που επιτέλεσαν σε αυτή την έκθεση. Περιέχει, κατά την άποψή μας, θετικά στοιχεία όπως, κατ' αρχάς, την παραδοχή πως τα μέτρα λιτότητας που προωθούνται από τις πολιτικές της Ένωσης αυξάνουν κατακόρυφα τη νεανική ανεργία, την κριτική που ασκείται στα κράτη μέλη τα οποία δεν προώθησαν την απασχόληση των νέων και, βεβαίως, είναι σημαντικό, την εισαγωγή του ορισμού της αξιοπρεπούς απασχόλησης της ΔΟΕ. Ως ομάδα της Ενωτικής Αριστεράς, έχουμε σοβαρές επιφυλάξεις για την πρωτοβουλία απασχόλησης των νέων, αφού απουσιάζουν συγκεκριμένα βήματα για την επίλυση των δομικών προβλημάτων της ανεργίας. Χρειάζεται να σταματήσει άμεσα η προώθηση της μετανάστευσης των νέων, καθώς και οι πρακτικές ασκήσεις ως μέσον εισδοχής των νέων στην εργασία. Αντίθετα, αυτό που χρειάζεται η Ένωση είναι δημόσιες επενδύσεις που θα δημιουργήσουν αξιοπρεπείς θέσεις εργασίας, με διασφαλισμένα όλα τα εργασιακά δικαιώματα για τους νέους κι όσους μπαίνουν για πρώτη φορά στην αγορά εργασίας. Χρειάζονται ακριβώς δημόσιες επενδύσεις στην πραγματική οικονομία.

Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE). – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil europea es un instrumento muy importante, pero tenemos un problema de aplicación en muchos Estados miembros. Particularmente sangrante, por ejemplo, es el caso español, siendo como es España en este momento el segundo país con más paro juvenil de la Unión Europea, un 37 %, que es más del doble del paro juvenil de la media de la Unión.

En este caso, por ejemplo, no es aceptable que se destine la mayoría de los recursos de la garantía juvenil a un sistema de bonificaciones que solo supone aligerar las cuotas de la seguridad social para los empresarios. No hay programas ni para crear empleo ni para reducir la precariedad en el mercado de trabajo, las necesidades más importantes que tienen las personas jóvenes cuando quieren trabajar. Los resultados están funcionando peor que en el resto de la Unión Europea, ya que la tasa de empleo juvenil crece mucho menos en España.

En la práctica, la Garantía Juvenil se está utilizando, en este caso, para programas que pagan menos salarios o no reconocen la relación laboral como tal. Únicamente el 30 % de las ofertas del programa son de empleo, frente al 70 % en la UE-28, por lo que, lejos de ser un programa que ayude a tener trabajo de calidad, en este caso se convierte en una mera subvención a los empresarios, que encima precarizan.

Por eso, también pedimos que el resto de la Cámara apoye la enmienda presentada por nuestro grupo y el S&D, que pide mejorar la definición de lo que es oferta de calidad, para que responda a las necesidades de las personas jóvenes que estén en este programa.

Por lo tanto, señora comisaria, es muy importante seguir adelante con el programa, pero, sobre todo, es muy importante que ustedes vigilen que su aplicación se haga de forma correcta.

Nathan Gill (EFDD). – Madam President, we have heard in this debate that youth unemployment in the EU ranges from 5% in the north to almost 40% in Greece. I also heard claims that this initiative has been – and I am going to quote – ‘hugely successful’.

If using billions of taxpayers’ euros to train youth was hugely successful, why do we still see youth unemployment rates of 40% in Greece? If this scheme is so great, use it to eradicate unemployment in southern Europe.

Funding training is admirable, but it does not help skilled youth find worthy employment when there are no jobs. High taxation, red tape and restrictive employment laws are a barrier to small and medium-sized businesses taking on more staff. If you want to help our youth, promote freedom for our SMEs to run their businesses the way that they see fit with access to funds for investment and growth. Surely the goal must be job creation.

Dominique Bilde (ENF). – Madame la Présidente, les faits sont connus: le taux de chômage est élevé dans beaucoup de pays d'Europe et les jeunes sont considérablement touchés. Les causes aussi sont connues: la crise de 2008, à laquelle s'ajoutent les politiques d'austérité et la raréfaction des emplois nécessitant peu de qualifications, qui rendent le phénomène durable.

En 2013, l'Union européenne a finalement pris conscience de la nécessité d'agir. L'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes ayant été peu efficace jusqu'à présent, il s'avère donc nécessaire de la prolonger jusqu'en 2020, ainsi que de l'élargir aux 25-30 ans puisque ceux qui sont entrés sur le marché du travail sans trouver d'emploi pérenne en 2008 sont désormais dans cette tranche d'âge.

À raison, le rapport se préoccupe particulièrement des jeunes qui ne sont ni en activité, ni en parcours d'études. Il est nécessaire de favoriser leur insertion par l'apprentissage, l'alternance ou la formation. Il y a désormais urgence, puisque nous risquons d'hypothéquer l'avenir de ceux que les sociologues appellent déjà «des générations sacrifiées».

Σωτήριος Ζαριανόπουλος (NI). – Η εκτόξευση της ανεργίας των νέων, παροξυσμός της γενικής αύξησής της, σας ανησυχεί. Όχι για να λύσετε το πρόβλημα: ούτε θέλετε, ούτε μπορείτε, αλλά για να κάμψετε την αγανάκτηση εκατομμυρίων νέων, την απόρριψή τους στο σύστημά σας, αλλά και εκβιασμένους από την ανεργία να τους παραδώσετε δούλους στο κεφάλαιο, σε όποια δουλειά, κλάδο, ή χώρα τους χρειάζεται. Το λένε εργασιακή κινητικότητα, ενώ είναι μετανάστευση και ξεριζωμός που τρώει και την Ελλάδα. Η τζάμπα επιδοτούμενη από ευρωπαϊκά προγράμματα προσωρινή, ευέλικτη, κακοπληρωμένη απασχόληση ωφελεί μόνο τις επιχειρήσεις. Μετατρέπει τους νέους σε δια βίου καταρτιζόμενους, μαθητευόμενους κακοπληρωμένους κάτω από τον βασικό μισθό, λίγο ή περισσότερο άνεργους. Ακόμα και την εκπαίδευση στρατεύετε σε αυτό. Οι επενδύσεις που επικαλείστε σαν λύση αυτό απαιτούν. Πάμφηγο προσωπικό, εκβιασμένο από ανεργία και ανασφάλεια. Αυτό είναι το όραμά σας για το μέλλον της εργασίας, ο ευρωπαϊκός κοινωνικός πυλώνας! Είναι εφιάλτης και βαρβαρότητα. Ο καπιταλισμός μόνο αυτό έχει να προσφέρει. Οι νέοι πρέπει να παλέψουν για την ανατροπή του, για προοπτική και μέλλον.

Verónica Lope Fontagné (PPE). – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, primero querría recordar que la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil nació como un instrumento de emergencia ante una situación crítica que afectaba a millones de jóvenes en toda la Unión Europea y gracias al cual se han beneficiado 1,6 millones de las regiones más afectadas. Concretamente en mi país, en España, ha bajado el paro juvenil en más del 20 % en los últimos cuatro años. La tasa de empleabilidad —también en mi país— de los jóvenes inscritos en el sistema de Garantía Juvenil es del 41 %.

Creo que esos datos son positivos y estamos avanzando en la buena dirección. Indudablemente, queda un largo camino por recorrer y, sobre todo, para incorporar a los jóvenes con más dificultades en el mercado laboral, como son los ninis, los jóvenes desempleados de larga duración, los jóvenes con discapacidad y los pertenecientes a minorías étnicas. Por eso, y para apoyar el empleo juvenil de forma decidida, tenemos que convertir esta Iniciativa en un instrumento de carácter estable.

Y con respecto a su aplicación y para valorar su efectividad, tenemos que tener en cuenta varios temas. Primero, que los ninis son un grupo muy diverso, con distintas necesidades y niveles de formación y que necesitan un enfoque personalizado, y luego, también, que la Garantía Juvenil ha servido para abordar profundas reformas estructurales en los Estados miembros, reformas realizadas en un contexto económico adverso, especialmente en los países beneficiarios, ya que partían de un desempleo juvenil más elevado.

Marita Ulvskog (S&D). – Fru talman, fru kommissionär! Syftet med detta initiativ är att nå de ungdomar som står allra längst från arbetsmarknaden: unga som varken har jobb eller utbildning. Vi börjar nu se att detta initiativ har fått positiva resultat. Det är också anledningen till att det under förra året fick en budgetökning. Men den ökningen gäller ju bara fram till 2020, och det är också anledningen till att vi för den här debatten i dag. Vi måste alltså fatta beslut om vägval.

Min bestämda uppfattning är att vi i första hand måste se till att medlemsländerna satsar mer än de gör i dag på att få unga i arbete. De måste göra prioriteringarna. Enligt både ILO och Eurofound så krävs det mellan 45 miljarder och 50 miljarder euro per år för att nå målet med programmet. Det kan jämföras med att det i EU-budgeten finns bara 8,8 miljarder, om jag minns rätt, för programmet mellan 2014 och 2020. Medlemsländerna måste alltså också upp med pengarna på bordet.

Det finns stora skillnader mellan medlemsländerna, det vet vi mycket väl. Vi vet att stödet från sysselsättningsinitiativet har varit helt nödvändigt för att de ska kunna utveckla egna ungdomsgarantier. Vi ska naturligtvis fortsätta att finnas där, men det måste vara så att medlemsstaterna också gör de prioriteringar som är nödvändiga för att de ska ha kvar några unga i sina medlemsländer och för att de ska ha unga som klarar svåra uppgifter och som är beredda att ge sig in i det.

Den ekonomiska krisen har också inneburit en förlorad tid för många unga, så därför är det viktigt att ungdomsgarantierna är kvalitativa, att de inte innebär ännu en tidsförlust. För att nå detta måste de unga själva vara involverade i utformningen och utvärderingen av ungdomsgarantin.

Det går inte längre att smita undan, för det är faktiskt vad vissa medlemsländer gör, så alle man ombord! Det är vad som krävs.

Czesław Hoc (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Bezrobocie ludzi młodych to bardzo poważny, wielowymiarowy problem. Z jednej strony – zagrożenie izolacją, alienacją społeczną, a nawet patologizacją tej młodzieży, z drugiej zaś strony – niewykorzystany potencjał młodego kapitału ludzkiego. I co ważne: aktualne pokolenie musi sobie zdawać sprawę, że dzisiejsi potencjalni młodzi pracownicy staną w obliczu podwójnego obciążenia, wynikającego ze zmian demograficznych oraz konieczności zapewnienia stabilności systemów emerytalnych. Zatem praca dla ludzi młodych to warunek pokoleniowej lepszej przyszłości.

Do sprawozdania jednak mamy wiele uwag. Po pierwsze, potrzeba pozostawienia większej elastyczności dla państw członkowskich w zarządzaniu alokacją. Należy uprościć i zmniejszyć obciążenia biurokratyczne i ujednoczyć zasady monitorowania, wprowadzić obowiązek raportowania rzeczywistych wskaźników efektów – jak podjęcie pracy, nauki lub uzyskanie kwalifikacji, a nie jedynie otrzymanie oferty pracy czy szkolenia – prowadzić autentyczne wsparcie dla młodzieży NEET, koniecznie premiować udział osób młodych z niepełnosprawnościami i przeciwdziałać ich dyskryminacji, prowadzić konkretną współpracę z organizacjami młodzieżowymi.

Paloma López Bermejo (GUE/NGL). – Señora presidenta, según el Eurobarómetro, la mitad de los jóvenes europeos se sienten excluidos y marginados de toda participación significativa en la vida social y económica. Y esto no se corrige solo con aportaciones económicas de la Unión Europea a través de la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil o la Garantía Juvenil, y más cuando los Estados miembros han malutilizado estos fondos, como ha denunciado el propio Tribunal de Cuentas. Pagar las cotizaciones sociales de las empresas, como en España, solo ha servido para aumentar la precariedad en el escaso empleo generado.

O aprovechamos estos recursos económicos para hacer cambios estructurales que generen de verdad empleos de calidad, que apuesten por otro modelo productivo, que garanticen políticas activas de empleo con itinerarios formativos; o terminamos de una vez por todas con esas becas que solo sirven para generar mayor precariedad; o garantizamos, en resumen, ese empleo estable y servicios públicos de empleo o, si no, el próximo año estaremos aquí nuevamente con grandes cifras y titulares y con una mayor desafección de nuestros jóvenes.

André Elissen (ENF). – Vandaag bespreken wij de uitvoering van het jongerenwerkgelegenheidsinitiatief. De Europese Unie heeft de lidstaten de verplichting opgelegd om binnen een termijn van vier maanden een baan, voortgezette scholing, een plaats in het leerlingstelsel of een stage aan te bieden. Een onrealistische ambitie, waarbij iedereen van tevoren al weet dat zoiets niet haalbaar is.

De bemoeizucht en geldverspilling vanuit de EU kent wederom geen grenzen. Opnieuw zijn de effecten van de miljardeninvesteringen niet te meten. De doelstellingen worden niet gehaald en men dekt zich op voorhand in. En wat is de oplossing van de wereldvreemde Europese elite? Nog meer geld erbij, natuurlijk. De belastingbetaler draait op voor deze absurde, niet uitvoerbare plannen. Het verslag komt niet verder dan het intrappen van open deuren en het opsommen van vage algemeenheden.

De enige manier om jeugdwerkloosheid echt aan te pakken is maatwerk op nationaal niveau. Kortom, soevereiniteit en macht terug naar de lidstaten.

Sofia Ribeiro (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, a Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens assenta num tripé constituído pela oferta de emprego, pela formação e pelos estágios. E na minha região, assim como em muitos Estados-Membros, este tripé está desequilibrado, porque nós estamos a investir muito mais na formação e nos estágios do que estamos a investir na oferta de emprego. E, portanto, não estamos a contribuir para o combate à precariedade.

Temos um segundo problema com um dos pés do tripé, que é precisamente o da formação. Os nossos jovens estão a ser atirados para ciclos de formação contínuos, de formação completamente desadequada, de formação que é completamente inconsequente, quando nós temos que garantir o contrário. Nós temos que garantir que os nossos jovens têm um apoio individualizado, em equipas multidisciplinares, constituídas por técnicos, por psicólogos, por sociólogos especializados, para garantirem que a oferta de formação é adequada quer às características do estagiário, quer às necessidades das empresas.

Por último, os estágios não podem mascarar contratos de trabalho nem podem substituir contratos de trabalho. E, portanto, é preciso garantir uma definição adequada do conteúdo funcional e da responsabilidade do estagiário que deve ser acompanhado por um monitor que o apoie e que lhe dê formação. É preciso mais fiscalização, com meios de inspeção adequados. É preciso mais transparência e uma avaliação qualitativa do programa quanto aos resultados.

Para terminar, a Iniciativa para o Emprego dos Jovens tem que ser consequente. Isso implica uma maior mobilidade social e que reduzamos as desigualdades sociais na União Europeia.

Javi López (S&D). – Señora presidenta, la crisis acabó por robar expectativas y esperanzas de toda una generación en Europa y acabó por romper también uno de esos pactos invisibles sobre los que se sustenta y vertebra nuestra sociedad: el pacto entre generaciones. Por todo ello, hace ya cuatro años que iniciamos nuestro trabajo desde el ámbito europeo con la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil.

Cuatro años que nos dan también para poder valorar y reivindicar lo que hemos hecho durante todo este tiempo. Reivindicar que es necesario que la Unión Europea continúe trabajando, que haga de este programa un programa permanente, que miremos el horizonte de 2020 y nuestras perspectivas financieras con clara vocación de continuar trabajando en este sentido.

Pero a la vez con la voluntad de reformar, porque es necesario que este dinero vaya destinado a cambios estructurales en nuestras políticas activas de empleo, a programas integrales de integración laboral, con puestos de trabajo de calidad y formación de calidad, y que no escondamos nuestros problemas laborales bajo la alfombra de la precariedad o la temporalidad.

Helga Stevens (ECR). – Ik wil de rapporteur danken voor dit evenwichtige verslag. Het is echter geen goed idee om van het jongerenwerkgelegenheidsinitiatief een permanent EU-financieringsinstrument te maken. De oorzaken voor jeugdwerkloosheid lopen immers sterk uiteen in de verschillende lidstaten. Een uniforme aanpak is dus onmogelijk.

Het is verstandiger om de lidstaten en de regio's te motiveren tot structureel beleid op maat van de eigen arbeidsmarkt. Maar dit initiatief bereikt net het tegenovergestelde. Het neemt voor de betrokken regio's de prikkels weg om het roer om te gooien. De grootschalige EU-financiering verbergt immers de structurele problemen die aan de jeugdwerkloosheid ten grondslag liggen. Ik zie hiervan trouwens een duidelijk voorbeeld in België. Wallonië en het Brussels Gewest ontvangen fondsen vanuit het jongerenwerkgelegenheidsinitiatief. Vervolgens verdwijnen deze jongeren in opleidingstrajecten en uit de werkloosheidsstatistieken en kunnen deze regio's een goednieuwsshow brengen.

Ik betreuf het dat deze regio's op die manier niet verplicht worden om de broodnodige structurele hervormingen door te voeren. Zo is het jongereninitiatief slechts een duur doekje voor het bloeden. Zonde van het geld!

Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL). – Madam President, given the disproportionate impact of austerity and recession on youth, it is essential that this Youth Employment Initiative is properly implemented. I welcome that this report highlights both the positive and the negative aspects of the implementation of the scheme so far. While much is to be said for the positive impact of the initiative – helping to fight against social exclusion, poverty and emigration among the youngest sectors of society – there are significant concerns that the full potential of the scheme is not being realised.

Inappropriate usage of funds and Member States using it to replace funding from national governments has resulted in the waste of possibly life-changing funds for young men and women throughout the EU. Some Member States including my own, Ireland, excluded single parents and young people with disabilities from the initiative.

We must also ensure that there is proper engagement with trade unions to ensure that young people are not being exploited in the jobs and the training that they are being offered and that those internships are not just displacing real jobs.

Laurențiu Rebegea (ENF). – Doamnă președintă, lumea a trecut de la epoca industrială la epoca post-industrială. Din ce în ce mai mult, oferta locurilor de muncă se dezvoltă în sfera serviciilor, în timp ce, în sferile clasice ale industriei sau ale agriculturii, oferta de locuri de muncă scade dramatic.

Apreciez acest raport care discută inițiativa privind ocuparea forței de muncă în rândul tinerilor în Uniunea Europeană. Avem nevoie de un segment puternic și dinamic care înseamnă, de fapt, viitorul nostru, viitorul Uniunii Europene. Cred cu tărie că Uniunea în ansamblu nu va putea concura cu Statele Unite sau cu China dacă nu va putea oferi tinerilor condițiile în care să își poată împlini energia și creativitatea. Tineretul Europei este înconjurat de elemente ale unei culturi multimilenare. Aceste elemente sunt un fundal cultural, dar și un îndemn la dezvoltarea unor patternuri specifice. Mi-aș dori, în acest context, ca inițiativele privind ocuparea forței de muncă în rândul tinerilor să fie cât mai mult legate de elementele culturii și tradiției. Acest lucru este posibil cu atât mai mult cu cât intrăm într-o epocă a industriilor creative. Europa este unitate, dar este și diversitate. Această idee trebuie dusă mai departe de tinerii noștri.

Thomas Mann (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Vor fünf Jahren einigte sich der Rat – maßgeblich beeinflusst von Angela Merkel – auf die Jugendbeschäftigungsinitiative. Wir haben uns im Europäischen Parlament stark gemacht für die ausreichende Finanzierung der Jugendgarantie, für Arbeitsstellen, Weiterbildung, Ausbildung und Praktika. Das Programm funktioniert! Die Jugendarbeitslosigkeit ist in der EU-28 auf durchschnittlich 16,2 % statt 24 % stark gesunken – Marianne Thyssen hat darauf hingewiesen. Endlich geht sie sogar in Griechenland, Spanien und Italien zurück – wenn auch noch zu gering, das wissen wir alle. Wir haben die Mittel um 2,4 Milliarden Euro auf 8,8 Milliarden Euro bis 2020 erhöht – konkrete Worte, ja, aber vor allem konkrete Taten.

Dennoch gibt es Bedenken in einigen Teilen des Berichts. Die Arbeitgeber sollen verpflichtet werden, hochwertige Praktika anzubieten. Ich bin für Aufforderung aber nicht für Zwang, das ist kein Instrument der sozialen Marktwirtschaft. Oder runde Tische mit sämtlichen Akteuren, um die Umsetzung der Strategien vor Ort zu beurteilen – das ist doch schwer zu realisieren. Eine Hotline für die Verletzung von Rechten Jugendlicher ist sehr populistisch, da müssen wir nochmal nachlegen. Ich setze auf die Wirksamkeit von Maßnahmen und habe meiner EVP-Fraktion empfohlen, dem insgesamt sehr guten Bericht von Romana Tomc zuzustimmen. Wir müssen alles dafür tun, dass Jugendliche, die guten Willens sind, auch bei der Beschäftigung nicht alleingelassen werden.

Siôn Simon (S&D). – Madam President, paragraphs 34 and 43 of this report rightly treat the need to support apprenticeships in tackling youth unemployment. Yet this week in the UK we see 1 400 apprentices thrown into absolute turmoil by the collapse under the Tory government of the Carillion construction firm. Nobody is telling them anything or giving them any support whatsoever about whether they will have apprenticeships next week or the week after or will be joining the back of the queue, despite their best efforts to get on.

One bricklaying apprentice in Birmingham said: ‘yesterday we saw people leaving, the man in charge of stock just left, he was the first to go. Then, we saw people high up in the office with their bags packed leaving. I saw another man going, and more people just with their bags packed going’.

That is not support for apprenticeships, that is a disgrace and this Tory government needs to look to itself and start looking after people.

Puhetta johti HEIDI HAUTALA

varapuhemies

Richard Sulík (ECR). – Vážená pani predsedajúca, iniciatíva na podporu zamestnanosti mladých opäť raz potvrdzuje, že nič nie je trvácnejšie ako dočasné vládne opatrenie. Presne ako dočasný euroval či dočasný výkup dlhopisov, aj táto iniciatíva mala byť len dočasná. No ako vidieť, je úplná ilúzia si myslieť, že európski byrokrati sa vzdajú prerozdeľovania peňazí. Nezamestnanosť mladých je bezpochyby vo viacerých členských krajinách veľký problém, avšak tento problém si musia riešiť členské krajiny. Je to klasická agenda spadajúca do ich kompetencií. Tu nepotrebujeme európsku koordináciu, práve naopak. Potrebujeme súťaž najlepších konceptov. Navyše problém nezamestnanosti mladých nevyriešime dotáciami. Skutočné a poctivé riešenie je odstraňovanie bariér v podnikaní, zníženie zaťaženia práce a menej byrokracie. Ďalšími miliardovými dotáciami len znižujeme tlak na členské krajiny, aby sa pustili do odvážnych reforiem, a existujúci stav v konečnom dôsledku konzervujeme.

Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Przede wszystkim gratuluję Romanie Tomc tego bardzo dobrego, ważnego sprawozdania. Mówimy w nim o Inicjatywie dla Młodych, unijnym instrumencie finansowym skierowanym do tych państw i regionów, w których bezrobocie młodych przekracza 25%. W szczególności rozmawiamy o kierowaniu działań do młodzieży NEET: młodych ludzi, którzy nie pracują, nie uczą się, nie szkolą, nie uczestniczą w żadnych praktykach. Mamy ich w Europie 7,5 mln. Część z nich ma status bezrobotnych (poszukują pracy), ale ok. 40% jest ekonomicznie nieaktywna. Nie podejmują żadnej aktywności w celu zmiany swojego statusu, a więc możemy się spodziewać, że jutro, pojutrze czy za rok ich sytuacja będzie podobna. Jak bardzo destrukcyjne jest takie doświadczenie dla indywidualnego człowieka i dla całego społeczeństwa, nie trzeba w tej Izbie tłumaczyć. Dlatego powinniśmy skupić się na rozwiązaniach i zauważyć fakt, że większość NEET stanowią kobiety. Ryzyko, że kobiety trafią do grupy NEET, rośnie z wiekiem. Największa przewaga kobiet jest w grupie wiekowej 30-34 lata, a więc wtedy, gdy unijne programy skierowane do młodzieży już nie mogą im pomóc.

Pani Komisarz! Należy lepiej zaadresować unijne programy w związku z przewagą kobiet wśród najbardziej zagrożonej młodzieży. Należy programować i oceniać konkretne projekty realizowane w państwach członkowskich z uwzględnieniem płci. Wymaga to nie tylko gromadzenia i analizowania statystyk z rozbiciem na płeć, ale wyraźnej zmiany w celach i treściach programów finansowanych przez Inicjatywę dla Młodzieży.

Emilian Pavel (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, doamnă comisar, lucrez în domeniul politicilor de tineret de când mă știu și, de aceea, sunt un mare susținător al Garanției pentru tineret și al Inițiativei privind ocuparea forței de muncă în rândul tinerilor. În urma unei misiuni în Slovenia și Croația, dar și din alte numeroase exemple de bună practică din Uniunea Europeană, aș dori să încurajez toate statele membre, Comisia Europeană, dar și colegii din Parlament să se lupte pentru următoarele lucruri:

În primul rând, definirea clară a ceea ce înseamnă o ofertă de calitate pentru acești tineri, care să includă: programe personalizate de învățare, condiții de muncă, protecție socială și remunerație de calitate.

În al doilea rând, inițiativa este menită să completeze alte măsuri luate la nivelul statelor membre, așadar, încurajez statele membre să își ia un angajament mai ambițios, atât din punct de vedere financiar, cât și din punctul de vedere al dezvoltării de programe de calitate și, mai ales, sustenabile.

Sper, de asemenea, ca această inițiativă să beneficieze de o finanțare pe măsură în cadrul financiar multianual post-2020. Europa nu își poate permite să piardă această generație tânără și cu atât de mult potențial.

Anne Sander (PPE). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Commissaire, après trois années d'activité, il est temps d'offrir à l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes un bilan de santé. Force est de constater que ce fonds se porte bien et a fait du chemin depuis le coup de *boost* que lui a offert notre assemblée en débloquent un milliard d'euros supplémentaires pour aider les jeunes des régions les plus défavorisées.

Des fonds européens, il est aujourd'hui le meilleur élève. Pour autant, l'heure n'est pas à la béatitude. Oui, le taux de chômage des jeunes a diminué, mais il est encore trop important et un certain nombre d'États sont à la traîne dans l'utilisation des fonds.

L'heure étant aux bonnes résolutions de la nouvelle année, j'aimerais ici en formuler trois. Elles sont indispensables pour décupler la force de frappe de l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes.

Cette aide doit d'abord aller à ceux qui en ont le plus besoin, à ces jeunes isolés parce qu'ils ne sont pas inscrits auprès des services pour l'emploi, parce qu'ils sont peu ou pas qualifiés ou parce qu'ils sont éloignés des grands centres urbains.

Cette aide doit ensuite drainer des offres de qualité. Elles doivent être une plus-value sur un CV et un passeport pour décrocher un emploi dans la foulée. En ce sens, il faut mettre davantage l'accent sur les expériences d'apprentissage qui forment directement à un métier et sur les expériences à l'étranger.

Enfin, cette aide européenne, il faut la sanctuariser; elle doit à tout prix faire partie des priorités de la prochaine programmation budgétaire.

Michael Detjen (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kommissarin! Europa kann und muss sich mehr aktive Arbeitsmarktpolitik leisten. Die Beschäftigungsinitiative war ein guter Anfang, die Jugendgarantie muss weiter ausgebaut werden. Die Arbeitsmarktzahlen zeigen in die richtige Richtung: Die Arbeitslosigkeit sinkt. Doch die Zahlen sagen nicht die ganze Wahrheit. Es verbergen sich Kernprobleme, die nicht gelöst sind: die weiterhin schlechte Lohnentwicklung und eine nahezu explodierende Beschäftigung im atypischen Bereich. Darum ist es wichtig, dass die Jugendgarantie den Schwerpunkt auf qualitative, hochwertige Ausbildung und Arbeit legt. Das wollen wir in drei Schritten erreichen. Erstens: Von der EU geförderte Programme wie die Jugendgarantie müssen Qualitätsstandards erfüllen – dazu gehören faire Arbeitsbedingungen, soziale Absicherung und angemessene Entlohnung. Diese Punkte müssen noch klarer definiert werden. Wir sehen, dass dort, wo Sozialpartner eingebunden sind, die Qualität auch meistens stimmt.

Wir fordern zweitens eine stärkere Einbindung der Sozialpartner in die regionalen Projekte. Junge Menschen werden zu oft als billige Hilfskräfte ausgenutzt und missbraucht. Wir brauchen drittens ein europaweites Verbot der unbezahlten Praktika. Wir wollen, dass junge Menschen, wenn sie an ihren Berufsstart denken, Europa in guter Erinnerung haben.

Jeroen Lenaers (PPE). – Het eerste debat dat ik als lid van het Parlement in juli 2014 mocht voeren, ging over ditzelfde onderwerp. We hebben toen aan het begin van deze zittingsperiode opgeroepen om van de jeugdwerkloosheid een absolute prioriteit te maken. Terugkijkend op de afgelopen drieënhalve jaar, denk ik dat we daar ook in geslaagd zijn, met name dankzij de sterke samenwerking tussen het Parlement en commissaris Thyssen.

In de lidstaten zijn 132 maatregelen goedgekeurd, 1,6 miljoen jongeren hebben er gebruik van gemaakt en de jeugdwerkloosheid in de EU is sterk gedaald. En toch heb ik er een beetje een tweeslachtig gevoel bij. Want het is fijn dat we zoveel jonge mensen hebben kunnen helpen. Maar tegelijk blijft het triest dat dit nodig was en nog steeds is. Want we zien nog steeds in veel Europese landen een schrikbarend hoge jeugdwerkloosheid.

Er moet dus méér gebeuren, in de eerste plaats in de lidstaten zélf. Structurele hervormingen, betere besteding van beschikbare fondsen en een betere aansluiting van vraag en aanbod op de arbeidsmarkt zijn absoluut noodzakelijk en kunnen ook vanuit Europa aangemoedigd worden. Veel zaken daarbij zijn al benoemd, maar laat me nog één specifiek thema vermelden: als we de jeugd een toekomst willen geven in Europa, moeten we niet alleen over grenzen willen, maar ook kunnen kijken.

Ik denk dat één van de belangrijke zaken daarbij is: aandacht voor buurtaalonderwijs. Lidstaten moeten er vanaf een hele jonge leeftijd op aandringen dat scholieren de taal van hun buurlanden leren. Wij gaan daar morgen in de resolutie aandacht aan besteden en ik vraag de Commissie om dat ook te volgen.

In een mooie grensprovincie als mijn eigen Limburg, ingesloten tussen Duitsland en België, is dat absoluut cruciaal.

Eider Gardiazabal Rubial (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, la Garantía Juvenil ha ofrecido una oportunidad de integración a miles de jóvenes en toda Europa a los que la crisis económica expulsó o excluyó del mercado laboral. Y, en este sentido, tenemos que insistir en que tenemos que continuar decididamente con este programa y, sobre todo, proporcionarle mayores recursos presupuestarios para poder atender a todos los jóvenes. Pero no podemos caer en la autocomplacencia y, desde luego, mi país no tiene motivos para ello. Y tenemos que intentar mejorar el programa.

En este informe señalamos muchos problemas de la Iniciativa de Empleo Juvenil, y me gustaría destacar fundamentalmente dos. Primero, necesitamos que llegue a más jóvenes, sobre todo de edades comprendidas entre los 25 y los 30 años, porque son los que tienen mayor urgencia de emancipación y, por lo tanto, los que más urgente necesitan un trabajo con condiciones dignas y salarios suficientes. Y también necesitamos que esas ofertas de trabajo y formación que están financiadas con esta Garantía Juvenil sean útiles y de calidad. Porque es precisamente este el punto más débil, y por eso hemos presentado una enmienda.

Seamos claros. Ofrecer a los jóvenes una formación no adecuada y de baja calidad solo provoca que el joven pierda su tiempo y que nosotros malgastemos el dinero público. Ofrecerles un trabajo de poca o muy poca cualificación para el que muchas veces están sobrecualificados les aleja aún más de una posibilidad cierta de conseguir un trabajo decente. Así que sigamos trabajando por mejorar este programa y ofrecer un futuro a nuestra juventud.

Marek Plura (PPE). – Pani Komisarz! Serdecznie gratuję Romanie Tomc wnikliwego sprawozdania i przemyślanych zaleceń. Uważam, że konieczne jest zniesienie barier w dostępie młodych niepełnosprawnych do Inicjatywy na rzecz zatrudnienia oraz Gwarancji dla młodzieży. Chodzi zarówno o zapewnienie dostępności szkoleń i staży przez racjonalne dostosowanie miejsc pracy, nauki, materiałów dydaktycznych itp. do rodzaju niepełnosprawności, jak i o upowszechnianie informacji o tych inicjatywach w formatach dostępnych np. dla osób niewidomych czy niesłyszących.

Ponadto państwa członkowskie powinny zrewidować systemy orzecznictwa i świadczeń. Warto ograniczyć orzekanie o niezdolności do pracy w systemie, który uniemożliwia jednocześnie rejestrację w urzędach pracy, a tym samym uniemożliwia uczestnictwo w Inicjatywie na rzecz zatrudnienia młodzieży. Ograniczmy także sytuacje, w których podjęcie stażu czy rozpoczęcie pracy wiąże się z ryzykiem natychmiastowej utraty świadczeń.

Podjęcie pracy ma kolosalne znaczenie dla każdego młodego człowieka. Dla osoby niepełnosprawnej zatrudnienie jest dodatkowo przepustką do normalności. Europa potrzebuje swojej młodzieży, jej zaangażowania i talentów, potrzebuje także talentów i zaangażowania młodych niepełnosprawnych.

Miäpetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D). – Arvoisa puhemies, emme turhaan nostaneet Euroopan agendalle nuorisotyöttömyyttä. Toivotaan että pahin on ohi. Viidessä vuodessa nuorisotyöttömyys on pudonnut 24 prosentista 16 prosenttiin. EU:n työkaluista nuorisotakuu, nuorisotyöllisyysaloite sekä Euroopan sosiaalirahasto ovat yhdessä olleet auttamassa nuorisotyöttömyyden kitkemisessä.

Omassa maassani Suomessakin sosiaalirahasto on ollut rahoittamassa nuorille kohdistettua yhden luukun palvelua, Ohjaamo-toimintaa. Tulevalle ohjelmakaudelle tarvitsemme edelleen toimia nuorten työttömyyden kitkemiseksi. Erityisesti toimia tarvitsevat vammaiset, koulupudokkaat, maahanmuuttajat tai muuten haavoittuvammassa asemassa olevat syrjäytymisvaarassa olevat nuoret.

Haluaisin jättää kolme terveistä, kun menemme kehittämään tulevaa. Varojen käytön on oltava tehokasta, harjoittelun, työn tai koulutuksen on oltava laadukasta ja työstä on saatava palkka. Se laadukkuus tarkoittaa sitä, että nämä toimet johtavat jatko-opintoihin tai pysyvään työpaikkaan. Lisäksi kolmanneksi informaation ja ohjauksen saaminen on erittäin tärkeässä osassa. Nuoria itseään kannattaa kuunnella jo suunnitteluvaiheissa.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Již tady bylo zmíněno, že statistiky dnes ukazují pokles nezaměstnanosti, a to včetně mladých. Já jsem přesvědčena o tom, že *Youth guarantee* mladým lidem v kritických situacích v určitých oblastech skutečně pomohla. Byly to ty roky 2013, 2014, 2015. To, že v některých zemích nepomohly dostatečně, tyto evropské peníze, to je hodně věc těch národních států, které možná nebyly dostatečně aktivní a nevytvořily potřebné podmínky. Proto je potřeba vidět kriticky to, jak je program implementován. My potřebujeme nutně data, abychom uměli dobře vyhodnotit, kde jsou silné a slabé stránky. Tady nám také musí pomoci členské státy. Shromažďování dat ale není jediná věc, kde je určitá slabina. My potřebujeme zlepšit systém registrace, zlepšit také informovanost mladých lidí, aby tento program šel skutečně tam, do těch regionů, mezi ty mladé lidi, kteří jej nejvíce potřebují.

