

PEŁNE SPRAWOZDANIE Z OBRAD 23 PAŹDZIERNIKA 2018 R.

(C/2024/3523)

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

SESJA 2018-2019

Posiedzenia od 22 do 25 października 2018 r.

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PEŁNE SPRAWOZDANIE Z OBRAD 23 PAŹDZIERNIKA 2018 R.

PRZEWODNICTWO: BOGUSŁAW LIBERADZKI

Wiceprzewodniczący

1. Otwarcie posiedzenia

(Posiedzenie zostało otwarte o godz. 9.00)

2. Sprostowania (art. 231 Regulaminu): patrz protokół

3. Wykorzystywanie danych użytkowników Facebooka przez Cambridge Analytica a ochrona danych (debata)

Przewodniczący. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest oświadczenie Komisji: Wykorzystywanie danych użytkowników Facebooka przez Cambridge Analytica a ochrona danych (2018/2855(RSP)).

Věra Jourová, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, the Facebook Cambridge Analytica case was, in many ways, a wake-up call for all of us. We were reminded once again that in the digital world our personal data can be misused, abused and used against us. We were reminded again that cybersecurity and disinformation are a serious threat for free and democratic elections and that the digital arms race is not a thing of the future. It is happening right here and right now.

It was a clear warning sign that the election periods are particularly prone to disinformation and manipulation by private and foreign interests and that the European elections are not immune to this threat. We must strengthen our joint response to dangers to our democracy. The Facebook Cambridge Analytica scandal was not an isolated case as, since then, we have learned of new data breaches. Every such new case confirms the importance and the urgency of acting. Every such case confirms that the new EU data protection rules are not a privilege. They are a necessity, as you point out in the draft resolution.

The Commission shares many of your concerns concerning data protection and misuse of the research argument, and calls for algorithmic accountability. We also support wholeheartedly the call for the prompt adoption of the European political parties regulation by the co-legislators. We also take note of some new ideas for future regulatory action and electoral safeguards. The Commission has already been working to ensure fair and resilient elections or to deal with disinformation, which covers some of Parliament's ideas.

While we should not shy away from reinforcing our regulations where necessary, Europe is better equipped now than ever before with the powerful tools provided by the new data protection law, which were not in place at the time of the Cambridge Analytica breaches. It is important to enforce the existing rules at their full capacity.

I am in regular contact with the Chair of the European Data Protection Board and the Chair of the UK Data Protection Authority, who is leading the investigation into Facebook and Cambridge Analytica. We fully support the coordinated response of the EU data protection authorities.

I have also raised the US investigation into the matter with the Chair of the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Mr Simons, who was in Brussels last week for the second annual review of the Privacy Shield. He reassured me that this investigation is a key priority for the FTC and that it is ongoing. We have to wait for the final outcome of the investigation, but we will watch this very closely and stay in contact with the FTC.

But we also need to look beyond the case itself because it sent shock waves through the core of our democratic system. Our current election rules, practices and habits stem from our non-digital past. Campaign spending limits, strict rules on political advertising, including transparency on who is campaigning and who paid for it, the silence period, the role of the media in disinformation – all the offline rules – must be enforced online in the digital world. One thing is clear: the upcoming elections will not be business as usual and we cannot treat them as if they were. We cannot be naive and we have very little time to act.

The Commission therefore encourages Member States to establish and support a national elections network. The idea is that such a network would be able to quickly detect potential threats and swiftly enforce existing rules, including available financial sanctions. We have also stepped up our game against cyber-threats and to address disinformation. My colleague, Commissioner King, will tell you more about this in the concluding remarks, but I just want to stress that the Commission is not looking idly at those new developments.

We have brought in a package of measures to strengthen resilience against classical cybersecurity threats, like hacking in 2017. On disinformation, the Commission proposed a package of measures in the Communication on tackling online disinformation, based around transparency, traceability and accountability. We asked major IT platforms to commit to an EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation, which was presented last month. But we also have to recognise the fact that many companies, including Facebook, are trying to fix the mistakes they made and support us in the effort to make elections fairer and more transparent.

It goes without saying that the pressure you in this Chamber put on them brings positive results. I am counting on cross-party support for this package because it is ideologically neutral. The truth is that this is not, as such, about politicians. This is about the right of European people to make their choice as freely as possible, free from illegal manipulation, free from disinformation and free from foreign interference. Parliament's support for this package is crucial and your resolution is a great opportunity to send a clear message to the EU governments, but also to other relevant stakeholders. The European elections take place very soon. If we want to be prepared, we have to act now and we have to act fast.

I am encouraged by last week's European Council, which welcomed the Commission proposals, in the Communication called 'Securing free and fair European elections', on election cooperation networks, online transparency, protection against cybersecurity incidents, unlawful data manipulation, fighting disinformation campaigns and tightening the rules on European political party funding. It also called for a rapid examination and operational follow-up by the competent authorities. I therefore hope that together we can advance rapidly and shield ourselves better against manipulation, disinformation and abuse, also in light of the upcoming elections.

Paulo Rangel, *em nome do Grupo PPE*. – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Comissária, não há hoje dúvida alguma de que a interferência através das redes sociais (estamos aqui a ver o caso do Facebook, mas também de outras), a manipulação do ponto de vista político e de um ponto de vista mais geral são um perigo, um risco, uma ameaça.

O caso Cambridge Analytica mostrou claramente que é possível interferir num processo eleitoral. A nós não nos preocupa apenas a questão eleitoral; claro, como câmara política, essa preocupa-nos, mas a utilização de dados de cidadãos em qualquer matéria que não apenas a matéria política é também condenável, é um risco e é um perigo.

E por isso, com base neste caso que conhecemos, com base nas suspeitas fortes que temos no caso dos Estados Unidos, com base, por exemplo, no que está precisamente a acontecer agora no Brasil, onde se multiplicam de parte a parte a suspeitas de *fake news* e de manipulação de algoritmos para fazer campanha eleitoral, é fundamental que tomemos medidas, medidas para as eleições europeias porque essas são uma urgência, mas medidas que sejam de médio e longo prazo para todos os processos eleitorais.

Como digo, para nós, não é apenas a questão eleitoral que está em causa, é uma questão de cidadania geral para todas as matérias. Isto significa que não será apenas com uma interferência ou com uma legislação neste caso, mas pela compreensão de como podemos olhar para a sociedade democrática do futuro, sabendo que as redes sociais têm de ter aí um papel e que nós, assim como fomos capazes de regular o papel da comunicação social na sociedade passada, seremos capazes de regular o papel do novo mundo das redes sociais numa sociedade democrática moderna.

O desafio que está perante nós é um desafio constitucional muito mais ambicioso do que apenas este de impedir para já uma interferência de momento.

Udo Bullmann, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Mr President, the Cambridge Analytica scandal is the biggest manipulation of the democratic process so far in the digital age. This is not an isolated incident, Cambridge Analytica is the latest in a long series. A wave of massive data breaches has been rolling across Europe – there's been Yahoo, eBay, Uber and Facebook, to name just a few.

In the first half of 2018 alone, 2.2 billion people were affected by data breaches. A study from Oxford University, in cooperation with Lund University has shown that in Sweden, in the Swedish election, about 30% of online communication was fake news, and that a whole lot of all that fake news was imported from foreign countries.

That means, today, we are talking about trust in the election. We are talking about our free ability to vote. We are talking about political preferences being manipulated. We are talking about the selection of political leadership. We are talking about freedom and democracy.

According to the NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg, 80% of disinformation comes from Russia.

Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Das kann so nicht weitergehen! Unsere Demokratie ist eine Demokratie der Bürgerinnen und Bürger und nicht derjenigen, die Daten manipulieren oder Daten kaufen. Wenn Sie zehn Likes haben von jemandem, dann können Sie ihn so gut beschreiben wie ein Arbeitskollege. Mit 70 Likes wissen Sie mehr als der Mitbewohner, mit 150 Likes mehr als das Familienmitglied und mit 300 Likes soviel wie der jeweilige Ehepartner. Das bedeutet, wir laufen Gefahr, persönliche Souveränität zu verlieren, wir laufen Gefahr, mehr demokratische Souveränität zu verlieren. Das Selbstbestimmungsrecht des Volkes an der Wiege jeder demokratischen Bewegung ist in Gefahr. Und wir müssen sagen, dass die nächste Europawahl darüber entscheidet, ob wir dieses Gefecht für Freiheit und Demokratie gewinnen, oder ob wir es verlieren.

Wir haben mit der Datenschutzgrundverordnung angefangen. Das war ein richtiger Schritt. Aber wir müssen weitergehen – in der Gesetzgebung, in der Reform unserer nationalen Wahlgesetze und im Schutz der Privatsphäre im elektronischen Datensicherheitsbereich.

Ich danke der Frau Kommissarin, dass sie diese Diskussion mit uns führt. Es ist fünf Minuten vor zwölf. Und ich danke – ein ungewöhnlicher Schritt – unseren exzellenten Fotografinnen und Fotografen, dass sie uns heute Morgen begleiten. Wenn ich Sie bitten darf, einmal ein Bild von der Ratsbank zu machen heute Morgen, wäre das auch ein sehr eindrückliches Bild. Wo ist eigentlich der österreichische Ratsvorsitz in einer solchen Diskussion? Wenn Sie hinter den Kulissen *ePrivacy* blockieren, wenn Sie dafür sorgen, dass wir in der Gesetzgebung nicht weiterkommen und heute Morgen nicht einmal in diesem Plenum sind?

Was ist das für eine Grundhaltung des Rates, wenn es um Demokratie und Freiheit geht? Das kann ich nicht akzeptieren, und so können wir nicht arbeiten. Ich glaube, Herr Präsident, wir sollten dem Ratsvorsitz eine entsprechende Mitteilung machen, wie ernst die Debatte mittlerweile in Europa ist.

Przewodniczący. – Dziękuję bardzo Panu Przewodniczącemu Bullmannowi. Tak, stosownie zareagujemy.

Daniel Dalton, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, trust is vital in the digital era. With more of our lives taking place online and increasing consumer choice, people can, and do, get up and leave when that trust is damaged. What happened with Facebook and Cambridge Analytica was an unacceptable abuse on a vast scale. Everyone can agree that this must not happen again, and I have been supportive of the ongoing investigations.

The UK Information Commissioner's Office, which currently handles 30% of all European data protection board cases, is doing a thorough job of investigating. It has already issued a fine to Facebook. Cambridge Analytica is no more. It is clear that Facebook does not walk away from this scandal unscathed. Facebook knows it will need to rebuild its reputation in the eyes of its users, and as politicians it's not our role to dictate exactly how they do that. Nor is it our role to tell users how they should react. Most Europeans have not given up their Facebook account.

Clear legal limits and strict conditions on political profiling have been imposed by the new GDPR rules. Therefore, we should allow the GDPR time to bed in before we throw the baby out with the bathwater and start to chuck more legislation at the problem. And also let's try not to fool ourselves that Facebook manipulation was responsible for Brexit or Trump. People would have voted for them regardless of Facebook. It was already prevalent in our society.

The GDPR is not perfect, but at the speed at which technology moves and innovation moves, any new laws in this area need to keep up with the modern world. We should focus on addressing this, rather than trying to point-score by taking dangerous steps to suspend the privacy shield which is proposed in the resolution we will vote on later. This would deny our citizens the protections that it offers.

Sophia in 't Veld, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, although I might not agree with everything Mr Dalton says, I agree with one thing: that we shouldn't forget in this whole debate that the biggest threat to democracy is still offline and not online, in populist movements, governments, even in the European Union, who are trying to undermine democracy and the rule of law, and we should speak out.

On the GDPR, differently to Mr Dalton, I think that we should go faster. First of all, GDPR is the best privacy law in the world, but if it's not being implemented properly then it's useless. We should be looking at the means that the data protection authorities have in order to tackle the challenges on the table. For example, the Dutch Data Protection Authority has about 150 staff. They cannot fight Facebook. They don't have the same means.

Secondly, you say that the investigations are advancing. But are they advancing fast enough? You say Facebook is trying to fix its mistakes. I don't know, I'm not terribly convinced myself, to be honest, because they may have fixed some mistakes because they had to, but they're making new ones in the meantime – they're not mistakes, they're actually deliberately trying to circumvent the law. I hear that now Whatsapp is being used increasingly to spread all sorts of nonsense online.

That also brings me to new legislation. Contrary to Mr Dalton, I do believe that we need further legislation in the form of e-privacy, which is indeed being blocked by the Council, but the right-wing parties in this House have also voted against it. I really don't understand how you can stand here and say 'I'm terribly worried about what's happening to our democracy' and at the same time try to water down e-privacy. How can you do that? It's hypocrisy.

(Applause)

I think we also need to recognise that, in our very legitimate aim to strengthen security, we have very often very rapidly passed legislation that undermines the privacy and the legal protection of our citizens, and risks undermining the rule of law and democracy as well. We should have a proper evaluation before coming up with, yet again, new instruments for massive the collection and processing of personal data.

Finally, on a fake news and disinformation. I think we need a proper legal definition of fake news. What's fake news? I mean I may think that one of my colleagues in this House is spreading fake news, and they probably think that I am. Where do you draw the line between a political view and fake news? We need a proper legal definition before we take any measures against fake news, because otherwise it becomes arbitrary and then we are undermining our democracy for real.

Ska Keller, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I hope that Mark Zuckerberg is actually listening to the debate today so that he will understand that we are not letting him off the hook and that we are not happy with just some minor tweaks to the privacy settings of Facebook.

The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal is not simply a privacy scandal. It's a political scandal. It is a threat to our democracies. Facebook is illegally allowing some people to use the data for manipulating voters with psychological profiling, with fake news and with advertising profiling that makes it totally impossible to understand who is actually seeing what – the so-called 'dark ads'. The consequences are dramatic. This can even lead to voter manipulation, and there is a lot of evidence that shows that this is exactly what happened.

Facebook is a very powerful platform with huge influence on our private lives, but also on our political life. If we want to safeguard our democracy, we need clear and strict rules for such online platforms. Transparency is good, but it is just not enough.

We cannot leave it to companies like Facebook to decide who gets to see what political content just before the elections. We need to make sure that all voters have access to the same information, and we need to ban micro-targeting of political advertising. Member States need to do this very soon if we want to make sure that the European elections in May are undistorted by dubious dark ads and by political manipulation.

Cornelia Ernst, *im Namen der GUE/NGL-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Ich denke, dass wir bislang als Parlament unseren Job gemacht haben. Wir haben den Fall Cambridge Analytica thematisiert, wir haben Anhörungen gehabt, zu denen Facebook erwartungsgemäß PR-Personal geschickt hat. Ja, und wir haben auch die autokratischen Gebaren des EP-Präsidenten Tajani ausgehalten, dessen sogenannte Anhörung uns weltweit gewissermaßen zum Gespött gemacht hat.

Aber gut – wir haben eine Entschließung, wir haben Positionierungen, und wir haben ein vernünftiges Statement auch der Kommissarin. Jetzt wollen wir Konsequenzen haben, denn es geht um die Geschäftsgebaren von Facebook, die es zulassen, im großen Stil Daten für sogenannte Forschungszwecke zu benutzen – tatsächlich aber für politische Zwecke auszunutzen, zu missbrauchen.

Mit Cambridge Analytica wurde ja nicht nur schlechthin gegen Datenschutzrecht verstoßen, sondern gewissermaßen stabsmäßig Datenmissbrauch betrieben. Alles, was von Facebook zu hören ist, ist eine verbale Entschuldigung mit Engblick gewissermaßen, ohne Garantie, dass so etwas nicht noch mal passieren kann und dass sich im Geschäftsmodell etwas ändert. Eins will ich ganz klar sagen: Wenn Daten zu politischen Werbezwecken manipuliert werden, werden Wahlen manipuliert. Wenn Wahlen manipuliert werden, wirft uns das in eine vordemokratische Ära zurück und Wahlen werden zur Farce, und dann können wir auch – ehrlich gesagt – hier über sozialistische Einheitslisten abstimmen.

Deswegen muss gehandelt werden. Für Wahlwerbung muss es – wie im Offline-Bereich – Regulierungen geben. Wir brauchen Transparenz, wir brauchen Offenlegung der Finanzierungen; was wir nicht brauchen, ist *targeted advertising*. Das muss wenigstens in Wahlzeiten verboten sein und ansonsten strengen Vorschriften unterliegen.

Abgesehen davon, dass mich die Marktmacht von Facebook mittlerweile massiv stört, will ich noch eines sagen: Wenn wir im Fall Cambridge Analytica das Rennen verlieren, dann können wir die Freiheitsrechte der Bürgerinnen und Bürger auch zu Grabe tragen.

An die Adresse des Rates: Im Übrigen bin ich der Meinung, dass die ePrivacy so schnell wie möglich beschlossen werden muss.

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth, *on behalf of the EFDD Group*. – Mr President, Christmas is still weeks away, nevertheless, I can bring you joyous tidings from St Nicholas, as Sir Nicholas Clegg is also known.

Facebook has just appointed St Nicholas Clegg as head of global affairs. Many of us, many colleagues, have despaired at Facebook's predatory approach and worse, its blatant exploitation of the personal data of its users for commercial purposes. But, apparently, St Nicholas is going to put an end to all of this. St Nicholas is to be paid a pot of gold, worthy of ALDE Group leader, Guy Verhofstadt, on a slow day. Facebook has lost the confidence of millions of people, but St Nicholas Clegg understands this well because he went through exactly the same when he was leader of the Liberal Democrats. Also, St Nicholas Clegg is qualified. He speaks four languages fluently and can explain hypocrisy in all of them.

Nonetheless, Sir Nicholas will do well. He has written an entire book called 'How to Stop Brexit'. He will always be beloved as a lobbyist by the EU Commission and, for sure, the Commission is going to let Facebook off the hook.

Auke Zijlstra, *namens de ENF-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, ik heb bewust geen Facebookaccount. Toch volgt Facebook mij, en met mij dus miljoenen anderen. De Europese privacywet beschermt Facebook in dezen en mij niet. Facebook is een monopolist. Facebook heeft ook een politieke mening. In Duitsland bleek Facebook kritiek op de sociaaldemocratie te blokkeren, maar antisemitisme niet. De Europese Commissie vertelde mij op 4 augustus 2017 daarmee geen problemen te hebben. De Europese Commissie beschermt Facebook, maar niet de joodse gemeenschap.

Voorzitter, voor veel mensen is Facebook het internet, voor sociale contacten, maar ook voor het nieuws. Dat nieuws wordt door Facebook gefilterd. Alleen keurige – linkse neem ik aan – meningen komen door. Facebook beschermt zijn uitgangspunt, niet de vrije pers.

Voorzitter, de Europese Commissie heeft afspraken gemaakt met Facebook met het oog op de komende verkiezingen. Verhalen over nepnieuws en beïnvloeding van kiezers rechtvaardigen volgens de Commissie dat meningen goedgekeurd of verwijderd moeten worden van internet. De Europese Commissie heeft echter van Moskou niets te leren over beïnvloeding. De Commissie beschermt de Europese Unie, niet het democratisch proces. De Europese Commissie heeft een probleem met kritiek op de euro, kritiek op de Europese Unie, kritiek op migratie, kritiek op de islam. Die kritiek wordt samen populisme genoemd en moet bestreden worden, maar laat die kritiek nou net mijn mening zijn.

Ik denk dat de Europese Unie als zodanig een bedreiging voor de vrede en het welzijn van de lidstaten is, en dat is een mening die op Facebook geen plek heeft. Mijn kritiek had ook geen plek in de resolutie waarover we gaan stemmen, want al mijn amendementen werden weggestemd. Dat is ook geen wonder. Net als Facebook en de Europese Commissie beschermt ook dit Europees Parlement zijn eigen positie, niet die van de burgers.

Diane James (NI). – Mr President, if the European Union is actually serious about users' data and data protection, why not target Google and every other internet search engine whose algorithms ensure that anyone's search on absolutely anything is tracked, evaluated and fed back to the big corporates to influence and manipulate consumer opinion, choice and decision?

The concern that has been voiced in the Chamber this morning is about data-mining for political purposes and, of course, it is a key European Union issue because it knows the threat that exists in terms of anti-European Union sentiment there across Europe for next year's elections. But just let me remind you, both Twitter and Facebook have conducted the investigations. They have conducted those with the relevant political commissions, in relevant countries, and concluded, conducted, been approved, negligible impact.

Turning to Commissioner Jourová, I'm very pleased to see you this morning, Commissioner, and you stated 'free from foreign interference'. Well, can I ask you, will you take steps to stop billionaire George Soros from funding an anti-Brexit campaign with multimillion pound donations?

(The speaker declined to take a blue-card question from Molly Scott Cato)

Michał Boni (PPE). – W świecie cyfrowej rewolucji zaufanie jest jedną z najważniejszych wartości. Buduje zdrowe relacje między użytkownikami, twórcami i nadawcami treści oraz organizatorami komunikacji. Facebook to nie tylko kluczowa firma, ale i organizator komunikacji. Dlatego właśnie kwestia wiarygodności Facebooka jest tak ważna i symboliczna. Wyjaśnienie do końca wszystkich przyczyn i aspektów związków Facebooka i Cambridge Analytica i skandalicznego wycieku danych osobowych jest konieczne. Są przecież narzędzia prawne w postaci regulacji o ochronie danych osobowych już działającej od 25 maja tego roku, jest europejsko-amerykańska tarcza prywatności pilnująca spełniania wymogów ochrony prywatności, a Cambridge Analytica miał odpowiedni certyfikat. To, co prawnie wymagane, musi być respektowane bez żadnej taryfy ulgowej.

Od tamtego zdarzenia minęło już jednak trochę czasu. Są nowe wyzwania: reklama polityczna i niejasność źródeł jej finansowania – ważne w czasie wyborów, automatyzm algorytmów grożący zaburzeniem przejrzystości komunikacji, rozwój dezinformacji w każdej postaci, aż do *deepfake*. Ciemna strona internetu jest silniejsza niż korzyści, dlatego potrzebne są nowe strategie. Pracujemy nad nimi w Unii Europejskiej i dziękuję pani komisarz i panu komisarzowi za tę inicjatywę. Czego by nie powiedzieć o Facebooku, on też nad nimi pracuje – czy to opracowując flagowanie materiałów zakazanych, nienawistnych czy niepewnych co do prawdziwości, czy to eliminując boty i anonimowe konta służące walce w sieci, czy to ucząc nowego podejścia do prywatności, gdzie nasz realny wybór i zgoda będą kluczem do świadomego zachowywania się w internecie. Piętnując złe praktyki jak dziś, pokażmy też dobre przykłady. To oraz współpraca będzie bardziej użyteczne dla zdrowej przyszłości internetu.

Claude Moraes (S&D). – Mr President, at least one colleague has already said that entire elections, Brexit or any other individual election, are not wholly affected either by the Cambridge Analytica scandal or any other Facebook issue. This is an ultimate misunderstanding of what we are dealing with. What we are dealing with is individual groups of vulnerable voters being shifted around by the lack of integrity of what is happening on Facebook. If colleagues are not aware now of what is happening on these platforms, the scale of Facebook in 109 countries, then they're not paying attention.

We must take action now to restore trust, not just in online platforms, but in the integrity of our elections. That is now happening in the Commission and it is happening here in Parliament. This is absolutely critical, and we are defining the problem, but we must take action. In the hearings we said that there must now be an internal audit of Facebook. We urge Facebook now to work with the European Data Protection Board to carry out that full and independent audit, but we have to conform not just to GDPR but we said when the Council were absent here, to think about what the protections are within e-privacy. Not because e-privacy is some totemic, iconic thing that we are bandying around, but because we have a problem with the technology.

We have, colleagues, a whole issue now of further actions to protect our elections. In the United States, recent requirements have been introduced to verify the identity, location and sponsor of political ads that are a good response, and the same standards should be applied here. We have a whole range of issues that we have to fix here in the European Union: applying conventional offline electoral safeguards, such as rules and transparency and limits to spending, respect for silence periods, making it easy to recognise online political paid advertisements and banning profiling for electoral purposes. Social media platforms should label content shared by bots and speed up the process of removing fake accounts, and compulsory post-campaign audits should be conducted to ensure personal data are deleted. The Commission should look with us and updating competition rules and increasing algorithmic transparency.

We are here to deal with Facebook because Facebook is not a minor issue. This is a global issue dealing with elections all over the world and it has already affected our referenda and it has affected our elections. Colleagues, if anyone in this Chamber thinks that this is not a serious issue, they are not paying attention. This resolution sets out the path we need to protect our citizens' privacy and restore trust and confidence in our democratic systems.

Helga Stevens (ECR). – Voorzitter, beste collega's, ongeveer een half jaar geleden waren we allen verbaasd, boos of vol ongeloof over het enorme datalek bij Facebook. Dit was meteen de start van verschillende onderzoeken, ook in dit Parlement, die een duidelijk signaal gaven: zulke inbreuken op onze privacy zijn onaanvaardbaar. In september kwam er echter een nieuw datalek bij de techgigant aan het licht. Een softwareprobleem gaf hackers toegang tot miljoenen gebruikersaccounts, waaronder ook vijf miljoen Europese accounts.

Deze resolutie was een mooie kans om dit onrecht te veroordelen en op te roepen tot verdere actie. Helaas gaat de resolutie alle kanten uit. Zo roept zij op tot opschorting van het privacyschild tussen de EU en de VS zonder het bieden van een alternatief. Of men roept op tot aanpassing van de nationale kieswetten, wat duidelijk tot de bevoegdheden van de lidstaten behoort.

Het kernwoord dat deze resolutie in deze strijd nodig heeft is focus. Focus op het exacte probleem waarmee wij te maken hebben. Alleen zo kunnen we als wetgever het verschil maken.

Dita Charanzová (ALDE). – Mr President, the Facebook scandal has been a warning for all of us about what can happen when data is misused. Now, however, we have to focus on the lessons learned.

First, we need to be extremely cautious in protecting our data online. Internet literacy and staying safe on the internet must become a standard part of our education systems. Second, platforms need to better self-regulate. The days of community codes are over and now we need strict guidelines and rules. More importantly, platforms should act.

Lastly, fake news is a direct threat to our democracy with a potentially significant impact on the election results. Important decisions, such as whether to stay part of the EU or not, should not be decided based on targeted fake news. We should bear this in mind in the run-up to the forthcoming European elections. We want to keep the internet an open and free forum of discussion, but we need to know how to spot the fake.

Molly Scott Cato (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, I am able to take this time on behalf of Romeo Franz – I think there may have been a misunderstanding. Is that possible?

President. – Ms Scott Cato, right now Mr Romeo Franz is listed to speak, and according to the rules you may only be granted the floor during catch-the-eye procedure. There is no direct replacement, just catch-the-eye.

Interjection from Ms Scott Cato: 'I am on the screen now though, Mr President, I would just point out respectfully.'

Let us agree: ok, catch-the-eye, and you have one minute.

According to the rules, if I have a list of speakers – excuse me but I do believe that the person chairing the sitting is myself, not somebody behind, so a one-minute speech. It is a list. I asked Mr Romeo Franz to take the floor. We received information that Ms Scott Cato would like to replace Mr Franz, which is not possible. My proposal was that she be granted one minute in catch-the-eye, Ms Scott Cato accepted, so let us continue according to the list of speakers which has been prepared.

Νεοκλής Συλικιώτης (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, το σκάνδαλο Cambridge Analytica του Facebook είναι πολιτικό σκάνδαλο και απέδειξε τους κινδύνους που υπάρχουν, όταν η εξουσία συγκεντρώνεται στα χέρια λίγων κερδοσκοπών που έχουν τα μέσα να φακελώνουν και να χειραγωγούν εκατομμύρια ανθρώπους. Πρόκειται για τη μαζική παραβίαση προσωπικών δεδομένων, η οποία έχει αποκαλυφθεί, είναι απειλή για τη δημοκρατία και είναι μόνο η κορυφή του παγόβουνου. Τα προσωπικά δεδομένα δεκάδων εκατομμυρίων Αμερικανών και 2,7 εκατομμυρίων Ευρωπαίων έχουν χρησιμοποιηθεί και, πριν λίγες μέρες, το Facebook ενημέρωσε πως χάκερ απέκτησε πρόσβαση σε σχεδόν 50 εκατομμύρια λογαριασμούς.

Οι ίδιοι οι εκπρόσωποι του Facebook, κατά τη διάρκεια των ακροάσεων στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο, παραδέχτηκαν πως είχαν συμφωνία με προγραμματιστή εφαρμογών, ο οποίος έδιδε τα προσωπικά δεδομένα σε τρίτους. Ωστόσο, δεν απάντησαν ποια μέτρα λαμβάνουν τώρα για να συμμορφωθούν πλήρως με τον νέο ευρωπαϊκό κανονισμό για την προστασία των προσωπικών δεδομένων. Έχουμε ευθύνη, εν όψει και των ευρωεκλογών, να διασφαλίσουμε την εφαρμογή της ευρωπαϊκής νομοθεσίας για τα προσωπικά δεδομένα από όλες τις πλατφόρμες κοινωνικής δικτύωσης, να υπάρξει έλεγχος μέσω νέων νομοθετικών ρυθμίσεων και απλοποίηση των διαδικασιών, ώστε οι χρήστες να διαχειρίζονται τα προσωπικά τους δεδομένα και να ρυθμίζουν ποιος θα έχει πρόσβαση σε αυτά. Όσοι δε έτυχαν εκμετάλλευσης πρέπει να αποζημιωθούν από το Facebook, όπως ορδή αξιώνουν οι τέσσερις οργανώσεις καταναλωτών του Βελγίου, της Ιταλίας, της Ισπανίας και της Πορτογαλίας, με την προσφυγή που έχουν καταθέσει στα δικαστήρια.

Isabella Adinolfi (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor commissario, la sottrazione dei dati a Facebook, poi usati dalla società di consulenza politica Cambridge Analytica, fa emergere interrogativi importanti sui mezzi di cui disponiamo per contrastare fenomeni di questo tipo.

A questi interrogativi dobbiamo dare una risposta, ce lo chiedono 500 milioni di cittadini europei che rappresentiamo qui. Sappiamo bene che il modello di business delle grandi multinazionali del web si basa sulla raccolta dei dati degli utenti, divenuti il nuovo oro nero, e sulla successiva monetizzazione degli stessi.

Le alternative al cosiddetto capitalismo di sorveglianza esistono, ma occorre la volontà politica di intraprendere nuove strade.

Dobbiamo ripartire dall'istruzione dei cittadini affinché non siano meri consumatori ma membri consapevoli della società.

Dobbiamo dotare i cittadini degli strumenti necessari che consentano loro di usare i nuovi media e le nuove tecnologie, mettendoli in guardia su che cosa significa vivere in un mondo dove siamo costantemente connessi.

Dobbiamo rendere consapevoli le nuove generazioni di quanto siano importanti il diritto alla privacy e la protezione dei dati personali e quali siano le sue applicazioni concrete.

Siamo ancora in tempo per voltare pagina ed evitare che si ripetano scandali come questo.

Dominique Bilde (ENF). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, le mois dernier, une faille de sécurité laissait filtrer les données personnelles de quelque 50 millions d'utilisateurs de Facebook prouvant qu'en dépit des excuses contrites, exprimées dans la foulée du scandale Cambridge Analytica, il y a décidément quelque chose de pourri au royaume de Mark Zuckerberg.

Quelle est la véritable nature de Facebook? C'est celle beaucoup plus crue des pannes dans un mémorandum confidentiel d'un des vice-présidents.

Nous connectons des gens, point. Peut-être que cela coûtera une vie en exposant quelqu'un à des harceleurs, peut-être que quelqu'un mourra dans une attaque terroriste coordonnée via nos outils. Hé oui, mesdames et messieurs, c'est exactement leur propre définition.

Encore Facebook n'est-il pas neutre. Épaulé par ses légions de modérateurs, sa censure s'exerce avec zèle contre une myriade de comptes conservateurs pendant que sur l'autre rive de la Méditerranée, en Libye, des milices armées communiquent en toute impunité.

Par sa mainmise sur les informations et communications de millions d'individus, Facebook s'est donc fait le bras armé d'une censure totalitaire à géométrie variable.

Pour s'y être compromises, nos démocraties s'en trouveront à jamais bouleversées et la prochaine élection sera tronquée par des gens sans foi ni loi.

Steven Woolfe (NI). – Mr President, it is quite extraordinary that this Parliament should be indignant about Cambridge Analytica's cack-handed attempt to impact democratic votes. After all, right now, just a few hundred yards from the Brussels Parliament, Herman Van Rompuy, the former President of the European Union, leads a think tank whose sole aim is undermining the UK's democratic referendum to leave the European Union. Scandalously, he published a paper whose aim – and I quote – was to change the political dynamics in the UK by getting the Prime Minister to agree to an extension of the transition period.

This is foreign intervention in domestic politics. This is manipulation of voters from the outside. This is worse than Cambridge Analytica. This is the anti-democratic interference which is the very essence, the soul, of the European Union, and it has worked as Theresa May is now offering such an extension. Scandalous, scandalous, scandalous!

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 162(8))

(Interjection from Mr Woolfe: 'It is a pure joy to accept such blue cards from Mrs Scott Cato. Go ahead.')

Molly Scott Cato (Verts/ALE), blue-card question. – Dr Cato – but I appreciate Mr Woolfe taking the blue card and having the courage to do so.

Steven Woolfe sounds extremely indignant about this debate, so I wonder if he's critical about the theft of our citizens' data? I wonder if he minds about the use of illegal ads? Does he believe that the EU wants to steal our cuppa or cause polar bears to starve? And does he approve of the micro-targeting of ads at a vulnerable group of people, as Mr Moraes said, which undermines the public debate?

Steven Woolfe (NI), blue-card answer. – What I'm indignant about is the hypocrisy of this House. The hypocrisy that, on the one hand, says we do not like Cambridge Analytica yet we're quite willing to accept the money of Soros as he funds organisations in the UK that have tried to attempt to have a third referendum in the United Kingdom. Those who attempt to suggest that outside interference in the EU is perfectly acceptable: if you want democracy, treat it fairly on both sides, but don't accept the money from those who are trying to undermine our own Parliament.

Przewodniczący. – Panie i Panowie, są jeszcze dalsze zgłoszenia typu *blue card*, ale przyjmijmy zasadę: jeden mówca, jeden *blue card*. Chodzi o to, że musimy zakończyć o godz. 10.30.

Birgit Sippel (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Was macht Facebook, und was bringen parlamentarische Befragungen?

Machen wir uns nichts vor. Facebook hat die Untersuchung des Parlaments nicht ernst genommen. Facebook hat Vertrauen verspielt und EU-Recht gebrochen. Dagegen helfen keine schönen Worte oder freiwillige Verpflichtungen. Notwendig sind strenge Regeln, effektive Kontrollen und nötigenfalls Sanktionen.

Was bedeutet das? Erstens: Dank der Datenschutzgrundverordnung können wir Verstöße, wie im Falle Cambridge Analytica, mit bis zu 4 % des weltweiten Umsatzes bestrafen. Geben wir unseren Datenschutzbehörden die notwendigen Mittel zur effektiven Kontrolle!

Zweitens: Wir brauchen mehr Transparenz gerade bei politischer Werbung. Wer ist denn tatsächlich der Auftraggeber einer Botschaft und wer bezahlt?

Drittens: Wir brauchen die ePrivacy-Verordnung zum Schutz etwa vor *targeting*. ePrivacy sollte schon längst zusammen mit der Datenschutzverordnung wirken. Dass ePrivacy seit 1,5 Jahren von den Mitgliedstaaten blockiert wird, ist inakzeptabel!

Fazit: Wir sind den Praktiken der großen digitalen Unternehmen nicht hilflos ausgeliefert, aber wir müssen jetzt entschlossen und gemeinsam handeln, um unsere Bürger, um unsere Demokratie zu schützen.

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Mówimy tutaj o dwóch problemach, powiązanych, ale przecież różnych – używaniu danych osobowych w celach komercyjnych oraz używaniu ich w celach politycznych. O ile pierwszy jest już nam znany od co najmniej paru lat, waga tego drugiego problemu dopiero dociera do naszej świadomości.

Słuszny jest postulat rezolucji, żeby platformy internetowe odróżniały polityczne zastosowania swoich internetowych produktów reklamowych od ich zastosowań komercyjnych oraz żeby przetwarzanie danych osobowych do celów reklamy politycznej miało inną podstawę prawną niż ta, która ma zastosowanie do reklamy komercyjnej. Tylko, że – o ile mi wiadomo – taka odpowiednia podstawa prawna do tej pory nie powstała i wielkim zadaniem na przyszłość jest jej wypracowanie.

W projekcie rezolucji czytamy także, że państwa członkowskie powinny w trybie pilnym prowadzić dochodzenie w sprawie domniemanego nadużycia internetowej przestrzeni politycznej przez obce mocarstwa. Ale przecież nadużycia internetowej przestrzeni politycznej zdarzają się także wewnątrz Unii, między różnymi państwami członkowskimi. I to także wymaga analizy.

Jasenko Selimovic (ALDE). – Mr President, at the beginning of this year we saw the Facebook Cambridge Analytic scandal unfolding, an event of major proportions. We saw how our private data was harvested without our consent and subsequently used for political purposes – not a small one, but the biggest and most important one. The reaction was justifiably harsh. A common voice from all over this Parliament protested about the illegal use of private data. Mr Zuckerberg himself stood here and spoke about the change. He promised better security and assured us that something like this would never happen again. And why is it that, just a month ago, we saw another Facebook security breach aimed at our private data? How many more 'sorries' are we going to have from Mr Zuckerberg? I don't think there is any meaning in asking him anything anymore.

I therefore urge the Commission and this Parliament to respond appropriately and prevent this from happening again. We need stronger privacy rules and we need better enforcement of existing laws in order to have our personal data information secured.

Eva Joly (Verts/ALE). – Monsieur le Président, il ne doit plus être possible que des données personnelles soient utilisées à l'insu des utilisateurs.

Le scandale Cambridge Analytica a montré le pouvoir immense que nous avons laissé s'accumuler entre les mains d'entreprises qui disposent à leur guise de nos données personnelles. Il est temps de reprendre le contrôle de nos données pour garder le contrôle de nos vies. Ouvrons les yeux. Accepter que nos données soient exploitées à des fins de profilage et de ciblage politique ne serait pas seulement une défaite individuelle, mais une abdication collective. Laisser à Facebook et à ses algorithmes le soin de déterminer les messages politiques que nous recevons, c'est accepter une forme de servitude volontaire.

À l'heure où la vérité elle-même est menacée par la multiplication des infox, notre liberté d'opinion est liée à la connaissance claire que nous avons de qui s'adresse à nous et dans quel but. Souhaitons-nous que l'homo numericus reste un citoyen libre?

Alors tout contenu politique doit pouvoir être identifié comme tel et nous devons savoir qui en est à l'origine. C'est vraiment le minimum et c'est urgent.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL). – Senhor Presidente, em 2013, Snowden revelou-nos como as agências norte-americanas tinham colocado as maiores empresas do setor da Internet a vigiar os utilizadores. O mundo percebeu então quão frágil era a sua privacidade e a proteção dos seus dados. Cinco anos passaram e o escândalo da Cambridge Analytica veio mostrar-nos como à beira do precipício o que se decidiu fazer foi dar um passo em frente.

A privacidade e os nossos dados pessoais passaram a ser um dos mais valiosos ativos do capitalismo e hoje sabemos que os dados pessoais têm sido usados como armas de combate político. Se juntarmos a isto o crescimento das *fake news*, das mentiras e dos discursos de ódio, temos a receita perfeita para a manipulação em massa das eleições.

Plataformas como o Facebook e o WhatsApp não têm capacidade nem transparência para lidar com a informação que propõem e ainda menos para a proteger, como vemos aliás no Brasil.

Por isso, pergunto o que é preciso acontecer mais para continuarmos a defender as nossas democracias e para defender eleições democráticas.

Jörg Meuthen (EFDD). – Herr Präsident! Meine Partei ist eine konservative Partei, moderat, rechts der Mitte. In meinem Land verorten sich viele Journalisten jedoch überwiegend links der Mitte, viele von ihnen sogar sehr weit links. Manche Erhebungen kommen zu dem Schluss, dass mehr als 40 % der Journalisten grün wählen. Objektive Berichterstattung ist keine Selbstverständlichkeit, in diesen Zeiten schon gar nicht mehr. Also bin ich sehr dankbar dafür, dass es Facebook gibt. Mit Facebook haben wir einen Kanal zu unseren Wählern, den grünlinks indoktrinierende Journalisten uns nicht vermauern können.

Wir beobachten sehr genau, wie die linke Mehrheit in diesem Haus und bei uns zu Hause uns diesen Zugang nehmen will. Wir sehen, wie sie Facebook unter Druck setzen, wie sie konservativ-freiheitliche Meinungsäußerung in der Reichweite drosseln und sogar zensieren wollen. So ist das eben mit den Linken: Erst fordern sie herrschaftsfreien Diskurs, und sind sie einmal an der Macht, dann interessiert sie nur noch diskursfreie Herrschaft.

Liebe Kollegen, wer nicht diskutieren will, der beweist nur eines: dass er keine Argumente hat. Und wer wie Sie keine Argumente hat, der hat die Debatte de facto bereits verloren. Das werden Sie noch merken.

Κωνσταντίνος Παπαδάκης (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, απέναντι στην ψευδαισθήση της ελευθερίας στο Διαδίκτυο υπάρχει η σκληρή πραγματικότητα. Κουμάντο και εδώ, όπως και όταν κλείνει η οθόνη, κάνουν οι επιχειρηματικοί όμιλοι που έχουν την ιδιοκτησία. Για τους υπόλοιπους, η εργασία, η ενημέρωση, η διασκέδαση σημαίνει, άθελα ή εν αγνοία τους, αυτοφακέλωμα. Τα προσωπικά δεδομένα τους, η πολιτική τους στάση και τα ενδιαφέροντά τους καταγράφονται, συγκεντρώνονται, επεξεργάζονται, γίνονται εμπόρευμα, αντικείμενο σκληρού ανταγωνισμού για το ποιος όμιλος, ποια μυστική υπηρεσία και αστικό κράτος θα τα ελέγξει θησαυρίζοντας, εκτοπίζοντας τους ανταγωνιστές του.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και οι κυβερνήσεις της υποδύονται τις ευαίσθητες για τα προσωπικά δεδομένα, στήνουν μηχανισμούς τύπου GDPR και επιβάλλουν κυρώσεις, υπηρετώντας τους ευρωπαϊκούς ομίλους στον ανταγωνισμό τους με τους αντίστοιχους αμερικανικούς για τον έλεγχο της αγοράς. Όμορφος κόσμος, αγγελικά πλασμένος ο καπιταλισμός, η αμφισβήτηση αυτού του συστήματος, η οποία σήμερα λογοκρίνεται και φιλτράρεται, θα βρει τον δρόμο της και, με την ανατροπή του, η επιστήμη, η τεχνολογία και οι εφαρμογές τους θα τεθούν στην υπηρεσία των λαϊκών αναγκών.

Jeroen Lenaers (PPE). – Voorzitter, onze boodschap hier een half jaar geleden was helder: het misbruik van gegevens van miljoenen Europese burgers is schandalig, Facebook moet veranderen en Mark Zuckerberg moet zich hier in dit Parlement komen verantwoorden.

Nou, die verantwoordings sessie kwam er, maar was – mede door de eisen van Zuckerberg zelf – een aanfluiting. Ook in de drie goede hoorzittingen die we in dit Parlement hebben georganiseerd, bleek Facebook op geen enkele wijze dit probleem serieus te nemen. In plaats van mensen met verstand van zaken of mensen die iets daadwerkelijk te vertellen hebben in het bedrijf, werd het *public policy*-team gestuurd, de lobbyisten van Facebook, dezelfde lobbyisten die hier eerder ingezet werden om hard te lobbyen tegen onze nieuwe privacyregels.

Dus hoewel we terecht met elkaar vaststellen dat Facebook verbeteringen doorgevoerd heeft, is het allesbehalve geruststellend. Anderhalf miljard gebruikers werd nog snel even buiten het bereik van de Europese regels gebracht. Andermaal een teken dat Facebook nog steeds niet gelooft in het belang van databescherming of de manier waarop we in Europa daarmee omgaan.

Dus het is onze taak om ze dat geloof bij te brengen. Goedschiks of kwaadschiks. Er moet een volledige audit komen van het bedrijf Facebook en de toezichthouders in heel Europa moeten aan de slag om echt te controleren of de huidige praktijken bij het bedrijf voldoen aan onze regels. Facebook plaatste in april nog paginagrote advertenties om de nieuwe Europese regels te verwelkomen. We doen Facebook dus waarschijnlijk een groot plezier om die regels ook vanaf dag één keihard te handhaven, allereerst bij Facebook zelf.

Mercedes Bresso (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, io non ritorno sulla nostra risoluzione, che condivido; mi auguro che la Commissione in questo momento lavori per tutelare le elezioni europee da interferenze che, a seguito di queste audizioni, appaiono non solo possibili ma assolutamente prevedibili.

Volevo sollevare una questione che riguarda complessivamente il fatto che noi ci stiamo risvegliando da un mondo dove sembrava tutto gratuito e stiamo scoprendo che, in realtà, il prezzo che paghiamo a questo mondo di Internet tutto gratuito è l'utilizzo dei nostri dati a fini economici e a fini elettorali.

Credo quindi che il problema sia più complesso e vada affrontato: come in un futuro che userà sempre di più delle piattaforme di questo tipo si ricostruisce un rapporto corretto per cui si paga quello che si utilizza ma si è tutelati nella propria identità e nell'uso dei propri dati.

Credo ci sia un problema anche di piattaforme di tipo pubblico perché, come sempre, quando si creano i grandi monopoli può intervenire il pubblico sia a regolamentare i monopoli sia anche attraverso strumenti diversi di tipo pubblico.

Sajjad Karim (ECR). – Mr President, in my own country the relevant committee in my parliament is crying out for action to be taken. My colleague Damian Collins is not satisfied with the result, and the committee in question has carried out an inquiry and has directly said that there is manipulation and Russian interference in our election processes. That is at a nation-state level and look here today: the Council chairs are empty, that is the response that we are giving.

Governments are stalling, Facebook knows its power. But this weekend hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of London and among their demands is a demand that we must protect our much-cherished democratic processes. Cambridge Analytica and Facebook were instrumental in swaying the EU referendum in the United Kingdom; swaying it using techniques beyond the expectations of an unsuspecting electorate and out-of-date election regulations.

Nick Clegg may hold the most senior public policy role in Facebook today ; let's hope he guides them well. But Cambridge Analytica has not gone, it lives on in other guises and will continue to show itself again.

Светослав Христов Малинов (PPE). – Колеги, наистина става дума за скандал, за криза на доверието и аз се радвам, че Европейската комисия няма да пропусне тази криза и няма да я остави неизползвана. Искам обаче да погледна към проблема от друг ъгъл.

Ние сами създаваме своята дигитална личност. В началото нейният живот наистина зависи от нашата воля и ние наистина контролираме нещата. Никой обаче не ни казва и вероятно никой не би могъл да ни каже от какъв момент нататък данните на нашето дигитално „аз“ се използват от други хора и организации за свои цели.

Ние не си даваме сметка, че нашето дигитално „аз“ съдържа информация, която в съчетание със стотици хиляди, милиони други такива дигитални личности, на практика представлява ценност, може да се купува и продава и се използва в така наречените „big data analyses“ и изготвянето на инфографики, с които пък можем ние индивидуално да бъдем манипулирани и насочвани като потребители и избиратели.

Разбира се, ние ще направим всичко възможно да създадем подходяща регулация, но аз винаги изпитвам съмнение, че нашите законодателни дейности ще бъдат изостанали в момента, в който се създадат. Ние винаги ще изоставяме от новите технологии. Затова бих искал да се обърнем към другата, същинската защита – здравия разум, съдържаността, дигиталната компетентност. Това трябва да възпитаваме особено у нашите млади хора, защото дигиталното пространство не насърчава тези качества. Разбира се, няма по-надеждна преграда пред манипулациите от отговорната демократична личност, въоръжена с подходящите регулации, изработването на които е наше задължение.

Csaba Sógor (PPE). – Mr President, the phrase ‘if you are not paying for the product, you are the product’ predates the internet era. Still, both regulators and internet users seem unprepared for the new reality in which data is the new oil. Unaware to whom they give away their data or how they can stop sharing it, most people until recently found being offered ads to buy things as something uncontroversial.

However, the Cambridge Analytica scandal revealed something more worrying: people’s data can be improperly collected and shared, and they can be microtargeted by various entities who want to influence and manipulate their political view or voting behaviour. This threatens the very idea of democracy, according to which voters can decide for themselves and are not mere subjects of propaganda machines.

Users and, most importantly, regulators need to catch up with this new reality. We took the first step with the adoption of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR); now we should apply it and make sure third countries using our citizens’ data apply it too.

Romeo Franz (Verts/ALE). – Herr Präsident, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Haben wir dieser datenbasierten individuellen Manipulation wirklich den Brexit und Präsident Trump zu verdanken? Diese Frage ist extrem schwer zu beantworten, aber es ist die demokratische Kernfrage dieses Skandals.

Es gibt Erkenntnisse über die politische Wirkung von Facebook. Ein Team der Universität von Warwick hat sich die rechtsextremen Übergriffe in Deutschland in den letzten Jahren angesehen und nach möglichen Ursachen gesucht. Sie haben je nach Ortschaft geschaut, ob es einen Zusammenhang mit der Anzahl der dort lebenden Ausländer, mit der Arbeitslosigkeit, dem Bildungs- und Einkommensniveau und, und, und gibt. Die einzige Variable, wo sie einen signifikanten statistischen Zusammenhang zur Anzahl der Übergriffe feststellen konnten, war der Umfang der Nutzung von Facebook in der dortigen Bevölkerung.

Facebook ist ein Problem für unsere Demokratie – auch ohne Cambridge Analytica. Daher ist es gut, dass die Entschließung fordert, gezielte politische Werbung, die auf Profilen mit persönlichen Daten basiert, ganz zu verbieten. Der Verhaltenskodex, den die Kommission mit der Plattform erarbeitet hat, zielt leider nur auf Transparenz und Selbstregulierung ab. Wir brauchen aber klare Regeln, wenn uns unsere Demokratie wichtig ist.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, as rapporteur on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), I was very pleased with the overall outcome, and I think it will work well into the future. But, as Ms Sophia in 't Veld said, all the rules and laws in the world are no good unless they're applied, and I think it's quite obvious that there are problems in Facebook – we have seen that for some time.

The first one, I think, is the question that Manfred Weber, Leader of the European People's Party, put to Mark Zuckerberg when he came to Parliament. He said: 'Is Facebook just too big?' We had the phrase during the recession from his book about banks being too big to fail, but is Facebook just too big to operate? That's one question that has to be looked at.

I know Facebook does an awful lot of good work in terms of facilitating people to communicate, but the dark side has to be addressed, especially countries like Russia interfering in elections. That's undermining all of society and it needs to be monitored and monitored independently, as opposed to what's happening now.

Nicola Caputo (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, l'attacco a Facebook del 28 settembre ha messo in pericolo i dati personali di milioni di persone: dalle informazioni più semplici fino ai dati bancari collegati ai profili Facebook, tutto è stato oggetto dell'attacco.

Dopo *Cambridge Analytica* questo nuovo scandalo dimostra che Facebook non è ancora in grado di assicurare il pieno rispetto della normativa dell'Unione europea in materia di protezione dei dati, in particolare del regolamento generale sulla protezione dei dati e della direttiva *e-privacy*.

Dopo lo scandalo *Cambridge Analytica* Facebook aveva promesso un audit interno completo: se ciò è avvenuto, il Parlamento europeo non ne è ancora stato informato. Facebook deve permettere all'ENISA e al Comitato europeo per la protezione dei dati di effettuare un audit indipendente sulla sua piattaforma.

Facebook deve apportare modifiche sostanziali alla sua piattaforma, non solo per garantire la conformità al diritto dell'Unione europea in materia di protezione dei dati, ma anche per migliorare la sua trasparenza, per arginare il rischio di ulteriori manipolazioni politiche dei profili Facebook e per evitare che *fake news* inficino le prossime elezioni.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospodine predsjedavajući, razvoj informacijskih tehnologija i brojnih digitalnih usluga učinio je ljude umreženijima nego ikad prije. Poslovanje je bez interneta danas teško zamisliti, a *online* smo preselili i dobar dio privatnog života – od slanja poruka i pohrane obiteljskih fotografija do kupovine odjeće i naručivanja hrane.

Proizvodi i usluge lako su dostupni, novi komunikacijski kanali učinili su nas produktivnijima, ali sve to dolazi uz cijenu narušene privatnosti i sigurnosti.

Slučaj *Cambridge Analytica* samo je potvrdio važnost zaštite podataka građana na internetu. No jako je važno izbjeći nepotrebnu histeriju i građane informirati što predstavlja opasnost po njihovu privatnost, a što je benigno. Panično uskraćivanje svih podataka znatno bi usporilo razvoj digitalnih usluga, otežalo poslovanje brojnim tvrtkama i ugrozilo radna mjesta. To, vjerujem, nikome nije u cilju.

Molly Scott Cato (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, those of us involved in politics have been horrified by the way Facebook has been used to share disinformation that distorts democracy and divides societies. From the UK Brexit campaign to the Trump election and now the presidential election in Brazil, Facebook has shown itself to be an anti-social network that threatens democracy. The disinfectant of publicity has not ended this problem. *Cambridge Analytica* is morphing into a new form under the auspices of *Emerdata* that reunites the money of the Mercer family with the manipulative skills of Alexander Nix, and it's disappointing to hear that Nick Clegg will be joining Facebook as global ambassador and spin master. The resolution notes that we need less PR and more detailed answers from technical experts and changes to Facebook governance.

I'm pleased that the resolution notes the excellent work done by the UK's information commissioner, Elizabeth Denham, and that it seeks to prohibit political targeted advertising that undermines the public debate through microtargeting. We are witnessing democracy disrupted across the world. Protecting democracy against the psychological operations of the wealthy should be a priority for us all.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, το σκάνδαλο της Cambridge Analytica απέδειξε ότι τα στοιχεία των προσωπικών δεδομένων 50 περίπου εκατομμυρίων χρηστών που είχε κατορθώσει να εξασφαλίσει, φέρεται ότι τα χρησιμοποίησε για να ενισχύσει την εκστρατεία του προέδρου Τραμπ. Βεβαίως, αυτή η πρακτική δεν είναι άγνωστη στις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες. Σύμφωνα με το Bloomberg, το 2012 κάτι ανάλογο είχε κάνει και ο Πρόεδρος Ομπάμα. Το βαρύτερο, όμως, ζήτημα το οποίο προκύπτει από το σκάνδαλο αυτό είναι η ασφάλεια των προσωπικών δεδομένων.

Κάθε άνθρωπος, χωρίς δυστυχώς να λαμβάνει υπόψη το θέμα του απορρήτου, παραχωρεί τα προσωπικά του δεδομένα στα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης, ελπίζοντας ότι αυτά δεν θα αναλυθούν. Δυστυχώς όμως, αυτό δεν συμβαίνει, διότι με τους αλγορίθμους που έχουν δημιουργήσει αυτά τα μέσα, αναλύουν τα προσωπικά δεδομένα για να εκτιμήσουν τις εμπορικές, κυρίως, προτιμήσεις αλλά και τις πολιτικές και να μπορούν να τις επηρεάσουν. Γι' αυτό τα κράτη πρέπει να λάβουν μέτρα ούτως ώστε να πάψει να γίνεται αυτό, χωρίς όμως να παραβιάζεται και το δικαίωμα της ελεύθερης έκφρασης του χρήστη.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, o uso de dados pessoais cedidos, voluntária ou involuntariamente, pela rede social Facebook, ou por outras redes e plataformas, para manipular escolhas e opções políticas e comportamentos de massa, coloca uma questão civilizacional. Estão em causa valores como a privacidade, a transparência, a confiança e, em última análise, a liberdade de escolha dos cidadãos.