Souhlasím s návrhem, aby se více přizpůsobil tento program pro zdravotně postižené a také mladé rodiče. To je myslím výborný a důležitý návrh. Naopak nesouhlasím se zvýšenou byrokracií, kterou by např. představovala nabídka, resp. definice kvalitní nabídky. Totiž jednotné provádění ještě nemusí vůbec znamenat efektivnější provádění. Rozhodující je přece individuální přístup úřadu k potřebným mladým lidem, zohlednění národních a regionálních specifik. Čili tento program potřebuje zásadní reformu.

Εύα Καϊλή (S&D). – Το «Youth employment Initiative», αυτή η πρωτοβουλία μαθητείας και δημιουργίας απασχόλησης, αποτελεί εξαιρετική προσπάθεια και ισχυρό εργαλείο για την καταπολέμηση της ανεργίας των νέων και ειδικά σε χώρες όπως η Ελλάδα. Είναι μάλιστα μια απόδειξη για το πού κοιτάζει Ευρώπη. Υπήρξε όμως και μια δυσάρεστη έκπληξη, που διαπιστώσαμε ειδικά στην Ελλάδα, πως αντί για αξιοποίησή του σε άνοιγμα ευκαιριών με προοπτική επαγγελματικής αποκατάστασης στη συνέχεια, το πρόγραμμα φάνηκε ότι εφαρμόζεται κυρίως στον δημόσιο τομέα, δηλαδή σε θέσεις εργασίας που δεν έχουν ελπίδα ή προοπτική συνέχισης της απασχόλησης.

Σε απάντηση της Επιτροπής, διαπιστώθηκε πως δεν υπάρχει ενημέρωση για το πού μαθητεύουν οι νέοι μας, άρα δεν υπάρχει ενημέρωση για την ποιότητα των θέσεων εργασίας, ούτε λοιπόν και για τον αριθμό των συμμετεχόντων στον ιδιωτικό ή στον δημόσιο τομέα. Ευελπιστούμε ότι το ποσό που παρέχεται, ειδικά σε χώρες με υψηλά ποσοστά ανεργίας και κυρίως στους νέους, θα αυξηθεί, αλλά είναι σημαντικό το πρόγραμμα αυτό να επεκταθεί και να καταστεί πιο φιλόδοξο και στοχευμένο, με καλύτερη δηλαδή αντιστοιχία μεταξύ προσφοράς, ζήτησης και δεξιοτήτων ώστε να αισθανθούν οι νέοι μας ότι μένοντας στην Ευρώπη το μέλλον τους είναι σε καλά χέρια.

Krzysztof Hetman (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Uważam, że zwalczanie bezrobocia wśród młodzieży powinno nadal stanowić jeden z najważniejszych priorytetów Unii Europejskiej i państw członkowskich, dlatego też od początku popierałem Inicjatywę na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych jako nowy instrument dedykowany temu – niestety wciąż utrzymującemu się – problemowi. Cieszę się, że Komisja zdecydowała się zwiększyć budżet Inicjatywy, i mam nadzieję, że środki na ten cel będą dostępne – jeśli tylko będzie taka potrzeba – także w przyszłej perspektywie finansowej.

Chciałbym jednak zwrócić uwagę, że aby instrument zwiększył swoją efektywność, należy większą wagę przykładac do dopasowania oferty do kwalifikacji bezrobotnej młodzieży w taki sposób, aby wziac także pod uwage potrzeby pracodawców i wypelnic nieobsadzone wakaty. Juz ponad jedna trzecia pracodawców sygnalizuje brak rąk do pracy. To właśnie nierównowaga między popytem i podażą umiejętności w większym stopniu niż konsekwencje kryzysu finansowego coraz częściej odpowiada za utrzymujące się bezrobocie wśród młodzieży. Oferta odpowiednich kursów doszkalających i staży zawodowych między innymi może w znacznym stopniu przyczynić się do rozwiązania tego problemu. Ponadto większy nacisk powinien być położony na monitorowanie i komunikowanie efektów, aby państwa członkowskie mogły wzajemnie korzystać z wymiany dobrych praktyk i systematycznie ulepszać swoją ofertę.

Csaba Sógor (PPE). – Madam President, as stated in the report, although we came a long way from the alarming height of 24% youth unemployment in 2013, at present only a handful of Member States have this rate at less than 11 %. Youth unemployment – with its lasting effects both on economic productivity and growth as well as on individuals – remains a strong concern and needs particular attention.

With support provided to more than 1.6 million young people and operations amounting to more than EUR 4 billion, the Youth Employment Initiative has had a considerable impact on employment in recent years; although its success depended to a large extent on national factors such as implementation capacity.

However, the report rightly points out that the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative are no substitutes for macroeconomic and other national policies to promote employment in general and youth employment in particular. There are Member States which have not yet implemented much needed educational, economic and social structural reforms to address the challenges they are faced with.

Seeing several positive results achieved until now, I hope that an updated Youth Employment Initiative can be a better driver for policy reform in the fields of education, public employment services and improved synergies with employers in order to provide a better future for our youth.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Comissária, a juventude tem de ser a prioridade da União Europeia. Isso tem consequências, desde logo, orçamentais, e, desde logo também nos orçamentos nacionais, já que a competência na área do emprego é uma competência nacional.

A União Europeia tem feito a sua parte. Os Estados-Membros devem utilizar os vários fundos que têm para a promoção do emprego. Só na política de coesão são 350 mil milhões de euros. O Fundo Social Europeu, o elemento mais importante para a formação adequada, para o emprego, para a educação, tem cerca de oitenta mil milhões de euros, e os Estados-Membros devem utilizá-lo para este objetivo.

A União Europeia tem feito a sua parte e reforçou, por exemplo, na conciliação para o orçamento deste ano a Iniciativa Emprego Jovem em 116 milhões de euros. A Iniciativa Emprego Jovem é um instrumento que demonstra a solidariedade da União Europeia. Ajuda os Estados-Membros e as regiões mais pobres, aquelas que têm mais desemprego jovem para melhorarem a sua inclusão. Reforça, desta forma, a coesão social e a coesão territorial.

Temos de reforçar, de melhorar a Iniciativa Emprego Jovem. Temos de continuar com esta iniciativa. A União Europeia precisa de inclusão, precisa de coesão territorial e, volto da forma que comecei: a juventude tem de ser a prioridade da União Europeia e os jovens têm de ser envolvidos na execução dos programas, na construção das políticas que lhes dizem respeito.

Danuta Jazłowiecka (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Jeszcze 5 lat temu w części państw członkowskich bezrobocie wśród osób młodych wynosiło ponad 40 %. Dzisiaj sytuacja znacznie się poprawiła, choć są kraje, gdzie nadal jest wiele do zrobienia. Nierównomierne wdrażanie Inicjatywy w państwach członkowskich powoduje, że proces jej monitorowania i oceny stanowi poważne wyzwanie. Brakuje przejrzystości w sprawdzaniu osiągniętych efektów, nie ma też jednolitego rozumienia kluczowego pojęcia „dobrej jakości staży” czy „dobrej jakości miejsca pracy”.

Państwa członkowskie mają także trudności przy określaniu populacji docelowej. Trybunał Obrachunkowy zauważył, że państwa członkowskie stosują zbyt ogólne i powierzchowne kryteria. Skutkiem tego jest m.in. problem z identyfikacją populacji młodzieży NEET, tzw. biernej młodzieży. Żadne państwo członkowskie nie potrafiło na przykład wypracować metod dotarcia do tej grupy. Tym samym osoby najbardziej potrzebujące wsparcia otrzymują je w najmniejszym stopniu. Istotne jest, aby państwa członkowskie włożyły więcej wysiłku w znalezienie sposobów identyfikowania biernej i wykluczonej młodzieży NEET oraz ustanowienie odpowiednich dla nich strategii.

Głównym założeniem Inicjatywy na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych jest uzupełnienie finansowania krajowego, nie zaś jego zastępowanie. Niestety dostępne dane pokazują, że w części państw członkowskich finansowanie ze środków Inicjatywy zastąpiło finansowanie krajowe. Tym samym program nie wnosi aż tak istotnej wartości dodanej, jaką planowano w momencie jego ustanowienia, a koszty ponoszą ludzie młodzi.

Podsumowując, Inicjatywa na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych zaczyna generować wiele pozytywnych efektów w obszarze walki z bezrobociem wśród młodzieży, niemniej jednak zdefiniowane mankamenty należy usunąć, wprowadzić elementy, o których mówił m.in. Marek Plura, by z programu korzystali faktycznie potrzebujący.

Chciałabym także podziękować Romanie Tomc za bardzo dobre, rzetelne sprawozdanie.

Pyynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot

Franc Bogovič (PPE). – Najprej iskrene čestitke kolegici Romani Tomc za odlično poročilo, čestitke in zahvala tudi vam, spoštovana komisarka Thyssenova, za vaše delo, ki ga opravljate pri odpravljanju brezposelnosti med mladimi, ki vemo, da so bili največje žrtve gospodarske krize.

Poročilo je spodbudno, hkrati pa je pri vašem delu ugotovljeno, da je velika povezava med šolskimi sistemi v državah na eni strani in na drugi strani brezposelnostjo.

Države, ki imajo vajeništvo, ki imajo pripravništvo, kjer se povezuje gospodarstvo in šolstvo, so države z najnižjimi stopnjami brezposelnosti in mislim, da to mora biti tudi na nek način nauk za tiste države, ki so zdaj deležne tega jamstva za mlade, in da tudi poskušamo reformirati šolske sisteme.

Pozorni moramo biti pa tudi na to, da se nam dogaja to, da je danes problem v Evropi, da se množično mladi selijo iz manj razvitih držav v bolj razvite države, iz manj razvitih regij v bolj razvite države. Zato je potrebno biti pri tej pobudi pozoren tudi na ta problem, ki bo problem prihodnjih let.

Nicola Caputo (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la disoccupazione giovanile resta la grande sfida nell'Unione europea, in particolare in alcuni paesi tra cui sicuramente la Spagna, la Grecia e l'Italia.

Vanno attivati meccanismi in grado di assicurare una maggiore trasparenza su come sono spesi i fondi per i giovani disoccupati e gli Stati membri vanno obbligati a fornire i dati di monitoraggio in loro possesso. Troppo poco sappiamo dei risultati e degli effetti conseguiti con l'Iniziativa a favore dell'occupazione giovanile e quel poco che sappiamo non è rassicurante.

Dai dati disponibili emergono risultati non entusiasmanti circa la qualità dell'offerta di lavoro. L'Iniziativa andrebbe maggiormente focalizzata sulla disoccupazione giovanile a lungo termine, aiutando concretamente a individuare i giovani che non hanno un lavoro né seguono un percorso scolastico o formativo, i cosiddetti «NEET», e quindi a predisporre strategie mirate ed adeguate per risolvere questo vero e proprio dramma sociale.

La questione giovanile va affrontata in modo olistico, integrando gli strumenti locali, regionali e nazionali, per fare una cosa semplice ma fondamentale: formare i giovani e insegnare loro a lavorare bene. Non servono palliativi.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η πρωτοβουλία για την απασχόληση των νέων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση πράγματι είναι μια σημαντική ενέργεια. Όμως, όπως έχω πει επανειλημμένα σε αυτήν εδώ την αίθουσα, υπάρχουν περιορισμένοι πόροι και επομένως το πρώτο που πρέπει να κοιτάξουμε είναι η αύξηση των πόρων. Το δεύτερο είναι να εξηγήσουμε τα στοιχεία διότι εμφανίζεται μία μείωση στην ανεργία των νέων. Αυτή όμως οφείλεται κυρίως στο ότι υπάρχουν ευέλικτες μορφές απασχόλησης, υπάρχει η μερική απασχόληση υπάρχει το «part time».

Το επόμενο θέμα που πρέπει να μας απασχολήσει είναι οι χώρες του ευρωπαϊκού Νότου: Ελλάδα, Ιταλία, Ισπανία. Στην Ελλάδα, 500.000 νέοι έχουν φύγει και έχουν πάει σε άλλες χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Όσοι νέοι απασχολούνται παίρνουν μισθούς πείνας, μέχρι 450 ευρώ. Πολλοί από αυτούς μένουν απλήρωτοι. Επίσης, δεν υπάρχουν πολύ συγκεκριμένα στοιχεία για το πώς προχώρησε αυτή η πρωτοβουλία στην Ελλάδα. Τέλος, η χρηματοδότηση από πλευράς κρατών μελών περιορίζεται διότι, σε διαφορετική περίπτωση, αυξάνεται το έλλειμμα.

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (ALDE). – Madam President, I also wish to congratulate the rapporteur for all the work she has done on this file. Youth employment training and empowerment have always been among ALDE's priorities, and I am pleased that the Youth Employment Initiative has so far helped 1.4 million young people who were not in employment, education or training to get a job placement, an apprenticeship or a traineeship.

While acknowledging this achievement, I also need to underline that there is much more to be done in order to enhance and improve the implementation of the programme and ensure that it successfully complements the national youth employment initiatives, in particular by reaching out to those at risk of exclusion. The assessment clearly shows that the pace of implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative does not correspond to the one initially foreseen, taking into account the various options for implementation. On the basis of results obtained, specific measures should be undertaken in order to better respond to the specific needs and issues in each Member State.

João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, os elevados níveis de desemprego, que permanecem sistematicamente na União Europeia, não estão desligados das suas políticas neoliberais e de promoção do emprego precário e de baixos salários. Tais políticas têm particular impacto nos jovens, razão pela qual, em países como Portugal, se verifica um nível de desemprego jovem que atinge os 25%. A IEJ é um paliativo, que a prática demonstra não dar resposta aos objetivos a que se propõe. O próprio relatório reconhece que seriam necessários cerca de 45 mil milhões de euros para que o programa tivesse o impacto visível. Ora, no período 2014-2020 os senhores orçamentaram apenas 6,4 mil milhões, muito abaixo do necessário.

De boas intenções está o Inferno cheio. Coerentes, temos, sistematicamente, proposto o aumento substantivo das dotações do IEJ, defendendo a criação de postos de trabalho com direitos e contratos permanentes, propostas que a maioria de direita e da social-democracia no Parlamento Europeu têm rejeitado.

Este relatório é, além do mais, omissivo em muitas questões, nomeadamente na resposta aos problemas estruturais que estão na origem do desemprego jovem.

Igor Šoltes (Verts/ALE). – Torej, ta politika spodbujanja zaposlovanja mladih in ta shema je izjemno pomembna in pomagali smo mnogim mladim v Evropski uniji, je pa res, da je seveda odgovornost za reševanje tega problema ponavadi potem na državah članicah, kako učinkovito tudi črpa ta sredstva.

Je pa res potrebno spomniti tudi na to, da je na področju trga dela, zlasti pri mladih, vedno več tako imenovanega prekarnega dela, ki postaja pri mladih prevladujoča oblika razmerja. Pojavljajo se seveda tudi tako imenovane digitalne platforme, ki trg dela bistveno spreminjajo in iz delovnega razmerja selijo trg dela na trg storitev.

In to so stvari, na katere moramo biti zelo pozorni, ker lahko dobimo tudi drugačno statistično sliko. In strinjam se s kolegi, ki pravijo, ta denar mora biti namenjen za kvalitetna delovna mesta, ki morajo izpolnjevati določene standarde kakovosti, od socialnih, plačnih, in pomenijo tudi mogoče dobro orodje za stimulatívno davčno politiko, odvisno od države, koliko sposobna je.

Ivica Tolić (PPE). – Gospođo predsjednice, prvo želim pohvaliti kolegicu Tomc i čestitati joj na izvrsnom izvješću i prijedlozima. Zaista je pohvalno lansiranje Inicijative za zapošljavanje mladih, kao i povećanje financijskih sredstava za tu svrhu. Proces bi međutim trebao biti osmišljen i implementiran do kraja, od lansiranja ideje, pa do korištenja sredstava namijenjenih mladima iz skupine NEET kao krajnjim korisnicima.

Moramo osigurati kvalitetne baze podataka da bi se znalo koliko je mladih u toj kategoriji, moralo bi se znati transparentno koliko sredstava i kome treba dodijeliti, morali bi imati povratnu informaciju kako su dodijeljena sredstva utrošena i imati mjerljive rezultate ove Inicijative. Odgovornost za svaku pojedinu stavku procesa mora biti vrlo jasno određena i u svakom se trenutku mora znati u kojoj fazi je proces provedbe Inicijative.

Nezaposlenost mladih uistinu je jedan od ključnih izazova Europske unije i zato ova Inicijativa nikako ne smije ostati samo na tome da su izdvojena određena sredstva, nego je potrebno inzistirati na provedbi konkretnih strategija usklađenih sa sustavima izobrazbe i tržišta rada u regijama i zemljama članicama. Tu usklađenost smatram ključnom.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, doamnă comisar, vreau și eu să vă mulțumesc pentru raport și pentru această temă extrem de importantă. Dacă nu vom rezolva problema scăderii șomajului în rândul tinerilor, vedem cum tinerii pleacă nu dintr-o țară în alta în Europa, ci chiar pe alte continente și alimentăm din bugetele naționale și europene forță de muncă calificată pentru Statele Unite, pentru China, pentru India.

Cred că trebuie să găsim și măsuri complementare. Sigur că susțin această inițiativă, dar, spunea un coleg și spunea bine, trebuie să vedem cum reformăm și educația. Am exemplu concret în țara mea: școlarizăm persoane pentru locuri de muncă care nu se regăsesc în economie și cred că trebuie să existe această legătură între ceea ce școlarizăm, ce locuri de muncă oferă economia și unde investim în pregătire profesională. Trebuie o educație a adulților, pentru că părinții nu mai vor să își dea copiii la școlile de meserii – desființarea școlilor de meserii a adus asemenea efecte. Și eu cred într-un program complet, cu măsuri complementare acestei inițiative, dar trebuie continuat, evident, și cu inițiativa legată de Garanția pentru tineret și Inițiativa pentru tineri.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospođo predsjednice, nakon osnivanja Garancije za mlade, države članice Unije posvetile su se zajedničkom cilju, osiguravanju toga da mladi ljudi dobiju dobru i kvalitetnu ponudu za posao, kontinuiranu edukaciju ili priliku za stažiranje unutar perioda od četiri mjeseca nakon što završe na zavodu za zapošljavanje ili nakon što im prestane formalno obrazovanje.

Pohvaljujem Izvješće i kvalitetne preporuke koje je izvjestiteljica ponudila u ovome Izvješću, posebice one o prilagodbi mjera lokalnim potrebama te o poboljšanju komunikacije o postojećim programima potpore mladima.

Osim mjera navedenih u Izvješću, držim da je krucijalno mladima kontinuirano naglašavati važnost jačanja poduzetničkih vještina koje se ne mogu razvijati bez pozitivne poslovne klime, što nas ponovno vodi zaključku da su upravo strukturne reforme najbrži put ka kvalitetnom zapošljavanju mladih.

Caterina Chinnici (S&D). – Signora Presidente, signora Commissaria, onorevoli colleghi, secondo le più recenti rilevazioni i dati sull'occupazione giovanile sono in lento miglioramento, ma proprio per questo si deve confermare il sostegno agli Stati membri attraverso programmi per l'occupazione giovanile necessari per dare maggiore speranza ai tanti giovani ancora in cerca di lavoro.

A questo scopo, come sottolineato dalla relatrice, è necessario misurare concretamente e con precisione i risultati fin qui ottenuti, cosa non semplice. Quindi è vero, occorre migliorare i sistemi di monitoraggio per ottenere dati più precisi soprattutto riguardo alla fascia dei cosiddetti «NEET».

Ciò che tuttavia è ancor più necessario è intraprendere un ulteriore passo avanti per sviluppare azioni più forti sulle politiche attive di inserimento dei giovani nel mondo del lavoro, piuttosto che continuare a privilegiare strumenti anticrisi o occupazionali temporanei. E occorre uno stanziamento economico adeguato nei programmi post 2020 per far sì che ai giovani siano riconosciute condizioni di lavoro stabili, corrispondenti alle loro qualifiche, alle loro competenze e alle loro capacità professionali.

Ivana Maletić (PPE). – Gospođo predsjednice, pozdravljam povjerenicu i posebno čestitam izvjestiteljici, kolegici Romani Tomc, na ovom izvrsnom Izvješću. Ona je zapravo i obilazila države članice, kako bi se uvjerila u kvalitetu provedbe i probleme s kojima se države članice susreću i zato imamo ovako kvalitetno i dobro Izvješće, hvala na tome.

Inicijativa za zapošljavanje mladih daje i jednu važnu poruku mladima, a to je da ih stavljamo na prvo mjesto i da nam je jako važno njihovo zapošljavanje i stjecanje novih znanja i vještina, kako bi se što lakše, bolje i brže mogli zaposliti. Ono što ovo Izvješće jasno pokazuje jest da nedostaju konkretnije mjere i aktivnosti koje se rade u suradnji s mladima i koje bi što bolje i kvalitetnije odgovorile na njihovu potrebu.

Tako smo, recimo, u Republici Hrvatskoj čuli od mladih da bi htjeli više mjera poput *inkubatora* na fakultetima, koji će ih potaknuti na realizaciju ideja i samozapošljavanje ili, recimo, stručno usavršavanje, ali tijekom studiranja i školovanja, kako bi bili spremni za rad po završetku školovanja, a ne tek tada počeli učiti raditi.

Wajid Khan (S&D). – Madam President, in the years after the financial crisis almost one in five young people in the UK were not in education, employment or training, ‘NEET’, which is often a phrase I do not like.

My constituency was badly affected, in fact Merseyside was one of the five UK areas granted Youth Employment Initiative funding. What this report touches on reflects my concern. Are our efforts working? In the UK, the number of inactive NEETs has stayed almost static since 2002. Young women remain more likely to struggle than young men. Disabled young people remain far more likely to be locked out of employment or education. Young people in the UK are still three times more likely to be unemployed than the general population.

The longer a young person spends ‘NEET’, the greater the impact is on their employment prospects and even on their longer-term physical and mental health. So our efforts must be targeted better. Those hardest-to-reach groups must be identified more effectively, otherwise for all our efforts we will still be left with a lost generation.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Asszony! Ezt a mai vitát végighallgatva teljesen meg voltam döbbenve, amikor néhányan azt mondták, hogy ezt az ifjúsági kezdeményezést abba kéne hagyni és az idetartozó ügyeket tagországi kezelésbe kéne vonni. Én próbáltam megkérdezni ezeket az embereket, hogy tulajdonképpen mi a csuda akadályozta volna meg a tagországokat, hogy bármit is tegyenek a saját fiataljaik munkanélküliségének az oldása vagy feloldása, enyhítése érdekében? Ezzel együtt én a mai vitából azért azt is leszűrtem, hogy igazából csak a globál számokra próbálunk összpontosítani. Hány százalékos az ifjúsági munkanélküliség? De azt nem vettük tekintetbe, hogy ez még egyes országokon belül földrajzilag is különbözik. Ez az ifjúsági munkanélküliség elsősorban vidéken, a falvakban sújtja az embereket. Úgy gondolom, hogy ezt a kezdeményezést az „okosfalu” mintájára ki kéne terjeszteni kistelepülésekre, a kisfalvakra, ahol a fiataloknak lényegében nulla esélyük van bármire is.

(Pyynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot päättyvät)

Marianne Thyssen, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, I would like to thank the rapporteur and the honourable Members for their support and for the interesting remarks and comments.

Your report is very timely as we are now in the process of elaborating our proposals for the future funding of youth employment under the next Multiannual Financial Framework. Fighting youth unemployment will continue to be a high priority at European and national levels as long as the rates of young unemployed and of those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) remain excessively high.

The targeted funding and the focus on results which characterise the Youth Employment Initiative should be maintained. We will also address the challenge of simplifying implementation rules and reducing the burden on both managing authorities and beneficiaries.

Many of you stressed the importance of macro-economic policies, and I would like to mention the policy of this Commission to stimulate economic growth, investment and job creation. Let me also refer to our skills agenda, and to underline our attention to quality in terms of offer in the framework of the Youth Employment Initiative. This initiative is well targeted, as you know, targeted at specific regions and groups of young people, and we have specific results indicators that act as an additional driver of quality.

The Commission is also monitoring the quality of employment for all age groups under the European Semester, with particular attention being paid to issues related to labour-market segmentation. We provide guidance on the quality of traineeships and apprenticeships and we promote youth learning and vocational education and training (VET) mobility. We have enhanced the monitoring of the quality of Youth Guarantee offers in the Employment Committee (EMCO) multilateral surveillance process, and, as some of you might know, conclusions are expected soon – early this year.

For the future, the commitment to quality offers for young people has been reinforced in the Pillar of Social Rights. In principle 4b of the pillar we have included the Youth Guarantee.

Honourable Members, I look forward to working with you on the future Multiannual Financial Framework proposals, to securing a prominent place for investing in the future of our young generation. This investment in young people is not only, as some of you said, an expression of solidarity: it is also an essential condition for ensuring the future development of a highly competitive social market economy aiming at full employment and social progress. It is also about an inclusive society and a dynamic society. Thanks for your support. Let us work together in the interest of our younger generation.

Romana Tomc, *Poročevalka*. – Hvala lepa še enkrat za besedo in hvala lepa vsem, ki ste sodelovali v tej zanimivi debati.

Ugotavljam, da imamo pravzaprav enake poglede na reševanje brezposelnosti mladih in da vsi skupaj prepoznavamo ta program YEI kot eno izmed temeljnih in zelo koristnih pobud za zmanjševanje brezposelnosti mladih. Seveda imamo še veliko dela na tem področju in strinjam se, da moramo v nadaljevanju ta program narediti bolj učinkovit. Tudi Komisija mora dobiti večje pristožnosti, da lahko nadzira države članice, kako porabljajo ta denar.

Vendar, naj še sama za konec opozorim na tisto, kar ste mnogi pred mano že opozarjali. Evropska unija oziroma Komisija daje na voljo veliko denarja, države članice pa so tiste, ki so najbolj odgovorne za to, da ta denar, ki je namenjen mladim, resnično pride do njih.

Še eno pomembno opozorilo: ta program in ta denar ni ne edino ne najpomembnejše sredstvo, ki ga imajo države članice za reševanje svoje zaposlovalske politike. One same so tiste, ki morajo najprej narediti vse potrebne reforme in v tem se zelo razlikujemo, nekateri zelo zaostajajo. Potrebne so reforme na trgu dela, posebej pa reforme na trgu oziroma na področju izobraževanja, namreč ne moremo si privoščiti, da na trg dela prihajajo mladi, ki postanejo brezposelni, vendar imajo recimo visoko izobrazbo. Za to morajo poskrbeti izobraževalni sistemi.

Potrebovali bomo ta program, ne samo danes, jutri, ampak tudi po letu 2020. Ampak, če bomo želeli, da bo ta učinkovit, bomo morali upoštevati tudi razmere, ki bodo na trgu dela veljale čez nekaj let, to se pravi, novi in inovativni programi za mlade. Hvala lepa vsem za sodelovanje še enkrat.

Puhemies. – Keskustelu on päättynyt.

Äänestys toimitetaan torstaina 18.1.2018.

Kirjalliset lausumat (työjärjestyksen 162 artikla)

Monika Beňová (S&D), *písomne*. – Je nepochybne správne, že Európska komisia prijala rôzne opatrenia a že európske inštitúcie sa snažia aktívne bojovať s príčinami vysokej nezamestnanosti mladých ľudí v Európskej únii najmä v pokrízovom období. Pokrok je vidno. Pokračovanie v ďalšom znižovaní nezamestnanosti mladých však naďalej zostáva dôležitou výzvou. Nezamestnanosť ostáva jednou z hlavných priorít Európskej únie a ani pri mierne zlepšenej situácii netreba byť príliš optimistický a zabúdať na skutočné problémy, pred ktorými spoločne stojíme. Európske podporné schémy musia byť nastavené tak, aby pomáhali všetkým mladým nevynímajúc mladých hendikepovaných ľudí, ktorí si dlhodobu na trhu práce nevedia nájsť uplatnenie. Európske mechanizmy majú dopĺňať, no nemôžu nahrádzať vnútroštátne financovanie podpory mladých. Doposiaľ to, bohužiaľ, často fungovalo tak, že štáty využívali tieto zdroje na financovanie už existujúcich, a nie vytváranie nových opatrení. Európska únia sa musí snažiť o prijímanie politik a nástrojov, ktoré budú pre občanov prospešné aj v časoch, keď sa Európe ekonomicky nedarí a stagnuje.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), *por escrito*. – Os últimos dados do Eurostat confirmam uma situação de desemprego estrutural elevado na União Europeia e na Zona Euro. Um desemprego sistémico que coexiste com uma outra realidade que os dados estatísticos não iludem: um crescimento anormalmente baixo dos salários, uma compressão do preço da força de trabalho, que aproveita a pressão social exercida pelo exército de reserva de desempregados para aumentar a exploração dos que ainda vão encontrando trabalho. Duas realidades que afetam particularmente os mais jovens e que confirmam que a crise capitalista foi aproveitada para forçar a entrada num novo patamar de exploração. A União Europeia e as suas políticas são um agente ativo na promoção desta corrida ao fundo no plano dos direitos, dos salários, das condições de vida e de trabalho. Em Portugal, o desemprego jovem que atinge os 25%. A Iniciativa Emprego Jovem surge como um paliativo. Mas o que a prática demonstra é o seu impacto quase residual. Por diversas vezes propusemos um aumento dos recursos alocados a este programa e uma clarificação das suas regras, visando impedir a promoção de formas de trabalho precário. Significativamente, estas propostas foram chumbadas pela direita e pela social-democracia neste Parlamento. Que agora aqui vêm chorar lágrimas de crocodilo pelo desemprego jovem.

Ádám Kósa (PPE), *írásban*. – A 2008-2009-es pénzügyi-gazdasági válság Görögország mellett Magyarországot érintette a legmélyebben az EU-ban – ami többek közt – azzal is járt, hogy drámaian megnőtt a magyar fiatalok munkanélkülisége is. 2012-re a munkanélküli fiatalok aránya a 28%-ot is meghaladta, ami 5%-kal magasabb volt az EU átlagánál. 2017-re ezt számot sikerült 10,5%-ra csökkenteni Magyarországon a hatékony hazai programoknak és az ezekhez igazodó EU-s források hatékony felhasználásának köszönhetően. Eközben ugyanezen EU-s mutató csak 16,4%-ra csökkent 2017 végére, ami jóval kisebb dinamikát jelentett, mint a magyar csökkenés. Így már a jelentéstervezet szerint is egyértelművé vált az, hogy Magyarország azon kevés országok közé tartozik Ausztria, Csehország, Hollandia, Málta és Németország mellett, ahol 11% alatt van a fiatalok munkanélkülisége. Sajnálatos ugyanakkor, hogy a 2013 és 2016 között a részt vevő fiatalok mindössze 4%-a fejezte be a programot, ami nagyon alacsony határfoknak tekinthető, különösen akkor, ha a tagállami programok elsősorban a magasan képzett fiatalokra összpontosítottak. Javasoltam a Foglalkoztatási és Szociális Bizottságban folyó munka kapcsán, hogy a hosszabban gyengén teljesítő tagállamokra fordított forrásokat vizsgálják felül, hiszen az elfogadhatatlan, hogy ha valaki – mint például hazánk – sokkal jobban és gyorsabban javít önnön helyzetén, akkor annak forrásvesztéssel kell számolnia, míg más tagállamok a gyengébb teljesítménnyel is folyamatosan kapnak a támogatásokat.

Dominique Martin (ENF), *par écrit*. – La mise en œuvre de l'initiative pour l'emploi des jeunes (IEJ) est une problématique épineuse car elle oppose d'une part la volonté tout à fait légitime d'aider, par un financement conséquent, les jeunes particulièrement désocialisés, ce que nous soutenons, et d'autre part, de développer un «système d'emplois aidés», fustigé par la Cour des comptes et contre lequel nous sommes extrêmement critiques. Néanmoins, une grande partie du financement vient du Fonds de Solidarité de l'Union Européenne (FSUE) et certaines de nos régions françaises en bénéficient, ce dont nous nous félicitons. L'argent du contribuable français «retourne», même si ce n'est qu'en partie, aux Français qui en ont le plus besoin. Nous appelons de nos vœux à une meilleure gestion et rappelons surtout que ce n'est pas une solution sur le long terme. Seule une relance économie encadrée par un patriotisme de même nature pourra endiguer le chômage des jeunes.

Dubravka Šuica (PPE), *napisan*. – Visoka stopa zaposlenosti mladih jedna je od najbitnijih stavki svakog „zdravoga” gospodarstva. Financijska kriza 2008. godine značajno je promijenila situaciju na tržištu rada te utjecala na snažan porast stopa nezaposlenosti mladih. Inicijativa za zapošljavanje mladih kreirana je s ciljem brze mobilizacije financijskih sredstava u najpogodnijim zemljama koje se bore s visokim stupnjem nezaposlenosti i neaktivnosti mladih. Program se odnosi na mlade do 24 godine, no države članice imaju pravo povećati tu granicu na 29 godina.

Bitno je naglasiti da se mjerama želi isključivo nadopuniti nacionalne programe zapošljavanja mladih, koji su u nekim zemljama zakazali, a ne ih u potpunosti zamijeniti. Program je financiran 50 % iz Europskog socijalnog fonda te 50 % iz proračuna EU-a i radi se o trenutno najuspješnijem među svim europskim strukturnim i investicijskim fondovima u pogledu provedbe.

Prostora za napredak još ima, stoga treba raditi na boljoj razmjeni i kvaliteti podataka među državama. Isto tako, neke zemlje koriste novac EU-a umjesto državnog novca namijenjenog programima zapošljavanja mladih što treba promijeniti.

Smatram da je Inicijativa vrlo bitna u napretku EU-a, jer je nezaposlenost mladih postao zajednički problem svih država članica te se s njime moramo suočiti zajedno, na razini EU-a. Visokom stopom zaposlenosti mladih stvorit će se uvjeti za održiv i ujedinjen oporavak gospodarstva euro područja.

Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL), por escrito. – O desemprego afeta particularmente os mais jovens. A União Europeia e as suas políticas são um agente ativo na promoção desta corrida ao fundo no plano dos direitos, dos salários, das condições de vida e de trabalho. Em Portugal, o desemprego jovem atinge os 25%. Assim é em muitos outros Estados-Membros.

A Iniciativa Emprego Jovem não resolve os problemas estruturais do desemprego. Pior, torna-se um fator de desvalorização do trabalho, seja no vínculo, na remuneração ou na sua flexibilização. Ou seja, os jovens, onde quer que encontrem trabalho, estágio ou formação, tornam-se pau para toda a colher. Mas ainda assim o seu impacto macroeconómico é quase residual como o demonstram as estatísticas.

Por diversas vezes propusemos um aumento dos recursos alocados a este programa e uma clarificação das suas regras, visando impedir a promoção de formas de trabalho precário. Significativamente, estas propostas foram chumbadas pela direita e pela social-democracia neste Parlamento, que agora aqui vêm chorar lágrimas de crocodilo pelo desemprego jovem.

Kristina Winberg (EFDD), skrifilig. – Ungdomsgarantin är ännu ett av många EU-program som detta parlament tycker att man ska utvidga trots dess misslyckanden. Dessutom, som fallet i princip alltid är i denna union, betalar Sverige in mer än vad vi får tillbaka. Arbetsmarknadspolitiska satsningar ska i den mån de behövs eller bedöms fungera beslutas om i nationella parlament i min mening.

Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski (PPE), na piśmie. – Sprawozdanie w sprawie wdrażania Inicjatywy na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych przyjmuję jedynie z umiarkowaną ulgą. Problem bezrobocia młodzieży na poziomie ogólnounijnym, którego stopa jest wedle doniesień około dwukrotnie wyższa niż średnia ogólna stopa bezrobocia, jest dla nas problemem pierwszorzędym, a Inicjatywa na rzecz zatrudnienia ludzi młodych jest jednym z kluczowych wdrażanych przez nas instrumentów nakierowanych na zwalczanie tego problemu. Zaznaczam jednak, że zarówno gwarancja dla młodzieży, jak i sama Inicjatywa mogą być jedynie pierwszym krokiem w kierunku zintegrowanego podejścia uwzględniającego potrzeby ludzi młodych w zakresie zatrudnienia. Inicjatywę uznaję zwłaszcza za adekwatny bodziec do przeprowadzania szeroko zakrojonych reform oraz stymulowania lepszej koordynacji w obszarze zatrudnienia i kształcenia.