No momento em que nos preparamos para fazer o enorme investimento no programa digital da Europa, temos de definir um padrão ético e jurídico aplicável a todas as empresas que atuam no nosso território, ou que com ele interagem, e desenvolver ferramentas robustas de verificação e sanção de quem não o fizer.

Ao mesmo tempo, é importante desenvolver, de forma progressiva, um modelo de gestão das redes sociais mais próxima do modelo da Internet, mais *multi-stakeholder* e menos baseada nos grandes potentados empresariais hegemónicos.

É preciso devolver à sociedade o que é dela. É preciso colocar o desenvolvimento tecnológico ao serviço dos indivíduos e não de quem os quer manipular e distorcer a sua liberdade de escolha.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señor presidente, señora comisaria de Justicia, cuando estalló el escándalo, Mark Zuckerberg fue llamado a comparecer ante el Senado de los Estados Unidos y fue la primera vez en que se puso corbata. Su posición física fue de subordinación ante el Senado de los Estados Unidos. Cuando compareció aquí, en el Parlamento Europeo, ni remotamente fue sometido a un interrogatorio de dureza pareja al que le sometió el Senado de los Estados Unidos.

Nos hallamos ante los gigantes de la red, que se consideran desvinculados por completo de cualquier ley y de cualquier jurisdicción y, sin embargo, ante ningún gigante la Unión Europea puede abdicar de su deber de proteger y asegurar los derechos fundamentales de los europeos; por tanto, es mucho lo que hay por hacer.

Para empezar, hay que exigir que se cumpla —también a los gigantes de la red— el Reglamento de protección de datos y, en su caso, poner en marcha la directiva que vincula a la policía, la judicatura y la fiscalía para investigar los delitos relacionados con las violaciones de derechos fundamentales en la red.

Pero también hay que invertir en educación de la privacidad, en ciberseguridad y en nuevas tecnologías, porque nuestra inversión en nuevas tecnologías nada tiene que ver con la de los Estados Unidos y, hasta que no tengamos una mejor inversión en seguridad y tecnologías, no tenemos nada que hacer ante los gigantes de la red.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnilor comisari, stimați colegi, astăzi dezbatem un lucru care ține de viitorul Europei, până la urmă, de viața cetățenilor și de democrație. Dar, iată, Consiliul nu este prezent, Comisia pare a fi mulțumită de pașii pe care i-a făcut, noi, Parlamentul, ne-am făcut treaba așa cum s-a spus și suntem în aceeași situație, domnilor comisari, pentru că, iată, în fiecare săptămână putem constata că apar conturi false, că ne sunt preluate datele.

Ce facem, de fapt? Doamna comisar spune că avem un instrument foarte puternic, dar cum îl folosim? Care sunt rezultatele? Să fim serioși, eu cred că Comisia trebuie să găsească mijloace comune pentru că Facebook ne-a ignorat. Eu am fost într-o delegație în iulie acolo. Nu a găsit nimic nou după ce a declarat că, atunci când a proiectat Facebook, nu s-a gândit la protecția datelor. Eu cred că nu avem nimic până acum și peste câteva luni intrăm în alegerile europene. Nu putem lăsa cetățenii, companiile să se apere cu mastodonți, să lupte cu mastodonți. Asta este datoria Comisiei și a Consiliului.

(Konec zgłoszeń z sali)

Julian King, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, thank you for this debate on what is a key resolution. As my colleague, Commissioner Jourová, underlined, the Cambridge Analytica case has thrust into the spotlight an array of threats to our elections: hacks, leaks, fake news, as well as the misuse of personal data, classical cyber-attacks that target our voting systems and cyber-enabled manipulation of voting behaviour.

To tackle the classic cybersecurity threats, the Commission brought forward a package of measures in September last year to build greater cyber-resilience, to protect systems and data and to strengthen deterrence against those who would seek to attack us. To tackle the challenge of cyber-manipulation, in April this year, the Commission proposed a package of measures in our communication on tackling online disinformation, based around transparency, traceability and accountability.

This set out our clear definition of disinformation. It sent a clear and strong message to all of the internet platforms – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others – who we strongly believe have a real responsibility to take action. We asked them to commit to an EU-wide Code of Practice on Disinformation, presented in fact last month. We set out clear objectives for this code and called for measurable results in a number of areas, not asking the platforms, or indeed public authorities, to judge whether something is true or false, right or wrong, but to shine a light on the provenance of the information that we are seeing.

I am encouraged that your resolution, as Claude Moraes underlined, identifies the need for urgent action in a number of these areas. We ask the platforms to restrict targeting options for political advertising, to ensure greater transparency around sponsored content, to step up their efforts to identify and delete fake accounts, and to establish clear rules around bots. There should also be greater clarity around algorithms and information on how they prioritise the content that is on display. This should be combined with tools enabling users more easily to discover content and access new sources representing alternative points of view, as well as to be able to report disinformation.

We want to see the code implemented effectively. We've said we'll analyse first results by the end of this year. We hope we can see sufficient progress by working on a voluntary basis, but we've been clear: we reserve the right to consider our options again if we do not make the progress that we need to see.

As mentioned by Commissioner Jourová earlier, last month President Juncker presented a set of measures specifically on election security, asking Member States to set up a national election cooperation network of all of the relevant authorities and to appoint a contact point to participate in a European-level election cooperation network. As part of this, the Commission will work closely with, and support, data protection authorities to make sure that all data breaches are effectively investigated.

Last week, we convened a high-level meeting which brought together, for the first time, public and private actors from the Member States in order to take stock of progress and to identify and share best practices for countering the threats to our democratic processes and our democratic values. This event highlighted again the key importance of engagement, both by the public authorities, but also by the key private-sector actors. With the European elections and numerous national elections on the horizon, it is imperative that we see sufficient commitment from the big online platforms.

The Commission very much welcomes your strong engagement on this urgent range of issues. Awareness is the first line of defence, but, as you set out in your resolution, we need to go further. We have a strong shared interest in protecting our democratic institutions, our democratic processes and our elections. The Commission is committed to working with you, with Member States and with the private sector to secure the foundations of our democracy.

Przewodniczący. – Pozwolą Państwo na taką drobną obserwację osobistą. Dobrze się złożyło, iż przypało mi przewodniczenie temu akurat punktowi naszej debaty, ponieważ w Parlamencie Europejskim jestem odpowiedzialny za bezpieczeństwo, w tym także to, o którym tutaj rozmawialiśmy.

Otrzymałem jeden projekt rezolucji zamykającej debatę.

Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 25 października 2018 r.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 162)

Ева Майдел (PPE), в писмена форма. – Злоупотребата с истината, фактите и доверието на хората и избирателите не е патент на цифровите платформи. Тя за съжаление съществуваше и ще продължава да съществува в аналоговия, цифровия и хартиения свят. Единственото, което се промени с новите платформи, е улесненият достъп до тях. Това, което трябва да направим, е да сложим ясни правила, така че платформите да поемат своята отговорност, като контролират средата за комуникация, която създадоха, и да следят много по-добре за вредното съдържание и злоупотребата с лични данни.

Ние обаче имаме и още една задача и тя е да наложим правила и санкции на тези, които искат да се възползват от липсата на ясни правила в дигиталните платформи. А това на първо място са политически партии и кандидати и присъдружните им организации. Нито Фейсбук, нито Гугъл или някой от останалите платформи могат да избягат от своята отговорност, но ние не трябва да забравяме, че основният интерес от тази злоупотреба е именно в политическите организации и кандидати. И те трябва да получат най-голямата строгост, на която сме способни за това, че искат да манипулират избора на гражданите, като подменят честното политическо състезание за доверието им със състезание от лъжи и манипулации.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D), írásban. – Az Európai Parlament szocialista frakciója ismerte fel elsőként, hogy az EP és az egész Unió legsajátabb és egyre sürgetőbb feladata, hogy élen járjon az állampolgárainkat, egész demokratikus politikai rendünket veszélyeztető olyan alattomos praktikákkal szembeni védekezésben, mint amelyet a Cambridge Analytica „lebukása” – több tízmillió Facebook-használó polgár személyes adataival való visszaélése – leleplezett.

A mostani határozatunkkal azonban még csak a – mégoly fontos – felismerésnél és az első védekező lépésnél tartunk, jól tudva, hogy a Cambridge Analytica esete csak a jéghegy csúcса, hiszen számos más üzleti vállalkozás működik a világon a személyes adatkezelő algoritmusok révén információk manipulálása, árusítása körében.

Az EU és tagállamainak demokratikus működése szempontjából különösen veszélyesnek tartom az egyes politikai erők, sőt államok által szervezett „fake news” terjesztést, a politikai uszító kampányokat, valamint a választási eredmények befolyásolására irányuló manipulációt.

Tekintettel az Európa több országában küszöbön álló fontos választásokra, különösen a májusi EP-választásra, fontosnak tartom, hogy mostani állásfoglalásunknak legyen konkrét utóélete, és a tagállamok kormányai is határozott intézkedésekkel, célzott jogszabályokkal vessenek gátat ennek a modern támadásnak. Különösen elvárnám ezt az olyan tagállami politikai vezetéstől, mint saját hazámé, ahol sajnos az Orbán-kormány politikai céljai érdekében maga is használja a hamis hírek és a félelemkeltés ilyen eszközeit.

Claudia Țapardel (S&D), în scris. – În contextul scandalului izbucnit în jurul companiilor Facebook – Cambridge Analytica, prin care datele a milioane de utilizatori Facebook au fost accesate ilegal de o companie de consultanță britanică în scop electoral, asistăm astăzi la o serie de discuții ample privind protejarea datelor personale pe care fiecare utilizator de internet le pune la dispoziția giganților rețelelor sociale. Consider că fenomenul este cu atât mai important cu cât poate duce la manipularea cetățenilor, mai ales în timpul procesului electoral, sau poate influența consumatorii în așa fel încât să se ajungă la distorsionarea pieței și a concurenței loiale. Scandalul Facebook-Cambridge Analytica ne-a arătat foarte clar că trebuie să depunem eforturi semnificative pentru a restabili încrederea cetățenilor noștri în procesul democratic și să asigurăm un nivel adecvat de transparență. În 2019, în România vom avea două rânduri de alegeri. În acest context, colectarea ilegală a datelor personale ale utilizatorilor reprezintă una dintre cele mai mari provocări cu care ne confruntăm în era tehnologiei digitale la nivel mondial. Așadar, este important ca statele membre să implemen-

teze cât mai eficient Regulamentul General de Protecția Datelor, iar Comisia să ia măsurile necesare pentru a monitoriza implementarea și aplicarea legislației cu scopul de a asigura protecția tuturor cetățenilor europeni.

Maria Gabriela Zoană (S&D), *în scris*. – Facebook este o platformă mondială de socializare care găzduiește, între altele, conturile a peste 370 de milioane de cetățeni europeni de toate vârstele, cetățeni pe care noi avem obligația să-i apărăm în fața abuzurilor de orice fel. În acest context, orice încălcare a Regulamentului european pentru protecția datelor cu caracter personal de către reprezentanții acestei platforme sau de către terții care au acces la exploatarea ei reprezintă de fapt o încălcare a intimității a 370 de milioane de cetățeni europeni. Este limpede pentru oricine că deținerea datelor a sute de milioane de persoane – aici incluzând nu numai datele de identificare personală, ci și datele privind preferințele politice, preferințele pentru anumite produse și servicii sau alte date sensibile, dar și accesul la discuțiile private – reprezintă o oportunitate uriașă pentru marile companii care operează aceste platforme de socializare. Este cazul și Whatsapp-ului sau a altor aplicații. Tocmai de aceea, pe cât de mare este oportunitatea, pe atât de mare trebuie să fie și răspunderea acestor operatori, iar eu susțin aplicarea unor sancțiuni drastice de către autoritățile europene sau naționale ori de câte ori se încalcă regulamentul european privind GDPR. Altfel, este afectată însăși democrația.

(Posiedzenie zostało chwilowo zawieszona)

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. ANTONIO TAJANI

Presidente

4. Wznowienie posiedzenia

(La seduta è ripresa alle 10.38)

5. Debata z prezydentem Rumunii Klausem Iohannisem na temat przyszłości Europy (debata)

Presidente. – Do il benvenuto, a nome del Parlamento, al Presidente della Repubblica di Romania, Klaus Iohannis, che sarà oggi protagonista della discussione sul futuro dell'Europa (2018/2732(RSP)).

Lo ringrazio per aver accettato il nostro invito a discutere con noi, in un vero dibattito, quali sono le proposte della Romania per il futuro dell'Europa, per preparare insieme – Parlamento europeo, Commissione e Stati membri – una strategia per rilanciare il sogno europeo, che nonostante le difficoltà che incontra rimane l'unica possibilità per i nostri concittadini. Ecco perché sono molto lieto di avere oggi con noi il Presidente della Romania, alla vigilia del semestre di Presidenza dell'Unione europea, e durante la Presidenza rumena si svolgeranno anche le elezioni. Quindi oggi avremo la possibilità di confrontarci con lui dopo averlo ascoltato.

Prima di dare la parola al Presidente Iohannis vi ricordo che è possibile richiedere il «catch the eye» usando il dispositivo per il voto elettronico.

President Iohannis, thank you very much for coming, and now you have the floor.

(Applause)

Klaus Iohannis, *President of Romania*. – Domnule Președinte, stimați membri ai Parlamentului European, doamnelor și domnilor, este o onoare și un privilegiu să mă aflu astăzi în Parlamentul European. Vă mulțumesc pentru invitația de a participa la dezbateră privind viitorul Uniunii Europene.

Uniunea a fost marcată de-a lungul timpului, dar mai ales în ultimul deceniu, de provocări multiple, care ne-au testat coeziunea și unitatea, de la criza financiară și economică, criza migrației, atacurile teroriste, până la ascensiunea mișcărilor populiste. A fost un deceniu în care Uniunea a trebuit să „învețe să se adapteze din mers”. Pe fondul acestor provocări, Uniunea a fost marcată de căutarea unei viziuni comune, definită prin nevoia unui echilibru „înțelept” între realitățile specifice din fiecare stat membru și dorința de a consolida împreună o Uniune veritabilă, o Uniune orientată spre viitor.

Principala constatare pozitivă a acestei perioade este că există un element care ne unește: identitatea europeană bazată pe principii, valori și interese comune. Iar aceste valori comune trebuie mereu redescoperite, reapreciate și repuse în valoare, pentru că universalitatea valorilor stă tocmai în caracterul lor regenerativ.

Parcurgem un nou capitol în devenirea și consolidarea proiectului european, în care avem nevoie de elaborarea unei noi viziuni cu privire la viitorul Uniunii. Din această perspectivă, pledez ferm pentru unitate, coeziune, solidaritate și pentru calea europeană comună în eforturile de consolidare a proiectului european. Cheia centrală a demersurilor noastre trebuie să rămână „unitatea”. Pentru România, acest principiu reprezintă însăși esența proiectului european, care i-a dat acestuia capacitatea de a face față provocărilor multiple cu care Uniunea s-a confruntat până în prezent.

Uniunea Europeană este un proiect evolutiv. Noile realități, atât la nivelul statelor membre, cât și din plan global, impun o dezvoltare și o consolidare a proiectului european și, în niciun caz, o repunere în discuție a principiilor fundamentale pe care proiectul european a fost clădit.

O Uniune puternică nu trebuie să fie realizată în detrimentul unității. Avem nevoie de o Uniune incluzivă, care nu lasă în urmă niciun stat și niciun cetățean european. Din acest punct de vedere, idei precum o Europă cu mai multe viteze sau o Uniune a cercurilor concentrice nu pot reprezenta o soluție, în măsura în care dorim menținerea caracterului unitar și indivizibil al Uniunii Europene, care îi conferă valoare și credibilitate în relația sa cu restul lumii.

Președintele Juncker spunea anul trecut că Europa trebuie să își regăsească suflul, să respire cu ambii plămâni, cel vestic și cel estic. Eu sper că viitorul nostru împreună ne va arăta, de asemenea, că Europa are o singură inimă. O inimă care bate prin noi toți, care ne unește, de la est la vest și de la nord la sud, care face ca cetățenii noștri să se identifice și să se definească în mod natural ca europeni. Trebuie să ne asumăm acest ideal comun și, dacă este necesar, să ne adaptăm și să recalibrăm instrumentele prin care putem să îl atingem.

Am încredere că în noua etapă în care va intra Uniunea Europeană începând cu anul 2019 și pe care România, în calitate de președinție rotativă a Consiliului Uniunii Europene, o va pregăti împreună cu celelalte state membre și cu instituțiile europene, va fi una fructuoasă. Sunt încrezător că Summitul de la Sibiu din 9 mai 2019 va reprezenta un reper în proiecția privind viitorul unei Uniuni mai puternice, mai unite, mai coezive și mai democratice. Depinde de puterea, înțelepciunea și voința noastră – state membre, instituții europene și cetățeni europeni – ca acest obiectiv să devină realitate.

Doamnelor și domnilor, Summitul de la Sibiu este un moment important pentru consolidarea fundației acestui viitor. Un viitor comun, un viitor democratic, un viitor optimist. Viitorul Uniunii Europene nu se poate edifica decât cu participarea și implicarea directă și activă a cetățenilor europeni. Îmi doresc ca Sibiu să fie un moment de sensibilizare pentru cetățenii europeni.

Cetățenii vor măsuri concrete și rezultate tangibile. Vor vești pozitive despre pace, securitate și prosperitate. De asemenea, cetățenii trebuie să vadă că lucrăm pentru a proteja și consolida simbolurile majore ale Uniunii: moneda Euro, piața internă, spațiul Schengen și libertatea de circulație.

În același timp, cetățenii noștri au nevoie de mai multă coeziune. Iar coeziunea nu este doar ambiția noilor state membre, care au un nivel mai redus de convergență economică, ci este o necesitate pentru membrii mai vechi ai Uniunii. Coeziunea este unitate, este expresia acțiunii comune, concertate și coordonate la nivelul Uniunii. Trebuie să ne întoarcem la esența principiului coeziunii, așa cum este acesta reflectat în tratatele Uniunii – forța centripetă a unei comunități de viziune și acțiune, generatoare de plusvaloare pentru întreaga Uniune.

Uniunea Europeană se află astăzi într-un moment de redresare economică. Acest lucru nu ar fi fost posibil în absența unei viziuni și acțiuni comune în crearea și consolidarea unei uniuni economice și monetare. Siguranța economică este la fel de importantă ca cea a frontierelor, iar prosperitatea Uniunii depinde de capacitatea noastră de a asigura o uniune economică și monetară puternică, capabilă să răspundă așteptărilor cetățenilor, dar și să facă față unor noi provocări.

În vederea atingerii acestui obiectiv, avem nevoie de măsuri și decizii cuprinzătoare, care să garanteze participarea tuturor statelor membre la eforturile comune de realizare a unei zone euro mai puternice, mai stabile și mai competitive. Pentru România, aderarea la zona euro cât mai curând posibil, când toate condițiile vor fi îndeplinite, este un obiectiv național fundamental.

Anul acesta sărbătorim 25 de ani de piață internă. Am parcurs un drum lung în ceea ce privește libertățile și oportunitățile de a călători, de a studia și de a lucra în cadrul Uniunii Europene pentru cetățenii noștri. Nu putem să ne imaginăm Uniunea Europeană fără piața unică și fără cele patru libertăți fundamentale ale acesteia, libera circulație a mărfurilor, a persoanelor, a serviciilor și a capitalurilor. Avem nevoie de o piață internă funcțională, competitivă și incluzivă. O piață internă în care cetățenii resimt în viața de zi cu zi beneficiile acesteia.

În același timp, Europa este și trebuie să rămână un lider pe plan internațional în multiple domenii, cu precădere în ceea ce privește revoluția tehnologică și digitală. Europa are capacitatea și forța de a se transforma și de a fi lider în conectivitate. Creșterea și stabilitatea, competitivitatea, securitatea și îmbunătățirea calității vieții tuturor europenilor depind de cât de ambițioasă și hotărâtă este Europa în privința digitalizării, respectiv cercetării și inovării.

În același timp, trebuie să asigurăm o mai bună adaptare a forței noastre de muncă la nevoile, cerințele și evoluțiile pieței interne, pentru a garanta că progresul social și competitivitatea merg mână în mână.

Trebuie să fim, de asemenea, conștienți de faptul că transformarea digitală a societății nu va putea fi împlinită fără o investiție masivă în educație și în noile aptitudini necesare. Toți cetățenii – din orice regiune și orice grup social – trebuie angrenați în aceste evoluții. Acesta trebuie să fie angajamentul nostru, al celor ce conduc Europa, și în această diversitate și cuprindere va sta tăria continentului nostru în competiția globală ce va urma.

Vorbim și de un viitor în care Uniunea își va recâștiga propriii cetățeni, prin întărirea sentimentului lor de securitate, aici, acasă, în interiorul Uniunii. Provocările generate de migrație și securitate sunt aspecte de maxim interes pentru noi toți. Trebuie să acționăm astfel încât proiectul european să reclădească siguranța cetățenilor, să acordăm o atenție sporită combaterii terorismului și radicalizării.

Este necesar să acționăm astfel încât să devenim mai proactivi și să mărim capacitatea de prevenire a Uniunii. Răspunsul la crize cu măsuri contextuale nu constituie o modalitate eficientă și, în această cheie, avem nevoie de soluții durabile.

Uniunea Europeană trebuie să rămână un spațiu de liberă circulație, în care toți cetățenii noștri să se poată deplasa liber și să poată munci oriunde în spațiul comunitar, unde tinerii să poată călători, studia, beneficiind astfel pe deplin de unul dintre cele mai vizibile și ambițioase proiecte ale construcției europene – spațiul Schengen.

Pentru România, aderarea la spațiul Schengen reprezintă un obiectiv important. Acest demers va contribui semnificativ la consolidarea securității pentru întregul spațiu de liberă circulație din Uniune.

Corolarul unei Uniuni sigure și puternice ar trebui să fie o Uniune lărgită, pentru că mărimea conferă putere – o noțiune cât se poate de adevărată și relevantă într-un context global foarte competitiv. Iar politica de extindere a Uniunii și-a demonstrat în mod clar valoarea prin valurile succesive de primire de noi membri, contribuind, de o manieră incontestabilă, la prosperitatea și securitatea continentului.

Lărgirea Uniunii nu trebuie să rămână doar un deziderat pentru generațiile viitoare, ci continuă să fie o necesitate reală, în care statele candidate și potențialii candidați trebuie să își ancoreze eforturile de continuare a reformelor și de asumare autentică și consecventă a valorilor și principiilor europene.

Onorați parlamentari europeni, nu putem fi cu adevărat relevanți la nivel global dacă nu reușim să influențăm semnificativ mediul din vecinătatea noastră. Păstrarea statelor din vecinătatea sudică și estică ancorate ferm în valorile europene și menținerea angajamentului lor pentru reforme structurale ireversibile depind și de capacitatea noastră de a ne îndeplini angajamentele în raport cu ele.

Nu în ultimul rând, vorbim și de un viitor în care Uniunea va avea un rol de prim-plan pe scena internațională, un viitor în care statele membre vor sprijini, pe baza intereselor împărtășite și a solidarității reciproce, afirmarea Uniunii ca actor global, cu o contribuție decisivă la promovarea sistemului multilateral bazat pe reguli.

Implementarea Strategiei globale a Uniunii Europene a înlesnit deja evoluții importante atât în domeniul securității și apărării, cât și în ceea ce privește consolidarea legăturilor dintre politicile interne și externe ale Uniunii.

Este responsabilitatea noastră să ne asigurăm că, în anii care vin, Uniunea va dispune de instrumentele necesare pentru a răspunde noilor provocări. Continuarea inițiativelor din domeniul securității și apărării comune în condiții care să asigure cooperarea strânsă și evitarea paralelismelor cu NATO, consolidarea rezilienței Uniunii și a partenerilor săi, îmbunătățirea comunicării strategice sunt obiective care necesită o atenție sporită și acțiuni constante.

Consistența politicii Uniunii în vecinătatea sa, menținerea parteneriatului transatlantic solid, onorarea angajamentelor – de la continuarea politicii de extindere în parametrii agreeți, până la consolidarea relației instituționale cu ONU și susținerea fermă a multilateralismului și virtuților sale – sunt tot atâtea domenii în care Uniunea va fi chemată să demonstreze că poate să acționeze eficient.

Distinși membri ai Parlamentului European, în urmă cu 11 ani, când România s-a alăturat mării familii europene, mă simțeam deosebit de mândru, ca român, că trăiesc acest moment important pentru țara mea. Anul viitor, când România preia pentru prima dată Președinția Consiliului Uniunii Europene, Summitul de la Sibiu va reprezenta un moment de răscruce pentru familia noastră europeană.

Este datoria noastră, este responsabilitatea noastră să creionăm viitorul Europei. Alături de toți românii, mă simt mândru în calitate de cetățean român și, în egală măsură, de cetățean european. Pentru că mândria națională sau mândria europeană nu reprezintă concepte erodate și nici realități paralele. Este o stare asumată, care întreține și dă forță și conținut acestei identități. Pentru că Europa este parte din fibra noastră. O Europă care însumează din diversitatea noastră. O Europă clădită pe baza conceptului de unitate în diversitate. De aceea Europa este România și România este Europa.

2018 este anul Centenarului României Moderne, care înseamnă pentru noi nu atât analize retrospectiv-istorice, cât, mai ales, proiecții de viitor. În acești 100 de ani, am învățat unele lecții importante, trecând prin experiențe și perioade nefericite. Iar lecția democrației este una dintre cele mai importante. De aceea apreciem cu atât mai mult valorile familiei europene.

Din acest motiv, România este o țară profund atașată proiectului european. Avem o societate vibrantă și dinamică, în continuă evoluție. Suntem o democrație tânără, care are resursele pentru a se perfecționa. Românii sunt conectați activ la valorile civice. Au dovedit-o cât se poate de clar și și-au făcut auzită vocea atunci când a fost nevoie să apere statul de drept și democrația.

(Aplauze puternice)

Românii au voința și forța de a merge mai departe pe drumul european pe care și l-au asumat. Este ambiția de a depăși orice obstacol pentru a rămâne puternic ancorați în marea familie europeană din care facem parte în mod fundamental.

Tânăra generație crede în Europa și se implică în dezbateri privind viitorul nostru de o manieră pozitivă și, mai ales, optimistă. Din entuziasmul acestor tineri remarcabili se hrănește și optimismul nostru privind viitorul Europei. Totodată, entuziasmul lor ne obligă în mod deosebit la responsabilitate. Avantajul acestui val de entuziasm care vine dinspre România provine, în primul rând, din forța lui de a inspira și a retrezi reflexul apărării democrației, care nu este un dat, ci presupune o responsabilitate continuă de a o îngriji, apăra și promova.

România este în prezent o țară dinamică și orientată spre viitor, care a îmbrățișat rapid și a valorificat noile tendințe tehnologice și servicii digitale. Una dintre companiile românești este de câțiva ani lider mondial în soluții de apărare și securitate cibernetică. Pe de altă parte, o companie inițiată de doi tineri ingineri a devenit, în această primăvară, primul „unicorn” românesc. În numai șase luni, compania și-a triplat valoarea, ajungând la o evaluare de 3 miliarde de euro, a devenit unul dintre liderii globali în roboți software, automatizare și inteligență artificială.

Peste tot în România, de la Iași la Timișoara, de la Cluj la București, de la Craiova și Constanța, mii de ingineri români talentați – femei și bărbați – lucrează pentru a avansa tehnologiile digitale, fie că e vorba de mașini conectate și sisteme inteligente de transport, de telecomunicații 5G și internetul lucrurilor, de cercetare și inovare în *blockchain*, tehnologii spațiale sau agricultură digitală. Economia datelor este viitorul, iar sectoarele românești de IT&C și creativ au una dintre ponderile cele mai mari din PIB-ul național din întreaga Uniune. Nu trebuie, așadar, să mire pe nimeni că România își dorește și are capacitatea să contribuie la consolidarea rolului global al Uniunii în acest domeniu.

România susține activ o Uniune care investește în siguranța cetățenilor săi. Unitatea europeană este esențială când vorbim de consolidarea securității interne a Uniunii. Pentru România, în calitate de stat membru care gestionează una dintre cele mai mari frontiere externe ale Uniunii Europene, securitatea este un domeniu prioritar, în care am demonstrat deja că performăm în toate privințele. Suntem capabili, astăzi, să fim un furnizor de securitate, la cele mai înalte standarde, pentru întreaga Uniune, așa cum o facem deja în cadrul NATO. Ca stat membru al Uniunii, vom acorda o importanță specială continuării măsurilor menite să reducă fragmentarea spațiului european de securitate.

Avem datoria să protejăm toți cetățenii, indiferent dacă aceștia se află sau nu în statele din spațiul Schengen. Acest lucru este posibil doar printr-o aplicare integrală la frontiera externă a Uniunii, de către toate statele membre, a instrumentelor de securitate de ultimă generație.

Distinși membri ai Parlamentului European, Uniunea Europeană s-a clădit pe o dorință cât se poate de umană și profundă, aceea de pace pe continentul european. Această pace internă – cu toate ingredientele sale: cooperarea între statele membre, principiul statului de drept, drepturi și libertăți fundamentale, diversitate, prosperitate, standarde sociale, de muncă – a devenit un bun de export extrem de prețios.

A venit momentul să ne reîntoarcem cu acest model către interior și să arătăm cetățenilor noștri ce am reușit să creăm împreună. Să vedem cum protejăm, împreună, pacea și cum se traduce nevoia de pace astăzi, la nivelul intereselor cetățeanului.

Am mereu în minte cuvintele extrem de actuale ale lui Jean Monnet. Citez:

„... il n'y a pas pour les peuples d'Europe d'autre avenir que dans l'union”

Vă îndemn să păstrăm unitatea drept cuvânt de ordine al viitorului. O unitate însă care nu va veni de la sine. O unitate pe care trebuie să o protejăm și să o consolidăm în mod constant, îngrijindu-ne, în același timp, de diversitatea atât de caracteristică culturii europene.

Vă mulțumesc.

(Adunarea, în picioare, l-a aplaudat pe vorbitor)

Jean-Claude Juncker, *Président de la Commission*. – Monsieur le Président de la République, cher Klaus, Monsieur le Président du Parlement européen, c'est pour Madame Crețu, commissaire roumaine, et moi-même, un grand honneur d'avoir pu vous écouter, nous qui vous connaissons et vous aimons bien.

C'est pour le Parlement européen un grand moment, parce que c'est la première fois, si je ne m'abuse, qu'un président roumain en exercice s'exprime, à la veille de la présidence de son pays – la première présidence roumaine – devant les représentants du peuple européen.

Dragi români,

I'm not fluent in Romanian but I did understand.

Mon roumain imparfait veut dire «mes chers Roumains», puisqu'ils nous observent et nous regardent. C'est aussi pour moi aussi un moment de forte émotion, puisque j'ai avec la Roumanie et avec son Président exercice, une longue histoire. Elle est d'abord personnelle, entre nous deux, puisque nous nous connaissons depuis des siècles. Le Président roumain a été maire de Sibiu Hermannstadt, et il y a entre Hermannstadt et le Luxembourg, une vieille histoire. Parce que contrairement à ce que prétendent les historiens allemands, ceux qui ont peuplé la Transylvanie n'étaient pas les Saxons mais les Luxembourgeois. Ce qui fait que nous pouvons nous parler dans un luxembourgeois approximatif; enfin, il y a entre nous une union qui fait que l'histoire ancienne perdure dans les temps qui sont les nôtres et pour les décennies et siècles devant nous.

Il y a trop peu de Roumains dans cette salle.

En décembre 1997, j'ai présidé le Conseil européen à Luxembourg sous la présidence luxembourgeoise, et c'est alors que nous avons ouvert grandement les portes pour les pays qu'on appelait à l'époque «pays candidats», dont la Roumanie. Et, sous une autre présidence luxembourgeoise, en avril 2005, j'ai pu signer au nom de l'Union européenne, le traité d'adhésion de la Roumanie à l'Union européenne. Ce furent pour moi des moments inoubliables, parce que ce jour-là, la réconciliation entre l'histoire et la géographie européennes était définitivement accomplie et pour moi la Roumanie n'est donc pas un pays neutre, mais un pays vers lequel me portaient mes sentiments les plus profonds, les rares qualités de cœur que je peux avoir, et donc oui, bienvenue au Parlement et re-bienvenue en Europe, Monsieur le Président.

Je pense au peuple roumain, que j'aime bien puisque, à travers ses autorités, il m'a couvert de distinctions et d'honneurs auxquels j'ai été sensible, alors qu'en règle générale, on dit qu'on n'est pas sensible à ce genre de décorations et d'honneurs.

Je pense au peuple roumain qui, depuis le début, a su s'intégrer dans la sphère de solidarité et de complicité européenne comme si la Roumanie avait été un État membre fondateur. Et donc, oui, la Roumanie aujourd'hui et depuis longtemps – même avant son adhésion à l'Union européenne – a été et est devenue un fournisseur de stabilité et non pas un consommateur de stabilité dans une région tourmentée, difficile, dramatiquement éprouvée, à travers son histoire, jusqu'au sang, et donc oui, sans la Roumanie, l'Union européenne ne serait pas complète.

(Applaudissements)

La Roumanie, dès le premier jour de son adhésion, a su se placer à la tête de l'intégration européenne. Je sais que le Président n'aime pas trop l'Europe des cercles concentriques, une Europe d'avant-garde et une Europe qui serait à la traîne. Il n'aime pas cela du tout, tout comme moi je n'aime pas ces concepts. Mais la Roumanie a prouvé dans les faits qu'elle n'a rien à craindre d'un tel scénario qui, du reste, n'est pas le mien, parce qu'elle s'est toujours classée à la tête du mouvement. J'en prends pour exemple l'accord de la Roumanie sur la mise en place d'un parquet européen. D'autres, même des États membres fondateurs, n'ont pas le courage de faire cela. La Roumanie était parmi les premiers à dire oui à la mise en place d'un brevet européen, alors que d'autres n'avaient pas cette volonté d'avant-garde.

La Roumanie fêtera le 1^{er} décembre de l'année en cours son centenaire, le centenaire de la grande union, comme disent nos amis Roumains. Je voulais dire au Président que c'est bien sûr une fête romaine, mais c'est aussi une fête européenne, parce que tout ce qui concerne la Roumanie concerne l'Europe. Tout ce qui est propre à la Roumanie n'est pas étranger à l'Union européenne et donc ce jour-là nous fêterons ensemble un grand moment de l'histoire roumaine et un grand moment de l'histoire européenne.

Dès 2014, en me présentant devant ce Parlement, le 15 juillet — c'est une date que vous n'avez pas retenue mais moi oui –, j'ai dit que la Roumanie sous le mandat de la Commission qui est la mienne, devrait faire partie de la zone Schengen.

Seit Juli 2014 plädiere ich dafür, dass Rumänien Teil der Schengen-Zone wird, und ich hätte gerne, dass wir dies bewerkstelligen, bevor das Mandat dieser Kommission endet.

(Applaus)

Ich sage das aus allgemeinen Gründen, ich sage das aber auch aus Rumänien-spezifischen Gründen. Allerdings möchte ich darauf aufmerksam machen – und das ist eine Bemerkung, die ich nicht so sehr an die Adresse des Präsidenten richte, sondern eher an die Adresse der rumänischen Regierung und des rumänischen Parlaments: Man darf das nicht dadurch in Gefahr bringen, dass man von rechtsstaatlichen Prinzipien Abstand nimmt.

(Applaus)

Mein Herzenswunsch wäre es, dass man in Rumänien vor Eintritt in die Präsidentschaft der Europäischen Union einen nationalen Konsensus hinkriegt, was Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Kampf gegen die Korruption anbelangt. Dies ist absolut notwendig.

(Applaus)

Ansonsten wird es der Kommission schwerfallen, die zielgerichtete Empfehlung, was den Schengen-Raum anbelangt, einvernehmlich vorschlagen zu können.

And then we have the problem of the budget. I have had more than three talks with my friend the president, insisting on the need to put into place the negotiation boxes after the Austrian Presidency, which will achieve it. Concluding this chapter would be a major performance and much-needed achievement under the Romanian Presidency, in the light of the perspective of the summit in Sibiu.

This chapter on the financial perspective has to be concluded before the European elections because we would lose more than the momentum, we would lose several dimensions. It would be a major win for us if we were able to put the financial perspectives in place. I know that the Romanian president, my dear friend Klaus, is very committed to achieving this, together with his government. It will be no ordinary summit in Sibiu (Hermannstadt). It will be the moment when and where we have to deliver European perspectives, talking to those who called for the European elections in May 2019.

Ich bin sehr davon überzeugt, dass der Herr Präsident und die rumänische Regierung, das rumänische Parlament, alles in ihren Kräften Stehende tun werden, um Sibiu zu einem großen Moment europäischer Zukunftsgestaltung zu machen. Ich hatte letztes Jahr vorgeschlagen, dass wir diesen Gipfel in Hermannstadt/Sibiu haben sollten, weil ich der Auffassung bin, wenn es ein Land, das erst 2007 mit großer Verspätung im europäischen Geschichtsverlauf der Europäischen Union beigetreten ist, schaffen würde, die nächsten sieben Jahre rumänisch – sprich europäisch –, europäisch – sprich rumänisch – zu gestalten, trüge dies eine Symbolkraft in sich, die man nicht unterschätzen sollte.

(Beifall)

Manfred Weber, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, I would like to welcome the President of Romania. Mr President, it is good to have you here within the format of the Future of Europe discussions in the European Union.

The first lesson, I would say, that we can learn when we listen to you, as a representative of this great country, is optimism: Europe works, Europe delivers. I only want to mention one figure out of the last 20 years: the economic development of Romania, so the growth rate, increased by more than 490% on the GDP base, four times higher than Moldova, for example. So to be part of this Europe, to be part of the European Union, works – on the question of the economy, but also on the question of developing towards a modern society in Romania. Congratulations on this.

But, I must say that Europe is not yet really unified. We cannot talk today about an already really united European Union. Romania is a Member of the European Union but the living conditions inside of our Union differ a lot. The European People's Party (the PPE) does not want to accept this. We want to change this. We want to really have, in the future, a united Europe where people have an equal standard of living.

There is No Europe of east and west. There is No Europe of north and south. No Europe of poor and rich. There are only Europeans. And that is why, as the PPE, we want to continue our efforts under cohesion policy – you mentioned this – and we have to invest again in infrastructure, but I think new priorities are also needed. In research, for example. Let's build, for example, the next supercomputer of the European Union in some of the countries in the central and eastern European Member States, and not always in the traditional Western countries, and let's dream the dream that in the future an Austrian or a French student goes to Krakow or Bucharest to study and not to Oxford or Munich anymore. That is probably one of the dreams we should really dream.

Another element is that Romania is a Member of the European Union but also in terms of the conditions, not yet fully. That is why we welcome the engagement to join the euro, which is for us a crucial element for surviving as Europeans in a globalised world, and we fully support the enlargement process on the Schengen Area. Let's be engaged. We also fully support what President Jean-Claude Juncker said today, that we should get started; probably the first step is opening the airports already before the European elections in 2019. We have to move on these questions.

I want to show respect also towards the citizens of Romania, because I think it is clear that there is still a need of modernisation, of modernising the country in the direction of a country which fights strongly for fundamental principles and fights against corruption. I want to clarify that this is not only a Romanian problem, but it is also a Romanian problem, and people care about this, people care about the situation in the country. The government has to change the direction.

We discussed this a few weeks ago here in Strasbourg as well. For my political family, I have to underline that today's government already crossed some of the red lines which are defined in our common understanding about values and I want to thank you, as President, because you gave the people in Romania who demonstrated opposition, who demonstrated too their readiness to go forward for a modern Romania, a voice. You defended modernisation. You are the President of a modern Romania and that is good.

Herr Präsident, Sie werden in ein paar Monaten die Präsidentschaft übernehmen. Da gibt es noch ein paar Punkte, die uns wichtig sind. Das erste ist, dass wir bis dahin versuchen müssen, Antworten zu geben. In der Migrationsfrage, in der Fragestellung des Budgets für die Europäische Union müssen wir liefern, und wir müssen auch über die Erfolge, die wir haben, reden, den Menschen auch vermitteln, dass Europa in ihrem Alltag wirkmächtig und positiv ist.

Das Zweite, was aber auch wichtig ist, ist, dass in Ihrer Ratspräsidentschaft die Europawahlen stattfinden werden. Wir alle vertreten ein demokratisches Europa. Wir sind die Kammer der Bürger der Europäischen Union. Für ein demokratisches Europa braucht man Kandidaten und man braucht ein Programm, man braucht Inhalte, man braucht Ideen. Das werden wir praktizieren als Abgeordnete, als Parteien auf diesem Kontinent in den nächsten Jahren. 2014, bei der letzten Wahl, hatten wir beispielsweise zum ersten Mal Spitzenkandidaten nominiert, wie Jean-Claude Juncker, auch Guy Verhofstadt hat kandidiert, Ska Keller hat kandidiert, wir hatten verschiedene Kandidaten. Und wir wollen beim nächsten Mal noch mehr die Programmviefalt deutlich machen – dass ich für Ceta gestimmt habe und Ska Keller gegen Ceta gestimmt hat beispielsweise –, die Unterschiede deutlich machen.

Worum ich Sie bitte, ist, dass Sie im Anschluss Ihren Beitrag dazu leisten, dass dieses demokratische Europa, die Willensbildung der Bürger Europas dann auch nach den Europawahlen Ausdruck findet in einem gemeinsamen Programm für die Zukunft dieses Kontinents und in den Entscheidungen, die dann zu fällen sind.

Ich habe mit dem Verweis auf den Optimismus begonnen, den Sie praktizieren, und ich möchte damit auch schließen. Vor 28 Jahren, am Beginn der Neunziger, hat ein junger Mann in Sibiu vor der Entscheidung gestanden, sein Land entweder zu verlassen und in der Ferne seine Zukunft zu suchen, oder dazubleiben und aufzubauen. Er hat sich für das Letztere entschieden, fürs Anpacken. Er hat zunächst seine Stadt in die Zukunft geführt, die Arbeitslosigkeit reduziert und den Menschen einen guten Platz zum Leben geschaffen. Heute steht der gleiche Mann vor uns, nämlich der heutige Präsident Rumäniens, Klaus Iohannis. Und deswegen ist die Botschaft, die Sie mitbringen, Optimismus. Mit viel Arbeit, mit Seriosität, mit Willen und Ideen kann man sein Land und Europa in eine gute Zukunft führen. Danke für diese Botschaft!

(Beifall)

Josef Weidenholzer, im Namen der S&D-Fraktion. – Herr Präsident! Willkommen im Europäischen Parlament, Herr Präsident! Es ist wichtig, dass Sie sich heute der Debatte über die Zukunft Europas stellen. Nicht nur, weil Ihr Land in wenigen Wochen von Österreich die Ratspräsidentschaft übernehmen wird, sondern auch wegen der Entwicklungen in Zentral- und Osteuropa.

Die Euphorie, die sich vor mehr als zehn Jahren breitgemacht hat, ist verflogen. Überwunden geglaubte Gräben tun sich auf und neue kommen dazu. Das hängt auch mit nicht eingehaltenen Zusagen zusammen, wie etwa mit dem immer wieder verschobenen Schengen-Beitritt Ihres Landes. Generell betrachtet gibt es vor allem im ökonomischen Bereich Schief lagen, die auf den gesamten Osten zutreffen. Auch die demografische Situation stellt eine Herausforderung dar. Die meisten osteuropäischen Staaten sind mit einem gewaltigen *brain drain* konfrontiert. Wir sollten diese Entwicklungen viel offener, direkter ansprechen, selbstkritisch. Auch um zu verhindern, dass der latente Unmut von Demagogen instrumentalisiert wird, um die europäische Wertegemeinschaft auszuhöhlen.

Oft wird – und auch Sie haben das heute getan – im Zusammenhang von Ost- und Westeuropa ein Bild zitiert, wonach Europa mit zwei Lungen atmen müsste. Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Demokratie und Menschenrechte, das sind die Luft, die wir zum atmen brauchen, und das verbindet uns.

Herr Präsident, es ist gut zu hören, dass auch Sie die europäischen Werte nicht infrage stellen und Ihr Handeln danach ausrichten wollen. Rumänien ist ein wichtiger Mitgliedstaat der Union – ein sehr wichtiger – mit großem Potenzial. Das Wirtschaftswachstum liegt weit über dem EU-Durchschnitt, vor allem auch dank eines starken Engagements im IT-Sektor. Auch die rumänische Diaspora trägt wesentlich zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung anderer Mitgliedstaaten bei.

Rumänien hat einen weiten Weg zurückgelegt. Die Ausgangssituation war schwieriger als in den anderen ehemals kommunistischen Ländern. Die erzielten Fortschritte waren vor allem auch deswegen möglich, weil das Land gemeinsam mit der Europäischen Kommission im Kooperations- und Kontrollmechanismus zusammenarbeitet. Die Bekämpfung der Korruption und die Unabhängigkeit des Justizwesens sind dabei prioritär. Nur wenn das gelingt, dann lässt sich die positive wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Landes auch nachhaltig absichern. Nur wenn die Korruption beseitigt ist, kommt der wirtschaftliche Erfolg auch bei den einfachen Menschen an. In dieser Hinsicht ist noch viel zu tun.

Die S&D-Fraktion wird hier ein kritischer Begleiter sein. Für uns stehen Demokratie und Rechtsstaatlichkeit im Zentrum. Diese Prinzipien sind universell und gelten für alle Mitgliedstaaten, egal ob im Osten oder im Westen.

Wenn Sie etwas mehr Disziplin hätten, dann würden Sie mich auch ausreden lassen.

Deshalb zählen wir auch darauf, dass Sie das Europäische Parlament dabei unterstützen, endlich den von uns vorgeschlagenen Rechtsstaats- und Grundrechtsmechanismus, über den wir heute Nachmittag diskutieren werden, umzusetzen.

Herr Präsident, mit Sorge beobachten wir die innenpolitische Situation in Ihrem Land, die sich immer wieder zuspitzt. Es steht uns nicht zu, uns in innenpolitische Vorgänge einzumischen, aber es ist nicht gut, wenn sich eine Gesellschaft immer mehr fragmentiert und sich unüberbrückbare Gegensätze verfestigen. Wir hoffen, dass Sie kraft Ihres Amtes und Ihrer Persönlichkeit zu deren Überwindung und zu mehr Gemeinsamkeit beitragen. Deswegen ersuchen wir Sie auch, die Rolle der Geheimdienste, des letzten Überbleibels der Ceaușescu-Jahre, zu überdenken. Bei ordentlichen Gerichtsverfahren sollten *secret protocols* keine Rolle spielen. Das wäre ein wichtiger Schritt in Richtung eines modernen, liberalen und europäischen Rumänien.

Monica Macovei, în numele grupului ECR. – Bun venit, domnule Președinte Iohannis! La 11 ani de la aderare, România vor în Europa - 65 % la sută dintre noi vrem ca România să rămână în Uniune și peste 60 % din cetățenii statelor membre vor și ei în Uniune – un nivel record în ultimii 25 de ani.

Liderii politici europeni nu trebuie să piardă această încredere a oamenilor, ci trebuie să o consolideze. Românii își pun încrederea în Uniune în special acum, când trăiesc de luni de zile coșmarul unei guvernări netransparente, care atacă permanent justiția independentă și slăbește lupta anticorupție. Românii sunt însă un popor viu și nu ezită să iasă în stradă pentru a apăra justiția, dreptatea și democrația.

În acest timp, Parlamentul European a adoptat noi directive pentru combaterea spălării banilor, pentru confiscarea extinsă a averilor, dar ele nu sunt transpuse în România, nici la timp, nici corect, ci dimpotrivă, de multe ori invers decât prevăd directivele. Asta, de acest guvern PSD-ALDE.

Pentru a-și păstra valorile, Europa trebuie să sancționeze derapajele de la democrație. Președintele Iohannis a criticat și sancționat public derapajele guvernului PSD-ALDE, asaltul asupra justiției și modificarea legislației penale. Dar discursul PSD-ALDE, ca și discursurile altor politicieni populiști, încearcă să manipuleze opinia publică, insistând că România sau alte state membre își pierd identitatea. Nu spun însă nimic despre avantajele apartenenței la Uniune. Discursul extremist divizează societăți, în timp ce politicienii extremiști își văd de afacerile cu bani publici, urmând exemplul Kremlinului. Trebuie să învingem extremismul și populismul.

Înainte preluării președinției, guvernul trebuie să respecte toate recomandările Comisiei de la Veneția și avertismentele Comisiei Europene legate de modificarea codurilor și legilor justiției. Ar fi un semn de respect pentru români, pentru partenerii străini și pentru democrație.

În 2019 va fi prima dată de la aderare când România preia Președinția Consiliului Uniunii Europene. Primul summit al Uniunii, fără Marea Britanie, va avea loc la Sibiu în mai 2019.

Pentru a-și păstra valorile și Europa trebuie să sancționeze derapajele de la democrație, cum am spus. România are ocazia, preluând Președinția Consiliului European, de a fi în atenția întregii lumi în prima jumătate a anului 2019. Îmi doresc ca România să îndeplinească acest rol în mod responsabil și cu profesionalism.

Guy Verhofstadt, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Mr President, the first time that I went to your country, President Iohannis, to Bucharest, was in December 1989 in one of those old Tarom airplanes. I have to tell you, it was torture. With no leg-room, it was a little bit like flying with Ryanair today. For me it was the first time that I went to a Communist country, because before the fall of the Berlin Wall, we liberals were not allowed to go. In Bucharest – I remember it very well – I met the historical leader of the Romanian liberals, Radu-Anton Câmpeanu, in an empty building, in an empty office with one table and one chair. He had just returned from exile in Paris in December 1989. When I came back here, what I did was immediately to send a truck full of office furniture and computers. A few months later these capitalist gifts were destroyed by a furious mob of miners, the henchmen of Iliescu. So I had to send a second truck to Romania to help Mr Câmpeanu build up his liberal and democratic movement. Not only did I send office furniture and computers, I also sent material for a radio station that became one of the first private radio stations in your country – Radio Contact – with the same name as a station in Belgium.

The reason why I'm telling you this story is very simple, because today, so many years later – nearly 30 years later – I am again worried about what is happening in Romania.

First of all, these dubious reforms were undermining the judiciary – I said that to your Prime Minister here a few weeks ago. The same applies to the weakening of the Criminal Code, undermining the fight against corruption. Then there was the discovery of secret protocols, which I have never heard about in any other country, between the secret service on the one hand and some parts of the judiciary on the other. My plea to the Prime Minister, but also to you – because you have to work together in this respect – is certainly not to follow that path in the near future and certainly not to follow the examples of countries like Poland and Hungary, which have embarked on illiberal paths, I should say, towards autocracy. I think that only good cooperation between you, as the President of the Romanian Republic, and the Prime Minister, the Government and the majority can avoid this. And I think there is huge support in this House to support you in this endeavour.

So what we need, I think, exactly 30 years after the Romanian revolution, at European level is exactly what is also at stake in Romania. There will be, in 2019, a fight between liberal democracy and the tendency in a number of countries – unfortunately mainly eastern European countries – to go the way of illiberal autocracy. It will be a fight between tolerance and racism, a fight of openness against protectionism, and a fight by all the – I should say – true Europeans against all the kinds of narrow-minded nationalists and populists that we have seen in the four corners of Europe. And I think that, just as it did in 1989, Romania will have an important role to play in winning the fight in 2019.

This also gives me the opportunity to come back to the debate on the future of the Union.

If there is one real reform to be made for the future of the European Union, Mr President, then it is to get rid of the unanimity rule in the European Union. Look again at the Khashoggi case that we have today. On Saturday all the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, together with Mogherini, produced what? A weak condemnation, a soft declaration instead of common action, which is impossible because of the unanimity rule in foreign affairs. What is needed is not a soft declaration or a weak condemnation; what is needed is a ban – a European ban – on exports of weapons to Saudi Arabia. That is what is needed and it can be achieved only...

(Applause)

... and this is what I want to hear in this debate about the future of Europe – if we get rid of the unanimity rule, if we can get rid – and Romania is ready to do so – of this veto power, this veto right that all Member States still cherish, but which is in fact the real obstacle to a re-foundation of the European Union.

And I'm pleased that Romania and the President will be on our side in this fight for that reform.

Ska Keller, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I would like to thank President Juncker very much for joining this debate on the future of Europe. With the European elections getting close, it is even more important to discuss how that future should look – our common future.

That is the question that we need to ask ourselves, but not just those of us in this room. Every citizen of Europe needs to ask themselves what kind of Europe they want to live in. Do we want a Europe where we fight for our common values, where we defend democracy, civil liberties and freedom, or do we let Europe go down a slippery slope of nationalism and governments that hollow out the key foundations of our Union and of democracy?

Unfortunately, some governments seem to be going exactly in that way. How the situation looks in a Member State also defines what the European Union as such, and as a whole, looks like. Right now, when our common values are being trampled upon in many Member States, every voice that defends civil liberties and every voice that defends freedom and the rule of law counts, regardless of political affiliation.

Therefore, President Juncker, we count on you! The Romanian people count on you! The Romanian people showed in a referendum two weeks ago that they do not want an authoritarian state that discriminates and that tries to play people off against one another. They also protested in their thousands against corruption. They protested against a government that de facto legalises corruption and does not even shy away from weakening a judiciary system to make it easier for some politicians to put public money – the money of all Romanians – into their own pockets. But, instead of listening, the Romanian Government sent tear gas against those people protesting. And now the Government even wants to replace a strong anti-corruption chief prosecutor with somebody who has, let us say, not such a strong record of working against corruption. This is a slap in the face for Romanian citizens. Mr President, it now depends on you to stop that.

Mr President, we need you as a strong voice for democracy and the rule of law in Romania and throughout the European Union. Two weeks ago, the Constitutional Court of Romania declared over 60 articles of the new criminal procedure code unconstitutional. On Friday, the Venice Commission warned that the reform would jeopardise the fight against corruption and also against organised crime. Mr President, why don't you take the lead and call on all political parties to put the recommendations of the Venice Commission into practice? Romania needs to start a broad reassessment of the law reform with all stakeholders involved. Since Romania will take over the presidency in a couple of months, it would be even more important to have a role model at the head of the Presidency for good governance to show how it can be done.

Let us be courageous together and stand up for democracy and the rule of law, and let us not be intimidated by all of those who flagrantly undermine that very rule of law and our freedom.

Tania González Peñas, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señor presidente, gracias, señor Iohannis por estar aquí para intercambiar impresiones con el Parlamento Europeo.

Rumanía se unió a la Unión Europea en el año 2007, y en aquel momento comenzaba un período de grandes esperanzas y de estrechamiento de lazos entre el pueblo rumano y el resto de países de la Unión Europea. Sin embargo, los últimos acontecimientos parecen mostrar que la dignidad del pueblo rumano está poniendo en jaque al Gobierno.

Hablamos del futuro de Europa. Yo querría echar la vista atrás y recordar aquella campaña presidencial de 2014. En aquel momento, señor Iohannis, su partido se centró en la lucha contra la corrupción y en mejorar el sistema judicial. Cualquiera que mirara por un retrovisor se asombraría con respecto a las decisiones que el Gobierno de su país está tomando en los últimos tiempos.

Usted tiene la prerrogativa de dirigirse a su Parlamento en cuestiones de interés nacional, así como de salvaguardar el cumplimiento de la Constitución y de los derechos fundamentales. Y en este sentido, debe ser firme y claro en la defensa de la democracia y de las libertades y no llegar a ser cómplice de la deriva de su Gobierno, que parece que está siguiendo la estela de otros, como el polaco o el húngaro.

Asistimos con sorpresa a algunas involuciones democráticas propias de otros tiempos. En concreto, voy a mencionar tres casos muy conocidos.

En primer lugar, el referéndum contra los matrimonios homosexuales, convocado por la extrema derecha y la iglesia ortodoxa, referéndum que apoyó el Gobierno rumano participando en una campaña de odio y homofobia que ha mostrado el lado más retrógrado de un gobierno socialdemócrata, que debería abochornar aquí al Grupo S&D. Afortunadamente los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas de Rumanía mostraron su dignidad de manera rotunda con una abstención tan alta que impidió siquiera que saliese adelante.

En segundo lugar, en agosto miles de sus compatriotas tomaron las calles en contra de la corrupción endémica actual del Gobierno. La ciudadanía rumana se resiste a los intentos de los gobernantes actuales de controlar el poder judicial para diluir el relativo éxito de la lucha contra la corrupción.

Y, en tercer lugar, las reformas de la ley que regula las ONG. La Conferencia de ONG Internacionales del Consejo de Europa señaló que existen claras deficiencias con respecto al cumplimiento de las normas y de las buenas prácticas internacionales.

Desde el Grupo GUE/NGL queremos preguntar también al Grupo S&D sobre estos tres elementos y su opinión, y queremos animarle, señor Iohannis, a ser firme; a ser firme en la defensa de la democracia y de las libertades y en la lucha contra la corrupción; a escuchar la voz de su pueblo antes que otras voces y a no continuar con esa confrontación con el sentido común que está llevando a cabo su Gobierno. Por suerte los hechos de los últimos meses dan cuenta de que los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas rumanas saben hacerse escuchar. Desde aquí lo celebramos. Le mostramos nuestro apoyo para defender los derechos y las libertades conquistadas con tanto sufrimiento.

Rosa D'Amato, a nome del gruppo EFDD. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Presidente Iohannis, quando penso alla Romania penso ai tanti rumeni che vivono in Italia, ai tanti che conosco e che ho incontrato. Nei loro racconti c'è l'immagine di un grande paese, ricco di bellezze e tradizioni, ma anche di un paese che deve fare i conti con annosi problemi, a partire da quello della corruzione. Lo abbiamo visto quest'estate con le proteste che hanno invaso le strade di Bucarest.

Non si allarmi, Presidente, qui nessuno vuole fare il maestrino, sappiamo tutti come la corruzione sia un fenomeno che riguarda tutta l'Europa, nessun paese escluso. Si stima che il suo costo per l'intera Unione sia di 120 miliardi l'anno. È evidente a tutti come la corruzione distrugga l'economia e la giustizia sociale, colpendo i cittadini e le imprese che operano onestamente, punendo chi merita e premiando chi è amico del potere. La corruzione è il furto più grave che si possa commettere in uno Stato perché ruba il futuro.

Li capisco bene, Presidente, perché anch'io vengo da una terra di emigrazione e di corruzione. Per decenni mi sono sentita dire che contro tutto questo c'è poco da fare, che bisogna accettarlo perché tutti i politici sono uguali, perché questa è la politica, e la pubblica amministrazione e lo Stato non cambieranno mai.

Ma non è così! La politica, quella buona, può e deve combattere la corruzione. Come? Con le leggi, come quella che abbiamo appena approvato in Italia, aumentando le pene per corrotti e corruttori, proteggendo chi denuncia e introducendo un principio chiaro: chi è condannato per corruzione non può avere nulla a che fare con la pubblica amministrazione, men che meno ricevere fondi pubblici. Si tratta di misure e principi che sarebbe bene applicare a livello europeo, come le misure sui *whistler blower*, che il Parlamento ha sollecitato un anno fa ma che sono lettera morta.

E a proposito di lettere morte, dato che il tema è il futuro dell'Europa, sarebbe bene che l'Unione europea cominciasse a pensare a garantire un futuro ai suoi cittadini, invece di arroccarsi sulla difesa di regole fallimentari. Mi riferisco a quanto sta avvenendo in queste ore con gli attacchi scomposti alla manovra economica proposta dal governo italiano: abbiamo assistito a commissari europei che hanno bocciato il testo prima ancora di leggerlo, invocando punizioni atroci da parte dei mercati. C'è stato persino un commissario che, appena dopo le elezioni, aveva già preannunciato che l'alta finanza avrebbe fatto cambiare idea agli italiani su chi votare.

La verità è che l'*austerità* e le sue regole hanno fallito. Ci è stato detto che per ridurre il debito pubblico bisognava tagliare la spesa sociale e gli investimenti. In Italia è stato fatto, ma il debito pubblico è rimasto pressoché invariato. Ci è stato detto che con i conti in ordine sarebbero ripartite la crescita e l'occupazione, ma la realtà è che l'economia è stagnante da anni, le famiglie stanno corrodendo i loro risparmi, le imprese falliscono e i giovani emigrano.

Il governo di cui fa parte il mio movimento, il Movimento 5 Stelle, ha detto basta. L'*austerità* sta uccidendo l'Unione europea e l'eurozona, se vuole sopravvivere, ha bisogno di nuove regole di bilancio, ma nell'attesa di cambiarle uno Stato non può impiccare se stesso e i suoi cittadini al rispetto di vincoli sbagliati.

Pensate, anche un istituto, l'Istituto tedesco per la ricerca economica, conferma la bontà della manovra del governo italiano. Il direttore dell'istituto dice che il problema dell'Italia non è il deficit di quest'anno ma la sua depressione economica.

L'Europa dovrebbe ammettere che una maggiore spesa pubblica e più deficit sono utili se concentrati su crescita e occupazione quali priorità assolute. Anche queste sono per caso parole di un pericoloso populista?

A chi sostiene che si violano le norme europee ricordo che il cambiamento dei parametri è perfettamente compatibile con le regole europee, in quanto l'Italia si trova ancora in una situazione eccezionale di cui tenere conto: 17 milioni e mezzo di persone a rischio di povertà ed esclusione sociale, 5 milioni di poveri assoluti sono o no una situazione di vera emergenza? Secondo gli economisti sì. Serve quindi un sostegno forte ai ceti più poveri per la stabilità sociale e per rilanciare i consumi. È quello che abbiamo fatto con il reddito di cittadinanza, una misura che questo Parlamento ha sostenuto soltanto un anno fa con un voto a grande maggioranza su una nostra risoluzione.

Gli ultimi sei mesi, Presidente, di questa legislatura saranno a Presidenza rumena: siate coraggiosi anche voi! Caro Presidente, cari colleghi, il cambiamento quindi è possibile. In Italia c'è un governo che lo sta promuovendo, lo hanno capito anche in Germania, lo capiscano anche a Bruxelles, una volta per tutte!

Nicolas Bay, au nom du groupe ENF. – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, par son fonctionnement, ou plutôt ses dysfonctionnements, mais aussi et surtout par ses orientations politiques, l'Union européenne non seulement n'assure pas l'avenir des nations européennes – c'est le débat qui nous occupe aujourd'hui – mais elle devient en réalité, de plus en plus, une anti-Europe.

Quoiqu'ils s'en défendent, certains ne sont sans doute pas mécontents de cette évolution, puisqu'ils n'ont jamais cherché à assurer à l'échelle continentale, l'indépendance et la puissance. En réalité, ils conçoivent la construction européenne comme une simple étape vers un village global et vers une gouvernance mondiale.

Mais pour ma part, je suis convaincu qu'il est encore temps de sauver l'Europe des dérives actuelles de l'Union européenne. Avec nos alliés et les forces nationales qui progressent partout sur notre continent, nous voulons construire une Europe qui soit à la hauteur du génie de notre civilisation et qui permette à nouveau à nos nations de rayonner à travers le monde, d'être fortes et respectées sur la scène internationale, que ce soit individuellement ou collectivement.

Cette Europe ne passe pas par une Commission européenne qui décide de tout et de rien, à la fois toute-puissante et en même temps impotente. Incapable, par exemple, de protéger nos entreprises aussi bien contre le dumping chinois que contre l'extra-territorialité du droit américain. J'en profite d'ailleurs pour souligner que l'Union européenne est toujours pressée de donner des leçons d'état de droit à la Pologne, à la Hongrie ou, demain, à la Roumanie, de donner des leçons de droits de l'homme à la Russie, mais elle se montre d'un silence assourdissant s'agissant du meurtre barbare du journaliste Khashoggi sur ordre de Riyad dans le consulat d'Arabie Saoudite à Istanbul.

Alors oui, il faut mettre fin à cette bureaucratie hors sol et sans légitimité démocratique. La Commission, elle, se prétend transparente et indépendante dans les décisions qu'elle prend au quotidien et qui concernent plus de 500 millions d'Européens. Mais c'est dans l'opacité la plus totale qu'elle conclut des traités de libre-échange tous azimut. Ces traités organisent la concurrence déloyale, provoquant la désindustrialisation de nos pays et la ruine de notre agriculture, qu'il s'agisse du CETA, déjà en vigueur sans pourtant avoir été ratifié par les parlements nationaux, des projets actuellement en discussion avec le Mercosur ou avec les pays d'Océanie, ou encore de l'accord signé cet été par Jean-Claude Juncker en catimini avec le Japon et, pas plus tard que vendredi dernier, avec Singapour.

Soumise au marché, l'Europe de la Commission, c'est aussi l'Europe de la démission car ses dirigeants n'assument pas les fonctions et obéissent moins aux peuples qu'aux fonctionnaires non élus qui les entourent, ainsi qu'aux juges de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme et de la Cour de justice de l'Union. On nous parle régulièrement de protectionnisme européen, mais en 1997 le traité d'Amsterdam a abrogé l'article 44, paragraphe 2, du traité de Rome, qui prévoyait le développement d'une préférence naturelle entre les États membres. Et la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne a retoqué quelques-unes des rares mesures anti-dumping prises par la Commission à l'époque. C'est ce que l'essayiste français Eric Zemmour a appelé «le coup d'État des juges». En effet, depuis les années 70, le pouvoir politique se laisse peu à peu déposséder de ses prérogatives par le pouvoir judiciaire, d'abord à l'échelon national et aujourd'hui à l'échelle européenne. Ainsi, au-delà de notre souveraineté, c'est bien la démocratie et ses fondements qui sont en péril.

On ne peut pas non plus prétendre à la solidarité européenne avec une Commission punitive qui cherche à sanctionner les États membres qui ne se soumettent pas à son idéologie, en particulier sur la migration, dont on voudrait désormais faire un nouveau droit de l'homme.

Nous avons besoin de véritables coopérations sur les grands défis comme la protection des frontières extérieures ou encore les enjeux énergétiques et environnementaux. Mais non! on ne peut pas prétendre vouloir préserver notre écosystème, tout en encourageant sans cesse un libre-échange transcontinental effréné, qui est par nature profondément anti-écologique.

Voilà pourquoi il est temps de refonder la construction européenne et de la réorienter, loin des utopies et des dogmes.

Cătălin Sorin Ivan (NI). – Domnule Președinte, într-un context atât de complicat pentru România, intern și extern, dar la fel de complicat și pentru Uniunea Europeană, mesajul dumneavoastră de astăzi este un mesaj optimist, un mesaj de stabilitate, o gură de oxigen, dacă vreți, pentru dezbateră europeană din aceste zile.

Sunt de acord că este nevoie de o recalibrare a proiectului european. După mai bine de zece ani de zile de tensiuni, de eșecuri, de crize una după alta, este nevoie să arătăm cetățenilor europeni că am învățat din aceste greșeli, că ne-am învățat lecțiile și că putem intra într-un nou capitol european mult mai hotărâți, mult mai bine pregătiți, mult mai adaptați realităților din fiecare țară membră.

Vreau să vă mulțumesc că ați amintit de cei peste o sută de mii de tineri excepționali din România care lucrează în industria IT, care dezvoltă proiecte pe *blockchain*, care folosesc tehnologiile moderne. Nu întâmplător, în aceste zile s-a lansat în România primul proiect politic pe *blockchain*, primul partid *blockchain* din Europa. Îmi pun mari speranțe într-o Europă digitalizată, pentru că prin digitalizare putem lupta împotriva corupției și împotriva sărăciei.

În final, vreau să vă mulțumesc că ați amintit nu doar de unitatea Uniunii Europene, nu doar de importanța acestei unități, ci mai mult, de „unitate în diversitate”. Faptul că v-ați reîntors la crezul primordial al Uniunii Europene, acela că uniți suntem mai puternici, dar uniți în diversitatea noastră, păstrând specificul național, păstrând valorile noastre naționale.

Presidente. – Ricordo a tutti i colleghi che la discussione di oggi è sul futuro dell'Europa, non è una discussione sulla situazione in Romania, visto che l'abbiamo avuta nella scorsa tornata.

Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania. – Domnule Președinte, onorați membri ai Parlamentului European, în primul rând, dați-mi voie să mulțumesc tuturor vorbitorilor, începând de la Președintele Comisiei, până la cei care au vorbit în numele grupurilor politice.

Ați atins mai multe subiecte, dintre care cel care mie îmi e cel mai drag – țara mea, România. În decembrie 1989, noi, românii, am decis că nu mai suportăm dictatura comunistă și am înlăturat-o. De atunci, construim o democrație pe care noi, românii, ne-o dorim bazată pe ceea ce se numește valorile democrației europene, valorile Uniunii Europene.

În acești aproape 30 de ani România s-a schimbat. România s-a schimbat profund. Suntem o țară din estul Europei care în continuare crede în democrația de tip european. România este o țară cu o economie în creștere. România este o țară care reprezintă un pol de stabilitate în regiunea geografică în care ne găsim. România este o țară care aspiră la statutul de lider în domenii precum cele pe care le-am menționat în prima parte a discursului meu. România este o țară apreciată și respectată pentru securitatea pe care o livrează și în regiune și în NATO și în altă parte. Noi am înțeles, noi, românii, am înțeles de mult că nu putem să rămânem receptori de ajutor și de securitate, ci trebuie să ne asumăm un rol mult mai greu, dar în care credem – cel de furnizor de securitate – și asta facem.

România este un stat de drept. România este un stat democratic. În România există o dezbatere politică și în România există ceea ce am denumit „o democrație foarte vie”. Nu vreau să intru în detalii ale dezbaterii interne din România, dar pot să vă asigur că eu sunt hotărât să rămân implicat pentru a garanta românilor păstrarea valorilor democratice, păstrarea regulilor și principiilor unui stat de drept și continuarea unei lupte foarte dure, grele, dar drepte, a luptei împotriva corupției.

(Aplauze puternice)

Cred că în Europa avem mai multe probleme. Una dintre ele este conexiunea între cetățean și politician. De multe ori, această conexiune este una slabă, cetățenii nu înțeleg ce fac politicienii și, din păcate, unii politicieni nu înțeleg ce vor cetățenii. În România cetățenii au spus clar ce vor, iar eu – care am fost ales de un număr semnificativ de români – am înțeles că ei doresc să continui acest mesaj cu care am început, pentru o Românie democratică, pentru o Românie europeană, o Românie integrată profund în Uniunea Europeană, o Românie care păstrează intact statul de drept și care luptă – și trebuie să spun, cu rezultate notabile – împotriva corupției. Că există controverse este adevărat, dar spuneți-mi ce democrație parlamentară ar fi aceea fără controverse? Iar eu sunt hotărât că din această luptă va câștiga România europeană, România democratică și mă voi implica pentru acest lucru.

Am vorbit în prima parte a întâlnirii noastre despre cum văd eu viitorul Uniunii Europene. Mai multe luări de poziții s-au referit mai degrabă la viitorul apropiat al Uniunii Europene și atunci dați-mi voie să spun câteva cuvinte și despre cum vedem noi în România, cum văd eu viitorul apropiat al Uniunii Europene și mă refer la prima parte a anului 2019, când România va deține Președinția Consiliului Uniunii Europene.

Ne așteptăm o perioadă extrem de dificilă. Avem dosare extrem de grele, pe care dorim să le tratăm într-un mod echitabil, dar și cu foarte multă determinare, spre un rezultat pozitiv sau optimist. Nu întotdeauna va fi posibil. Unul din dosare se numește Brexit și aici, cu siguranță, lucrurile sunt încă într-o fază care depinde foarte mult de negocierea care se poartă, însă noi ne dorim să ajungem la un acord cu Marea Britanie și dorim să avem acest acord foarte repede. România se va implica atât cât Președinția Consiliului poate să se implice în acest lucru. Și dați-mi voie să spun că aici avem, în ce privește negocierea Brexitului, o primă dovadă palpabilă, clară și transparentă a eficienței colaborării. Faptul că cei 27 au lucrat strict împreună, au acceptat o singură echipă de negociere, a adus rezultate notabile. Iată că unitatea nu este un concept al viitorilor, ci unitatea este un concept al politicianilor cu viziune.

Avem un dosar pe care știu că l-ați discutat în Parlament și care vă este drag și ne este drag, este vorba de cadrul financiar multianual. Trebuie să ajungem la un progres pe acest dosar. Faptul că dumneavoastră, în Parlament, ne încurajați pe noi, din Consiliu, să mergem spre o creștere a bugetului este, în opinia României, un lucru bun, dar negocierea va trebui să continue practic – și aici România se va implica și sperăm să avem, dacă nu chiar finalizarea negocierilor, măcar progrese semnificative în zone sensibile pe acest buget.

Un dosar care a fost menționat și de mine și de unii vorbitori: migrația. Trebuie să ajungem cât se poate de repede la o abordare comună. Dacă nu reușim să definim o politică europeană în acest domeniu, atunci vom avea o problemă majoră. Și România se va implica pentru a progresa în aceste negocieri. La momentul acesta, știți foarte bine, în ce privește reforma Dublin, avem 28 de păreri din 28 de state, foarte diferite. Eu cred că putem să apropiem aceste opinii și să ajungem la primele concluzii comune care, pe urmă, ne permit un tratament pe mai multe paliere al acestui fenomen, un tratament care va diferi fundamental de felul cum am acționat până acum. Până acum am acționat în urma unei crize; noi trebuie să acționăm înaintea unei crize – asta am vrut să spun când am spus că Uniunea Europeană trebuie să acționeze preventiv. Noi știm cum funcționează lumea, dar trebuie să ne și pregătim, să facem față la efectele acestei funcțiuni.

Și în fine, în timpul Președinției României vor avea loc alegerile europene și în timpul campaniei pentru alegerile europene vom avea summitul de la Sibiu. Acest summit este extrem de important pentru România și pentru Uniunea Europeană și nu neapărat prin faptul că este orașul meu natal, ci prin faptul că acel summit are tema unică și clară – viitorul Uniunii Europene. Vom discuta și vom creiona o gândire despre Uniunea Europeană clară, limpede, de înțeles pentru cetățeanul european, nu numai pentru politicianul european.

Iar alegerile pentru Parlamentul European de anul viitor ne vor oferi o radiografie, ne vor arăta dacă noi toți am fost credibili, dacă am știut să generăm proiecte credibile, dacă știm să desenăm un viitor pentru Uniunea Europeană, sau dacă mai avem un pic de lucrat.

Vă mulțumesc.

(Aplauze)

Procedura «catch the eye»

Laima Liucija Andrikiene (PPE). – Gerb. pirmininke, prezidente, sveikiname Jus Europos Parlamente. Kaip Jūs, kaip mes visi žinome, kitų metų pirmąjį pusmetį Rumunija pirmą kartą pirmininkaus Europos Sąjungos Tarybai. Darbotvarkė tikrai įtempta. Laukia įtempta darbotvarkė todėl, kad balandžio pabaigoje prasidės oficiali Europos Parlamento rinkimų kampanija. Todėl ypatingai svarbu iki jos pradžios padaryti sprendimus pasiekti susitarimus, nuo kurių priklausys visos Europos Sąjungos ateitis. Turiu galvoje ir naująją finansinę perspektyvą. Iš Europos Parlamento labai gerai matoma, kas vyksta Rumunijoje. Mes matome šimtus tūkstančių Jūsų piliečių, išėjusių į gatves su labai aiškia žinia – stabdykite korupciją. Mūsų parama visiems, kurie kovoja už įstatymo viršenybę ir kurie pasisako prieš korupcijos legalizavimą. Nuo to, kas laimės šią kovą, priklausau ne tik tai Jūsų valstybės ateitis – mes visi esame susiję Europos Sąjungoje. Todėl Jūsų pozicija ypatingai svarbi. Linkiu Jums drąsos ir ištvėmės šiame nelengvame kelyje. Ačiū.

Liliana Rodrigues (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, agradeço a presença do Presidente do Roménia aqui hoje conosco e queria fazer duas declarações de interesse: a primeira que só por mera desonestidade intelectual é que alguém pode comparar a situação da Roménia com a Hungria ou com a Polónia e a segunda é que tenho um sobrinho a estudar na Roménia.

A Roménia tem, de facto, um sistema semipresidencialista complexo, uma Constituição também ela complexa e tenho duas questões muito concretas para lhe fazer, Sr. Presidente.

Primeiro, que papel tem tido o Presidente na melhoria do sistema democrático e da separação dos poderes e de que forma isso será visível durante a Presidência romena, isto é, o respeito pelo Estado de Direito e o combate à corrupção, que não são apenas um desígnio do seu país, mas de toda a União Europeia.

A segunda questão diz respeito àquilo que já disse sobre o Quadro Financeiro Plurianual e, porque também temos aqui a Sra. Comissária do Desenvolvimento Regional, gostaria de lhe perguntar se a Roménia está preparada para, de facto, no primeiro semestre de 2019, ter um acordo sobre a regulamentação da política de coesão, ou seja, que estratégia política tem, está desenhada ou se está já desenhada e se poderemos saber em que é que incide.

Marek Jurek (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący, Panie Prezydencie, Panie i Panowie Posłowie! Przede wszystkim chcę wyrazić wielkie uznanie dla Rumunii jako kraju, który ma kluczowe znaczenie dla naszego bezpieczeństwa w regionie tak wrażliwym jak basen Morza Czarnego. Pracujemy z wieloma kolegami, tutaj, na tej sali czy w komisjach, którzy wnoszą bardzo realny wkład w nasze wspólne stanowisko i w troskę o to, żebyśmy nawzajem umacniali niepodległość swoich państw. Pan powiedział bardzo cenne słowa o tym, że nie powinniśmy dublować struktur bezpieczeństwa Europy. Trzy czwarte naszych państw jest sprzymierzonych w przymierzu atlantyckim i wspólna polityka bezpieczeństwa powinna polegać przede wszystkim na solidarności na forum NATO, na prezentowaniu wspólnego stanowiska. Szkoda, że znowu wyszedł pan Verhofstadt. On tutaj mówił, że musimy odejść od traktatów europejskich, zlikwidować zasadę jednomyślności. Jeżeli tak kocha większość, to niech jego kraj przyłączy się do reakcji dyplomatycznych w sprawie Skripała. Bo Rumunia zademonstrowała solidarność; ojczyzna pana Verhofstadta – niestety nie.

Renate Weber (ALDE). – Domnule Președinte, ați vorbit frumos de Uniunea Europeană și mă bucur, pentru că sunt o mare susținătoare a proiectului european. Dar vorbind de responsabilitate, ați omis să menționați abuzurile săvârșite în timpul mandatului dumneavoastră în numele unei cauze corecte și care trebuie să continue – lupta anticorupție – dar care, din păcate, a fost folosită adesea pentru jocuri de putere.

În timpul mandatului dumneavoastră a fost semnat un nou protocol secret între Serviciul Român de Informații și Parchetul General, prin care procurorii devineau supușii Serviciului de Informații, fiind obligați să raporteze evoluțiile din anchetele lor. O consecință a acestor protocoale secrete a fost situația a zeci de procurori și judecători, inclusiv de la Curtea Constituțională, acuzați de fapte inexistente, hărțuiți ani de zile, fiind achitați în final. Așa a fost afectată independența magistraților.

Asumați-vă această responsabilitate, domnule Președinte, ca să fim siguri că abuzurile nu se vor mai repeta.

Terry Reintke (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, President Iohannis, you have said that all citizens should feel heard and welcome in the European Union and that they should enjoy freedom of movement, and I am sure that this also means that minorities should feel heard and at home inside the European Union. You also said that we should not have a Europe of several paces and that there should not be too big a difference between Member States. Romania is one of the few countries in the European Union where we still don't have any legislation on civil partnership or same-sex legislation. A couple of weeks ago there was even a referendum which sometimes consisted of homophobic rhetoric. My question now to you is: what can you do in order to push Romania to adopt legislation in this field, and what will the Romanian Presidency do in order to make sure that LGBTIs will also feel at home and heard inside the European Union?

Κωνσταντίνα Κούνεβα (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η κυβέρνηση της Ρουμανίας, περίπου πριν από έναν χρόνο, αποφάσισε να καταργήσει τις εργοδοτικές εισφορές και να μεταφέρει το κόστος των εισφορών μόνο στους εργαζόμενους. Ως αντάλλαγμα, κάλεσε τις επιχειρήσεις να προχωρήσουν σε αυξήσεις μισθών. Κύριε Πρόεδρε της Ρουμανίας, θα σας παρακαλούσα να μας πείτε εάν αυτή η πρωτοφανής ασφαλιστική μεταρρύθμιση είχε το παραμικρό όφελος για τους εργαζόμενους, εάν τελικώς οι επιχειρήσεις έκαναν ανάλογες αυξήσεις ή μήπως οι εργαζόμενοι πτώχευσαν ακόμη περισσότερο. Σας παρακαλώ να μου απαντήσετε, για να ξέρουμε ή εάν θα εργαστείτε υπέρ μιας Ευρώπης της κοινωνικής προστασίας και της δίκαιης κατανομής των ασφαλιστικών βαρών.

Franz Obermayr (ENF). – Herr Präsident! Grüß Gott, Herr Präsident Iohannis, schön, dass Sie heute hier sind.

Schade, dass so wenige Kollegen anwesend sind. Es wäre wichtig gewesen, durch ihre Präsenz und ihr Interesse – gerade in der schwierigen demokratiepolitischen Situation – Aufmerksamkeit zu zeigen. In weiten Bereichen, Herr Präsident, konnte ich Ihren Ausführungen folgen, sie nachvollziehen, wenngleich Sie ein bisschen allgemein geblieben sind.

EU-Standards haben Sie bemüht: Konsolidierung, Kohäsion, die berühmten europäischen Werte. Doch es ist, glaube ich wichtig, auch ein bisschen ins Detail zu gehen und da vermisse ich doch Ihre klaren Aussagen zu Rechtsstaatlichkeit, unabhängigen Gerichten und vor allem korruptionsfreien Politik und Verwaltung, so wie Herr Juncker es ja auch angeschnitten hat.

Persönlich darf ich Ihnen als Alt-Österreicher für die Zukunft alles Gute wünschen und natürlich dem Mitgliedstaat Rumänien für die Herausforderung der ersten Ratspräsidentschaft eine rasche politische Konsolidierung.

Udo Voigt (NI). – Herr Präsident! Ich habe eine klare Frage an Sie. Ich habe in Ihren Ausführungen vermisst, dass Sie dazu Stellung nehmen, was auf Ihrem Boden stattgefunden hat, als amerikanische Geheimflugzeuge in Bukarest, in Rumänien gelandet sind. Es gab Folterungen, es gab Verhöre, es gab Ermordungen und Verschleppungen. Sie sprechen von einer Fortsetzung der transatlantischen Allianz. Ist es das, was Sie unter transatlantischer Allianz verstehen, dass Sie weiterhin billigen, dass eine raumfremde Macht wie die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika auf europäischem Boden Folterknechte und Foltergefängnisse betreibt?

Ferner habe ich da noch eine Frage: Wie gedenken Sie, mit den bereits eingeleiteten Vertragsverletzungsverfahren gegen Polen, gegen Ungarn umzugehen? Und auch gegen Rumänien wird ja Ähnliches debattiert. Wenn wir über die Zukunft Europas sprechen, dann müssen wir natürlich auch über die Vielfalt der Völker in Europa sprechen; das haben Sie heute getan. Aber wir sprechen nicht über die Vielfalt einer multikulturellen, multirassischen Gesellschaft, sondern wir fördern den Kampf, den Wettbewerb der Völker untereinander und wollen nicht Millionen von Fremden nach Europa holen. Wie stehen Sie dazu?

Adina-Ioana Vălean (PPE). – Domnule președinte, domnule Președinte Iohannis, apreciez felul în care România, prin dumneavoastră, privește viitorul Europei. Vocea proeuropeană a Estului, pe care o reprezentați, este extrem de importantă în acest moment când încrederea în proiectul european trebuie reclădită.

Cred, ca și dumneavoastră, că Europa cu două viteze este extrem de periculoasă și poate crea falii în interiorul Uniunii care vor fi greu de reparat. Mai cred că succesul Uniunii Europene depinde de succesul fiecăruia dintre statele membre, iar România trebuie să facă mai mult și mai bine pentru a contribui la întărirea și viitorul proiectului european.

În acest context, cred că ar fi interesant pentru noi dacă ne-ați putea spune câteva dintre prioritățile interne pe care România le are pentru a recupera din decalajele față de celelalte state membre și a contribui, prin ea însăși, la viitorul Uniunii.

Andi Cristea (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, domnule Președinte Iohannis, bine ați venit în Parlamentul European! Nu ați vorbit rău – aici, înainte de a fi membrii unui partid politic, suntem cetățenii unei țări – și vă felicit pentru abordarea proeuropeană pe care dumneavoastră ați expus-o – toți românii sunt proeuropeni, sunt buni europeni – însă vreau să vă întreb următoarea chestiune. Eu știu că, pentru memoria instituțională a Bucureștiului, Republica Moldova este cel de al doilea stat românesc. Dumneavoastră ați vorbit despre prioritățile naționale, ați vorbit despre viitorul Europei și nu ați menționat Republica Moldova. Întrebarea mea – sper să nu sune dramatic, dar v-o adresez – ați abandonat cumva Republica Moldova? Pentru că în ultimii patru ani de mandat dumneavoastră ați fost o singură dată la Chișinău.

László Tótkés (PPE). – Elnök Úr, fogadja őszinte elismerésemet azért, hogy az EU múlt heti brüsszeli csúcstalálkozóján állást foglalt az illegális migrációval és az emberkereskedelemmel szemben, odahaza pedig határozottan fellépett a korrupció ellenében és a romániai jogállamiság védelmében. Európa jövője érdekében arra kérem, hogy Magyarországgal és a visegrádi négyekkel összefogva keljenek védelmére az európai értékeknek, európai keresztény identitásunknak, nemzeteink szuverenitásának. Erdélyi magyarként Önt mint német-szász honfitársamat arra kérem, hogy országunk centenáriumi időszakában ne csak a korrupcióval, hanem a nacionál-kommunista vétetésű magyarellenességgel szemben is védelmezze a jogállamiságot, nehogy mi is az elfogyatkozott erdélyi szászok sorsára jussunk, akiket a Ceausescu-diktatúra űzött el szülőföldjükről.

Maria Gabriela Zoană (S&D). – Domnule președinte, eu sunt hotărâtă să îmi apăr țara, sunt o mare susținătoare a proiectului european. Ați vorbit despre unitate și coeziune, v-ați inspirat din discursul Președintelui Juncker – Europa cu doi plămâni, estul și vestul Europei, o singură inimă – ați vorbit despre onoare. Onoare este că reprezentați o țară minunată ca România, domnule Președinte Iohannis, dar dumneavoastră aveți în țară un limbaj cu totul diferit, dumneavoastră instigați la dezbinare, limbajul dumneavoastră duplicitar a împărțit țara în două, instigă la ură între liberali și social-democrați, a creat o ruptură între generații, între românii cu opțiuni politice diferite. Aici, în plenul Parlamentului European, și acum câteva zile în Italia ați lăudat realizările guvernului României. De ce nu faceți același lucru și în România, atunci când ajungeți acasă? Unde este unitatea pentru România, domnule Președinte Iohannis, în contextul în care dumneavoastră dezbinați, destabilizați România?

Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR). – Prezydent Rumunii mówił dzisiaj, że Unia Europejska potrzebuje wizji w celu konsolidacji – jak stwierdził – prawdziwej unii, która patrzy w przyszłość. Pytanie brzmi jednak, czym jest prawdziwa unia. Wielu przywódców krajów europejskich kreśliło inne wizje od wizji Pana Prezydenta, a przed Panem również swoich kilka scenariuszy przedstawiał szef Komisji Europejskiej Jean-Claude Juncker, który przy okazji zachęcał, żeby były one dyskutowane w krajach członkowskich, w różnych środowiskach. Chcę powiedzieć, że takie obywatelskie dyskusje, inicjatywy już powstają w Polsce i na Litwie. Działa od dwóch lat ruch Europa Christi, który jasno precyzuje swoje oczekiwania co do przyszłego funkcjonowania Unii Europejskiej – prawdziwej unii, o której mówił pan prezydent. Po pierwsze, powrót do wartości podstawowych, czyli chrześcijaństwa, do którego odniesienie powinno być wpisane w bazowych dokumentach unijnych. Warunkiem *sine qua non* musi być ochrona ludzkiego życia od chwili poczęcia do naturalnej śmierci, także ochrona tradycyjnego modelu rodziny musi być zagwarantowana w dokumentach unijnych. Wdzięczny byłbym za wzięcie tego pod uwagę.

Stefan Eck (GUE/NGL). – Herr Präsident! Herzlich willkommen, Herr Präsident Iohannis! Ich war seit Herbst 2014 fünf Mal in Rumänien, um mit Tierschützern und Politikern, auch mit dem damaligen Premierminister Cioloș, über die grausamen Massentötungen von Streunerhunden und über die Hintergründe dafür zu sprechen. Die Bevölkerung wurde 2013 von Politikern und Medien manipuliert, um das Massaker an den Hunden zu rechtfertigen, das zu einem lukrativen Geschäft wurde, an dem bis heute korrupte Behörden und Politiker mitverdienen. Sie, Herr Präsident, sprachen sich vor Ihrer Wahl gegen die Massentötungen aus und bezeichneten sie als barbarisch. Viele Rumänen haben Sie deshalb gewählt. Aber immer noch werden Streunerhunde eingefangen und brutal getötet, jeden Tag.

Machen Sie endlich Ihren politischen Einfluss geltend für ein humanes und modernes Populationsmanagement, bei dem berücksichtigt wird, dass Tiere fühlende Wesen sind, so wie es im Vertrag von Lissabon unter Artikel 13 steht! Was in Rumänien trotz weltweiter Proteste mit den Streunerhunden geschah und geschieht, ist eine Schande und hat nichts mit unseren zivilisatorischen Werten in Europa zu tun. Herr Präsident, für Massentötungen von Streunerhunden ist in unserem Europa einfach kein Platz.

Also, wenn Rumänien die Ratspräsidentschaft übernommen hat, kann es zeigen, ob ihm alle Werte am Herzen liegen – und Tierschutz ist definitiv ein europäischer Wert.

Siegfried Mureșan (PPE). – Domnule Președinte, domnule Președinte Iohannis, bine ați venit aici, în plenul Parlamentului European. Vorbind despre viitorul Uniunii Europene, ați pus un accent deosebit pe securitate și prosperitate. Și eu cred că aceste două componente sunt foarte importante, deoarece în următorii ani noi, Uniunea Europeană, trebuie să livrăm exact ceea ce cetățenii așteaptă de la noi – și cred că oamenii așteaptă, în primul rând, siguranță și prosperitate.

Trebuie să fim conștienți că trăim într-o lume în schimbare, iar ritmul schimbării se va accelera în următorii ani. În următorii ani, cetățenii europeni vor consuma noi categorii de produse, de servicii, vor apărea noi meserii și multe din meseriile pe care le-am făcut până acum vor dispărea. De aceea, cred că următoarele patru elemente sunt esențiale pentru prosperitatea în Europa în viitor: educație, inovare, tineret și digitalizare. Trebuie să pregătim tinerii europeni să lucreze cot la cot – tineri români, alături de tineri portughezi, irlandezi, suedezi și estonieni – și trebuie să spunem tinerilor că în Europa, în viitor, izolarea nu este o soluție. Euroscepticismul, politicile antieuropene nu sunt o soluție, Europa este casa noastră. Construind Europa, construim viitorul nostru și Europa va aduce prosperitate.

Victor Boștinaru (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, se întâmplă rar în acest Parlament ca cele mai multe voci din România să exprime consensul în jurul unei idei centrale – aceea a locului și rolului țării noastre în Uniunea Europeană. De aceea, nu fac decât să salut contribuția dumneavoastră și să spun că ar fi bine ca această dezbatere să o continuăm acasă pentru că da, - și pentru colegii din Parlamentul European e cazul să spunem – România nu își vede locul în afara proiectului european și al alianței NATO și acesta este un fapt istoric, care este împărțit de elitele politice, de intelectualii țării, de elitele economice.

Am două întrebări pentru dumneavoastră, ambele vor avea deznodământul la summitul de la Sibiu. Brexitul – acolo se va accepta acordul. Cum vede însă țara dumneavoastră și țara mea viitoarele relații cu Marea Britanie? Și doi, despre viitorul uniunii apărării - *European defence* - cum ar trebui din perspectiva țării noastre să evolueze această nouă politică europeană în care țara noastră are interese enorme și care va fi viitorul uniunii pentru apărare cu alianța NATO?

Romeo Franz (Verts/ALE). – Herr Präsident! Danke schön, Herr Präsident Iohannis. Wir machen uns große Sorgen um die Situation der Roma in Rumänien: Ausgrenzung, Segregation, Ausbeutung. Gleichberechtigte Teilhabe ist für einen großen Teil Ihrer Bürger mit Roma-Hintergrund nicht gegeben, und hier werden auch die Menschenrechte massiv verletzt – auch die Kinderrechte. Die Situation dieser Menschen ist zum Teil entmenslicht. Was möchten Sie dagegen tun, und was möchten Sie für die Inklusion tun?

Ich fahre demnächst nach Tinca, das ist eine kleine Stadt in Ihrem Land. Da gibt es große Vorkommnisse mit diesen Menschenrechtsverletzungen. Ich würde Sie gern darüber informieren wollen.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – Domnule Președinte, domnule Președinte Iohannis, e o bucurie să avem aici în Parlamentul European o voce din România care apără Uniunea și care se gândește la viitorul ei. Din păcate, acum trei săptămâni am avut o altă voce din România, cea a șefei guvernului, care a atacat instituțiile și care a arătat fățiş că nu vrea să coopereze cu instituții europene.

Aveți dreptate când spuneți că Uniunea nu trebuie să lase în urmă vreun stat membru, dar cred că e la fel de adevărat să spunem că e nevoie ca și guvernele din statele membre să nu uite Europa, să nu o lase în urmă. Și, din păcate, ceea ce se întâmplă în România de doi ani încoace este tocmai acest lucru – Europa e uitată. Nu știu vreun guvern din numeroasele echipe propuse de PSD-ALDE care să fie apărât vreodată Uniunea Europeană, care să fi vorbit despre ce înseamnă Europa în mod concret. Niciunul, nu există un ministru care să fi făcut asta. Dumneavoastră spuneți că va fi o președinție fructuoasă. Eu mă tem că nu va fi. Cu cine să apărăm Europa, domnule Președinte? Cu Daea? Cu Andrușcă? Cu Olguța? Cu Tudorel Toader? Îi vedeți prezidând vreo reuniune a omologilor lor? *No way, Mister President.* Îmi pare rău că a plecat domnul Verhofstadt pentru că i-aș fi spus că în România securiștii corupți apără independența justiției vorbind despre servicii secrete. Asta e realitatea, nu e un punct de vedere liberal. Iar domnul Verhofstadt ne-a povestit că în 1990 a făcut cadou un radio în România – i l-a făcut lui Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, a uitat să menționeze proprietarul. Și, până în ziua de astăzi, îl ține în brațe pe Tăriceanu, orice ar face. Rușine familiei liberale, rușine familiei socialiste, amândouă țin în brațe corupții!

José Blanco López (S&D). – Señor presidente, realmente este no es un debate para hablar de lo que ocurre en su país: es un debate para hablar del futuro de la Unión Europea. De eso le quiero hablar yo, señor presidente, porque en el próximo periodo ustedes la van a presidir y, al inicio de este mandato, nos habíamos fijado un objetivo, que es que el peso de la industria alcance el 20 % de nuestro producto interior bruto y, lamentablemente, estamos viendo cómo industrias —sobre todo de la siderurgia y del aluminio— están cerrando día sí y día también en el conjunto de la Unión Europea.

Nuestro peso industrial disminuye y, a pesar de algunas medidas que se han adoptado por parte de la Comisión, no alcanzan a poner coto a las prácticas comerciales desleales y al dumping de países como China.

Por eso yo le voy a invitar, señor presidente, a que, conjuntamente con los restantes presidentes de los Gobiernos, impulse una auténtica política industrial europea. Esto es el futuro de Europa: que tenga más peso, y evitar cierres como los que están ocurriendo en estos momentos en nuestro país en el sector del aluminio.

Csaba Sógor (PPE). – Tisztelt Elnök Úr! Olyan Európát szeretnénk, ahol – idézem Önt – „*nu lasă în urmă niciun cetățean european*”. Románia is tagja ennek az Európának, és a romániai kisebbségek is. Remélem, nem mondja, hogy a romániai kisebbségvédelem példaértékű, hiszen pont Ön volt az, aki megpróbálta visszavonni a meglévő kisebbségi jogokat a közigazgatási törvény alkotmánybírószágon való megóvása során. Európa, ahogy Ön mondta „*unitar și indivizibil*”, vagyis hogy – ezt otthon is sokat halljuk – az alkotmány is írja, de pont az ilyen próbálkozások, mint az Öné, osztják meg a román társadalmat, ahol a kisebbségeket másodrendű polgároknak tartják. Mindketten kisebbségek vagyunk, Ön német, én magyar. Európa és Románia talán leghűségesebb polgárai, hiszen a helyünkön maradtunk minden beolvasztási kísérlet ellenére. Tegyen meg mindent, hogy 2020-ban, amikor 100 éves lesz Románia, egyetlen polgára se érezze magát másodrendűnek. Tartsa és tartassa tiszteletben a kisebbségek jogait anyanyelvükhöz, szimbólumaikhoz, tulajdonukhoz, szülőföldjükhöz.

Claudia Țapardel (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, în acest moment foarte important pentru viitorul Uniunii Europene și în care vorbim despre unitatea acesteia, vă solicit ca, în calitate de președinte al celui de al șaselea stat ca importanță și mărime din Uniunea Europeană după ieșirea Marii Britanii și a unui stat care are o creștere economică remarcabilă și care poate fi considerat un adevărat lider regional al Europei, să solicitați în mod ferm ca până la sfârșitul mandatului acestor instituții europene – ca până în mai 2019 — România să devină parte integrantă a spațiului Schengen. Sunt conștientă că ați menționat acest lucru în discursul dumneavoastră, dar vă solicit ca, în calitate de reprezentant al României în Consiliul European, să soluționați această nedreptate pentru România, pentru că acolo avem o situație de blocaj și de rea-voință.

De asemenea, domnule Președinte, democrația se asigură prin respectarea drepturilor și libertăților fundamentale, a prezumției de nevinovăție, a respectării deciziilor Curții Constituționale și fără ca cetățenii țării noastre să fie ascultați abuziv de către serviciile secrete prin intermediul protocoalelor. Ați avut un mesaj constructiv astăzi, dar haideți să aveți aceeași atitudine constructivă și în țara noastră. Haideți ca împreună să protejăm toți românii, iar aceștia să se bucure de aceleași drepturi și libertăți fundamentale ca și cetățenii europeni.

Mihai Țurcanu (PPE). – Domnule Președinte, dragi colegi, trebuie să rețineți că România așa arată, așa gândește, așa se poziționează la și față de Uniunea Europeană, așa cum a transmis astăzi domnul președinte Klaus Werner Iohannis. El este singurul om, singurul român mandatat de către cetățenii români să îi reprezinte, printr-un vot masiv și legitim de peste 50 % dat în 2014. Oricine altcineva în afară de Președintele României își arogă acest drept este un impostor și nu trebuie luat în serios, indiferent de cum se numește. Spre exemplu, cei care guvernează astăzi România au fost votați doar de 18 % din numărul total de cetățeni cu drept de vot și nu au moral acest drept.

Emilian Pavel (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, doamnă comisar, domnule Președinte Iohannis, trebuie să recunosc, și eu apreciez discursul dumneavoastră și vă mulțumesc pentru el și pot să spun că sunt de acord și cu colegii mei care spun că ne-am dori acasă acest discurs și vă citesc un articol din Constituția României, „Președintele României veghează la respectarea Constituției și la buna funcționare a autorităților publice. În acest scop, Președintele exercită funcția de mediere între puterile statului, precum și între stat și societate.” Vom gândi ce înseamnă acest articol când ne întoarcem acasă.

Legat de Uniunea Europeană, românii sunt discriminați în cel puțin trei rapoarte la care lucrez în Comisia pentru libertăți civile. Unul este Schengen și punctual aș vrea să ne spuneți în ce condiții ați accepta o intrare în două etape în Schengen pentru România, deși îndeplinim toate condițiile încă din 2011? Al doilea raport este MCV. Sunteți sau nu pentru eliminarea MCV? Al treilea raport se referă la vizele care încă sunt necesare pentru cetățenii români pentru a pleca în SUA. Suntem discriminați din acest punct de vedere, iar Comisia Europeană uită să acționeze, deci practic încălcă legislația europeană. Al patrulea dosar este din Comisia de muncă și afaceri sociale. Când vorbim de *social dumping* - și am avut un vot în Parlamentul European împotriva *social dumping* - trebuie să vorbim și despre *social dumping* cu privire la românii care lucrează în fabricile multinaționalelor în România și primesc undeva la 10 % din cât primesc muncitorii care fac aceeași muncă în țara de unde provin aceste multinaționale.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Pane předsedající, vážený pane prezidente, děkuji Vám za Vaše jasná slova o společné a jednotné evropské budoucnosti. Vy jste již zmínil, že očekáváte jednotný postup u brexitu, jednotný postup u víceletého finančního rámce. Zajímá mě, jak vidíte řešení v případě Vašeho předsednictví, pokud bude muset dokončit jednání o azylovém systému, a také Vás čeká dokončení jednání o balíčku mobility, který se týká sociálního zajištění u řidičů. To je téma, které se samozřejmě rumunských pracovníků a podnikatelů také velmi dotýká.

Já si velmi přeji, aby mladí lidé nemuseli odcházet z Východu na Západ, z Rumunska na Západ, z České republiky na Západ. Velmi si přeji, aby se cítili v našich zemích bezpečně, aby zde viděli svoji budoucnost. Vaše paní premiérka bohužel neuklidnila naše obavy o vývoj v Rumunsku a ve Vás vkládáme velkou naději.

Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, domnule Președinte al României, ați vorbit despre nevoia de unitate și de incluziune în Uniunea Europeană. În același timp, de cadrul financiar multianual. Cu toate acestea, dacă vă uitați la el, se prevăd scăderi de fonduri importante pentru politica de coeziune și pentru politica agricolă comună. Cum veți acționa dumneavoastră în așa fel încât nivelul de dezvoltare al României și nivelul de trai al cetățenilor români să se apropie de cel al vechilor membri ai Uniunii Europene?

În același timp, domnule Președinte, vreau să vă spun că noi, toți cetățenii români, așteptăm de 28 de ani un președinte al tuturor românilor, un președinte moderator, un președinte facilitator, un președinte echilibrat față de toți cetățenii, indiferent de opțiunea lor politică. În același timp, domnule Președinte, am văzut că în programul dumneavoastră de astăzi în Parlamentul European nu ați inclus și o întâlnire cu toți eurodeputații români. Domnule Președinte, noi suntem reprezentanții cetățenilor români în Parlamentul European, și o asemenea întâlnire ar fi fost benefică și pentru noi și pentru dumneavoastră.

(Fine della procedura «catch the eye»)

Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania. – Domnule Președinte, mulțumesc tuturor vorbitorilor pentru pozițiile exprimate. Au fost numeroase, mi-aș fi dorit să fi fost mai numeroase. Vă mulțumesc celor care ați găsit cuvinte de apreciere pentru România, vă mulțumesc și celor care au găsit cuvinte de critică constructivă, fiindcă altfel de critică nu îmi imaginez că se poate face în Parlamentul European.

„Unitate în diversitate”, acesta a fost conceptul cu care am încheiat prima mea prezentare și luările de poziție din această sală arată, într-adevăr, că aici trebuie să lucrăm. Abordări foarte diferite, dar, evident, fiecare cu greutatea și cu reprezentativitatea parlamentară a ei. Dați-mi voie să vă propun un demers prin care pot să interacționez cu dumneavoastră, cei care ați luat cuvântul și poate și cu alții care încă nu au făcut-o. Având în vedere diversitatea temelor – și vă asigur că toate sunt importante, mă interesează și avem poziții ferme pe toate – nu pot să intru în toate detaliile și în toate răspunsurile. Împreună cu kolegele și cu colegii mei, vom avea grijă ca fiecare vorbitor să primească un răspuns în scris și cred că în acest fel vom îmbunătăți net dialogul între noi. Încă o dată, mulțumesc pentru luările de poziție.

Dați-mi voie în încheiere, domnule Președinte, onorați membri ai Parlamentului European să revin la câteva cuvinte-cheie, fiindcă astăzi vorbim despre cum vom creiona viitorul Uniunii Europene – unitate și coeziune, apropiere față de cetățean, securitatea internă a Uniunii Europene, securitatea frontierelor Uniunii Europene, greutate în politica internațională a Uniunii Europene, abordări care respectă și cultivă diversitatea, dar permit o acționare unitară înspre exterior – iată temele care ne preocupă pe toți, teme care îi preocupă pe europeni. Cred că este obligația noastră să găsim nu numai răspunsuri, ci să găsim politici și să aplicăm practic ceea ce credem noi că este important pentru cetățenii noștri, dar în același fel și pentru Uniunea Europeană. Vă mulțumesc tuturor.

(Aplauze)

Presidente. – Grazie ancora, signor Presidente, per aver accettato il nostro invito e per aver partecipato a un dibattito serrato sul futuro dell'Europa, non rifiutando anche di ascoltare e di rispondere a domande che riguardano il Suo paese.

La discussione è chiusa.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Birgit Collin-Langen (PPE), *schriftlich*. – In meinen Augen ist es wichtig, dass wir Europa wieder als Ganzes verstehen und nicht gedanklich in Grüppchen aufteilen. Wir alle sind Europa. Ich bin froh darüber, dass Präsidenten Iohannis diesen Punkt hervorgehoben hat. Wir sind nicht West- oder Osteuropa, Visegrad oder Club Med-Länder, sondern ein Europa. Und als Europa ist es auch unsere Aufgabe, auf Missstände in unseren Mitgliedstaaten hinzuweisen und gegen diese vorzugehen. Rumänien hat seit seinem Beitritt zur EU viel Reformwillen gezeigt und viel erreicht. Jedoch gibt es noch zahlreiche Probleme, die bekämpft werden müssen. Rückschritte in der Rechtsstaatlichkeit sind nicht zu akzeptieren, wie die systematische Korruption. Ich wünsche Herrn Iohannis viel Kraft und Mut, diese Probleme zu bekämpfen.

Maria Grapini (S&D), *în scris*. – Astăzi ar fi trebuit să dezbatem o temă importantă -viitorul Europei. Din păcate am asistat la multe luări de cuvânt cu atacuri directe asupra României în prezența Președintelui României. Tema nu era România, chiar dacă este stat membru al Uniunii Europene. De aceea, eu doresc să-l întreb pe Președintele României dacă, în calitate de reprezentant al Consiliului va susține ca România și cetățenii săi să fie tratați egal prin renunțarea la Mecanismul de Cooperare și Verificare și instituirea unui mecanism de supraveghere al tuturor statelor, având în vedere că, iată, se constată că marea corupție este în alte state, așa cum arată recentul scandal de corupție din 9 state membre. De asemenea, aș dori să ne spună domnul Președinte Iohannis dacă va fi de acord cu noua condiționalitate pentru alocarea fondurilor europene și anume funcționarea statului de drept.

Nu în ultimul rând, pentru că vorbim de viitorul Europei, vă întreb, domnule Președinte, dacă susțineți o lege a răspunderii magistraților în România și în Uniune, având în vedere sumele imense plătite din bugetele naționale cetățenilor nedreptățiți de procurori, capitol la care România este campioană?

(La seduta è sospesa alle 12.54 in attesa del turno di votazioni)

IN THE CHAIR: MAIREAD McGUINNESS

Vice-President

6. Wznowienie posiedzenia

(The sitting resumed at 13.00)

President. – I just want to make a small personal announcement. The gavel I am using was produced by the Men's Sheds in Ireland – they were one of the winners of the European Citizen's Prize. I thought it might be a nice touch for me to use this to call order today, and I in particular mention the Drogheda Men's Sheds in Ireland.

(Applause)

It's one of the privileges of this job, but let's see how the votes go!

7. Głosowanie

President. – The next item is the vote.

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

- 7.1. **Konsultacja w sprawie immunitetu Alfonsa Luigiego Marry (A8-0325/2018 - Gilles Lebreton) (głosowanie)**
- 7.2. **Wniosek o uchylenie immunitetu Manolisa Kefalogiannisa (A8-0333/2018 - Jean-Marie Cavada) (głosowanie)**
- 7.3. **Elektroniczna publikacja Dziennika Urzędowego Unii Europejskiej (A8-0323/2018 - Pavel Svoboda) (głosowanie)**
- 7.4. **Umowa między Unią Europejską a Wspólnotą Bahamów w sprawie zniesienia wiz krótkoterminowych (A8-0304/2018 - Emilian Pavel) (głosowanie)**

— *Before the vote:*

Emilian Pavel, Rapporteur. – Doamna președintă, o scurtă remarcă în legătură cu trei dintre aceste șase state – nu am uitat și vreau să spun acest lucru în fața tuturor colegilor – că Saint Kitts and Nevis, Bahamas și Mauritius sunt paradisiuri fiscale, însă nu putem pedepsi cetățenii din aceste state. Va trebui să lucrăm împreună pentru a găsi alte metode de a împiedica scurgerea de bani care trebuie să rămână în Uniunea Europeană, în aceste state și vă invit să facem acest lucru împreună.
- 7.5. **Umowa między Wspólnotą Europejską a Republiką Mauritiusu w sprawie zniesienia wiz krótkoterminowych (A8-0303/2018 - Emilian Pavel) (głosowanie)**
- 7.6. **Umowa między Unią Europejską a Antiguą i Barbudą w sprawie zniesienia wiz krótkoterminowych (A8-0305/2018 - Emilian Pavel) (głosowanie)**
- 7.7. **Umowa między Unią Europejską a Federacją Saint Kitts i Nevis w sprawie zniesienia wiz krótkoterminowych (A8-0306/2018 - Emilian Pavel) (głosowanie)**
- 7.8. **Umowa między Unią Europejską a Barbadosem w sprawie zniesienia wiz krótkoterminowych (A8-0301/2018 - Emilian Pavel) (głosowanie)**
- 7.9. **Umowa między Unią Europejską a Republiką Seszeli w sprawie zniesienia wiz krótkoterminowych (A8-0302/2018 - Emilian Pavel) (głosowanie)**
- 7.10. **Uruchomienie Europejskiego Funduszu Dostosowania do Globalizacji w następstwie wniosku Portugalii – EGF/2018/002 PT/Norte – Centro – Lisboa wearing apparel (A8-0311/2018 - José Manuel Fernandes) (głosowanie)**

7.11. Powołanie dyrektora zarządzającego EFIS (A8-0314/2018 - Jean Arthuis, Roberto Gualtieri) (głosowanie)

7.12. Powołanie zastępcy dyrektora zarządzającego EFIS (A8-0312/2018 - Jean Arthuis, Roberto Gualtieri) (głosowanie)

7.13. Jakość wody przeznaczonej do spożycia przez ludzi (wersja przekształcona) (A8-0288/2018 - Michel Dantin) (głosowanie)

— *After the vote:*

Michel Dantin, *rapporteur*. – Madame la Vice-présidente, conformément aux règles de notre assemblée, je demande officiellement que le rapport soit renvoyé en commission et qu'il soit à la base des négociations interinstitutionnelles.