W tym kontekście ze szczególną mocą pragnę podkreślić również potencjał sektora kultury i kreatywnego w zakresie zatrudnienia. Branże kulturalne i kreatywne w Europie zapewniają ponad 12 mln pełnoetatowych miejsc pracy, co stanowi 7,5 % czynnej zawodowo populacji UE. Co więcej, przyczyniają się one znacząco i bardziej niż jakkolwiek inny sektor właśnie do zatrudniania ludzi młodych. W końcu, w kontekście diskutowanego przez nas dziś wdrażania Inicjatywy, silnie zaznaczam, że dla właściwej oceny implementacji narzędzia kluczowe pozostają dobrze funkcjonujące systemy monitorowania i sprawozdawczości.

18. Decyzja w sprawie strategii dotyczącej tworzyw sztucznych (debata)

Puhemies. – Esityslistalla on seuraavana komission julkilausuma päätöksestä muovistrategiasta (2018/2508(RSP)).

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, we have managed to make solid progress in the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan. Thanks to Parliament's hard work, one of the key initiatives, the legislative package on waste, is now very close to adoption. I am grateful for the hard work of Simona Bonafè and all the shadow rapporteurs involved. The package the Commission adopted yesterday keeps us on this very positive track. The main element of this package is the Plastics Strategy for Europe.

There is a tide of growing awareness and concern among people, businesses and governments about the enormity of plastic pollution. In last year's special Eurobarometer survey, 84% of European citizens said that they are worried about the impact of plastics on our environment. The Commission also received a petition signed by 800 000 Europeans calling on us to deliver an ambitious plan, and I know that, in this House too, there is a sense of urgency about this issue.

Plastic pollution is an enormous challenge, threatening our environment and health. Every second, approximately 700 kilos of plastic waste ends up in our oceans. If we go on this way, there will be more plastic than fish in the ocean by 2050. Micro-plastics are found not just in our oceans but also in our water, in the water we drink, in the food we eat, and in the air we breathe. Also, the way we produce, use and dispose of plastics today is a threat to several economic sectors: fisheries and tourism, to name two. It is also a wasted economic opportunity. Vice-President Katainen will say more about that in a second.

With this strategy, we aim to foster a new, sustainable and profitable plastics economy, with the design of products and other parts of the production chain taking into account re-use and recycling needs.

Plastic packaging accounts for about 60% of all plastic waste generated in Europe every year. It is therefore paramount that we address packaging as a priority. Our aim is that, by 2030, all plastic packaging placed on the EU market will be reusable or recyclable in a cost-effective manner. We have quickly begun work on future revision of rules, and new harmonised rules, on packaging.

In the shorter term, we need to curb plastic waste and reduce the use of certain types of plastic. Several measures for that are provided for in the strategy. We will propose an EU-level legislative initiative on single-use plastics before summer. Single-use plastic items constitute 50% of litter found on EU beaches, and it is important that we significantly reduce the use of these products.

Micro-plastics are another serious problem. We have launched a process to ban micro-plastics that are intentionally added to products such as cosmetics, paints and detergents, and we can do that under the Reach framework. Also, we will continue our work to ban oxo-plastics because these oxo-plastics fragment to tiny pieces, exacerbating the micro-plastics accumulation even more.

Together with this strategy, we adopted a new directive on port reception facilities, which goes a long way, ensuring that waste is brought back to land instead of being discharged at sea. We will also develop additional measures to motivate those working on boats to bring the fishing gear to land and not dump it into the sea.

Since a significant part of plastic pollution comes from other parts of the world, we will need to work together with the rest of the world to make sure that we improve the situation. We, as the EU, can be a global leader in this. We have been a global leader on climate action and we can be a global leader here as well. We need the full support of this Parliament if we are to be successful.

Vice-President Katainen will now explain how this is also working well for our economy.

Jyrki Katainen, *Vice-President of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, today, or actually yesterday we adopted a plastic strategy, which is the elementary part of the circular economy thinking. Today, all too often the way plastics are produced, used and discarded fails to capture the economic benefits of a more circular approach.

According to the estimates only 5% of the value of plastic packaging materials remains in the economy, the rest goes to waste after a very short first use. The annual bill accounts for up to EUR 105 billion. We simply cannot afford it.

This is why we are proposing rethinking and improving the functioning of the entire complex value chain: plastic producers, designers, retailers and recyclers and consumers all need to act. It often seems to be forgotten that high levels of plastic recycling can only be achieved by improving the way plastics are produced and designed.

The aim is that by 2030 all plastic packaging will be reusable and recyclable. This will be achieved by stimulating design for circularity, boosting recycled content and stimulating better separate waste collection. Plastics packaging today accounts for about 60% of all plastics waste generated in Europe every year. It is therefore paramount that we address this as a priority.

In the EU, the uptake of recycled plastics in new products is low; only around 6%. Our objective is to support the creation of more stable markets for recycled plastics and ensure the demand for recycled plastics is multiplied by four.

In other words, our aim is, first, to create a truly well-functioning single market for recyclable plastics, second to improve waste collection and, third, promote recycled plastics. The intention is to stimulate investment in the sector.

Existing EU funds such as the structural funds, the European Fund for Strategic Investments and Horizon 2020 will continue to support businesses and Member States to upgrade their waste management infrastructure. We aim at stimulating the increase of the European recycling capacity and the quality of the resulting recycled material.

This will create trust in the market and attract further investment and innovation in Europe. But plastic waste reduction depends not only on the recycling infrastructure, it can also be reduced by using more sustainable materials which could replace traditional plastic while offering the same functionalities.

Later this year the Commission will develop a strategic research innovation agenda for plastics. The focus will be the development of smarter and more recyclable plastic materials and products, more efficient recycling processes, the removal of hazardous substances and contaminants from recycled plastics and finding solutions addressing the problem of micro-plastics.

And if we manage to set things right the world will follow us. It is always the case that good European policies are copied elsewhere, and that should be our goal, to have a global impact. This is the most effective way to ensure that the European plastics industry, employing today as many as 1.5 million people, will become stronger, more competitive and at the same time the world leader in innovation, digitisation and decarbonisation.

Peter Liese, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Herren Vizepräsidenten, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich begrüße sehr, dass die Kommission heute die Strategie vorgelegt hat. Wir haben ein Riesenproblem, wir haben ein Problem mit der Verschmutzung der Weltmeere. Es ist zwar eine dramatische Schilderung, aber an dem, was Sie, Herr Vizepräsident Timmermans, gestern erklärt haben, ist sicher etwas dran, dass wir, wenn wir nicht aufpassen, 2050 mehr Plastik im Meer haben als Fisch. Und es bringt heute schon gesundheitliche Probleme mit sich. Wir haben auch das Problem, dass wir die Rohstoffe unserer Kinder verbrauchen, dass wir insgesamt zu wenig Kreislaufwirtschaft haben und zu viel Wegwerfgesellschaft. Deswegen müssen wir etwas tun.

Die Kommission hat sehr interessante Vorschläge gemacht. Immerhin gibt es auch einen Legislativvorschlag, der jetzt schon dabei ist. Und da möchte ich ansetzen. Wir müssen aufhören, nur zu reden. Wir müssen sehr konkret handeln. Und dazu braucht es Gesetzgebungsvorschläge. Die Europäische Kommission ist das einzige Gremium, das Gesetzgebungsvorschläge machen kann. Deswegen: Glückwunsch zu dem einen, sehr kleinen Vorschlag, den Sie gemacht haben. Aber ich möchte wirklich darum bitten, dass, wie angekündigt, im Mai der nächste Vorschlag kommt und dass es dabei auch nicht bleibt.

Wir brauchen einen gesetzlichen Rahmen, der diejenigen, die Recycling nach vorne bringen wollen, und diejenigen, die nachhaltige Produktionsmethoden nach vorne bringen wollen, im Wettbewerb besser stellt. Denn es gibt überall gute Ideen, und es gibt überall Menschen, die etwas tun wollen. Aber es gibt auch überall Shareholder, die sagen: Wenn du das machst, verlieren wir Geld. Also müssen die Regeln so sein, dass man kein Geld verliert, wenn man in nachhaltige Produktion investiert, sondern dass man Geld gewinnt. Auf dem Weg sollten wir zusammen arbeiten.

Kathleen Van Brempt, *namens de S&D-Fractie*. – Als Frans Timmermans er is, neem ik altijd de gelegenheid te baat om in mijn eigen taal te spreken. Dat is een beetje vervelend voor de andere commissaris, maar die kan naar de vertolking luisteren. Laat me beginnen met te zeggen “bedankt, dikke proficiat”. Het was hoog tijd, maar jullie doen het. Jullie komen met een strategie rond plastic en ik denk dat we vandaag de enige grote regio in de wereld zijn die die verantwoordelijkheid neemt. Daarmee zetten wij ook de standaard voor de rest van de wereld. Dat is heel belangrijk!

Wij gaan jullie daar ten volle in ondersteunen. We kijken ook vooral uit naar de wetgevende voorstellen, want zachte-wetgevingsstrategieën en bewustmaking zijn allemaal goed en wel, maar we hebben ook wetgeving nodig. Ik denk dan aan de werkgroep wegwerpplastic maar ook aan de wetgeving inzake havenontvangstinstallaties. Die zijn allebei heel belangrijk en het Parlement gaat daar zeker zijn schouders onder zetten.

Er komt ook een onderzoek naar een belasting op wegwerpplastic. Dat is een heel belangrijk item in heel veel van onze lidstaten. Onze fractie wil dat ondersteunen. Ik denk dat dat een goeie manier is om plastic weg te belasten.

Waar we het minder mee eens zijn is om die belasting te gebruiken als een soort van eigen inkomsten voor de Unie, want dit is bij uitstek een belasting die je niet wil innen, die naar nul moet. En als we over eigen inkomsten praten – en daar zijn we zeer grote voorstander van – dan willen we daar een stabiele basis voor hebben.

Een laatste punt. Het is heel belangrijk dat de Commissie voorstelt om tegen 2030 ervoor te zorgen dat alle plasticverpakkingen recycleerbaar zijn. Bekijk dat samen met het schitterende werk dat onze rapporteur Simona Bonafè en de anderen gedaan hebben rond het afvalpakket en de circulaire economie. Dan heb je een goede basis. Maar we gaan ook moeten zorgen dat we een markt creëren, dat de producenten die recycleerbare verpakkingen ook gaan gebruiken. Zolang goedkope olie gemakkelijker bereikbaar is dan de recycleerbare materialen, hebben we een probleem. Daarom zijn er straffe initiatieven nodig, bijvoorbeeld ervoor zorgen dat producten van de toekomst een minimaal aantal recycleerbare materialen bevatten. Maar dank alvast voor dit initiatief!

Julie Girling, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. –Madam President, I would like to thank our Vice-Presidents. It is interesting to hear your proposal.

I know that it is not a very fashionable thing to say, but I am actually a great fan of plastic. It is a wonderful material. It has transformed most of our lives, certainly mine. If you are as old as I am, you can remember when there was not very much plastic around and life was very different. But we all have to accept, and there is common agreement, that we have probably got to the point where – a bit like all of our issues around climate change – it is time that we stopped just taking the benefits and realised that there are some pretty heavy downsides.

I really think that this argument is done. It is made. I doubt if you will hear too many people today, or in the future when you are putting the strategy into place, arguing with that. I think our problem is going to be about how we put these proposals in place. Perhaps, given where I stand in the Chamber and possibly a little bit my nationality, it will not come as a great surprise to you that I am not such a fan as the two previous speakers of the legislation. That is not to say that I do not think we need any – of course we do, we do need a framework – but I would like to make an appeal for that to be as light as possible in the sense of setting Member States' targets and allowing them to use their own best efforts to meet those.

The new thing in here that I took away was this issue about setting a single market for recyclable plastics, standards on how they are manufactured and what they are manufactured with. That is how you stimulate this change. It is by creating a market, making that market work and trusting the public. I can tell you that in the UK, where we have just banned microplastics, there was no resistance. They do not need to be brought on board. It is actually the functioning of the whole system that needs to be taken very seriously, so I thank you very much.

Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, many thanks from my side to the Commission for their strategy paper. If a few years ago, someone had told me that two Vice-Presidents would present a strategy on plastics in Parliament I would have sent that person to the madhouse.

So it is great to see that commitment from the Commission, and leafing through the strategy, I must say the analysis is very strong, the language is right and the intentions are very, very promising. If the European Commission were a consultancy firm I would certainly recommend it to all my friends and businesses around.

But the Commission is a political body; not only that, it is the only political body that can propose legislative proposals. And that is what is still lacking here. I know some elements are technically difficult: setting common standards for biodegradable plastics is not easy, and I know there's a huge scientific debate behind that. But there are many other elements that are much less complicated and that have already been considered by the Commission for years and years, even by previous commissioners.

Ms Girling has already mentioned that tackling the use of micro plastics in cosmetics would have been easy, and it would have been quite easy to set minimum standards for recycled content in the Ecodesign Directive. And what about measures on single-use plastics? That has been done the around the world

So concluding, I'm very happy with the strategy, but I had expected a little bit more on the legislative part. I know that your intention is to come forward with those, please do so during your mandate because if it is left to the next Commission we don't know if the same two vice-presidents will still be still there.

Kateřina Konečná, za skupinu GUE/NGL. – Děkuji také oběma pánům z Komise, kteří dnes přišli mezi nás, aby nám představili ten materiál, na který jsme asi všichni dlouho čekali, nicméně musím říci, že nám předložená strategie ve mně nechává spíše smíšené pocity. Na jedné straně velice vítám, že Evropská komise plánuje pracovat tak, aby zajistila, že veškeré plastové obaly uváděné na vnitřní trh EU budou do roku 2030 buď opakovatelně použitelné, nebo snadno recyklovatelné, a že více než polovina veškerého plastového odpadu bude do stejného roku recyklovatelná. Jednotný vnitřní trh s plasty je správná cesta, která však bude vyžadovat robustní investice.

V současné době čelíme přímo celosvětové krizi, co se týče plastového obalu, a nemáme čas čekat do roku 2030 a nevyřešíme to ani tak, že z Číny, kde už naše plastové odpady nechťejí, je začneme vozit do Afriky. Situace v našich mořích je dlouhodobě neudržitelná a to nejenom kvůli mikroplastům. Proto je nezbytné, aby na základě strategie byly co nejrychleji předloženy ambiciózní předpisy a to ještě touto Komisí. Ty musí drasticky snížit spotřebu jak plastových předmětů, tak obalů. Obešli jsme se bez nich před tím, musíme se obejít i do budoucna.

Nejsem si jista, jestli stačí spoléhat pouze na dobrovolné závazky průmyslu. Po několika studiích biodegradabilních plastů provedených u nás v ČR, kdy bylo zjištěno, že ve většině případů se tyto nerozkládají ani po dvou letech v půdě, jsem skeptická i vůči nim. Měli bychom začít ověřovat to, co navrhujeme, a ne se nechat ukonejšit průmyslem nad tím, co nám navrhuje on.

Margrete Auken, for Verts/ALE-Gruppen. – Fru formand! Det er virkelig en stor dag! Det er trods alt fire år siden, at Kommissionen, og ikke mindst kommissær Timmermans, og jeg var virkelig oppe at slås. Kommissæren var sikker på, at plastik var »small things«, og Kommissionen skulle være lillebitte om »small things«. Nu står vi her, og Kommissionen har erkendt, at plastikforurening er »big things«. De er ovenikøbet kommet med noget, som er rimelig »big«. Det ender med at blive en vane hos mig at skulle rose Timmermans, og det gør jeg med glæde, hver eneste gang han giver mig anledning til det. Så tusind mange tak!

Men der er selvfølgelig et par småting! Men lad mig først lige tage rosen videre: Det er fint, at der er en sammenhængende beskrivelse af problemet, så vi både har sundhed, klima, natur, job og ressourceeffektivitet med, og at nødvendigheden af konkurrencefordele nævnes. Jeg mener også, at vi skal have industrien ordentligt ind, som det er nævnt af flere, bl.a. af Peter Liese. Jeg støtter, at man sørger for, at vi får en progressiv støtte til industrien. Vi skal have midtvejsevalueringer, så vi kan se, at vi faktisk når noget. Så vil jeg også gerne deltage i sorgen over, at der ikke er konkrete forslag. Men nu har jeg været så glad, så jeg vil nøjes med i stedet at glæde mig over, at vi har fået lovning på, at forslagene kommer til maj. Jeg regner med, at centrale dele af dem kan være færdige, så vi kan møde vores borgere med et bevis på, at vi faktisk tager deres bekymringer alvorligt. Jeg tror, at det bedste, vi kan gøre for at styrke EU i denne her sag, er at gøre noget rigtigt godt her.

Jeg har endnu en enkelt lille ting: Jeg ved, at Kommissionen har et problem med hormonforstyrrende stoffer. Jeg ved ikke, om de selv er blevet forstyrrede i hovedet, siden vi ikke kan få lov til at få dem med. Vi bliver altså nødt til at sørge for, at også de hormonforstyrrende stoffer kommer ud af plastik, hvis det skal kunne genbruges og genindvindes. Men lad mig sige tusind tak for, at vi omsider får et forbud mod oxo. Det skal forbydes så hurtigt som overhovedet muligt. Det er en katastrofe, at dette stof er i vores miljø.

Julia Reid, on behalf of the EFDD Group. – Madam President, my party and I strongly value products, materials and resources in our economy, and we believe that these should be kept in use for as long as possible in order to minimise the generation of waste in our environment.

Thus, it is our opinion that plastic, which is an extremely important material, should be used prudently. However, food packaging has led to a reduction in food wastage. The UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation estimates that 33% of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally, totalling about 1.3 billion tons per year. Therefore, packaging techniques such as modified atmosphere packaging and innovations such as active and intelligent packaging can ameliorate this.

My party and I therefore believe that plastic packaging which cannot be reused should be made of a substance that can be recycled.

Sylvie Goddyn, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Madame la Présidente, Messieurs les Vice-présidents, depuis la publication en 2013 du livre vert sur la stratégie concernant les plastiques, nous avons pris la mesure d'un problème majeur qui met gravement en danger l'environnement et la santé des Européens.

Du «tout-plastique» hier, nous prenons aujourd'hui le chemin plus raisonnable de l'économie et du recyclage.

Le chiffre alarmant de huit millions de tonnes de déchets plastiques déversés chaque année dans nos océans nous presse d'agir.

Lutter contre la pollution en augmentant la durée de vie des plastiques et la teneur de ceux-ci en matières recyclables, promouvoir les plastiques biodégradables et responsabiliser les consommateurs sont des mesures qui vont dans le bon sens.

Mais il faut aller plus loin, à savoir interdire le plastique partout où c'est possible, surtout lorsque d'autres options existent déjà, et s'éloigner le plus possible de la logique du «tout-jetable».

Je pense notamment aux plastiques à usage unique, qui peuvent être remplacés rapidement par des matériaux en carton ou à base de papier recyclé, et qui sont des solutions de remplacement durables.

Vous pourrez en tout cas, Messieurs les Vice-présidents, compter sur notre groupe pour alimenter en propositions cette stratégie que vous souhaitez ambitieuse.

Adina-Ioana Vălean (PPE). – Madam President, the plastic strategy is long-awaited and from what I hear already today the commissioners will have huge support in the European Parliament to help them deliver on this strategy.

We all agree that high-quality recycling of plastics is a key part of the process, yet we need a viable market for them. That is why I welcomed the proposal for quality standards for recycled plastics and the intention to incentivise packaging for the construction and car industries to use more of them. That creates a complete economic value chain, giving the industry the possibility to adapt to the new rules.

Moreover, while taking into account food safety, we need to discourage multi-layer packaging and encourage easier-to-recycle plastics. We can and should have more ambition when it comes to micro-plastics in detergents in detergents and cosmetics and single-use plastics, by building on the success of our legislation on plastic bags.

In the end, as has been said many times, the ocean and the seas are being suffocated by plastic particles, and I'm very happy to see the EUR 100 million in funding for research and support for action on marine litter. However, we need to consider every level of production, recycling and disposal for this strategy to be a success story.

Miriam Dalli (S&D). – Madam President, let me start straightaway by congratulating both Vice-Presidents. I have been through the strategy. I have spoken to both of you and I have to say I am satisfied that for the first time ever we are looking at the issue with a holistic perspective.

It could be that I come from an island in the middle of the Mediterranean, and that makes me much more aware of the environmental and health problems that plastic waste brings. I think this is our opportunity to actually make sure that we put environment at the forefront, while also making sure that we get industry on board.

We need to make sure that we remain competitive and we do not let other continents run in front of us in the competitiveness stakes. This is our opportunity because people are aware of the impact that plastic has, not only on our environment but also on our health. I have to be honest with you, I was quite shocked to hear that micro-plastics are not only ending up on our seabed, not only in the fish that we eat, but are also in the air we breathe. It is such a complex issue and so great a problem that we need to address it sooner rather than later.

I have spoken to both of you, and if I may, as a final point, I would like to commit you on something, because I have heard some of the concerns that were raised. When we spoke, you promised a ban on the deliberate addition of micro-plastics, in detergents and cosmetics for example.

You spoke about legislation on single-use plastics, and we will hold you to your word. We hope that we will see this by May, as we really want to make sure that we have progress on another legislative proposal from your end to make sure that waste does not come into our ports.

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR). – De strategie is zonder meer weer een stap vooruit naar de kringlooeconomie die we allemaal voor ogen hebben en waarin meer en beter recycleren van plastic een belangrijke en noodzakelijke schakel is.

Bedankt en proficiat voor de ambitie die de Commissie hier toont. We moeten het Chinese importverbod op plastic resoluut aangrijpen om meer te investeren in eigen recyclagecapaciteit. Maar meer recycleren alleen is natuurlijk niet voldoende. We moeten ook inzetten op het voorkomen van afval, op doordachte productontwerpen, op nieuwe bedrijfsmodellen. Ik verwelkom ook de genuanceerde houding van de Commissie over biologisch afbreekbaar plastic. Duidelijke afspraken zijn nodig, maar we moeten ook beseffen dat zelfs dát soort plastic geen zaligmakende oplossing is voor zwerfvuil op zee, integendeel.

Ook de aangekondigde acties inzake microplastics klinken veelbelovend. Europese oplossingen moeten, zullen, kunnen hier echt het verschil maken.

Tot slot roep ik de Commissie op om snel werk te maken van het wetgevend werk, maar ook oog te hebben voor maatwerk en haar acties niet te beperken tot consumentenverpakkingen. Ook in de *business-to-business*-markt is er zeker ruimte voor innovatie!

Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL). – Frau Präsidentin, meine Herren Vizepräsidenten! Ich begrüße, dass sich die Kommission mit ihrer Kunststoffstrategie der Umsetzung von Umwelanforderungen stellt. Das konzeptionelle Korsett für diese Strategie wird sich jedoch kaum als tragfähig erweisen, denn die gewählte Freiwilligkeit, der Fokus auf Recycling und Wiederverwertung sowie die Betrachtung des Plastikproblems allein aus der Sicht des Binnenmarkts sowie von Angebot und Nachfrage werden keine Lösung liefern. Konkret: Dass Deutschland seine bisher von China abgenommenen jährlich 570 000 Tonnen Plastikmüll zukünftig nicht illegal in Polen, Bulgarien oder Rumänien versteckt, ist, ja, ein Binnenmarktthema. Dass man aber China nicht ersetzt durch Vietnam, die Türkei oder Afrika, ist eine handelspolitische Frage.

Wir haben die Verantwortung, dass Plastik weder bei uns noch woanders einfach deponiert wird. Die Tücke mit diesen Stoffen ist: Aus dem Blick ist vielleicht aus dem Sinn, aber halt nicht aus der Welt. Gründe und Argumente für eine ernsthafte Politik der Müllvermeidung gibt es ebenso wie auch Technologien seines Abbaus. Aber die Industrie singt wie immer ihr Interessenlied: zu hohe Vorgaben. Denn die Kasse klingelt nur, wenn die Produktion brummt. Deshalb brauchen wir Umweltstandards und stoffliche Müllvermeidung schon im produktiven Ansatz als Kriterien und müssen diese auch in international verbindliche Ziele übersetzen.

Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin! Diese schrecklichen Bilder: Plastik am Strand, Plastik im Wald. Tiere, die elendig verrecken – Fische, Kühe. Und dann diese Bilder, dass es sozusagen im Meer einen Kontinent gibt, nur aus Plastik. Ich finde es auch gut, dass Sie die konkrete Zahl genannt haben. Irgendwann werden wir mehr Plastik im Meer haben als Fische. Ich finde es gut, dass die Kommission endlich etwas macht.

Ich sitze hier bei der Mutter Teresa von allen Plastiktüten. Die ist Priesterin und wahrscheinlich hat sie Herrn Timmermans bekehrt, so dass die Juncker-Kommission endlich die kleinen Dinge, die die Menschen interessieren, auch groß machen will. Ich finde es schön, dass Sie Ihre Meinung geändert haben, dass meine ich auch persönlich. Gut, dann brauchen wir mehr Gesetze – aber ich berichte Ihnen jetzt noch etwas aus meiner persönlichen Geschichte: 1991 war ich als junger Mann auf einer Konferenz der UNECE, also Europa, Kanada und so weiter. Damals haben wir über ein Verbot von PVC diskutiert – warum? Weil die Experten damals gesagt haben: Wenn ich PVC und Polyethylen und anderes Plastik vermische, dann kriege ich Downcycling, oder ich muss es verbrennen. Das heißt, für mich wäre die eigentliche politische Courage der Kommission: Wir müssen all das Plastik verbieten, das nach dem Recycling kein

ordentliches Produkt wird. Das ist die eigentliche Herausforderung, und ich hoffe, dass die Kommission sich daran wagt.

Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Ja, in der Tat: Zwei Kommissare und dann noch zwei Vizepräsidenten heute hier. Das ist schon ein Wunder. Mutter Teresa hat da eine Menge bewegt. Dass das auch noch zwei Vizepräsidenten sind, um die es bei der Debatte über „groß oder klein“ bei der letzten Wahl ging, darüber wollen wir nicht weiter reden. Sie sind jetzt auch noch beide hier, das spricht für ihren Charakter; es freut mich.

Dass Sie dieses Thema aufgreifen, war ja sichtbar. Damals hatte eben Herr Präsident Juncker falsche Größenordnungen zugrunde gelegt. Heute sind wir froh, dass er das auch sieht. Nur 5 % der Plastikware, die wir in Europa haben, werden verarbeitet. Alles andere landet da, wo meine Kollegen das gerade erwähnt haben. Und deswegen sind wir uns sicher alle einig: Wir müssen da etwas tun.

Herr Kommissar, oder meine Herren Kommissare, eins steht fest: Ich bin nun wohl einer der Ältesten hier in diesem Raum und schon ewige Zeiten hier in diesem Haus. Wenn wir einmal unsere europäischen Abfallgesetze ordentlich umgesetzt hätten – auch in meinem eigenen Land, ich will das gar nicht bestreiten –, dann hätten wir viel weniger Probleme. Dann müssten wir nicht diese Horrorszenarien aufführen, die wir jetzt gerade hier aufführen. Es ist wichtig, dass man maßvolle, durchaus strenge Regeln hat. Und wir müssen die Industrie einbinden und auch verpflichten. Das heißt, wir müssen – wie wir das schon seit vielen Jahren machen – entlang der Wertschöpfungskette dafür sorgen, dass die Designer der Produkte ein ernsthaftes Wort mitreden und dass die Designer sich mit den Recyclern endlich mal zusammensetzen. Der eine sagt dann zum anderen, das sei ein sozialer Abstieg für ihn. Nein, das ist eine Vernunftlösung, und da müssen wir hin! Ich setze in diesem Falle sowieso auf die Kommission, aber auch auf die europäische Industrie, die sich diesen Gedanken anschließen und vernünftige Vorschläge mittragen wird.

Simona Bonafè (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ringrazio la Commissione per la presentazione di questa strategia che è molto importante per l'Europa, sia dal punto di vista ambientale che da quello economico.

Parto da un dato: oggi in Europa si producono 25 milioni di tonnellate di rifiuti plastici e meno del 30 % viene riciclato. Sono dati impressionanti se si considera che gran parte di questi rifiuti sono la prima causa di inquinamento dei mari: oggi esistono intere isole di plastica in mezzo agli oceani. È bene chiarire che questa non è una strategia contro la plastica ma un'opportunità che dobbiamo essere capaci di cogliere. Puntare a rendere da qui al 2030 tutti gli imballaggi in plastica riciclabili e riutilizzabili non è solo un modo per tutelare l'ambiente ma è anche una scelta precisa, che dà nuovo impulso all'industria del riciclo, all'innovazione per materiali più sostenibili, per rilanciare la competitività delle nostre imprese e sostenere l'occupazione. Sfide che richiedono investimenti in ricerca e sviluppo, che verranno stimolati dai 100 milioni di EUR aggiuntivi.

L'accordo sul pacchetto dell'economia circolare che abbiamo raggiunto a dicembre darà già il via concretamente a molte azioni presenti nella strategia, a partire dal rafforzamento degli obblighi di raccolta separata, alle misure di prevenzione nella generazione di rifiuti, come l'introduzione di schemi di responsabilità estesa del produttore per gli imballaggi. Quando si parla di plastica si parla di prodotti e materiali di uso comune per i cittadini europei: bottiglie, cosmetici, buste.

Questo è il momento giusto: c'è un'opinione pubblica molto attenta ai temi della sostenibilità e preoccupata per l'impatto dell'inquinamento sulla salute. I cittadini hanno già dimostrato che, quando si tratta di mettere in atto azioni che tutelano l'ambiente, sono i primi ad adottare comportamenti virtuosi. È nostro dovere passare dalle intenzioni a misure concrete, come stiamo facendo.

Andrzej Grzyb (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Też przyłączam się do tych podziękowań, że oto tandem dwóch wiceprzewodniczących przedstawia strategię w tej sprawie, zresztą zapowiedzianą, oczekiwaną z końcem zeszłego roku. To bardzo ważny fakt, że dopełniamy niejako strategię w zakresie gospodarki o obiegu zamkniętym przez tę prezentację ze strony Państwa. Co prawda jeszcze bez regulacji, ale wydaje mi się, że te zapowiedzi, które tutaj są, świadczą o tym, że wszyscy myślimy o tym, że o plastikach czy o tworzywach sztucznych musimy myśleć, od prewencji poczynając, od ekoprojektu aż po dobre – że tak powiem – skuteczne metody zbierania tego, co się produkuje.

Podobno 300 milionów ton w ciągu roku produkujemy różnego rodzaju tworzyw sztucznych w skali świata. Ten znaczący odsetek jest również produkowany tutaj, w Europie.

Jednak na co chciałbym zwrócić uwagę: że w tym dokumencie Państwo nie zwracacie uwagi na połączenie tej strategii w zakresie tworzyw sztucznych z bioekonomią, a przecież to jest w tej chwili pewnego rodzaju nadzieja związana z tym, że surowce odnawialne mogą być źródłem wytwarzania tworzyw sztucznych, które są biodegradowalne. Oczywiście istnieją i takie, które mogą zawierać te komponenty i nie będą biodegradowalne, ale duża część jest biodegradowalna.

Wiemy, jakie są zmiany na rynkach surowców rolnych. Niektóre z nich już są polimeryzowane do tworzyw sztucznych (na przykład cukier przez kwas lakcydowy).

Po drugie, chciałbym zwrócić jeszcze uwagę (jeszcze chwileczkę, Pani Przewodnicząca) na problemy związane z odpadami w morzach. Wydaje mi się, że tego nie zrobimy tylko jako Unia Europejska i państwa członkowskie. Musimy współpracować tutaj z naszymi sąsiadami. Przykładem jest Morze Śródziemne – bez współpracy z Bliskim Wschodem i Afryką nie jesteśmy w stanie zapobiec tym zanieczyszczeniom, w szczególności jeżeli chodzi o mikroplastiki.

Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, domnule comisar, salut publicarea Strategiei privind materialele plastice. Aș vrea să fac o observație referitoare la costuri. În strategie afirmăm că se irosec anual între 70 și 105 miliarde de euro prin deșeuri din plastic nereciclate. Vă referiți și la pagubele provocate la nivelul mediului prin deșeuri marine sau arderea deșeurilor din plastic.

Însă trebuie să vorbim și despre costurile la nivelul sănătății. În fiecare an, sunt generate milioane de tone de deșeuri din plastic cu impact poluant asupra mediului și care sunt dificil, dacă nu imposibil de eliminat. Care sunt riscurile asupra sănătății produse de fragmentele minuscule de plastic ce pot fi găsite acum în aer, în apa potabilă, în unele alimente pe care le consumăm? Conform strategiei, Comisia se va asigura că microparticulele de plastic intră sub incidența legislației privind substanțele chimice. E un pas important, dar s-ar putea să nu fie suficient. Uniunea Europeană nu a făcut suficiente progrese în ceea ce privește cercetarea și reducerea expunerii cetățenilor la substanțe toxice, deși are obligația de a face acest lucru potrivit celui de Al șaptelea program de acțiune pentru mediu.

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Madam President, excuse me, I didn't hear how much time I have. Sorry. Thank you. I shall be quick then. I would just like to say that in 2002, Ireland introduced a plastic bag levy and there was an immediate 90% reduction in the use of plastic bags. So Member States can do things themselves. That's the good news. The bad news is that my country is one of the largest producers of plastic waste in the European Union, so we've got a lot of work to do.

We need to talk about China and its decision not to take our dirty plastic anymore. I've tried to find out from the industry where it is going to go. I wonder, do the Commissioners know? This is an immediate and real problem for us. It seems to me that we're moving from landfills to sea fills, and that's really serious because of the impact on our ecosystems. Therefore, this strategy is vital, and I thank both Commissioners for being here this evening to present it. It has got to work. We have an immediate concern around illegal dumping, I took a walk in the countryside at the weekend and I was disgusted with what I saw around me. A French colleague saw my pictures on Twitter and shared her experiences, so we need to tackle that in the Member States.

There is one area where we are encouraging people to use the internet to buy goods and services. However, when it comes to buying products, we all know that the amount of packaging that comes through our post, or otherwise, with internet sales is enormous, and we are not talking about it. My young children buy things on the internet and I have more waste as a result. This is something we've got to talk about and deal with, or the mountains will rise.

Elnökváltás: JÁRÓKA LÍVIA*alelnök asszony*

Christel Schaldemose (S&D). – Fru formand! Det er rigtigt glædeligt, at vi nu har en plastikstrategi for EU. Den indeholder en masse gode målsætninger og intentioner. Plastik skal reguleres bedre, og særligt affaldet er et kæmpeproblem, som vi nu tager ansvar for. 2030-målsætningerne med høje krav om genbrug og genanvendelse er derfor helt rigtige. EU bliver førende i verden, og strategien er både tiltrængt, nødvendig og god. Så tak for det! Men jeg må også sige til Kommission, at I skuffer en smule her ved ikke at tage fat hurtigere! Jeg synes, I skulle have præsenteret 3-4 lovforslag sammen med strategien. I ved udmærket godt, at vi her i det europæiske lovgivningsmaskineri ikke arbejder særligt hurtigt, så der vil gå flere år, før lovgivningen er på plads. Så lov os, at I overholder tidsfristerne, og lov os, at I kommer med noget så hurtigt som muligt. Vi bliver nødt til at handle nu!

Nicola Caputo (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la strategia sulla plastica dell'Unione europea è un primo e importante passo per combattere uno dei drammi che caratterizzano la nostra civiltà, ossia la plastica, il terzo materiale più diffuso sulla Terra dopo acciaio e cemento.