(The request to refer the report back to committee was approved)

7.14. Zasoby na rzecz spójności gospodarczej, społecznej i terytorialnej oraz zasoby na inwestycje na rzecz wzrostu gospodarczego i zatrudnienia (A8-0282/2018 - Iskra Mihaylova) (głosowanie)

7.15. Dostosowanie obowiązków sprawozdawczych w dziedzinie polityki ochrony środowiska (A8-0324/2018 - Adina-Ioana Vălean) (głosowanie)

— *After the vote:*

Peter Liese (PPE), *in Vertretung der Berichterstatterin*. – Frau Präsidentin! Die Berichterstatterin, Frau Vălean, kann nicht anwesend sein und hat mich gebeten, in ihrem Namen darum zu bitten, dass wir den Bericht in den Ausschuss zurückverweisen, damit wir mit dem Rat verhandeln können. Jetzt sagen einige Juristen, das müsste ich im Namen der Fraktion tun. Ich tue das auch gerne im Namen der Fraktion. Hauptsache, wir können mit dem Rat verhandeln.

(The request to refer the report back to committee was approved)

7.16. Rola partycypacji finansowej pracowników w tworzeniu miejsc pracy i reaktywizacji bezrobotnych (A8-0293/2018 - Renate Weber) (głosowanie)

President. – That concludes the vote.

8. Wyjaśnienia dotyczące sposobu głosowania

8.1. Jakość wody przeznaczonej do spożycia przez ludzi (wersja przekształcona) (A8-0288/2018 - Michel Dantin)

Oral explanations of vote

Rory Palmer, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, I think when many of us turn on the taps in our homes or our workplaces we will take it for granted that the water in our glass will be clean, safe and of sufficient quality to drink, and Parliament has today gone some way to ensuring that remains the case. We've taken important steps on endocrine disruptors, on Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and on microplastics in our water. We are responding to the concerns of citizens on the safety and quality of our drinking water.

I want to turn though to those people who do not have a tap to turn on, those who are homeless, who live in the makeshift refugee camps we see in European cities. Parliament today could and should have gone much further on the right to water. We have missed an opportunity today to respond in full to those 1.8 million EU citizens who signed the European Citizens' Initiative on the right to water. Those in this House, who chose not to respond positively to that call from our citizens will have to answer to them next year in the elections.

Finally, I want to turn to the issue of water leakage. Leaking water from our pipes, from our networks is not just bad for the environment, it isn't just wasteful, it means water bills are higher for customers. I particularly want to mention the campaign by the GMB trade union in the UK, the Take Back the Tap campaign, which is seeking to get water back in public hands, and properly accountable to the public. 2.4 billion litres of water wasted every single day in the UK by the privatised water companies, 432 million litres a day leaking from the Severn Trent network in my region and at the same time, those companies in the last five years have paid out GBP 6.5 billion in shareholder dividends.

We all have a right to clean, safe drinking water and those water suppliers should be acting in the public interest, not in the interests of bonanza shareholder dividends.

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, votei a favor desta resolução pela urgência na definição de parâmetros mínimos da qualidade da água na União e pela garantia de que todos os cidadãos do território europeu tenham acesso a este bem fundamental.

O acesso à água potável tem de ser considerado um direito humano fundamental.

Exatamente por ser essencial para a saúde humana, a água não pode ser escrava do negócio de distribuição. Enquanto bem público, defendo padrões de qualidade e prevenção de desperdício que só são alcançáveis através da exploração ética da água. São estes valores que devem ser promovidos quando falamos da eficiência dos sistemas de distribuição.

Reforço ainda que, em 2010, as Nações Unidas consagraram a água como um direito humano, a par do saneamento, e que, por isso, o acesso à água potável não deve estar condicionado pela falta de recursos económicos do utilizador final.

Foi por este motivo que votei a favor da disponibilização de pontos de água potável em locais públicos, de qualidade controlada, como já existem em muitos Estados-Membros de forma voluntária, no desejo de que se torne também regra para toda a União Europeia.

Alex Mayer (S&D). – Madam President, 1.2 million bathtubs' worth. That's how much water Anglian Water wastes every single day through leaks. Yet the privatised water company showered their shareholders with a total of GBP 320 million last year. It's another 1.2 million bathtubs' worth for Affinity Water, 453 000 for Essex and Suffolk Water and 93 000 for Cambridge Water. All wasted.

It's time for change. We need a water industry that works for everyone and England's water needs to be in the hands of the public. After all, water is vital for life and about as natural a monopoly as you can find. Where's the need for a market? When you run the bath, the choice is hot or cold, not Anglia Water or Thames Water. As this report rightly says, leakage rates need to fall, and that is why I am proud to back the GMB's campaign. It's time to take back the tap.

Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE). – Madam President, it is indeed remarkable how many EU citizens participated in the Right2Water initiative which gave birth to this European Parliament resolution. Therefore, I have strongly supported this proposal to revise the EU's Drinking Water Directive. Having access to high quality drinkable water is essential for people's health and the quality of their daily life. The proposal aims to adjust the Directive so we can better address new challenges such as climate change and adapt the rules to the new scientific environment and circular economy. In addition, with this proposal we aim at more ambitious water quality standards for human consumption.

I hope that as soon as such standards are set in place the Member States, including mine, Lithuania, will do their best to achieve them; for example, by providing more public drinking-water fountains and improving water infrastructure. We have to ensure safe, affordable and high quality water for our citizens.

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, το νερό είναι κοινωνικό αγαθό, είναι απαραίτητο για τη ζωή και την υγεία. Γι' αυτό και η πρωτοβουλία των πολιτών για το νερό συγκέντρωσε πάνω από 2 εκατομμύρια υπογραφές. Όλοι απαιτούν ποιοτικό νερό, καθαρό νερό, νερό προσιτό σε όλους, καθολική πρόσβαση στο νερό. Αυτό σημαίνει, βεβαίως, ότι η τιμή του νερού πρέπει να είναι προσιτή σε όλους και να υπάρχουν ειδικά τιμολόγια για ευάλωτες κοινωνικές ομάδες, όπως είναι οι άνεργοι, να έχουμε μηδενικό φόρο προστιθέμενης αξίας στις υπηρεσίες παροχής κοινωνικής ωφέλειας για την ύδρευση, να απαγορεύεται η διακοπή της υδροδότησης σε περίπτωση οφειλών από ευαίσθητες κοινωνικές ομάδες, όπως είναι οι συνταξιούχοι, να έχουμε διαγραφή των ληξιπρόθεσμων χρεών των ανέργων. Παροχή, βεβαίως, του νερού να γίνεται από το Δημόσιο και όχι από ιδιωτικές δομές. Ταυτόχρονα, να μη γίνει ξεπούλημα της ΕΥΔΑΠ και της ΕΥΑΘ στην Ελλάδα, μια και έχουν ενταχθεί στο υπερταμείο.

Eleonora Forenza (GUE/NGL). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ci saremmo aspettati un testo più coraggioso da quest'Aula e questo è il motivo della mia astensione su questo voto.

Ci saremmo aspettati più coraggio nel dare seguito all'iniziativa *Right2Water* e, in particolare, più coraggio nell'esprimere tolleranza zero verso le sostanze PFAS che avvelenano il sangue e la vita di migliaia di persone nella regione del Veneto.

Abbiamo ascoltato in questi giorni le mamme «NO PFAS» e le loro preoccupazioni, ma abbiamo ascoltato anche chi ci ha portato studi medici che testimoniano quanto queste sostanze bioaccumulabili, sia a catena corta che a catena lunga, abbiano il potere di avvelenare la salute delle persone.

In un'Unione europea in cui vige il principio di precauzione, ci saremmo aspettati coerentemente il divieto totale e la tolleranza zero verso le sostanze PFAS.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já jsem hlasoval pro tento návrh zprávy a chtěl bych se vyjádřit k tomuto tématu. Myslím, že si všichni uvědomujeme, jak je tato oblast zásadní pro budoucí vývoj evropského společenství. Jedná se skutečně o primární zdroj, voda je primární zdroj pro náš život, který je také důležitou součástí každodenního života každého z Evropanů. Obyvatelé Evropy zatím nepocítují, že by se jich osobně týkaly problémy s dostupností nebo kvalitou pitné vody. Dostupností myslím jak fyzickou dostupnost této komodity, tak samozřejmě i cenovou dostupnost. To ovšem neznamená, že bychom v této oblasti neměli podnikat nové kroky ke zlepšení současné situace. Přístup k pitné vodě a její kvalita jsou primárními zájmy EU, přesto si myslím, že bychom měli být velice opatrní při tvoření nových legislativních opatření. V této oblasti nesmíme zapomínat respektovat princip subsidiarity. Vodní zdroje by měly být primárně spravovány a ošetřovány jednotlivými členskými státy. Já jsem tuto zprávu podpořil, podpořil jsem také určitá opatření, která zvýrazňovala roli obcí a měst.

Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL). – Madam President, we need to be ambitious when it comes to our water quality and water supply. That's why I abstained on this because this report, this was not ambitious enough. The reason why I say it wasn't ambitious enough is because it went below the minimum standard.

The idea that it would be acceptable to people in here that you can go in and cut off the water supply to a house with children in it, if that's a minimum for you well I can't go along with that. But then again it can't be a surprise, because we have a Commissioner for Agriculture who is actually here because of what he said on this issue in Ireland. He said that if people didn't pay their water bills, no matter how much they needed it, their water would be cut down to a trickle.

His punishment was to be thrown out of Irish politics, but in the bizarre world of European politics his reward was to get that job here. But let there be a warning to people here: you need to be more ambitious than you were today. The idea that you can cut off someone's water supply when they need it for their bottle to feed them and to quench their thirst ... you cause major problems for them, and this is what you will do by voting for what you did today. That's not ambitious enough for me. Is it too much to ask?

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Madam President, yet again I find myself asking, to what problem is this legislative proposal the solution? Clean water and its spread has been one of the miracles of our lifetime, not only in Europe but world-wide. One of the extraordinary and unreported wonders is the number of people who are no longer subject to water-borne diseases.

But it is not a problem in the European Union and if it were, there are ample national regulations and laws and legal remedies open for an individual who has been injured without needing additional regulation. Smuggled into this report is something quite different as well. The proposal that restaurants should all have to supply free water on demand.

Now again, I think this is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of how the private sector operates and what free contract is. Nobody has to eat in a restaurant, and if they choose to it's surely up to the restaurateur to offer whatever terms he wanted. You've got to ask, is there any crevice, is there any nook or cranny of national life so small that Brussels doesn't seek to thrust its stubby fingers into it?

Dubravka Šuica (PPE). – Gospođo predsjedavajuća, ovo je prva građanska inicijativa nakon Lisabonskog sporazuma koja je zaista uspjela, koja je prikupila više od 1 800 000 potpisa i koju smo kao Parlament ozbiljno uzeli u razmatranje.

Drago mi je da je danas Parlament velikom većinom glasao za pravo na vodu. Uvjerena sam da svaki građanin treba imati pravo na kvalitetnu vodu i ja vjerujem da će ovi pregovori završiti čim prije, da će se države članice usuglasiti i da će svaki građanin dobiti pravo na čistu, pitku i kvalitetnu vodu. Smatram da je to najmanji standard koji možemo našim građanima Europske unije pružiti.

Kad je Hrvatska u pitanju, mi smo treća zemlja po bogatstvu voda u Europskoj uniji i sigurna sam da će moja država Hrvatska i njezine vlasti omogućiti našim građanima da imaju pristup na vodu, jer smatram da je to prije svega građansko pravo i slažem se s time što su Ujedinjeni narodi proglasili pravo na vodu građanskim, odnosno ljudskim pravom.

8.2. Rola partycypacji finansowej pracowników w tworzeniu miejsc pracy i reaktywizacji bezrobotnych (A8-0293/2018 - Renate Weber)

Oral explanations of vote

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, θα πρέπει να διασφαλίσουμε τα βασικά εργασιακά δικαιώματα, διότι νομίζω ότι αυτό είναι το βασικό στοιχείο στη σύγχρονη εποχή, ιδίως στις χώρες του ευρωπαϊκού Νότου, ιδίως στην Ελλάδα, όπου πλέον δεν διασφαλίζεται καν η καταβολή του μισθού, διότι έχουμε πάρα πολλούς εργοδότες οι οποίοι δεν αμείβουν τους εργαζομένους τους. Ταυτόχρονα, οι εργοδότες αυτοί, πολλές φορές, τους αναγκάζουν να πληρωθούν σε είδος. Επιπλέον, οι εργοδότες αυτοί δεν πληρώνουν καν τις ασφαλιστικές εισφορές.

Αντιλαμβάνεται κανείς ότι συνεχίζεται η εκμετάλλευση των εργαζομένων, ιδίως στην εποχή της κρίσης, με κινεζοποίηση των μισθών που έχει γίνει στην ελληνική οικονομία, με καθημερινές παρεμβάσεις στα συνδικαλιστικά τους δικαιώματα και, ταυτόχρονα, συνεχίζεται η μείωση των μισθών, καθώς έχουμε χιλιάδες παράνομους μετανάστες, οι οποίοι δρουν ως εφεδρικός στρατός για τη μείωση των αμοιβών των εργαζομένων. Άρα, λοιπόν, πρέπει να έχουμε συγκεκριμένα μέτρα για την προστασία των δικαιωμάτων των εργαζομένων.

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI). – Pani Przewodnicząca! To sprawozdanie to jest stek bzdur, pouczeń i jakiegoś takiego socjalistycznego marudzenia, wtrącania się w ogóle w nieswoje sprawy. Sama lista tych instytucji, które zostały powołane i które są wymieniane, robi wrażenie: strategia „Europa 2020”, Europejski Fundusz Społeczny, Europejski Fundusz Dostosowania do Globalizacji, Europejska Fundacja na rzecz Poprawy Warunków Życia i Pracy, Kreatywna Europa itd. Matko Boska! To, co my tutaj mamy, to jest już pełny komunizm w natarciu. Próbowujemy zarządzać każdą dziedziną życia za pomocą stu tysięcy różnych agencji, nad którymi nikt już nie panuje i nikt już nie ma wiedzy na temat tego, czym która się zajmuje. Jest to zupełnie zbędne sprawozdanie napisane bełkotliwym językiem. Nikt go nie będzie czytał. Nikogo to nie interesuje i nie ma żadnego powodu, żebyśmy się tym zajmowali.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já jsem trochu překvapen, že pan kolega nezná všechny nástroje, které používá EU, ale to je možná takový pouze povzdech. Já si naopak myslím, že ta zpráva je poměrně zdrženlivá. Hovoří o řadě modelů finanční účasti zaměstnanců na vytváření pracovních míst a jejich motivaci. Bavíme se o modelech, kterými jsou finanční podíl na zisku, individuální zaměstnanecké podílnictví, vlastnictví pracovníků v rámci družstevních podílů a programy tzv. zaměstnaneckého podílnictví. Jsou to skutečně různorodé varianty motivace těchto pracovníků a já shledávám právě žádoucí motivovat zaměstnance k vytváření nových pracovních míst. Jsem také rád, že jak jsem řekl, ta zpráva je poměrně zdrženlivá, skutečně říká, že ta role je především na členských státech. A pro mě je pouze podstatné, aby ta pravidla daná především těmi vnitrostátními předpisy byla co nejvíce předvídatelná a transparentní. A protože všechno toto ta zpráva splňovala, tak jsem skutečně s radostí hlasoval pro.

9. Korekty do głosowania i zamiar głosowania: Patrz protokól

(The sitting was suspended at 13.49)

PRÉSIDENTE: SYLVIE GUILLAUME

Vice-présidente

10. Wznowienie posiedzenia

(La séance est reprise à 15 h 02)

11. Przyjęcie protokołu poprzedniego posiedzenia: Patrz protokól

12. Program prac Komisji na rok 2019 (debata)

La Présidente. – L'ordre du jour appelle le débat sur la déclaration de la Commission sur le programme de travail de la Commission pour 2019 (2018/2850(RSP)).

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, I have literally come running from the College meeting that has just ended to present to you the work programme for 2019 that we have just decided. I think we are all aware that the next six months will be crucial for our Union. For Europeans going to the polls next May it is not enough that the Commission has made proposals to make their lives better, they want to see results on the ground, concrete decisions.

Together we have a very short window of time in which to find agreement on the many proposals that are on the table and thus show that the European Union can deliver solutions to the challenges that cannot be addressed by any of our Member States acting alone.

Challenges such as ensuring that Europe's return to economic growth benefits all, and creating opportunity in the transition to the digital and low carbon economy. Challenges such as demographics and migration, climate change and the competition for resources, which require a shared push towards sustainability. Challenges to our values and democratic societies from terrorists, cyber-attackers and disinformation campaigns. In an increasingly volatile world, we have to show that Europe is able to deliver solutions to these biggest of questions.

Today's work programme reflects fully the ambition of Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union address last month and the accompanying letter of intent. It represents the Commission's commitment to work intensively with you, and the Council, to deliver what we promised under the 10 priorities on the basis of which this House approved the Commission's mandate, as well as, of course, to prepare the Union for the future.

Our work programme has been enriched by the fruitful exchanges we have had with Parliament, through the structured dialogue with the Conference of Committee Chairs and with the Conference of Presidents as well. We have also had a good exchange with the Council in line with the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making.

So the first priority for our work in the coming year is all about delivery. With the initiatives presented alongside the State of the Union address, the Commission has tabled all of the legislative proposals needed to deliver on our common agenda for jobs, growth, fairness and democratic change. Together with this House, and the Council, we have found agreement on nearly half of these and a further 20% are well advanced in the legislative process. The priority must now be to turn the remaining proposals into legislation and then to implement it effectively.

The Joint Declaration on the EU's legislative priorities for 2018 and 2019, signed by the Presidents of the three institutions, has proved valuable in helping us to find shared priorities, and especially to stick to them. I know from our dialogue that this Parliament shares the commitment to maintain and further step up the momentum.

The Commission will be a constructive and energetic partner to you, as well as to the Council, in helping find the agreements needed to deliver what we promised on migration, on the reform of our common asylum system, on the digital single market, on a fairer and deeper economic monetary union, on the European Pillar of Social Rights and on internal security, to name but a few.

To keep strong focus on delivery on these shared priorities, we are only proposing a very limited number of new initiatives in our work programme. Some of these are policy initiatives which are needed to complete the 10 priorities in areas such as further boosting investment, addressing the challenges of artificial intelligence or tackling disinformation campaigns which threaten our democracy. Whilst continuing the significant efforts to ensure an agreement with the United Kingdom, we will bring forward the necessary measures to adapt the *acquis* ahead of Brexit.

We will also continue our better regulation work. To consolidate this as part of our collective DNA, we will present the results of our ongoing stocktaking this spring. Today we are announcing evaluation work and fitness checks to ensure our existing laws are fit for purpose and up to date, including in areas flagged in the opinions of the REFIT platform. We will also pay particular attention to ensuring the laws we already have are properly implemented and applied. In parallel with the work programme, we are also presenting a Communication which sets out how we propose to strengthen the role of subsidiarity and proportionality principles in our policymaking.

Finally, our work programme takes forward the roadmap to the Sibiu Summit on Europe Day next year. This will be a crucial moment for the EU of 27 to shape our collective future. The Commission will help prepare this discussion with contributions on delivering a sustainable European future to implement the sustainable development goals and surpass our Paris commitments.

We will advocate moving to more efficient decision-making in energy and climate, tax and social policies. We will also look at how to strengthen the international role of the euro and, as we will discuss further in the debate later this evening, at strengthening the rule of law framework. To build a strong foundation for our European future it is clearly essential that we find agreement before the Sibiu Summit on a future MFF – multiannual financial framework – which will enable us to deal effectively with the challenges ahead.

Honourable Members, this is the time to deliver; let's get to work.

József Szájer, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, I think we can all agree here that democracy is a good thing. There will be a new mandate from next year, both for the European Parliament and our connected institution – the Commission – which is very dependent on us next year. But this debate this year should take place at the same time for that very reason: about the future but also about how we complete our five years' work together. From that point of view these two elements are mixed here.

The first thing I would like to say is that our group is very keen to work on, and insists on the need to deliver on, the legislative proposals which are still pending. Parliament should complete its work and the Commission should table everything which is still missing from the table. From what we have seen so far, this is possible.

For the EPP Group, the most important element – and the number-one question we would like to see completed – is, obviously, the security and migration issue, where border protection – not just border management, but real protection of the European Union – should be achieved, as well as cooperation with Africa, keeping a vigilant eye within the continent on the Western Balkans. The Vice-President mentioned cybersecurity, especially concerning the possibilities of disinformation in the European Parliament election campaign. We also insist on implementation, not just on completing pending legislation, for instance in the area of PNR. This is a very important thing.

I would also like to use this opportunity to welcome – as we have discussed in this Parliament several times, parallel work is not something which we need to do concerning the Commission work programme – the withdrawal of the mandate from the migration compact, which is a decision that I think the Commission was right to take. It should be left to the Member States and we should find our own way to find our own possibilities at European level. All these aspects are very important to ensure the stability of the continent.

On solidarity, I would also like to draw your attention to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which is very important, and also to the fact that the Parliament will be ready – and this is a message to the Council rather than the Commission or ourselves – with the MFF proposals by the end of this year. With all due respect, some elements are still missing, but I think we can achieve it. From there on, it will basically be the Council's job. But we are delivering our results here.

Regarding trade policy and climate change, my colleagues will expand on my speech, but I would like to welcome the Commission's quick response to these issues. I wish for ourselves the successful completion of our work of five years, both for the Commission and for Parliament.

Maria João Rodrigues, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, I would like to say to the First Vice-President: yes, what is at stake is knowing what kind of European Union we can present to our citizens in the upcoming European elections. A Europe which can really deliver on solutions for their problems, or a Europe which is paralysed by the forces of the status quo? We, the S&D Group, are really striving for real European solutions, and we need to deliver them in the last months, for sure.

When it comes to tackling social inequalities, this means fully implementing the European Social Pillar. When it comes to climate change, this means having an ambitious strategy for a low-carbon economy. When it comes to the digital revolution, we need to frame it, to conduct it in such a way that we improve working conditions and we control the effects on our democracy. And when it comes to migration management and the refugee crisis, we need to make sure that Europe counts not only on the European border, but the real European Asylum System and a real partnership with Africa. Then we can ask: but do we have the means for this?

And we think we have, because if we fight tax evasion – tax avoidance – the means will be there. We need to turn these into a future Community framework and also a proper reform of the eurozone, overcoming the current differences. And then we can ask: can we decide on this? Yes, we can. In the European Parliament we decide by a majority, so let's see now how the different Groups promote these real European solutions. And yes, when it comes to the Council, these proposals coming now to extend qualified majority voting in the social area, taxation and foreign affairs – this makes sense – will support the Commission in this direction.

Let's make the best of the upcoming months. This is indeed the moment for us to strengthen European sovereignty as the main leverage to increase citizens' ownership of their own lives.

Anneleen Van Bossuyt, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, beste heer Timmermans, beste collega's, de tijd dringt. We zijn in volle vaart op weg naar het einde van de legislatuur.

“Een Unie die beter naar haar burgers luistert”. Niet meer dan wat mooie woorden waren het bij de start van deze Commissie, want achterkamerpolitiek vormde de rode draad doorheen het beleid van deze Commissie. Belastinggeld gaf u uit aan dure folietjes in de hoop zo zieltjes te winnen. Denk maar aan de gratis treintickets en de gratis wifi. Kostbare tijd verspilde u dan weer aan nutteloze voorstellen zoals transnationale lijsten. Geld en tijd die u beter kon besteden aan dat waar de burger écht van wakker ligt: het inperken van migratie, het verzekeren van onze veiligheid en het creëren van een jobvriendelijk klimaat.

Binnenkort start uw laatste beleidsjaar. Uw laatste kans om volop in te zetten op de echte prioriteiten: jobs, veiligheid en migratie. Bijkomende middelen voor Frontex en dus een betere versterking van onze buitengrenzen, dat zijn hoopvolle maatregelen. Wij zijn ook steeds vragende partij geweest – en zijn dat nog steeds – naar meer steun voor Erasmus+ en onderzoek, en naar meer samenwerking op vlak van klimaat en defensie.

Hopelijk zijn dat deze keer geen loze woorden en kan u nog enigszins bewijzen dat u de bezorgdheden van de burgers wel ter harte neemt.

Dita Charanzová, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, I believe that we should now focus a little bit less on the current Commission's legacy and try to make a real effort to deliver on our commitments. We need to prove to our citizens that we hear their concerns and we act upon them. In my view, the Commission needs to be realistic in what it wants to achieve before the end of its term and concentrate on a few key priorities, instead of opening a number of new issues. Sometimes less is more.

So what should the Commission do next year?

First and foremost is Brexit. In 2019 the EU will go through a major, unprecedented moment in its history. It is in our common interest that this happens as smoothly and peacefully as possible for citizens, for businesses, for the entire European Union. The Commission must do its best to finalise an agreement together with the UK. Beyond Brexit, we must continue our work on key issues, border security and the personal prosperity of EU citizens. We have passed through difficult periods in Europe recently and we need to make sure people understand that the EU is on their side and prevents effectively potential future crises.

I agree that one way to prevent external crises is to work better with our neighbouring regions, including Africa. On the other hand, I wonder if it's time now to come up at the end of the Commission's mandate with long-term proposals, such as the voting procedure within the Council, without having an in-depth political debate with this Parliament and the Member States. Let us focus on fixing the big problems we have right now instead of focusing on creating new ones.

Philippe Lamberts, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Vice-président, merci pour votre exposé, qui fut, comme d'habitude, concis. On ne peut pas reprocher à la Commission de vouloir livrer des résultats, c'est tout à votre honneur.

La question que je vous pose est la suivante: vous assistez comme moi à une désaffection grandissante de beaucoup de nos concitoyens à l'égard de la construction européenne, alors que vous et moi savons qu'elle est un élément essentiel à l'exercice de notre souveraineté démocratique. Pensez-vous donc que c'est en continuant à travailler en faisant un peu plus de la même chose ou en travaillant de manière incrémentale que nous allons raviver l'enthousiasme européen celles et ceux de nos concitoyens qui l'ont perdu?

Je pense que ce qu'il nous faut, en réalité, c'est un changement de paradigme. Je suis d'accord avec vous pour dire que ce n'est pas à la veille d'une élection qu'on engage un changement de paradigme mais sur certains points – la Commission d'ailleurs a fait des propositions, je pense à l'Euro en particulier – qui, je pense, sont à la hauteur du défi; encore faut-il que le Conseil suive. Je pense cependant qu'il nous faut quelque chose de beaucoup plus solide. En réalité, notre lecture des choses est que nos sociétés sont menacées par deux bombes à retardement: d'une part des inégalités grandissantes et d'autre part, une empreinte écologique qui dépasse ce que notre planète peut supporter.

Donc, clairement, il nous faut un changement de paradigme, une réorientation des politiques de l'Union européenne, et au lieu de cela, je dois constater que les familles politiques traditionnelles, ici au Parlement européen et au Conseil, continuent pour l'essentiel dans la même direction. Je vous ai bien écouté, Monsieur Szájer, quand vous dites qu'il faut mettre le paquet sur la question de la sécurité et des migrations. Pour ma part, je constate que pour nos concitoyens, ces préoccupations, certes importantes, ne viennent pas en première place. Vous persistez dans une voie qui est aussi celle de vos amis bavarois, mais je constate que c'est par bataillons entiers que leurs électeurs les ont quittés, pour les extrêmes pour certains – parce qu'en fait, en les imitant vous les renforcez – et, pour ceux qui étaient dégoûtés par cette évolution, pour les Verts, et je pense que leur choix était le bon.

João Pimenta Lopes, *em nome do Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Senhora Presidente, Senhor Comissário, a sua intervenção não traz novidade, apenas a habitual retórica e propaganda que omite as consequências das políticas que a Comissão e a União Europeia têm imposto aos trabalhadores e aos povos.

Se as evidências faltassem, aí está a discussão do próximo Quadro Financeiro Plurianual que antecipa brutais cortes na coesão, aprofundando o desenvolvimento desigual, injusto e assimétrico, impondo a divergência entre os diferentes Estados-Membros como 30 anos de integração portuguesa o demonstram.

Ao mesmo tempo, engordam as rubricas que sustentam as vossas políticas repressivas, securitárias e militaristas. Um figurino que torna evidente que os fundos da União Europeia nunca foram a expressão de solidariedade ou sequer compensação pelas perdas de soberania, da destruição dos tecidos produtivos nacionais ou do impacto assimétrico do Mercado Único, do euro e das políticas comuns.

Nenhum povo está condenado a ficar amarrado aos constrangimentos da União Europeia. Será da sua vontade e luta que se construirá uma Europa de paz e de cooperação, de progresso e de justiça social, de Estados livres, soberanos e iguais em direitos.

Rolandas Paksas, *EFDD frakcijos vardu*. – Gerbiama Pirmininke, dažnai šioje salėje mums siūloma kalbėti apie žmogaus teisių pažeidimus Azijos, Afrikos, Lotynų Amerikos valstybėse. Priimamos grėsmingos rezoliucijos. Dažnai mojuojama taip vadinamu teisės viršenybės principu prieš Lenkiją ar Vengriją. Na taip, Komisijos darbotvarkė devynioliktiems metams pilna gražių žodžių. Joje yra visko, bet trūksta pagarbos savo piliečiams. Todėl aš klaisiu: ką Europos Sąjungos Komisijos pirmininkas asmeniškai ir Komisija *in corpore* galėtų padaryti, kad ir Lietuvoje, Europos Sąjungos valstybėje, pradėtų galioti Žmogaus teisių konvencija, kad piliečiai atgautų savo pilietines teises, o prieš aštuonis metus priimtas Žmogaus Teisių Teismo sprendimas pagaliau įsigaliotų? Nes visi mes žinome, kad pavėluotas teisingumas – tai jokio teisingumo.

Olaf Stuger, *namens de ENF-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, ik kwam hier net de zaal binnenlopen en toen hoorde ik de commissaris spreken over *fairness*. Als ik *fairness* hoor, dan schiet me altijd de zaak Selmayr te binnen. Dan denk ik, hoe kan dat nou toch zijn dat ik deze zaal binnenloop en het eerste woord dat ik hoor is *fairness*. Selmayr, het schandaligste hoofdstuk in het boek van deze Commissie.

En dan heb ik het nog niet over een verslag van de Europese Rekenkamer over CCS. Dat is de opslag van CO₂ waarin 3,7 miljard euro is geïnvesteerd. We hebben dat bekeken en daarbij hebben we onderzocht waar het geld naartoe is gegaan. Daar is niks mee gebeurd. Het is weg. 3,7 miljard. Net zoals de 2 miljard die voor innovatieve technologie voor hernieuwbare energie gebruikt zou moeten worden. Ook weg. Daarom zeg ik, namens de Nederlandse belastingbetaler aan deze Commissie, dank u wel.

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – Tisztelt Elnök Asszony! 2019-ben az Európai Bizottság kiemelt feladata a hétéves költségvetés, a kompromisszum megtalálása a Tanáccsal és a Parlamenttel. A fő kihívás a centrum és a periféria országai közötti szakadéknak a csökkentése és az Unió szétesésének megakadályozása. Ennek érdekében az uniós források hatékony felhasználására van szükség, mindenek előtt közös fellépésre, szigorú fellépésre a korrupció ellen. Kiemelten kell támogatni a jelentős hozzáadott értéket teremtő kkv-kat, amelyek így képesek lesznek a bérek emelésére, megfigyelve az Unión belüli egyirányú munkaerő-vándorlást, ami mindkét oldalon társadalmi feszültséget okoz. Mindezzel ellentétben a Bizottság javaslata, amelyik a kohéziós alapokat jelentősen csökkentené. A Parlament aggodalmát fejezte ki amiatt, hogy a Bizottság gyengíti az EU fő szolidaritási politikáját, és különösen ellenzi a Kohéziós Alap csökkentését. Bízom benne, hogy társjogalkotóként érvényesíteni tudjuk az elvárásainkat.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – Madame la Présidente, comme pour la Commission, la priorité majeure pour nous l'année prochaine sera l'adoption du cadre financier pluriannuel.

Nos citoyens ont besoin de certitudes et nous avons besoin de stabilité financière pour faire face à tous les défis dans la sphère de l'action externe, domaine dont je m'occupe ici au Parlement.

En ce qui concerne le nouvel instrument financier externe NDICI (instrument de voisinage, de coopération au développement et de coopération internationale), nous avons été surpris que la proposition de la Commission n'ait absolument pas tenu compte de la position du Parlement, qui était de garder un instrument séparé pour le voisinage.

Il y a aussi beaucoup d'interrogations suscitées par la gouvernance de cet instrument global, y compris concernant la nouvelle architecture financière externe.

Ensuite, les Balkans de l'Ouest doivent rester au centre de notre attention. L'année 2018 a été pour les Balkans l'année de l'opportunité en termes d'intégration européenne; 2019 doit devenir l'année de la cohérence. Je pense qu'il faut poursuivre notre engagement dans cette zone et y exporter notre stabilité.

Enfin, je salue le projet de renforcement du mécanisme sur l'état de droit. Vous êtes familier, Monsieur le Vice-président, de la situation en Roumanie et je vous remercie pour votre engagement. J'espère qu'il sera le même d'ici les prochaines élections européennes.

Nous devons aussi être très fermes quand des dérives de l'état de droit se produisent dans notre voisinage. Je pense notamment à la Moldavie, où il faut en tirer toutes les conséquences, y compris au niveau budgétaire.

Eric Andrieu (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Vice-président, je m'interroge: la Commission européenne veut-elle être le fossoyeur du projet européen? C'est la question que je vous pose.

Alors que Monsanto et Bayer viennent d'être condamnés en appel par la justice américaine ce matin, alors que 1,3 million de citoyens européens ont signé l'initiative «Stop glyphosate», alors que ce Parlement a mis en place une commission d'enquête sur les procédures d'autorisation des pesticides en Europe suite aux «Monsanto Papers» et au renouvellement pour le moins controversé du glyphosate, que faites-vous pour protéger la santé des 500 millions de citoyens européens?

Vous vous opposez à l'interdiction décrétée par la région de Bruxelles Capitale d'utiliser des produits à base de glyphosate au mépris des principes de précaution. Savez-vous, Monsieur le Vice-président, que la santé humaine est la préoccupation numéro deux des Européens au moment où je m'exprime? Pensez-vous qu'une décision de ce type soit opportune et qu'elle encourage les citoyens à se rendre aux urnes du 23 au 26 mai prochain? Je vous renvoie à l'article 191, paragraphe 2, du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union européenne, qui prévoit que «la politique de l'Union dans le domaine de l'environnement vise un niveau de protection élevé [...] et est fondée sur les principes de précaution».

Je formule le vœu que la Commission européenne prévoie de proposer en 2019, une révision de la législation européenne sur les pesticides et réponde aux failles du système actuel et aux attentes des 500 millions d'Européens dans ce domaine.

Bernd Kölmel (ECR). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Vizepräsident! In dem Arbeitsprogramm der Kommission sind Ausführungen über eine Vertiefung der Währungsunion enthalten. Darin wird gefordert, dass wir endlich einen funktionierenden, einen umfassenden Währungsfonds erhalten und dass wir die Bankenunion vollenden, damit das Risiko geteilt werden kann.

Das sind eindeutig die falschen Maßnahmen. Statt dass wir mehr Transfers brauchen, brauchen wir mehr Eigenverantwortung. Statt eines nicht passenden Korsetts für alle brauchen wir mehr Freiheit für alle. Der Euro ist in der jetzigen Form gescheitert. Er kann nicht in dieser Art und Weise fortgeführt werden, mit den gleichen Maßnahmen für alle. Stattdessen sollten wir im Arbeitsprogramm Maßnahmen vorsehen: Wie können wir Länder aus der Eurozone entlassen, und zwar in einer Art und Weise, dass die Wirtschaft – sowohl dieser Länder als auch der verbleibenden Länder – in der Eurozone möglichst wenig beschädigt wird.

Jetzt wäre die Möglichkeit, das Ganze so vorzubereiten, damit wir kein Chaos erleben, denn ansonsten werden wir sehen, dass die Märkte kollabieren, wenn wir nichts unternehmen und weiterhin Schuldenspiralen zulassen.

(Der Redner ist damit einverstanden, eine Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“ gemäß Artikel 162 Absatz 8 der Geschäftsordnung zu beantworten.)

Philippe Lamberts (Verts/ALE), question «carton bleu». – L'Allemagne est unifiée depuis à peu près 150 ans et réunifiée depuis à peu près un quart de siècle. Malgré cette longue histoire, l'Allemagne reste un pays aujourd'hui économiquement inhomogène, de sorte que ce qui fait tenir l'Allemagne ensemble, ce sont des transferts financiers massifs entre les régions les plus riches du pays et les régions les moins riches du pays.

Ces transferts utilisent la voie de la fiscalité, du budget fédéral, la voie de la sécurité sociale fédérale et la voix du «Finanzausgleich». C'est cela qui fait tenir l'Allemagne ensemble. Expliquez-moi comment on pourrait se passer, au regard de l'unité européenne, de ces mécanismes qui sont indispensables à l'unité allemande? Je n'ai toujours pas compris.

Bernd Kölmel (ECR), Antwort auf eine Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“. – Herr Lamberts, vielen Dank für diese Frage! In der Tat haben wir da ein Modell, das funktioniert. Das funktioniert deshalb, weil man in Deutschland akzeptiert, dass es einen Ausgleich zwischen den ärmeren und den reicheren Regionen gibt. Und ich habe überhaupt nichts dagegen, wenn man einen solchen Ausgleich auch in der EU einführen will. Aber da müssen Sie mal die Bürger fragen, ob sie das wollen. Da sollten Sie nicht nur nach Deutschland schauen, da sollten Sie alle Bürger in der EU fragen, ob sie denn bereit sind, alle länger zu arbeiten, oder – anders gesagt – dass einige länger arbeiten und andere früher in Rente gehen und das über Finanztransfers finanziert wird.

Außerdem geht es doch gerade darum, dass man die Länder nicht bestraft durch eine nicht passende Währung. Ich möchte doch den Ländern die Freiheit zurückgeben, damit sie über Abwertungen wieder wettbewerbsfähig werden. Wir sollten nicht in Transfers denken, sondern in echter Solidarität und Fairness.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης (GUE/NGL). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κύριε Timmermans, η εμμονή στις νεοφιλελεύθερες συνταγές και στην ακινησία τρέφουν τον αντιευρωπαϊκό, ακροδεξιό λαϊκισμό που επιδιώκει τη διάλυση της ευρωπαϊκής ενοποίησης, τη συρρίκνωση της δημοκρατίας και μια μεγάλη κοινωνική οπισθοδρόμηση. Τους ακούτε και εδώ μέσα. Το ερώτημα είναι τι κάνετε – όχι στα λόγια, αλλά στην πράξη – για να αντιμετωπίσετε τις κρίσιμες αλλαγές που απαιτούν οι πολίτες: πραγματικό κοινωνικό πυλώνα και όχι απλώς μια ετικέτα στα λόγια, ένα πολυετές δημοσιονομικό πλαίσιο που θα εγκριθεί πριν από τις ευρωεκλογές και θα στηρίζει πολιτικές ανάπτυξης και συνοχής που να μειώνουν τις ανισότητες, μεταρρύθμιση της πολιτικής ασύλου για να μη φορτώνονται όλα τα βάρη η Ελλάδα και η Ιταλία στο προσφυγικό, ενίσχυση της διαφάνειας και της δημοκρατικής λογοδοσίας, πιο φιλόδοξοι στόχοι για την αντιμετώπιση της κλιματικής αλλαγής. Αυτά κρίνουν την εξέλιξη και σε αυτά θα κριθείτε. Όχι από τα λόγια, αλλά από τις πράξεις. Από το τι θα κάνετε «delivery» στο τέλος της ημέρας.

Patrick O'Flynn (EFDD). – Madam President, in the United States of America, where I believe they directly elect their presidents, a president who is in the last year of his term and is not standing again is described as a lame duck. On that basis, this is a lame duck Commission. Were it wise, it would reflect that modest status with modest targets. But no, right across the piece, the Juncker Commission is attempting new power grabs for Brussels, from permanent structured cooperation in defence to a common European asylum system, to beefing up the sanctions on Member States which displease it in what it euphemistically calls the rule-of-law agenda. That's the rule of Brussels law over national democracies, by the way.

But with its two federalist engines wheezing badly – Macron in France and Merkel in Germany – one can't help but notice that the Commission is on collision course with the two other heavyweights, with Italy in regard both to migration and economic sovereignty, and with the United Kingdom on its right to run its own affairs even after it's left the club. I had to laugh when Mr Juncker in his State of the Union package went to great pains to highlight one area where he felt subsidiarity could be enforced: changing the clocks. Countries are going to be allowed to set their own time. Big deal: given the rest of this federalist agenda, that just gives the nation the right to decide whether its sovereignty will be stolen at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock on any given day.

Mr Juncker told us in September, and I quote, 'The time for European sovereignty has come'. No, it has not, at least not in the eyes of Italians, or Hungarians, or Austrians or Swedes, or German surging towards the AfD. Even at its fag end, this Commission continues the great eurocrat mistake of overreaching and seeking to govern without consent. Well, the British people have had enough. We're off. We will run our own country again one day, no matter what Mrs May connives to bind us into. If you don't change your ways, I predict we will be the first of many.

Mario Borghezio (ENF). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, mentre ogni elezione rinnova la condanna dei popoli alla politica di *austerità*, alle politiche sbagliate sull'immigrazione e alle politiche sociali inesistenti di questa Unione europea, il vasto programma con il quale ci si presenta alla conclusione della legislatura è una stanca ripetizione di tutte quelle promesse e di tutti quegli impegni vaghi dei quali nessuno in realtà è stato mai mantenuto. Con una novità: un grosso investimento per le campagne di disinformazione.

Mentre ci sono paesi come il mio, l'Italia, che hanno 5 milioni di poveri – e per fortuna c'è un governo che ha finalmente stanziato un contributo sociale, perché l'Europa non ci aveva pensato – io credo che sarebbe necessario riflettere sui risultati elettorali che si vanno ripetendo, riflettere sul problema della sfida dell'immigrazione, sulla quale non state dicendo niente, non c'è una parola sugli accordi di riammissione, non avete fatto assolutamente niente e non intendete fare niente per risolvere alla radice questi problemi.

Gli aiuti all'Africa, un piano Marshall per l'Africa, certo, non finanziando i soliti satrapi corrotti ma attraverso un sistema di investimenti delle nostre piccole e medie imprese. Bisogna portare il lavoro, bisogna ricreare le condizioni perché ci sia lavoro, qui da noi e nei paesi esportatori di immigrazione...

(La Presidente toglie la parola all'oratore.)

Kazimierz Michał Ujazdowski (NI). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Koleżanki i Koledzy! Przewodniczący Timmermans mówił o spełnieniu pragmatycznych oczekiwań obywateli. To była dobra formuła. Pytanie, jak rozumiemy pragmatyczne oczekiwania obywateli. Myślę, że dotyczą one przynajmniej trzech sfer: dbałości o bezpieczeństwo, i to dbałości o bezpieczeństwo w pełnym, całościowym wymiarze, nie tylko walki z terroryzmem, bezpieczeństwa południowej flanki Unii Europejskiej, ale także bezpieczeństwa na Wschodzie i wrażliwości na hegemonię ze strony Putina; po drugie, danie przykładu oszczędnej legislacji, z tym nie zawsze jest dobrze, danie wzoru przejrzystości w działaniu Komisji Europejskiej; i po trzecie, odrzucenie recept socjalistów. Unia Europejska potrzebuje zastrzyku wolności gospodarczej, konkurencyjności, walki z protekcjonizmem, równych reguł, które dadzą siłę gospodarczą całej Europie. Myślę, że tego oczekują obywatele, z pewnością bardzo wielu obywateli w Europie Środkowej.

Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Grundsätzlich begrüße ich die Vorhaben der Europäischen Kommission für das kommende Jahr. Wir sind am Ende der parlamentarischen Mandatsperiode, und da muss man natürlich versuchen, offene Dossiers so gut wie möglich abzuschließen.

Von großer wirtschaftlicher und symbolischer Bedeutung ist die schnelle Ratifizierung des Wirtschaftspartnerschaftsabkommens zwischen der EU und Japan. Es ist zurzeit das wichtigste Handelsabkommen in der europäischen Geschichte. Aber es hat auch eine symbolische Bedeutung auf globaler Ebene. Die EU steht für nachhaltigen Freihandel und gegen kurzfristigen Protektionismus. Wir müssen natürlich versuchen, das internationale Handelssystem zu fördern, und zwar regelbasiert. Dies bedeutet, dass wir die Reform der WTO vorantreiben müssen – wir arbeiten daran hier im Parlament –, und dass wir versuchen sollen, mit den USA eine gemeinsame Lösung zu finden. Sollte sich herausstellen, dass die USA, wie es sich abgezeichnet hat, wieder mit uns an einem gemeinsamen Handelsabkommen arbeiten wollen, dann hoffe ich sehr, dass die Kommission diese Chance auch aufgreift.

Aber was ich nun wirklich hoffe in diesen nächsten Monaten, das ist, dass die Kommission sich eine Kommunikationsstrategie zurechtlegt. Wir müssen alle miteinander so kommunizieren, dass unsere Bürger wissen: Wir wollen ein Europa, das schützt, aber nicht ein Europa, das geschlossen ist.

Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D). – Voorzitter, meneer de vicevoorzitter van de Commissie, laatste werkjaar. Je zou kunnen zeggen we doen nog een beetje voort of je zou kunnen zeggen neen, we gaan de bakens alvast uitzetten voor de komende legislatuur. Dat is een beetje mijn pleidooi vandaag. We weten dat we onze economie radicaal moeten hervormen. We weten dat we radicaal andere opties moeten nemen voor de toekomst. Het goede nieuws is dat het script daarvoor eigenlijk klaarligt. Dat hebben we niet in Europa geschreven. Dat hebben we geschreven op het niveau van de Verenigde Naties, met de zogenoemde doelstellingen voor duurzame ontwikkeling. Die omarmen wij als fractie totaal. Voor ons is dat bijna de bijbel geworden.

We gaan die moeten implementeren en dat betekent heel concrete dingen. Uit de steenkool stappen, niet meer investeren in fossiele energie, maar ook zorgen dat we de *race to the bottom* van de lonen en de arbeidsvoorwaarden van onze werknemers stoppen, dat we die omkeren en dat we op het sociale inzetten.

Maar – en dat is meteen mijn maar en ook mijn pleidooi vandaag – we weten wat we moeten doen, maar op het gebied van *governance* in de Europese Unie hebben we niet de middelen om dat te doen. We zitten nog altijd vast aan dat stabiliteits- en groeipact, aan dat Europese semester, gelinkt aan enge begrotingsdoelstellingen. Begrotingsdoelstellingen zijn zinvol als ze gelinkt zijn aan maatschappelijke doelstellingen. Vandaar zou het goed zijn als de Commissie komt met een voorstel om dat Europees semester radicaal om te zetten en daarin de doelstellingen voor duurzame ontwikkeling toe te passen. Dit betekent dat de begrotingsdoelstellingen niet belangrijker zijn dan sociale doelstellingen of milieudoelstellingen. Met name het samen benaderen en samen dwingende voorwaarden in onze *governance* stellen is een essentiële voorwaarde.

Anders Primdahl Vistisen (ECR). – Fru formand! Denne Kommissions periode har været præget af krisetilstand: fra eurokrise over brexit til migrationskrise og nu til en generel tillidskrise fra de europæiske befolkningers side. Derfor er det jo næsten tragikomisk at forestille sig, at det, der egentlig fylder mest i præsentationen af arbejdsprogrammet, er forbudelse af engangsplastik og balloner samt ideen om, at medlemsstaterne nu frit skal kunne vælge, hvorvidt de vil have sommertid eller ej, og hvilken tidszone de ønsker at tilhøre. Hvis Kommissionen virkelig havde ønsket at tage fat om nældens rod – i stedet for at tale om fremtidsprojekter med Europas forenede stater, om én fælles præsident, om en fælles udenrigspolitik, om et budget for eurozonen, osv., men i stedet for havde taget de helt konkrete bekymringer fra Europas befolkninger op vedrørende deres sikkerhed og den fuldstændig ukontrollerbare migration, og hvis den lod være med og blande sig i medlemsstaternes interne demokrati, så havde EU-projektet en langt bedre chance for at overleve på sigt efter brexit.

Jörg Meuthen (EFDD). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Vizekommissionspräsident! Wirft man einen Blick auf die politischen Aktivitäten der noch amtierenden Kommission, so fällt die Bestandsaufnahme schlicht verheerend aus.

Die Kommission hat die durch illegale Migration verursachten Probleme über Jahre hinweg bis 2014 völlig verdrängt und erkennt seit 2015 den Ernst der entstandenen Lage komplett. Bis heute beschäftigen Sie sich lieber mit Placebo-Lösungen und zwangsweiser Migranten-Umverteilung, statt endlich die Außengrenzen zu schützen, wie es längst geboten wäre.

Auch bei Euro und Finanzen stehen Sie vor einem gigantischen Scherbenhaufen. Matteo Salvini lehrt Sie heute, dass Italien immer noch ein souveräner Staat ist. Als solcher entscheidet er über seine Steuer-, seine Wirtschafts- und seine Haushaltspolitik eigenverantwortlich, und die Kommission kann nichts dagegen tun. Das als verbindlich gepriesene Regelwerk der EU erweist sich ein weiteres Mal als komplett zahnloser Tiger.

Deshalb arbeiten wir für ein Europa der Vaterländer, in dem jeder Staat eigenverantwortlich entscheidet und dann freilich auch die Folgen seiner politischen Entscheidungen schultert. Nur so kann Europa funktionieren – anders nicht.

Bogdan Brunon Wenta (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Program prac Komisji Europejskiej na przyszły rok, który dla nas wszystkich w Unii będzie rokiem decyzji, zmian, a także wyzwań w zakresie współpracy rozwojowej i pomocy humanitarnej. Z perspektywy Komisji Rozwoju (DEVE), którą reprezentuje, ale także innych komisji w Parlamencie, kluczowym, głównym tematem są oczywiście wieloletnie ramy finansowe na lata 2021-2027, a także związane z nimi negocjacje i dyskusje wokół propozycji Komisji w zakresie stworzenia nowego instrumentu sąsiedztwa oraz współpracy międzynarodowej i rozwojowej.

Orędzie przewodniczącego Junckera zawierało propozycje bardziej skutecznego modelu zarządzania oraz zintensyfikowania współpracy między wielostronnymi i krajowymi podmiotami działającymi na rzecz rozwoju. Osobiście uważam, że jest to dobry kierunek, który pozwoli stworzyć miejsca pracy oraz wykorzystać możliwości inwestycyjne na zasadach partnerstwa z Afryką i z krajami sąsiadującymi z Unią. Uważam, że musimy – jako Unia i państwa członkowskie – unikać tylko powielania działań, a bardziej wzmocnić ich skuteczność i komplementarność.

Chciałbym również wspomnieć o Agendzie 2030 i o celach zrównoważonego rozwoju ONZ, które zostały także zawarte w europejskim konsensusie na rzecz rozwoju. Mam nadzieję, że na podstawie analizy Komisji Europejskiej, która ma zostać opublikowana jeszcze w tym roku, uda się stworzyć kompleksową strategię wdrażania celów zrównoważonego rozwoju w 2019 r. oraz uwzględnić te cele także w przyszłej architekturze finansowania pomocy rozwojowej.

Silvia Costa (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, gentile vicepresidente, io apprezco i risultati che Lei ha individuato, che la Commissione ha individuato, e anche che abbia aperto un orizzonte anche per le riforme istituzionali necessarie per salvare il progetto europeo. Credo che questa sia la prospettiva verso la quale dobbiamo andare se vogliamo far amare di nuovo l'Europa, e credo che per le imminenti elezioni sia giusto accelerare molto di più l'adozione del codice di condotta anche per i *social network* e per le piattaforme sociali contro la disinformazione organizzata che dà vita a molti populismi e nazionalismi.

Mi ha un po' stupito, però, che rispetto al richiamo che Lei ha fatto al *social pillar* e anche alla sostenibilità come grande prospettiva, non ne abbia indicato minimamente l'aspetto educativo e culturale. Senza un accesso alla cultura e all'educazione, un innalzamento della qualità dei sistemi educativi, una partecipazione dei cittadini alla produzione culturale e anche una partecipazione a programmi, come Erasmus e Europa creativa, che sono programmi di successo, ma sottofinanziati, non ci sarà futuro per il progetto europeo. Lei lo sa perché lo ha sempre detto, ma non lo si dice in questa relazione. La prego di tenere questi come alti obiettivi.

Bernd Lange (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Timmermans! Ich greife aus dem Bereich Handel einen kleinen Satz heraus. Im Arbeitsprogramm steht, dass Sie den *deadlock* bei der Umsetzung der *Dual-use-Exportkontrolle* überwinden wollen. Ja, das müssen wir auch. Wir haben 2014 eine gemeinsame Erklärung zwischen Rat, Kommission und Parlament verabschiedet, wo wir gefordert haben, dass wir eine stärkere Kontrolle der Güter, die sowohl zur Verletzung von Menschenrechten, aber eben auch zivil genutzt werden können, endlich anpacken. 2014 — das ist nun vier Jahre her!

Und wir haben einen Vorschlag. Wir haben als Parlament eine Entscheidung dazu getroffen – mit über 500 Stimmen, also ein klares Signal –, und immer noch sind wir nicht in der Lage zu verhandeln, immer noch blockiert der Rat. Kann es denn sein, dass wirtschaftliche Interessen über dem Schutz der Menschenrechte stehen? Nein, ich glaube, wir müssen hier vorangehen. Wir können nicht zulassen, dass mit europäischer Software in anderen Ländern Oppositionelle kontrolliert und verfolgt werden. Wir brauchen hier ein strenges Exportregime.

Pervenche Berès (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Vice-président, je vois votre programme de travail pour 2019, et j'ai envie de vous dire devant ce Parlement, concentrez-vous sur l'essentiel et faites en sorte que nous puissions aboutir à des résultats.

De ce point de vue-là et dans le cadre des responsabilités qui sont les miennes au Parlement européen, je voudrais insister sur quelques points.

D'abord, s'agissant de la supervision des banques et des marchés financiers, nous devons mettre en œuvre cette fameuse réforme des autorités de supervision, et pour cela nous avons besoin du soutien de la Commission.

Vous devez aussi convaincre le Conseil de bouger sur la garantie des dépôts, car sinon tout le système de l'union bancaire s'écroulera. Nous devons aussi convaincre le Conseil, avec votre soutien, quant aux fameuses CCP, ces chambres de compensation qui vont être secouées par le départ de nos amis britanniques.