Dagli anni '50 ad oggi, con l'avvio della grande diffusione dell'uso della plastica, sono stati prodotti 8,3 miliardi di tonnellate di plastica e ne sono stati gettati in natura circa 6,3 miliardi. Le iniziative che la Commissione intende mettere in campo sono tutte condivisibili. Molto altro però si potrebbe fare, e forse si può anche accorciare l'arco temporale della strategia, considerato che il 2030 non è poi così vicino.

Ma ciò che mi preme rilevare è il dato politico dell'iniziativa: l'Unione europea certifica, finalmente, al massimo livello di autorevolezza istituzionale, che il problema della plastica esiste e che va affrontato seriamente. Come già accaduto in passato per altri elementi della politica ambientale, questa posizione dell'Unione europea costringerà anche altre aree del mondo a confrontarsi con il problema procedendo nella stessa direzione, confermando che l'Unione europea sa esercitare la propria leadership mondiale in materia ambientale.

„Catch the eye” eljárás

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, Senhores Vice-Presidentes, caros Colegas, gostaria de começar por saudar a Comissão pelo lançamento da primeira estratégia europeia para os plásticos e os esforços de harmonização da defesa e proteção do ambiente, com o crescimento económico e com a inovação que ela traduz.

Todos sabemos que a sociedade humana é largamente dependente do plástico. Mais de 70% dos nossos produtos que utilizamos no nosso dia-a-dia são feitos à base de materiais compostos de plásticos. A realidade é que nós, europeus, geramos 25 milhões de toneladas de resíduos de plásticos por ano, dos quais menos de 70% são recolhidos para reciclagem, acabando o restante nos nossos oceanos, contaminando tudo à sua passagem, pondo em perigo a própria sustentabilidade do planeta.

A necessidade de apostar na reciclagem e no *design*, Senhores Vice-Presidentes, não é suficiente. Há também que mudar os comportamentos, mudar a cultura do descartável ao nível da produção e do consumo, estimulando o uso de materiais duráveis e reutilizáveis. Caros Colegas, é uma evidência que a sociedade atual é infelizmente plástico-dependente. Por isso entendo que nos cabe a todos nós criar as condições para que essa dependência termine a favor de um ambiente mais sustentável.

Termino dizendo, Senhores Vice-Presidentes, como disse o Sr. Vice-Presidente Timmermans, se não mudarmos a forma como produzimos e utilizamos os objetos de plástico em 2050 haverá mais plástico do que peixe nos nossos oceanos.

Doru-Claudian Frunzulică (S&D). – Madam President, while acknowledging that plastic is an important material for our economy and daily lives, serious threats emerge when plastics end up in the environment, especially in the oceans and in the seas, where they have an impact on nature, the climate and human health. Therefore, we have to bring strong capabilities in order to tackle this worrying issue and to frame a robust strategy for improving the economics, quality and rate of plastic recycling and reuse, especially when plastic production is expected to almost quadruple by 2050.

I therefore fully welcome the first ever Europe-wide strategy on plastics, which would ensure that the design and production of plastics and plastic products fully match the use, repair and recycling needs, and that more sustainable materials are developed and promoted, while laying the foundations for a new plastic economy and bringing new opportunities for innovation, competitiveness and job creation. In my personal opinion, ladies and gentlemen, Vice-President of the Commission, the European Union has to ban the plastic bags within a very short period of time.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Timmermans και κυρία Katainen, η ευρωπαϊκή στρατηγική για τα πλαστικά πραγματικά είναι μία ενδιαφέρουσα πρωτοβουλία, η οποία συνδυάζει την προστασία του περιβάλλοντος με τις δυνατότητες ανακύκλωσης και, ταυτόχρονα, την ένταξη της βιομηχανίας πλαστικών στην κυκλική οικονομία. Επιπλέον, προστατεύει την αλιεία και τον τουρισμό που είναι ιδιαίτερα σημαντικοί για την Ελλάδα, η οποία έχει χιλιάδες νησιά, όπως γνωρίζετε, και τα οποία απαιτούν να έχουν ακόμη πιο καθαρές ακτές και θάλασσες. Στην Ελλάδα ήδη άρχισε η διαδικασία και επιβάλλονται, από αρχές του χρόνου 0,03 ευρώ για κάθε πλαστική σακούλα συν 24% ΦΠΑ. Το κράτος προσπαθεί «να βγάλει από τη μύγα ξίγκι», όπως λέμε. Το ποσό αυτό θα φτάσει τα 0,09 ευρώ από την 1η Ιανουαρίου του 2019. Όμως, στη στρατηγική μας πρέπει να υπάρξει ο στόχος να ενισχυθούν οι επιχειρήσεις, προκειμένου να μπορέσουν να περάσουν στην κυκλική οικονομία και αυτό αφορά τουλάχιστον 200 μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις στην Ελλάδα και 12.000 εργαζόμενους.

Gesine Meissner (ALDE). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Vizepräsidenten, liebe Kollegen! Bei der *Our-Ocean-Konferenz* in Malta stand ein riesengroßer Albatros aus Plastik direkt vor dem Veranstaltungsgebäude – Herr Timmermans, Sie haben es gesehen –, genau aus der Menge Plastik, die pro Sekunde ins Meer kommt – das war erschreckend. Prinz Charles, einer der Sprecher, sprach davon: *plastic is now on our menu*. Dann war da ein indischer Aktivist, der forderte dazu auf, dass wir keine Strohhalme mehr benutzen sollten – alles gute Ideen. Auch eine gute Idee ist, dass wir die Revision der Hafenauffangrichtlinie haben. Es gibt aber viel mehr, was man einfach besprechen muss.

Ich war vor kurzem in einem Wettbewerb zur Kreislaufwirtschaft für junge Menschen. Dort war eine junge Frau, die aus Plastikmüll aus dem Meer Möbel entwickelt. Ich kenne einen Journalisten in Deutschland – einen Familienvater –, der hat seinen Journalismus an den Nagel gehängt und entwickelt jetzt ein Verbrauchersiegel für plastikfreie Konsumgüter. Davon gibt es ja eine ganze Menge: bei Kosmetik, bei Kleidung – wir müssen es nur nach vorne bringen. Wir können im Europäischen Parlament zum Beispiel zusehen, dass wir keine Plastikflaschen mehr verwenden.

Eine Sache noch: Es gibt von der G7 noch eine große Plastikausstellung. Ich habe mit mehreren Kollegen aus dem Parlament Unterschriften gesammelt. Wenn alles klappt, haben wir diese Ausstellung im April in Brüssel vor unserem Parlament. Schon jetzt – falls es klappt – fordere ich Sie auf, das wir uns dort alle wiedertreffen.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, o mercado e a sua sacralização impuseram práticas e comportamentos irracionais insustentáveis no que se refere à utilização de bens descartáveis, demonstrando um enorme desrespeito e desprezo mesmo pelos limites físicos do planeta.

É fundamental que a produção e utilização de produtos descartáveis e inúteis sejam reduzidas, mas não vamos lá com as abordagens de mercado preconizadas pela Comissão Europeia ou com os chamados *instrumentos económicos*. A aplicação do princípio do poluidor-pagador, que significa reservar o direito de poluir a quem o possa pagar, não torna essa poluição menos lesiva pelo facto de alguém, neste caso os consumidores, pagarem por ela.

Nada impede que seja pura e simplesmente posto um ponto final na distribuição, paga ou não, de sacos de plástico desnecessários e não biodegradáveis. Que se ataque a proliferação de embalagens não necessárias e que se estimule as embalagens reutilizáveis pelo distribuidor retirando o seu custo do consumidor, mais, fazendo com que deixe de constituir um custo, quer económico, quer ambiental. É que, na hierarquia de gestão de resíduos, antes da reciclagem vem mesmo a redução.

Igor Šoltes (Verts/ALE). – Torej, plastika postaja vse večji uničevalec našega planeta. Evropejci na leto odvržemo kar 25 milijonov ton plastičnih odpadkov, manj kot 30 % pa se jih reciklira. Plastika za enkratno uporabo predstavlja polovico odpadkov na morju in obali in kot smo lahko slišali, do leta 2050 naj bi bilo v morju več plastike kot rib. Po nekaterih ocenah zaradi plastičnih vrečk letno pogine okoli milijarda živali. To je le nekaj grozljivih podatkov, ki opozarjajo na resnost posledic plastičnih odpadkov.

Nekateri krizo onesnaževanja s plastiko povezujejo in primerjajo celo s podnebnimi spremembami. No, in končno je Evropska komisija predstavila strategijo za boj proti plastičnim odpadkom, ki jo je treba pozdraviti in se truditi, da bi bila čim bolj ambiciozna, in seveda pozdravljam predloge, ki so usmerjeni v zmanjšanje porabe plastike in spodbujanje reciklaže.

Naš odnos do planeta, na katerem živimo, je zares obsojanja vreden, zato je potrebna naša streznitev, ker če imamo zdaj že mikroplastiko v vodi in soli in v zraku, smo pred resno preizkušnjo v prihodnosti.

Dubravka Šuica (PPE). – Gospodo predsednice, želim čestitati Komisiji na ovom prijedlogu. Mislim da na dnevni red rijetko dolazi točka koja nas ovoliko ujedinjuje kao što nas je ujedinila ova Vaša strategija za plastiku.

Budući da kažu da slika govori više od tisuću riječi, ja želim danas ovom slikom pokazati plastično smeće koje je zapljusnulo južnu obalu Hrvatske, odnosno grad Dubrovnik, čija sam ja još uvijek stanovnica i nekadašnja gradonačelnica. Dakle grad, koji je pod zaštitom UNESCO-a, pod plastičnim je smećem iz susjednih država koje žele biti kandidatkinje za Europsku uniju.

Stoga, koristim prigodu apelirati na Komisiju i na sve nas da, kad dođe do poglavlja koja se odnose na zaštitu okoliša, budemo strogi. Postoji niz konvencija, postoji Barcelonska konvencija i mnoge direktive. Međutim, ove zemlje se toga ne pridržavaju. Stoga je ovo jedinstvena prigoda da se konačno svi zamislimo nad svojom sudbinom.

Slažem se oko svih dosadašnjih izjava ovdje vezanih uz smeće i plastiku. Da se ne ponavljamo, ali postrožimo pravila, donesimo propise. Dakle, strategija da, ali što brže s direktivama i što brže s regulativama koje će nas sve još više ujediniti i osloboditi ove poštasti koja definitivno ima utjecaj na ljudsko zdravlje.

Karin Kadenbach (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, meine Herren Präsidenten! Ich darf Ihnen danken für diese Strategie, die Sie uns präsentiert haben. Denn zwischen *plastic is fantastic* und *ban on all plastics* ist ein weiter Weg. Das, was Sie uns hier vorgeschlagen haben, ist ein sehr ausbalancierter Zugang. Wir wollen auf Plastik nicht verzichten. Ich glaube, Plastik wird auch in Zukunft seinen Platz in unserem Leben haben. Aber der zum Teil gedankenlose und häufig auch sehr verantwortungslose Umgang mit Plastik in unserer Gesellschaft, in unserer Wirtschaft, hat Plastik und die Produkte, die daraus entstehen, zu einer Bedrohung für Gesundheit, Umwelt und Menschen gemacht.

Mit dieser Strategie soll erreicht werden, dass auf der einen Seite eine sichere Produktion stattfindet, dass Wiederverwertung und Wiederverwendung der Produkte für Mensch, Umwelt und Gesundheit sinnvoll und wünschenswert sind, und dass auf der anderen Seite jene Produkte, die dem Begriff der Nachhaltigkeit nicht gerecht werden, vom Markt verschwinden. Dazu gehören für mich natürlich auch alle *microplastics*. Ich darf Sie ersuchen, in diesem Sinne so schnell wie möglich wirklich aktiv zu werden, damit wir baldigst auch *legislation* haben.

(A „catch the eye” eljárás vége)

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, I can be brief. Seldom in my three years in this Parliament have I experienced such a unity of purpose.

Everyone agrees that we need to do something; perhaps not everyone agrees on the measures we need to take or the speed with which we will do it. But let me give you one guarantee: this Commission will try everything it can to put on your table legislative proposals in those areas where we can come up with legislation. We've already started with REACH on micro-plastics in cosmetics, paints and in detergents, but sometimes we need more analysis. How are we going to deal with micro-plastics coming out of tyres on cars or coming out of our clothes when we wash them?

These are complicated things and we want to make sure we get the science right before we put legislation on the table. And as far as packaging is concerned, we will be extremely ambitious and we will come up with legislation, and we want this to happen very quickly. But we've also seen that the unity of purpose in this room is shared by industry: by and large they want to be part of this. They know they need to be part of this.

We need to create the circumstances for them to be part of it and for it to become a profitable business. But I believe that plastics will continue to have a huge role in our society. I'm not an enemy of plastics. Plastics can be fantastic if they're the right plastics, and we need to get the science right. That's why we're putting EUR 100 million extra into research through Horizon 2020.

So I see the message you gave to us today as a strong endorsement for this Commission to continue along this path. This is what we will do – and this is a promise I make on behalf of all of us – we will make proposals for legislation where we can. But we will not rush into things, especially if we haven't got the science right yet or if we can still wait for industry to do its part.

If industry won't do its part we will step in. But I have the feeling that given the sense of urgency that is shared by industry, we will be able to do a lot of things together as well.

If we do this in a holistic way, if it is part of our circular economy, if it is part of the fourth industrial revolution and the benefits it brings, we will lead in the world and make sure that the health of our children and grandchildren will not suffer and our environment will not suffer more than it already does as a result of the waste of plastics.

(Applause)

Jyrki Katainen, *Vice-President of the Commission*. – Madam President, thank you very much for your strong support. This debate made me really happy, and I do believe that we can deliver. Thank you very much for the ideas.

I have four points: firstly, why do recycled plastics not account for more than 6% of the entire volume of plastics used? It is because we don't have European-wide quality standards for recycled plastic, and this we will change. We need a single market tool for recycled plastics.

Why don't we recycle more packaging waste, plastic bags and waste? Because there are too many different types of plastics used for packaging. So that's why we want to change this. We need quality standards and other standards in order to create a more harmonised approach for producing plastic packages. This enables us to create a single market. These two measures enable us to create a well-functioning single market for plastics.

Secondly, we also need to look at the regulatory framework for biodegradable and compostable plastics. You are right that bio products can be an alternative source for producing more sustainable plastics, but we need to get this regulatory framework right. Our consumers must also know that you cannot mix biodegradable plastics with oil-based plastics, otherwise recycling is impossible. So we have to encourage or empower consumers.

Thirdly, we certainly need more innovations. Horizon 2020 has already financed plastic-related innovations worth EUR 250 million during this period, and an additional 100 million will be made available. Furthermore, FC and structural funds can provide public financing. But even more money is available in private sector if the regulatory environment is right, and that's why we have to concentrate on this part of our work.

Fourthly, on China. I must say that I could not blame China at all when they decided to ban plastic waste imports. I must congratulate them. It's actually a good incentive for Europe to find solutions, sustainable solutions. How to deal with plastic waste. It puts pressure on us, but it also create incentives. It will change the market, and this is what we need: a sustainable market where profit is coming from more sustainable behaviour. Finally, thank you once again very much for an excellent discussion.

(Applause)

Elnök asszony. – A vitát lezárom.

Írásbeli nyilatkozatok (162. cikk)

Françoise Grossetête (PPE), par écrit. – En septembre dernier, la Commission européenne a présenté sa stratégie industrielle pour permettre aux entreprises européennes d'être plus compétitives. Parmi les objectifs affichés figure la volonté de recycler massivement et efficacement les matières plastiques en Europe. Le taux de recyclage au sein de l'UE atteint uniquement 22 %, un niveau jugé trop bas. Une nouvelle stratégie est donc indispensable, non seulement pour encourager les bonnes pratiques mais aussi pour solutionner les difficultés rencontrées par le secteur de l'industrie du plastique. Nous le savons, les obstacles à un meilleur recyclage sont essentiellement techniques et économiques. En effet, il existe un écart de coût entre les plastiques vierges et les plastiques recyclés, qui se font au détriment de ces derniers. Par ailleurs, la récente décision de la Chine d'interdire l'importation de certains déchets plastiques venus d'Europe nous offre une réelle opportunité de créer les conditions d'un marché intérieur pour les matières recyclées. La mise en place d'un tel marché nécessitera également des investissements dans les infrastructures de recyclage du plastique dont le coût devrait être porté à la fois par les entreprises et les autorités publiques. Oui, nous avons besoin de plastiques, mais des plastiques de qualité et recyclables.

Tunne Kelam (PPE), in writing. – Eight million tons of plastic end up in the sea every year; 80% of litter in the oceans is plastic; 85% of beach litter is plastic. According to UN estimates, by 2050 practically 100% of seabirds will have ingested plastic, and around 600 marine species will be harmed by plastic. I welcome the Commission's strategy to address the usage of plastic in Europe, where 25 million tons of plastic waste is generated every year, of which only 30% is collected for recycling. Whereas this strategy is a step in right direction, it still fails to target the problem as a whole. The EC strategy focuses primarily on circular economy, on developing bio-degradable and reusable plastic. We eat plastic, we breathe in plastic in the environment. Plastic is everywhere. It should be a European goal to dramatically reduce the usage of plastic to a minimum, especially when it comes to packaging. It is not enough merely to ban single-use plastic bags. I call on the Commission to go far beyond its current proposal and offer a vision of a plastic-free Europe. We need an ambitious goal to save the next generation from drowning in a new ocean of waste.

Davor Škrlec (Verts/ALE), napisan. – Europska komisija još uvijek nije isporučila obvezujuća pravila u kontekstu Strategije o plastici Europske unije. U sadašnjem i budućem gospodarstvu Europske unije ne smije biti mjesta za jednokratnu plastiku. Takva plastika – njezina proizvodnja, upotreba i odlaganje, osim toga što je ekološki nesigurna i što je njezin učinak na zdravlje građana još uvijek nepoznat, također je protivna potencijalima kružne ekonomije. Kako bi se ti potencijali u potpunosti iskoristili, proizvodi ne smiju sadržavati toksične supstance kakve se nalaze npr. u jednokratnim plastičnim vrećicama i drugim plastičnim proizvodima.

Europa svake godine proizvodi 25 milijuna tona plastičnog otpada, od čega se manje od 30 % reciklira. Također, čak 85 % otpada na plažama čini plastika, ukoliko govorimo o svjetskoj razini. Europska komisija, stoga, treba što prije uključiti odgovarajuće planove o snažnim mjerama za ograničavanje otrovnih i opasnih tvari koje se koriste u proizvodnji za okoliš štetne oxo-plastike i mikroplastike.

Iz tog razloga pozdravljam svaki budući napor Europske unije kojim se nastoji izbaciti toksične supstance iz proizvoda od plastike, smanjiti njihovu upotrebu te povećati razinu ponovnog iskorištavanja i recikliranja odgovarajućeg otpada.

19. **Jurysdykcja, uznawanie i wykonywanie orzeczeń w sprawach małżeńskich i w sprawach dotyczących odpowiedzialności rodzicielskiej oraz w sprawie uprowadzenia dziecka za granicę (debata)**

Elnök asszony. – A következő napirendi pont a Tadeusz Zwiefka által a Jogi Bizottság nevében készített, a házassági ügyekben és a szülői felelősségre vonatkozó eljárásokban a joghatóságról, a határozatok elismeréséről és végrehajtásáról, valamint a gyermekek jogellenes külföldre viteléről szóló tanácsi rendeletre irányuló javaslatról szóló jelentésről folytatott vita (COM(2016)0411 – C8-0322/2016 – 2016/0190(CNS))

Tadeusz Zwiefka, sprawozdawca. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Chciałbym na samym początku zaznaczyć, że mimo iż pracowaliśmy i pracujemy nadal nad przekształceniem tego rozporządzenia zgodnie ze specjalną procedurą ustawodawczą, która ustanawia Parlament Europejski wyłącznie w roli konsultacyjnej, natomiast Radę stanowiącą jednogłośnie jako jedyne prawo dawcę, to pracę, która była do wykonania właśnie tutaj w naszej Izbie, w Parlamencie Europejskim, podjęliśmy z pełnym entuzjazmem i – wydaje mi się – wykonaliśmy ją naprawdę dobrze. Dlatego chciałbym rozpocząć od podziękowań. Przede wszystkim chciałbym podziękować Komisji Europejskiej za przygotowanie naprawdę dobrego projektu przekształcenia rozporządzenia Bruksela II bis. Chciałbym podziękować moim koleżankom i kolegom z Komisji Prawnej, a w szczególności kontrsprawozdawcom, z którymi naprawdę miałem ogromną przyjemność i satys-

fakcję współpracować przy tym właśnie rozporządzeniu.

Mimo iż propozycja Komisji rzeczywiście oceniona została jako bardzo dobra, Parlament wniósł pewne swoje propozycje, które – głęboko w to wierzę – poprawiają propozycję przygotowaną przez Komisję, a jednocześnie spowodują, że Rada zechce pochylić się także nad zgłoszonymi przez nas uwagami.

Chciałbym poruszyć kilka najistotniejszych kwestii. Po pierwsze sprawa wysłuchania dziecka. Dla nas jest to kluczowa rzecz w tym rozporządzeniu, ponieważ uważamy, że w sporze rodzicielskim dotyczącym wykonywania władzy rodzicielskiej czy kwestii uprowadzenia dziecka, tak zwanego porwania rodzicielskiego, dziecko jest niestety stroną najsłabszą i tę stronę trzeba absolutnie chronić. Dziecko musi być podmiotem tej prowadzonej sprawy, a broń Boże nie przedmiotem, dlatego stawiamy tak bardzo mocno wszystkie elementy, które pozwalają zachować jak najlepszą pozycję dziecka. Oczywiście nie możemy nakazać wysłuchiwanie dziecka w każdej sprawie. Ta decyzja pozostaje niezależna dla sądu, ale tę rzecz, którą wprowadzamy jako *novum*, to konieczność uzasadnienia decyzji odmownej w przypadku, kiedy sąd nie decyduje się na przeprowadzenie wysłuchania. Zwracamy także uwagę na fakt, że te wysłuchania powinny charakteryzować się pewnymi wspólnymi standardami. Powinny odbywać się w przyjaznej dla dziecka atmosferze, czyli może to być poza siedzibą sądu. Przeprowadzane powinny być przez wyspecjalizowanego sędziego bądź przygotowanego eksperta, bez wpływu osób trzecich i bez presji ze strony rodziców, a więc także bez ich udziału. To jest bardzo istotna kwestia.

Sugerujemy, aby w tych sprawach związanych z wykonywaniem władzy rodzicielskiej wziąć pod uwagę możliwość przeprowadzenia czy korzystania z mediacji jako alternatywnego sposobu rozwiązywania sporów. Mediacja daje możliwości przeróżne, większe niż sąd, skraca także czas postępowania i oczywiście pozwala zaoszczędzać spore wydatki.

Kolejna kwestia, na którą chcę zwrócić uwagę, to jest kwestia umieszczania dziecka decyzją sądu poza jego rodziną biologiczną, czyli w rodzinie zastępczej bądź placówce wychowawczo-opiekuńczej. Dołożyłem do propozycji Komisji swoją propozycję, przyjętą przez Komisję Prawną, aby sąd mógł rozważyć przy podejmowaniu tej decyzji możliwość pozostawienia dziecka w rodzinie, która przebywa w kraju, gdzie toczy się sprawa. W przypadku długotrwałych spraw jest to bardzo, bardzo pożyteczne rozwiązanie.

Z radością witamy propozycje Komisji polegające na zniesieniu procedury *exequatur*, czyli odejściu od konieczności potwierdzania procesów przeprowadzonych w innych państwach członkowskich Unii Europejskiej, co już zostało sprawdzone w innych przypadkach.

Dziękuję Państwu za możliwość wygłoszenia tego wstępu. Będę z ciekawością przysłuchiwał się debacie i odniosę się do niej na zakończenie.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, the Brussels IIa Regulation is a key tool to navigating cross-border legal issues in family matters and to providing protection for children. Its revision addresses the shortcomings regarding parental responsibility proceedings which have also been flagged in the past by the honourable Members.

I am very happy that the Commission and Parliament have a common goal. We want to prevent that, in cross-border cases, children end up being taken hostages of long disputes. We also want to facilitate the procedures for families by various means including by reducing the length and cost of these procedures.

Before I speak about Parliament's amendments, I would like first to express my thanks to our rapporteur, Mr Zwiefka, for the excellent cooperation on this file.

I am delighted that the report acknowledges that time and a smooth return to family life is of essence for children's welfare and their relationship with their parents. In particular, I very much welcome the measures included in the report aiming to substantially reduce delays in returning children who were abducted by one of their parents. These are in line with the Commission's proposal. These measures will imply in practice less cumbersome procedures for parents and quicker decisions by judges in cross-border cases. This will result in giving children back the stability they need and deserve, and an earlier return to family life.

Facilitating enforcement of judgments once decisions are taken is another crucial aspect to ensure the rights of children and their families. The abolishment of the intermediate procedures to obtain cross-border enforcement of judgments will make this possible. This will avoid costs and delays, whilst maintaining the necessary safeguards to ensure, for instance, the rights of the defence. Therefore, I welcome Parliament's support for this measure in this respect.

Concerning the amendments on the rights of the child to be heard in the proceedings, I take note of Parliament's wish for their to be common minimum standards at EU level – to be proposed by the Commission – such as referring to the practical arrangements of the hearing. We have carefully assessed such a possibility.

However, given that the existing rules and practices in Member States in this area are extremely divergent, we find it more efficient to rely on existing standards laid down in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which all Member States have already subscribed. Therefore, I hope to have this particular rule accepted in the final version of the new instrument.

As you all know, strengthening the rights of the child is a top priority for the Commission. Our proposal in this area will ensure that children are given an opportunity to be heard in legal proceedings concerning them. Mutual recognition of Member States' practices in this respect will avoid refusals at the recognition or enforcement stage, thus allowing true circulation of judgments in the European Union.

For the sake of efficiency and in order to avoid overlaps we have not included specific rules on mediation for conflicts between parents, as requested by Parliament. The existing Mediation Directive already covers efficient mediation mechanisms in these situations and foresees support for parents in resolving their conflicts.

Finally, I have noticed that Parliament's amendments focus also on close cooperation between Member States' authorities. Here again, we speak with one voice. Central authorities are the direct interface with parents and should play a key role in supporting judges in applying the regulation. The report and the proposed amendments reflect the need for more efficient cooperation.

Miriam Dalli, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Petitions*. – Madam President, I too would like to thank the rapporteur. What we are discussing today is a sensitive issue that has a direct impact on thousands of citizens, particularly children living across the EU. So it is our duty to ensure that both children and parents who act in good faith are protected. There are too many cases of international child abduction by one of the parents for us not to act, and our guiding principle is that child abduction is detrimental to the fundamental rights of any child, wherever he or she is.

It is a fact that the world we are living in is changing, and family law issues also change because family law issues that, before, were exclusively dealt with within national states now require international application. As international relationships and marriages increase, so do international custody disputes. In the Committee on Petitions we deal with cases of parents being deprived of their children, illegally taken away from them by the other parent, and that is why we believe that any proposal has to be more effective and ensure the best interests of the child.

This is precisely why we need to close all loopholes and make sure that the regulation is not interpreted in a way that favours the parent responsible for the wrongful removal of a child. We need to make sure that the court of the Member State of origin of the child is the one that takes the final decision in this respect. And we have to reduce, if not eliminate, forum shopping and ensure the interests of both parents are protected and, most importantly, reduce any possible harm to the children involved. I believe that this is the only way through which we can ensure effective judicial protection of the fundamental rights of children across the EU, wherever they are.

Pavel Svoboda, *za skupinu PPE*. – Dovolte mi, abych poděkoval všem kolegům z výboru JURI, především našemu zpravodaji Tadeuszi Zwiefkovi za práci, kterou odvedli při projednávání této zprávy.

Chci ubezpečit všechny občany, že dnes zde projednáváme návrh nového znění důležité legislativy, která se dotýká mnoha občanů. V EU registrujeme zhruba 16 milionů mezinárodních rodin. Bohužel registrujeme také 140 000 mezinárodních rozvodů ročně a co je nejhorší, také 1 800 případů únosů dětí jedním z rodičů ročně.

Nařízení upravující příslušnost, uznávání a výkon rozhodnutí ve věcech manželských a rodičovských už platí s výjimkou Dánska od roku 2005. Praxe ukázala, že ale stávající znění lze vylepšit ku prospěchu zejména dětí. Je třeba také ujistit, že toto nařízení zlepšuje pouze procesní pravidla. Hmotného práva, např. definice manželství, se toto nařízení netýká. Subsidiarita je respektována. Nařízení se také vztahuje pouze na tzv. přeshraniční případy, tedy případy, kdy každý z manželů má státní příslušnost jiného státu.

Je zájmem JURI a celého tohoto Parlamentu, aby tato legislativa byla přijata, protože sleduje zájem dítěte, a já mohu prohlásit za výbor JURI, že jsme se touto otázkou, touto stránkou nového návrhu velmi pečlivě zabývali.

Evelyne Gebhardt, *im Namen der S&D-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar! Herr Svoboda erwähnte es gerade: Sehr viel mehr Menschen als früher leben zusammen, nehmen diese Errungenschaften der Europäischen Union, der Unionsbürgerschaft wahr. Natürlich gibt es auch eine Kehrseite: Nicht alle Ehen, die geschlossen werden, sind dann am Ende erfolgreich. Als ich Mediatorin des Europäischen Parlaments war, habe ich das Leid der Kinder miterleben müssen, die von Kindesentziehungen betroffen sind, und ich muss sagen, das sind keine schönen Geschichten, die da zu erleben sind. Deswegen war ich sehr angenehm überrascht, als ich feststellen durfte, dass die Europäische Kommission eine Großzahl der Vorschläge, die ich damals erarbeitet habe, zur Verbesserung des Rechts in diesem Bereich aufgegriffen und in den Entwurf hineingebracht hat. Das ist eine gute Sache. Insbesondere muss es eine bessere Zusammenarbeit der Gerichte und der Behörden geben, ein schnelleres Zusammenarbeiten, denn je länger solche Verfahren dauern, umso schlimmer wird es gerade und insbesondere für die Kinder. Und es bedarf auch der Rechtssicherheit, die damit verbunden ist.

Ein weiterer Bereich, der ganz außerordentlich wichtig ist, ist die Anhörung der Kinder. Wir müssen dafür sorgen, dass die Rechte, die sie durch die UNO-Resolution haben, auch tatsächlich verwirklicht werden. Wir müssen dafür sorgen, dass Kinder kindgerecht angehört werden können, in ihrer eigenen Sprache, aber auch so, dass sie in einem geschützten Rahmen gefragt werden können und nicht in einem Saal, der sehr unmöglich sein kann für Kinder, wenn es zum Beispiel ein Gerichtssaal ist. Da müssen wir sehr darauf achten, dass die Rahmenbedingungen richtig und auch für die Kinder annehmbar sind.

Ein weiterer Punkt – und da bin ich Herrn Zwiefka auch sehr dankbar, da haben wir auch sehr gut zusammengearbeitet – ist die Frage der Mediation. Ja, wir haben Regelungen zur Mediation in der Europäischen Union, aber die reichen noch nicht aus. Die reichen noch nicht aus, wenn wir sehen, dass die Gerichte diese Möglichkeiten, die es gibt, nicht wahrnehmen. Wir müssen dafür sorgen, dass gerade weniger begüterte Eltern die damit verbundenen Kosten nicht alleine tragen müssen, weil eben gerade die Fragen, die gestellt werden müssen – diese Mediation –, dazu führen können, dass – wie Sie, Herr Zwiefka, auch richtig sagten – Kosten gespart werden, weil die Verfahren schneller sein können, vielleicht solche Verfahren noch nicht mal notwendig werden, und auch besser für die Eltern und für die betroffenen Kinder sind. Also eine ganz wichtige Frage.

Einen letzten Punkt muss ich allerdings noch ansprechen, und da konnten wir uns nicht einigen, da waren Herr Zwiefka und ich schlicht nicht einer Meinung und leider das Parlament bisher auch nicht: Es ist die Frage der eingetragenen Partnerschaften. Ich kann nicht nachvollziehen, warum die Kinder aus eingetragenen Partnerschaften, in denen es Probleme gibt, nicht die gleichen Rechte haben wie die Kinder aus Ehen. Da werden wir noch nacharbeiten müssen in Zukunft, denn das ist eigentlich unerträglich.

Arne Gericke, *im Namen der ECR-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Wenn zwei sich streiten, weint der Dritte – eine leicht abgewandelte Lebensweisheit, die gut umschreibt, was Kinder erleben, wenn ihre Eltern sich scheiden lassen. Umso wichtiger ist, in einem Trennungsverfahren immer das Wohl des Kindes ganz vorne anzustellen. Deutschland steht hier ganz besonders in der Pflicht. Unsere Bundesregierung muss dringend das Scheidungs- und Familienrecht überarbeiten. Wir brauchen ein konsequentes Wechselmodell, wie fast alle anderen europäischen Staaten.

Die vielen Petitionen an das Europäische Parlament bezüglich der Arbeit der deutschen Jugendämter zeigen mir, dass wir auch hier eine umfassende Reform brauchen. Über ein Jahr lang habe ich eine französische Mutter und ihre Tochter in diesem schwierigen Kampf begleitet. Heute fiel das Urteil zu ihren Gunsten. Deutschland, beweg Dich! Davon profitieren viele Familien im Scheidungsstreit. Davon profitieren die bis heute benachteiligten Trennungsväter, und es profitieren die Kinder, weil ihnen beide Eltern bleiben. Europa kann wertvolle Impulse geben, um Bewegung in die deutsche Politik zu bringen. Tun wir es zum Wohle unserer Kinder!

Κώστας Χρυσόγονος, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL. – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η αύξηση του αριθμού των ζευγαριών διαφορετικών εθνικοτήτων καθιστά αναγκαία τη βελτίωση και αποσαφήνιση της νομοθεσίας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για τη διεθνή δικαιοδοσία, για την αναγνώριση και εκτέλεση δικαστικών αποφάσεων σε γαμικές διαφορές και διαφορές γονικής μέριμνας, και για τη διεθνή απαγωγή παιδιών. Πρέπει να δοθεί ένα τέλος στην ανασφάλεια δικαίου, καθώς και σε περιττές καθυστερήσεις σχετικών υποθέσεων που επηρεάζουν αρνητικά τις εμπλεκόμενες οικογένειες. Πρέπει να δίδεται έμφαση στην προστασία του συμφέροντος των παιδιών, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και των προσφύγων. Είναι επίσης αναγκαία η εξειδικευμένη κατάρτιση των δικαστών και η ενίσχυση του επικουρικού θεσμού της διαμεσολάβησης. Χρειαζόμαστε ακόμη συγκέντρωση της δικαιοδοσίας για τις διεθνείς απαγωγές παιδιών σε εξειδικευμένα δικαστήρια και εξορθολογισμό των λόγων τυχόν άρνησης εκτέλεσης σχετικών αλλοδαπών αποφάσεων. Με βάση τις παραμέτρους αυτές, συμφωνώ με την έκθεση του ευρωβουλευτή, κυρίου Zwiefka, που συζητούμε σήμερα και θα την υπερψηφίσω.

Laura Ferrara, a nome del gruppo EFDD. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la proposta di rifusione del regolamento Bruxelles II bis presenta luci e ombre.

Sono apprezzabili le norme volte a facilitare il riconoscimento delle sentenze e a ridurre al minimo le possibilità di sottrazione internazionale di minori. In particolare, si apprezza l'introduzione del principio secondo il quale la tutela dell'interesse superiore del minore e dei diritti fondamentali correlati deve essere preminente su tutti gli altri diritti. Altresì apprezzabile è la richiesta di una formazione ad hoc per il personale giudiziario degli Stati membri, soprattutto in materia di diritto di famiglia.

Rimangono tuttavia gravi perplessità, in primis l'incoraggiamento al ricorso alla mediazione in materia di diritti di affidamento, una soluzione che non dà sufficienti garanzie di imparzialità. Inoltre non è stato chiarito in maniera adeguata il concetto di residenza abituale e non sono state date garanzie sufficienti per scongiurare il rischio che i giudici di alcuni Stati membri prendano decisioni favorevoli ai propri cittadini, senza tener conto delle sentenze dei colleghi di altri paesi.

Gilles Lebreton, au nom du groupe ENF. – Madame la Présidente, l'enlèvement transfrontalier d'enfants est un problème grave. En France, il touche particulièrement les enfants issus de couples franco-allemands. Quand ces couples se séparent, les parents allemands emmènent fréquemment leurs enfants en Allemagne, alors même que la justice française a confié leur garde aux parents français.

Plusieurs de ces parents victimes se sont plaints auprès de moi de l'inertie de l'Union européenne. Je me réjouis aujourd'hui de constater que leur souffrance a été entendue. Le rapport Zwiefka devrait en effet leur permettre de récupérer plus facilement leurs enfants. Parmi les mesures qu'il avance, trois semblent particulièrement prometteuses. D'abord, la réduction des délais de retour des enfants à 18 semaines maximum. Ensuite, la mise en place dans chaque État européen de juges nationaux spécialisés en matière d'enlèvement d'enfants. Enfin, le renforcement du rôle des autorités centrales nationales garantes de l'efficacité du dispositif dans chaque État. C'est pourquoi je voterai le rapport Zwiefka.

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE). – Señora presidenta, efectivamente, los conflictos de matrimonios transfronterizos internacionales han aumentado porque esta es una realidad que va en aumento. Hay dieciséis millones de familias internacionales. Se producen 140 000 divorcios al año en la Unión Europea y también 1 800 casos de sustracciones de menores.

Efectivamente, es un tema que aborda la pieza angular jurídica que es este Reglamento «Bruselas II bis», que hoy tratamos y que es un Reglamento que ha tenido beneficios porque ha ayudado a esta cooperación judicial, pero, evidentemente, unos años después de la aplicación, hemos podido constatar que ha tenido déficits y dificultades.

Se han descrito aquí dificultades en lo que es la cooperación judicial, dificultades en lo que son los acogimientos, dificultades en la protección del menor, en la eliminación necesaria del *exequatur*, en la ejecución de las decisiones y, sobre todo, la inseguridad jurídica que muchas veces ha albergado y los retrasos innecesarios, que han dificultado siempre el interés del menor, porque si el interés del menor ya es complicado cuando se produce una separación, lo es todavía más cuando esta situación se alarga innecesariamente.

Por lo tanto, bienvenida sea esta revisión de este Reglamento para poder mejorar la seguridad jurídica, para poder ser más eficaz, para poder apostar por la mediación, para poder apostar por una resolución armoniosa y, sobre todo, para que se proteja, sin ninguna duda, el interés del menor, que es el que nos ocupa en este caso.

Habremos hecho así que Europa esté más cerca de los ciudadanos y que realmente seamos efectivos y ágiles en la protección de los derechos humanos.

Jytte Guteland (S&D). – Fru talman! Ett barnvänligt Europa måste vara det vi alla eftersträvar. Det ett bra Europa för oss alla. Barn ska inte behöva uppleva hårdare konflikter än dem som rör hur många sådana här man kan få eller hur många sagor det kan bli till vällingen för kvällen. Tyvärr ser det inte ut så i vårt Europa. Vi har, och det är glädjande, en stor förekomst av att familjer skapas över landsgränser, men det medför också att så mycket som 16 miljoner människor har tvister över landsgränserna och 1 800 barnbortföranden sker i unionen. Det här är barn som hamnar i kläm.

Att omarbete regelverket är därför jätteviktigt om vi vill sätta barnens bästa främst. Reglerna har många gånger i dag präglats av förvirring, rättsosäkerhet och onödiga förseningar. För mig och för min politiska grupp har det varit väldigt viktigt att sätta barnens främsta i det första rummet, och då måste barnen få komma till tals. Jag är väldigt glad över att vi vill säkra det genom omröstningen i morgon.

Jag har också drivit, och vår grupp har drivit, att förordningen också ska omfatta registrerade partnerskap. Jag är besviken över att de konservativa grupperna inte gick med på det. Det är barn som hamnar i kläm för att ni inte ville gå längre och hjälpa också dessa barn. Men slutligen vill jag säga att grundbulten i förordningen måste vara att barnens vilja sätts i centrum.

Branislav Škripek (ECR). – Vážená pani predsedajúca, rád by som poďakoval kolegovi Zwiefkovi k správe, ktorá bez zasahovania do národných kompetencií rieši vážny a praktický problém medzinárodného únosu detí. A ďakujem aj kolegom za podnetné príspevky a pohľady, ktoré k tejto téme dávate. Rozpad manželstva je vždy tragédiou, ktorá ohrozuje vývoj detí. Keď sa dieťa stáva rukojemníkom sporu medzi dvoma hádajúcimi sa manželmi, ktorí mali byť jeho milujúcimi rodičmi, je to prehra pre všetky strany. O to viac, ak neboli vypočuté hlasy detí, v ktorej krajine a s ktorým rodičom chcú žiť. Srdcervúce prípady unesených detí vlastnými rodičmi do iných členských štátov stáli tvárou v tvár neschopnosti európskych súdnych mechanizmov zastaviť toto šialenstvo.

Verím, že tento parlament bude pokračovať v nastavenom trende a práva detí v akejkoľvek situácii a v ktoromkoľvek stupni vývoja bude bezpodmienečne ctieť. A chcem týmto slovom poukázať aj na tie deti, ktoré sú ešte len v maternici a ešte sa nestihli narodiť. Aj tieto práva musíme ctieť a chrániť.

Eleonora Evi (EFDD). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, una moltitudine di cittadini europei continua a denunciare con lo strumento delle petizioni gravissime violazioni di quei diritti fondamentali che questa relazione si prefigge di tutelare più efficacemente in materia di interesse superiore del minore e responsabilità genitoriale.

Le denunce in massima misura si concentrano su procedure, meccanismi e pratiche attuati in concreto dallo Jugendamt in Germania, ravvisandosi molteplici discriminazioni nei confronti dei genitori non tedeschi. Persiste altresì allo stato attuale un'insufficiente disponibilità delle autorità tedesche preposte a offrire piena e autentica collaborazione.

Finché su questa vicenda, che si trascina ormai da troppo tempo, non verrà fatta piena luce, la più rapida circolazione delle decisioni giudiziarie che si intende ottenere con questo provvedimento produrrà una semplice conseguenza, ovvero aggravare intollerabili ingiustizie che, al contrario, andrebbero combattute iniziando a intensificare i controlli e le verifiche puntuali negli Stati membri sulle condotte delle autorità competenti in materia di responsabilità genitoriale e garanzia effettiva del benessere dei minori coinvolti.

Francis Zammit Dimech (PPE). – Nahseb naqblu li nassiguraw il-protezzjoni tat-tfal minn xi forma ta' periklu dejjem kienet parti intrinsika mill-valuri taghna bhala Ewropej. U dan nistghu nkomplu nwettquh permezz ta' titjib biex nirregolaw kaži internazzjonali ta' abdikazzjoni tat-tfal.

L-importanza ta' miżuri legali huma ċari u johorġu b'sahhithom. Niftakar f'każ anki f'Malta fejn missier kellu l-problema li minkejja li kellu l-ordni favur il-kustodja mill-qrati Maltin, kellu problemi kbar biex dik ikun jista' jinfurzaha fi Stat Membru iehor f'każ fejn fil-fatt it-tifel kien mahtuf minn ommu u miżmum f'pajjiż iehor.

Hawnhekk qed nitkellmu fuq każijiet reali u każijiet li jolqtu aspekt tal-hajja mill-iktar importanti tal-persuni umani. Dawn ir-regolamenti naturalment ghandhom il-vantaġġ li ser jaghmlu r-ritorn tat-tfal li jkunu ġew mahtufa hafna iktar effiċjenti permezz ta' żmien stipulat għall-proċess, permezz tal-introduzzjoni tal-medjazzjoni u anki permezz ta' proċeduri li fl-ahhar mill-ahhar l-iskop prinċipali tagħhom huwa li jinfurzaw prinċipju li għalina huwa għażiż hafna: il-prinċipju li l-akbar u l-aktar interess importanti huwa dejjem dak tat-tfal u li t-tfal ghandhom id-drittijiet fundamentali tagħhom li jridu jkunu dejjem imharsa.

Caterina Chinnici (S&D). – Signora Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, la proposta di regolamento che stiamo discutendo interviene opportunamente per un necessario aggiornamento del quadro giuridico volto a superare le criticità che troppo spesso emergono nell'esecuzione, nei diversi paesi europei, delle decisioni in materia matrimoniale, in generale, e nei casi di sottrazione internazionale dei minori, che finiscono di fatto per essere a lungo, troppo a lungo, contesi dai genitori a seguito di divorzi internazionali.

Apprezzo particolarmente nella relazione l'introduzione, in tali procedure, dell'audizione del minore, fondamentale affinché il bambino possa esprimere le proprie opinioni nei procedimenti che lo riguardano, come peraltro previsto dalle Carte internazionali, così da poter fornire all'autorità competente tutti gli elementi per la valutazione del suo, esclusivamente del suo, superiore interesse. Ed è importante che l'audizione del bambino si svolga secondo standard comuni, con modalità volte ad assicurare le dovute cautele per evitare interferenze, turbamenti, condizionamenti e traumi per il bambino.

Particolarmente apprezzabile è inoltre l'introduzione di un termine massimo per l'espletamento delle procedure di ritorno del bambino, disposizione che, unitamente alla concentrazione della competenza per la sottrazione dei minori presso autorità specializzate, potrà velocizzare le procedure di ritorno evitando di sottoporre il bambino a lunghi periodi di incertezza giuridica.

Ringrazio quindi il relatore e i colleghi della commissione JURI per l'ottimo lavoro svolto.

Емил Радев (PPE). – Г-жо Председател, искам да поздравя и благодаря на докладчика г-н Цвиефка за чудесния доклад. Радвам се, че голяма част от измененията, които предложих, влязоха в окончателния текст на доклада. Сега се надявам, че въпреки консултативната роля на Европейския парламент по този въпрос, нашият глас ще бъде чул от Съвета и предложенията ни взети предвид.

Считам, че нашите предложения ще допринесат за по-добрата защита на интересите на децата в процедурите по определяне или отнемане на родителска отговорност и при развод или раздяла на техните родители, както и в случаите на отвлечане на деца в Съюза. В тази реформа ключово е засилването на сътрудничеството между централните органи на държавите членки.

Важен е и въпросът за равното третиране на страните в производствата по развод и при отнемане на родителската отговорност. При международните двойки всяка страна трябва да бъде информирана в пълна степен и своевременно за всички предприети мерки на език, който разбира напълно.

Най-важният момент от нашите предложения обаче засяга последователността във възпитанието на детето, неговия етнически произход, религия, култура и език. По-специално в случаите на дългосрочно настаняване на дете, органите трябва винаги да разгледат възможността за настаняване при роднини и членовете на семейството, дори и те да живеят в друга държава. Трябва да се гарантира, че родителите и роднините на детето могат, независимо от местопребиваването си, да имат редовни лични отношения с него.

Считам, че регламентът „Брюксел Па“ трябва да гарантира запазването на суверенитета на държавите по отношение на националното материално право в сферата на родителската отговорност и да не налага чужди за дадената държава членка правоотношения в тази област.

„Catch the eye” eljárás

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Já jsem s velkým zájmem poslouchal tuto debatu. V době, kdy jsem byl ministrem spravedlnosti v ČR, tak jsem řešil několik příkladů problémů s mezinárodními únosy dětí, kdy se v praxi jasně ukazovalo, jak Brusel nefunguje, jaké mezery má a já jsem velmi rád, že ty problémy, které jsme v praxi řešili – průtahy v řízení, nejasné pozice jednotlivých soudů –, tak se v této novele, v této úpravě řeší. Chci poděkovat panu zpravodaji, protože opravdu mám pocit, že tato novela v praxi může mít velké dopady a je dobře, že tam upravujeme takové věci, jako jsou zvláštní soudy, jako jsou lhůty pro soudní rozhodování, jako je speciální úprava výslechu dítěte, která by měla vést k tomu, že zájmy dítěte budou v každém případě zohledněny.

Takže jako člověk, který má s tímto praktické zkušenosti, děkuji Komisi, děkuji zpravodaji a myslím si, že tato právní úprava může v praxi výrazně pomoci.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, ¿cómo no iba una mayoría de este Parlamento Europeo a aprobar, por una amplia mayoría, un Reglamento dirigido a reforzar el principio de confianza mutua y de reconocimiento mutuo de resoluciones judiciales en un asunto tan sensible y tan importante como son los litigios de divorcio o de Derecho matrimonial, pero, sobre todo, la sustracción de menores en la Unión Europea?

Es un asunto del que me ocupé cuando tuve la responsabilidad de ser ministro de Justicia del Gobierno de España y, por tanto, saludo todo avance dirigido a aportar mayor claridad, seguridad jurídica, la supresión del *exequatur* y, sobre todo, a reforzar los derechos del menor a ser oído en todo procedimiento que le afecte. Solo puedo lamentar que no hayan prosperado las enmiendas propuestas desde la Comisión de Peticiones, en las que se señalaba la importancia de reforzar precisamente al menor en supuestos tan dolorosos como son los que afectan a la violencia de género o del reconocimiento expreso de las distintas formas de filiación y, consiguientemente, de las distintas formas de familia que habitan en la Unión Europea y la enriquecen.

En todo caso, saludo este Reglamento y vamos a votarlo favorablemente.

Nότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η αναδιτύπωση του κανονισμού (ΕΚ) αριθ. 2201/2003 του Συμβουλίου για τη διεθνή δικαιοδοσία και την αναγνώριση και εκτέλεση αποφάσεων σε γαμικές διαφορές και σε διαφορές γονικής μέριμνας, θεωρώ ότι είναι κάτι το ιδιαίτερα σημαντικό. Στην Επιτροπή Αναφορών είχαν έρθει πάρα πολλές υποθέσεις οι οποίες είχαν σχέση και με την εξάσκηση της γονικής μέριμνας και με απαγωγές. Μάλιστα είχαμε πάρα πολλές καταγγελίες για τον τρόπο λειτουργίας της ειδικής υπηρεσίας πρόνοιας στη Γερμανία, το περίφημο «Jugendamt», και θεωρώ πολύ σημαντική την παρέμβαση του κυρίου Gericke, και ήθελα να τον συγχαρώ, που πραγματικά ζήτησε από την πατρίδα του να υπάρξουν αλλαγές στο θέμα αυτό. Είναι προφανές ότι ο κανονισμός έχει μεγάλη σημασία διότι επικεντρώνεται στο συμφέρον του παιδιού. Θεωρώ, ιδιαίτερα, σημαντική τη δυνατότητα ακρόασης του ίδιου του παιδιού προκειμένου να εκδοθεί συγκεκριμένη δικαστική απόφαση. Επίσης, είναι πολύ σημαντικό ότι θεσπίζονται ειδικευμένα δικαστήρια τα οποία εξετάζουν τις περιπτώσεις απαγωγής παιδιών. Αυτά είναι τα κεντρικά σημεία και νομίζω ότι βαδίζουμε στη σωστή κατεύθυνση.

Jiří Maštálka (GUE/NGL). – Možná, že bychom mohli vyslyšet hlas jediného dítěte, které je tady přítomno v sále, to je tady dítě kolegyně.

Nejprve mi dovolu, abych poděkoval panu zpravodaji za vynikající práci, kterou odvedl. Díky neustále narůstající mobilitě v rámci EU samozřejmě narůstá i počet mezinárodních párů. Manželské věci a rodičovská odpovědnost jsou oblasti, které vyžadují bezodkladné řešení. Zvláštní pozornost potom musíme věnovat dětem, včetně přeshraničního umísťování, uznávání a výkonu rozhodnutí a spolupráce s vnitrostátními orgány.

Samostatnou a smutnou kapitolou jsou pak mezinárodní únosy jedním z rodičů. Podle statistik platí, že každou minutu se v Evropě ztratí jedno dítě. V roce 2015 došlo k nahlášení více než 60 000 případů únosů. Cílem přepracovaného nařízení, které dnes projednáváme, je zlepšit účinnost navrácení uneseného dítěte. Vítám přístup zpravodaje, který si je vědom citlivosti řady otázek a zvolil, podle mého názoru, obezřetný, ale jasný přístup.

Ελευθέριος Συναδινός (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, είναι επιβεβλημένη η ενίσχυση αμερόληπτης ασφάλειας δικαίου που εξασφαλίζει τα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα του παιδιού και απλοποιεί την εύρεση λύσης. Είναι επίσης απαραίτητη η διατήρηση του οικογενειακού δικαίου υπό την πλήρη δικαιοδοσία και αρμοδιότητα των κρατών μελών, συμπεριλαμβανομένης της υπό προϋποθέσεις δυνατότητας άμεσης αναγνώρισης αποφάσεων. Παρ' όλα αυτά, για συναισθηματικά φορτισμένα και πραγματικά ζητήματα, επιχειρείται η διατάραξη της νομικής τάξης και λογικής. Απαιτείται ιδιαίτερη προσοχή στην εφαρμογή της δυτικής νομικής προσέγγισης προκειμένου για λαθρομετανάστες και άτομα των οποίων η συνήθης διαμονή δεν μπορεί να διευκρινιστεί και τα οποία αρνούνται την κοινωνική και πολιτισμική τους ενσωμάτωση και έχουν διαφορετικές ηθικές και ανθρωπιστικές αξίες. Σεβόμενοι τις Συνθήκες, οφείλουμε να περιοριζόμαστε στην υποστήριξη ανάπτυξης κατάλληλων υποδομών και διαύλων επικοινωνίας.

ωνίας μεταξύ των κρατών μελών, δίχως εμπλοκή στα εσωτερικά των οικογενειακών υποθέσεων και με μέλημα το υπέρτερο συμφέρον του παιδιού.

Anna Záborská (PPE). – Vážená pani predsedajúca, snaha o zlepšenie európskej legislatívy týkajúcej sa cezhraničných manželských a rodičovských sporov je správna vec. Návrh Komisie rešpektuje kompetencie členských štátov. Umožňuje im neuznať a odmietnuť vykonanie rozhodnutí, ktoré nie sú v súlade s verejným poriadkom väčšiny členských štátov. Za neprijateľné však považujem štyri pozmeňujúce návrhy, ktoré tieto kompetencie obmedzujú. Dva z nich požadujú, aby členský štát musel uznať aj také manželské zväzky, ktoré jeho legislatíva nepozná. A ďalšie dva by mohli spôsobiť, že štáty by museli automaticky uznávať aj súkromné rozvody vyhlásené napríklad súdmi šaria v moslimských krajinách. Chcem poďakovať kolegovi Zwiefkovi a uvedomujem si, že mu v prvom rade išlo o ochranu detí, ale ak by návrh prešiel v tomto znení, nebudem ho môcť podporiť.

Marijana Petir (PPE). – Gospođa predsjednice, gospodine povjereniče, u povijesnom trenutku poput ovoga, kad je mobilnost ljudi i njihovih članova obitelji naša svakodnevnica, sve više se stvara potreba za uređenjem određenih pravničkih okvira na razini svih članica Unije.

Međutim, od krucijalne važnosti je zadržati se u granicama kompetencija Europske unije i ne dopustiti da se pretjeranom zakonodavnom ambicioznošću prekrše pravila supsidijarnosti te uđe u izravno narušavanje onoga što je isključiva zakonodavna ovlast svake pojedine države članice.

Upravo iz tog razloga pozivam kolege da glasaju protiv amandmana 19, 28, 31 i 49.

Prihvatanjem ovih amandmana javni red države članice više neće biti od važnosti u odlukama vezanim uz roditeljsku odgovornost čime se izravno krši pravo države članice da uređuje obiteljski život vlastitim materijalnim pravom.

Ovim putem se želi dokinuti ono što je Sud pravde nebrojeno puta utvrdio, a to je nadležnost države članice da određuje obuhvatnost vlastitog javnog reda i politike.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Já jsem byl zde po celou dobu diskuze a hlásil jsem se do *catch the eye*. Vážený pane komisaři, vážený pane zpravodaji, já bych chtěl ocenit roli zpravodaje. Skutečně si myslím, že to byl příslovečný tanec mezi vejci, protože tato norma je normou především procesní. Ona má pomoci řešit spory, ke kterým dochází v důsledku právě především rozvodu manželství. Hlídá se prioritní zájem dítěte, a to by bylo asi vhodné, abychom považovali za skutečně prioritní, bez ohledu na určité ideologie. Je třeba stanovit si jasná pravidla a rozhodovat především rychle podle těchto jasných lhůt a ty lhůty toto nařízení přináší, takže ta revize nařízení Brusel je prostě velmi důležitá. Stejně tak je důležité samozřejmě i informovat rodiče o jejich právech a povinnostech a přispívat k té vzájemné mediaci, ale mediace se už toto nařízení netýká.

(A „catch the eye” eljárás vége.)

Dimitris Avramopoulos, Member of the Commission. –Madam President, let me again express my thanks on behalf of the Commission for Parliament’s report and your support for this recast proposal. Your report will inspire the debate in the Council. We remain confident that under the leadership of the Bulgarian Presidency, which has chosen this as a priority, we will see progress on these files. A swift conclusion to the negotiations. will be important as it would help families in difficult situations and protect children in particular. I am sure that this will lead to the adoption of measures that will serve this very noble purpose.

Tadeusz Zwiefka, sprawozdawca. – Bardzo serdecznie chciałem wszystkim podziękować za tę niezwykle ciekawą dyskusję. Parlament jutrzejszym głosowaniem kończy swój udział w tej procedurze legislacyjnej, ale mam nadzieję, że to, co będzie owocem naszej pracy i zostanie jutro przyjęte podczas głosowania, rzeczywiście będzie impulsem do dalszych prac w Radzie.

Chciałbym uspokoić wszystkich, że jutro – według mojej najlepszej wiedzy – nie będziemy głosowali żadnych poprawek do mojego sprawozdania i z tego, co jest mi wiadomym, takie poprawki nie zostały zgłoszone i będzie to głosowanie pojedyncze. W związku z powyższym zachęcam wszystkich, którzy jeszcze się nie zdecydowali poprzeć tego sprawozdania, aby to uczynili. Wszystkim zaś pozostałym koleżankom i kolegom, którzy w imieniu grup politycznych zapewnili o poparciu mojego sprawozdania podczas jutrzejszego głosowania, chciałbym bardzo serdecznie podziękować.

Proszę Państwa, to rozporządzenie, ta procedura ma oczywiście służyć rozwiązywaniu problemów życia rodzinnego, ale przecież w najmniejszym stopniu nie wkraczamy tutaj w zakres prawa rodzinnego, które pozostaje w gestii państwa członkowskiego, i nie przekroczyliśmy ani w propozycji Komisji, ani w moim sprawozdaniu zasady pomocniczości.

Natomiast chciałbym zwrócić uwagę na jeden fakt, który bezsprzecznie jest niezwykle ważny, a mianowicie to będzie sprawdzian zaufania wzajemnego wobec wymiaru sprawiedliwości państw członkowskich. I tylko dzięki wysokiemu poziomowi tegoż wymiaru sprawiedliwości w poszczególnych państwach takie zaufanie także dla innych przyszłych rozwiązań będziemy mogli budować.

Elnök asszony. – A vitát lezárom.

A szavazásra 2018. január 18-án, csütörtökön kerül sor.

Írásbeli nyilatkozatok (162. cikk)

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE), *písemně.* – Vyšší mobilita osob v EU přináší i vyšší počet manželství, která se uzavírají mezi osobami odlišné státní příslušnosti. Těmto manželstvím se nevyhýbají konflikty, rozchody a přibývá i přeshraničních soudních řízení. Je proto vhodné usnadňovat jak výkon soudních rozhodnutí, která byla vydána v jiném členském státě, tak i vzájemné uznávání takových rozhodnutí. Návrh revize nařízení Brusel II podporuji, protože přizpůsobuje stávající pravidla této nové realitě. Mimo jiné vítám povinné zjišťování názoru dítěte v případech, kdy je dítě schopné k projednávání věci vyjádřit svůj názor. Domnívám se, že tato povinnost přispěje k tomu, aby soud vydal rozhodnutí, které je v maximálním souladu se zájmem dítěte. V tomto směru je potřeba posílit vzájemnou důvěru mezi členskými státy tím, že budou tyto výslechy dětí mezi členskými státy uznávány. K posílení této vzájemné důvěry a zkrácení celého soudního řízení přispěje i zrušení řízení o prohlášení vykonatelnosti rozsudků vydaných ve všech oblastech, které pod nařízením spadají. Za přínosné považuji i to, aby řízení o mezinárodních únosech dětí v každém členském státě prováděly specializované soudy. Tato specializace by měla zvýšit kvalitu těchto rozhodnutí a fakticky zkrátit lhůty pro jejich vydávání.

20. Traktat z Marrakeszu: ułatwienie dostępu do opublikowanych utworów osobom niewidomym, osobom niedowidzącym i osobom z innymi niepełnosprawnościami uniemożliwiającymi zapoznanie się z drukiem (debata)

Elnök asszony. – A következő napirendi pont Max Andersson által a Jogi Bizottság nevében készített, a vakok, látáskárosultak és nyomtatott szöveget egyéb okból használni képtelen személyek megjelent művekhez való hozzáféréseinek megkönnyítéséről szóló marrákesi szerződésnek az Európai Unió nevében történő megkötéséről szóló tanácsi határozatra irányuló javaslatról szóló ajánlásról folytatott vita (12629/2017 – C8-0375/2017 – 2014/0297(NLE)) (A8-0400/2017).

Max Andersson, *rapporteur.* –Madam President, today we are discussing the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty, which aims to facilitate access to books for blind people and visually impaired and otherwise print-disabled persons. This will improve the lives of a very great number of people. Today when you make a copy of a book, in an EU country, into a format that blind people can read, you are mostly not allowed to bring it across a national border because that's the way copyright is constructed. But the Marrakesh Treaty, which is a UN Treaty, seeks to liberate those books so that they can be shared freely all over the world, or at least in all the countries that have ratified the Marrakesh Treaty.

This will make life better for many of the 285 million beneficiaries of this treaty, who will get access to a lot more books that they can read, and access to better educational opportunities. While this will be good for blind people inside the EU, the greatest benefit will be for blind people in those countries – especially countries where they speak English or French or Spanish or Portuguese – where access to books today is very poor by comparison with rich countries such as those in the Union. Those readers will have access to books that are already available inside the EU. So this is a great step forward and it is going to happen quite soon, hopefully in September once we ratify the treaty. It has made possible partly by the work of the European Parliament, which has been fighting for this treaty for very many years.

Of course, not only the European Parliament has been fighting for it: we have been working together with blind people's organisations and with libraries, as well as a great number of concerned citizens all over the world, to make this possible.

It has not always been easy. Some Member States were, let's say, more protective of their publishing interests than they were interested in standing up for the rights of blind people, and they were very cautious, very reluctant, but we are argued them down. This is a huge step forward.

What is the next step once we ratify this treaty? Well, in many Member States in the EU today there are discussions about how to implement the treaty, and some governments are considering compensation schemes – a possibility that is, in fact, allowed – to compensate publishers for the income that they will lose when blind people do not buy their books because they can get them freely through libraries with the help of the Marrakesh Treaty.

I do not really understand why compensation schemes are necessary but some Member States insisted on them. I would just like to remind those governments that the implementation provisions include rules to make sure that compensation schemes which have to be paid for by libraries and blind people's organisations shall not be an excessive burden on them. I think I speak for many people in this Chamber when I say to the governments who are considering how to implement the treaty that we will be watching them.

(Applause)

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, the Commission would like to express its deep satisfaction with the fact that the legislative file on the ratification of the Marrakesh Treaty is now entering its final stages. The draft Council decision is on the table, and the EP is voting on its position regarding its consent.

The Marrakesh Treaty aims to substantially improve access to books, journals and other printed texts for persons who are blind, visually impaired or who have other disabilities that prevent them from reading in the same way as persons without those disabilities. This objective is very important.

Even today, too few print materials can be accessed by people with brain disabilities worldwide. Addressing this problem is fundamental for social inclusion and social advancement. Doing so will benefit people with brain disabilities, and it will benefit everybody else.

The Marrakesh Treaty has been an important priority for the Commission for a long time, and we would like to support the statements made by the rapporteur of this file, Mr Andersson. Together with the adoption by the European Union of the directive and regulation implementing the Marrakesh Treaty into the EU's legal framework on 13 September 2017, the ratification of the Treaty means that the European Union will soon be in a position to participate in the exchange of books and other print materials in formats accessible for the beneficiaries, as envisioned by the Treaty.

We will therefore give our full support to this proposal, and we hope that the legislative procedure can be brought to a swift end.

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, *en nombre del Grupo PPE*. – Señora presidenta, efectivamente, el Tratado de Marrakech supone facilitar el acceso de las obras publicadas a las personas ciegas o con alguna dificultad visual. Y sabemos que hay 2,5 millones de personas ciegas en Europa y más de 25 millones de personas con dificultades visuales en nuestro continente. Hasta ahora, no tenían acceso más que a menos de un 5 % de obras en formato accesible. Gracias a este Tratado de Marrakech, que empezó a negociarse en 2013 y cuya ratificación estamos culminando ya hoy, esos millones de personas van a poder acceder, en formato accesible, a miles y miles de libros y podremos arreglar la hambruna de lectura.

Es un momento histórico porque conseguimos con esta decisión que haya un impacto en la accesibilidad de las personas con dificultades visuales, con un formato que puede ser braille, puede ser macrotipo, lectura grande, audiolibros... Conseguimos, sin duda, remediar —lo he dicho— la hambruna de lectura, pero conseguimos también que millones de personas puedan acceder a la educación, puedan acceder al empleo y puedan acceder a la plena inclusión.

Siempre defendemos una Europa de todos, una Europa integradora, una Europa inclusiva. Y hoy, con esta decisión, hacemos gala de todo aquello que defendemos. No olvidemos que el pegamento de los sentimientos europeos son precisamente los valores. Y hoy cobra sentido el caminar juntos, hoy cobra sentido que Europa tiene vida y esperanza de vida, y que invitamos con esta decisión a un mayor compromiso por la dignidad de las personas.

Sin ninguna duda, después de esta decisión —que en poco o nada verá la luz—, nuestro compromiso con los derechos humanos se convierte en superlativo y, sin ninguna duda, hoy nos sentimos orgullosos de ser europeos y hoy realmente hacemos gala del patriotismo europeo.

Jytte Guteland, för S&D-gruppen. – Fru talman! Jag vill tacka min kollega Max Andersson från den gröna gruppen, som har lett förhandlingarna, och resten av alla involverade kollegor, för det här är en historisk debatt och en historisk omröstning som kommer att äga rum. Den här mannen skulle ha sovit, men han vill vara med och fira det här tillfället, tror jag.

Hela 120 000 svenskar räknas som synskadade och 10 000 är blinda. I hela EU är siffran 30 miljoner människor och globalt så rör det sig om 285 miljoner. Dessa har rätt till tillgänglighet och förtjänar att få ökade möjligheter till talböcker, punktskriftsböcker eller syntolkningar på olika språk. Det är en förutsättning för demokratisk delaktighet och möjligheten att vara kulturellt involverad och kunna ta del av den kulturella debatten och utbudet. Jag och min socialdemokratiska partigrupp är väldigt stolta över att vi äntligen har slutfört förhandlingarna för att införliva Marrakechfördraget i EU-rätten.

För första gången i EU:s historia harmoniseras nu undantag på upphovsrätten på EU-nivå för dem som har stort behov av det. Det är inte en dag för tidigt. Att EU ratificerar Marrakechfördraget har länge varit oerhört viktigt för att blinda, synskadade och andra personer med läs- eller synsvårigheter ska kunna ges rätten att ta del av litteratur och syntolkning på olika språk. På grund av ett visst motstånd från vissa EU-länder har vi under förhandlingarnas gång känt oro för hur förslaget skulle kunna urvattnas och inte ge tillräcklig tillgång till böcker för synskadade. Men överenskommelsen från den 13 september är dock i stort sett bra, vilket vi väldigt glada för.

Därför vill jag uppmana samtliga medlemsländer att verkligen se till att införliva nationella lagar på området så snart som möjligt, så att böcker och e-böcker kan överföras till läsbara media för synskadade utan krångliga upphovsrättsliga avgifter. Att Marrakechfördraget nu antas är en viktig reform för global jämlikhet. Jag vill också bara kort säga att det i vissa länder är så lågt som en procent som har tillgång till böcker. Att vi nu godkänner det här medför ökad tillgänglighet i Afrika, i Sydamerika och i Sydostasien. Det är också oerhört viktigt.

Νότης Μαριάς, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας ECR. – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η συνθήκη του Μαρακές εγκρίθηκε τον Ιούνιο του 2013. Εμπίπτει σε ένα πλαίσιο διεθνών συνθηκών που αφορούν τα δικαιώματα πνευματικής ιδιοκτησίας. Έχει μια έντονα ανθρωπιστική και κοινωνική διάσταση αφού αυτό που διαμορφώνει είναι μια σειρά υποχρεωτικών εξαιρέσεων υπέρ των τυφλών, υπέρ των ατόμων που έχουν προβλήματα στην όραση, προκειμένου να μπορούν να προχωρούν στην ανάγνωση εντύπων σε δημοσιευμένα έργα. Χρειάστηκε όμως να γίνει πολύς αγώνας. Είχαμε πάρα πολλές συζητήσεις στην Επιτροπή Αναφορών. Υπήρξε μεγάλη πίεση από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο. Χρειάστηκε να εκδοθεί και γνωμοδότηση του Δικαστηρίου της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης τον Φεβρουάριο του 2017 για να ανοίξει επιτέλους ο δρόμος για την κύρωση αυτής της συνθήκης, η οποία πραγματικά αποτελεί σημαντικό βήμα προόδου για την ίδια την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, καθώς στηρίζει πλέον τα άτομα με ειδικές ανάγκες και κυρίως αυτούς που έχουν προβλήματα όρασης.

Cecilia Wikström, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Madam President, as few as only 5% of the books published in the EU are being translated for people with visual disabilities, and not even one single percent in the developing countries. In other words, the opportunities and the world as such presented to people with visual impairments are much narrower than for others. Not only because they cannot access the same number of books as others but also because books are a key to education.

I am a firm believer, as are most of my colleagues in this House, in equal opportunities for everybody. Two years ago my committee, the Committee on Petitions, put forward a resolution on this topic urging the Member States to ratify the Marrakech Treaty. Tomorrow this House has an absolutely unique power to greatly improve equality by voting in favour of the Marrakech Treaty. This will not only be a big step towards increasing the variety of books translated into Braille but also towards equal opportunities.

Sadly, the world is not at all fair. Fair education for all is a faraway dream for too many. Rich countries have lots of books and smaller numbers of visually impaired persons. Poor countries, on the other hand, suffer from the opposite: they have too many blind people and visually impaired people and too few books. The aim of the Marrakech Treaty is to bridge this gap.

On the other hand, protection of intellectual property is crucial. In its legal essence the Marrakech Treaty is a copyright exemption but it is a proportionate one, a justified one, because the essence of its aim is equal opportunities for all and in the end a much more inclusive and educated world.

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. FABIO MASSIMO CASTALDO

Vicepresidente

Jiří Maštálka, *za skupinu GUE/NGL*. – Nejprve mi dovolu, abych poděkoval a poblahopřál panu zpravodaji za odvedenou práci. Více než 300 milionů nevidomých osob, osob se zrakovým postižením a osob trpících poruchou čtení díky Marrákešské smlouvě dostane přístup ke knihám a jiným tištěným materiálům, který jim dnes komplikuje autorské právo, o kterém mluvila kolegyně Wikströmová.

Osoby, které jsou nevidomé, zrakově postižené nebo mají poruchy čtení se při přístupu ke knihám a dalším tištěným materiálům i nadále potýkají s překážkami. Potřeba zvýšit počet děl a jiných předmětů ochrany v přístupných formátech, jako je Braillovo písmo, audioknihy a zvětšené písmo, byla konečně uznána na mezinárodní úrovni. To umožní dotčeným osobám a organizacím pořizovat kopie děl v přístupných formátech a rozšiřovat je po EU i ve třetích zemích, které jsou smluvními stranami. Zvýšíme tím jejich přístup ke vzdělání a možnost plnohodnotného zapojení do života.