En matière fiscale, peut-être ai-je mal lu votre programme de travail, mais je n'ai pas eu l'impression que vous mettiez assez d'insistance sur deux volets tout à fait essentiels: à la fois la fiscalité du numérique et cette fameuse assiette commune de l'impôt sur les sociétés.

Enfin, je partage totalement l'avis de ma collègue Kathleen Van Brempt, vous devez revoir la gouvernance économique au regard des objectifs du développement durable.

Jens Geier (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr verehrter Herr Vizepräsident, verehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Sozialdemokratinnen und Sozialdemokraten sind überzeugt davon, dass die Menschen eine EU wollen, die ihnen Sorgen nimmt, und keine EU haben wollen, die ihre Sorgen vermehrt.

Mir ist klar: Die großen Bremser bei vielen Dingen, die wir uns gemeinsam für eine positive Weiterentwicklung der Europäischen Union wünschen, die sitzen im Rat der Europäischen Union. Aber ich möchte heute über die Initiativen der Kommission reden, vor allen Dingen in der sozialen Dimension. Wir freuen uns über den Erfolg bei der Entsende-richtlinie. Wir haben damit einen großen Beitrag geleistet, um ein dringendes soziales Problem innerhalb der Europäischen Union abzubauen. Aber wir sind besorgt über das Gesetzespaket zum Unternehmensrecht.

Herr Vizepräsident Timmermans, betriebliche Mitbestimmung – das können wir in Deutschland an jeder Ecke sehen –, das ist ein Erfolgsmodell. Aber dieses Gesetzespaket könnte dieses Erfolgsmodell beschädigen. Was wir zusätzlich dringend benötigen, das sind Initiativen, die die Lebensverhältnisse und die sozialen Sicherungssysteme in den Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union annähern. Der MFR leistet das vielleicht nur unzureichend, denn hier gehen die Kohäsionsleistungen zurück. Was wir uns wünschen, ist eine Richtlinie zur sozialen Anpassung nach oben.

Iratxe García Pérez (S&D). – Señora presidenta, podríamos dedicar el poco tiempo que nos queda en lamentarnos por los errores cometidos o podemos volcar nuestros esfuerzos en devolver el alma que le falta al proyecto de la Unión, con una Europa, con un pilar social fuerte que avance en los derechos sociales, en un marco de salarios mínimos, en pensiones dignas y en salarios dignos; una Europa líder en la lucha contra el cambio climático, como un asunto en el que perder un solo minuto sería ya una grave irresponsabilidad; una Europa igualitaria que no renuncie a erradicar la violencia contra las mujeres y que intente desbloquear iniciativas legislativas como el Women on Boards o, por ejemplo, la Directiva sobre la igualdad de trato.

Señor Timmermans, ustedes desde la Comisión Europea no pueden permitirse resignarse y nosotros desde la familia socialista arrimaremos el hombro para construir esa Europa.

Nicola Danti (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor vicepresidente, le scadenze elettorali fanno del 2019 sicuramente un anno particolare, un anno nel quale noi dobbiamo chiudere i tanti progetti che sono stati portati avanti ma anche tentare di proiettare l'Europa nel futuro.

Vorrei soffermarmi su due temi. Il primo: dobbiamo completare la costruzione del mercato unico digitale. In questa legislatura abbiamo fatto molte cose, ma è chiaro che ormai le piattaforme e l'intelligenza artificiale necessitano di regole nuove. Dobbiamo evitare, signor vicepresidente, che la rivoluzione digitale si affermi in maniera contraddittoria rispetto ai principi su cui si basa l'Unione europea.

Secondo punto: abbiamo celebrato quest'anno i venticinque anni del mercato unico, una storia di successo dell'Europa. Certo, per come lo abbiamo costruito in questi anni, il mercato unico, così com'è, non è più sufficiente. Abbiamo necessità di regole più stringenti per quanto riguarda la sorveglianza del mercato, i controlli sui prodotti e regole chiare su come si svolgono i servizi.

Io penso che questi siano i messaggi che dobbiamo mandare ai cittadini europei per le prossime elezioni.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ringrazio il vicepresidente Timmermans.

Il programma di lavoro di cui discutiamo è più breve, data l'imminente scadenza elettorale, ma il lavoro da fare è ancora moltissimo, in particolare vediamo l'incapacità dei leader europei riuniti nel Consiglio di trovare soluzioni comuni, vediamo dossier bloccati, vediamo l'incapacità dell'Europa di far avanzare un'agenda politica e legislativa.

Abbiamo bisogno di sbloccare questa situazione, penso ai temi migratori, penso alla riforma del regolamento di Dublino ma penso anche all'attuazione del pilastro sociale europeo con un fondo sociale, fondi di coesione che siano in grado di dare risposte ai bambini europei, in modo che tutti abbiano le stesse opportunità, con la garanzia per i bambini, con strumenti innovativi di sostegno al lavoro e all'apprendimento lungo tutto l'arco della vita, per allineare l'azione dell'Unione agli obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile delle Nazioni Unite.

Altrimenti continueremo a porre grandi obiettivi senza gli strumenti per raggiungerli e faremo solo crescere la rabbia dei nazionalisti e la retorica contro l'Europa.

Interventions à la demande

Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski (PPE). – Jeśli wszystko jest priorytetem, to nic tym priorytetem niestety nie jest. Ja troszeczkę współczuję panu komisarzowi, bo wysłuchałem blisko trzydziestu wystąpień i o tych priorytetach najważniejszych było tylko kilkanaście wystąpień. Reszta to raczej krytyka instytucji unijnych lub też życzenia dotyczące określonych priorytetów w długiej perspektywie.

Powiem, co dla mnie jest najistotniejsze. Po pierwsze, skończyć wszystkie kwestie te, które wymagają długiego czasu, czyli przede wszystkim kwestie budżetowe i finansowe, w tym wspomniany na przykład przyrzeczony program Erasmus+. Druga kwestia to jest oczywiście szeroko rozumiane bezpieczeństwo, czyli wszystko to, od czego zaczęliśmy tę kadencję Parlamentu, a kończymy w kompletnie zmienionych warunkach. I po trzecie, brexit. Rozwiązanie problemów umowy z Wielką Brytanią, jej odejściem, będzie kluczowe, jeżeli chodzi o całą następną perspektywę współpracy nie tylko z Wielką Brytanią, ale innymi państwami także.

José Blanco López (S&D). – Señora presidenta; lamentablemente, señor vicepresidente, la Comisión Europea, que se había fijado al principio de su mandato que el peso de la industria alcanzara el 20 % del PIB, asiste en silencio al cierre de industrias y de empresas y no presenta el plan industrial tantas veces reclamado por el Parlamento y por la Comisión.

En el sector de la siderurgia, el aluminio y el acero, es todavía mucho más grave. Acaban de anunciarse cierres en empresas en España por parte de Alcoa —en Avilés y A Coruña— o, hace pocos días, el de la empresa Vestas. Es necesario, por lo tanto, no quedarse de brazos cruzados y tomar medidas y tomar iniciativas; y las medidas que impulsó en su momento la Comisión no alcanzan a poner coto a las prácticas comerciales desleales y al dumping de países como China.

Le interpele a usted directamente, señor Timmermans, para que haga frente a esta situación y nos ayude a mantener el empleo de sectores industriales estratégicos claves para nuestra Europa y para nuestro país.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospođa predsjedavajuća, jedinstveno tržište danas je najveća vrijednost europskih integracija. Donijelo je ekonomski prosperitet, veće mogućnosti zaposlenja, jaču konkurentnost, rast inovacija te bolje i jeftinije proizvode i usluge većem dijelu europskog kontinenta. Zato podržavam nastojanja da se ono produbi u području digitalne ekonomije, energetike i finansijskih usluga. Svaki oblik protekcionizma put je u stagnaciju i zaostajanje za drugim globalnim divovima.

Smatram da je Komisija do referenduma o Brexitu imala solidno posložene prioritete, ali nakon toga previše se fokusirala na projekt daljnje političke integracije, osjetivši da odlaskom glavnog kočničara federalističkog modela dolazi povoljan trenutak.

Ogromna većina građana ne živi od plave zastave i žutih zvjezdica, nego od kruha koji zarađuju na tržištu. Zato do izbora moramo napraviti još više po pitanju ekonomske integracije, a političku, koja nema podršku građana, maknuti s dnevnog reda.

Luke Ming Flanagan (GUE/NGL). – Madam President, if one was to be getting divorced next March, no matter what else was happening in your life, whether you were getting a more energy-efficient car, whether you were insulating your house and no matter how deluded you'd want to be about what was important next year, what would be important next year would be the divorce. And you wouldn't put it number four on the list. It should be number one on the list, otherwise you would be in denial. We are talking about Brexit; we are talking about the second-biggest economy in Europe leaving the European Union. Like it or not, they're leaving. Billions of euros in trade, billions of connections in many other areas – family-wise, social-wise – in many different areas. That has to be the number one priority. If it isn't, there's something wrong here. In particular for Ireland, we need the endgame to be: no restrictions on trade, no restrictions on movement of people and no border. People talk about the Irish border – it's not an Irish border, it's a British border. If it was up to us it would not be there.

Ελευθέριος Συναδινός (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, ο κύριος Γιούνκερ και η Επιτροπή έχουν μια τελευταία ευκαιρία να διορθώσουν τις πολιτικές τους πριν γραφούν οριστικά με μελανά γράμματα στην ιστορία της Ευρώπης. Η αποχώρηση του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου, η ανεξέλεγκτη λαθρομετανάστευση, η τρομοκρατία και η παρατεταμένη οικονομική λιτότητα στους ευρωπαίους πολίτες, ειδικά των χωρών του Νότου, δείχνουν ότι τα προγράμματά τους έχουν επιτύχει το σκοπό τους. Αλλοιώνουν, δηλαδή, εθνολογικά την Ευρώπη, επιβάλλουν το φόβο και επικυριαρχούν στις αδύναμες οικονομικά χώρες.

Όμως η Ευρώπη αλλάζει, οι πολίτες αφυπνίζονται και απαιτούν σεβασμό και αξιοπρέπεια. Η Επιτροπή οφείλει να σεβαστεί την απόφασή τους και να προχωρήσει άμεσα στον επαναπατρισμό των κυριαρχικών δικαιωμάτων των κρατών μελών στις αντίστοιχες κυβερνήσεις τους και να ασχοληθεί αποκλειστικά με την εξομάλυνση των οικονομικών ανισοτήτων που δημιούργησε με τις λανθασμένες πολιτικές της. Διαφορετικά, η Ένωση θα καταρρεύσει και η καταστροφή θα έχει ονοματεπώνυμο.

Patricija Šulin (PPE). – Pozdravljam delovni program Evropske komisije za leto 2019.

V Evropski uniji dosegamo zavirljive gospodarske rezultate. Potrebujemo dober dogovor glede večletnega finančnega okvira, ki nam bo omogočil soočanje z izzivi, ki so pred nami.

Migracije in varnost, izzivi svetovne digitalizacije, pogljobljena monetarna Unija, pravičen notranji trg so le ena izmed pomembnih področij. Ne smemo si dovoliti, da bi zmanjšali sredstva za kmetijsko in kohezivsko politiko.

Poleg zaključka pogajanj na številnih področjih ter sprejetja odprtih predlogov, ki so še v obravnavi, ne smemo pozabiti tudi na dolgoročne cilje, kjer moramo nadaljevati z razpravo o prihodnosti Evropske unije, predvsem v luči morebitnih institucionalnih sprememb, ki bodo povezavo okrepili in jo bodo še bolj približali našim državljanom in državljanom.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Doamna președintă, domnule comisar, dragi colegi, trebuie să fim realiști - 2019 este un an scurt și pentru Comisie și pentru noi. Eu cred că prioritățile trebuie să fie foarte clare și au și fost spuse aici, este vorba de Brexit. Trebuie să vedem cum va avea un impact foarte mare – eu sunt raportor pe uniunea vamală – va afecta și uniunea vamală și multe alte regulamente pe care le avem în lucru.

Dar, domnule comisar, eu cred că în fiecare zi trebuie să ne preocupe viitorul Europei și astăzi de dimineață am discutat acest lucru. Cred că este esențial să vedeți cum Comisia găsește alte mijloace, alte instrumente pentru a putea stabili acea încredere a cetățenilor și a statelor membre, să nu mai avem această percepție de state împărțite în două – cetățeni mâna întâia/mâna a doua. Cred că încrederea în viitorul Europei nu începe după 2019, chiar dacă 2019 este un an foarte greu.

Apoi, apărarea comercială. Eu de patru ani vorbesc aici că țările terțe – sigur, avem piață, intrarea produselor – dar nu există o bună verificare și este o concurență neloială, ne-am dezindustrializat.

Și, nu în ultimul rând, aș vrea să spun că este foarte important ce facem cu cadrul financiar multianual. Deci cum facem să fie cea mai bună împărțire?

Marek Jurek (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie i Panowie Posłowie! Panie Pierwszy Wiceprzewodniczący! Komisji Europejskiej w tej kadencji zostało kilka miesięcy pracy, a słyszał Pan, jak wielkie są oczekiwania. Tym bardziej więc trzeba zamykać sprawy niepotrzebne. Mam w pierwszym rządzie na myśli ten wniosek, który Komisja Europejska złożyła przeciwko Polsce. Jak Pan widział, na ostatnim posiedzeniu Rady ds. Ogólnych wypowiadało się wiele państw, ale to nie jest większość potrzebna do stwierdzenia ryzyka, że w Polsce demokracja nie funkcjonuje. Zresztą mieliśmy niedawno wybory samorządowe. Sam mógł je Pan oglądać. Pora tę sprawę nareszcie zamknąć. Jeżeli wierzy Pan w rządy prawa, proszę pozostać w granicach swoich kompetencji. To wynika jasno z zasady podziału władz. Jeżeli wierzy Pan w demokrację, proszę jasno skonkludować, że nie ma większości – powtórzę jeszcze raz – większości wymaganej, bo nie każda większość stanowi większość wymaganą według prawa do tego, żeby tę procedurę kontynuować. I proszę podjąć te sprawy, o które dzisiaj prosiła Izba.

Javi López (S&D). – Señora presidenta, vicepresidente Timmermans, ahora que encaramos el final del mandato, es el momento de poder concretar en forma de normas, presupuesto e instrumentos de políticas públicas una de las mejores ideas que ha impulsado esta Comisión, que es el pilar europeo de derechos sociales.

Tenemos varias herramientas encima de la mesa para poder aprobar la Directiva sobre condiciones de trabajo transparentes y predecibles, para combatir la precariedad y regular las nuevas formas de trabajo; el paquete de conciliación laboral, que es una pieza fundamental para llevar la igualdad de género también al mercado laboral; o la Autoridad Laboral Europea, que tiene que ser un instrumento para combatir los abusos que viven muchos trabajadores europeos.

Estas son algunas de las ideas que hay encima de la mesa, pero también hay viejas ideas, como el seguro de desempleo europeo, que gobiernos nuevos, como el español, están comprometidos a impulsar. Ahora que acabamos el mandato, utilicemos estas herramientas para ganar legitimidad de cara a los ciudadanos europeos en el combate por una Europa social y justa.

Νότης Μαρτιάς (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, οι ευρωπαίοι πολίτες απαιτούν αλλαγή πορείας: εγκατάλειψη της λιτότητας, εγκατάλειψη της βίαιης δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής, έμφαση στην κοινωνική Ευρώπη, στην αλληλεγγύη, στην ενδυνάμωση της εδαφικής και κοινωνικής συνοχής και, ταυτόχρονα, στη λειτουργία των μηχανισμών μετεγκατάστασης σε σχέση με τους πρόσφυγες. Επιπλέον, πρέπει να διαμορφωθεί μια σύγχρονη ευρωπαϊκή βιομηχανική πολιτική. Σε σχέση με την ευρωζώνη, πρέπει να λειτουργήσει ο θεσμός πολύ πιο ευέλικτα, να καταργηθεί το Σύμφωνο Σταθερότητας, να έχουμε ανάκτηση και λειτουργία της δημοσιονομικής κυριαρχίας των κρατών μελών, να μπορούν να εφαρμόσουν αυτά τα οποία πιστεύουν και απαιτούν οι λαοί τους στα θέματα των προϋπολογισμών και, ταυτόχρονα, να εξεταστεί πλέον στο μέλλον η ανάκτηση νομισματικής κυριαρχίας εκ μέρους των κρατών μελών στο πλαίσιο της ευρωζώνης, ούτως ώστε οι δικές τους κεντρικές τράπεζες να ασκούν την κυριαρχία αυτή κατά το ποσοστό συμμετοχής τους στο κεφάλαιο της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας. Με μια πιο ευέλικτη ευρωζώνη μπορούμε να έχουμε απαντήσεις στην οικονομική ανάπτυξη.

(Fin des interventions à la demande)

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, so many subjects were raised by the Members that I can't go into all of them, and they will come back in the committee meetings and in the plenary during the course of the rest of our mandate. But there are a few remarks I would like to make.

First of all, there's no reason to be so gloomy! Look at the Eurobarometer. Our citizens, in a vast majority, believe the European Union is their home and their collective home, and a vast majority believe in the European project. They don't agree, very often, with proposals we make. They don't necessarily like the European Commission, or even the European Parliament, but they do understand that they share a destiny with other Europeans.

Sometimes that feels uncomfortable because we don't know whether we are really fully in control of that destiny. But the very fact, the very basis, that Europeans understand that it is better to solve our differences around a conference table, even if that takes time and it is tedious, rather than to go back to Europe's history of solving differences on the battlefield, is something that is shared by a vast majority of our citizens – even in countries where political forces do their best to rekindle age-old controversies based on nationalism, even in those countries the majority of the population is in favour of the European Union. So please, take some courage from that. That is a good starting position to be in.

And then yes, of course we need to take steps on issues that have been left alone too long. But if we look, for instance, at the migration issue, has that not been solved because European institutions have failed to act or has that not been solved because Member States, very often based on nationalism, did not come together and did not want to compromise? Answer that question! We have nothing to be ashamed of, neither the Commission nor the European Parliament, but put the onus where it belongs.

Do we really think that going back to nation states on their own is going to solve the problem of climate change, is going to find solutions for migration issues, is going to give us the force to negotiate fair trade agreements with big partners in the world like the United States and China? The leader of Mr Flynn, or the de facto leader of Mr Flynn, does not know whom he admires more – Putin or Trump. Are they going to help us decide the fate of Europe, Putin and Trump, or should we be masters of our own fate in Europe? I believe we should be masters of our own fate.

Somebody ridiculed the plastics strategy. I would say, go and watch what science comes up with now! Our oceans are suffocating in plastic. Every human being has microplastics in his/her body. Every single bought bottle of water has microplastics in it. Is it not urgent? Is this not something that more than 80% of Europeans want us to act upon? Is it not a good choice to interdict single plastic use, stuff that is made in a few seconds and stays in our environment for hundreds of years, and for which we have perfectly feasible alternatives that do not pollute our natural environment? Why ridicule that? It is a great change for our society. It is something our citizens want. This is something we need to do and we can do it now.

On the banking union – let's complete the banking union. In my political life, one of the most horrible moments I can remember is in 2008 when I was in national government, when we were told we need to save the banks because they are too big to fail. We could not hold the bankers accountable. We needed to pour billions of taxpayers' money into saving the banks. Do we still want that? No! We never want that to happen again. If that is not to happen again, if banks are to be held accountable themselves for their mistakes, we need a banking union and only the European Union can provide a banking union. There is not a 'concert de nations' that can provide for that.

The same goes for taxation. How fair is it that huge corporations can negotiate with individual Member States so that at the end of the day, they don't pay tax? Should the rule not be that you pay tax where you make profits? The only way we can achieve that, especially against the big tech corporations, is if we are united on this, as Europeans, and not divided. They will play off one Member State against the other.

Please make speed with the changes in company law, because it will help us on the one hand to especially allow small and medium-sized enterprises to act on a European scale, and at the same time we will protect the rights of workers in this so that you cannot use letterbox companies to avoid taking your responsibility towards your workers and towards your other social responsibilities. Let's act on that!

Of course, this is not always the big picture, but these are concrete measures that make the lives of European citizens better day by day.

With all the differences we have across the board here in Parliament, compromise is never a bad thing. Why did we bad-mouth compromise at some point? In a democracy, compromise is a thing of beauty because it brings together a majority to make positive change in this society. This is the force. This is where the force of the European Parliament lies and yes, the SDGs can be a good framework for that.

We can certainly mould Europe along this global picture. This is, I think, something we can do in the future, but for the year to come, let's try and finish a number of the subjects that are still on the table – on fiscal policy, on completing the economic and monetary union, which is urgent. Again, it is not complete. It needs to be completed. But again, solidarity and responsibility go hand in hand. Of course, you can ask solidarity of other Europeans, but then you also have the responsibility to act within the rules in the economic and monetary union. Otherwise, other Europeans will not want to share their destiny with you.

I think on all these subjects, we have so much to do. We have little time, but there is no need to be complacent. There is no need to be fatalistic. We can do this together. With all the political differences we have, the Commission is ready to work with you and the Council to get this done – also dual use, let me insist on that. We salute Parliament's position on that. Hey, Council, now get going! Make sure we can get this done soon.

La Présidente. – Le débat est clos.

13. Afera CumEx – przestępstwo finansowe i luki w obowiązujących ramach prawnych (debata)

La Présidente. – L'ordre du jour appelle le débat sur la déclaration du Conseil et de la Commission sur le scandale des «CumEx Files»: la criminalité financière et les lacunes du cadre juridique actuel (2018/2900(RSP)).

Karoline Edtstadler, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, thank you very much for inviting the Presidency to participate in this debate. Recent emerging media reports have referred to ongoing investigations in relation to the so-called cum-ex trades that reportedly involve tens of billions of euros. At this stage it is our understanding that systematic investigations have been initiated and searches are being conducted at national levels in several Member States on suspicion of tax evasion.

As the Honourable Members are aware, the fight against tax avoidance and aggressive tax planning both at global and EU levels is a priority for the Council and one of the key focuses of its work. The Presidency therefore continues to follow closely all relevant information and developments. So far, we have no indications that there would be any direct link to, or breach of, current EU legislation or rules. No discussion on this issue has, therefore, taken place in the Council and its preparatory bodies at this stage. I will listen attentively to your debate and as I said, we will follow the developments closely.

Pierre Moscovici, Membre de la Commission. – Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, merci d'avoir organisé ce débat si rapidement.

Encore une fois, grâce au travail des journalistes – que je veux saluer – un nouveau scandale fiscal est révélé qui vient montrer que pour réduire leurs impôts les contribuables les plus riches et les plus puissants ne manquent pas d'imagination et se moquent bien de la solidarité, de l'éthique et parfois de la légalité. Les schémas de fraudes qui ont été révélés sont choquants et même insupportables.

Ils sont choquants parce qu'ils impliquent certaines banques qui ont abusé des trésors publics au plus fort de la crise, alors que des sommes considérables d'argent public venaient d'être injectées pour sauver le secteur bancaire.

Insupportables, car ce sont des recettes en moins pour les États membres et donc aussi des investissements en moins et des impôts en plus pour les entreprises et les citoyens qui respectent les règles du jeu, donc ce n'est pas admissible, bien sûr.

Que nous dit ce nouveau scandale – un de plus? Que par le passé, les règles concernant l'échange d'informations auraient pu et dû être plus efficaces, mais surtout plus respectées. Il faut rappeler qu'au moment des faits, ces échanges étaient dits «spontanés», c'est-à-dire laissés à l'appréciation des États et ces règles n'ont pas permis – force est de le constater – d'empêcher des comportements frauduleux. Elles n'ont pas permis d'empêcher que ces flux se déplacent d'un État membre vers les autres.

Or, depuis 2014, cette Commission – et je suis fier d'y avoir contribué à ma place de commissaire à la fiscalité – a engagé ce que j'ai appelé «la révolution de la transparence», en suivant un principe extrêmement simple qui est de renforcer et même de systématiser la coopération et les échanges d'informations entre les États membres. L'échange d'informations, c'est vraiment le concept clé qui nous a fait changer, je crois, d'époque.

Ainsi, la directive sur la coopération administrative a été considérablement étendue. Elle inclut désormais l'échange automatique obligatoire d'informations dans de nombreux cas. C'est vrai que l'information détenue par certains États membres est indispensable à d'autres, par exemple sur les comptes financiers – c'est la fin du secret bancaire –, sur les décisions fiscales rendues par les États membres, sur les informations pays par pays – ce sont les fameuses décisions sur les *tax ruling* – ou sur le CBCR (Country-by-Country reporting), dont je continue de penser qu'il doit être public, et enfin, sur le partage d'informations entre les autorités fiscales nationales et les autorités anti-blanchiment.

Plus récemment, cette directive a été complétée par de nouvelles dispositions en matière de déclaration pour les intermédiaires fiscaux; vous l'avez votée et je vous en remercie. Son entrée en vigueur est prévue pour l'année prochaine. Elle va tout changer parce qu'elle obligera ces intermédiaires – des banquiers, des avocats, des conseillers juridiques ou fiscaux – à déclarer les montages fiscaux abusifs ou agressifs qu'ils vendent à leurs clients.

J'appelle les États membres à utiliser désormais ces outils qui sont à leur disposition pour coopérer, pour échanger des informations plus vite. La vitesse, précisément, est essentielle pour éviter que ce genre de schéma agressif ne se propage entre États membres.

Les révélations de la semaine dernière démontrent, une fois de plus, que ces questions de justice fiscale intéressent au plus haut point le grand public. Elles sont même maintenant tout en haut des priorités de nos opinions et c'est la raison pour laquelle j'invite le Parlement et le Conseil à adopter rapidement nos propositions sur les rapports pays par pays publics et sur la protection des lanceurs d'alerte.

Au-delà du renforcement de la coopération avec les administrations fiscales, cette Commission a systématiquement proposé aux États membres, comme vous le savez, une approche collective ambitieuse – et là, le Parlement et la Commission se sont toujours trouvés côte à côte – par la définition d'une assiette commune pour l'impôt sur les sociétés. Les progrès sur ce dossier sont réels et ils doivent aboutir, parce qu'une assiette harmonisée réduirait considérablement les possibilités de fraude fiscale par une meilleure prise en compte des activités numériques. Et je pense qu'une réponse européenne est seule à même d'entraîner le reste de la communauté internationale dans une réforme sérieuse du cadre légal, par l'adoption d'une liste commune de paradis fiscaux, qui nous a donné suffisamment de poids pour obtenir, je le crois, toute une série de réformes qui permettent de progresser dans la lutte contre les régimes fiscaux dommageables à travers le monde.

Nous avons aussi proposé aux États membres de négocier certains aspects des traités de prévention de double imposition au niveau européen lors des accords FATCA (Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act) avec les États-Unis. Certains États membres n'étaient pas «mûrs» pour une telle approche coordonnée et il est peut-être temps – ce n'est pas un testament, c'est une proposition – de relancer cette idée.

Voilà, Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, tout n'est pas encore réglé, tout n'est pas encore mis en place, mais s'agissant précisément de ce qui est soulevé par ce scandale, il se trouve que des progrès significatifs ont été accomplis, même si je ne peux pas dire que tout ce que nous avons décidé ensemble est de nature à rendre impossible un tel scandale. Mais je peux dire avec beaucoup de confiance que ce serait beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup plus difficile si les administrations fiscales remplissent les dispositions légales auxquelles elles sont maintenant tenues. Lorsque toutes ces législations seront mises en œuvre, il sera, je crois, beaucoup plus compliqué de faire ce type d'optimisation et de fraude fiscales en Europe et vous pouvez compter sur ma détermination et sur celle de la Commission pour s'en assurer.

Je crois aussi, comme toujours, qu'il faut se tourner vers les États membres parce que c'est à eux de faire respecter ces dispositions davantage que ne l'avaient été celles qui portaient sur l'échange d'informations spontanées à l'époque. Maintenant le spontané est automatique et donc obligatoire. Je compte vraiment sur les États membres, c'est la moindre des choses, pour se conformer à leurs obligations.

Markus Ferber, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Cum-Ex-Betrugsgeschäfte verlaufen nach einem Muster, das uns eigentlich sehr bekannt vorkommen muss. Es wird ein Steuerschlupfloch identifiziert, das problematisch ist und das umso leichter zu nutzen ist, je schlechter Steuerbehörden kommunizieren. Deswegen brauchen wir auch für die Kapitalertragsteuer und die Quellensteuer einen automatischen Informationsaustausch, wie wir ihn bereits – der Kommissar hat es angedeutet – bei der Körperschaftsteuer haben.

Ich hatte der Kommission schon im Frühjahr dieses Jahres vorgeschlagen, den bestehenden Mechanismus auf die Kapitalertragsteuer beziehungsweise die Quellensteuer auszudehnen. In der Antwort, die ich von Ihnen, Herr Kommissar, in einem Schreiben vom 5. Oktober dieses Jahres bekommen habe – es ist noch nicht sehr lange her –, schreiben Sie mir: „Dennoch kann ich feststellen, dass die durchgeführte Analyse keine Erweiterung des Geltungsbereichs der Steuersysteme für den automatischen Informationsaustausch rechtfertigt.“ Keine drei Wochen ist es her, dass Sie mir das geschrieben haben. Ich weiß nicht, was Sie analysiert haben, aber der Cum-Ex-Skandal rechtfertigt definitiv eine Ausdehnung des automatischen Informationsaustausches. Sie haben es ja selber gesagt, dann machen Sie es bitte auch!

Was ich hier feststelle, ist ja nicht nur, dass Probleme nicht erkannt werden. Schlimmer ist es, wenn man sich weigert, an der Lösung des Problems mitzuarbeiten. Das ist aber genau das, was Sie mir geschrieben haben. Mit dieser Haltung wiederholt die Kommission die Fehler, die auch in der Vergangenheit dafür gesorgt haben, dass multinationale Konzerne jahrelang die Körperschaftsteuersysteme der Mitgliedstaaten gegeneinander ausspielen konnten. Die Lernkurve der Kommission ist sehr, sehr flach.

Pervenche Berès, *au nom du groupe S&D*. – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire, il s'agit d'un débat exceptionnel pour un scandale fiscal qui, malheureusement, n'est pas exceptionnel.

Après l'évasion dans les paradis fiscaux, nous voici confrontés à une fraude de banques réclamant au fisc le remboursement d'impôts jamais payés.

Derrière tout cela, il faut peut-être engager de nouvelles réformes structurelles qui permettraient de surveiller la façon dont, dans certains États membres, des crédits d'impôts sur les dividendes sont distribués et sont à la base de cette fraude. Et puis, pourquoi ne pas l'admettre, la véritable transaction financière sur les opérations de haute fréquence aurait sans doute permis d'aller de l'avant contre une telle fraude, contre la manipulation des droits du titre dont on voit bien, ici aussi, un des impacts.

L'échange d'informations entre les administrations fiscales nationales est essentiel, vous l'avez dit, mais nous disons aussi que ces fraudes sont opérées au niveau européen. Nous devons donc y apporter une solution européenne. Il appartient aussi aux autorités de supervision européennes de trouver, conformément à leur mandat, les moyens d'agir dans ce domaine. C'est dans cet esprit que ce Parlement est déterminé à agir d'ici la fin de son mandat.

Petr Ježek, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, here we are once again discussing another unacceptable tax evasion scandal affecting a large number of countries. Even more damning is the fact that the German authorities stopped cum-ex trading in 2012 only for it to have reared its head again in Germany and other Member States. The role of the banking industry in facilitating this large-scale tax fraud emphasises the need to hold tax administrations, banks and others responsible to account.

The question is, why are the authorities not doing more to prevent this form of illegal tax evasion? And how is it that, every time these scandals are uncovered, it is left to investigative journalists to do all the work?

In the TAX3 Committee, we will pay the utmost attention to these revelations and continue to work to find solutions to ensure effective legislation, efficient implementation and robust enforcement of rules across the EU. In this latest scandal, it is estimated that taxpayers were swindled out of EUR 55 billion. This has to stop. Hard-working people are seeing their money disappear into black holes due to a combination of unscrupulous individuals and, at times, the incompetence of enforcement authorities. Citizens deserve better.

Sven Giegold, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Dieser Skandal ist aus doppelter Sicht unerträglich. Er ist unerträglich, weil es hier um sehr, sehr hohe finanzielle Verluste geht – mindestens 55 Mrd. Euro für die europäischen Steuerzahler, vermutlich noch viel mehr, ein Teil davon Betrug, ein anderer Teil vermutlich Steuervermeidung – und auch unerträglich, weil die Akteure, die hier die Integrität der europäischen Finanzmärkte aufs Spiel setzen, die Gleichen sind, die mit milliardenschweren Summen gerettet wurden, die öffentlich immer wieder erklärt haben, sie hätten jetzt verstanden und würden auf der Basis von Ethik handeln.

Deshalb ist dieser Steuerskandal in dieser Kombination ein echter Angriff auf die soziale Marktwirtschaft. Lieber Herr Kommissar und liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Bürgerinnen und Bürger werden dem nicht mehr lange zusehen. Die werden irgendwann in noch größerer Zahl in die Hände von Populisten laufen, wenn sie nicht das Gefühl haben, dass der Staat, die Europäische Union, in der Lage ist, solchen Machenschaften wirklich das Handwerk zu legen.

Deshalb – Herr Kommissar und auch an den Rat – bitte ich, dass wir jetzt wirklich alle Maßnahmen ergreifen, die wir haben. Die europäischen Finanzaufsichtsbehörden können von uns genauso wie von Ihnen, Herr Kommissar, aufgefordert werden, nach Artikel 22 der Verordnung der Aufsichtsbehörden eine europäische Sonderuntersuchung einzuleiten. Auf der Basis dieser Untersuchung muss festgestellt werden: Welche Institute waren beteiligt, mit welchen Summen haben die gearbeitet, auf der Basis welcher Lizenzen? Da muss es Konsequenzen geben.

Im Übrigen schließe ich mich ausdrücklich der Forderung des Kollegen Ferber an, dass der automatische Informationsaustausch ausgeweitet wird auf die Kapitalertragsteuer. Herr Moscovici, ich hoffe, Sie werden diese beiden Dinge machen. Legen Sie diese Vorschläge vor!

Im Übrigen wäre es gut, wenn wir dann entsprechend andere Antworten bekommen als bisher, nämlich dass die EU-Kommission im Schreiben an das Journalistenkonsortium gesagt hat, sie sei nicht zuständig, das sei nationale Aufgabe. Nein, das ist eine europäische Aufgabe, Herr Kommissar.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης, *εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL*. – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κύριοι του Συμβουλίου και της Κομισιόν, το σκάνδαλο Cum Ex είναι ο ορισμός του οικονομικού εγκλήματος. Τουλάχιστον 55 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ εκλάπησαν από το δημόσιο ταμείο από 11 τουλάχιστον κράτη μέλη. Ζήτησα χθες να κάνουμε τη συζήτηση αυτή επειγόντως στην ολομέλεια, γιατί για μια ακόμη φορά, κύριε Μοσκοβισί, οι ευρωπαϊκοί εποπτικοί μηχανισμοί πιάστηκαν στον ύπνο. Μετά τα Panama Papers και τα Paradise Papers, ένα ακόμη σκάνδαλο αποκαλύπτεται, όχι από τους ευρωπαϊκούς ελεγκτικούς μηχανισμούς, όχι από τους αρμόδιους θεσμούς, αλλά από τους whistleblowers και αυτή η παταγώδης αποτυχία, αυτό το φιάσκο, αλλά και η ένοχη πολιτική σιωπή που το συνοδεύει – όσα μας είπε το Συμβούλιο ένα μνημείο υποκρισίας και ένοχης πολιτικής σιωπής – δηλητηριάζει τη δημοκρατία και επιβαρύνει όλους τους πολίτες. Τι μας είπε το Συμβούλιο: «δεν το έχουμε συζητήσει μέχρι τώρα, δεν έχουμε δει τίποτα παράνομο». Αλήθεια; Έτσι απαντάτε στους πολίτες όταν αποκαλύπτεται ότι εκλάπησαν 55 δισεκατομμύρια ευρώ; Και ποιοι τα πλήρωσαν αυτά; Οι έντιμοι φορολογούμενοι, το δημόσιο ταμείο, το κοινωνικό κράτος, οι μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις. Χρειαζόμαστε, λοιπόν, κοινή ευρωπαϊκή απάντηση που να κλείνει όλες τις τρύπες της νομοθεσίας, αυτόματη ανταλλαγή πληροφοριών, ισχυρότερα εργαλεία και κυρώσεις. Ολοκληρώνω, κύριε Πρόεδρε, η πολιτική σιωπή και απραξία συνιστά συννεοχή, γιατί αυτή η κραυγαλέα αδικία δηλητηριάζει τη δημοκρατία.

PRZEWODNICTWO: ZDZISŁAW KRASNODEŃSKI*Wiceprzewodniczący*

Marco Valli, *a nome del gruppo EFDD*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, siamo di fronte a un altro grandissimo scandalo, paragonabile quasi a quello di qualche anno fa relativo alla frode Euribor causata alla società da parte di grandissime banche d'affari, le famose *too big to fail*, che abbiamo salvato con tanto denaro pubblico, come hanno detto anche altri colleghi qui, e molto spesso sono loro, in virtù di questa loro grandezza, a dettare le regole.

Ecco, la politica e l'Europa soprattutto, l'Unione europea, devono reagire fortemente su questo tema partendo da una più dura legislazione sullo scambio di informazioni, perché è impossibile che queste banche continuino a fare delle pratiche sia fraudolente che pseudolegali nella gestione delle loro pratiche fiscali, e su questo bisogna fare chiarezza. Per fare chiarezza l'unico modo è quello di fare trasparenza e per fare trasparenza serve un maggiore scambio di informazioni.

Su questo tema il mio movimento, il mio governo e il mio paese sono d'accordo nel fare di più.

Dariusz Rosati (PPE). – Mr President, so here we are again with another tax scandal on the agenda. After Panama, Bahama, Paradise football leagues and other revelations, we have a cum-ex scam that cost EU Member States almost EUR 50 billion. A network of equity traders, tax advisers, bankers, lawyers and investors has conspired to remove – or should I say steal – this amount of money from Member States' tax coffers. The cum-ex scheme had only one purpose: to grab tax reimbursement from the state – but for tax that had never been paid. The modalities are now very well known. We are all shocked by the amount of this monumental theft.

Mr President, we should be grateful to the group of journalists from Panorama and *die Zeit* for uncovering this malpractice. But should I ask: what about the law enforcement institutions? Where have they been when these criminal activities were taking place, and why was this kind of swindle at all possible in the EU in the first place? I am calling on this Parliament and on the Commission to take immediate steps in order to eliminate these malpractices.

Jeppe Kofod (S&D). – Mr President, I have to say, this cum-ex scandal is a true scandal of how you can do a robbery against our population, against our state coffers. Taxes that people have paid out of their hard work were stolen by people working in the biggest banks in Europe – lawyers, accountants, advisors. To me, this shows that we need really to do much more in Europe.

I want to use an example from this scandal. Germany already discovered, in 2012, that there was a cum-ex scandal. They even started to arrest people. But they didn't warn the other Member States on the list that they found among these fraudsters. They didn't warn Denmark, France and the other countries that they were the next in line. And now we have a bill of at least more than EUR 50 billion stolen from the population.

So what we need in the EU is a 112 number – an emergency number you can call when you see fraud in your Member State and have tax authorities and the police working together in a coordinated fashion, assisting Member States and stopping these fraudsters once and for all.

Martin Schirdewan (GUE/NGL). – Herr Präsident! Die europäischen Bürger sind es leid, dass die Staaten von betrügerischen Bänkern ihrer Steuereinnahmen beraubt werden. Die europäischen Bürger sind es aber ebenso leid, dass die Politik anscheinend machtlos danebensteht.

Diesmal handelt es sich also um 55 Mrd. Euro, die durch betrügerische Geschäfte in elf europäischen Staaten aus den öffentlichen Steuereinnahmen geraubt wurden. Diese 55 Mrd. fehlen in Kindergärten, in Schulen, in der Forschung und Entwicklung, aber auch in den sozialen Sicherheitssystemen. Das nenne ich Diebstahl an der Gesellschaft.

Skandalös bei dem neuerlichen Cum-Ex-Skandal ist auch, dass die deutsche Bundesregierung von diesen Vorgängen seit 2002 wusste, ihre Partner aber erst 2015 informiert haben soll. Dem Steuerdiebstahl durch Banker jahrelang zuzusehen, gleichzeitig aber einen knallharten Spar- und Kürzungspolitikkurs in Europa durchzusetzen, das ist mal ein sehr dialektisches Verhältnis zur europäischen Partnerschaft.

Unterbinden wir diese kriminellen und unmoralischen Geschäfte ein für alle Mal! Unterbinden wir steuergetriebene Aktiengeschäfte und schützen wir die Staatshaushalte vor den Gangstern in Nadelstreifen! Das erwarten die europäischen Bürger von uns.

Luděk Niedermayer (PPE). – Mr President, the tax system we are now using is maybe well suited for the middle of the last century. Since then the world has changed. It is smaller, it is quicker and it is virtual to some extent. States even now are slow to react to this situation. At best we are filling the holes and sometimes creating new ones. The cum-ex scandal is about sophisticated greedy people, about the bankers and the lawyers, and about victory over tax authorities equipped only with the data and sometimes slow. It is a very sad story and billions were lost. I hope this will finally help us to team up together and start to trim the tax system so that it reflects the reality of the 21st century. If not, our economy will be harmed and public confidence will be lost.

Evelyn Regner (S&D). – Herr Präsident, sehr geehrte Frau Staatssekretärin, sehr geehrter Herr Kommissar! Wir brauchen ein europäisches FBI gegen Finanzkriminalität. Wir brauchen eine europäische Lösung. Mehr Transparenz, ja, aber wir brauchen auch eine nationale Antwort, nämlich mehr Prüfer, mehr Unternehmenssteuerprüfer national. Vielfach haben nämlich sehr viele Staaten begonnen, hier ein bisschen schleißig zu werden und lasch zu werden und hier Personal abzubauen, statt es zu verstärken. Also mehr Rechtsregeln, aber vor allem auch mehr Umsetzung.

Ich muss zugeben, ich bin wirklich schockiert. Wir sind ja schon einiges gewohnt nach dem Panama-Untersuchungsausschuss und nach all den anderen Ausschüssen. Aber das ist noch einmal mehr oder weniger besonders heftiger Tobak. Es ist ein regelrechter Steuerraubskandal, Kriminalität in Nadelstreifen. Ich möchte ein kurzes Zitat von einer Sitzung der Cum-Ex-Spezialisten vorlesen: „Wer sich nicht damit identifizieren kann, dass weniger Kindergärten gebaut werden, weil wir solche Geschäfte machen, der ist hier falsch.“ Also, das ist dermaßen krank, dass wir als Gesetzgeber, dass der Rat, dass die Kommission gefordert sind, hier wesentlich engagierter und weitsichtiger zu sein. Also, ein europäisches FBI wäre angebracht.

Miguel Urbán Crespo (GUE/NGL). – Señor presidente, en la economía de casino hay un dicho que dice que «la banca siempre gana». Desgraciadamente, parece que sea este el lema actual de la Unión Europea. ¿Cuánto tiempo vamos a tardar en pararle los pies a los bancos? Estamos viendo un auténtico fraude a la democracia.

En España, el Tribunal Supremo ha suspendido su propia sentencia, que obligaba a pagar a los bancos el impuesto sobre las hipotecas, aduciendo las graves consecuencias económicas y sociales que esto podía generar. ¿Atienden los bancos a las consecuencias sociales cuando saquean miles de millones de euros de las arcas públicas? ¿Cuando organizan sus cuentas para no declarar beneficios y no pagar impuestos? ¿Cuando desalojan a las familias de sus casas?

No podemos seguir permitiéndolo, señorías. A quien defrauda sistemáticamente a los ciudadanos se les debe retirar la licencia bancaria. El crédito debe pasar a ser un servicio público, con una banca bajo control social. Es el momento de poner normas para que esta vez, de una vez, quien gane sea la gente.

Othmar Karas (PPE). – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, Frau Ratspräsidentin, meine Damen und Herren! Ja, es ist ein Skandal – wir kommen gar nicht mehr nach, in jeder Parlamentsdebatte einen neuen Steuerbetrug zu überprüfen, neu zu klären, zu überlegen, welcher Ausschuss – zum Glück haben wir den TAX-Ausschuss – diese *files* wieder betrachten soll.

Es handelt sich zweifelsohne um den größten Steuerbetrugsfall in der Geschichte. Elf Länder sind involviert. Um über 55 Mrd. Euro an Steuerzahlergeld wurde betrogen, wurde wieder weiterüberwiesen. Wir fordern daher sehr klar, dass auf der Basis einer umfassenden unabhängigen und grenzüberschreitenden Untersuchung alle Verantwortlichen zur Rechenschaft gezogen werden, dass alle Lücken und Unklarheiten innerhalb der nationalen Systeme beseitigt werden und die Kontrolle verschärft wird, dass die bestehenden europäischen Regelungen zum Informationsaustausch endlich auf die Kapitalertragsteuer ausgeweitet werden und dass es scharfe, abschreckende Sanktionsmechanismen gibt.

Wir müssen handeln, konkret handeln, nicht nur untersuchen und den Steuerbetrü gern nachlaufen.

Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL). – Senhor Presidente, este escândalo do Cum Ex, mais um, é absolutamente intolerável. São 55 mil milhões de euros que foram sonogados à administração pública e aos Estados nacionais, ou seja, ao mesmo tempo que os Estados nacionais caíam impiedosamente sobre os contribuintes com uma gigantesca carga de impostos para recapitalizar a banca, esta mesma banca engendrou esquemas de evasão fiscal com esta técnica de compra e recompra de ações para fugir ao pagamento de impostos sobre dividendos.

Este escândalo revela, mais uma vez, que um sério combate à fraude e evasão fiscal implica questionar, pôr em causa, duas vacas sagradas desta União Europeia: a banca privada que tem de ser controlada publicamente e a total liberalização do trânsito de capitais que tem de ser controlada.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski (PPE). – Jestem członkiem Komisji ds. Terroryzmu i muszę powiedzieć, że kwestie finansowe zajmują nam najwięcej czasu. Kwestie związane przede wszystkim z finansowaniem różnego rodzaju działań niezgodnych z prawem, zagrażających bezpieczeństwu obywateli Europy. Wśród nich są różne elementy. Są elementy tych dużych nominałów euro – 500 euro – banknotów nazywanych popularnie bin Ladenami, ale także oszustwa podatkowe, te o których mówimy przy tej okazji. Uważam, że wrażliwość instytucji europejskich w tej materii jest absolutnie niewystarczająca. Że bez względu na to, czy mówimy o takiej aferze czy o Vacie czy mówimy o podatkach szczególnych czy wyprowadzaniu środków finansowych z państw, gdzie są wypracowywane określone dobra, na przykład na Cypr czy do rajów podatkowych, jesteśmy cały czas nieskuteczni i – podkreślam – spóźnieni wobec różnych grup przestępczych. To absolutnie musi ulec zmianie.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, stimai colegi, cred că trebuie să mulțumim presei, pentru că multe din nereguli le descoperă presa și nu instituțiile abilitate. Domnule comisar, fraudă de zeci de miliarde lipsește din bugetul statelor membre, din bugetul Uniunii Europene și de la cetățeni, până la urmă. Ce își propune Comisia? Pentru că, câteodată Comisia stă și numără anumite acte legislative dintr-un singur stat și nu se concentrează pe piața internă, pe a fotografia ce se întâmplă în întreaga piață internă, în întreaga Uniune Europeană, pentru că evaziunea fiscală este transfrontalieră, sunt mecanisme foarte bine puse la punct. Și, deși avem Europol și foarte multe alte agenții de securitate și de verificare, nu se întâmplă nimic. Eu aș vrea să înțeleg în răspunsul dumneavoastră, domnule comisar, ce vă propuneți concret acum, pe această situație concretă – evaziune de peste 50 de miliarde – și ce mecanisme veți folosi în viitor să nu mai apară, să prevenim aceste lucruri.

Νότης Μαρτιάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, μετά τα Panama Papers, άλλο ένα σκάνδαλο, το σκάνδαλο Cum Ex. Σκάνδαλο φοροδιαφυγής, φοροαποφυγής, κλοπή 55 δισεκατομμυρίων ευρώ από τα δημόσια ταμεία. Δεν πλήρωσαν φόρους εύποροι φορολογούμενοι, μεγαλοεπενδυτές, μεγάλες τράπεζες, τράπεζες οι οποίες διασώθηκαν με τα χρήματα των φορολογουμένων στους οποίους οι κυβερνήσεις επέβαλλαν φόρους προκειμένου να σώσουν τις τράπεζες. Είχαμε βραχυχρόνια μεταβίβαση τίτλων, προκειμένου να υπάρχουν φορολογικές ελαφρύνσεις επί των μερισμάτων. Τα μέτρα που απαιτούνται να ληφθούν είναι οπωσδήποτε διαφάνεια, ανταλλαγή στοιχείων σε ευρωπαϊκό επίπεδο, και κυρίως η θεσμοθέτηση μιας ευρωπαϊκής Glass-Steagall Act για τον διαχωρισμό των εμπορικών δραστηριοτήτων των τραπεζών από τις επενδυτικές δραστηριότητες, διότι μόνο με μια νέα ευρωπαϊκή Glass-Steagall Act μπορούμε να περιορίσουμε τις απάτες τέτοιου τύπου.

Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE). – Señor presidente, un escándalo más que se añade a los muchos que han salido. Este es gordo: de aproximadamente 55 000 millones de euros de fraude a los Ministerios de Hacienda. No puede ser considerado una cuestión de fraude exclusivamente nacional porque hay claramente elementos transfronterizos; y es especialmente escandaloso porque ese se produjo en plena época de austeridad en Europa y se siguieron produciendo otros incluso después de los grandes escándalos financieros de 2007 y 2008: bancos que reclamaban la devolución de impuestos que jamás habían pagado. Esto es totalmente intolerable.

Entonces, tenemos que ver cómo afrontamos eso a nivel europeo, porque uno de los grandes problemas es que los Ministerios de Hacienda nacionales no se coordinan lo suficiente para dar una respuesta a este fenómeno. Por lo tanto, el intercambio automático de información es imprescindible, la revisión de las Directivas sobre cooperación administrativa es imprescindible y —como señalaba mi colega Sven Giegold— se debe recurrir al artículo 22 del Reglamento relativo a la Autoridad Europea de Supervisión para así iniciar una investigación paneuropea sobre este crimen financiero.

Marek Jurek (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący, Panie i Panowie Posłowie! Przed chwilą takie elegijne na temat ostatnich planów przemówienie wygłaszał przewodniczący Timmermans. A ja mam znowu *déjà vu*, jak słucham naszej dzisiejszej debaty. Przypomina mi się początek naszej kadencji – afera luksemburska, wtedy też mówiliśmy o tym, jak państwo państwom wyciąga pieniądze z budżetu. I naprawdę zastanówmy się wszyscy, czy nasza ówczesna tolerancja nie jest przyczyną tego, że dzisiaj o podobnym temacie musimy rozmawiać. To wcale nie jest temat nowy. To po pierwsze, dlatego, że o CumEx pisano już wiele, wiele miesięcy, a nawet więcej temu. Po drugie, to nie jest tylko sprawa skrzywdzonych ludzi, ograniczonych funkcji budżetowych państwa, ale to jest sprawa funkcjonowania samej demokracji. Dlatego, że instytut Lobby Control, prestiżowy instytut niemiecki, pisał o tym, w jaki sposób wyglądały zaniechania państwa niemieckiego w stosunku do walki z takimi rzeczami. Więc naprawdę – jak szukamy miejsc, gdzie źle funkcjonuje demokracja, to najlepiej zaczniemy od góry.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Pierre Moscovici, Membre de la Commission. – Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, vos échanges de cet après-midi montrent que nous partageons tous trois sentiments.

D'abord, une indignation légitime face à ces nouvelles révélations. Ce sont des pratiques – plusieurs l'ont dit – intolérables qui doivent absolument cesser.

Ensuite, une reconnaissance sincère et profonde envers les journalistes. C'est une preuve de plus que la presse d'investigation est un pilier essentiel d'une démocratie réelle et vivante et c'est le rappel que personne ne doit s'attaquer, en quoi que ce soit, à la liberté de la presse.

Enfin, notre détermination commune à agir, c'est aussi une manière de rendre hommage au travail de ces journalistes. À ce propos, permettez-moi de corriger ce qui peut apparaître comme une fausse impression: non, la répétition des scandales n'est pas le signe de notre impuissance. Il y a toujours un décalage temporel entre ce qui est révélé et l'état du droit. L'action commune que nous menons de façon continue ces dernières années n'est pas vaine, mais c'est la course perpétuelle. C'est une vieille histoire entre le gendarme et le voleur. Notre combat contre la fraude fiscale ne sera en vérité jamais fini car comme je l'ai dit, l'imagination des fraudeurs est sans limite et les possibilités offertes par la technologie doivent aussi être explorées.

Ces révélations montrent ainsi que les fraudeurs ont su parfaitement tirer profit des législations qui diffèrent entre les États, du manque d'information entre eux et des dispositions spécifiques des conventions bilatérales. À partir de ce moment-là, les enseignements que nous devons en tirer, nous les décidons politiques publics, c'est qu'il faut tout simplement en finir avec les approches purement nationales, parcellaires, car cela ne fonctionne pas. Nous sommes face à des mécanismes internationaux, européens et la réponse doit être évidemment internationale et européenne.

Je tiens à préciser que nous avons maintenant en place des règles et des outils qui permettent aux États d'alerter leurs homologues en cas de fraude. Ce n'est d'ailleurs pas une question de moyens, c'est une question de volonté et d'attitude. Les États membres doivent comprendre que l'administration fiscale est un espace de plus en plus européenisé. Je veillerai à ce que ce message soit transmis aux chefs des administrations fiscales lors de leur prochaine réunion à Bruxelles. J'ai déjà eu souvent l'occasion de le dire dans cette enceinte: pour être réelle, la souveraineté fiscale doit être exercée en commun, au niveau européen, sinon nous sommes démunis face à ces phénomènes qui sont pour beaucoup des phénomènes transfrontaliers.

Je sais que ce changement de paradigme est difficile pour tous, à commencer par les États membres, surtout en matière de fiscalité car ils considèrent – on le sait – que c'est un des attributs essentiels de leur pouvoir régalién. Mais il ne s'agit pas de renoncer à cette souveraineté, il s'agit de l'exercer en commun au niveau européen pour œuvrer en faveur de l'intérêt général de l'Union européenne. Il s'agit de décider d'une approche collective qui est la seule qui soit à même d'offrir une réponse à la hauteur de l'ingéniosité, encore une fois très grande, des fraudeurs. Avec une politique fiscale coordonnée, finis les trous dans nos législations fiscales et finies, donc, les opportunités de fraude. C'est bien cette idée que je porterai quand je présenterai en début d'année prochaine des propositions pour le passage à la majorité qualifiée en matière fiscale. Il est plus que temps d'engager le débat avec les États membres.