Julia Reda, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, this treaty has been 10 years in the making. It took the tireless work of human-rights defenders such as James Love to initiate the treaty, and it has taken the rapporteur, the entire Parliament, including former Members, and the Commission to get Member States finally to accept it. Thanks to them, millions of Europeans and hundreds of millions around the world who are blind or partially sighted will finally get access to accessible books.

Over those 10 years we had to overcome relentless resistance from those who wanted to stop or water down the treaty. That list includes, among others, the pharmaceutical industry, the film industry and other intellectual property holders because the very idea of an intellectual property treaty that is there to protect users and not rights holders is offensive to them. They called the access of blind people to books, and I quote, 'an unbalanced privilege'.

It is not a privilege: it is a human right enshrined in the Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities, the right of equal access to information and culture. This equal right means that Member States should not charge blind people's organisation any compensation for making books accessible. So let us remind the Member States that this is a humanitarian treaty, not a new income source for publishers. And let's make sure that Member States implement this treaty properly and don't charge people with disabilities extra for enjoying the same access to knowledge that we all already have.

Isabella Adinolfi, *a nome del gruppo EFDD*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, finalmente l'Unione europea si è decisa a ratificare il trattato di Marrakech, che rappresenta un atto giuridico fondamentale nell'implementazione dei diritti delle persone non vedenti o affette da difficoltà visive.

Il trattato era stato firmato nel 2014 ma mai ratificato a causa delle reticenze del Consiglio, con grande pregiudizio per tutti i diritti delle persone affette da deficit visivi. La ratifica da parte dell'Unione europea rappresenta quindi un momento di grande importanza e finalmente, dopo anni di pressioni e di battaglie portate avanti nei confronti del Consiglio, possiamo dire che ce l'abbiamo fatta. Le persone non vedenti o affette da difficoltà visive vedranno riconosciuti i loro diritti, finalmente.

Non possiamo dunque che felicitarci. Si tratta di un atto che consente la realizzazione concreta del principio di uguaglianza e che dimostra come l'Unione europea, quando vuole, sa operare nella giusta direzione. Sono decisioni come queste che danno senso al progetto europeo e consentono ai cittadini europei di comprendere il valore aggiunto di questa Unione, che troppo spesso invece si occupa soltanto di banche e di finanza, e troppo poco dei diritti, soprattutto dei diritti dei più deboli.

Invito quindi tutti i miei colleghi domani a votare positivamente. Il voto di domani sarà ricordato veramente come un momento storico nel riconoscimento dei diritti fondamentali e dell'importanza della diffusione e dell'accessibilità alla cultura.

Marie-Christine Boutonnet, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Monsieur le Président, demain nous voterons sur la décision du Conseil de conclure le traité de Marrakech. Celui-ci vise à faciliter l'accès aux œuvres publiées pour les aveugles et déficients visuels et les personnes ayant d'autres difficultés de lecture des textes imprimés.

Ce vote marquera pour l'Europe une étape décisive dans un processus entamé en 2009 au sein de l'Organisation mondiale de la propriété intellectuelle. Ce processus a abouti à l'adoption de ce traité en 2013.

L'application effective de la directive et du règlement adoptés le 13 septembre dernier et mettant en œuvre le traité sera permise par cette ratification.

En tant que Française, d'un pays éminemment littéraire, je tiens à remercier toutes celles et ceux qui ont permis un tel traité. Je ne peux que redire à nouveau ma satisfaction de cette avancée en faveur de toutes ces personnes qui pourront enfin avoir accès à une plus grande partie de notre patrimoine.

Tadeusz Zwiefka (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! Chciałbym dołączyć do tych wszystkich głosów radości wyrażanych z powodu zakończenia (jutro to nastąpi) prac nad ostateczną ratyfikacją Traktatu z Marrakeszu. To jest dowód sprawiedliwości dziejowej. Oczywiście trwało to zbyt długo. Myślę, że te procedury, które się toczyły, można było poważnie skrócić. Nie wynikały one na szczęście z niechęci do ratyfikowania Traktatu z Marrakeszu przez Unię Europejską, a wynikały z problematyki proceduralnej dotyczącej kompetencji Unii Europejskiej i państw członkowskich. Tak czy inaczej, czas, który został zmarnowany, musi być szybko nadrobiony, dlatego że osób niewidzących czy niedowidzących, słabowidzących jest niestety ogromna liczba, a ograniczenie możliwości korzystania z dóbr kultury jest oczywiście czymś niezwykle niesprawiedliwym. Dobrze się dzieje, że dzisiaj kończymy tę pracę i wreszcie udostępniamy taką możliwość naszym obywatelom, choćby też z tego względu, że niestety liczba osób niewidzących czy słabowidzących będzie ze względów cywilizacyjnych wzrastała.

Pytał kolega Andersson, któremu dziękuję za to sprawozdanie, jak ono będzie wdrażane. Ja mam nadzieję, że szybko. Chciałbym raz jeszcze, bo już to czyniłem jesienią ubiegłego roku, zaapelować do państw członkowskich, aby we współpracy z organizacjami osób niewidzących, słabowidzących, ale także z wydawcami i wszystkimi innymi instytucjami w to zaangażowanymi natychmiast przystąpiły do wdrażania postanowień dyrektywy i rozporządzenia.

Josef Weidenholzer (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Eigentlich müssten wir uns heute freuen – der Vertrag von Marrakesch wird endlich von Europa ratifiziert. Mit diesem internationalen Vertrag werden aktuelle Literatur und Kunst blinden und sehbehinderten Menschen zugänglich gemacht – eigentlich etwas Selbstverständliches. Dieser Vertrag wurde bereits 2013 unterzeichnet, und vier Jahre später hat es Europa endlich , ihn zu ratifizieren – ein langer Zeitraum. Niemand hatte eigentlich etwas Besonderes dagegen, das Ganze dauerte deswegen so lange, weil es Kompetenzstreitigkeiten zwischen Rat und Kommission gab, und um das zu klären, musste sogar der Europäische Gerichtshof bemüht werden. Das alles ist absurd und zynisch, weil wieder einmal interinstitutionelle Streitigkeiten und politische Auseinandersetzungen auf dem Rücken der Betroffenen und der Schwachen ausgetragen werden.

Wir sollten uns freuen, dass wir es endlich geschafft haben, aber es sollte uns eine Lehre sein, das Gemeinsame und nicht Kompetenzstreitigkeiten in den Mittelpunkt zu stellen. Leider passiert das viel zu oft in der europäischen Politik, wie beispielsweise – weil der Kommissar gerade hier ist – auch in der Asyl- und Migrationspolitik.

Helga Stevens (ECR). – Het Europees Parlement zet vandaag eindelijk de laatste stap in het ratificatieproces van het verdrag van Marrakesh. Personen die blind zijn, een visuele beperking of een leeshandicap hebben, krijgen nog altijd zeer moeilijk of geen toegang tot boeken en ander gedrukt materiaal. De noodzaak om meer werken en ander beschermd materiaal in toegankelijke vormen zoals braille, luisterboeken en groteletterdruk beschikbaar te stellen is groot.

Met de tekst die op tafel ligt, wordt in het EU-recht een nieuwe verplichte uitzondering op het auteursrecht ingevoerd. Hierdoor zullen begunstigde personen en organisaties kopieën van werken in toegankelijke vormen kunnen maken en kunnen verspreiden in de EU en derde landen die partij zijn bij het verdrag. Dankzij het Verdrag van Marrakesh krijgen in de EU meer dan 30 miljoen mensen met een visuele beperking eindelijk gelijkwaardig toegang tot het gedrukte woord. Een kleine stap voor de mensheid, een gigantische stap vooruit voor blinden en slechtziende personen. Dank u.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, finora solo il 5 % del patrimonio librario e culturale mondiale è stato disponibile in formato accessibile, l'1 % soltanto nei paesi in via di sviluppo.

Si tratta di una gravissima lesione del diritto alla conoscenza per centinaia di milioni di persone nel mondo, e decine di milioni in Europa, e di una condanna a non poter raggiungere, quindi, un livello adeguato di istruzione, con un forte impatto sui livelli di occupazione e quindi anche di povertà.

Con il trattato di Marrakech, che attraverso deroghe specifiche al diritto d'autore espande la fruibilità dei prodotti testuali a beneficio delle persone non vedenti, con disabilità visive e con altre difficoltà nella lettura di testi a stampa, potranno essere redatte e scambiate in formati accessibili molte più opere, quali libri, riviste e quotidiani o altri generi di pubblicazioni e notazioni, compresi gli spartiti musicali e relative illustrazioni. È una vera rivoluzione, attesa da anni dai cittadini e difesa dal Parlamento europeo.

Resta l'amarezza per il faticoso processo di recepimento. Per molti anni la Commissione ha dimostrato scarsissima volontà politica di difendere le persone con disabilità visive e con difficoltà di lettura e alcuni Stati membri, tra cui purtroppo per un certo periodo anche l'Italia, hanno utilizzato argomentazioni risibili per rallentare il processo di entrata in vigore. Ma ora finalmente è stato raggiunto un accordo, soprattutto grazie al lavoro di questo Parlamento e alla strenua difesa del trattato da parte delle organizzazioni di rappresentanza delle persone con disabilità. Lo ribadiamo oggi ancora una volta: la conoscenza è un diritto di tutti.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, it is the right of everyone to fully participate in culture. Persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled sadly continue to face many barriers in accessing books and other print materials which are protected by copyright and related rights.

Adopted in 2013, the Marrakesh Treaty, which allows for copyright exceptions to facilitate the creation of accessible versions of books and other copyrighted works for visually impaired persons was a landmark move to enable visually impaired people to access books with the same ease as sighted readers. Whilst working as the shadow rapporteur in the Committee on Culture and Education for this file, I consulted with a wide cross-section of stakeholders: disability experts, NGOs working on disability issues and representatives from the author and publisher fields, who were largely in agreement with each other and stressed the importance of the speedy ratification of the treaty.

Europe's non-discrimination law for people with disabilities is one of a string of EU actions that have brought tangible benefits for those who live with a disability in Europe, including those who live in Britain. With Brexit, the disabled communities will lose a crucial platform to defend their rights. We must guard against that.

Olga Sehnalová (S&D). – Vzdělávání a plnohodnotné zapojení lidí nevidomých, se zrakovým postižením nebo s poruchami čtení do společnosti souvisí i s přístupností knih, učebnic a dalších tištěných děl. Přesto je jich dnes v přístupných formátech vydáváno pouhých 5 %, v rozvojových zemích nejsou publikovány téměř vůbec. Knihy v přístupných formátech tak musí často vydávat na vlastní náklady organizace lidí s postižením, které je však kvůli autorským právům nemohou poskytovat přes hranice. Marrákešskou smlouvu, která tyto překážky odstraňuje, již ratifikovalo 33 států světa a je velmi důležité, aby se k nim co nejdříve přidaly i státy EU. Více než 30 milionů Evropanů s vážným zrakovým postižením, kteří dosud kvůli autorskému právu měli jen velmi omezený nebo žádný přístup ke knihám a jiným tištěným materiálům, na její vstup v platnost již čeká příliš dlouho.

Procedura catch-the-eye

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Já jsem přesvědčen, že osoby, které jsou nevidomé, zrakově postižené nebo mají jiné poruchy čtení, se při přístupu ke knihám a dalším tištěným materiálům i nadále potýkají s mnoha překážkami. Souhlasím s mými předřečníky, že bohužel jednou z těch překážek byl i laxní postup právě ze strany evropských institucí. On možná nebyl ani tak laxní, ale ve výsledku oddálil přístup k těmto kulturním statkům právě pro tuto skupinu osob.

Já jsem velmi rád, že tedy postoupil proces ratifikace tak, že již nyní ji můžeme uzavřít. Byl bych velmi rád, kdybychom se právě i poučili z tohoto příkladu, který aktuálně zde řešíme tak, aby pro příště právě ve prospěch těchto konkrétních osob byl postup orgánů a institucí Unie co nejrychlejší a tím i co nejúčinnější.

Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE). – Hr. formand! Det er en fantastisk dag! Jeg har været med i alle de ti år, vi har kæmpet for denne sag, og jeg kan forsikre jer, at Parlamentet havde været rigtig god til at støtte sagen. Problemet har ikke kun været institutionerne, det har været et meget heftigt lobbyarbejde fra rettighedshavernes side. De har også lobbyet min regering, og det har været virkelig pinligt at opleve, hvordan store lande har prøvet at gemme sig bag pæne lille Danmark, som bare blev kørt over af rettighedshaverne. Men lad mig advare imod en ting: betragtning 14. I den gives der mulighed for, at der kan laves nationale ordninger med kompensation. Sørg for, at det ikke sker! Det er et hul i dette system, og vi har endnu aldrig set rettighedshavere være i stand til at dokumentere, at de har lidt mere end minimale tab, som det står i betragtning 14. Kæmp nu hjemme for, at der ikke kommer dette hul i loven! Det kan blive ødelæggende for det hele, og det er det eneste svage punkt i det, vi står med nu, og en del af vores kompromis. Jeg håber meget, at I vil gøre jeres bedste hjemme.

(Fine della procedura catch-the-eye)

Dimitris Avramopoulos, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, I would like to thank all colleagues. This debate stresses once again the importance of this file which is far from being only technical. It will produce better opportunities for people with print disabilities and, as I said earlier, it will contribute to a better society and a better economy for all of us.

The time seems to have come for the Marrakech Treaty to become a reality and to have its practical effects on the ground. For this reason I would like to thank the honourable Members of this Parliament for their tireless work and for the resolve that this House has put into this file, and in particular our rapporteur Mr Andersson and the shadow rapporteurs. Thank you, Mr President, thank you, dear colleagues.

Max Andersson, rapporteur. – Mr President, when I was appointed rapporteur for the Greens for the ratification of the Marrakech Treaty nearly three and half years ago, I was told that this would be an easy file and that it would be over quickly. Well, we were overly optimistic and I fear that we might have underestimated the degree of resistance that certain lobby interests would be able to push for and try to delay the ratification of the Marrakech Treaty.

But we overcame this resistance, and this is because many people – the shadows and many other MEPs present and not present in Parliament right now – did a lot of work in order to improve the access of blind people to books that they can read. We did it, and I also would like to thank the Commission for its sterling work on this issue and of course I would like to thank the Estonian Presidency and the Maltese Presidency for all the good things that they also did in order to make this a reality.

It has been very encouraging to hear this debate and all the speeches and I am quite confident that tomorrow we will vote to ratify the Marrakech Treaty so that blind people and visually impaired people and people with other reading disabilities will get a lot better access to books that they can read.

Presidente. – La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà domani, 18 gennaio 2018, alle 12.00.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Igor Šoltes (Verts/ALE), *pisno.* – Kako je mogoče, da pravica do branja v 21. stoletju še vedno ni zagotovljena vsem ljudem? Izredno smo lahko zaskrbljeni in celo zgroženi ob podatku, da je slepim in slabovidnim v razvitih državah v dostopnih oblikah na voljo samo 5 % vseh objavljenih knjig, v državah v razvoju pa manj kot 1 %. Očitno se ob tem pozablja, da je pravica do branja neločljivo povezana s pravico do izobraževanja, ki je temeljna človekova pravica.

S tem, ko se zavlačuje z implementacijo Marakeške pogodbe, smo tako vsak dan korak dlje od enakopravnosti, ki bi morala biti nekaj samoumevnega! Skrajni čas je, da to spremenimo, zato podpiram priporočilo, da se čimprej odobri sklenitev Marakeške pogodbe, in ob tem pozivam države članice k čim bolj celoviti implementaciji v praksi. Nekatere slovenske invalidske organizacije so namreč že izrazile skrb, da bi lahko pri implementaciji v slovensko zakonodajo prišlo do sprememb, ki bi trenutno stanje morebiti celo poslabšale (npr. uvedba morebitnega ekonomskega nadomestila za založnike). Tega nikakor ne smemo dopustiti. Opozarjam tudi na to, da so za celovito implementacijo potrebna tudi ustrezna finančna sredstva, saj bo brez tega težko pričakovane spremembe v vsakdanjem življenju težko uresničiti.

Romana Tomc (PPE), *pisno.* – Marakeška pogodba bo olajšala dostop do objavljenih del za slepe in slabovidne osebe ter osebe z drugimi motnjami branja, saj se slepi in slabovidni še vedno soočajo s številnimi ovirami pri dostopu do knjig in drugega tiskanega gradiva. Le-ti potrebujejo večje število del in drugih zaščitene vsebin, ki so na voljo v dostopnih oblikah, kot so Braillova pisava, zvočne knjige in veliki tisk.

V zakonodajo EU je predvidena uvedba nove obvezne izjeme glede avtorskih pravic v skladu z Marakeško pogodbo. Ta bo omogočila upravičenim osebam in organizacijam, da naredijo izvode del v dostopnih formatih in jih razširjajo po vsej EU in v tretjih državah, ki so podpisnice Marakeške pogodbe. Vesela sem, da bomo z Marakeško pogodbo zagotovili temeljne človekove pravice za več kot 30 milijonov slabovidnih otrok po vsej EU in omogočili večjo dostopnost knjig v državah v razvoju.

21. Walka z handlem kobietami i dziewczętami w celu wykorzystywania seksualnego i wyzysku w pracy w UE (debata)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sull'interrogazione con richiesta di risposta orale alla Commissione sulla lotta contro la tratta di donne e ragazze per finalità di sfruttamento sessuale e lavorativo nell'UE (O-000094/2017 - B8-0616/2017) (2017/3008(RSP)).

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, *author.* – Mr President, Commissioner, as we speak, tens of thousands of women and children are being sexually abused and exploited in Europe. The EPP wholeheartedly supports this initiative to join forces across political groups to put an end to this unfolding tragedy.

Tonight, we stand united to urge the Member States to do more, faster and better, to stop trafficking. When visiting reception centres in Sicily, I was told by doctors that there was not a single woman or girl who had not been raped on her way to Europe. Their stories are devastating. You can read them on their bodies. The time has come for the Anti-Trafficking Directive to be fully enforced by all Member States. Trafficking is a high-profit and low-cost business, at the expense of women and girls. We call on the Member States to do more to combat impunity and protect victims, to increase police and judicial cooperation, including with Europol, Eurojust and third countries, to ensure that traffickers are brought to justice, to combat demand for prostitution and online abuse, criminalise sex buyers and track their money, confiscate assets of criminal organisations and build trust with the victims, making them feel safe. They must provide psychological support and access to reproductive health services, allocate the necessary resources and support the anti-trafficking coordinator.

We must also make sure that Member States implement the Directive on Victims' Rights. What is happening in Libya is totally unacceptable in modern times. It is a new slavery. The EU and the Member States must urgently act to deal with Libya and the trafficking routes, taking into account the gender dimension. From the Balkans to Western Europe, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, there should be no hiding place for traffickers.

Mr President, I am the author of this text and I would like to finish, if you would you allow me please. We welcome the Commission's commitment but, once again, we ask for a new anti-trafficking strategy post-2016. Together with the EPP, and as co-chair of the Intergroup on Children's Rights, I will continue to be committed to zero tolerance against trafficking. The EPP has been driving for the directive since 2011; we were here for the implementation report in 2016, and we are here tonight. We will not give up. The time has come for the Member States to go from words to action.

Iratxe García Pérez, *autora*. – Señor presidente, en la Europa moderna del siglo XXI hay esclavas sexuales. En la desarrollada Europa del siglo XXI hay mujeres explotadas laboralmente. En la avanzada Europa del siglo XXI hay más de quinientas mil mujeres y niñas que anualmente atraviesan nuestras fronteras en manos de mafias y grupos organizados de delincuentes. Podríamos ponerles nombre y apellidos, rostros, a estas mujeres engañadas y obligadas a ejercer la prostitución.

Mujeres y niñas amenazadas con asesinar a sus familias contraen una deuda que deben pagar en los burdeles en los que trabajan. Trabajan en burdeles, crean una deuda, pagan el dinero a estas mafias. Dinero de los clientes que termina en los bolsillos de las mafias y de los delincuentes. Repito: dinero de los clientes que termina en los bolsillos de los delincuentes. Digo esto porque todavía hay quienes, de forma ingenua o intencionada, dicen que esto de la prostitución es un ejercicio de decidir libremente sobre lo que uno quiere hacer con su vida. Y creo que también sería el momento de que en Europa habláramos de la legislación. Porque sin clientes no habría delincuentes con los bolsillos llenos.

Y también hay que hablar de otra cuestión, y es la explotación laboral. El Grupo socialista estuvo en el mes de julio en la isla de Sicilia, en la zona de Ragusa, para visitar una zona donde en explotaciones agrícolas hay mujeres —mayoritariamente, en este caso, rumanas— que están siendo explotadas laboralmente, que trabajan de sol a sol por menos de tres euros diarios, si acaso los cobran.

Ambas situaciones, las mujeres explotadas sexualmente y las explotadas laboralmente, tienen un denominador común: mujeres vulnerables que sufren. Por eso, la Comisión Europea y los Estados miembros tienen que poner en marcha una estrategia contra el tráfico de mujeres y contra la trata de mujeres y de niñas. Porque hay que convertir las leyes en instrumentos y en recursos. Es nuestra responsabilidad. Es nuestra obligación. Por ello, no renunciamos a denunciar y a ser la voz de esas mujeres. No hay excusas para callar.

Arne Gericke, *Verfasser*. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Zahlen sind erschreckend, ja. EU-weit gibt es jährlich über 16 000 entdeckte Opfer von Menschenhandel, drei Viertel davon Frauen und Mädchen, und die Dunkelziffer liegt um ein Vielfaches höher. Im Grunde muss man leider sagen: Es gibt keine verlässlichen Zahlen über Menschenhandel, und es wird sie auch nie geben. Das aber darf uns nicht daran hindern, alles zu tun, um gegen Menschenhandel, Zwangsprostitution, Kindesmissbrauch und illegalen Organhandel in Europa vorzugehen. Jedes Opfer ist ein Opfer zu viel. Menschen zwingen andere Menschen, unter unwürdigen Bedingungen zu arbeiten – weltweit. Auch mitten in Europa findet Zwangsarbeit statt, meist unsichtbar. Nicht nur in der Prostitution, sondern auch auf dem Bau, in Hotels, Restaurants, der Pflege- und der Reinigungsbranche oder der Fleischproduktion werden Menschen bedroht und ausgebeutet. Sprechen wir auch Klartext zur Prostitution, und machen wir uns nichts vor: Über 90 % der Prostituierten in Europas Klubs, auf Europas Straßen tun das, was sie tun, nicht freiwillig. Sie sind Opfer krimineller Gewalt. Frauen, die nach Europa kamen, in der Hoffnung, Monat für Monat Geld in die Heimat schicken zu können, um ihre Kinder zu ernähren.

Entsprechend müssen wir auf all diese kriminelle Gewalt reagieren: null Toleranz. Wir brauchen das nordische Modell gegen Zwangsprostitution. Wir brauchen die volle Kooperation der Sicherheitskräfte in Europa gegen den Menschenhandel. Wir brauchen ein europäisches Suchsystem für vermisste Kinder. Kurzum: Wir brauchen aktives, koordiniertes Handeln und null Toleranz gegen jede Art des Menschenhandels – jetzt, nicht morgen.

Angelika Mlinar, *Verfasserin*. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Mehr Mobilität von Arbeitskräften ist ein oft geäußertes Wunsch in Europa, denn fehlende Mobilität ist eine der Einschränkungen des Binnenmarktes. In einigen Bereichen haben wir aber mehr Mobilität, als man das annehmen würde und als man sich das auch wünschen könnte. Ich habe mich zuletzt intensiv mit Berichten befasst, die von Tausenden Frauen berichten, die als moderne Sklavinnen in landwirtschaftlichen Bereichen Siziliens arbeiten. Diese Frauen werden für harte Arbeit kaum bezahlt, auch wenn sie zwölf Stunden am Tag in glühender Hitze schuften. Polizeiberichte sprechen von circa 7 500 Frauen, überwiegend aus Rumänien, die unter diesen Umständen als moderne Sklavinnen gehalten werden.

Leider wissen wir alle, dass diese offiziellen Zahlen bei Opfern von Missbrauch und Ausbeutung nur die Spitze des Eisbergs darstellen. Wenn diese Frauen dann nach einem anstrengenden Tag eigentlich zur Ruhe kommen sollten, wartet dann noch oft eine andere Form des Missbrauchs auf sie: die sexuelle Belästigung – beziehungsweise Ausbeutung – durch den Grundbesitzer, den Arbeitsvermittler, deren Bekannte oder Freunde. Wir müssen uns der Tatsache stellen und uns wirklich in die Augen schauen und sagen: Moderne Sklaverei existiert! Nicht tausende Kilometer entfernt auf anderen Kontinenten, sondern mitten unter uns in der Europäischen Union – und nicht nur in Italien, sondern auch in anderen Mitgliedstaaten. Zwei Drittel dieser Opfer sind EU-Bürger, die meisten davon Frauen und Mädchen, und oft werden sie zum Zweck der sexuellen Ausbeutung über die Grenzen gebracht.

Die Mitgliedstaaten haben eine rechtliche und vor allem auch eine moralische Verpflichtung zum Schutz dieser Menschen, die von einem Land ins andere kommen und dort Gefahr laufen, aufs Größte missbraucht zu werden. Das EU-Recht verpflichtet alle, regelmäßige Kontrollen durchzuführen, um Fälle von Ausbeutung und Missbrauch zu identifizieren, die Opfer zu schützen und die Verursacher und Peiniger zu bestrafen. Als Ko-Berichterstatterin für den Bericht zur Umsetzung der Opferschutz-Richtlinie werde ich mich verstärkt für den Schutz der Betroffenen einsetzen. Die Opfer brauchen gezielte Unterstützung, Informationen über ihre Rechte, verlässliche Strafverfolgung und Konsequenzen für ihre Peiniger.

Malin Björk, *författare*. – Herr talman! Kommissionsär Avramopoulos! Du vet ju att vi länge har bett om en strategi utan att kommissionen har levererat en sådan. Nu har ni presenterat en lista med åtgärder. Det är naturligtvis välkommet, men låt oss vara ärliga: en åtgärdslista är inte en strategi. Den är inte lika förpliktigande, inte lika framåtsyftande och inte lika systematisk. Jag vill ändå ge några rekommendationer angående de åtgärder som kommissionen presenterat.

Den huvudsakliga människohandeln i Europa handlar om kvinnor och flickor som köps av män på prostitutionsmarknaden. Det är därför välkommet att kommissionen äntligen ska göra någonting för att kriminalisera dem som utsätter och utnyttjar människohandelsoffer. Jag läser från kommissionen: "Kommissionen kommer att uppmantra medlemsstaterna att kriminalisera dem som vetandes utnyttjar tjänster från kvinnohandelsoffer eller människohandelsoffer". Problemet är, kommissionen, att om man har någon som vetandes, om man måste bevisa att någon vetandes utnyttjar, då försvårar man för dem som ska lagföra.

De mest framgångsrika exemplen har vi från länder som gått längre. I Sverige, Frankrike, Norge, Island och Irland har man varit mest framgångsrika med att bekämpa kvinnohandel. Förbjud köp av sexuella tjänster. Det är 2018, det är dags att sätta stopp för den patriarkala föreställningen att män kan köpa kvinnor och flickor, att kvinnor kan köpas och säljas. Det är helt enkelt passé. Det har i Sverige funnits ett #metoo för dem som har utnyttjats i prostitution och kvinnohandel, mot det maktmissbruk och utnyttjande som sker där.

Jag måste också säga till kommissionen att jag ändå uppmantrar och välkomnar det stöd till kvinnor som utnyttjas i prostitution som ni presenterar i åtgärdslistan och det ökade stödet till barn. Men vi måste inse att om vi inte gör någonting åt efterfrågan, åt dem som köper och utnyttjar kvinnor och flickor i prostitutionsindustrin, så står vi still och stampar. Det får vara slut med det. Det finns effektiva åtgärder. Det gäller att våga ta dem. Det är dags att säga hej då till den rätt som män tar sig som köper kvinnor i prostitution.

Ernest Urtasun, *autor*. – Señor presidente, la trata de seres humanos en la Unión Europea es un problema creciente. Según los datos de la misma Comisión Europea, el 76 % de las víctimas son mujeres; el 15 % menores; de 2013 a 2014 se registraron casi 16 000 víctimas y solo hubo alrededor de 3 000 condenas por trata.

De todas formas, sabemos que los casos de trata en la actualidad deben ser más del doble o el triple de los números registrados, porque la mayoría de casos, evidentemente, escapan a las estadísticas. Sabemos también que la actual crisis migratoria y de refugiados está siendo usada por las mafias de trata para identificar a las personas más vulnerables, principalmente mujeres y niñas, abusando de solicitantes de asilo que quieren llegar a Europa o que ya están en campos de refugiados europeos. Dieciséis mil quinientos niños no acompañados entraron en Grecia, Italia, Bulgaria y España durante los seis primeros meses de 2017 y actualmente estos tienen, evidentemente, muchas posibilidades de caer en las redes de trata.

La OIM también ha informado de un aumento drástico del número de mujeres y niñas nigerianas que han caído víctimas de la trata de seres humanos, la gran mayoría con fines de explotación sexual. Solo de enero a septiembre de 2017, 4 371 mujeres y niñas nigerianas que marchaban de Libia se identificaron como víctimas de trata de explotación sexual. Y también aquí me gustaría recordar que, el 6 de noviembre pasado, veintiséis mujeres y niñas de esta misma nacionalidad fueron asesinadas por sus mafias cuando trataban de llegar a la costa italiana.

Debemos reaccionar ya ante esta terrible e intolerable realidad, y creemos que la Comisión Europea debe actuar. Tenemos algunos instrumentos muy valiosos, pero deben aplicarse de una forma más concreta, y la Comisión debe ser más estricta en obligar a los Estados miembros a cumplir estos instrumentos. Y, como se ha dicho anteriormente, creemos que es muy importante que, más allá de los instrumentos que tenemos, desarrollemos una política comprensiva desde las instituciones europeas para atajar este fenómeno.

Por lo tanto, señor comisario, hoy esperamos con mucho interés saber qué acciones está llevando a cabo la Comisión Europea para atajar este terrible fenómeno.

Daniela Aiuto, *autore*. – Signor Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, ancora oggi, nonostante la direttiva 2011/36/UE concernente la prevenzione e la repressione della tratta di essere umani e la protezione delle vittime, in vigore da alcuni anni nei diversi Stati membri, questo fenomeno non sembra diminuire. Al contrario, i dati ci mostrano un drastico aumento.

Come sappiamo, in questo mondo sommerso della tratta di esseri umani, sono le donne e le bambine le principali vittime. La Commissione ha di fatto registrato che il 76 % delle vittime sono donne, di cui 15 % minori, vittime di aguzzini che le portano con forza in Europa, promettendo loro un mondo e una vita migliori. Una volta giunte all'interno dei nostri confini si trovano a vivere un incubo ben peggiore di quello che hanno lasciato nelle loro terre di origine, andando a ingrossare le fila dello sfruttamento sessuale o del lavoro nero, gestito da organizzazioni criminali. Secondo alcuni dati dell'UNODC ogni anno, in Europa, i gruppi criminali guadagnano 3 miliardi di dollari grazie al traffico di esseri umani per il solo fine di sfruttamento sessuale.

Sappiamo bene che spesso la tratta di esseri umani è strettamente legata alla crisi migratoria che da oriente e dal sud del Mediterraneo sta colpendo l'Unione europea, in modo particolare Italia e Grecia. La Commissione ha intenzione di adottare misure specifiche per fronteggiare tale crisi o vuole lasciare tutto l'onere sulle spalle di questi Stati? Non è forse il caso di rafforzare gli sforzi investigativi alle frontiere per porre un freno a questa vergogna?

Mi trovo infine costretta a ricordare alla Commissione come l'Unione non costituisca solamente la destinazione prescelta dalle organizzazioni criminali; in molti casi l'Unione costituisce anche il luogo di origine del commercio di esseri umani perché, come sappiamo, sono moltissime le giovani donne degli Stati membri più poveri che vengono costrette alla prostituzione presso gli Stati meno colpiti dalla crisi.

L'emergenza umanitaria che ci troviamo ad affrontare è quindi resa ancora più grave dal peggioramento degli squilibri economici interni all'Unione e il crimine organizzato non costituisce l'unico nemico verso il quale assumere una posizione decisa. La povertà ormai è endemica all'interno di molti Stati membri: è un nemico altrettanto pericoloso, un invisibile alleato del crimine organizzato che agisce silenziosamente dall'interno dei nostri confini. Non possiamo sopportare oltre, è il momento di fermare tutto ciò.

Siamo qui tutti quanti, ancora una volta, a chiedere quali saranno le azioni concrete che la Commissione ha intenzione di mettere in campo per affrontare il problema. C'è bisogno di tolleranza zero, è già stato detto, contro la tratta di esseri umani perché, come sappiamo, essa rappresenta una forma di schiavitù che è in netto contrasto con la Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, let me start by expressing my thanks to our colleagues from all political families here who have initiated this debate here today. It is a very timely one and it is about an issue, as we all know, of high sensitivity, at the top of the interests of our citizens. Again, my thanks to this House for its continuous active interest and support in our joint fight against this odious phenomenon.

I am sure that we will all agree in this room that when dealing with trafficking in human beings what really counts is actions and results, more than intentions and words. The modern 'slave markets' in Libya and elsewhere, where human beings are bought and sold as cheap commodities, will not be stopped if we do not act now.

The ruthless sick minds who take advantage of innocent children – girls and boys – or hopeless and vulnerable adults – women and men – will continue to make astronomical profits if we do not stop them now. The pain from the torture and the indelible damage on the victims' bodies and souls will not be repaired if we do not protect and take care of them now.

Unfortunately, the situation, as you all know, is neither new, nor does it happen only in unstable countries. Trafficking also happens right here in Europe. As is rightly pointed out in your question, there is a strong gender dimension in this picture, while the available data does not capture the real magnitude of this phenomenon. It is also true that these desperate human beings are usually exploited for sexual or labour purposes. Therefore, what is needed now is exactly to focus on the specific characteristics of this crime and tackle them with the proper tools.

Let us be frank, however. The real fight against trafficking in human beings is not being fought here, by the European Union institutions. It is on the ground, and it is Member States' authorities that need to deliver, where needed by joint efforts.

Obviously the Commission will continue supporting efforts in these operational endeavours. A demonstrative example of joint efforts can be seen in the information provided by Europol. From 2016 until early December 2017, 2 476 new human trafficking cases were referred to Europol; 10 664 potential victims were registered, the majority of whom were EU nationals; 10 449 suspects have been signalled in its database, the majority of whom again were EU nationals.

All these years, through an ambitious and progressive approach, we have managed in the European Union to create a solid legal and policy framework which has brought Europe to the frontline of global efforts. Now it is time, on the one hand, to fully implement and enforce our strong and modern legal armoury, and, on the other hand, to step up our efforts with targeted and focused actions.

My personal commitment, my personal aim, is to bring tangible results, to be as much as possible operational, to make a difference on the ground. This is the reason why last December, as you will remember, I presented a list of further concrete measures to step up our action to disrupt the modus operandi of traffickers, to strengthen victims' rights and protection, to intensify internal and external efforts in a coordinated manner, and to widen our knowledge base and provide targeted financial support. We will monitor progress on the actions set out and will report on progress to this House and the Council already by the end of 2018.

EU-wide updated statistical data on this phenomenon will also be made available in the next Progress Report in 2018, including on: gender dimension, children affected and forms of exploitation. We are now examining very closely how Member States comply with the EU Anti-trafficking Directive and we will not hesitate to initiate infringement procedures, if needed.

On labour inspections, the Commission will come soon with the second report on the implementation of the Employers' Sanction Directive. Moreover, gender plays a pivotal role in our new set of actions. In this respect, we will work closely with the European Institute for Gender Equality to deliver practical guidance to Member States on how to implement the provisions of the Anti-trafficking Directive on assistance and protection from a gender perspective.

In terms of resources allocated and funding on the gender dimension, the Commission's Comprehensive Policy Review (2016) demonstrated that almost 20% of funded projects were gender-specific in the period between 2004 and 2015. Future funding priorities by the Commission will ensure that the gender dimension is duly addressed. In that respect, the last call under the Internal Security Fund and Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund places priority on the gender dimension.

Finally, the next Progress Report will also provide an update on the EU-wide progress made at investigative efforts, based on Member States' information covering the period between 2015 and 2017.

Thank you very much for your attention and most importantly, for your support. We are all on the same side to bring an end to this odious phenomenon.

Barbara Matera, *a nome del gruppo PPE*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, trovo paradossale che nel 2018 ci troviamo ancora a parlare di schiavitù, perché quando si parla della tratta di donne, di ragazze, di bambini per finalità sessuali e lavorative non c'è altro nome che «schiavitù». Nel mondo su mille persone tre sono schiave, oltre un quarto sono minori. In tutto il mondo da sei a dieci milioni di bambini sono costretti a lavori forzati, vittime di traffico sessuale o segregati come schiavi.

Nella nostra civilissima Europa, secondo dati forniti dalla Commissione europea, il 79 % delle vittime di traffico sono destinate a prostituzione e a sfruttamento sessuale. Non è la prima volta che in quest'Aula ci troviamo a discutere e a condannare i trafficanti e a cercare le misure da poter prendere per proteggere le vittime ma, se non ci fosse domanda, non ci sarebbe mercato.

Occorrerebbe una legislazione europea omogenea e rigorosa, che ci permetterebbe di perseguire i trafficanti e i clienti in ogni angolo della nostra Unione. La Commissione deve farsi portatrice di questa istanza e aumentare, con le agenzie come Europol, tutti gli sforzi investigativi in quei paesi dove lo sfruttamento è molto più diffuso. Siamo nel 2018 e ci sono ancora schiavi del sesso.

Concludo, Presidente, con le parole di Simone Veil, che in questi ultimi anni stiamo ricordando, che diceva che l'Europa deve dimostrare di essere esemplare nell'applicazione dei diritti umani. Ebbene, dimostriamolo!

Maria Arena, *au nom du groupe S&D*. – Monsieur le Président, l'évaluation de la directive sur la traite des êtres humains, publiée en 2016 par la Commission, montre que l'exploitation sexuelle demeure la finalité la plus répandue de la traite en Europe, suivie de l'exploitation par le travail. Les femmes et les jeunes filles en sont les principales victimes et la visite que le groupe socialiste et démocrate a réalisée en Sicile, dans le domaine de l'agriculture, nous a donné un exemple flagrant de cet esclavage moderne.

Bien entendu, la Sicile n'est pas l'unique endroit où cet esclavage a lieu. Les femmes roumaines ne sont pas les seules victimes non plus en Europe. Les réseaux de mineures nigérianes dans la prostitution à Bruxelles en sont un autre exemple.

On parle souvent de l'exploitation du sexe, mais il y a aussi l'exploitation par les entreprises, tout simplement parce qu'elles ont l'intérêt d'avoir du profit à court terme en payant le moins possible leurs travailleurs. Donc, ce que je demande, c'est que si on travaille sur la question de l'exploitation du sexe – ce qui est important, bien entendu, dans la traite des êtres humains –, nous devons aussi responsabiliser les entreprises européennes qui aujourd'hui font l'exploitation de ces personnes, que ce soit dans la culture de la tomate, dans la cueillette des pommes ou dans d'autres activités, tout simplement parce qu'elles veulent vendre des produits à moindre prix dans les supermarchés, sans aucun scrupule.

Par conséquent, Monsieur le Commissaire, je pense qu'il est important – et c'est la responsabilité de la Commission – de demander aux États membres de faire respecter cette directive, qui existe et qui n'est pas respectée par certains d'entre eux, mais il faut aussi donner des moyens aux États membres, comme dans les inspections sociales, par exemple, pour contrôler les lois du travail, parce que c'est par les lois du travail, par la protection du travail que nous allons aussi protéger ces personnes, et il est important que les entreprises respectent la protection du travail.

Eleonora Forenza, *a nome del gruppo GUE/NGL*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, parliamo di un fenomeno al crocevia tra razzismo e sessismo. Il 76 % delle vittime di traffico umano, secondo la relazione della Commissione pubblicata nel 2016, è costituito da donne. Le provenienze più ricorrenti sono Albania, Cina, Marocco, Nigeria, 80 % per sfruttamento sessuale. Un ulteriore dato dice che il 67 % delle vittime di traffico è sottoposto a sfruttamento sessuale.

La schiavitù sessuale racconta la connotazione machista, patriarcale e violenta nei confronti delle donne di questa Europa, di tantissimi, bianchissimi, cittadini europei che a parole sostengono i diritti umani.

Io sollecito le istituzioni europee a una battaglia senza frontiere contro il sessismo e contro il razzismo e ringrazio personalmente l'onorevole Matera per aver citato Simone Veil e non Silvio Berlusconi a proposito di sfruttamento sessuale.

Terry Reintke, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, women and girls are not victims. Women and girls are made victims. Women and girls are strong and resilient, but too often they are being exploited. Too often they are being exploited by a system that is made for the few to gain profit and for the many to suffer from it.

It is not a sign of weakness in these women that they are exploited. It is actually a sign of our weakness that we let this happen, that we let so many women and girls not live in freedom in the European Union, and the responsibility is put from one to the other.

If the Member States are too weak to actually implement a Directive that is already in place, then the Commission needs to be strong because we need more police cooperation, including across borders. We need the perpetrators to see that their actions have consequences. We need to have better training for police and for justice personnel, because very often they do not even know how to act in cases of human trafficking. We need justice and support for those who have become victims because too often they are left alone. Girls' and women's rights are the unfinished business of the 21st century. Let's put this directive in place and change something in this perfidious system.

Mireille D'Ornano, *au nom du groupe EFDD*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, comme l'a rappelé la Commission, plus d'un tiers des 15 000 victimes de la traite des êtres humains enregistrées dans l'Union européenne entre 2013 et 2014 étaient des étrangers extra-européens.

De l'aveu de la Commission, elle-même, je cite: «les réseaux de trafiquants d'êtres humains profitent des routes de l'immigration irrégulière en ciblant les personnes les plus vulnérables, à savoir les femmes et les enfants». Elle précise en outre que les trafiquants exploitent de plus en plus les systèmes d'asile.

Pourtant, dans une réponse de juillet 2017, la Commission envisage de se retourner contre les États si elle juge qu'ils appliquent mal la directive sur la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains.

On ne peut qu'être frappé par l'absence totale de remise en question, par l'Union européenne, de sa politique migratoire irresponsable quand on connaît ses conséquences effroyables en termes d'esclavage moderne et d'exploitation sexuelle, qui touchent notamment des enfants.

Mylène Troszczynski, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, la traite des êtres humains comme la prostitution et la mendicité forcées sont des réalités dans tous nos pays et dans le monde entier. Elles seraient presque aussi rémunératrices que le trafic de drogue ou la contrefaçon.

Dans nos villes, nous croisons tous les jours des hommes, mais surtout, des femmes et des enfants meurtris par le froid et la faim, exploités par des réseaux mafieux. 65 % proviendraient des pays de l'Union, mais d'autres viennent de beaucoup plus loin. L'Unicef signale une augmentation du nombre de femmes et de filles nigérianes victimes de la traite des êtres humains.

Que proposez-vous? Vous demandez que la Commission sanctionne encore plus les États membres qui ne respecteraient pas telle ou telle directive et, pire, leur obligation de diligence envers l'Union, comme si cela allait aider les victimes. Vous refusez d'évoquer la passoire qu'est devenu l'espace Schengen, favorisant les trafics d'organisations mafieuses, qui deviennent intraquables. En outre, la Commission européenne veut encore augmenter les quotas de migrants, créant ainsi de nouveaux appels d'air, livrant ces migrants aux mains des passeurs qui, justement, s'empresseront de les mettre en esclavage ou de les prostituer. Comme souvent, vous tentez par vos incantations de régler des situations qui pourraient être maîtrisables sans vos folles politiques.

Diane Dodds (NI). – Mr President, human trafficking is a serious crime that can affect anyone of any age, gender or nationality. It is a crime that currently affects every large town and city across the United Kingdom and the European Union, with women and girls making up more than 70% of the total estimated number of victims globally. National Crime Agency statistics estimate that, in the United Kingdom alone, there are tens of thousands of victims of this horrific crime. Previous estimates of between 10 000 and 13 000 across the UK are now thought to be only the tip of the iceberg.

In 2015, the Human Trafficking and Exploitation Bill in Northern Ireland paved the way for more robust UK-wide legislation, giving additional support to those who have been victims of human trafficking. The bill gives much-needed support to victims with regard to compensation, providing 'trafficking guardians' for children who have been victims, and support up to and after criminal investigations. But legislation can only do so much. As we go about normal life, there is a growing and a good chance that you will come across a victim who has been exploited. Education will be one of the only ways to eradicate this terrible, vile crime.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Je to velmi smutné poslouchání, protože obětí obchodu s lidmi neubývá. Ta statistika 700 000 až 2 000 000 lidí je velmi smutnou statistikou a samozřejmě tak, jak jste tady řekli, převažují ženy a děti, které jsou velmi ohrožené. Pak jsou to také sektory, kde je žen v otrocké práci nejvíce, bylo zde zmíněno zemědělství, ale je to i stavebnictví, výroba či domácí práce. Pokud se podíváme na geografii, tak jsou to především ženy z Albánie, Číny, Maroka, Nigérie a Vietnamu. Takové obchodování s lidmi samozřejmě nelze tolerovat, a je proto správné, že hledáme řešení, která by byla efektivnější.

ČR je v oblasti boje proti obchodování cílovou a tranzitní zemí spíše než zdrojovou. Poskytujeme ochranu a pomoc obětem prostřednictvím specifických programů a spolupracujeme s mnoha neziskovými organizacemi. Já bych chtěla zdůraznit, že právě neziskový sektor je velmi důležitým partnerem v boji proti obchodování s lidmi, a proto bych doporučila, aby i ostatní státy zvážily jeho větší zapojení. S ohledem na národní specifika by také bylo potřeba posílit činnost právě na národní úrovni, aby byly identifikovány konkrétní sektory a území, kde je třeba posílit podporu a pomoc těmto obětem.

Edouard Martin (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, est-ce que nos valeurs ont un coût, est-ce que nos valeurs ont un prix?

Eh bien, je peux vous dire que pour certains, ce prix, ils l'ont fixé: c'est le prix d'un kilo de tomates cerises siciliennes, et c'est vrai que cela n'est pas propre à la Sicile, mais je me suis rendu dans ce territoire et j'ai vu toutes les dérives de l'exploitation de ces produits.

Derrière ces tomates cerises, il y a un système de petits patrons et d'esclaves, de caporaux et d'ouvrières agricoles. Ces tomates sont le résultat d'une exploitation sociale et sexuelle de femmes roumaines, tunisiennes, nigérianes, souvent organisée – cela a été dit – par les entreprises elles-mêmes.

Ces femmes victimes de traite, travailleuses, otages, sont confrontées au choix de Sophie, elles rêvent d'un meilleur futur mais ne seront jamais libres.

Ces exploitations, ces trafics sont à condamner toujours, de plus en plus fort. Je tiens ici à rendre hommage à ces femmes, mais les bons sentiments ne suffisent pas et ne mettront pas un terme à ces trafics social et sexuel.

Par conséquent, je vous demande, Monsieur le Commissaire, de nous présenter votre stratégie post-2016 sur le combat contre le trafic de femmes et de filles, qui ne cesse d'augmenter. Cette stratégie doit être efficace, répondre à l'urgence – je dis bien l'urgence – de la situation, sanctionner les États membres qui ne respectent pas les instruments juridiques, mais aussi, les aider financièrement pour mieux lutter contre ce fléau.

Κωνσταντίνα Κούνεβα (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Επίτροπε, επικρατούν απάνθρωπες συνθήκες εργασίας στα θερμοκήπια της Ιταλίας και στα χωράφια μανιταριών της Ολλανδίας. Παρατηρήθηκε κακοποίηση εργαζομένων στις καλλιέργειες σπαραγγιών της Τσεχίας και στις καλλιέργειες φράουλας της Ελλάδας, πριν μερικά χρόνια. Η εμπορία ανθρώπων και η εργασιακή εκμετάλλευση ντροπιάζουν την Ευρώπη. Δεν τροφοδοτούν μόνο τη βιομηχανία του σεξ, αλλά και τη γεωργία, την κτηνοτροφία, τις κατασκευές, τον τουρισμό, την παροχή φροντίδας. Η Ευρώπη δεν μπορεί να είναι περήφανη για την ανάπτυξη που συνδέεται με αυτό το σύγχρονο δουλεμπόριο!

Ελέγχει άραγε η Επιτροπή αν εφαρμόζονται οι οδηγίες για την εμπορία ανθρώπων και για τους εποχικούς εργάτες ή ενδιέφεται μόνο για τους δημοσιονομικούς κανόνες;

Επειδή αυτό το πρόβλημα πρέπει να λυθεί, χρειαζόμαστε:

- έξυπνους ελέγχους εργασίας, όπως τόνισα και στην έκθεσή μου για το οικιακό προσωπικό,
- νόμιμες και διαφανείς διαδικασίες για την εργασία των μεταναστών και, το πιο σημαντικό,
- η διασφάλιση των εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων για να μπορέσουμε να μπούμε πραγματικά στον 21ο αιώνα.

Μόνο έτσι μπορεί να σπάσει ο φόβος!

Margot Parker (EFDD). – Mr President, trafficking of women and children for sexual and labour exploitation is as rife as ever. One of the most vulnerable groups are of course children. In 2016 roughly one in three potential victims of modern slavery were children. But current statistics underestimate the true scale of what is going on, only showing what has been reported, and in some cases there are inconsistencies in recording.

The disappearance of children is a cruel reality of modern day slavery. In 2015, 10 000 migrant children went missing within Europe according to Europol, all with the prospect of a better life but instead headed for a life of domestic servitude, sexual exploitation or child marriage. We are letting down these victims, leaving them vulnerable and open to being trafficked and abused.

How have we let this terrible violation of human dignity worsen? Criminalised gangs are taking advantage of the EU's open borders and exploiting women and children for vast sums of money. Victims are used as mere pawns in the game of crime. Each victim is disposable and easily replaceable to the criminals. To them one death is nothing on the profitability of their enslavement.

The Commission must grasp that free movement of people is exacerbating the problem, failing the victims and aiding the criminals. As the EU prohibits the UK from conducting criminal background checks on EU citizens, it is no wonder that crime has escalated. Migrant children could start in Greece and end up in France without being tracked. This is not a simple matter, but each time we debate this nothing is resolved. If this issue is not addressed, then there is no hope for the victims.

Anna Hedh (S&D). – Herr talman! Sedan 2016 står EU helt utan en strategi för människohandel. Detta trots att kommissionär Avramopoulos flera gånger har lovat och försäkrat att en strategi är på gång. I stället valde kommissionen den 5 december att presentera ett så kallat meddelande om människohandel, ett dokument som knappast kommer att göra lika stor skillnad som en strategi. Jag är mycket besviken och arg över att kommissionen har valt att agera på detta sätt.

Jag har arbetat med frågan om människohandel i över ett decennium i Europaparlamentet och har ständigt mött motstånd. Det är häpnadsväckande att det är så många som inte inser allvaret i de brott som människohandel innebär. Människohandel är en gränsöverskridande verksamhet och kräver gränsöverskridande lösningar och en strategi. Om vi sänker ambitionsnivån i frågan skickar vi signaler till medlemsländerna att EU prioriterar andra saker och att förövarna kan fortsätta begå brott och övergrepp. Signalpolitiskt är det mycket viktigt att EU agerar kraftfullt. För människohandel i EU ökar lavinartat.

Det mänskliga lidande som följer av människohandel kräver att vi ständigt prioriterar kampen mot förövarna. Vi måste kriminalisera användandet av tjänster ifrån människohandelsoffer i EU. Vi måste bekämpa efterfrågan. Principen att följa pengarna ska användas i det gränsöverskridande polisiära arbetet. Skyddet för människohandelsoffer måste också öka, både under och efter rättsprocessen.

Jag vill också ta tillfället i akt att påpeka vikten av människohandelskoordinators roll. Att det finns en person och en funktion med ett mycket stort kunnande i frågan om människohandel är avgörande för att vi ska nå framgång i arbetet med att motverka människohandel i hela EU.

Hur länge ska vi tillåta människohandel i Europa? När kommer kommissionen att presentera en strategi för att på ett aktivt och konkret sätt motverka människohandel?

João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL). – Senhor Presidente, sabemos que o crime organizado tira rendimentos do tráfico de seres humanos superiores ao tráfico de drogas e de armas, estando-lhes muitas vezes associado, alimentando negócios e outras atividades criminosas que o branqueamento de capitais e os paraísos fiscais facilitam.

Sabemos que o objeto do tráfico de mulheres passa por casamentos forçados e situações de trabalho clandestino e ou doméstico em condições de escravidão. Mas o fundamental é a exploração sexual, a prostituição.

A prostituição é um grave flagelo social que escraviza milhões de mulheres, aprisionadas nas redes criminosas de tráfico de seres humanos e outras formas de exploração que alguns querem apelidar de prostituição voluntária ou por opção da mulher.

Trata-se de um grave atentado contra a mulher, o seu corpo, a sua saúde física e psicológica, a sua dignidade e direitos. A prostituição alimenta uma sórdida exploração das mulheres oriundas das classes e camadas mais pobres, configurando uma grave violação dos direitos humanos.

Urge, pois, rejeitar quaisquer iniciativas como alguns pretendem hoje, em Portugal, de regulamentar a prostituição, legitimando a violência contra a mulher e o tráfico que lhe está associado.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, come è stato detto, non serve guardare lontano per incontrare storie di sfruttamento sessuale o lavorativo: accadono quotidianamente all'interno dell'Unione europea e a ritrovarsi vittime sono, nella maggior parte dei casi, donne e giovani ragazze, che cadono nella trappola dello sfruttamento sessuale.

Per molte di esse lo sfruttamento è anche lavorativo: orari interminabili, pessime condizioni lavorative e misere paghe. Di questo è un esempio anche il mio paese, dove molte donne sono impiegate in agricoltura in condizioni davvero disumane. In alcuni casi questi lavori estenuanti hanno portato alla morte, come nel caso di Paola Clemente che nel 2015, in Puglia, ha perso la vita a 49 anni, uccisa dalla fatica mentre raccoglieva l'uva a 2 euro l'ora. Luoghi dove si pratica il caporalato, dove vi sono sistemi di intermediazione di manodopera con molte complicità.

L'Unione europea deve intervenire, e non si tratta solo di assicurare alla giustizia i trafficanti e gli sfruttatori e di sanzionare le imprese complici, ma anche di praticare una politica volta a far sì che molte ragazze non siano costrette a consegnare il loro futuro a delinquenti senza scrupoli. Sono necessarie politiche formative dell'istruzione che consentano maggiori opportunità, sono necessarie politiche del lavoro e del welfare capaci di assicurare indipendenza economica e sociale, sono necessarie politiche più stringenti sui diritti e la loro piena salvaguardia. Insomma, signor Commissario, bisogna passare dalle parole ai fatti.

Ángela Vallina (GUE/NGL). – Señor presidente, señor comisario, la explotación laboral en la Unión Europea es, por desgracia, un hecho cotidiano. La propia Agencia de los Derechos Fundamentales nos alerta de las desigualdades económicas mundiales y del aumento de la movilidad laboral, que están favoreciendo la explotación laboral.

Y también nos alerta de que un contrato de trabajo y un permiso de residencia no garantizan situaciones justas. Bajo la legalidad, en la Unión Europea hay también explotación. La explotación, además, tiene rostro femenino. La explotación laboral y sexual entre las mujeres, usted lo sabe, es mucho mayor que entre los hombres: 76 % —tres de cada cuatro víctimas—, y el 15 % de los casos son menores.

Frente a esto necesitamos una acción política fuerte, no una declaración de intenciones. Y necesitamos una coordinación entre la Comisión y los Estados contra la trata de personas, políticas transversales de género y un mayor peso del diálogo social frente a las políticas neoliberales que desprotegen a los trabajadores y a las trabajadoras.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, the rising number of reports of trafficking in human beings is a matter of extreme concern, especially for feminists. As we know, women are far more likely to fall victim to trafficking, particularly for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The phenomenon is in complete contradiction with our values, as well as European and national law. It shows that women are still, in many cases, denied their humanity and objectified.

I would like to highlight the situation of trans sex workers, whose situation and voice is too often overlooked. Most trans murders are perpetrated against sex workers who are often already victims of human trafficking. Their experience must be taken into account and our policies should have a specific trans focus.

I am very curious to know what steps the Commission has concretely taken to put an end to the trafficking of human beings. It is shameful to see that our governments pretend to take the issue of trafficking seriously when it comes to preventing migrants from reaching Europe, but fail to address it with the gravity it requires when it comes to women and trans people. I look forward to your responses, Commissioner.

Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, it is 2018 and here within the EU we have humans being trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation: human slaves, with women and children making up the vast majority of those trafficked. At a time when the movement against the sexual exploitation of women is at its zenith we cannot forget those women and girls who are most vulnerable. Nor is it acceptable that human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation is on the rise.

It is imperative that the EU take action to stop this cruel and inhumane practice. Perpetrators must be brought to justice and Member States must cooperate to name, shame and penalise those companies which are using labour from trafficked humans. Member States must comply fully with the Human Trafficking Directive, the Victims' Rights Directive and the Seasonal Workers Directive, and we must collect disaggregated data so that we can fully know the extent of the horror, and then move to eradicate human slavery once and for all.

Procedura catch-the-eye

Anna Záborská (PPE). – Vážený pán predsedajúci, rovnakej debaty ako dnes som sa v tomto parlamente zúčastnila pred trinástimi rokmi. Kolegovia, nič sa nezmenilo. Podľa správy o pokroku v boji proti obchodovaniu s ľuďmi väčšina registrovaných obetí obchodovania pochádza z Rumunska, Bulharska, Maďarska a Poľska. Alebo inak, z piatich európskych krajín, ktorých občania sa najčastejšie stávajú korisťou obchodníkov s ľuďmi, až štyri patria medzi takzvané nové členské štáty. Obchodovaniu s ľuďmi sa darí tam, kde je veľká chudoba a málo príležitostí. Kým budú v Európskej únii existovať priepastné ekonomické rozdiely medzi štátmi a regiónmi, dovedy budú existovať dve Európy. Ak dnes voláme po zjednotení, myslíme na to, že skutočná jednota nevzniká strhnutím hraničných plotov. Rodí sa v solidarite a rešpekte k dôstojnosti každého človeka a v spoločnom boji proti extrémnej chudobe bez ohľadu na hranice.

Caterina Chinnici (S&D). – Signor Presidente, signor Commissario, la tratta di esseri umani, che vede come vittime predestinate le donne e le bambine, è un fenomeno che purtroppo non tende a diminuire ma che anzi, malgrado l'adozione della direttiva antitratta del 2011, presenta tassi di crescita preoccupanti, dovuti principalmente alla crisi migratoria in corso, durante la quale, in particolare, il numero dei minori non accompagnati è cresciuto in modo esponenziale.

Facili da reclutare e purtroppo ancora oggi non adeguatamente tutelati, gran parte di tali minori finiscono nelle reti del crimine organizzato che li sfrutta sessualmente o li utilizza come manodopera criminale. A fronte di tali gravi abusi la Commissione ha la responsabilità di intervenire, affinché gli Stati membri diano tutta piena attuazione alla direttiva antitratta. Concretamente le autorità nazionali devono accrescere il numero e l'efficacia delle indagini e delle azioni penali, devono migliorare le procedure per l'identificazione delle vittime e, naturalmente, fornire loro assistenza specializzata e tutela.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η εμπορία γυναικών και κοριτσιών για σκοπούς σεξουαλικής και εργασιακής εκμετάλλευσης στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, δυστυχώς, βρίσκεται στην ημερήσια διάταξη. Τα στοιχεία καταδεικνύουν ότι πρέπει να ληφθούν πολύ συγκεκριμένα μέτρα. Διαπιστώθηκε ότι το 76% των καταγεγραμμένων θυμάτων ήταν γυναίκες, ενώ το 15% ήταν παιδιά. Προέρχονται από τη Ρουμανία, τη Βουλγαρία, τις Κάτω Χώρες, την Ουγγαρία και την Πολωνία. Είναι δεδομένο ότι αυτή εκμετάλλευση, ιδίως, η εργασιακή εκμετάλλευση, επικεντρώνεται στον γεωργικό τομέα. Θα πρέπει λοιπόν τα κράτη μέλη να προχωρήσουν στην αποτελεσματική εφαρμογή της οδηγίας 2011/36/ΕΕ, θα πρέπει να τιμωρηθούν οι δουλεμπόροι και να υπάρξει δίωξη των σωματεμπόρων. Ταυτόχρονα, πρέπει να υπάρξουν και συνεργασίες των κρατών για να αντιμετωπίσουν αυτή τη διασυνοριακή εμπορία ανθρώπων.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – Señor presidente; este problema, señor comisario, combina la actuación de redes internacionales organizadas y clandestinas que requieren un tratamiento global a nivel al menos europeo, y una respuesta, dada generalmente desde el nivel local o regional, desde la sanidad, los servicios sociales o la educación, a las víctimas de estas prácticas. Por eso deberían integrarse ambos aspectos, de manera decidida y sincera, en la planificación y ejecución de las políticas europeas contra esta lacra.

La obtención de datos más fiables y una capacidad real para la coordinación multinivel interinstitucional, desde la prestación de los servicios concretos, son ventajas patentes de su participación. Así lo acredita, por ejemplo, el IV Plan cuatrienal de atención al trabajador temporero en el País Vasco, en donde esta iniciativa lleva en marcha desde el año 2004.

Finalmente, quiero añadir dos preguntas: ¿puede confirmar la Comisión que el incremento de la actividad de estas redes puede propiciar que sean ya casi 30 000 los menores no acompañados desaparecidos en la Unión?; además de la explotación sexual, ¿hay datos sobre la relación entre estas desapariciones y el tráfico ilegal de órganos o las adopciones ilegales?

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η σεξουαλική και εργασιακή εκμετάλλευση ανθρώπων και κυρίως γυναικών και κοριτσιών αποτελεί μια πραγματικότητα η οποία έχει τις ρίζες της στην αρχαιότητα αλλά, δυστυχώς, στην εποχή μας έχει προσλάβει μορφή επικερδούς οικονομικής δραστηριότητας. Η κατάσταση αυτή αποτελεί στίγμα για τον ανθρωπισμό και τον πολιτισμό μας. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση πρέπει, σε συνεργασία με τα κράτη μέλη αλλά και άλλες χώρες, να λάβει δραστικά μέτρα ούτως ώστε αυτή η απαράδεκτη κατάσταση, αρχικώς μιν να περιοριστεί, στο τέλος δε να εξαλειφθεί. Δεν αρκεί μόνο να επικαλείται η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση τα άρθρα 5 και 31 του Χάρτη των Θεμελιωδών Δικαιωμάτων, σύμφωνα με τα οποία απαγορεύεται η δουλεία και η καταναγκαστική εργασία και αναγνωρίζεται στους εργαζόμενους το δικαίωμα σε δίκαιη προσφορά και αξιοπρεπείς συνθήκες εργασίας. Πρέπει να εφαρμοστούν αυστηροί έλεγχοι στις χώρες εκείνες στις οποίες παρατηρούνται φαινόμενα σεξουαλικής και εργασιακής εκμετάλλευσης γυναικών και παιδιών και, παράλληλα, να αποτραπεί η ανεξέλεγκτη δράση των δουλεμπόρων και των σωματεμπόρων. Τέλος, πρέπει να θεσπιστούν αυστηρές νομοθετικές διατάξεις, με τις οποίες να επιβάλλονται δρακόντιες ποινές σε όσους δρουν κατά τον αδίστακτο και απαράδεκτο αυτόν τρόπο.

(Fine della procedura catch-the-eye)

Dimitris Avramopoulos, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, I would like to start by thanking colleagues again for this very interesting debate and their substantial and useful contributions.

I make no secret of the fact that I was pleased to hear that all of us in this room share the same approach, as I elaborated in my introductory remarks. We have taken a very clear stance based on determination, resolve and principles. Over the years, the European Union and the Member States have demonstrated a strong commitment to cracking down on unscrupulous criminals, preventing the crime and, most importantly, protecting the victims.

We have developed a robust EU legislation and policy approach. Now we have to ensure full compliance with the European Union's laws and be more operational with our work. Only if we all work together – the Presidency of the Council, Member States, the European Parliament, civil society and our agencies – can we make a difference on the ground, and we are determined to do so.

I can only assure you that the Commission is committed to reinvigorating efforts and that the new set of priority actions is already being implemented. For me personally, as I stressed at the beginning during my introductory remarks, I am committed to delivering on that. I will be happy to inform Parliament later this year on progress achieved. Thank you for your support.

Presidente. – La discussione è chiusa.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), raštu. – Kaip matome, Komisija 2016 m. ataskaitoje dėl pažangos kovojant su prekyba žmonėmis, nustatė, kad 76 proc. registruotų nukentėjusių asmenų yra moterys ir bent 15 proc. – vaikai. Dauguma registruotų nukentėjusių asmenų yra Europos Sąjungos piliečiai. Nepaisant priimtų direktyvų, kuriomis siekiama kovoti su prekyba žmonėmis, prekybos žmonėmis išnaudojimo darbe tikslais aukų skaičius vis auga. Kalbant apie sunkų išnaudojimą darbe ir seksualinį išnaudojimą įvairiuose atitinkamuose sektoriuose, reikia įvertinti, ar valstybės narės laikosi minėtų direktyvų ir deramo rūpestingumo pareigos, siekdamos apsaugoti darbuotojus ir atlikti patikrinimus, kad būtų nustatyti išnaudojimo darbe atvejai ir apsaugoti nukentėję asmenys. Taigi, norėčiau paklausti Komisijos, kokių veiksmų ji imasi prieš valstybes nares, kurios nesilaiko minėtų direktyvų? Be to, norėčiau sužinoti, kokių konkrečių priemonių Komisija imsis sprendama prekybos žmonėmis, seksualinės priedartos ir išnaudojimo darbe lyčių aspektą? Raginčiau

Komisijā peržiūrēti ir įvertinti, kokių tyrimo veiksmų buvo imtasi tų šalių, kuriose labiausiai paplitęs seksualinis išnaudojimas ir išnaudojimas darbe, atžvilgiu. Be to, labai svarbu užtikrinti, kad tokių nusikaltimų vykdytojai būtų patraukiami baudžiamojon atsakomybėn.

Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D), *por escrito*. – En la avanzada Europa del siglo XXI, más de quinientas mil mujeres y niñas cruzan anualmente nuestras fronteras en manos de mafias y grupos organizados de delincuentes, que las explotan laboralmente o las obligan a ejercer la prostitución, cuando no las dos cosas. Mujeres y niñas, amenazadas con el asesinato de sus familias, que contraen una deuda exorbitante que solo pueden pagar trabajando en burdeles o en campos agrícolas, con sueldos paupérrimos, en condiciones infrahumanas, como pudimos ver los socialistas en julio en Ragusa, Sicilia, donde cientos de mujeres, en su mayoría rumanas, trabajan de sol a sol por menos de tres euros diarios, y eso si los cobran. La Comisión Europea debe poner en marcha, sin demora, una nueva estrategia europea contra el tráfico de mujeres y de niñas. Pese a que la explotación laboral está aumentando, el destino principal de las mujeres que son objeto de tráfico como meras mercancías, sigue siendo la prostitución, de la que obtienen enormes beneficios las mafias y los delincuentes. Todavía hay quienes creen que las mujeres eligen libremente dedicarse a la prostitución. Ha llegado el momento de que Europa se plantee legislar, porque sin clientes no habría delincuentes con los bolsillos llenos.

Ελισάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυονίδη (PPE), *γραφικώς*. – Η εμπορία και η παράνομη διακίνηση γυναικών και νεαρών κοριτσιών με σκοπό τη σεξουαλική εκμετάλλευση και την καταναγκαστική εργασία συμβαίνει δίπλα μας και λαμβάνει τα τελευταία χρόνια ανησυχητικές διαστάσεις, αποτελώντας τη δεύτερη πιο κερδοφόρα παράνομη δραστηριότητα παγκοσμίως μετά το εμπόριο ναρκωτικών. Στην Ευρώπη των αξιών και της απόλυτης προστασίας των θεμελιωδών δικαιωμάτων, προσβάλλει τις κοινώνιες μας το γεγονός ότι η συντριπτική πλειονότητα των καταγεγραμμένων θυμάτων προέρχονται σήμερα δυστυχώς από κράτη μέλη της ΕΕ. Η ευρωπαϊκή ήπειρος βιώνει σήμερα μια νέα έξαρση του ειδεχθούς αυτού εγκλήματος, το οποίο τραυματίζει την ελευθερία και την αξιοπρέπεια εκατομμυρίων γυναικών και κοριτσιών, προκαλώντας ανεπανόρθωτες βλάβες για μια ολόκληρη ζωή. Ας αναλογιστούμε μόνο ότι, πολλές φορές, η προσπάθεια απελευθέρωσης από τον καταναγκασμό αυτό πληρώνεται από τις νεαρές γυναίκες με την ίδια τους τη ζωή. Αν και η ευρωπαϊκή νομοθεσία για την πρόληψη και καταστολή της εμπορίας ανθρώπων είναι παρούσα, η εναρμόνιση των κρατών μελών παραμένει ακόμα ελλιπής σχετικά με την καθιέρωση αποτελεσματικών μηχανισμών έννομης προστασίας, την ποινική τιμωρία των δραστών και την προστασία των θυμάτων. Είναι χρέος μας να ενώσουμε τις δυνάμεις μας και να συνεργαστούμε πιο αποτελεσματικά σε διασυνοριακό επίπεδο, γιατί η εμπορία γυναικών και κοριτσιών δεν κάνει διακρίσεις και μας αφορά όλους.

Karol Karski (ECR), *na piśmie*. – Handel ludźmi jest jednym z najgorszych czynów, jakie można popełnić. Jest absolutnym złem moralnym niezależnie od płci ofiar. Oczywiście niektóre formy handlu wzbudzają w nas szczególnie mocne emocje, np. gdy dotyczy on dzieci lub jest związany z wykorzystywaniem seksualnym, a to pozostaje zdecydowanie najczęstszą przyczyną handlu ludźmi. Jego ofiarami najczęściej są kobiety i wyraźnie widać, że kierunek prowadzi z państw biedniejszych do bogatszych. Nie można także ignorować niepokojącego zjawiska wzrostu liczby przypadków pracy niewolniczej – szczególnie sektor rolniczy jest podatny na ten rodzaj wykorzystywania.

Należy dążyć do wyrównywania różnic między krajami, żeby dysproporcje w zakresie zasobności społeczeństw, a zatem pośrednie powody popadania w takie warunki wykorzystywania były niwelowane.

Na koniec, tak jak wiele osób, apeluję o wprowadzenie w życie na poziomie Unii Europejskiej i jej państw członkowskich wszelkich przewidzianych prawem środków, które mają na celu przeciwdziałanie temu procederowi i zwalczanie go, wykrycie i surowe ukaranie sprawców, a także pomoc materialną i psychologiczną jego ofiarom.

22. Europejski Rok Dziedzictwa Kulturowego – 2018 (debata)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sulla dichiarazione della Commissione sull'anno europeo del patrimonio culturale 2018 (2018/2509(RSP)).

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, 2018 is the European Year of Cultural Heritage. As you will remember, it was launched at the European Culture Forum in Milan on 7 December 2017, in the presence of a vibrant crowd of 800 participants from a wide range of cultural organisations: UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Member States and the European institutions.

We were joined by the Estonian Presidency, the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament. We were honoured by the presence and active participation of the European Parliament's President, Mr Antonio Tajani, the Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, Ms Petra Kammevert, and Ms Sylvia Costa, who led the European Parliament's negotiating team on the decision for the year.

I would like to warmly express my thanks to all of them, including the European Parliament's rapporteur, Mr Mircea Diaconu, for the decisive role they played in making this European Year of Cultural Heritage happen.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage comes at a particularly decisive moment in the history of our Union. It comes at a time when the European Union is grappling with issues that go to the very heart of the values it stands for, and that will have a bearing on how the Union will evolve.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage also comes at a time when culture is high on the European Union's agenda. In Gothenburg last November, the European heads of state and government discussed the important role of education and culture in strengthening people's sense of belonging to a cultural community.