Plusieurs questions m'ont été adressées sur la possibilité d'étendre l'échange d'informations automatique aux dividendes. Je pense en effet que c'est une perspective qui mérite d'être explorée. Reconnaissons toutefois qu'à ce stade où nous sommes de votre mandat au Parlement européen et du nôtre à la Commission, c'est quelque chose qui devra être creusé davantage dans le temps. Mais je veux vous dire que nous avons déjà beaucoup étendu cet échange d'informations, que beaucoup d'États membres n'utilisent pas les informations qu'ils reçoivent des autres États et qu'il est important, voire fondamental de mettre en place ce qui est déjà adopté. Je ne renie pas les responsabilités de la Commission, et à la fois le travail du Parlement, le travail des journalistes, le changement d'esprit sur la scène internationale, nous ont donné ensemble de formidables opportunités pour avancer. Mais tout de même, je le dis, notamment à M. Giegold, j'en appelle encore et toujours aux États membres. Leur responsabilité dans la mise en œuvre de ce que nous avons décidé, y compris dans l'achèvement de ce qui est déjà proposé – comme le projet ACCIS (assiette commune consolidée pour l'impôt des sociétés) ou la fiscalité du numérique – est absolument majeure. Majorité qualifiée ou pas, ils ont une responsabilité. À nous, institutions qui incarnons l'intérêt général, de le leur rappeler, et je le fais au Conseil. J'espère que sous la présidence autrichienne, qui est très active sur ces sujets, notamment sur l'ACCIS et sur la fiscalité du numérique, nous aurons de derniers résultats au cours de ce semestre, parce qu'ensuite il sera trop tard. Donc, j'encourage la présidence autrichienne à continuer ses efforts pour que nous puissions marquer ces progrès tant attendus par vous, Mesdames et Messieurs les parlementaires, mais en réalité, surtout par les citoyens européens.

Karoline Edtstadler, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, I have listened carefully to your comments and to the concerns raised. And yes, you are completely right. We are aware of the seriousness of the affair, its possible repercussions and the financial impacts for the institutions involved. I can only second what the Commissioner said and confirm that the Presidency stands ready to look further into the issue. And thank you, Commissioner, for the encouragement. We are really doing a lot and trying our utmost to reach good results under our Presidency on all points, not least in the matter that you have mentioned.

Przewodniczący. – Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się podczas jednej z kolejnych sesji miesięcznych.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 162)

Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL), *por escrito*. – Este escândalo do CumEx, mais um, é a todos os títulos intolerável. Foram 55 mil milhões de euros sonegados às administrações fiscais entre 2012 e 2015. Ou seja, ao mesmo que os governos da UE caíam de forma impiedosa sobre os contribuintes para recapitalizar a banca, esta mesma banca andava a criar esquemas de evasão fiscal com trocas de ações com não residentes, por forma a evitar a tributação dos dividendos. Este caso revela, mais uma vez, o que defendemos há muito. Um verdadeiro combate à fraude e evasão fiscal implica forçosamente questionar e mexer em duas vacas sagradas desta união Europeia: o sistema financeiro e a livre circulação de capitais. Neste sentido, o controlo público sobre a banca e controlo sobre os movimentos de capitais assume, hoje, plena atualidade.

14. Zabójstwo saudyjskiego dziennikarza Jamala Khashoggiiego w konsulacie Arabii Saudyjskiej w Stambule (debata)

Przewodniczący. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest oświadczenie wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji / wysokiej przedstawiciel Unii do spraw zagranicznych i polityki bezpieczeństwa w sprawie zabójstwa saudyjskiego dziennikarza Jamala Khashoggiiego w konsulacie Arabii Saudyjskiej w Stambule (2018/2885(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. – Mr President, I would like to thank all the honourable Members for having decided to put this issue on the agenda of your plenary today. I think it is extremely important for Parliament to have its voice heard on this.

Let me start by saying something basic and very clear that I think we have to start from, namely that a crime against one journalist, wherever in the world, is a crime against freedom of speech and freedom of information. As such, I would say it is a crime against our societies everywhere in the world, our way of life, in particular in Europe, our principles and our values. It's a crime against all of us.

Three weeks after the disappearance of Jamal Khashoggi, we now know that he was killed in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. Saudi Arabia has now arrested a number of officials in connection with the case, yet too many details about what happened to the journalist are still missing. The confirmation of his death is a first step towards the truth and towards accountability, but the explanations offered so far by the Saudi authorities leave many doubts and many unanswered questions.

From day one, we have been asking Saudi Arabia to shed light on the events of 2 October through a full, credible, transparent and prompt investigation. We expect the Saudi institutions to provide all the information they have about the case and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. Last week, the Foreign Affairs Council – all 28 - Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States – agreed to demand, united, a credible and transparent investigation. Together with the Foreign Ministers of the countries of the G7, we have coordinated our approach, first asking for a credible investigation and, right now at this moment, working on further statements and steps to be taken together.

Just a few days ago, I expressed once again, on behalf of the whole European Union and of all our Member States, our expectation for clarity and full accountability. We have also asked Saudi Arabia for full collaboration with the Turkish authorities. We hope that everyone will work towards the goal of establishing the facts. This is the starting point. The investigation must be driven by the search for the truth, and not by geopolitics.

We will not merely wait for more clarity or ask for it: we will also continue to act, together with our partners, for achieving clarity. The European Union's reaction from now on will depend on the next steps taken by the Saudi authorities. We will continue, first of all, to coordinate among ourselves, with united European Union positions, but we will also continue to coordinate with our partners around the world and continue to follow the case and work to coordinate the appropriate reaction. As I said, this will have to be a united one at European level and together with our international partners.

The Saudi leadership has promised ambitious reforms for the country. The way this investigation is managed is a very important test in terms of free speech, human rights and the rule of law for all the people of Saudi Arabia. Just a few months ago, our staff at the External Action Service in Brussels welcomed Jamal Khashoggi for a conference on Saudi Arabia and on the situation in the region. We engaged with him on several occasions as a credible and authoritative voice in the debate about his country and the Middle East. In his last op-ed, which was published after his death, he asked for a free and independent platform for Arab voices. Through the years we, as the European Union, have worked precisely to support young and independent Arab voices. We have trained young Arab journalists, we have financed

independent media and we have engaged in policy dialogues through initiatives such as Young Mediterranean Voices.

Free speech lies at the core of our values and it will continue to be the basis for our foreign policy. We believe that national interest can never be a justification for curbing freedom of speech. On the contrary, when basic human rights are violated, our countries get weaker. I think this is the voice that needs to be heard at this point in history from the European Union and from this Parliament, united. It's a point of strength to respect and protect human rights, starting with freedom of speech. It's not a point of weakness. It's a point of strength of our societies.

(Applause)

When fundamental freedoms come under attack there can be no peace, no security and no human development. Repression makes states and societies weaker and not stronger. Jamal Khashoggi had always advocated not only free speech, but also greater tolerance and respect for diversity. Reading some of his words today is quite painful, thinking of the way in which the story ended, but the best way we have to honour his memory is to be firm and determined in asking for the truth and working for the truth – not only for the truth, but also for accountability, which is different both from scapegoating and from revenge.

It is important for us to say this now. We will not only ask for justice, but we will also keep working for justice, for free speech and human rights in Saudi Arabia, in the region – in the whole region of the Gulf – and everywhere in the world.

(Applause)

Tunne Kelam, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, one of the most influential Saudi journalists residing in the US has been killed, in all likelihood brutally murdered. It was a flagrant attack against independent journalism. A week ago the British Times newspaper concluded that it was worse than a murder, it was a mistake. After hiding two weeks behind lies and disinformation, the Saudi Foreign Minister finally admitted that yes, it was a tremendous mistake. While the whole truth has still to be fully revealed, at this moment it is practically impossible to believe that the Saudi Crown Prince was not informed of the murderers' plan. Stopping arms sales to this country, at least on a temporary basis, is absolutely needed.

The moral we cannot escape is the following: in autocratic systems, even under the so-called modern reformers, worse things can still happen. Real reforms can succeed only under democratic transparency and control. A critical Khashoggi could have been an integral part of credible reforms in Saudi Arabia. Instead, he has been brutally cast overboard. Therefore, the democratic world has to reject strongly and unconditionally such behaviour. Saudi Arabia must pay a high price for the tremendous mistake of its present leaders or middlemen.

Victor Boştinaru, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, I trust we all share today the dismay and outrage towards the killing of Jamal Khashoggi. 'Killing' – I don't know whether this is the most appropriate wording to define the crime committed in Istanbul and the horrific manner in which it appears the prominent journalist and opponent has been tortured, murdered and dismembered by agents close to the Saudi regime. This is an unprecedented crime and case in the history of the world, at least since the Second World War. Never, never have we seen such a case!

I also feel the need to emphasise that this is one of a long series of human rights violations and widespread crackdowns by the autocratic and discriminatory regime on prominent activists – journalists and writers, lawyers and human rights defenders – oppression that has intensified since 2017.

Finally, I would like to insist on what are probably the two most important points. First, the explanations given by Riyadh are insufficient and absolutely not credible. They are mostly a whitewash of an appalling and flagrant assassination and violation of human rights, and of diplomatic and consular law.

The second: these events ask for a collective, clear and loud response that goes beyond the short-lived international uproar. It is time to reconsider western relations with the Kingdom. Whereas I can only welcome the position of some Member States, as well as economic actors and international organisations, to boycott today's future investment initiative in Riyadh, what is key is to have real measures to target those responsible beyond the number of operatives which were acting in Istanbul. We will invite all EU Member States to reconsider the export of arms to Saudi Arabia.

Charles Tannock, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, High Representative, as ever more gruesome details emerge surrounding the brutal murder of the Saudi dissident and journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the more obvious become the inconsistencies and, basically, the cover-ups in the explanations given by the Saudi authorities. News sources are now reporting that dismembered body parts belonging to Khashoggi have been found, supporting the Turkish claims and their narrative of the events.

Clearly, there is more to come and an international investigation into the case is urgently needed, as called for by France, the UK and Germany. I also note the comments made by the British Foreign Secretary in which, pending the investigation, a UK arms embargo has not been excluded. I note also the temporary one already imposed by Germany, much to its credit.

We in the West had welcomed some of the recent reforms led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, in a country more often known for its internal social repression and global export of Wahhabi Salafism. However, we have also witnessed a young despot consolidating his power at home and intervening more widely and aggressively abroad, from the Saudi blockade of Qatar and the atrocious bombing campaign in Yemen to the support for jihadists in Syria.

The brazenness and the location of Khashoggi's murder are, however, without precedent, and the use of torture crosses the line which makes this an international crime under the Torture Convention of 1987.

Pragmatism, driven by commercial ties, has been the watchword for relations between Saudi Arabia and the West for many decades. It is time now for our common EU values and fundamental human rights also to reassert themselves.

Marietje Schaake, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, the revelations about the brutal murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi demand European action so that perpetrators will be held to account. Additionally, a regime that lies and deceives the international community cannot be trusted to handle war weapons. I applaud Chancellor Merkel's expressions towards an embargo, but I wish it had been an EU initiative from the beginning. We've called for this in this House four times. Unfortunately, our friends in the EPP and the ECR have always been very reluctant to condemn the human rights violations in Saudi Arabia.

Some see the murder of Mr Khashoggi as a tipping point, but I see it as the cumulation of inaction when the human rights of the Saudi people were violated over and over again. Sakharov Prize winner Raif Badawi continues to suffer in prison and has been flogged for expressing himself. The 50 out of 1 000 lashes administered almost killed him already. Women's rights activists are facing life sentences, and the kind of intimidation that we see here cannot be masked by the long-awaited so-called freedom for women to drive cars. And many human rights defenders such as Manal al-Sharif have had to flee Saudi Arabia already. The kingdom decapitates people with swords on public squares as a common form of capital punishment – around 150 people a year. Homosexuality is punishable by the death sentence, and so is atheism.

We now need human rights sanctions, including a ban on the export of surveillance systems used to track and trace dissidents, and I hope this House will support a strongly-worded resolution.

While the Khashoggi case is a game-changer, it would be a mistake to limit the lessons learned only to this specific case. The Khashoggi case is not only a murder, but I fear it turns out to be a suicide.

Barbara Lochbihler, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Die Erklärungen der saudischen Regierung zur Tötung des Journalisten Khashoggi sind völlig unzureichend. Daher begrüße ich es, dass Sie, Frau Mogherini, umfassende und transparente Ermittlungen eingefordert haben. Bei Appellen alleine darf es aber nicht bleiben. Die Tötung Khashoggis ist ein Ergebnis der Zero-Toleranz-Politik des saudischen Herrscherhauses gegenüber seinen Kritikern. Der Sacharow-Preisträger Raif Badawi und zahlreiche andere gewaltlose politische Gefangene sitzen aufgrund von kritischen Meinungsäußerungen seit Jahren im Gefängnis. Sie müssen unverzüglich freigelassen werden.

Wir dürfen nach dem gewaltsamen Tod von Khashoggi nicht zur Tagesordnung übergehen. Das Europäische Parlament hat bereits mehrfach ein Waffenexportverbot gefordert. Wir müssen verhindern, dass Waffen aus Europa bei Kriegsverbrechen im Jemen zum Einsatz kommen. Alle EU-Mitgliedstaaten müssen endlich Konsequenzen ziehen und ein Waffenembargo gegen Saudi-Arabien nicht nur ankündigen, sondern auch durchsetzen.

Ángela Vallina, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señor presidente, este brutal crimen ha hecho que a algunos se les haya caído la venda de los ojos. Pero no, no ha sido un error ni un caso aislado: ha sido un crimen planificado a sangre fría de los muchos que comete Arabia Saudí en sus fronteras.

Fustigaciones, amputaciones, decapitaciones, lapidación, sumisión de la mujer, menores condenados a muerte, por no hablar de las miles de muertes de civiles en Yemen. Arabia Saudí es un régimen feudal, criminal, que piensa que con su dinero puede comprar las voluntades de toda la comunidad internacional y, hasta ahora, la experiencia, desde luego, les da la razón.

Señora Mogherini, ante este despiadado asesinato, ante el genocidio del pueblo yemení, escuche de una vez a este Parlamento, que la ha instado varias veces al embargo de la venta de armas a Arabia Saudí. No finja que se cree las versiones contradictorias ni las múltiples mentiras de Arabia Saudí. Sea valiente, promueva de una vez el embargo europeo a la venta de armas. Dejen el doble rasero. Con hechos y no con palabras, aún podríamos pensar que esta Unión defiende y protege los derechos humanos; si no, ya lo dijo nuestro gran Quevedo: «Poderoso caballero es don Dinero».

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, *a nome del gruppo EFDD*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, gentile Alto rappresentante, l'episodio Khashoggi è una doccia gelata per tutti coloro che vedevano in Mohammad Bin Salman la speranza di una nuova Arabia Saudita, riformista e più rispettosa dei diritti umani, nonostante fosse già chiaro da tempo che il principe mirasse più a un *restyling* cosmetico che di sostanza.

Ricostruire cosa sia esattamente accaduto il 2 ottobre è difficile. L'unico fatto sicuro è che Khashoggi è entrato nel consolato saudita e non ne è mai uscito vivo, probabilmente ne è uscito piuttosto in pezzi, in una valigetta.

È iniziato subito il solito balletto delle dichiarazioni. L'ultima versione è che si è trattato di un'operazione «canaglia» condotta dai servizi segreti senza che, ovviamente, il principe Salman e i vertici dell'*intelligence* ne fossero al corrente. La verità, l'abbiamo intuuta tutti fin dall'inizio.

Mai come oggi serve un segnale forte da parte nostra, perché in mezzo a tanti dubbi una sola cosa è chiara: Khashoggi è stato ucciso anche perché i responsabili credevano di poterlo fare impunemente. Schiacciare il dissenso interno funziona meglio quando è accompagnato dal silenzio assordante che viene dall'esterno, il che, nei fatti, rende complice chi non osa protestare.

Quello di Khashoggi non è infatti un caso isolato ma un vero e proprio *modus operandi* nei confronti dei dissidenti. Rapimenti, uccisioni extragiudiziali, sparizioni forzate e campagne di diffamazione feroci sono pratica tristemente comune.

Nonostante tutto questo l'Arabia Saudita siede inspiegabilmente nel Consiglio dei diritti umani dell'ONU. Anche in un mondo di maschere e di ipocrisia, come ormai è diventato il nostro – in altre circostanze farebbero sorridere i rimproveri turchi a Riyadh – deve esserci un limite. Il re, o meglio il principe, ormai è nudo. Nel regno saudita non cade foglia senza che lui ne sia pienamente informato.

Quale sarà la nostra risposta? Ci trincereremo ancora una volta dietro la falsa indignazione, un bisbiglio in una tempesta, salvo tornare in breve tempo al *business as usual*? Quanti altri Khashoggi, quanti altri Badawi ancora dovremo tollerare? Finché regnerà l'impunità, finché il *business* dei contratti multimilionari trionferà sui diritti avremo casi come quello di Khashoggi.

Tanti di voi si indignano solo oggi, ma noi lo diciamo da sempre: è ora di implementare un *ban* totale dell'export di armi europee. È ora di sanzioni adeguate per i responsabili. È ora di smettere di essere complici di questo regime.

Mario Borghezio, a nome del gruppo ENF. – (inizio del discorso senza microfono) ... un po' pelosa, un po'dubbia quando si pensa di fare di questo come un unicum, basti pensare al KGB, basti pensare a quello che succede agli oppositori in Cina, in Iran, e poi vedere – premesso che evidentemente anche noi condanniamo questo delitto – vedere da parte dell'Occidente, e dell'Europa in particolare, considerare il pubblico ministero delle democrazie europee quell'Erdogan che tiene in prigione oltre 300 giornalisti. La vostra amica Turchia è la capitale mondiale delle prigioni dei giornalisti: 5 condannati all'ergastolo, 3 000 privati del diritto di lavorare nella loro professione.

Allora cerchiamola questa verità, sono d'accordo con l'Alto rappresentante, ma cerchiamola in tutte le direzioni. Diciamo la verità completa, per esempio che questo giornalista non è il Regeni della situazione: era un uomo che, dal suo punto di vista legittimamente, sosteneva il Qatar, sosteneva i Fratelli musulmani, che non sono proprio un'organizzazione democratica.

E allora andiamo avanti, facciamo chiarezza e domandiamoci chi sia magari la vittima politica di questo attacco, magari quello che voleva riformare a suo modo la situazione interna dell'Arabia Saudita e magari gli interessi petroliferi molto concreti.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η Σαουδική Αραβία είναι μία χώρα η οποία παραβιάζει τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και εκδικείται με σκληρό τρόπο τους υπερασπιστές τους, αλλά και όσους την επικρίνουν. Υπ' αυτή την προϋπόθεση, η δολοφονία του Κασόγκι θα μπορούσε να ενταχθεί σε αυτή την πραγματικότητα, εάν δεν υπήρχαν οι ειδικοί δεσμοί του ανθρώπου αυτού με τις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες. Οπότε γίνονται τα εξής ερωτήματα: Γιατί διέταξε το σαουδικό κράτος τη δολοφονία του Κασόγκι; Ήταν ο Κασόγκι ένας απλός επικριτής της κυβέρνησης της χώρας του ή ήξερε και άλλες πληροφορίες που υπήρχε το ενδεχόμενο να τις αποκαλύψει; Επίσης, οι μυστικές υπηρεσίες των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών ήξεραν για τη δολοφονία του Κασόγκι και, αν ναι, γιατί δεν τον ειδοποιούσαν;

Εκείνο που έχει σημασία είναι ότι τα ερωτήματα αυτά δεν πρόκειται να απαντηθούν, διότι οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες με τη Σαουδική Αραβία έχουν ιδιαίτερους δεσμούς, και οικονομικούς και στρατιωτικούς. Πρόσφατα έχει υπογραφεί μια σύμβαση για αγορά στρατιωτικού υλικού αξίας 110 δισεκατομμυρίων δολαρίων. Άρα, λοιπόν, το πιθανότερο είναι η υπόθεση Κασόγκι να τοποθετηθεί στο αρχείο, διότι οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες χρησιμοποιούν τη Σαουδική Αραβία και εναντίον του Ιράν και εναντίον της τρομοκρατίας.

José Ignacio Salafrañca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE). – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, señorías, sobre la base de los principios que profesamos, tenemos que expresar nuestra más enérgica condena por la muerte del periodista Yamal Jashogui y pedir, como ha hecho la alta representante, una investigación creíble que ponga a los responsables a disposición de la justicia.

Este crimen, por sus circunstancias, puede realmente comprometer la credibilidad del proceso reformista y tener consecuencias impredecibles en el orden internacional. Arabia Saudita es el principal productor de crudo del mundo, principal socio de los Estados Unidos, socio de la Unión en el marco del Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo, y un actor insoslayable en la ya muy inflamable situación que se vive en la región: las guerras de Siria y Yemen, la división en el Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo y, al mismo tiempo, la peor situación desde hace muchos años en el proceso de paz de Oriente Medio.

Debemos apoyar a la alta representante para dar una respuesta coordinada a la crisis de la región, sobre la base de nuestros principios, y evitar con inteligencia que Rusia, que vende 3 200 millones de dólares en armas, sea ya no solo el principal valedor de Siria e Irán, sino que se convierta en el socio o el actor hegemónico en la región.

Elena Valenciano (S&D). – Señor presidente, la verdad es que es muy duro hablar en esta casa de un crimen tan escabroso —según la policía, un asesinato autorizado; tal vez un crimen de Estado—, pero nuestra misión es política. Podríamos decir que Jashogui es una más de las víctimas de esa monarquía medieval saudí que persigue y ejecuta a los disidentes. La que aún no ha liberado a nuestro premio Sájarov.

Pero lo que pasa es que Jashogui se ha convertido en la víctima que ha puesto en evidencia que lo que tiene que cambiar es el juego de tronos y clanes entre Arabia Saudí y los países occidentales; por supuesto que las sanciones y dejar de vender a Arabia Saudí son siempre gestos políticos significativos, pero, por esa vía, no hemos conseguido parar la masacre en Yemen.

Sabemos que la respuesta verdaderamente eficaz consiste en restaurar la legitimidad y la fuerza del orden internacional frente a los abusos y las agresiones, vengan de donde vengan, y ese debería ser el esfuerzo de todas las potencias y de todos los países europeos: hacer un frente común —como ha dicho la alta representante— para mostrar firmeza ante los responsables de los crímenes contra la humanidad en Arabia Saudí, y en Yemen y en Siria y en Libia.

Debemos instar al secretario general de las Naciones Unidas a que lidere una investigación internacional rápida, independiente y eficaz. Los Estados Unidos también deberían participar en ese esfuerzo. Es una buena oportunidad para su propia política exterior, tan alejada en este momento de los valores universales. Toda la política de la Unión Europea debe dirigirse a reconstruir la fuerza del Derecho internacional. Apoyamos decididamente las gestiones de la alta representante.

Bas Belder (ECR). – Voorzitter, de scene is werkelijk grotesk. In een land waar de pers op allerlei wijze monddood wordt gemaakt, gebeurt dat gewelddadig met een Saoedische journalist. Echter wat weet de Turkse overheid precies over de volstrekt abjecte – laat er geen twijfel over bestaan – over de volstrekt abjecte moord op Khashoggi? Deze cruciale vraag heeft president Erdoğan ook vandaag weer niet beantwoord. Intussen struikelen media en politici in Europa al dagen over elkaar in het afroepen van strafsancities contra de dader, het regime in Riyad.

Een verantwoorde afweging van de geopolitieke en economische effecten van de Europese strafmaatregelen is hierbij dringend geboden. Verdergaande implosie van het Midden-Oosten dient te worden voorkomen. Dat wil ik onderstrepen. Dat gevaar, dat zag wijlen Jamal Khashoggi als overtuigd islamist en geestverwant van de Moslimbroeders – zie zijn schrijfsels, die ik heb bestudeerd – absoluut niet. Dat zag hij anders en met deze politieke agenda diende hij de *Washington Post* als columnist. Hoe was het mogelijk – vraag ik me af als oud-journalist – een boezemvriend van wijlen Osama bin Laden op je pagina's.

Bodil Valero (Verts/ALE). – Herr talman! Vad vi hittills fått veta om omständigheterna i fallet med den mördade saudiska journalisten Jamal Khashoggi är fruktansvärt – och det är mycket sällan jag håller med Turkiets president, som ju inte har ett gott rykte när det gäller mänskliga rättigheter. Men i detta fall vill jag också understryka att det inte är tillräckligt att lägga skulden på de säkerhetsmän som utförde mordet. Någon eller några planerade, någon beordrade. Det krävs en oberoende och rättvis utredning.

Mina tankar om Saudiarabiens respekt för medborgarnas mänskliga rättigheter har aldrig varit höga men nu har sauderna gått över alla gränser. Det är skrämmande att det är ett land som många EU-länder har nära band till, inte minst på grund av vapenexporten. Jag vill påstå att all försäljning till Saudi i det här läget strider mot våra gemensamma regler. Här i parlamentet har vi upprepade gånger begärt ett vapenembargo mot Saudiarabien. Det hedrar fru Merkel att hon vill stoppa tysk export, men det är dags för fler att ta efter. Och det är dags att förverkliga embargot, fru Mogherini. Allt annat vore faktiskt skamligt.

Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL). – Monsieur le Président, l'assassinat ignoble du journaliste Jamal Khashoggi devrait enfin permettre que l'on cesse de fermer les yeux sur la barbarie du régime de Riyad.

Quand on vous écoute Madame Mogherini, on a des doutes. Ne soyons pas dupes des intentions de la Turquie qui, soudain, devient défenseur de la liberté d'expression.

Il a fallu trois semaines pour que le régime saoudien avoue que le journaliste était bien mort dans les locaux de son ambassade – passons sur les différentes versions, évolutions et informations.

18 personnes auraient été arrêtées, plusieurs proches du prince héritier destitués pour une simple rixe qui a mal tourné. On va faire payer les lampistes ou plutôt ceux qui ont eu le tort de se faire prendre. Mais qui est le donneur d'ordre? L'Escadron du tigre est-il une réalité? À qui obéit-il?

Oui, il faut une enquête, mais indépendante, internationale, sous l'égide de l'ONU et il faut rompre les relations avec ce régime qui réprime, y compris dans le sang, ses opposants et finance le terrorisme international et, surtout, oui, il faut arrêter de leur vendre des armes au mépris du droit international.

Ignazio Corrao (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Alto rappresentante, la storia di Khashoggi potrebbe essere la trama di una *spy story*, oppure di una pellicola *pulp*: è una storia ambientata in un consolato, in cui il protagonista viene fatto a pezzi, in cui intervengono travestimenti di sosia, agenti segreti ed esperti di autopsia che vivisezionano con segaossa.

Purtroppo però non stiamo parlando di finzione hollywoodiana ma della tristissima realtà. Sì, perché in questa vicenda purtroppo reale è la vittima, reale è il dolore dei familiari, a cui rivolgiamo le nostre condoglianze, e reali sono i mandanti.

Fittizia è invece l'imbarazzante versione dei fatti fornita dai sauditi, i quali sostengono che Khashoggi sarebbe deceduto a seguito di una colluttazione. Certo, una colluttazione tra un sessantenne e quindici uomini venuti appositamente da Riyadh: è una tesi molto credibile!

Il principe, non potendo più negare la responsabilità saudita, richiede adesso, sotto pressione internazionale, un ulteriore mese di tempo per svolgere le indagini. Questo suggerisce due possibili scenari: o il principe saudita non ha più il controllo del proprio regno oppure, tesi più verosimile, è direttamente responsabile dei tragici fatti di Istanbul e vuole solo guadagnare tempo.

Cosa è accaduto è chiaro a tutti: sono stati trovati da poco i resti del corpo del povero Khashoggi ma nonostante ciò, ancora una volta, non ci saranno conseguenze. Ancora una volta permetteremo ai sauditi di prenderci in giro, di sbatterci in faccia tutta la loro brutale disumanità, lo permetteremo in nome di due divinità universalmente venerate: il dio denaro e il dio petrolio.

Collegli, questo caso si aggiunge a innumerevoli altre violazioni dei diritti umani da parte dell'Arabia Saudita, presenti e passate. Per tale motivo mi continuo a chiedere come sia possibile che l'Arabia Saudita occupi ancora un posto in seno al Consiglio per i diritti umani delle Nazioni Unite. È veramente uno scandalo, e abbiamo il dovere di chiedere all'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite di prendere provvedimenti.

In questo grave contesto l'Europa dovrebbe imparare a parlare con una voce sola, chiara, inequivocabile e risoluta, evitando inaccettabili fughe in avanti da parte di singoli Stati.

Marie-Christine Arnautu (ENF). – Monsieur le Président, il aura donc fallu l'assassinat du journaliste Khashoggi pour que les gouvernements occidentaux fassent mine de découvrir le vrai visage de l'Arabie Saoudite, aux antipodes de la sympathique pétromonarchie qu'elle prétend être.

En février dernier, le ministre des affaires étrangères saoudien s'était livré, devant notre commission des affaires étrangères, à un exercice de «taqîya», vantant la politique réformatrice du prince héritier pour un islam, je cite: «ouvert, inclusif et tolérant». Les chancelleries occidentales ne demandaient pas mieux que de se laisser duper pour ne pas renoncer à leurs juteux contrats. Ainsi, quand l'Arabie Saoudite soutenait ouvertement les djihadistes en Syrie, les gouvernements occidentaux à ses côtés préféraient condamner la Russie en lutte contre les terroristes.

L'armée saoudienne bombarde les populations civiles du Yémen, nos gouvernements continuent de lui livrer des armes.

Son entrée au Conseil des droits de l'homme et à la Commission de la condition de la femme de l'ONU n'avait suscité que de molles protestations.

Sans cette hypocrisie occidentale et le sentiment d'impunité dont jouit l'Arabie Saoudite, ce journaliste serait peut-être encore vivant aujourd'hui.

Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE). – Señor presidente, Yamal Jashogui fue brutalmente asesinado y descuartizado en el Consulado de su país en Estambul. Este asesinato en sede consular es una ejecución extrajudicial, es violencia de Estado ejecutada fuera de su territorio. Yamal molestaba y decidieron eliminarlo. Además, el asesinato es un ataque más a la libertad de opinión y expresión: Daphne Caruana, Jan Cusack, Martina Kusnirova, otro más.

El asesinato y la persecución de periodistas o de formadores de opinión es un golpe demoledor contra las libertades civiles. Pedimos una investigación rigurosa e independiente para esclarecer los hechos y castigar a los culpables. Las connotaciones internacionales del caso son enormes, mucho más allá de lo dicho por Erdoğan esta mañana en la Gran Asamblea.

En esta casa el artículo 19 Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos y el artículo 11 de nuestra propia Carta nos obligan y nos vinculan. Nuestra libertad depende y mucho de la prensa libre y sin fronteras.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Alto rappresentante, questa mattina Hatice Cengiz, fidanzata di Khashoggi, mi ha inviato una lettera che Le ho consegnato poco fa per conoscenza.

Quanto da lei scritto in questa lettera basta per capire quanto è avvenuto a Istanbul, che una commissione d'inchiesta potrà solo confermare. Parliamoci chiaro: è del tutto ridicolo sostenere che 15 uomini arrivati da Riyadh siano entrati nel consolato a Istanbul e abbiano torturato e ucciso un giornalista operando all'oscuro del principe ereditario.

Ciò che è successo non è solo un fatto di gravità inaudita ma dimostra, ancora una volta, che i cambiamenti annunciati da Bin Salman, con il suo tour nelle capitali mondiali, non sono stati altro che una copertura mentre il regime ha continuato a comportarsi in modo autoritario e repressivo.

Ora quanto è avvenuto impone all'Unione europea e agli Stati membri, compreso il mio –vero, onorevole Corrao – di chiudere una fase politica improntata al realismo e riconsiderare il quadro delle relazioni diplomatiche con Riyadh, prevedendo da un lato la sospensione del commercio delle armi e dall'altro sanzioni mirate nei confronti dell'attuale *leadership* saudita.

(L'oratore accetta di rispondere a una domanda «cartellino blu» (articolo 162, paragrafo 8, del regolamento))

Paul Rübiger (PPE), Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“. – Ich möchte Herrn Panzeri Folgendes fragen: Es wird ja nicht reichen, einen Haftbefehl für die Mörder auszustellen, sondern ich glaube, wir brauchen auch personalisierte Sanktionen für alle, die an der Aktion beteiligt waren. Glauben Sie, dass das Einfrieren von Konten und Reisesperren, so wie wir es in anderen Ländern machen, mit personalisierten Sanktionen der richtige Ansatz wäre?

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D), risposta a una domanda «cartellino blu». – Parlo di sanzioni mirate verso la *leadership* saudita.

Io non ho la verità in tasca, ma da quanto è avvenuto mi pare di poter dire con tranquillità che c'è una responsabilità politica, c'è un mandante. Il mandante si trova a Riyadh e quindi in qualche modo è importante che si arrivi lì, si accerti la verità lì e si mettano in campo tutte le politiche sanzionatorie nei confronti di quella *leadership*, utilizzando tutti gli strumenti che l'Unione europea ha a disposizione.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-н Председател, държа да кажа, че не споделям фалшивия шок от бруталното убийство на саудитския журналист Джамал Хашоги. Ако някой се прави на изненадан, то той е лицемер. Не го споделям, защото няма как да бъдат изненада действията на тайните служби на една държава – брутално теократична ислямистка диктатура.

Саудитска арабия не веднъж е подкрепяла групировки, свързани с ислямския тероризъм, чиито методи не се различават от тези, използвани при убийството на журналиста. Нека си кажем истината – Саудитска арабия не е нищо повече от една ранна версия на Ислямска държава, която има своята международна легитимация. Саудитска арабия е родината на най-крайната радикална и варварска доктрина на исляма – лахабизма. Саудитска арабия разпространява този ислямизъм извън своите граници. Не веднъж в тази зала съм давал примери как саудитски фондации щедро спонсорират радикален ислям в Европа – от Балканите до Обединеното кралство.

Време е проблемът да бъде посочен ясно и категорично. Ислямизмът и радикалният ислям трябва да бъдат изкоренени от Европа. В противен случай нагли убийства като това на журналист в Истанбул ще стават все по-чести. Редно е, уважаеми, обаче всички тези държави тук, например президентът Макрон, ясно да заявят своето отношение и да спрат да продават оръжие и да спрат да печелят от кървавите петролдолари на Ислямска държава.

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, when an authoritarian regime appears to be involved in the brutal murder of a citizen in one of its consulates, as seems to have happened with the journalist Mr Khashoggi, democratic governments have two possible reactions: putting human dignity above all or clinging to the economic interests that tie them to this regime. This afternoon, the Spanish Congress has shamefully chosen the latter. The status quo parties, aligned with the interests of the Crown, prefer to protect multi-million euro arms contracts instead of choosing dignity. This is nothing new. Member States have systematically been violating the common position on arms exports to countries such as Saudi Arabia, which use the war machine to violate human rights and prolong conflicts.

Ms Mogherini, the European Union and its Member States must opt for dignity. Before arms and business there is life and justice. We must put a ban on arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Jacques Colombier (ENF). – Monsieur le Président, les autorités saoudiennes ne peuvent plus cacher l'atroce vérité: le journaliste Jamal Khashoggi a été découpé vivant et la disparition de son corps en dit long sur le sort atroce qu'il a subi, victime d'un meurtre planifié des jours à l'avance.

Le vrai visage de Mohamed Ben Salman, véritable enfant chéri des médias, des politiques et des lobbies en Europe, apparaît comme celui d'un sinistre tyran sanguinaire et brutal, vivant dans l'opulence des pétrodollars. Il a déjà montré dans la guerre atroce menée contre la population du Yémen, dans les répressions barbares contre les minorités chiïtes de son pays et dans la chasse lancée aux opposants, comme Raif Badawi, qu'il était sans aucun doute une des pires incarnations du pouvoir de ce véritable État voyou qu'est l'Arabie Saoudite.

L'Arabie Saoudite, qui encourage l'islam radical partout dans le monde et finance la construction de mosquées radicales et dont la responsabilité dans les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 est accablante. Alors au lieu de vous focaliser sur la Russie, mettez au ban des nations cet État voyou qui n'est rien d'autre qu'un Daech institutionnalisé.

Josef Weidenholzer (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Die Ermordung von Jamal Khashoggi ist ein Akt von unvorstellbarer Bestialität – wie aus einem Horrorfilm. Ein Beweis für die Rücksichtslosigkeit und Ignoranz, die das saudische Regime den Menschenrechten entgegenbringt. Das muss endlich Folgen haben!

Das Regime in Riad darf nicht länger hofiert werden, und vor allem müssen die Waffenlieferungen eingestellt werden. Das haben wir heute schon gehört. Allerdings sind Zweifel angebracht, und es ist zu befürchten, dass wir in den üblichen Modus zurückfallen: Erregung, scharfe Kritik, um dann wieder den Verlockungen des saudischen Geldes zu erliegen. So wird das nichts!

Wir brauchen keine PR-gesteuerte Revolution wie die des Kronprinzen, sondern echte Veränderung, und das hatte Khashoggi im Sinn. In seinem letzten, posthum veröffentlichten Beitrag für die Washington Post kündigte er die Gründung einer transnationalen arabischen Informationsplattform an, um den verhängnisvollen Kreislauf von Armut, Missmanagement und mangelnder Bildung zu beenden. Das war sein Vermächtnis. Deshalb dürfen wir den Glauben nicht aufgeben, dass es einmal auch eine arabische Demokratie geben wird.

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – Herr Präsident, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Arroganz, die rücksichtslose Brutalität und die höhnische Verachtung, mit der das saudische Königtum den Mord an Khashoggi organisiert hat, haben die Weltöffentlichkeit aufgeweckt. Dieses Parlament hat schon im Februar 2016 gefordert, dass gegenüber Saudi-Arabien ein Waffenembargo verhängt werden soll. Wir haben das seither mehrfach wiederholt. Denn so außerordentlich dieser eine Mord hervorsteht, so wenig steht er alleine. Man denke nur an den Krieg in Jemen, bei dem aktuell acht Millionen Menschen von Hunger bedroht sind, weil durch die Blockade nicht genug Lebensmittel zu ihnen kommen. Wir müssen handeln, Frau Hohe Vertreterin, Vizepräsidentin Mogherini! Jetzt muss Europa durch ein Waffenembargo zeigen, dass es eine Grenze zieht.

Eugen Freund (S&D). – Mr President, I have two points to make. It's terrible what the Saudis did to Jamal Khashoggi. There are no words for this savage killing of a journalist – and I say this as a fellow journalist. But we must not forget how gingerly we have been treating Saudi Arabia for years, and how they practically get – and got – away with anything and everything, regardless of the brutal atrocities they have been committing on their own soil, to their own people, and in Yemen and Qatar, and so on.

The second point: it's all too ironic (if it were not so sad) that we rely on Turkey, of all countries, and on President Erdoğan, of all people, when we discuss the brutal murder of Jamal Khashoggi. I just wonder what all the Turkish journalists may think of us – journalists who were dragged to jail more than two years ago by the same leader who is now our key witness in the Khashoggi case. It's only logical, therefore, to call for an independent, unbiased international investigation.

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Representante, as sinistras e macabras circunstâncias da morte de Jamal Khashoggi colocaram na agenda mediática de todo o mundo o que, desde há muito, aquele respeitado jornalista do Washington Post denunciava e o regime de Riade e os seus aliados tentavam branquear: a vaga de detenções, a repressão e as tentativas de humilhação pública de intelectuais e líderes religiosos discordantes do príncipe Mohammed bin Salman, líder de facto do país.

Senhora Alta Representante, a União Europeia tem de condenar este assassinato e instar as autoridades sauditas a revelarem o paradeiro do corpo de Jamal Khashoggi, a permitirem uma investigação credível e transparente para apurar o que se passou na sua missão diplomática em Istambul, numa chocante violação da Convenção de Viena sobre as relações consulares e das obrigações internacionais da Arábia Saudita como membro do Conselho das Nações Unidas para os Direitos Humanos.

Em memória de Jamal Khashoggi, devemos ainda, mais uma vez, exigir a libertação de todos os seus colegas, como o escritor Saleh al Shehi ou o bloguer Raif Badawi, que pagam com penas de prisão as suas legítimas reivindicações pelos direitos políticos e liberdades cívicas naquele país. O embargo de armas à Arábia Saudita torna-se agora, mais do que nunca, um imperativo moral e de decência.

Przewodniczący. – Jeszcze wyjaśnię, że będą udzielał głosu tym głównie kolegom, którzy jeszcze nie mieli szansy zabrania głosu.

Arne Lietz (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Sehr geehrte Hohe Vertreterin, ganz herzlichen Dank für Ihren starken Vortrag für Pressefreiheit und für die Freiheit der Journalisten.

Das unterstützen wir.

Das Parlament hat Sie schon zweimal aufgefordert, auch mit den Mitgliedstaaten in Dialog zu gehen über die Rüstungsexporte. Saudi-Arabien sollte keine Rüstungsexporte mehr bekommen, das haben auch die Konservativen hier im Haus beschlossen. Es ist jetzt wichtig, dass wir dieses Thema aufrechterhalten. Selbst die deutsche Regierung erkennt an: Wenn ein Land nicht liefert, dürfen die anderen Länder auch nicht liefern.

Kohärente Außenpolitik heißt kohärente Rüstungsexportpolitik. Dementsprechend hoffe ich, dass wir das schaffen und dass Sie uns unterstützen in der Aufforderung, dass wir Saudi-Arabien hier gemeinsam europäisch die Antwort geben, keine Rüstung mehr in dieses Land zu geben, damit wir ein klares Zeichen setzen. Das ist auch eine Grundlinie für das Europäische Parlament, was wir auch über die Rüstungsexportkontrollberichte verfolgen.

Ich würde mich sehr freuen, wenn Sie diese Botschaft mit aus dem Haus nehmen.

Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (ECR). – Arvoisa puhemies, toimittajan työstä on tullut vaarallista. Toimittajien suojelukomitean mukaan 64 toimittajaa on saanut surmansa jo tämän vuoden aikana ympäri maailmaa. Yksi heistä on Khashoggi, joka murhattiin Saudi-Arabian konsulaatin tiloissa Istanbulissa. On äärimmäisen tärkeää, että Khashoggin kuolemasta suoritetaan pikaisella aikataululla avoin tutkinta, jotta tapahtumien kulkuun saadaan selvyys ja murhasta vastuulliset oikeuden eteen vastaamaan teostaan.

Ei ole millään lailla hyväksyttävää, että toimittajien työtä häiritään eri tavoin, äärimmäisissä tapauksissa jopa murhaamalla. Lehdistön vapaus on erittäin tärkeä arvo, jota tulee puolustaa. Toivon siksi, että parlamentti antaa voimakkaan ja selvän tukensa tämän ja kaikkien muidenkin toimittajien murhien tutkintaan.

Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE). – Arvoisa puhemies, korkea edustaja Mogherini, vaaditte aivan oikein toimittaja Khashoggin murhan tutkimista, avointa tutkimista, mutta se ei nyt riitä. EU maiden täytyy sitoutua olemaan myymättä aseita Saudi-Arabiaan. Se on vähintään. Nyt on EU:n arvot puntarissa. Arvostammeko ihmisoikeuksia ja lehdistönvapautta? Vai onko kuitenkin tärkeintä se, että saadaan öljyä ja raha puhuu? Tämä murha on ollut julma. Me emme tiedä vielä kaikkia yksityiskohtia, mutta kaikki se, mitä me olemme kuulleet, on kyllä sellaista, jota ei voida jättää rankaisematta.

Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE). – Señor presidente, condenamos este terrible asesinato, condenamos los asesinatos de defensores de derechos humanos, de periodistas, de abogados, de personas, de hombres y de mujeres, de escritores. Condenamos la doble hipocresía de las fotos del rey de España, que se fotografía con el príncipe saudita; condenamos que haya Gobiernos y que haya Parlamentos que son capaces de mirar a otro lado cuando se ven estas tragedias, cuando se ven esas masacres sobre la población civil de Yemen.

Mientras unos se hacen fotos, mientras la señora Mogherini pide resoluciones comunes con las que nuestro Grupo está totalmente de acuerdo, mientras la señora Merkel rompe ya una lanza en esta batalla moviendo ficha, ¿qué hace España?, ¿qué hace el Reino Unido?, ¿qué hace Francia? Queremos saberlo, porque ellos son los Estados con mayor implicación.

Y, por eso, hacemos también un llamamiento para que la Unión Europea, en la próxima reunión de las Naciones Unidas, en la sesión del Consejo de Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, pueda presentar una Resolución sobre la situación de los defensores de los derechos humanos, que también establezca un régimen de sanciones precisamente contra estos abusos. Matar es delito, pero poner una venda en los ojos también.

Miguel Urbán Crespo (GUE/NGL). – Señor presidente, el asesinato de Jashogui no es un asesinato cualquiera, es un asesinato de Estado. No es una casualidad y no es un caso aislado. Es uno de los muchos casos que demuestran la brutal dictadura que es Arabia Saudí; una brutal dictadura que es un socio preferente en la compra de armas europeas. ¿Y qué hacemos? Sacamos bonitas declaraciones. Hemos sacado declaraciones para que no se vendan armas a Arabia Saudí, que bombardea a la sociedad civil en Yemen. Pero ¿se cumplen? Seguimos vendiendo armas a Arabia Saudí. Hemos visto cómo el Gobierno español sigue vendiendo armas a Arabia Saudí.

Necesitamos una posición común para que no se vendan armas desde Europa a Arabia Saudí, para que se tomen medidas que verdaderamente puedan parar lo que estamos viendo, que es esta dictadura brutal. Hay que investigar también a los comisionistas, como el señor Borbón, que se dedican a hacer negocio en nombre de todos con esta dictadura. Hay que tomar partido de una vez por todas.

Jean-Luc Schaffhauser (ENF). – Monsieur le Président, ce meurtre est inadmissible. Mais qu'est ce qui est le plus inadmissible: la mort d'un journaliste, frère musulman, ou les millions de morts en Irak dans une guerre illégale que nous avons approuvée? La Turquie, qui élimine ses opposants politiques de manière plus discrète et que nous continuons à soutenir? Les morts silencieux dans l'entourage de M^{me} Clinton, dont personne ne parle mais qui ont bien été éliminés?

Chers collègues, il ne faut pas de condamnations à sens unique. Vous seriez plus crédibles si vos indignations s'adressaient à tout régime qui assassine ses opposants, et croyez-moi, les crimes d'Etat sont nombreux.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, first of all I would like to thank Parliament for the quite strong and united voice that I've heard from different groups and different national backgrounds that send the same message. This very much supports and strengthens the work and the words that we've been doing and saying in recent weeks, namely that we want to know the truth, that we want justice, and that we will not settle for anything less.

We will continue to demand a full, credible and transparent investigation. As this Parliament was debating this murder, we released a common G7 statement going exactly in the same direction, which I think is a good message of unity and strength. We, as the European Union – and myself personally – have been very explicit so far, and we will continue to do so. We are also united.

As you know – and as some of you have said – individual Member States have either taken steps or indicated that they would be willing to take steps. Some have decided to withdraw their participation from events in Saudi Arabia and have announced other possible measures. Collectively, I believe that, as the European Union and in the Council in particular (so here I would have to cross the Chamber and sit on the other side), collectively we will have to monitor the situation as it continues to evolve in the coming days – hopefully not weeks – and decide on any measure to be taken collectively, as the European Union, based on, first and foremost, the steps that are taken by the Saudi authorities to establish the truth and to bring those responsible to justice. As I said, accountability, not revenge or any fig leaf that could hide real responsibilities.

I can also point to the fact that those of you who have taken the floor come from different political groups and different countries. Most of you come from parties that have a majority in the national governments. Maybe there is something you can also do when it comes to your national governments' positions. It's true that there are different attitudes among Member States at the moment on some of the measures. I notice that there are also different attitudes within government coalitions in single countries that are quite evident in this Chamber. So we can all work on more unity, and I think we have the duty to do so in the coming days: to react properly, rationally, united and in coordination with our international partners.

I also want to thank the Parliament for a second reason, and I will finish with that. This debate was important, but the constant focus that you help us to put on freedom of speech and the support we give – not only to journalists around the world, but also to human rights activists, civil society organisations, and to political opposition in some cases – is vital. This will remain at the core of our foreign policy, with one key element that some of you mentioned today and that to me is really vital, namely that this is done, and will continue to be done, in the case of the European Union, regardless of geopolitics. It's not because we like one country more than another; it's not because one country is more, or less, credible than another that we will stay more silent. We will continue to support civil society, human rights, journalists and activists everywhere in the world, and we will continue to denounce and to oppose all measures against a free, open society everywhere in the world. We will continue to engage in every situation where freedom and human rights are under attack, whoever the victim, wherever it takes place and whatever the country.

(Applause)

Przewodniczący. – Otrzymałem siedem projektów rezolucji złożonych zgodnie z art. 123 ust. 2 Regulaminu.

Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 25 października 2018 r.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 162)

Ana Gomes (S&D), por escrito. – É deplorável que a UE não tenha tido posição clara, unida e firme, mal houve notícia do desaparecimento do jornalista Jamal Khashoggi. O assassinato do jornalista Khashoggi resulta da percepção de total impunidade incutida na ditadura saudita, desde logo pelos seus aliados americanos e europeus. Uma impunidade que continua, mesmo depois de o Príncipe Herdeiro Mohammed Bin Salman ter sequestrado o primeiro-ministro libanês, Saad Hariri, em 2017, e de ter sido necessária a intervenção do Presidente francês para o resgatar.

É mais do que hora de pôr fim ao encobrimento e ao conluio com o regime fora-da-lei saudita. Este Parlamento e toda a UE têm de exigir uma investigação independente, sob a alçada das Nações Unidas, que determine quem foram os responsáveis pelo assassinato de Jamal Khashoggi e que os obrigue a serem julgados por um tribunal internacional. Todos os esbirros já identificados como tendo estado envolvidos no assassinio, incluindo o de Mohammed Bin Salman, têm de constar da lista de sanções pessoais, incluindo congelamento de ativos e proibições de entrada na UE. Os governos europeus têm de pôr imediatamente cobro à venda de armas à Arábia Saudita, que viola escandalosamente a sua própria Posição Comum, vinculativa, sobre a exportação de armamentos.

Urmas Paet (ALDE), kirjalikult. – Istanbulis Saudi Araabia konsulaadis tapetud Saudi Araabia ajakirjaniku Jamal Khashoggi surma asjaolude selgitamiseks tuleb algatada sõltumatu ja läbipaistev rahvusvaheline uurimine ning juhtunule tuleb rahvusvaheliselt reageerida. Süüdlased tuleb välja selgitada ja tunnustatud, usaldusväärse, sõltumatu ja erapooletu kohtu ees vastutusele võtta. Kui Saudi Araabia võimude seotus ajakirjaniku kadumise ja tapmisega leiab üheselt tõestust, peavad EL ja liikmesriigid olema valmis kehtestama Saudi Araabiale sanktsioonid, nagu viisakeeld ja mõrva eest vastutavate isikute varade külmutamise. ELi nõukogul tuleb arutada ELi riikide relvamüügiembargot Saudi Araabiale. Ühtlasi tuleks kehtestada keeld järelevalvesüsteemide ja muude elanikkonna mahasurumiseks kasutatavate kaheksa kasutusega kaupade ekspordile Saudi Araabiasse. EL peab pidama Saudi Araabiaga kõnelusi, võttes teemaks sealseid probleeme inimõiguste ja põhivabadustega ning Saudi Araabia murettekitava käitumise laiemas Lähis-Ida piirkonnas, sealhulgas Jeemenis. Khashoggi tapmisjuhtum on erakordselt jõhker, kuid paraku on Saudi Araabia võimude tagakiusamise ohvriks langenud veel palju inimõiguslasi, ajakirjanikke, juriste, blogijaid ja kirjanikke. Seda nii riigis sees kui ka mujal. Saudi Araabia peab kiirendama sotsiaalsete ja poliitiliste reformide läbiviimist ning austama inimõigusi. ELil tuleb jätkuvalt nõuda ka moratooriumi kehtestamist surmanuhtlusele.

Indrek Tarand (Verts/ALE), kirjalikult. – Me seisame silmitsi järjekordse riiklikult tellitud mõrvaga, sedapuhku on toimumispaik Istanbul. Mitte Bratislava, Valletta, või Sofia. Ning siin taustal on ka teatud seosed riiklikult tellitud mõrvadega Salisburys. Niisugused keskajas juurduvad valitsused ei tohiks nautida vabaduse, võrdsuse ja vendluse vundamendile rajatud ühiskondade toetust. Samas on maailm karm ning eks majanduskasvu mantra nõuab ka relvaekspordi. Seda nii geo-strateegilistest kaalutlustest lähtuvalt kui ka tööturu võimaluste avardamise pärast. Meenutan siiski, et nii Iraan, Venemaa kui ka Saudi Araabia, kes võtavad vabalt oma välismaal viibivaid kodanikke mõrvata, on eelkõige petro-dollaririigid. Ning sestap ei pea me alustama neile relvamüügi keelust, vaid Gazpromi ja Aramco keelust. Ning arvestades viimase jälestusväärse roima toimepanemise asjaolusid, peaksime hoopis kehtestama ekspordipiirangud saagidele – Husqvarna, Stihli ja Hilti saetootjad peaksid vaatama, kuhu nad oma kaupa müüvad....

Puhetta johti HEIDI HAUTALA*varapuhemies***15. Sytuacja na Morzu Azowskim (debata)**

Puhemies. – Esityslistalla on seuraavana komission varapuheenjohtajan ja unionin ulkoasioiden ja turvallisuuspolitiikan korkean edustajan julkilausuma tilanteesta Asovanmerellä (2018/2870(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Madam President, I would like to thank Parliament for keeping a strong focus on the security situation around the Black Sea after the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. We do not and we will not recognise the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula to the Russian Federation.

It is first and foremost a matter of principles, values – principles and values that all European nations agreed in Helsinki in 1975. We all agreed to the basic principle that our frontiers cannot be changed by military force. And this is a principle, it is a value, on which our common living together is based, but it is also a fundamental interest of all Europeans, because this is the foundation of peace and security on our European continent.

When this principle is violated, as it has been, we are all less secure in our continent and the events in the Sea of Azov are a demonstration of this. When the basic rules of peaceful coexistence are disregarded, instability and tensions are bound to rise. The construction of the Kerch Bridge between the Crimean Peninsula and the Russian Federation took place without Ukraine's consent and it constitutes another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. On top of that, the bridge hinders the passage of vessels to Ukrainian ports, to the Azov Sea.

Six months ago, Russia started to apply a new inspection regime for cargo vessels coming from Ukrainian ports in the Azov Sea or heading towards them. These inspections lead to long delays, which have increased dramatically over the past months. This has direct consequences on shipping costs, not only for Ukrainian exporters but also for vessels flying a European Union Member State flag. So far, more than 200 vessels, under both Ukrainian and international flags, have been affected by these controls by Russia, which in some cases lasted several days.

Even more worrying, tougher controls on naval traffic in the strait have come in parallel with the militarisation of the Azov Sea. Russia has recently started deploying military vessels to the area in significant numbers and Ukraine has partially responded with an increased military presence.

Let me recall that the Azov Sea used to be almost fully demilitarised and that Ukraine and Russia have signed a cooperation agreement on the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. This agreement implies that disputes between the parties are to be resolved through consultations and negotiations. We appreciate that Ukraine is seeking justice in international courts, such as the ongoing case under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

When international law is violated, when Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are violated, the European Union stands by the people of Ukraine. We immediately condemned the construction of the Kerch Bridge without Ukraine's consent, in July. The Council added six entities involved in the construction of the bridge to the list of those subject to restrictive measures over actions that undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

A militarisation of the Azov Sea is in no one's interest and it can only destabilise the delicate security situation in the wider Black Sea region. And let me remind us all that the Black Sea is a European sea and we do not want to witness yet another military build-up in our immediate region. So we will continue to push for the respect of international law and conventions, and to support Ukraine in these challenging circumstances. I am sure I can count on the support of this Parliament in this work we are doing.