As a contribution to this debate, the Commission issued a Communication on strengthening European identity through education and culture, which proposed, among other things, to strengthen the European agenda for culture. In December, the European Council followed up, recognising the importance of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Indeed, the European Year of Cultural Heritage offers us a unique opportunity. By engaging with our cultural memory, we can better understand and raise awareness of the many cultural influences on which our identities are based and we can develop our vision for the future. We can reconnect our citizens with their roots as Europeans, while respecting and cherishing the values created by different communities. This is the message we want to pass on, with the motto of the year: 'our heritage: where the past meets the future'.

So, what have we done so far to put this year in motion? First, we have mobilised a wide network of civil society and heritage operators who are helping us to implement the year on the ground. We have also mobilised Member States. We each have a dedicated national coordinator for the year and have national and regional programmes of activities.

We have been working very closely with the European Parliament, listening to you and involving you in all our stakeholder meetings. We have launched a specific call for proposals under the Creative Europe programme, to fund transnational cooperation projects in the field of cultural heritage.

We have developed synergies with existing initiatives in the field of cultural heritage, in particular the European heritage days, the EU prize for cultural heritage and the European heritage label. All these are fully involved in the European Year, and we have established a committee of stakeholders involving 35 heritage, cultural and youth networks, selected through the voices of a structured dialogue framework on culture.

Furthermore, Commission departments have joined forces to top up the Year's dedicated budget with additional projects funded through regular funds. In the case of research, for example, this has led to over EUR 100 million of investment in cultural heritage.

Finally, we have launched a communication campaign to give high visibility to our actions. The website is up and running in 24 languages, in addition to a video, leaflets, a very active social media strategy and a newsletter which goes to 4 000 stakeholders.

But the year has only just started. A wide array of activities and events lie ahead. We are now putting the final touches to ten major initiatives at European level, organised around four pillars: engagement, protection, sustainability and innovation. We have an ambitious programme, comprising over 100 European-level events and around 2 000 national and regional events during the year. These are designed to resonate far beyond the year itself.

It is only in the light of its long-term impact that we will be able to judge the year's success. A successful year will help us to better protect and manage tangible and intangible testimonies from our past and ensure that our fellow Europeans become increasingly aware of the value of cultural heritage for our identity and for our future.

I know the Commission can count on this House's support and active participation to turn this vision into reality. Cultural heritage makes us Europeans. Our heritage makes Europe meaningful, so I believe that this is a project we all endorse and uphold, because in these difficult times, in this existential moment for Europe, culture is one of the pillars of our existence.

Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, *w imieniu grupy PPE*. – Kultura jako priorytet – to dobrze brzmi, natomiast z realizacją jest dużo gorzej. Mamy godzinę 23, na sali – 12 posłów, czyli zaledwie 1 %, na miejscach publiczności – jedna osoba, być może czekająca, aby zgasić światło. Ta późna godzina jest pewną ilustracją podejścia do kultury, która zawsze pojawia się w tym czasie, właśnie niezwykle późnym.

Alc co chcę powiedzieć dziś: bardzo się cieszę z tego, że właśnie rok dziedzictwa to jest rok 2018, ale trzeba zobaczyć przy tej okazji, jaki jest stan uczestnictwa w kulturze, zwłaszcza w tej dziedzinie. Przygotowuję sprawozdanie o barierach w uczestnictwie w kulturze i zająłem się także dziedzictwem. Chcę powiedzieć, że z najnowszych danych wynika, iż zaledwie 30 % Europejczyków minimum raz w roku regularnie odwiedza muzeum lub ogląda zabytki. Raz w roku! 80 % jest dumnych z dziedzictwa kulturowego, ale go nie dotyka, nie uczestniczy w nim. Jeżeli pytamy, dlaczego się tak dzieje, padają trzy odpowiedzi. Po pierwsze – brak czasu, po drugie – koszty, a po trzecie – brak informacji.

Po co jest rok dziedzictwa, jaki powinien mieć cel? Otóż, po pierwsze – poprawić informacje o dziedzictwie europejskim, po drugie – zwiększyć uczestnictwo w kulturze poprzez likwidację tych barier, które sami mieszkańcy odczuwają. Jeżeli tylko 30 % Europejczyków raz w roku, ale rok po roku jest w muzeum lub zwiedza, a aż 80 % z nich ma muzeum lub zabytki pod nosem, bardzo blisko, to znaczy, że ten wysiłek, który powinien być dokonany, jest wykonywany tylko i wyłącznie w tak zwanym minimum. Zwracam na to uwagę.

Silvia Costa, *a nome del gruppo S&D*. – Signor Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, avremmo voluto un orario diverso per questo importante dibattito, perché ci siamo molto battuti in Parlamento, come si sa, per questo Anno europeo del patrimonio culturale, che vede un esemplare lavoro di squadra con la Commissione, il Consiglio e la società civile.

Ringrazio naturalmente anche la Direzione generale della cultura e il nostro collega relatore Mircea Diaconu, e penso, spero veramente che ogni nostro collega si senta ambasciatore di questo Anno.

La vastità delle iniziative e della partecipazione che si sono messe in moto in tutta Europa, ma anche le risposte dell'Eurobarometro, ci confermano che avevamo visto giusto, che la stragrande maggioranza degli europei ritiene che il comune patrimonio culturale sia un bene primario da condividere, su cui l'Europa deve investire molto di più. È un messaggio in controtendenza rispetto ai nazionalismi, ai muri e alla messa in discussione dell'identità stessa dell'Europa.

È un'occasione preziosa per condividere iniziative tematiche che puntino alla tutela e alla valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale europeo materiale, immateriale, paesaggistico e digitale, bene universale che esprime la ricca diversità linguistica e culturale ma anche una comune identità europea, straordinaria risorsa di dialogo interculturale e interreligioso, come richiamato anche a Göteborg.

Come avevamo auspicato e come è emerso dal forum di Milano a dicembre, ben 13 Direzioni generali della Commissione si sono messe in campo con azioni specifiche in un approccio trasversale su tre grandi obiettivi: far sì che i cittadini, in particolare i più giovani, si sentano coinvolti, riconoscere il valore economico e occupazionale del patrimonio e valorizzare il ruolo della cultura.

Vogliamo tuttavia che questo Anno non finisca in sé, ma che sia la premessa per l'agenda per la cultura europea 2019-2021 e finalmente per una centralità di risorse e di attenzione alla cultura nel nuovo programma finanziario pluriannuale.

Branislav Škripek, *za skupinu ECR*. – Vážený pán predsedajúci, oficiálna stránka Európskeho roka kultúrneho dedičstva uvádza, že naše európske kultúrne dedičstvo, ktoré chceme nesporne chrániť a rozvíjať, má štyri podoby. Hmotné ako pamiatky, nehmotné, jazyk, zvyky, prírodné a digitálne. Pán komisár Avramopoulos, vymenovali ste tu, kto všetko sa na tomto pripomenutí kultúrneho dedičstva podieľa. Spomenuli ste vari štyritisíc hráčov. A moja otázka je: oslovili ste aj kresťanské cirkvi, ktoré Európu vybudovali? Európa je známa vďaka katedrálam – aj Štrasburg má jednu obrovskú katedrálu – a predstavujú architektonické skvosty. Dámy a páni, kolegovia, dovoľte mi však povedať, že ani jedna z tých katedrál nebola postavená sama pre seba. Zámerom je – stavba mala predstavovať úctu k Bohu. Kultúra sa zakladá, teda stojí, na hodnotách. Kresťanstvo, teda viera v Boha, je jednoznačne duchovným dedičstvom Európy. Ja mám pocit, že to tento rok kultúrneho dedičstva opomína. Kolega Zdrojewski povedal, že iba takto neskoro táto plenárka sa venuje kultúre, ale ja dodám, že ani trochu tu nevieme spomenúť úctu k Bohu a pozdvihnutie duše. Ale kresťanstvo bolo motorom pre kultúru a vedu a sociálnu sféru. A ja myslím, že je treba vyzvať, aby sme sa v tomto roku hrdo hlásili ku kultúrnemu dedičstvu kresťanstva.

(Rečník súhlasil, že odpovie na otázku položenú zdvihnutím modrej karty (článok 162 ods. 8 rokovacieho poriadku))

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE), *otázka položená zvednutím modrej karty*. – Děkuji panu kolegovi, že připomněl toto téma. Já bych ho chtěla ujistit, že pokud plánujeme na národní a regionální úrovni, např. v ČR, projekt pro tento evropský rok, tak jsme zapojili např. Olomoucké arcibiskupství, ale chci Vám položit otázku: Jaké konkrétní zapojení církve Vy byste si představoval?

Branislav Škripek (ECR), *odpoveď na otázku položenú zdvihnutím modrej karty*. – Ďakujem pani kolegyňa za otázku. Ja si myslím, že je naozaj obrovské pole pôsobnosti, ktoré kresťanské cirkvi vedia predstaviť. Predovšetkým pripomenúť históriu. Cirkevné budovy tu máme nie nato, aby sme ich iba platili, ošetrovali, aby sme ich mali otvorené. Aby množstvo ľudí, ktorí nikdy nevideli kostol zvnútra, sa mohli dostať dovnútra a pozrieť sa. Napríklad známa akcia z Čiech a Slovenska je takzvaná Noc kostolov, keď sú otvorené. Sú tam pracovníci z farnosti a môžu ukázať, čo všetko ľudia môžu spoznať. Takže ja myslím, že cirkev má čo otvoriť a mali by sme to urobiť a vedieť ich k tomu aj pozvať. Ďakujem.

Mircea Diaconu, *în numele grupului ALDE*. – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, doamnelor și domnilor, de când am început să elaborez raportul acesta am avut senzația concretă de aliniere a planetelor. Un an cu atâtă încercătură istorică, cu atât importanță și greutate, primul an în care s-a terminat Primul Război Mondial și s-au desenat frontierele Europei de azi, când au apărut noi state, noi națiuni, inclusiv țara mea, România, a apărut atunci și, din pricina asta, cred că ne aflăm într-un punct de extremă importanță pentru toate instituțiile europene.

Trebuie să mulțumesc tuturor celor care au participat la acest raport. Mulți dintre ei se află chiar aici în sală. Și, în clipa în care am trecut prin cel mai greu moment al existenței mele în Parlamentul European, și anume negocierile cu Comisia și Consiliul, i-am avut alături pe toți, am fost ca unul și am izbutit ceva ce se întâmplă foarte rar sau se acceptă foarte rar, și anume participarea Parlamentului alături de celelalte instituții europene.

Prima reacție a fost că încălcăm tratatele – un dezastru. În final am argumentat cu toții și am izbutit să obținem acest lucru, de aceea suntem toți împreună. Argumentul meu de atunci a fost următorul: e un an cu mare importanță, trebuie să fim toți alături la această sărbătoare, la acest muzeu deschis, uriaș muzeu cât 27 de țări, deschis un an de zile, simbolic vorbind, la care trebuie să ne cunoaștem fiecare pe fiecare, să etalăm ce avem mai bun și mai reprezentativ pentru identitatea noastră națională în fața celuiilalt și a celorlalți.

Argumentul meu a fost următorul: dacă e o problemă, o falie, este ruperea dintre Europa, instituțiile europene și cetățean. Cei care pot uni mai bine acest lucru sunt chiar membrii Parlamentului. De aceea, îi invit pe membrii Parlamentului să se implice peste tot prin toate țările membre în desfășurarea acestui An european al patrimoniului. Veștile pe care ni le-ați dat, domnule comisar, sunt excelente. Sper că la finalul acestui an să ne bucurăm de rezultatele scontate.

Curzio Maltese, *a nome del gruppo GUE/NGL*. – Signor Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, in un minuto vi racconto una piccola storia, quella di Paolo Storchi, che è un giovane archeologo italiano, un trentenne, che ha un sogno, che è quello di riportare alla luce un antico insediamento del III secolo a.C. tra Reggio Emilia e Parma. È un progetto bellissimo, che ha avuto l'appoggio di importanti università italiane ed europee ma mai un finanziamento pubblico dal governo italiano.

Allora lui cosa ha fatto? È diventato famoso per un altro motivo: ha vinto un quiz televisivo che si chiama «L'eredità» in Italia e la metà della sua vincita l'ha destinata a far andare avanti gli scavi per ritrovare Tannetum.

Ecco, io mi auguro che quest'Anno del patrimonio culturale serva ad aiutare tanti Paolo Storchi d'Europa che, emarginati dai tagli alla cultura e all'istruzione, comunque continuano a lottare per conservare il patrimonio del passato e consegnarlo alle generazioni future.

Patrick O'Flynn, *on behalf of the EFDD Group*. – Mr President, as a Brexiteer I often point out there is No European demos. People are primarily loyal to their own nation state, and that is a major flaw in the EU project. I do acknowledge, however, that there is indeed a shared European cultural heritage based primarily on the Christian religion. Look at our cathedrals, including the astonishing one in this fair city. Our great universities, too, grew out of monasteries and cathedral schools, while many masterpiece paintings depict Bible scenes.

Yet the European Year of Cultural Heritage does not seem to understand this, talking instead of 'discovering diversity' and 'starting an inter-cultural conversation'. It promises to be little more, I am afraid, than a multicultural group hug, and yet seldom before has the cultural underpinning which, ultimately, advanced ideas such as female emancipation and democratic reform been more in need of honouring or affirming.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Tedy evropský rok kulturního dědictví 2018 začíná s velkým očekáváním tak, jak tady řekl kolega Diaconu. Proč se chceme vrátit ke kulturnímu dědictví, k našim kořenům? Protože pokud budeme znát svoji historii a kulturní dědictví, budeme moci lépe rozumět dnešku a také připravovat budoucnost společné Evropy.

Z těch mnoha cílů evropského roku bych zdůraznila zaměření na regiony, místní aktivity, především zapojení mládeže a také nové technologie. EP přímo výslovně vyzval k připomenutí důležitých symbolických mezníků tohoto roku, jako je např. 100 let od konce první světové války a vznik nových států. Mě bude velmi zajímat, jak se podaří právě zapojit mladou generaci, ty, kteří zatím zapojeni nebyli, a využít rozpočet, který byl v částce 8 000 000 nakonec schválen.

Jako poslankyně se tedy hlásím osobně k podpoře právě regionálních iniciativ, které vznikají např. v mém regionu. Bude to výstava výtvarných děl Rozlomená doba v Olomouci a také konference o zrodu moderního Středoevropana v Kroměříži, kde si budeme připomínat rok 1848 a 1918. Byl také podán vzdělávací projekt pro tvůrčí zapojení mladých lidí ze 4 zemí. Budu velmi pečlivě sledovat, jaké projekty budou podpořeny, protože nesmí to být jen kampaň, ale musí to být skutečně tvůrčí činnost. Obávám se, že pokud by zvítězila byrokracie nad kreativitou, byla by to promarněná šance a to se nesmí stát.

Petra Kammerevert (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Das Jahr des kulturellen Erbes ist eine wirklich europäische Initiative. Das gilt sowohl für seine Entstehungsgeschichte als auch für die Umsetzung und Zielsetzung. Gerade heute, wo Populisten versuchen, das kulturelle Erbe für ihre nationalistische Agenda zu vereinnahmen, müssen wir das Einende statt des Trennenden stärker in den Vordergrund stellen. Das heißt aber auch, dass sich 2018 nicht darin erschöpfen darf, ein bloßes Nebeneinander nationaler, primär kulturelle Nabelschau betreibender Initiativen zu sein. Das europäische Miteinander muss im Vordergrund stehen.

Das Jahr darf auch nicht zu einem Strohfeuer verkommen. Das europäische Projekt braucht einen neuen Anschub. Sich nur auf einen gemeinsamen Binnenmarkt und Verbraucherrechte zu beschränken, ist dabei nicht ausreichend.

Was wir benötigen, ist eine vertiefte europäische Kultur- und Bildungspolitik, damit sich die Bürgerinnen und Bürger auch in Zukunft mit der EU identifizieren können. Das Jahr des kulturellen Erbes muss von einem Geist des europäischen Miteinanders und der gemeinsamen Werte, die uns alle verbinden, geprägt sein, und dieser Geist muss bei allen Menschen ankommen – egal wo und wie sie leben, egal wie alt sie sind. Es muss auch stärker politische Signale aussenden. Stichworte sind hier: Verbesserung des Zugangs zu Kultur, kulturelle Bildung, Erhaltung des Kulturerbes, Digitalisierung unseres Filmerbes, Behebung der chronischen Unterfinanzierung von Kultur und Bildung.

Lassen Sie uns gemeinsam mit den Mitgliedstaaten und den vielen Zivilgesellschaften die Initiativen in diesem Jahr zu einem Erfolg machen, der nachwirkt und der Europa näher zusammenbringt.

Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE). – Señor presidente, a mí no me parece mal hablar de noche de patrimonio cultural. Recuerdo que Hegel escribió: «La lechuza de Minerva inicia su vuelo al caer el crepúsculo»; o sea, que no me parece inadecuado.

Pero dicho esto, yo celebro mucho que las instituciones europeas hayan proclamado el año 2018 como Año Europeo del Patrimonio Cultural y que colaboren en esta iniciativa, entre otros, el Consejo de Europa, la Unesco o Europa Nostra. La historia y la cultura europeas han sido profundamente dinámicas, sin comparación posible. Y hoy tenemos un patrimonio cultural realmente excepcional. A mí me gustaría que al final de este 2018 se pudiera lanzar un ambicioso programa o plan de acción de la Unión para el patrimonio cultural que sirviera en el futuro para preservarlo y difundirlo.

En efecto, este año 2018 no debe limitarse a un conjunto de actos o reuniones durante estos doce meses, sino que debería tener continuidad, señor comisario. Y por ello, me gustaría esa idea del plan de acción. Un año de atención a nuestro patrimonio no me parece suficiente. Creo que ese plan de acción incluso debería contemplar la creación de un fondo o partida presupuestaria específica para que la Unión contribuya a la recuperación y preservación del patrimonio cultural, por ejemplo, de importantes conjuntos arquitectónicos de los Estados miembros. Ahora que hablamos de las perspectivas financieras futuras, ¿por qué no pensar en una partida como esa? Ya sé que, a menudo, estas acciones se cofinancian a través de los fondos europeos para el desarrollo regional, pero una partida específica daría mayor visibilidad.

No solo es la paz, no solo es la economía, no solo es la globalización el argumento que justifica la Unión Europea de hoy. Lo es también el sustrato cultural histórico común que se plasma en ese brillante patrimonio cultural. Por consiguiente, la Unión también debe contribuir a preservarlo. ¿La base jurídica para ello? A mí me parece que está bastante claro en el artículo 167 del Tratado de Funcionamiento. Y, además no hace falta que subraye el gran impacto turístico y económico de un buen cuidado del patrimonio cultural.

Luigi Morgano (S&D). – Signor Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, concordo con gli interventi dei colleghi che mi hanno preceduto e proprio per questo motivo mi limito solo ad alcune sottolineature.

Premetto anch'io una sola osservazione critica: mi spiace che la discussione sia confinata a fine giornata perché meriterebbe una più corale condivisione da parte dei colleghi del Parlamento europeo.

Il 2018, Anno europeo del patrimonio culturale, deve infatti vedere un impegno corale che lo renda non un punto di arrivo ma un punto di partenza. Diversamente metteremmo in difficoltà tutte le motivazioni e le finalità della scelta che per la verità, e lo sottolineo positivamente, ha visto in modo fattivo partecipare tutte le istituzioni europee, gli Stati dell'Unione e la società civile.

Non è un caso: la conservazione e la valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale europeo, infatti, sono tra l'altro una dimensione fondamentale dell'identità europea, esito di una storia convissuta e condivisa, che certamente comprende la dimensione religiosa cristiana.

La coerenza, che non può mancarci, ci chiede che nel prossimo quadro finanziario come Parlamento operiamo alcune scelte conseguenti con riferimento alle nuove generazioni, all'educazione al patrimonio culturale, alla consapevolezza che il patrimonio culturale è fattore di coesione e di inclusione.

Момчил Неков (S&D). – Г-н Председател, обявяването на 2018 г. за европейска година на културното наследство свидетелства за промяна на менталитетите. Крайно време е да осъзнаем, че за европейците културата и традициите са изключително важни и не можем да правим повече компромиси с това. В момента, в който държавите изпитват финансови затруднения, първото нещо, което правят, е да орежат бюджета за култура. Тази порочна практика трябва да спре.

Според последните данни на Евробарометър, повече от 80% от европейските граждани смятат, че културното наследство е важно за техния регион, държава и за Съюза. Нека не забравяме, че Европа е посещавана от милиони туристи всяка година именно заради богатите бит и култура.

Надявам се поставянето на тази тема в общественото пространство да не отmine заедно с 2018 г., а да даде началото на сериозен дебат за средствата, заделени за култура в следващата многогодишна финансова рамка. За мое съжаление, България, която официално поe кормилото на европредседателството, е една от малкото държави, които не планират специално финансиране за културно наследство. Жалко за пропуснатата възможност.

Procedura catch-the-eye

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Ta debata byla velmi zajímavá. Já považuji společné kulturní dědictví také za mimořádně důležitý fenomén a jsem rád, že ta debata zde probíhá.

Zdůraznil bych ještě jednu věc. Projekty evropského společného kulturního prostoru posilují evropskou soudržnost a to si myslím, že v dnešní době je mimořádně důležité. V dnešní době občas někteří mladí lidé plně nechápou, proč evropské státy spolu spolupracují, proč je zde evropská integrace, jaké výhody evropská integrace přináší. Myslím si, že právě přes kulturu můžeme posilovat naši evropskou soudržnost a bojovat tak proti antievropským náladám, proti separatismu, proti nacionalismu. Ten boj je nenásilný a je podle mého názoru správný.

Já jsem velmi rád, že zde byly zmíněny transnacionální projekty, které právě mají ukázat společné evropské kulturní kořeny. Žádám o to, pane komisaři, aby tyto projekty nebyly zatíženy přílišnou byrokracií tak, aby nadšence, autory těchto projektů plně nezahltily vyplňováním různých ležster a dokumentů, ale aby opravdu ti lidé se mohli věnovat své kreativitě, jak již zmiňovala paní poslankyně Šojdřová. Bude dobré potom ty projekty také následně vyhodnotit, abychom viděli, jaké dopady měly a jak byly občany EU navštěvovány.

Κώστας Μαυρίδης (S&D). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, οι αρχές και οι αξίες μας ως Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση είναι το απόσταγμα του ευρωπαϊκού μας πολιτισμού. Ο δε πολιτισμός μας, κύριε Επίτροπε, είναι το υπέρτατο συμφέρον που μας κρατά μαζί για να διαμορφώνουμε το κοινό μας ευρωπαϊκό μέλλον. Για αυτό και χαιρετίζουμε θερμά αυτή την πρωτοβουλία και συγχαρητήρια σε όλους τους συντελεστές. Ωστόσο, η χαρά μας γίνεται πόνος και θλίψη ταυτοχρόνως, γιατί σε έδαφος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, στο Βόρειο κατεχόμενο έδαφος της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, ο τουρκικός στρατός και ο Ερντογάν συνεχίζουν να προστάζουν. Θα σας δώσω μερικούς αριθμούς που μας αφορούν όλους ως Ευρωπαίους: 500 ελληνορθόδοξες εκκλησίες και ξωκλήσια και 17 μοναστήρια, που επιβίωσαν από το πέρασμα αιώνων και κατακτητών, καταστρέφονται. 15.000 εκκλησιαστικές εικόνες κλάπηκαν και δεν βρέθηκαν ποτέ. 60.000 αρχαία κειμήλια έχουν μεταφερθεί παράνομα εκτός Κύπρου. Τώρα γνωρίζετε γιατί η χαρά μας είναι ταυτοχρόνως πόνος και θλίψη.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, το 2018 ως Ευρωπαϊκό Έτος πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς πρέπει, πέραν των άλλων, να αφιερωθεί στον επαναπατρισμό των κλαπέντων πολιτιστικών αγαθών. Δεν θα αναφερθώ, κύριε Αβραμόπουλε, σήμερα στους λεηλατηθέντες από τους Ναζί αρχαιολογικούς θησαυρούς κατά τη διάρκεια της γερμανικής κατοχής το 1941-1944 στην Ελλάδα, ζήτημα για το οποίο έχω επανειλημμένα ενημερώσει το Σώμα. Θα επικεντρωθώ, κύριε Αβραμόπουλε, με αφορμή τη Βουλγαρική Προεδρία, στο ζήτημα των κλαπέντων θησαυρών της Μακεδονίας, των αποκαλούμενων «Ελγινείων» της Μακεδονίας. Την άνοιξη λοιπόν του 1917, τα τότε βουλγαρικά στρατεύματα κατοχής επέδραμαν στην Ιερά Μονή Εικοσιφοίνισσης και στην Ιερά Μονή Τιμίου Προδρόμου, τις οποίες λεηλάτησαν αρπάζοντας εκκλησιαστικά κείμενα, χειρόγραφα και ιστορικά βιβλία, τα οποία βρίσκονται σήμερα στη Σόφια, στο Κέντρο Σλαβοβυζαντινών Σπουδών «Ivan Dujev» και στο Ιστορικό Μουσείο της Βουλγαρίας. Θεωρώ ότι είναι μια ιστορική ευκαιρία για τη Βουλγαρία να προχωρήσει άμεσα στην επιστροφή των «Ελγινείων» της Μακεδονίας. Αυτά θα έλεγα σήμερα στον κύριο Borissou, ο οποίος διέπραξε το ατόπημα να αποκαλέσει τα Σκόπια «Μακεδονία». Δυστυχώς όμως δεν έλαβα τον λόγο.

(Fine della procedura catch-the-eye)

Dimitris Avramopoulos, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, I would like to express my thanks to all of you who participated in this debate. To be frank with you, I would prefer to see more people in the Chamber today. You who are present here have proven your strong interest in, and support for, the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Our cultural heritage forms our identity, which is naturally rooted in the national and local context, but which also transcends borders to form and strengthen a European identity. Our cultures have common denominators, such as common democratic values, common principles and, most importantly, a common cultural consciousness, which will define our common European cultural future.

With full respect for our national cultures, we can build the pillars of our common cultural architecture for the years to come. I am sure that many events that will be happening throughout the year will successfully spread this message. In this context, I would urge you to become ambassadors of the Year by making its ideas and activities widely known amongst European citizens and participating in events, be it at European, national or local level.

The Commission will continue working with you as one of our principal partners of the Year. More than the economy, what will define the future of our union is our common cultural identity, which will guide us towards our common future as genuine believers in the European ideal. We can be, in a very harmonious way, proud of our national heritage, and we can be Europeans in our spirit and consciousness. This is the noble goal that the European Year of Cultural Heritage is meant to serve.

Presidente. – La discussione è chiusa.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD), per iscritto. – Il patrimonio culturale europeo è un bene comune che va tutelato, preservato e valorizzato al meglio e non utilizzato strumentalmente per cercare di concedersi un po' di visibilità in vista della campagna elettorale. Credo che sia fondamentale elaborare un piano ed una strategia di lungo periodo anche a livello europeo e non lanciare iniziative estemporanee, peraltro priva delle dotazioni finanziarie idonee, che si riducono al solo livello mediatico.

Il patrimonio culturale va preservato e valorizzato quotidianamente perché solo la cultura e la conoscenza possono aiutarci ad ottenere i mezzi intellettivi utili per interpretare al meglio la complessa realtà presente, nonché a capire ed accettare chi è diverso da noi. A questo proposito, servirebbero progetti concreti di recupero, preservazione e valorizzazione di beni culturali. In questo modo, i cittadini europei potrebbero toccare con mano l'utilità di una simile iniziativa che altrimenti rischia di rimanere uno spot vuoto.

Troppi, inoltre, sono gli operatori culturali la cui professionalità non viene riconosciuta e che sono abbandonati quando i riflettori si spengono. L'Unione europea dovrebbe invece dare manforte a tali soggetti e offrire soluzioni, insieme agli Stati membri, ai problemi che da soli si trovano a dover affrontare.

Dominique Bilde (ENF), par écrit. – Avec 453 sites inscrits, l'Europe rassemble environ la moitié du patrimoine mondial de l'Unesco. Et, bien qu'aux termes de l'article 167 du traité sur le Fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, la préservation du patrimoine relève de la responsabilité des États, la contribution de programmes comme Europe Créative a été non négligeable. Ceux-ci ne sauraient toutefois occulter les besoins de financements pour la rénovation du bâti ancien, alors que les fonds publics se raréfient. La situation est notamment critique en France, exacerbée par le désengagement de l'État des finances locales. Ainsi, entre 2003 et 2007, la proportion de monuments dans un état de conservation défectueux est passée de 32 % à 41 %, la crise accentuant cette tendance. Les actions de sensibilisation déployées dans le cadre de l'année du patrimoine ne sauraient donc se suppléer à un effort réel de valorisation, d'autant que l'Eurobaromètre du 7 décembre 2017 démontre que l'importance accordée au patrimoine est majoritairement partagée par les Européens. De même, les actions de bénévolat ne sauraient être assimilées au travail de rénovation, lequel requiert des compétences précises. L'année européenne du patrimoine culturel pourrait être l'occasion de promouvoir ces professions méconnues, malgré leurs perspectives de carrière tangibles.

Andrea Bocskor (PPE), írásban. – Az európai év fő célkitűzése az európai kulturális örökség, mint az évszázados történelemből fakadó, a tagállamokat és az európai népeket egybefonó közös hagyaték megünneplése. A kezdeményezés azt hivatott elősegíteni, hogy minél többen fedezzék fel és ismerjék meg Európa kulturális hagyatékát. Fontos, hogy kulturális örökségünket ápoljuk és óvjuk, valamint, hogy átadjuk a következő generációknak. Éppen ezért, ebben az európai évben különösen a fiatalokhoz szeretnénk szólni. 2018-ban számos kulturális eseményre kerül majd sor európai, nemzeti, regionális és helyi szinten egyaránt. Az év során a polgárok bekapcsolódhatnak az európai kulturális örökséget és értékeket bemutató, népszerűsítő eseményekbe és projektekbe, ami megerősíti az európaiság érzését.

Magyarországon nyitó konferenciával indul a Kulturális Örökség Európai Éve szakmai programsorozata január 22-én, ahol bemutatásra kerül az Év hazai megvalósításának a stratégiája, továbbá az állami-műemlék helyreállítási projektek, illetve a kormány értékmegőrzésre vonatkozó célkitűzései. Magyarország a hazai épített és természeti örökség védelmét, megőrzését kiemelt feladatnak tekinti, legyen szó hazai jelentőségű, vagy világörökségi helyszínről. Az Év hazai megvalósításához ezúton is sok sikert kívánok.

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (ALDE), *in writing*. – I warmly welcome this year's European year of cultural heritage. Undoubtedly, our cultural heritage and history are powerful agents which could reinforce a sense of belonging in EU citizens to our common European space and identity. Looking from this perspective, I believe that the initiative will promote cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion in a time when racism, xenophobia and nationalism are threatening our EU integration. In the long term, the European year of cultural heritage will help build closer relationships between different regions at EU, national, regional and local level. Last but not least, the European year of cultural heritage could be a golden opportunity to teach future generations about our traditions and cultural heritage. So let us seize that opportunity – let us not miss it.

Csaba Sógor (PPE), *írásban*. – A 2018-as évben rendkívül aktuális a kulturális örökség európai éve és az arról folyó közbeszéd, hogy Európa kulturális hagyatékát számba vegyük. Most, amikor a kulturális emlékezet és örökség relativizálódik, amikor sok európai számára feltevődik a kérdés, hogy pontosan kik is vagyunk mi, európaiak és milyen jövőkép áll előttünk, akkor fontos felmutatnunk, hogy melyek azok az értékek, amelyek bennünket, európaiakat összekötnek és egyúttal megkülönböztetnek másoktól. Kulturális örökségünk egy része vallási hagyományainkhoz, más része nemzeti identitásunkhoz kötődik és vannak olyan összetevők is, amelyek a közös európai identitásunk elemei. Mint a humanizmus, a reneszánsz vagy éppen a vallásszabadság. A vallásszabadság, amelyet Európában szinte napra pontosan 450 évvel ezelőtt, 1568-ban mondtak ki először az erdélyi Tordán, harminc évvel a nantes-i ediktum előtt. Én sok sikert kívánok a Bizottságnak az év eseményeihez, a tagállamoktól pedig kérem, hogy tegyenek meg mindent a színvonalas eseménysorozat sikere érdekében.

Θεόδωρος Ζαγοράκης (PPE), *γραφικώς*. – Η ανακήρυξη του 2018 ως Ευρωπαϊκού Έτους Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς, αποτελεί ιδανική ευκαιρία να διεκδικήσουμε περισσότερους πόρους για τον πολιτισμό. Πόρους για την ανάδειξη των μνημείων, των αρχαιολογικών χώρων και των μουσείων μας. Η υποστήριξη της πολιτιστικής μας ταυτότητας αποτελεί υποχρέωση απέναντι στην ιστορία και τον τόπο μας αλλά και παρακαταθήκη στα παιδιά και τους νέους μας. Παράλληλα, θα πρέπει να υπογραμμίσουμε πως μέσα από την ενίσχυση των κλάδων και των επιχειρήσεων που σχετίζονται με τον πολιτισμό μπορούν να δημιουργηθούν νέες θέσεις εργασίας και επιχειρηματικές ευκαιρίες που μπορούν, σε σύμπραξη με τομείς όπως ο τουρισμός και η γεωργία, αλλά και με τον εκσυγχρονισμό των υποδομών και τα ψηφιακά μέσα, να συνεισφέρουν καθοριστικά στην οικονομία μας.

23. Porządek obrad następnego posiedzenia: patrz protokół

24. Zamknięcie posiedzenia

(La seduta è tolta alle 23.09)

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Skróty i symbole

*	Procedura konsultacji
***	Procedura zgody
***I	Zwykła procedura ustawodawcza, pierwsze czytanie
***II	Zwykła procedura ustawodawcza, drugie czytanie
***III	Zwykła procedura ustawodawcza, trzecie czytanie

(Typ procedury zależy od podstawy prawnej zaproponowanej w danym projekcie aktu.)

Rozwinięcia skrótów nazw komisji parlamentarnych

AFET	Komisja Spraw Zagranicznych
DEVE	Komisja Rozwoju
INTA	Komisja Handlu Międzynarodowego
BUDG	Komisja Budżetowa
CONT	Komisja Kontroli Budżetowej
ECON	Komisja Gospodarcza i Monetarna
EMPL	Komisja Zatrudnienia i Spraw Socjalnych
ENVI	Komisja Środowiska Naturalnego, Zdrowia Publicznego i Bezpieczeństwa Żywności
ITRE	Komisja Przemysłu, Badań Naukowych i Energii
IMCO	Komisja Rynku Wewnętrznego i Ochrony Konsumentów
TRAN	Komisja Transportu i Turystyki
REGI	Komisja Rozwoju Regionalnego
AGRI	Komisja Rolnictwa i Obszarów Wiejskich
PECH	Komisja Rybołówstwa
CULT	Komisja Kultury i Edukacji
JURI	Komisja Prawna
LIBE	Komisja Wolności Obywatelskich, Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych
AFCO	Komisja Spraw Konstytucyjnych
FEMM	Komisja Praw Kobiet i Równych Szans
PETI	Komisja Petycji
DROI	Podkomisja Praw Człowieka
SEDE	Podkomisja Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony

Rozwinięcia skrótów nazw grup politycznych

PPE	Grupa Europejskiej Partii Ludowej (Chrześcijańscy Demokraci)
S&D	Grupa Postępowego Sojuszu Socjalistów i Demokratów w Parlamencie Europejskim
ECR	Grupa Europejskich Konserwatystów i Reformatorów
ALDE	Grupa Porozumienia Liberalistów i Demokratów na rzecz Europy
GUE/NGL	Konfederacyjna Grupa Zjednoczonej Lewicy Europejskiej/Nordycka Zielona Lewica
Verts/ALE	Grupa Zielonych/Wolne Przymierze Europejskie
EFDD	Europa Wolności i Demokracji Bezpośredniej
ENF	Grupa Europa Narodów i Wolności
NI	Niezrzeszeni