Sandra Kalniete, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, Madam Vice- President/High Representative, blatant violations of international law by the Russian Federation are nothing new. Since 2014, the EU has been able to unite itself in the response to them. But the creeping annexation of the Azov Sea and partial blockade of all the Ukrainian ports is one more serious challenge to our determination to uphold the European peace order. It is a direct concern of EU security and commercial interests, as the financial losses directly concern also EU merchants. But it is obviously more serious than a commercial and legal issue. The situation in Azov gradually turns into one more open conflict waiting to happen. The EU so far has not been up to this challenge, projecting weakness and disinterest rather than strength and determination.

At the very least, you, Madam Vice-President/High Representative, I thank you for the statement you made today and I expect you to join Ukraine in using all diplomatic action and international legal procedures to counter the hostile Russian actions in Oslo.

Victor Boştinaru, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, High Representative, the construction of the Kerch Bridge and the developments in the Sea of Azov are yet another offensive by Russia against the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Ukraine and are a clear violation of international law. It is beyond question that, after the illegal annexation of Crimea, after backing the separatists in Eastern Ukraine, after the suspension of gas supplies and after unlawful elections in the occupied territories and cyber-warfare, that this is an additional move by Russia to destabilise Ukraine from all corners.

The Socialists' and Democrats' Group once again stands by Ukraine and calls for EU unity and determination in managing this issue. The situation must be reversed and the governance of navigation in the Sea of Azov must return to the basics of international maritime law. The EU should act as a mediator between Kiev and Moscow and avoid further escalation. It is in the interests of the Member States to have free navigation in the Sea of Azov and to avoid further militarisation there, as has taken place in the Black Sea, placing NATO's entire eastern flank and the security of Member States, including the Baltic countries, Romania and Bulgaria, heavily at risk.

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, during the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) mission to, amongst other areas, the eastern part of Ukraine, including Mariupol and Talakivka, we were able to see with our own eyes the gravity of the situation in the Sea of Azov region. The draft joint resolution that we are able to present to Parliament describes precisely this situation. I would like to thank my colleagues for this.

The aggressive posture of the Russian Federation in the Azov Sea area turns our attention to yet another pattern that this country uses to deny access to territories. I am well aware of this. It happens in the Vistula Lagoon in Polish territorial waters. It has happened in many areas close to the Baltic Sea and I would also like to turn the attention of my colleagues to the denial, or partial denial, of access to seaports by Nord Stream 2. It is also an important factor added to this project.

Petras Auštrevičius, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, Madam High Representative, more than 10 000 lives have been lost in eastern Ukraine. Almost two million peaceful Ukrainians have had to flee their homes as refugees. As if that were not enough, Putin is continuing and has now moved his offensive to the Sea of Azov. With his personal approval ratings plummeting in Russia, it is only natural that the master of the Kremlin should be looking for more outside enemies. Throughout the ages, this pretext has been well tested by Russian tsars and comrades. Just as Stalin started his political career by robbing bourgeois on Russian trains, so is Putin now raiding Ukrainian and foreign ships, including the ones under EU flags.

If not properly countered in time, sooner or later such hostile practices will be treated by the Kremlin as a sort of approval to be used in other waters. The only response to this blatant violation of bilateral agreements and international law must be additional restrictive measures against an aggressive Kremlin.

The situation in which the illegal bridge is constructed with the participation of EU companies, thus undermining EU restrictive measures, is pathetic and unacceptable. The EU must come up with specific legal instruments to deal with this. We need to have an independent EU legal authority empowered to look into cases where EU companies – or persons or countries – have violated our own decisions in place. Those in the EU found to be in breach of the EU's sanctions must be penalised themselves.

To conclude, it is regrettable to see how Putin is able to turn everything upside down. Throughout the centuries, people across the globe have been proud of building bridges. And then along comes Putin, who transforms the 'bridge-building' narrative into another form of aggression against a neighbour.

Rebecca Harms, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Mogherini! Die Entwicklung im Asowschen Meer muss im Zusammenhang gesehen werden mit dem, was seit dem russischen Einmarsch und dem Beginn der Besetzung der Krim passiert ist. Russland hat die Krim zu einem großen militärischen Stützpunkt ausgebaut, und diese Entwicklung – die Militarisierung der Krim – ist ja noch lange nicht zu Ende. Deshalb muss das, was viele Kommentatoren als Kanonenbootpolitik Russlands im Asowschen Meer bezeichnen, von uns sehr ernst genommen werden. Ich teile ausdrücklich den Hinweis von Herrn Boştınaru auf unsere Probleme, unsere gemeinsamen Probleme an der östlichen Flanke.

Ich möchte sechs Punkte zur Prüfung vorschlagen: Meiner Meinung nach sollte das Mandat der OSZE auf die Beobachtung der Situation im Asowschen Meer ausgeweitet werden. Meiner Meinung nach muss die Europäische Union unbedingt die rechtliche Position der Ukraine in allen Instanzen – bei der UNO, bei der OSZE und auch vor internationalen Gerichtshöfen – stark und klar unterstützen. Die Europäische Union muss darauf achten, dass es zu keiner technischen und militärischen Zusammenarbeit mit der Russischen Föderation kommt, die möglicherweise auch noch die Operationsfähigkeit der russischen Marine stärkt. Meiner Meinung nach sollte die EU unbedingt prüfen, wie sie mit Projekten die Häfen von Mariupol und Berdjansk stärken kann. Und die EU und die NATO müssen klären, ob sie durch Eskorten und Präsenz in der Region eine weitere Eskalation verhindern können. Neue Sanktionen sollten auf jeden Fall diskutiert werden.

Jaromír Kohlíček, *za skupinu GUE/NGL*. – Paní předsedající, Azovské moře je vlastně záliv Černého moře mezi Krymem a jihoruskou stepí. V jeho okolí se rozprostírá krásná černozem a při pohledu z letadla působí velmi idylicky. Zcela jiné dojmy má asi každý, kdo zná jméno jedné ze soukromých armád, batalionu Azov. Likvidace stožárů vysokého napětí přivádějící elektřinu na Krym a přehrazení kanálu přes Perekopskou šíji – to jsou jen dvě ukázky takzvané dobré práce odvedené touto či podobnými jednotkami.

Není mi jasné, které vlády zemí Evropské unie mají zájem na eskalaci napětí v této části světa. Zastavte prosím tyto pokusy o rozpoutání dalšího nesmyslného konfliktu a přispějte k znovunastolení míru v této části světa. Chápu, že pro některé kolegy je Azovské moře daleko, ale uvědomte si, že se jedná o součást Evropy, která je necelou hodinu letu od Rumunska či Bulharska, tedy od území EU. Proto vás žádám, nepřipusťte, aby se tak jako v nedávné minulosti v těchto místech opět tvrdě bojovalo.

Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Haute représentante, la montée des tensions dans la mer d'Azov a une cause simple: la décision des États-Unis, annoncée fin août, d'augmenter leurs livraisons d'armes à l'Ukraine et notamment à sa marine.

L'Ukraine, ce gouvernement en faillite issu d'un coup d'État, voudrait que l'OTAN fasse des manœuvres dans la mer d'Azov, en infraction du traité russo-ukrainien de 2003. Ces décisions montrent que Washington, comme Kiev, cherche un affrontement avec la Russie, au mépris des accords de Minsk.

Une fois de plus, l'Union européenne est complice de cette montée aux extrêmes en soutenant l'OTAN et ses récents exercices militaires en Ukraine. Et nous avons, logiquement, d'une part, la dénonciation par les Ukrainiens de leur traité d'amitié avec la Russie de 1997 et, d'autre part, la dénonciation par les États-Unis du traité qui limite les euromissiles. Tout cela pour faire de l'Europe un nouveau champ d'affrontement nucléaire Est-Ouest.

L'Union européenne dit promouvoir la paix, mais encourage en fait la guerre en Europe.

Σωτήριος Ζαριανόπουλος (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, λίγες ημέρες μετά το ΝΑΤΟ, η κατάσταση στη Θάλασσα του Αζόφ και τη Μαύρη Θάλασσα συζητείται και στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο. Ήταν αναμενόμενο. Είναι περιοχή με πηγές και αγωγούς ενέργειας, αλλά και καθοριστικό ρόλο στη στρατιωτική περικύκλωση της Ρωσίας από Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, και με νατοϊκή βάση στα πλαίσια των ανταγωνισμών τους που κλιμακώνονται και με την απόσυρση των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών από τη συμφωνία των πυρηνικών όπλων. Στη μεγάλη εικόνα, στην ίδια στρατηγική εντάσσεται η επέμβαση των ευρω-νατοϊκών στην Ουκρανία, με κυβέρνηση που στηρίζεται και από ναζιστές. Στα Βαλκάνια, με ενίσχυση της παρουσίας τους με την απαράδεκτη συμφωνία των Πρεσπών, ενώ συνεχίζεται η αλλαγή συνόρων, όπως στο Κόσοβο. Προσκαλείται ο νατοϊκός στόλος στο Αιγαίο, δημιουργούνται και άλλες στρατιωτικές βάσεις σε όλη την Ελλάδα από την κυβέρνηση ΣΥΡΙΖΑ-ΑΝΕΛ. Τα μαχαίρια βγήκαν, οι λαοί μπαινούν σε άμεσους κινδύνους. Μοναδική λύση η αλληλεγγύη, ο κοινός αγώνας ενάντια στη λεηλασία των μονοπωλίων που μια σπίδα τους αρκεί για να ρίξουν τους λαούς και πάλι σε γενικευμένη σύρραξη.

Michael Gahler (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Ich stelle wieder einmal fest, dass bei der Moskauer Fraktion das Opfer an seiner Situation schuld ist. Ich glaube, das können wir so nicht durchgehen lassen.

Ich glaube, der Freundschaftsvertrag, der seinerzeit geschlossen worden ist, der ist durch die militärische Aggression Russlands schon obsolet gewesen. Wir sollten prüfen, ob das Abkommen von 2003, das das Asowsche Meer zu einer Art Binnensee zwischen der Ukraine und Russland erklärte, vielleicht die rechtliche Position der Ukraine schwächt und ob nicht UNCLOS, also die internationalen Regelungen, besser sind für die rechtliche Stellung der Ukraine.

Wir müssen gegenüber Moskau darauf bestehen, dass unsere Handelsschiffe dort nicht mehr als erforderlich kontrolliert werden und dass die Wartezeiten dort nicht mehr eintreten, denn Zeit ist Geld. Wir haben unsere Schiffe, die dort auf Reede liegen und warten, dass sie kontrolliert werden, zu unterstützen und fordern Russland auf, die bisherige Praxis zu beenden.

Knut Fleckenstein (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich kann mich den meisten Rednern hier im Hause nur anschließen. Ich glaube auch, dass wir eine ganz klare Haltung zu dem, was dort im Asowschen Meer passiert, zeigen müssen. Es geht nicht um irgendein bilaterales Problem, sondern es geht um internationales Recht. Es geht um unsere Solidarität mit den Menschen in der Ukraine. Es ist unser ureigenstes Interesse, dass die Schiffe unter EU-Flagge dort nicht über Gebühr gepiesackt werden. Deshalb ist es völlig richtig, dass wir die Hohe Vertreterin bitten, mit all ihren Möglichkeiten für eine Verbesserung der Situation dort einzutreten.

Nicht erschrecken, Rebecca Harms, ich würde die ersten vier der sechs Punkte sofort unterschreiben. Ich bin froh, dass wir nicht gleich wieder reflexhaft zu Sanktionen gegriffen haben. Aber die russische Seite muss wissen: Wir meinen es ernst. Wir wollen gerne reden, aber Recht bleibt Recht.

Charles Tannock (ECR). – Madam President, High Representative, the tensions in the Sea of Azov are yet another example of Russia's expansionist campaign to destabilise Ukraine politically and economically. Since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in the Black Sea in 2014, Ukraine's Azov ports, principally Mariupol, are now responsible for handling 80% of the country's maritime exports. Journeys that before could be made in a day are now taking up to a week, as the result of Russian restrictions. Russia seeks to defend many of these as being necessary for the security of the newly constructed Kerch Bridge linking mainland Russia to Crimea, the construction of which is, in itself, a violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Therefore, I welcome the Council's decision to extend restrictive measures to entities involved in its construction. With ever-increasing militarisation of the Sea of Azov, we must ensure that this cannot become a flashpoint for further conflict in future. NATO recently highlighted the need to continue with the political support that the alliance is offering to Ukraine, helping to modernise the Ukrainian armed forces and security institutions.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – Madame la Présidente, je crois que les intentions de la Russie sont claires: elle tente de détériorer la situation sociale et économique dans le sud-est de l'Ukraine et de créer des conditions propices à la mise en place d'un futur corridor terrestre menant à la Crimée.

En effet, je crois que le Kremlin ne se contente plus de l'intégration forcée de la péninsule, de son isolement de l'Ukraine; maintenant la Russie veut aussi obtenir le contrôle intégral de la mer d'Azov. Ce faisant, elle ne se gêne pas pour entraver, entre autres, le commerce international. Je pense par exemple aux inspections aléatoires des services de sécurité russes, lesquels causes des retards et coûtent des dizaines de milliers d'euros aux bateaux européens, notamment aux bateaux roumains et bulgares.

Dans ce contexte, je crois que nous devons être unis et aider les partenaires ukrainiens à utiliser tous les canaux diplomatiques et légaux pour faire face à ces pressions russes.

Neena Gill (S&D). – Madam President, Madam High Representative, not satisfied by annexing Crimea and supporting rebels in eastern Ukraine, Russia is now trying to choke Ukraine's economy. Russia's blockade is impeding civilian and maritime traffic, against international law. I fear military force will neither prevent a potential invasion nor de-escalate the situation, so therefore, High Representative, I urge you, if you have a moment to listen, to engage in mediating in this crisis and to revive a serious peace process.

With Ukraine's election campaign soon in full swing, time is of the essence. Both sides will soon expect more political gain from further escalation. So my questions to you, High Representative, are: are you considering a UN maritime peacekeeping operation to maintain freedom of maritime movement in the Sea of Azov? Maybe a neutral third country could be responsible or involved. Secondly, reducing tensions at sea could help restart a process for the political situation in Donbass.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to thank High Representative Mogherini for a very clear and strong statement based on principles, and this is an ideal point for Parliament to support this.

Systematically stopping merchant vessels in the Sea of Azov sea gives a signal that Russia is unilaterally expanding its control there. We can see it as a creeping attempt to annex the waters of Azov and turn the sea into a sort of Russian internal lake, and this in a situation where most of Ukraine's exports are passing through the Azov Sea ports.

Russia's overtures to expanding its control over Ukrainian territories and borders in this indirect but systematic way are most alarming. In this situation, the EU is once more called upon to demonstrate its strong, unanimous and unconditional support for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Francisco Assis (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Alta Comissária Federica Mogherini, com a sua atuação agressiva no mar de Azov, que atenta, uma vez mais, contra a soberania da Ucrânia e, em particular, com a construção de uma ponte no estreito de Kerch, que restringe a navegação nessas águas, a Rússia reincide no seu projeto de desestabilização geopolítica e de desafio às regras internacionais.

Temos consciência de que as sanções até agora aplicadas ainda não produziram os efeitos desejados. Apesar disso, não é possível reagir às ações disruptivas da Rússia apenas com declarações políticas, pelo que são pertinentes as medidas restritivas anunciadas pelo Conselho contra algumas entidades envolvidas na construção da ponte de Kerch.

A União Europeia deve apoiar e encorajar a via jurídica que Kiev está a explorar, nomeadamente, a queixa apresentada por este país no âmbito da Convenção da ONU sobre o Direito do Mar. Na mesma linha, faz todo o sentido a proposta de reforçar o mandato da missão especial de monitorização da OSCE, de modo a que esta cubra também as tensões no mar de Azov.

A União Europeia deve adotar, assim, uma postura enérgica, retaliando com medidas concretas, sempre com o cuidado de desencorajar decisões, de ambas as partes, que possam conduzir a uma escalada militar, mas sem hesitar no seu apoio àquela que é, indiscutivelmente, a parte mais fraca, a Ucrânia.

Dariusz Rosati (PPE). – Madam President, here we are again, speaking about the threat posed by Russia. The security of the Azov Sea is linked to the security of the Black Sea and EU security in general, not only Ukraine. The further militarisation of the Azov Sea area, the construction of the Kerch Bridge without the consent of Ukraine and the restrictions on maritime transport once more show that Russia wants to undermine the sovereignty of Ukraine and test how far it can go before the EU can react.

As President Putin does not seem to be really interested in dialogue, I urge the Member States and the EU to act. First, we need to extend the sanctions to include the companies that use this infamous Kerch Bridge as well. Such illegal actions cannot bring economic benefits to Russia. Secondly, the Mariupol region still needs more assistance from the EU, especially now while it is under even more military and economic pressure from Russia.

Othmar Karas (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Vizepräsidentin der Kommission, meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren! Ich begrüße es ausdrücklich, dass wir in diesem Fall auch Situationen diskutieren, die sich in der öffentlichen Wahrnehmung kaum wiederfinden, aber eine äußerst wichtige geopolitische Bedeutung haben. Das zunehmend aggressive und protektionistische Verhalten Russlands im Asowschen Meer ist eine solche und eine Weiterführung der Expansionspolitik, die wir in den letzten Jahren erlebt haben und die wir auf das Schärfste verurteilen.

Heute ist es bittere Realität, was wir am Beginn des Baus der Brücke über die Straße von Kertsch 2016 absehen konnten: Die flächendeckenden und gezielten Kontrollen von Schiffen auch unter europäischer Flagge führen zu kostspieligen Verzögerungen und sind einzig und allein dem langfristigen Ziel Russlands geschuldet, den internationalen Handel in den ukrainischen Häfen zum Erliegen zu bringen.

Wir müssen dafür Sorge tragen, dass die Destabilisierung der Region gestoppt wird. Russland muss sich an das Seerechtsübereinkommen der Vereinten Nationen halten, seinen Verpflichtungen unter internationalem Recht nachkommen und die Kontrollen aufheben, damit der freie Verkehr von Waren wiederhergestellt werden kann.

Eduard Kukan (PPE). – Madam President, the quiet escalation of the situation in the Sea of Azov over the past year requires our utmost attention. First of all, while ignoring international law on close and bilateral agreements between Ukraine and Russia, Russia proceeded with the construction of the Kerch Bridge. This constitutes yet another violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and aims at limiting economic activity in Ukrainian ports. The recent concert of illegal activities might have a trade character, but it has the clear political objectives to endanger Ukrainian ports and solidify Russian economic and military presence in the Azov Sea, and by extension the Black Sea, and to transform the Azov Sea into an internal lake of the Russian Federation.

We have to be clear and vocal in our opposition to these activities. Our condemnation should concern also the overall intensification of the military presence in the Black Sea, otherwise we risk the opening of yet another front in our neighbourhood, this time with maritime dimensions. This should be prevented.

Jaromír Štětina (PPE). – Paní předsedající, dámy a pánové, jako výsledek ruských operací a blokad lodí došlo za poslední období k poklesu zisků ukrajinských azovských přístavů Mariupol a Berdiansk o 30 %. Po nelegální anexi Krymu je až 80 % ukrajinského exportu nyní vedeno přes tyto přístavy. Ruské akce na Azovském moři mají jednoznačný cíl. Dále ekonomicky a sociálně rozvrátit Ukrajinu. Vojenské cíle jsou však ještě závažnější. Dochází k budování pozic k možnému útoku na Ukrajinu. Ruská armáda buduje v Azovském moři na okupovaném území námořní základnu, která se jmenuje Obryv. Proti nezákonným operacím Ruska na Azovském moři je nutné důrazně zakročit. Dalšímu vyostření situace můžeme zamezit mezinárodní námořní operací pod vedením Spojených národů nebo EU či uvalením sankcí na ruské přístavy v Azovském moři. Ukrajina nemůže zůstat osamocena.

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Gerbiama Pirmininke, tai, ką Rusija išdirbinėja Azovo jūroje, yra agresijos prieš Ukrainą tąsa. Dėl Rusijos veiksmų Kerčės sąsiauryje nuostolius patiria ne tik ES valstybių narių – Rumunijos, Bulgarijos ir kitų, bet ir Turkijos laivai. Tai Rusijos vykdoma jūrų blokada, kurios tikslas – sukelti dar didesnę įtampą regione, be to, ir dar didesnių ekonominių nuostolių Ukrainai. Mariupolio ir Berdiansko uostai – du pagrindiniai Ukrainos plieno ir grūdų eksporto uostai Azovo jūroje. Jų patiriami nuostoliai yra milžiniški. Ukraina svarsto nutraukti nuo 2003-ųjų metų galiojantį dvišalį susitarimą su Rusija dėl Azovo jūros statuso ir naudojimo, nes šis susitarimas dėl mūsų svarstomų Rusijos veiksmų nebetenka prasmės. Tuomet galiotų tarptautinė jūrų teisė, o mes, Europos Sąjunga, turėtume užtikrinti jos reikalavimų laikymąsi. Jei ne – sankcijos Rusijai, dar griežtesnės negu iki šiol. Turėtume skirti daugiau dėmesio tam regionui ir Azovo jūros militarizavimui.

Gunnar Hökmark (PPE). – Madam President, the Russian activities in the Sea of Azov are, of course, illegal actions against Ukraine, they are part of the warfare against Ukraine. But they are more than that. This is a violation of the freedom of the seas: it violates international laws; it is a demonstration that Russia does not respect the order of the international community. It is an action against us all. It is an action against European sea vessels. And, of course, we need to react because if we can't demonstrate to Russia that it is not acceptable for it to break international laws in the Sea of Azov we are opening the way to further such action by Russia in other parts of the world and also directed at the European Union and its Member States.

Madam President, High Commissioner, we need to be firm regarding sanctions and firm in telling the Russians that we do not accept this – not in the Sea of Azov and not anywhere else.

Pyynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Alta Representante, uma vez mais nos encontramos aqui para falar de um país e de um povo caído na pior das misérias, a desintegração de uma nação inteira.

Desde a anexação ilegal da Crimeia em março de 2014, temos vindo a assistir a uma constante militarização de toda a zona e a um sem número de agressões russas que visam o estrangulamento económico da Crimeia e a desestabilização da Ucrânia. O que se passa no mar de Azov faz parte dessa estratégia. Depois de devastar o turismo e a agricultura, bases da economia da Crimeia, o senhor Putin pretende agora expandir o seu controlo sobre o comércio e a navegação do mar de Azov, bloqueando os navios comerciantes que tentam chegar aos portos de Mariupol e Berdyansk.

O que se passa no estreito de Kerch ameaça não apenas a segurança da Ucrânia, mas também a liberdade de circulação da NATO na zona da estabilidade política da região do Mar Negro onde, aliás, a Rússia realiza regularmente, e de forma provocatória, exercícios militares de larga escala.

Senhora Alta Representante, há necessidade de assegurar a efetiva implementação das medidas restritivas acordadas no Conselho Europeu, e a Ucrânia, mais do que nunca, neste momento, precisa de nós, europeus. Muito obrigado.

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR). – Voorzitter, vandaag lopen de Oost-Oekraïense havens leeg. Poetin heeft besloten om na de illegale annexatie van de Krim, ook de Zee van Azov te militariseren, *de facto* in te nemen.

De voorbije maanden zoekt Poetin opnieuw het conflict op met buurland Oekraïne om het verder te destabiliseren. Na de aanleg van de Krimbrug over de Straat van Kertsj vindt hij het dus tijd om zijn invloedssfeer op zee uit te breiden. En keer op keer lapt Rusland elke internationale regel aan zijn laars. Dat hij zo de Europese Unie tegen zich in het harnas jaagt, deert hem niet.

Mevrouw de hoge vertegenwoordiger, de spanningen stijgen aan de fragiele achterpoort van de Europese Unie. Het minste incident kan het vuur aan de lont steken. En de mogelijke gevolgen voor zowel Oekraïne als de Europese Unie zijn niet te overzien.

Ik vond het een interessant debat en ik steun de concrete voorstellen van onder andere collega Rebecca Harms, die zij hier heeft gedaan. En ik steun u, mevrouw de hoge vertegenwoordiger, bij de druk die u uitoefent op de Russische Federatie, bij elke diplomatieke druk die u daar uitoefent. Ik reken erop dat u dat met de nodige daadkracht en met de nodige duidelijkheid zult doen.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, για μια ακόμη φορά, υπάρχει ένταση στις σχέσεις της Ρωσίας με την Ουκρανία, λόγω των γεγονότων που συμβαίνουν στην Αζοφική Θάλασσα. Η Ουκρανία κατηγορεί τη Ρωσία ότι με ελέγχους παρεμποδίζει την πρόσβαση προς τους λιμένες της Αζοφικής Θάλασσας, τους ουκρανικούς λιμένες, των εμπορικών πλοίων που διέρχονται τα Στενά του Κέρτς. Βεβαίως και αυτή, από την δική της πλευρά, έχει κρατήσει ένα ρωσικό αλιευτικό και ένα δεξαμενόπλοιο. Παράλληλα, έχει αυξήσει τη ναυτική της παρουσία στην Αζοφική Θάλασσα με δύο κανονιοφόρους και μέχρι τέλος του έτους σχεδιάζει να δημιουργήσει και μια ναυτική βάση στην περιοχή.

Αυτή η ένταση μοιραίως εμπλέκει και τις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες οι οποίες, θέλοντας να εξυπηρετήσουν τα στρατηγικά τους συμφέροντα, προσπαθούν να περιορίσουν τη Ρωσία και να μην της επιτρέψουν να τροφοδοτεί με ενέργεια και τις χώρες της Μέσης Ανατολής, αλλά και κάποιες χώρες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Όλη αυτή η κατάσταση μπορεί να ξεφύγει εύκολα από τον έλεγχο, διότι ας μην ξεχνάμε ότι η Θάλασσα του Αζόφ αποτελεί τη μόνη ναυτική πρόσβαση της Ρωσίας προς τον Νότο.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já chci velmi uvítat tu dnešní debatu, která byla mimořádně zajímavá a je do určité míry odpovědí těm všem, kteří v Evropě zpochybňují sankce vůči Rusku a kteří tvrdí, že by se sankce měly zrušit. Sám v České republice, odkud jsem, cítím u některých extremistických politických sil, že bychom měli vůči Rusku vystupovat vstřícněji. Ta dnešní debata jasně ukazuje, že naopak EU musí být razantnější, musí být tvrdší a že situace v Azovském moři, která zde dnes byla popisována, je další formou agrese vůči Ukrajině. Tentokrát je to v zásadě určitá forma obchodní blokády, která výrazně omezuje formu vývozu ukrajinského zboží z ukrajinských přístavů. Tedy připoujím se k těm, vážená paní vysoká představitelko, kteří Vás prosí o tvrdý přístup vůči Rusku. Není možné v této věci zaujímat kompromisy, které poškozují Ukrajinu a hodnoty a postoje EU.

József Nagy (PPE). – Tisztelt Elnök Asszony! Kedves Mogherini asszony! Köszönöm a kercsi híd építésével kialakult helyzetről szóló beszámolóját. Szerintem a Fekete-tenger egy európai tenger, az Azovi-tenger pedig a Fekete-tenger leválaszthatatlan része, amit Oroszország nem sajátíthat ki magának egyoldalúan, akár egy híd megépítése ürügyén sem.

Ez nemcsak Ukrajna, de a többi EU-s és nem EU-s országnak is sérti az érdekeit. Nagyon röviden csak azt szeretném elmondani, hogy támogatom a javaslatot, a helyzet megfigyelését, azt, hogy az Európai Bizottság küldjön ki szakértői csoportot, amely kiértékeli a konkrét gazdasági következményeket. Mérjék fel a közlekedés akadályozásának, az időhúzásnak, a kereskedelmi hajók molesztálásának a költségeit, és számolják ki azt is, hogy az ukrán kikötők forgalmának mennyi a csökkenése. Úgy gondolom, hogy ezek az adatok még jók lehetnek az Oroszországgal való tárgyalásainkban.

(Pyynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot päättyvät)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Madam President, I am here also for the next debate so I will continue. First of all, let me thank the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) and all its members, and in particular Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, for the work done in this regard, the visits made and the previous exchange of views we had. That was not with me personally but with our services, on 11 October, and, it helped to prepare for this plenary and helped with the work we are constantly doing on this issue.

Keeping the focus on this is essential, for different reasons, and the speakers all mentioned them. First of all, for our principles and values; and then for Ukraine's sovereignty, and also for the economy – both that of Ukraine and that of the European Union, as the speakers have emphasised – and for our collective security. I think we have many good reasons for keeping a close eye on what is happening in the Sea of Azov and we will continue to react appropriately and in a united manner. For this, the support of Parliament will continue to be key.

Let me assure you, too, that part of the next EU-Ukraine Association Council that I will chair in a couple of months from now – together, I believe, with the Ukrainian Prime Minister – will also focus on to how to address this issue in the best possible manner, and what kind of support the European Union can give to Ukraine in this context. Among other issues on which we are supporting Ukraine, this is also extremely important.

I would like quickly to touch upon a couple of points that were raised, not probably all of them, but a couple of them. Some of you referred to the need to uphold international principles, including the international courts and legislation. As I said at the beginning, we appreciate that Ukraine is seeking justice in the international courts. You know that there is an ongoing case under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). So we trust the international courts, and in this case UNCLOS, as we always do, upholding international jurisdictions.

The second point concerns the sanctions. As I mentioned before, we included new persons on our sanctions list in relation to the construction of the bridge. Some of you referred to the implementation of these sanctions. As you know very well, it is for the European Council, in unanimity, to adopt the sanctions and measures, but then it is for Member States to monitor their implementation and to take appropriate measures if needed. Obviously, as the Commission, we have our own say in pushing this monitoring of implementation by Member States, but it is very much an issue that lies in their hands.

We will continue to assess the situation and the developments in the Sea of Azov. We will continue to count on the support of this Parliament and all the relevant committees to continue to build a united effort and policy and to work with our Ukrainian friends to invest in their resilience as much as we can.

Puhemies. – Olen vastaanottanut viisi työjärjestyksen 123 artiklan 2 kohdan mukaisesti käsiteltäväksi jätettyä päätöslauselmaesitystä.

Keskustelu on päättynyt.

Äänestys toimitetaan torstaina 25.10.2018.

16. Sytuacja w Wenezueli (debata)

Puhemies. – Esityslistalla on seuraavana komission varapuheenjohtajan ja unionin ulkoasioiden ja turvallisuuspolitiikan korkean edustajan julkilausuma Venezuelan tilanteesta (2018/2891(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Madam President, we discuss the situation in Venezuela relatively often and I can start by saying that we are now seeing a further deterioration in the situation and further polarisation of the political scene. Tensions are continuing to rise, social and economic conditions are clearly worsening quite dramatically, and, against this background, over two million Venezuelans have decided to leave the country. We often refer to crises caused by migration to Europe. I would invite you to look at these numbers.

There are, as I said, two million Venezuelans fleeing to Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru and the Caribbean. Among those people, some are European citizens, so here we have an inverse situation: as you might know, nearly one million EU nationals have dual citizenship. There are also people of European descent who live in Venezuela, although many of them have already left the country. Even though an ocean geographically divides us, we Europeans cannot stand on the sidelines of this crisis. It concerns us simply because of the number of EU nationals who are also Venezuelans, not to mention the social, cultural and economic ties that exist between Europe and Venezuela.

Our response so far has been both humanitarian and political. On the humanitarian side, we are currently mobilising EUR 35 million in assistance to Venezuelans both within and outside the country. We are investing in health assistance, food and water sanitation. We are working to support the socio-economic inclusion of Venezuelans and to help the local economies of host communities in neighbouring countries. Half of this EUR 35 million package is already being implemented in near-record time and the remainder will be made operational by early next year. We are also exploring the possibility of further increasing the Commission's financial support beyond this already very significant contribution.

We have welcomed the appointment of Eduardo Stein as a UNHCR-IOM Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan refugees and migrants, and, with the Foreign Ministers of the 28 Member States, we had the opportunity to discuss the Venezuelan migration crisis last Monday in Luxembourg during the Foreign Affairs Council, expressing our support to both Mr Grandi and Mr Vitorino for this work, which we want to be joint work. On that occasion we had both Mr Grandi and Mr Vitorino with us. We didn't focus purely on issues relating to migration and Europe, and I believe that to be right. We stand ready to support any further coordinated action, both at regional and international level, to address this humanitarian crisis more effectively.

But the only possible solution is political. Last week – again with the Foreign Affairs Council, with the Foreign Ministers – we discussed what more the European Union can do to prevent a further deterioration in the situation or help change the course of these negative developments. Ministers from all 28 Member States have confirmed that, first of all, any sustainable political solution to the Venezuelan crisis has to be democratic and peaceful, and those are the two pillars that are guiding our action. External intervention or any use of force would simply be unacceptable to us and would make things much worse.

Our immediate request to the Government of Venezuela is that it takes unilateral confidence-building measures to ease tensions, first and foremost by restoring the full constitutional powers of the National Assembly and respecting the immunity of its members, releasing all political prisoners and taking concrete steps to restore political pluralism and guarantee respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We expect, in particular, a full, independent and impartial investigation into the circumstances of Councillor Albán's death. It is the duty of the State to ensure the safety and physical integrity of all people in its custody. Finally, we ask the Government to allow free, credible and transparent elections with full respect for the Constitution. On all these points, we have not changed our minds. You have heard them and have said as much yourselves several times. The requests from our side remain on the table and we don't intend to change our minds on these starting points: the people of Venezuela are simply asking for democracy, and this crisis will end only with a political process heading in that direction. This is very clear to us Europeans.

In response to the human rights violations in Venezuela and the ongoing attack on democratic institutions, we decided a year ago to impose targeted restrictive measures on a number of individuals who are responsible for the current situation. This is the first time that we are imposing these kinds of measures in Latin America and, as you can imagine, we didn't take the decision lightly. We took it not only because of the deteriorating situation, but also as a message for the authorities in Venezuela, with which we are keeping a channel of dialogue open, to commit themselves seriously to a negotiated political solution to the current crisis. Today, the situation has not improved at all. On the contrary. So we are sticking to our decision, and the restrictive measures will stay for as long as human rights are violated and democratic principles are disregarded. We do not intend to soften our position while there is no substantive progress on the ground.

At the Foreign Affairs Council last week, we started a discussion with the Ministers on what else we, as the European Union and as Member States, can do, in addition to these positions and the decision to continue the sanctions, to end the downward spiral and help start some kind of political process, as the absence of a political process might in itself lead to a further deterioration in the situation. So we will explore, first of all together with Latin American countries, the possibility of establishing a contact group with relevant and interested countries, not only from the region, and international players.

We don't think that, at this point in time, mediation or a dialogue would have any chance of succeeding. I want to be very clear on that point. It's not a question of buying time. No way. The conditions for either a dialogue or for mediation are not there, but an international initiative – a European initiative together with others – could, with plenty of question marks, help build the conditions that would eventually make it possible to relaunch a political process. For the moment, this is just a possibility that we are exploring. I don't want to raise expectations. We are simply worried about the lack of a political process and, personally, I don't want to be in a position, six months or a year from now, of looking back and asking whether we could have done more on the political side to prevent the situation from deteriorating even further.

So again, without raising expectations or launching an initiative today, the idea is simply to explore whether it might be possible to put something in place that could help create the conditions for something to happen in the future. I believe that we should try any peaceful option to end the current stalemate and prevent a violent escalation because, if the situation does not improve – and we do not see the situation improving – an escalation of violence cannot be ruled out, and that would mean even greater suffering for the people of Venezuela. This is an option that we have to avert and prevent.

We don't want to impose any outside outsourced solution. That is never the European approach. We believe in democracy, we believe in ownership, we believe in cooperation and we believe in respect. We believe that the future of Venezuela – and also the present of Venezuela – must be written by its people and no one else, without any external intervention. But we will do everything we can to help the Venezuelan people take the future and the present of the country back into their hands. I am looking forward to listening to your views.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, *en nombre del Grupo PPE*. – Señora presidenta, señora alta representante, señorías, la democracia y los derechos humanos se encuentran en una situación crítica en Venezuela: 2 300 000 venezolanos, según las cifras oficiales de ACNUR, han tenido que abandonar el país —de hecho, las cifras reales son tres millones—. Tres millones, señora alta representante, es una cifra enorme: representa diez veces la población de la ciudad de Estrasburgo que nos acoge hoy.

Hay más de doscientos cincuenta presos políticos, según el Foro Penal Venezolano, y más de doce mil ciudadanos venezolanos han entrado y salido en este carrusel siniestro de puertas giratorias de las cárceles; unos han salido, como Lorent Saleh, torturados; otros no han salido, como el concejal Fernando Albán, al que usted se ha referido; y otros, como el diputado de la Asamblea Nacional Juan Requesens, están todavía en prisión.

La cara partida de Juan Requesens, señora alta representante, es una imagen viva de lo que es hoy la democracia en Venezuela: ensangrentada, golpeada, maltratada, pero todavía en pie.

Creo que en el debate de hoy tenemos que reflexionar seriamente sobre el mensaje que la Unión Europea tiene que trasladar a este atribulado pueblo de Venezuela, y ver si somos capaces de trasladarles un mensaje de esperanza. Este Parlamento ha concedido el Premio Sájarov a la oposición democrática. Nos ha hablado de los debates en el Consejo de Ministros; celebramos, señora alta representante, que el Consejo no haya cambiado su posición. Sabemos que hay Estados miembros que quieren suavizarla, pero no es el momento de contemporizar, no es el momento de aflojar.

Es el momento de abordar con determinación y con coraje nuestros principios y de apoyar soluciones, señora alta representante, con nuestros socios de la región —usted se refería muy bien al Grupo de Lima o a la OEA— para tratar de que el pueblo de Venezuela, con todas las garantías, pueda volver a tomar la palabra.

Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señora presidenta, la pregunta, como bien decía la señora Mogherini, es: ¿qué más? Esta es la pregunta. Y este es el momento en que tenemos que responder, porque todo lo anterior ya está hecho: hemos condenado a Maduro y a su régimen cientos de veces; hemos producido resoluciones; proporcionamos ayuda humanitaria; hemos aplicado sanciones.

La pregunta es: ¿qué más, señorías? Y yo quisiera que hubiera un consenso en esta Cámara sobre «qué más». Y esta creo que es una reflexión que nos obliga a ser inteligentes y pragmáticos: inteligentes porque hay que encontrar en la región, en los agentes internacionales de la región, aliados para ayudar a Venezuela, y hacerlo como un país amigo de Venezuela, que es la Unión Europea; y pragmáticos, porque hay que encontrar salidas pacíficas y democráticas. Se ha dicho bien, pero salidas, inclusive a la dictadura, porque también las dictaduras necesitan salidas. Y yo creo que lo importante de hoy es mandar este mensaje, porque el acuerdo de la Cámara, además de las condenas, es que, en primer lugar, solo el pueblo venezolano decide.

En segundo lugar, que no cabe ninguna intervención ajena y mucho menos violenta, y creo que es oportuno recordarlo. Y en tercero, que precisamente por eso los ministros —y la señora Mogherini lo ha dicho bien— tienen que explorar si la Unión Europea puede jugar un papel mejor en la ayuda a una salida pacífica, democrática y dialogada.

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, we stand by the people of Venezuela in their dramatic situation with the spillover effect of this drama to the whole region. Therefore, we have to increase pressure on the Maduro regime to stop violations of human rights, including the rights and immunities of our colleagues, the parliamentarians. We have to increase pressure also to introduce reforms in the country and to keep cooperation with other organisations such as the OAS and the UN.

Dita Charanzová, *en nombre del Grupo ALDE*. – Señora presidenta, señora alta representante, esta es la cuarta Resolución sobre Venezuela este año y todos sabemos que la situación sigue empeorando en Venezuela. La Unión Europea no puede seguir esperando a que la situación de los derechos humanos se deteriore más y más.

¿Qué más necesitamos para convencernos? ¿Cuántos más abusos, más testimonios de tortura, más muertes de venezolanos inocentes debemos presenciar antes de que la Unión decida que la situación se ha deteriorado lo suficiente como para justificar un siguiente paso?

Primero, necesitamos acciones concretas y que tengan un impacto efectivo. Necesitamos más sanciones selectivas y que abarquen a familiares cercanos, así como a la compañía estatal de petróleo.

Segundo, debemos cooperar a nivel internacional. Por eso, pido a la Unión Europea y a sus Estados miembros que se unan a la petición de países como Argentina, Chile y Canadá para que la Corte Penal Internacional abra una investigación acerca de los crímenes cometidos por el régimen de Maduro, y de esa forma acabar de una vez por todas con la impunidad que impera en Venezuela desde hace ya mucho tiempo.

Es tarde, pero todavía queda un poco de tiempo para actuar de forma efectiva. No necesitamos más pruebas del sufrimiento a que se ve sometido el pueblo venezolano para dar este paso.

Molly Scott Cato, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, I must start by expressing our deep concern over the situation in Venezuela. As Greens, we abhor any human rights violations and threats to the rule of law and are seriously concerned about the deepening humanitarian and political crisis in Venezuela. I would like to acknowledge and support your efforts, Ms Mogherini, to establish a contact group in Venezuela that may facilitate political discussions between different parties. As Greens, we are always strong supporters of a political process as a means to bring about peaceful resolution. We recognise that targeted sanctions can bring some progress, but they cannot replace peaceful diplomacy, and they must not be allowed to harm the Venezuelan people further.

We have now had several debates in this House on Venezuela. We have them frequently, and it seems that there are some factions in the House who are unfailingly supporting the Venezuelan opposition. We are concerned that this may make the likelihood of civil conflict greater, and we see that as an increasing likelihood that we are very concerned about. I would urge my colleagues to support peace through diplomacy and negotiation, and not to stoke the fire with inflammatory rhetoric.

Javier Couso Permuy, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señora presidenta, otra Resolución sobre Venezuela, y ya pierdo la cuenta. Parece que buscan el récord Guinness de resoluciones sobre un país, y van por buen camino. Parece que no hay otro problema en América Latina. Pero ustedes no buscan solucionar los problemas de Venezuela, sino un cambio de gobierno.

Dos hechos en estas semanas dejan claro su doble rasero: Honduras, miles de migrantes huyendo de su país, del hambre y la violencia del país más violento del mundo. No les he escuchado hablar de emergencia humanitaria, ni de presión en las fronteras, ni de responsabilidad de un Gobierno heredero de un golpe de Estado, ni de pedir sanciones contra él.

Otro, el asesinato y descuartizamiento en vida del periodista Jashogui. ¿Dónde están las sanciones, señora Mogherini? ¿Dónde la denuncia del acuerdo con Arabia Saudí o el Consejo de Cooperación del Golfo? ¿Dónde los pronunciamientos contra la dictadura teocrática y asesina? No las hay porque esos son sus amiguitos.

El acoso furibundo de este Parlamento y de la Unión Europea solo persigue una agenda de cambios de gobierno; criminalizar y expulsar a un presidente que, con más de seis millones de votos, ganó las últimas elecciones. Pero la realidad es tozuda: ni golpes de Estado, ni terrorismo callejero, ni sanciones, ni guerra económica, ni intentos de magnicidio han conseguido torcer la voluntad venezolana expresada en las urnas. Es lo que les molesta: que Venezuela siga su camino soberano que solo van a decidir sus ciudadanos.

Mara Bizzotto, *a nome del gruppo ENF*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, in Venezuela Maduro è il capo di un'infame dittatura comunista che sta uccidendo il popolo venezuelano. In Venezuela i dissidenti politici vengono arrestati e uccisi dalla polizia di regime. In Venezuela i bambini e gli anziani muoiono di fame per mancanza di cure.

Li c'è una grande comunità di italo-venezuelani, 150 000 persone costrette ad abbandonare tutto e a scappare all'estero per fuggire dalle persecuzioni del regime di Maduro. I venezuelani sono veri profughi, profughi anticomunisti e cattolici che l'Europa, Lei, commissaria Mogherini, e il Vaticano fanno finta di non vedere.

È vergognoso il Suo silenzio, commissaria Mogherini, è vergognoso il silenzio della sinistra, che pensa solo ai falsi profughi africani e non dice una parola sui veri profughi anticomunisti del Venezuela.

Noi abbiamo il dovere di aiutare i nostri fratelli venezuelani, bisogna abbattere la dittatura comunista, spazzare via il dittatore Maduro e ridare la libertà al Venezuela. Libertà per il popolo venezuelano, libertà per i nostri fratelli italo-venezuelani.

McAllister, David (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to underline what has been said this evening. Venezuela is facing an unprecedented political, social, economic and humanitarian crisis. The devastating political actions of President Maduro have resulted in an increasing number of deaths, refugees and arbitrarily arrested people.

Three aspects should guide our actions with Venezuela, in my opinion. The first one is: the EU should continue to urge President Maduro to stop any human rights violations and to allow unhindered humanitarian aid to prevent the crisis from further deteriorating.

Secondly, I fully support the Foreign Affairs Council's calls for new presidential elections. If these elections do not take place in the near future, we must act swiftly and impose additional targeted, restrictive measures, and thirdly, the European Union must enhance its political outreach with the democratic opposition and the civil society. It is high time for friendly, meaningful and result-oriented negotiations towards peaceful solutions but most important also, in my opinion, is that the Venezuelan people deserve an end to this Communist nightmare.

Francisco Assis (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, na última semana de junho passado, integrando uma delegação do Parlamento Europeu, estive num dos Estados mais pobres do Brasil, Roraima, que faz fronteira com a Venezuela, e tive oportunidade, nessa altura, de visitar vários campos de refugiados venezuelanos. Não se trata de *fake news*, trata-se de contatos diretos que tive com pessoas que ali estavam, com quem pude falar, venezuelanos, a maioria, pobres, e que tinham fugido da Venezuela. Falei com eles e eles apontavam as mais diversas razões: a fome, a inexistência de medicamentos, alguns casos, um quadro de perseguição política.

Essa é a realidade. Muito mais do que dois milhões de cidadãos que deixaram a Venezuela nos últimos anos, devido ao regime ditatorial que ali impera. E nós, aqui, não podemos estabelecer nenhuma distinção entre ditaduras. Não há ditaduras de esquerda e ditaduras de direita, umas melhores e outras piores. Todas as ditaduras são deploráveis e os verdadeiros democratas têm a obrigação de as combater. E nós, que temos o privilégio de estar num Parlamento democrático, temos a obrigação de denunciar, de combater e de apoiar aqueles que lutam pela democracia na Venezuela, mesmo que não concordemos inteiramente com as suas orientações ideológicas e políticas.

Estou de acordo com a ideia de promover mais negociações, embora aquelas que se desenvolveram até agora tenham fracassado. Mas estou de acordo com essa ideia e penso que a União Europeia deve investir, até ao limite das suas capacidades, no esforço para promover essas negociações entre as diversas partes envolvidas no conflito na Venezuela. Mas isso não pode, em nenhuma circunstância, significar que a União Europeia vai retirar o que quer que seja de firmeza na sua relação com um regime ditatorial, como o regime atualmente existente na Venezuela.

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE). – Señora presidenta, gracias, señora Mogherini por su claridad meridiana. Mientras algunos siguen llenándose la boca con la palabra «diálogo» respecto a Venezuela, la vida de la opositora María Corina Machado está en peligro. Tras intentar inculparla sin éxito en un descabellado plan de magnicidio, el régimen chavista parece estar planeando ahora un atentado contra ella que disfrazaría de accidente, exactamente del mismo modo que ha intentado disfrazar de suicidio la muerte del concejal Fernando Albán. «Diálogo», ¿de qué diálogo hablan? En esta brutal asimetría de opresores y oprimidos, lo único que se plantea es un chantaje.

La Unión Europea tiene dos obligaciones ineludibles. La primera, esforzarse al máximo en garantizar la seguridad física de quienes encarnan la oposición democrática de Venezuela. Y la segunda, mantener su posición hasta lograr las condiciones aprobadas por esta Cámara, que muy bien ha recordado la señora Mogherini: liberación de todos los presos políticos, apertura de un canal humanitario, restitución plena de la Constitución y de todas las instituciones legítimas, y convocatoria de unas elecciones transparentes e inclusivas, sin impunidad para los criminales, que tendrán que responder ante la justicia internacional.

Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE). – Señora presidente, gracias, señora Mogherini por su presencia. La situación de Venezuela parecía difícil que empeorara, pero ha ocurrido en términos inaceptables. El presunto asesinato del concejal Fernando Albán, del partido Primero Justicia, por el burdo sistema de arrojarle por la ventana de la casa de las torturas, es algo ya que raya en lo que no se podría creer.

Dice la alta representante —y ha estado muy bien hoy— que no se abandonan las sanciones, pero que aboga por el diálogo. Y en esto vamos a discrepar. Esta es la tesis del señor Rodríguez Zapatero, expresidente del Gobierno de España, y que ya, más que mediador, empieza a ser un colaborador necesario de la dictadura.

Lamentablemente, el antiguo presidente del Parlamento Europeo, señor Borrell, y actual ministro de Asuntos Exteriores de España también está en esa línea. Es imposible plantear una situación de diálogo, y veo que la alta representante es también bastante escéptica. Pero he oído algo importante: hay que descartar por completo cualquier tipo de dilucidación sobre actuaciones violentas.

Las declaraciones de Trump, de Almagro y hasta de Ledezma son inaceptables. Las respuestas tienen que ser democráticas, impecablemente democráticas. Lo contrario provoca victimismo y produce razones que no tienen.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Madam President, I welcome High Representative Mogherini's stance on Venezuela. The grave human rights violations in the country must be condemned in the strongest possible terms, and the European Union must lead efforts to facilitate political dialogue in the country.

The situation in Venezuela has been blocked for several years, and there seems to be no end in sight. The EU should, as it often has done in the past, serve as a facilitator of dialogue in order for the Venezuelans to find a viable exit to the economic, social and political crisis they're facing. It's crucial to involve other countries from the region in order to ensure that peaceful talks can take place, whilst also joining efforts with them towards independent investigations into allegations of human rights violations and the prosecution of perpetrators.

While we discuss the diplomatic solutions to the crisis, sadly, people are starving on the ground, fleeing to neighbouring countries because they lack public services. With the current state of affairs, our priority should be to deliver urgent humanitarian aid to the country, as the short-term consequences of the crisis for the population are dire.

Nuno Melo (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, enquanto falamos, o ditador Nicolás Maduro critica Donald Trump por não abrir as fronteiras dos Estados Unidos a milhares de cidadãos das Honduras que querem entrar no país. Nicolás Maduro só não se questiona sobre as razões pelas quais estas pessoas escolhem como destino os Estados Unidos, e não a Venezuela. Porque é que preferem os braços de um país democrático, mesmo se tratado por Maduro como imperialista com pretensões a polícia do mundo, à Venezuela chavista e totalitária onde se aplicam as práticas marxistas mais ortodoxas em pleno século XXI?

E a resposta é fácil. Se procurassem a Venezuela, provavelmente teriam as fronteiras fechadas. Depois, se aí quisessem viver e trabalhar, o que é que encontrariam? Encontrariam miséria e fome, um povo à míngua, empresas encerradas, a violência das milícias do regime; se ficassem doentes não teriam medicamentos nos hospitais; se quisessem ser empresários, acabariam talvez presos arbitrariamente, como aconteceu a 34 gerentes de supermercados, 12 deles portugueses e luso-descendentes há pouco tempo; e se contestassem o Governo, talvez acabassem como Fernando Albán Salazar, vereador da cidade de Libertador, opositor preso às ordens da ditadura que talvez tenha tropeçado do décimo andar do prédio do serviço bolivariano de Inteligência Nacional em Caracas.

Senhora Presidente, este debate é sobre a situação na Venezuela. A situação na Venezuela, um dos países mais ricos do planeta, reduz-se a uma palavra, é uma tragédia.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, uma profunda derrapagem democrática institucional gerou uma enorme crise humanitária na Venezuela.

Uma tragédia com a dimensão daquela que está a suceder é sempre fruto de um estrondoso falhanço político. As causas e os contextos são vários, mas o papel da União Europeia não deve ser o de alimentar rivalidades geoestratégicas ou extremar a caracterização dos bons ou dos maus.

O sofrimento do povo venezuelano não pode ser um instrumento de combate político e, por isso, quero saudar a estratégia definida pela União Europeia, e aqui reiterada pela Alta Representante Federica Mogherini. Essa estratégia deve ser apoiada por este Parlamento. As sanções direcionadas e a denúncia das violações dos direitos humanos que ocorrem sistematicamente são a base necessária para forçar uma solução política que salvguarde as bases do Estado de direito, ajude o povo e permita resolver a brutal crise humanitária que está a ocorrer na Venezuela.

Eduard Kukan (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to start by saying that it remains crucial that the EU support the International Criminal Court (ICC) in investigating repression and crimes in Venezuela. There can be no moving forward without seeking justice. In addition to the dire humanitarian situation in Venezuela, President Maduro's regime continues to harass and torture political opponents whilst creating an environment of impunity in his country. I deeply regret the orchestrated accusation against the 2017 Sakharov Prize laureates, which, inter alia, effectively excluded them from competing in future elections.

The EU needs to be firm in its rejection of the illegitimate Constituent National Assembly authorities. Once again, our resolution must reiterate that the 20 May elections are illegitimate and not internationally recognised. As a response to the stance by the Venezuelan regime, we have adopted additional and revocable sanctions but need to make it clear that further deterioration of democracy will provoke a much stronger reaction from our side.

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Gerbiama Pirmininke, padėtis Venesueloje vis dar smarkiai blogėja, šalis susiduria su precedento neturinčia politine, socialine, ekonomine ir humanitarine krize – mes tai žinome.

Nuo tada, kai prezidentas Maduro perėmė valdžią, žmogaus teisių pažeidimai ir susidorojimai su pilietine visuomene tapo kasdienybe. Badas, vaistų stygius – situacija tokia beviltiška, kad ŽIV ir vėžiu sergantys pacientai nebegydomi, o tėvai savo alkanus vaikus yra priversti atiduoti į vaikų namus. Vietoje seniai laukiamų valdžios sprendimų – dar didesnės pastangos vaizduoti alternatyvią realybę.

Šiandien jau buvo minėta: pastaruoju metu daugiau nei 2,3 milijono pabėgėlių iš Venesuelos. Tai milžiniška humanitarinė krizė ir mes turime rasti galimybių atsakyti į ją.

Pirma, turime padėti savo partneriams regione susidoroti su pabėgėlių srautais iš Venesuelos. Antra, turime pasiekti, kad Venesuelos valdžios institucijos nedelsiant įsileistų humanitarinę pagalbą į šalį. Ir trečia, reikia tarptautinio tarpininkavimo ir kontaktų grupės, priimtinos abiem pusėms. Mums reikia to politinio krizės sprendimo ir vienintelio – taikiu būdu.

Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE). – Señora presidenta, señora alta representante, la situación es crítica: desastre humanitario y gravísima violación de los derechos humanos. Nuestro rol es fundamental. La Unión, las Naciones Unidas y el mundo libre deben reforzar su firme compromiso con el pueblo venezolano y contra la dictadura y la tiranía de Maduro. Condenamos enérgicamente el brutal asesinato de Fernando Albán y pedimos una investigación independiente en el marco de las Naciones Unidas que identifique a los culpables y añada nuevos argumentos incriminatorios a la causa ante la Corte Penal Internacional.

El Helicoide es un centro ilegal de represión, de tortura y de muerte. Ya hemos comprobado en Cúcuta y en Boa Vista las trágicas consecuencias del éxodo masivo de venezolanos buscando la vida y la libertad. El impacto en los países vecinos supera su buena fe y sus posibilidades de acogida. La condena no es suficiente. Hace falta más solidaridad tangible. La Unión está ahí y el Parlamento tiene que seguir ahí, ayudando, presionando y denunciando. ¿Qué son 35 millones de euros ante esta tragedia?

Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE). – *(inicio de la intervención fuera de micrófono)* ...el asesinato del opositor Fernando Albán, que se ha querido cubrir como un suicidio, es un trágico ejemplo de este deterioro. Yo vengo defendiendo desde hace tiempo que la Unión Europea tiene que ser más activa frente a esta crisis que afecta gravemente a ciudadanos venezolanos y también a los vecinos Colombia, Perú, Brasil y Ecuador.

No me gustaron, señora Mogherini, los resultados que ha leído del Consejo de Asuntos Exteriores de la semana pasada. Yo no creo en modo alguno que se den las condiciones para un relanzamiento de un mecanismo de diálogo o mediación. El régimen venezolano, que todo lo controla, no tiene voluntad de ceder en nada, ni de llegar a compromisos. Los antecedentes son muy claros: fracaso en la República Dominicana, detención y asesinato, en algún caso, de opositores. En fin, las fórmulas de diálogo, como usted sabe muy bien, dan oxígeno al régimen, le permiten ganar tiempo.

¿Nosotros qué tenemos que hacer? Además de ayudar a la población, aumentar la presión sobre el régimen. Hacerle ver que su comportamiento no queda impune y obligarle a cambiar de rumbo, en coordinación con los países del Grupo de Lima. La situación es gravísima, el sufrimiento de los venezolanos es enorme. Tenemos que ayudarles y contribuir a que el régimen de Maduro deponga su actitud.

Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio (PPE). – Señora presidenta, quiero prestar mi voz a las víctimas de la represión de Maduro, ya que ellas no pueden hablar porque, si lo hicieran, serían detenidas, torturadas y asesinadas.

Hablo en nombre de los padres que han visto morir a sus hijos por pedir libertad en Venezuela; en nombre de los millones de venezolanos que cruzan la frontera, víctimas de una crisis humanitaria sin precedentes; en nombre de los millones de exiliados por la crisis económica, política y social; de los jóvenes sin patria que no pueden volver a su país; de todas las familias destrozadas, separadas y que intentan sobrevivir en el exilio; en nombre de todos los que mueren porque no tienen ni alimentos ni medicamentos.

No se puede seguir negando la realidad. El diálogo ayuda a Maduro. Y me pregunto por qué España no se ha sumado a la denuncia ante la Corte Penal Internacional para que se investigue a Venezuela por crímenes de lesa humanidad como sí lo han hecho Francia y Alemania, por ejemplo. A Maduro le llegó su hora y debemos ayudar a los venezolanos a recuperar la esperanza, la libertad y la dignidad.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Madam President, the minimum wage in Venezuela was recently raised by 3 000%. That sounds like a wild dream for workers in a normal country, but in the meantime, inflation has skyrocketed by 83 000% this year. Prices doubled in 26 days, 80% of the population is affected by poverty. This represents a total failure by the present regime, which has lost the moral and political credentials to run the country, a regime that has caused the largest wave of migration in Latin America's recent history. There is a climate of violence and total impunity.

We need to take a decisive approach with clear conditions, namely: freeing all political prisoners; allowing humanitarian aid to enter the country unimpeded; and, lastly, the holding of free and credible elections. But I cannot agree more with your point, Ms Mogherini, that the people of Venezuela are simply asking for democracy, and the crisis will end with the restoration of a normal, open and pluralist society which guarantees the rights of every citizen. It is as simple as that.

Fernando Ruas (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Alta Representante, mais uma vez para exprimir a nossa profunda preocupação pelo que se está a passar neste grande país da América Latina. A Venezuela, não tendo vivido nenhuma catástrofe natural, possui hoje cerca de 87% da sua população afetada pelo verdadeiro flagelo social e humano que é a pobreza, vivendo mais de 61% dos venezuelanos em situação de pobreza extrema, como evidencia a nossa resolução.

Esta situação não é tolerável e tem que ser invertida! O retrato social, humanitário, económico e político na Venezuela é bem conhecido. Este Parlamento, aliás, tem debatido intensamente a situação, tendo enviado uma missão às suas fronteiras em junho último e atribuindo mesmo o prémio Shakarov, no ano passado, à oposição venezuelana.

E é a mesma esta oposição que se se vê alvo de perseguições e detenções arbitrárias, mandados de captura internacionais, expulsões do país ou exílios esforçados. Acresce a estes factos a morte o vereador Fernando Albán ocorrida há duas semanas em circunstâncias desconhecidas e enquanto estava sob custódia do Serviço de Inteligência Nacional. São, pois, situações intoleráveis que têm que ser imediatamente invertidas!

Termino, deixando o apelo para que a ajuda humanitária europeia e internacional seja reforçada no terreno e nos países limítrofes.

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. DAVID-MARIA SASSOLI

*Vicepresidente**Procedura «catch the eye»*

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Pane předsedající, já jsem velmi pozorně poslouchal tuto debatu a chci pouze připomenout, že v posledních měsících jsme se zde situací ve Venezuele zabývali několikrát. Situace je čím dál horší, kolegové velmi přesně popisují ekonomickou a obrovskou tragédii, kterou dnes venezuelský lid prožívá, a je otázka na Vás, paní vysoká představitelko, jestli jsme schopni instrumenty mezinárodního práva, mezinárodní diplomacie donutit diktátora Madura, aby alespoň umožnil vstup jednotkám, které jsou schopny poskytnout humanitární pomoc, a těm mezinárodním organizacím, které chtějí poskytovat humanitární pomoc, do své země, čímž by se snížila obrovská katastrofa venezuelského lidu. Dokud Maduro nicméně bude diktátorem, pak je nutné vnímat, že takové tragédie, jako je zavraždění aktivisty, politika Albána, budou realitou a nikdo s tím nic neudělá. Takže je třeba podle mého názoru vyvinout mnohem větší tlak a pomoci alespoň lidem v té obrovské ekonomické tragédii.

Caterina Chinnici (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Alto rappresentante, lo abbiamo oggi ribadito: è sempre più preoccupante la situazione di protratto stallo politico in Venezuela, che ha determinato una crisi umanitaria, sociale ed economica che colpisce il paese e ha provocato un vero e proprio esodo di massa.

Più di due milioni di persone, e fra questi molti bambini, hanno lasciato il paese per sfuggire a situazioni di vita drammatiche e alla repressione di un governo sempre più autoritario.

È necessario, è vero, lo stanziamento di aiuti per supportare le nazioni vicine nel far fronte all'enorme sforzo umanitario per garantire una dignitosa accoglienza a tutti i rifugiati, ma occorre una soluzione pacifica di lungo periodo, e per questo sarà necessario che l'Europa incrementi lo sforzo di mediazione internazionale con il governo venezuelano per porre fine alla violazione dei diritti e per il ripristino della democrazia.

Signora Mogherini, condivido la Sua proposta di istituire un gruppo di contatto che verifichi se esistano le condizioni per un processo politico che porti a una soluzione democratica che coinvolga tutti gli attori regionali e internazionali.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – Señor presidente, Maduro y su Gobierno, con la represión que ejercen —documentada con miles de denuncias—, con el bloqueo de la ayuda que necesitan, con el éxodo forzado al que obligan a la ciudadanía de un país mal administrado y gobernado, con su oposición a la transparencia frente a la comunidad internacional, obligan a pasar de las palabras a los hechos. Porque estamos ante más que síntomas de la comisión de un crimen de lesa humanidad contra las y los venezolanos.

Por eso quiero solicitar que la Unión y todos sus Estados miembros se sumen a la solicitud que ha puesto en marcha una investigación preliminar de la Corte Penal Internacional sobre las actividades del régimen de Nicolás Maduro. No basta con eso. Apoyo también nuevas sanciones selectivas contra sus jerarcas y toda iniciativa que promocióne una solución dialogada, necesaria. Pero requiere una condición: la liberación de todos los presos políticos, el cese del acoso y la represión y la restauración de las legítimas instituciones usurpadas.

Nada más lejos de la noble liberación que promovió Simón Bolívar que la cruel dictadura de Nicolás Maduro.

João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL). – Senhor Presidente, esta Câmara omite sistematicamente sem condenação as ameaças de intervenção militar e as constantes ações de desestabilização promovidas pelos Estados Unidos contra a República Bolivariana da Venezuela e o povo venezuelano. Uma estratégia a que se associa a União Europeia e que tem como elemento central as sanções e o bloqueio económico e financeiro, atingindo a economia da Venezuela e as condições de vida do seu povo e também da esmagadora maioria da comunidade portuguesa.

Ações que se intensificam quando o Governo venezuelano procura concretizar medidas de combate a ações terroristas, a par de medidas económicas, nomeadamente, de combate ao açambarcamento e à especulação de preços, visando assegurar a melhoria das condições de vida dos venezuelanos e também da comunidade portuguesa.

As relações com a Venezuela e o seu legítimo Governo devem pautar-se pelo respeito da sua soberania e independência, pela Carta das Nações Unidas e o direito internacional, como pelo respeito pelo direito do povo venezuelano a decidir, sem ingerências externas, o seu futuro.

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhora Alta Representante, peço imensa desculpa por lhe cortar a palavra, mas dou-lha já de seguida, muito obrigado. Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Representante, o colapso económico, o drama humanitário que se vive hoje na Venezuela tem origem num problema político que só por esta via deverá ser resolvido e, por isso, saúdo a senhora Mogherini pela intenção de, como disse há pouco, sem suavizar as medidas restritivas impostas pela União Europeia à Venezuela, criar um grupo de contacto encarregado de gerir a crise no país.

As recentes reviravoltas na política diplomática de alguns Estados-Membros, pretendendo substituir o regime de sanções individualizadas pelo diálogo, servem apenas para alimentar o engodo do governo do senhor Maduro que, nos últimos quatro anos, tem ludibriado chefes de Estado, o Vaticano, a União Europeia e o seu próprio povo, com simulacros de diálogo que apenas têm servido para ganhar tempo e tentar enfraquecer a pressão externa e desmobilizar a oposição.

Estas tentativas *ad hoc* de diálogo com o regime ilegítimo e ditatorial, que é parte do problema e não da solução, só servem para enfraquecer a posição conjunta da União e alimentar o balão de oxigénio de um governo que transformou uma nação democrática e próspera num narco-Estado que condena os seus próprios cidadãos à mais abjeta tirania e miséria.

Termino, senhora Mogherini, recordando Fernando Albán e pensando no seu assassinato e pensando também em Corina Machado que luta, neste momento, pela sua própria vida.

(Fine della procedura «catch the eye»)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, let me start by saying that, luckily, I have seen in the Member States and in the Council more unity than in this Chamber. Sorry, I am being blunt, but I want to start from just describing the situation as I have seen it in the past four years and still saw it last week. There is No Member State asking for a review of our sanctions policy and there is No Member State arguing that we should currently engage in mediation. We have to start from a point of clarity and truth about this. We can be against something but if nobody else is proposing that something then it's a pure exercise of rhetoric. I think we need to discuss things as they are.

Things as they are currently are as I described them at the start – and maybe some of you joined the debate after my initial contribution – that we are keeping our position exactly as it has been in recent years, on the need for freeing the political prisoners, the need for elections, the need to have the constitution fully respected and applied, and so on and so forth. We are keeping our sanctions in place. As I said, that was quite something because it was the first time we had introduced targeted sanctions in Latin America, which was not a decision taken lightly by our Member States. They were united on that, and they continue to be united in that respect.

In the meantime, we are saying two things, and I think we can agree on these two things. One: that the solution has to be peaceful, and I would have liked to have heard that a bit more clearly in some of the speeches from around the Chamber, because the idea of some form of military pressure or intervention is floating around. I think that, as Europeans, we are fully united on the fact that, in Venezuela, any sort of military pressure or intervention could actually be counterproductive because we know the nature of Maduro's attitude. That is all he is waiting for. Come on! The negative outside effect could strengthen the fight against the outside.

And we are worried: not worried, or at least I am not worried, about having an ideological fight as to whether we support one kind of ideology or the other, but we are seriously concerned about the situation of a country that has millions of people in a difficult situation, among them one million European citizens. So we care: we care about finding a solution.

How can that solution be found? The European position – which I think has been reflected well in the great majority of your positions – is first that any solution can only be a political, peaceful solution; and second, and equally importantly, that it has to be a democratic outcome – a democratic outcome, involving all Venezuelans because, as I said earlier, we are not, and we will never be, in favour of an external imposed solution. It has to be a Venezuelan solution and it has to involve all Venezuelans. This is the difficulty of the simple exercise of looking for democracy.

This is the balanced, united position that the European Union has stressed in recent weeks. We will now try to explore whether the conditions exist for establishing the contact group. As I said, I would not want to raise expectations, because I think this is extremely complicated as an exercise. However, I think it's worth trying not to initiate a mediation process or a dialogue but to see if the conditions are in place to establish a contact group that could start working on establishing the conditions – which are currently not there – for re-launching this political process. I said this very clearly at the beginning, perhaps some of you were not there when I said it.

I want to say something else very clearly, even if I ought to be sitting on the Council side to say it, namely that I have seen no divisions among Member States on this position. I have seen a very clearly united stand behind this effort that we are now starting to explore.

One last point on the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation. Some of you raised this. Currently, a preliminary examination is being conducted by the office of the ICC prosecutor and, as you know, the European Union is a strong supporter – probably the strongest supporter – of the ICC's role in bringing perpetrators to justice. So we now trust the ICC prosecutor's assessment on whether or not the Rome Statute requirements to initiate an investigation have been met in the case of Venezuela. We trust the ICC, as an institution, to carry out the preliminary examination that is currently being undertaken, and then we'll take it from there.

Presidente. – Le proposte di risoluzione, che dovranno essere presentate conformemente all'articolo 123, paragrafo 2 - (oppure all'articolo 128, paragrafo 5, a seconda dei casi), del regolamento saranno annunciate successivamente.

La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà giovedì 25 ottobre 2018.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

María Teresa Giménez Barbat (ALDE), por escrito. – Quiero empezar dando mis condolencias a la familia y amigos del Fernando Albán, concejal torturado y asesinado en la sede del SEBIN, aunque nos lo quieran vender como un suicidio. Fernando Albán había sido arrestado tras ser acusado de un supuesto atentado contra el presidente Maduro. Una acusación que parece extenderse a todo aquel que suponga una piedra en su camino dictatorial. El más reciente en recibir esta acusación es el Sr. Julio Borges, presidente de la Asamblea Nacional y galardonado con el premio Sájarov. En cualquier caso, no me corresponde a mí juzgar los hechos, por eso apoyo la necesidad de llevar a cabo una investigación independiente y transparente con expertos internacionales que permita clarificar los hechos y condenar a los culpables. La represión política en Venezuela ha llegado a índices escandalosos. El Foro Penal Venezolano nos informa de que actualmente hay 234 presos políticos. Un dato que la UE no puede ignorar. Por todo ello, es indispensable para alcanzar una solución política: a) la liberación inmediata de todos los presos políticos y el fin de la represión, b) establecer un nuevo Consejo Nacional Electoral independiente y c) organizar elecciones libres y justas de acuerdo con las normas internacionales y con la presencia de observadores internacionales.

17. Potrzeba ustanowienia wszechstronnego mechanizmu na rzecz demokracji, praworządności i praw podstawowych (debata)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sulle dichiarazioni del Consiglio e della Commissione sulla necessità di un meccanismo globale in materia di democrazia, Stato di diritto e diritti fondamentali (2018/2886(RSP)).

Karoline Edtstadler, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Thank you President, we appreciate that Parliament has given the Council the opportunity to participate in this debate. This Parliament has indeed always shown great dedication to protection of the rule of law, of democracy and of fundamental rights in our Union.

The protection and promotion of our core values as stated in Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union is a constant challenge. This challenge requires unwavering attention and effort across all institutions and all policy areas. Democracy, freedom, equality, the rule of law and human rights are the cornerstones of the European Union. Each Member State must therefore respect, protect and promote them.

The Austrian Presidency, and indeed all of us, agree that protection of the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in our Union cannot be taken for granted. To address this challenge, the Council and a Member State established a meeting within the Council, the so-called ‘annual rule of law dialogue’. The last rule of law dialogue was organised by the Estonian Presidency in October 2017 on media pluralism and the rule of law in a digital age. The next rule of law dialogue will be organised in November by the Austrian Presidency. It will deal with the issue of trust in public institutions and rule of law.

From the beginning we were aware that the Council’s response to rule of law issues needed to be reviewed at a regular pace and if needed, improved or adapted to current challenges. The last evaluation in 2016 showed, among others, that the preparation of dialogues should be more systematic and include the organisation of other accompanying events. This would provide for the possibility to assemble broad input at expert level, including the involvement of other EU institutions or other institutional organisations.

The Estonian Presidency and now our Presidency have followed these recommendations and included experts in the preparation of the annual ministerial dialogue. By the end of 2019 the Council will conduct a re-evaluation of the rule of law dialogue and consider ways to further strengthen it. In the meantime, the Council must task it with conducting two Article 7 procedures, on Poland and Hungary. Since the procedure was triggered, every General Affairs Council meeting has discussed the situation in Poland and in Hungary.

Of course, the Council is not acting alone in these matters of fundamental importance. The Presidency notes with interest the commitment of this Parliament and its legislative initiative report on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights. In addition, the Commission plays a vital role in monitoring developments in this field across the Union.

We also wish to highlight the role played by the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission in these questions and I note that in its working programme 2019, the Commission indicated that it would come up with a further strengthening of the 2014 rule of law framework.

Let me conclude by stressing that safeguarding democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights goes to the heart of our commitment to this Union. The success of this political project will be measured by its ability and determination to uphold these core values. We will play our part.

Frans Timmermans, *First Vice-President of the Commission*. – Mr President, when we discussed – I think it was exactly two years ago – the issue of stepping up our mechanism to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, I said on behalf of the Commission that we fully support Parliament’s objectives underlying the resolution adopted in 2016. Like Parliament, the Commission is deeply committed to ensuring that our common European values, including in particular democracy and the rule of law, are respected. I believe the actions of the Commission over the past four years leave no grounds for any doubt on that matter. So we agree on the end, and the discussion between us is about identifying the best means.

The developments which have occurred over the past two years have only made the Commission more convinced of the importance of using the instruments we already have to uphold EU values in the most effective way. The diversity of challenges we are facing requires a diversity of responses at EU level. Among these developments, the deterioration of the situation with the rule of law in Poland led the Commission, in December 2017, to initiate the procedure set out in Article 7 of the Treaty on the European Union. Last month Parliament decided to initiate the same procedure as regards Hungary. These are unprecedented steps in the history of our Union.

The Commission has recently launched a number of values-related infringement proceedings, and with regard to the Polish Law on the Supreme Court we have also invited the Court of Justice to impose interim measures. In addition, we have used other instruments, including audits and investigations relating to the use of EU funds, as well as measures through the European Semester to monitor justice reforms in Member States.

The Commission has used its powers as initiator of legislation to propose, as a key component of our next Multiannual Financial Framework, a regulation on protecting the Union's budget in the event of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States. The rules we propose would allow the Union to suspend, reduce or restrict access to EU funding when generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law impair or threaten to impair sound financial management or the Union's financial interest.

These actions show the Commission's determination to use all of the instruments at its disposal to address value-related concerns. In each case the Commission uses the instruments that we consider can be most effective. However, this does not mean there is no need to improve the EU's capacity to promote and uphold our common values. On the contrary, we need to make better use of the enforcement toolbox at our disposal. Parliament's 2016 resolution contained a number of ideas that the Commission supports: for example, setting up an interparliamentary dialogue between the European Parliament and national parliaments. The national parliaments are involved in many of the problems related to the rule of law that we have witnessed recently in some Member States. Such interparliamentary dialogue could, as a first step, discuss the various options and the means currently on the table to ensure that our common values are respected and enforced. The Commission will be ready to contribute to such a dialogue.

The Commission also supports the aim of making the variety of existing data and reports more accessible and visible including a national level. The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has a role to play in this respect.

There are other elements in the resolution which continue to raise questions. For example, the Commission maintains its strong doubts about the need for and the feasibility of an annual report and a policy cycle on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, prepared by a committee of experts. The central role attributed to an independent expert panel raises serious questions of legality, institutional legitimacy and accountability. Furthermore, the recent developments show that the problem we have is not a lack of reporting mechanisms in Europe, but rather a lack of capacity to act and enforce the rule of law and uphold our values in an effective manner.

We know the facts. We need to act. For this reason, as was also announced in the letter of intent which accompanied Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union speech and which was just today confirmed by the Work Programme, the Commission intends to present an initiative on further strengthening the 2014 Rule of Law framework. The initiative will draw lessons from the experiences of recent years. It will also take due account of the work of the European Parliament, including your resolution on democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights mechanism, and the discussion that has ensued.

To conclude, I can assure you that the Commission is ready to continue the discussion with you to determine how best the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights can be promoted and upheld. This is an objective we share, and one which goes to the very heart of what our European Union is.

Frank Engel, *au nom du groupe PPE*. – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Secrétaire d'État, Monsieur le premier Vice-président, je vous félicite et vous remercie pour les progrès qui ont été accomplis en matière de sauvegarde des droits fondamentaux et de l'état de droit, mais je dois vous dire encore et toujours que cela n'est pas suffisant et vous le savez.

Nous ne sommes pas en désaccord sur les déficiences que nous constatons en la matière parce qu'elles sont nombreuses et elles deviennent de plus en plus envahissantes. Le nombre d'États qu'il faudrait maintenant énumérer si l'on dressait la liste des États dans lesquels l'état de droit n'est pas ce qu'il devrait être, ne cesse d'augmenter.

Au lieu de revenir à ce que nous avons exigé dans une résolution, il y a quelques années déjà, j'aimerais simplement rappeler le principal constat et le principal problème à mon sens. Nous ne sommes hélas pas d'accord en Europe sur la façon de gouverner. Et ce que nous devons entendre quand nous allons en Hongrie ou ailleurs, en Pologne, en Roumanie, à Malte, en Slovaquie – la liste s'allongera sans doute encore – ne correspond pas à ce à quoi nous pourrions nous attendre dans d'autres parties de l'Europe. Et je vous rappelle que le Parlement a fait ce constat en disant précisément, pour cette raison, qu'il faut que nous ayons une interaction permanente les uns avec les autres, représentants de l'ensemble des États membres, sur la façon dont on peut gouverner légitimement et sur ce que nous ne devons pas faire

en Europe si nous voulons nous réclamer des valeurs communes, des principes communs, d'une base de gouvernance commune.

Il faut poser cette base parce qu'elle n'est hélas pas là. Nous ne nous y attendions pas quand nous formulions les traités. Il serait temps de l'instituer.

Josef Weidenholzer, im Namen der S&D-Fraktion. – Herr Präsident! Vor zwei Jahren hat dieses Haus mit großer Mehrheit die Kommission aufgefordert, einen niedrigschwelligen interinstitutionellen Mechanismus zur Garantie der Grundrechte einzurichten.

Die Kommission hat leider keinen besonderen Eifer gezeigt, diesen Vorschlag aufzugreifen, im Gegensatz zu manchen Mitgliedstaaten, wo eine sehr positive Rückmeldung gekommen ist. Ein solcher Mechanismus – auch DRF-Paket genannt – würde uns helfen, eine effektivere und nachhaltigere Sicherung der demokratischen Grundrechte sicherzustellen.

Der Ausgangspunkt ist einfach. Zwar gibt es mit den Kopenhagener Kriterien eine klare Hürde, Mitglied der Union zu werden. Ist diese einmal geschafft, dann sind kaum adäquate Mittel vorhanden, eine Nichtbeachtung oder willentliche Verletzung zu ahnden. Die bestehenden Instrumente sind oft zu heftig und zu wenig zielgerichtet, um bedrohliche Entwicklungen schon in einem frühen Stadium zu beeinflussen.

Wenn die Probleme einmal auf EU-Ebene thematisiert werden, dann wird Kritik von den betroffenen Mitgliedstaaten meist als Bedrohung von außen stilisiert und eine Problemlösung sehr schwer. Das haben wir in den letzten Jahren immer wieder feststellen müssen.

Der neue Mechanismus schlägt hingegen eine Verzahnung bereits vorhandener Instrumente vor, setzt in einem frühen Stadium an und stellt alle Mitgliedstaaten – die alten und die neuen – auf eine gleiche Grundlage.

Mit einem *democracy scoreboard* wird ähnlich der Venedig-Kommission ein Format entwickelt, das Vergleichsmöglichkeiten eröffnet und in einem frühen Stadium ansetzt. Die Schaffung eines derartigen Mechanismus – so glaube ich – würde neue Handlungsfähigkeit bringen und die Debattenkultur versachlichen.

Zdzisław Krasnodębski, w imieniu grupy ECR. – Panie Przewodniczący! W jednym zgadzam się z tymi, którzy proponują stały mechanizm sprawdzania demokracji praworządności i praw podstawowych, mianowicie w krytyce dotychczasowej praktyki instytucji unijnych w tym zakresie. Działania podejmowane przez Komisję oraz Parlament Europejski miały charakter wybiórczy, arbitralny i skrajnie upolityczniony. Na przykład nawet „najwięksi przyjaciele” (w cudzysłowie) mojego kraju przyznawali w kuluarach, że przedmiotem ich troski mogłoby być także inne państwo członkowskie.

I tak właśnie jest. I nie dotyczy to bynajmniej na przykład Malty tu wspomnianej przez kolegę. Otóż weźmy na przykład kraj, który uchodzi za wzór liberalnej demokracji. Mam na myśli Niemcy. Od dziesięcioleci środowiska sędziowskie w Niemczech domagają się przeprowadzenia reform urzeczywistniających w pełni zasadę demokracji, trójpodziału władz i niezawisłości sędziowskiej w niemieckim wymiarze sprawiedliwości. Apele o reformę sądownictwa były podnoszone przed wyborami do Bundestagu w 2017 r. Na przykład Neue Richtervereinigung wystosował tzw. apel berliński, w którym znalazło się następujące stwierdzenie, cytuję: „Republika Federalna Niemiec jako członek Unii może żądać w sposób wiarygodny przestrzegania podmiotowych zasad przez podmioty trzecie, jeżeli sama się w ten sposób zorganizuje. Dlatego domagamy się zaangażowania na rzecz tego, by niemiecki system sądownictwa odpowiadał zasadom podziału władzy, co należy od dawna do standardu europejskiego.” Te postulaty nie zostały jednak do dziś spełnione, a Deutscher Richterverbund 11 września 2018 r. opublikował swoje stanowisko w tej sprawie zatytułowane „Trzecia władza musi się rządzić sama”, w którym stwierdza między innymi, że sądownictwo oraz prokuratura w Niemieckiej Republice Federalnej są uzależnione od władzy wykonawczej, a wielu krajach związkowych o zatrudnieniu i awansie sędziów i prokuratorów decyduje samodzielnie minister sprawiedliwości. W związku z tym postuluje się podejmowanie decyzji personalnych w ramach samorządu sędziowskiego. To jest postulat sędziów.

Ostatnio, jak Państwo wiedzą, opinię publiczną w Niemczech bulwersuje sprawa obsadzania stanowisk sędziów w Trybunale Konstytucyjnym w Brandenburgii, gdzie, jak zwykle, poszczególne miejsca dzielone są między duże partie polityczne. Tym razem SPD postanowiła mianować między innymi zaangażowaną politycznie pisarkę bez doświadczenia sędziowskiego, która była na tyle rozsądna, że zapisała się do tej partii przed rokiem. Ja mógłbym mnożyć te przykłady. Podobnie jest w wielu innych krajach, gdzie sędziowie mogą być członkami partii politycznej. Wszędzie jest wpływ polityczny na wybór sędziów.

Wobec tego pytam się, zwracam się z do pana Timmermansa: dlaczego więc Komisja Europejska nie podjęła działań mających na celu przestrzeganie przez Niemiecką Republiką Federalną wartości wymienionych w art. 2 Traktatu o Unii Europejskiej. Można odpowiedzieć: bo Niemcy to są Niemcy, a Polska to jest Polska. Ale takie myślenie doprowadzi prędzej czy później do katastrofy Unii, a może i Europy.

Ale do tej katastrofy może doprowadzić także przekonanie, że to urzędnik Komisji Europejskiej lub Parlament Europejski miałby decydować o praworządności czy konstytucyjności w jakimś kraju. Nic zresztą nie byłoby większym pogwałceniem zasady konstytucyjności i praworządności, a proponowany mechanizm sprawdzania demokracji i praworządności byłby jej zaprzeczeniem.

Sophia in 't Veld, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, in today's EU, independent judges are being dismissed, journalists are threatened and even murdered, NGOs are harassed and intimidated. In the last two years alone, since we adopted the proposal for the DRF Pact, two Article 7 procedures have been launched: one by Parliament and one by the Commission. The Commission has also launched infringement cases and took a Member State to court. The Council organised hearings on the rule of law in that same Member State, and Parliament created the rule of law monitoring group for two other Member States, as well as a plenary debate on yet another Member State.

So a lot is being done – and I have to commend the Commissioner for his actions – but it is piecemeal and erratic. It is too little and, too often, too late. We need a pan-European mechanism for democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU that is comprehensive and not fragmented; evidence based, not politicised; one that monitors all Member States annually and is not ad hoc or incident-driven.

Exactly two years ago in this House, we adopted such a proposal: the DRF Pact. We proposed a fully-fledged inter-institutional agreement that we could have agreed on today. So why have the Commission and the Council so far failed to act on our proposal? You work on the rule of law, but your refusal to agree the comprehensive DRF Pact means that forces that demolish our way of life are always ahead of us. So it's time to act because, Commissioner, I don't agree with you. The toolkit that we currently have at our disposal is visibly not enough. So, as the Commission and Member States drag their feet, Parliament should move ahead anyway. I propose that we start our own annual DRF cycle, including country reporting and a debate on the state of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights in Europe, in tandem with national parliaments, and we don't wait until the Council and Commission are ready.

Because in conclusion, democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights cannot defend themselves. We have to stand up for them or they will perish.

Judith Sargentini, *namens de Verts/ALE-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, ik zie het pleidooi van collega Krasnodębski over Duitsland eigenlijk als een aanvulling, als een ondersteuning voor wat het Parlement vraagt, namelijk niet wachten tot het kalf verdrongen is, niet acht jaar lang sleuren om dan eindelijk een tweederdemeerderheid te krijgen om een artikel 7-procedure te kunnen beginnen voor Hongarije, maar gestructureerd, jaarlijks, als een soort van visitatiecommissie, zoals dat bij universiteiten plaatsvindt, te kijken wat de staat van de rechtsstaat, de democratie en de grondrechten is in iedere lidstaat.

Het is leuk dat de Raad elk jaar een onderwerp pakt en dan besloten met elkaar gaat praten, maar het is typisch dat de Raad er nog steeds voor terugschrikt om gewoon het Europees Parlement uit te nodigen om het verslag over Hongarije te komen toelichten. Want meer is het niet. Zo lang wij ons voor het maken van verslagen, zoals het mijne over Hongarije, moeten richten op instellingen van buiten, namelijk de Raad van Europa, de VN, de OVSE, en ons eigen Bureau voor de grondrechten niet de ruimte geven om echte analyses per land te maken, blijven we dus eigenlijk wegstijven van de problemen in onze eigen regio.

Barbara Spinelli, *a nome del gruppo GUE/NGL*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, da qualche tempo il tema del *rule of law* è riemerso con forza nel dibattito europeo. Di per sé il fatto è positivo, visto che l'Unione poggia su un concetto di *rule of law* che non si riduce all'applicazione della legge ma include i diritti umani.

Condivido l'idea di istituire un meccanismo preventivo che funga da argine contro possibili violazioni e rappresenti in modo chiaro un contraltare obiettivo, neutrale e soprattutto non punitivo rispetto agli attuali strumenti.

Ciò a maggior ragione a fronte del rischio che la questione del *rule of law* si trasformi in un terreno di contesa elettorale o tra Stati, che venga chiamata in causa in maniera selettiva sulla base di considerazioni partitiche, conducendo di fatto a uno svuotamento dello stesso *rule of law*.

Non credo che l'agire di Frans Timmermans sia parziale. Proprio per questo penso che potrebbe apprezzare un meccanismo che è animato da un bisogno così grande, continuativo e profondo di *expertise* imparziali.

Gilles Lebreton, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Monsieur le Président, une Europe authentiquement démocratique devrait respecter la souveraineté de chacune des nations européennes qui la composent, or l'Union européenne ne le fait pas. Elle s'immisce de façon scandaleuse dans les affaires intérieures de certains de ses États membres comme la Hongrie, la Pologne ou maintenant la Roumanie. Chose encore plus grave, le Parlement européen a imaginé, dans sa résolution du 25 octobre 2016, le vade-mecum de la mise sous tutelle politique des États membres. Il recommande de confier à un panel d'experts, élus par personne et sortis d'on ne sait où, le pouvoir de noter les États comme des enfants sur le respect de différents principes. La séparation des pouvoirs, la liberté d'expression ou encore l'indépendance de la justice.

En hommage involontaire au poète français, Jacques Prévert, qui en aurait bien ri, la résolution charge ce panel d'experts de donner des notes de couleur aux États. Vert aux gentils, orange aux suspects et rouge aux méchants. Pour les États qui obtiennent une note rouge, la sanction se veut terrible, c'est l'activation de l'article 7 du traité sur l'Union européenne qui débouche sur la suspension du droit de vote de l'État fautif au sein du Conseil. Tout cela n'est pas sérieux et je regrette qu'on ressorte ces vieilles lunes aujourd'hui.

Le Parlement européen gagnerait en crédibilité s'il écoutait un peu plus les aspirations des peuples au lieu de se poser en éternel donneur de leçons.

L'Europe des nations, que j'appelle de mes vœux, traitera les États européens avec respect et non avec la morgue de cette indigne résolution.

Roberta Metsola (PPE). – Mr President, if there is one thing that has been so violently exposed in the last year in Europe it is the need for a concrete mechanism that will monitor the state of the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in every Member State. It is clear that we need to close the gaps between the rights we demand as EU citizens and the tools that are currently available for their protection.

Having such a mechanism would be a huge step forward and would go some way in allaying the fears of so many citizens in Europe from different States who look to us when their rights are in danger, or when their institutions cannot be relied on or when the promise that is Europe is under threat.

This is not about going after any single state or government. It is about making the protection of the rights we have future-proof. Our focus must be on protection, about building up systems, about helping people and not about punishment.

Having this mechanism will mean that every Member State will be subjected to the same level of scrutiny. It will remove the politics from that equation and create equality among States. It will mean that governments who think that they have carte blanche to do as they please after winning an election will be in for a surprise. It will give Europe the tools to act.

We are not interested in going after one country. We want to change the entire system, and this could very well be the game changer that we need to address this generational challenge facing our Union.

Claude Moraes (S&D). – Mr President, it could well be a game changer to have the encapsulation of the 2016 resolution, which is a less crisis-driven, more systematic, rule of law mechanism and we have talked about it endlessly within our committee and it is something that we very much want.

I have two points that I want to make. One is that, in reaching this objective, we must not dismiss what we are currently doing, and not give an excuse to anyone to diminish the work that has been done, either by the Commission or by Members of Parliament here on these fundamental rights mechanisms under Article 7. To do so would be to diminish the key work that has been done and that will also happen when we have this other mechanism that is less crisis-driven, because what I mean by that is the capacity to act in case of a breach, the capacity to uphold the rule of law, and indeed human rights, will be difficult in this mechanism also. It will be difficult to monitor every Member State, and to act when there is something wrong there, so please, bear this in mind.

So, to ensure that we complete the work that we are doing currently, but then in the future we look at this mechanism, and yes, hopefully we fulfil the 2016 resolution. But don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Ensure that we preserve the very tough work that we are currently undertaking and then get to this new fundamental rights mechanism.

Birgit Sippel (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Warum ein Rechtsstaatsmechanismus? Artikel 2 des Vertrags beschreibt die Werte, auf denen unsere Union gründet: Achtung der Menschenwürde, Freiheit, Demokratie, Gleichheit, Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Achtung der Menschenrechte. Und mit ihrer Unterschrift haben sich alle Mitgliedstaaten verpflichtet, diese zu wahren und zu respektieren. Aber wenn Regierungen die Gewaltenteilung missachten, Obdachlose kriminalisiert werden oder regierungskritische Medien diskreditiert werden, dann bringt das Gefahren – für Einzelne und die Union insgesamt.

Wie können wir Vertrauen in Demokratie und Staat erwarten, wenn Regierungen Verträge, Gesetze und Gerichtsurteile nach Gutdünken auslegen oder gar schlicht ignorieren? Der Rechtsstaatsmechanismus ist notwendig, um Freiheit und Demokratie überall in Europa zu schützen.

(Die Rednerin ist damit einverstanden, eine Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“ gemäß Artikel 162 Absatz 8 der Geschäftsordnung zu beantworten.)

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR), pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. – W nawiązaniu do swojej wypowiedzi, gdzie podawałem przykłady z Niemiec, chciałem się Panią spytać, czy Pani jest gotowa zastosować to, co Pani powiedziała, do swojego kraju i do swojej partii?

Birgit Sippel (S&D), blue-card answer. – I think it is very clear that this mechanism should be fit for all Member States and, from time to time, we will check everything in all the Member States. I think this has been clear from the very beginning.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Pane předsedající, jako bývalý ministr spravedlnosti podporuji obhajobu principu právního státu a je dobře, že zde máme mechanismy v současné Lisabonské smlouvě. Ale musím říci, že můj postoj k případným změnám je zdrženlivý, stejně jako to vyjádřila Komise ve své zprávě z roku 2017. Zkrátka a dobře, pokud bychom nyní sáhli ke změně Lisabonské smlouvy a posílili kontrolní mechanismy i v podobě každoročních preventivních zpráv, tak já vnímám, že třeba v mé zemi, v České republice, by to vedlo k tomu, že by populisté takovéto změny zneužili k boji proti myšlenkám evropské integrace a zneužili by to proti Evropské unii jako takové. A to si myslím, že jako reální politici bychom také měli vnímat. Zkrátka posilovat pozici EU v této otázce, otázce ochrany právního státu, proti vůli občanů a proti vůli některých členských států se může otočit proti samotné myšlence evropské integrace. Byl bych tedy zdrženlivý.

Procedura «catch the eye»

Doru-Claudian Frunzulică (S&D). – Domnule președinte, vreau să vă spun un lucru – Uniunea Europeană se află actualmente la o răscruce de drumuri și observăm o schimbare a regulilor în timpul jocului. Țările care au aderat la Uniunea Europeană trebuiau să îndeplinească niște condiții politice – criteriile de la Copenhaga. Trebuie să țineți cont, stimați colegi, de un fapt foarte important – instituțiile în diferite state membre sunt diferite. Fiecare țară ar trebui judecată în funcție de instituțiile pe care le are. Iar aici s-au spus niște lucruri foarte importante – că toate țările membre ale Uniunii Europene ar trebui judecate în același mod. Pentru asta însă trebuie să avem instituții comune, aceleași instituții care să facă aceleași lucruri pentru cetățenii europeni.

Sunt perfect de acord cu doamna in 't Veld de la ALDE, care spunea că un mecanism trebuie să se aplice tuturor țărilor într-un mod coerent, ținând cont de instituțiile pe care țările respective le au. Din păcate, constatăm că – și acest lucru s-a mai spus – s-au găsit probleme, în general în țările din Europa Centrală și de Est. Ținând cont de situația unde ne aflăm acum cu Uniunea Europeană, cred eu că ar fi o mare eroare să continuăm pe acest drum. Trebuie să avem o poziție echilibrată față de țările membre pentru că cetățenii noștri s-ar putea simți discriminați și discriminarea crește în Europa Centrală și de Est.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, in my country, the UK, racist and anti-democratic forces led a campaign for us to leave the European Union and won by breaking the electoral law and telling lies. In Poland and Hungary, governments are making serious attacks against the rule of law and preventing civil society from playing its crucial role, required for any functioning democracy. In several other EU countries, helping migrants and refugees is now criminalised.

Whilst I was relieved to see this Parliament take action against Orbán's Government recently, I remain worried that the EU is not doing enough to support democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The drifting situation in several Member States should call for much stronger reactions. It's our moral and historical responsibility. We must rise against fascism and fight against those who attack our common values. So I fully support Sophia in 't Veld's proposal for a comprehensive EU mechanism that would help us respond to the breaches. In the meantime, we must continue to use the tools at our disposal against illiberal governments.

Maria Gabriela Zoană (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule vicepreședinte al Comisiei Europene, sunt avocat și de peste 15 ani predau dreptul penal, criminalistica și alte materii anexe studenților de la facultatea de drept. Personal, nu cred că există vreun cetățean de bună-credință în Europa care să fie de acord cu corupția. Spunem „nu” clar corupției.

Însă mă îngrijorează, în același timp, dublul limbaj de la nivelul instituțiilor europene. Dialogul sincer, cred eu, că este singura soluție. De aceea, în contextul Brexitului și a unui buget european viitor firav, mă tem, domnule președinte, că unele state puternice – și vreau să mă asigur pe această cale – că acestea nu vor folosi abuziv nerespectarea statului de drept pentru a lua banii europeni de la statele mai puțin puternice, cum sunt cele din estul Europei. Juridic vorbind, nu există în prezent nicio definiție clară a statului de drept și nici criterii clare care să identifice încălcarea statului de drept. Singura autoritate în măsură să decidă asupra încălcării statului de drept este Curtea Europeană de Justiție, nu Comisia, nu Consiliul și nu Parlamentul European. În caz contrar, domnule președinte, riscăm aplicarea discreționară a regulilor europene și, desigur, în urma unor decizii exclusiv politice, pedepsirea anumitor state.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar și stimați colegi, cred că în orice țară dacă mergem pe stradă să întrebăm cetățenii „vreți să fie stat de drept la dumneavoastră? Vreți să vi se respecte drepturile?”, evident că vor răspunde „da”. Problema care este și care a fost atinsă de foarte mulți colegi aici – cum definim statul de drept? Pentru că avem constituții, avem constituții – și un coleg din Cehia spunea „voința poporului, democrația, până la urmă, e voința poporului” - dacă constituția este respectată, dacă Curtea Constituțională din acel stat aprobă, verifică și atestă toată legislația care e votată în Parlament – o instituție votată tot de popor – atunci este respectat statul de drept. Sigur că sunt de acord și eu ca să fie verificate toate statele, nu așa cum avem noi, România și Bulgaria, MCV și nu mai scăpăm de el.

Problema care se pune este să cunoaștem instrumentele, modul cum se măsoară și nu poate totuși Comisia, care este un organism numit, să facă tăiere de fonduri, de exemplu, pentru că e o condiționalitate care nu este cuprinsă în tratat și nu cred că modificăm tratatul.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señor presidente, señor Timmermans, para recuperar en Europa la confianza mutua y en el futuro de la Unión Europea, es imprescindible reforzar el Estado de Derecho, sí, pero también luchar contra la corrupción y que desaparezcan del mapa esos referendos contrarios a los valores europeos y a la convergencia en derechos europeos, como los que pretenden decir no a las cuotas de refugiados o prohibir en la Constitución los matrimonios del mismo sexo.

Este Parlamento pidió hace años un mecanismo estructurado frente al actual paisaje fragmentario y errático donde florecen el nacionalpopulismo y la democracia iliberal que explotan el miedo al malestar, pero también el deterioro del imperio de la ley. Y es imprescindible que haya un mecanismo permanente de desarrollo del artículo 2 del Tratado de la Unión Europea y del artículo 7, para que no sea posible que una minoría de países pueda bloquear hasta hacer imposible la imposición del respeto al imperio de la ley.

Tenemos la última oportunidad para establecer ese mecanismo permanente y estructurado de respeto a la regla del Derecho, ¡no la desaprovechen! Vicepresidente Timmermans, Comisión, ¡háganlo!

Răzvan Popa (S&D). – Domnule președinte, stimați colegi, pe de o parte, evaluări ale respectării drepturilor fundamentale, a democrației și a statului de drept ar trebui să fie făcute periodic în toate statele membre ale Uniunii Europene și sunt chiar binevenite. Pe de altă parte, trebuie să fim foarte atenți cu astfel de evaluări bazate pe noțiuni și criterii uneori subiective și arbitrare, mai ales atunci când încercăm introducerea lor ca și condiționalități în acordarea fondurilor europene. Există o bază legală pentru introducerea unui astfel de mecanism? Știm în ce măsură încalcă sau interferează cu tratatele în vigoare? Sunt câteva întrebări la care trebuie să găsim răspunsuri clare și să discutăm despre noțiuni clare, nearbitrare și, doar mai apoi, să punem în discuție un astfel de mecanism, pe care cu toții ni-l dorim, dar, sigur, nimeni nu își dorește să fie un instrument politic.

Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D). – Domnule președinte, stimate domnule Timmermans, ați afirmat aici mai devreme că problema cu care se confruntă Comisia nu constă în a primi informațiile necesare, ci în modul de a acționa pe baza acestora. Permiteți-mi, cu tot respectul cuvenit, să vă contrazic. Din acest lanț ați omis etapa de mijloc, cea a analizării și a evaluării informațiilor primite și aceasta este adevărata problemă cu care ne confruntăm aici. Din lipsa unei analize corecte și aprofundate, uneori au existat poziții și declarații care nu au reflectat realitatea și care au dus la folosirea unui dublu standard în evaluarea unor situații-cheie.

Claudia Țapardel (S&D). – Domnule președinte, dragi colegi, am să mă adresez dumneavoastră astăzi nu în calitate de membru al Parlamentului European, ci în calitate de cetățean european și de susținător al tuturor principiilor ce stau la baza construcției europene: unitate, solidaritate, coeziune economică și socială, dezvoltare echilibrată a tuturor regiunilor europene. Și din această calitate, îmi exprim dezacordul total față de orice instrument sau mecanism care poate bloca dreptul statelor membre de a accesa fondurile europene. Nu uităm că statele membre au nevoie de aceste fonduri europene pentru a avea o dezvoltare echilibrată a tuturor regiunilor noastre.

Dragi colegi și domnule Timmermans, vă reamintesc că aici, la nivelul Uniunii Europene, toți avem aceleași drepturi și obligații. Și dacă avem totuși aceleași drepturi și obligații și vorbim de instaurarea unui astfel de mecanism, mă întreb de ce oare nu instaurați un mecanism de cooperare și verificare la nivelul tuturor statelor membre, și nu numai la nivelul României și al Bulgariei? Aveți grijă, pentru că vom instaura niște mecanisme care interferează cu tratatele europene și care vorbesc despre un dublu limbaj și despre un dublu standard la nivelul Uniunii Europene și acest lucru va afecta foarte grav unitatea și dezvoltarea viitoare a acestei construcții importante.

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, ο μηχανισμός για τη δημοκρατία, το κράτος δικαίου και τα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα είναι σημαντικός για τη λειτουργία της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και στηρίζεται βεβαίως στο άρθρο 7. Βασική όμως προϋπόθεση, κύριε Timmermans, για τη λειτουργία του άρθρου 7 είναι ότι ο μηχανισμός αυτός πρέπει να λειτουργεί εντός των αρμοδιοτήτων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και όχι σαν μηχανισμός υπαρπανής αρμοδιοτήτων των κρατών μελών. Γνωρίζουμε ότι βάση λειτουργίας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης είναι το άρθρο 5, δηλαδή η αρχή των δοτών εξουσιών, δηλαδή ότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και τα όργανά της έχουν τόσες αρμοδιότητες όσες της απονέμουν οι ίδιες οι Συνθήκες.

Επομένως, δεν μπορεί να αξιοποιείται ο μηχανισμός αυτός, προκειμένου να παρεμβαίνει σε θέματα που δεν άπτονται της αρμοδιότητας της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και το θέμα της συγκρότησης της ίδιας της λειτουργίας της δικαστικής εξουσίας ενός κράτους μέλους είναι αποκλειστική αρμοδιότητα. Διαφορετικά, εάν δεν τηρηθεί αυτή η αρχή, εάν δεν τηρηθεί η αρχή της διάκρισης των εξουσιών, τότε εύκολα πολλές πλευρές εδώ θα κατηγορούν την Κομισιόν ότι κάνει πολιτικό παιχνίδι. Μπορείτε να ενεργείτε και πρέπει να ενεργείτε όταν υπάρχει παραβίαση του κοινοτικού δικαίου και όταν έχετε αρμοδιότητα να παρέμβετε στο θέμα αυτό. Αν το πεδίο αρμοδιοτήτων σας είναι εκτός, τότε κινδυνεύετε να υποστείτε κριτική από αυτούς που δεν τηρούν τη δημοκρατία πολλές φορές, αλλά που θα πατούν στο γεγονός ότι ενεργείτε εκτός των αρμοδιοτήτων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Σε κάθε περίπτωση, το Δικαστήριο της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης μπορεί να κρίνει το πεδίο αρμοδιοτήτων και αν έχετε δίκιο.

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Señor presidente, coincido con la mayoría de ustedes en la necesidad de tener un mecanismo sistemático ambicioso y, sobre todo, más coherente para proteger la democracia, el Estado de Derecho y los derechos fundamentales en Europa. Pero permítanme una reflexión: el Estado de Derecho se puede desvirtuar de muchas formas, también a través del abuso del propio Estado de Derecho. Por lo tanto, este mecanismo también debería monitorizar los casos de abuso o, si ustedes prefieren, de uso arbitrario del Estado de Derecho, que también pueden llevar a situaciones de conculcación de derechos fundamentales.

Por ejemplo, solo desde esta perspectiva se puede analizar la dramática realidad de que hoy en el Estado español la expresidenta del Parlamento de Cataluña lleve meses en prisión preventiva por no haber prohibido en la Cámara catalana determinados debates y determinadas votaciones. Solo así se puede analizar la dramática realidad de tener a presos políticos acusados absurdamente de rebelión, cuando lo único que han hecho ha sido promover la democracia y el debate, nunca la violencia ni la subversión.

Señor Timmermans, el abuso del Estado de Derecho también pone en peligro la democracia y los derechos fundamentales y, por mucho que usted lo niegue, esto es lo que está pasando en el Estado español.

Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhor Comissário, gostaria muito de saber por que não respondem às nossas perguntas parlamentares quando falamos da vulneração de direitos fundamentais no Estado espanhol e, em particular, gostaria muito de focar essas perguntas relativas à Fundação Franco. Sabe que a Fundação Franco faz a apologia do fascismo no Estado espanhol?

Temos uma oportunidade única neste Parlamento, hoje, e mulheres relatoras deste Parlamento, e olho para algumas presentes, conseguimos uma resolução conjunta para lutar contra o neofascismo na Europa, que terá o apoio de cinco grupos parlamentares.

Com base nesta resolução que se vai votar na quinta-feira, teremos também novos mecanismos para uma maior coordenação na defesa dos direitos fundamentais. Mas gostaria, Sr. Comissário, que respondesse às nossas perguntas. São perguntas para a defesa do Estado de Direito também e que esteja presente nessa votação que vai ser também uma porta aberta a essa luta contra a intransigência e contra o fascismo ainda presente em muitos Estados-Membros.

Victor Boștinaru (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule prim-vicepreședinte, dintr-o perspectivă afirmativă, cred că acest instrument trebuie să fie, în primul rând, bazat pe un temei juridic foarte clar, care să prevină ambiguități și conflicte cu alte instrumente sau prevederi ale altor mecanisme.

Al doilea rând, în privința garanției aplicabilității, acest mecanism trebuie să fie aplicabil în mod explicit tuturor statelor membre fără excepție și acest lucru trebuie stipulat *expressis verbis*, așa cum evaluarea privind presupusele încălcări sistematice trebuie să fie rezultatul unui proces neutru și obiectiv și acceptat ca atare din momentul instituirii mecanismului.

Apoi, rolul Consiliului este esențial, domnule prim-vicepreședinte, Consiliul cu mecanismul de două treimi previne ceea ce Curtea de Conturi a Uniunii Europene spunea – arbitrarul și discreționarul potențial în mâinile Comisiei, ca și aprobarea de către Parlament a unei decizii astfel adoptate.

În sfârșit, adoptarea ar putea fi finalizată, dacă propunerea este echilibrată și justă, cu ocazia viitoarei președinții rotative, având însă garanțiile pe care le-au cerut și alți colegi aici în Parlament – neutralitatea, obiectivitatea, *no moving targets and no double standards*.

(Fine della procedura «catch the eye»)

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, the most ridiculous thing I've seen today is a tweet just put on Twitter by Ms in 't Veld where she writes: 'EU Commission Vice President @TimmermansEU sees no need for a comprehensive mechanism for safeguarding the rule of law in Europe. Apparently everything is just fine'.

I can stand a bit of political rhetoric, but here you just make yourself ridiculous. Have you not seen what we've done over the last couple of years? Have you not had the time to look – even glance over – the Commission Work Programme, where we announced that we will take these measures, and still you come up with that tweet? Have you not had a debate with me on these issues so many times over the last couple of years, and still you come up with that tweet? How can I take that seriously? And by the way, do I really have to explain to this Chamber what the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism is, where that comes from?

Do I really have to explain that Article 2 is binding on every Member State and that, as a result of Article 2, the separation of powers is an essential element of the working of the rule of law in the Member States? Do I really have to explain that to you, Mr Marias, still, after all these years? I think not, frankly speaking. And do I still have to hear, every time a country is criticised: 'Oh, you shouldn't be criticising us – double standards – look somewhere else'. Is that the nature of this debate? I hope not.

I hope we can find a mechanism that is more structured. I hope we can improve the rule-of-law mechanism. But be very careful that you don't give an excuse to those who don't want to be under scrutiny, who want to have the freedom to do whatever they like with the rule of law, that they can say, you know: 'As long as there's no mechanism, don't look at us'. The Commission takes its responsibilities extremely seriously, and we have done that over the last four years. It's not always been easy, but we will continue to do that.

This is our responsibility. This is what we take seriously. Article 7 is a very concrete measure. The lists of infringement procedures are very concrete measures. Asking the European Court of Justice for interim measures to safeguard the independence of the Supreme Court in Poland is a very concrete measure, and the Court of Justice has acted on that request of the Commission in a very concrete way. This is what we are doing very concretely, and I would not want what we are doing concretely to be relativised by saying: but we need a more comprehensive mechanism. There could be very good arguments for a more comprehensive mechanism, but it's not an alternative for what we're doing; it's additional to what we're doing and it should not weaken what we're doing.

Finalement, une remarque, parce que j'ai entendu M. Lebreton citer Jacques Prévert, ce qui m'a un peu étonné étant donné l'orientation politique de Jacques Prévert et celle de M. Lebreton. Je voudrais donc le confronter avec quelques lignes de Jacques Prévert qui représentent pour moi aussi l'accomplissement de l'intégration européenne depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale. C'est aussi une très belle réponse à ceux qui croient que le nationalisme proposerait un futur pour l'Union européenne. Et je cite Jacques Prévert: 'Soyez prévenus vieillards, soyez prévenus chefs de famille, le temps où vous donniez vos fils à la patrie comme on donne du pain aux pigeons, ce temps-là ne reviendra pas, prenez-en votre parti, c'est fini, le temps des cerises ne reviendra plus', Jacques Prévert.

Karoline Edtstadler, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, as background to this discussion, let me assure you once again that the Austrian Presidency and the Council as a whole attaches great importance to upholding democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights. They are at the heart of our concerns, as has been mentioned a few times today. I agree with Commissioner Timmermans when he stated that we should seek a better use of the given instruments. Of course, this does not prevent us from constantly reviewing and improving these instruments.

However, let me say a word regarding the doubts about the efficiency of these instruments and, in particular, regarding the Article 7 procedure, which were raised, directly or indirectly, by several Members of the Parliament. I would not describe it only as piecemeal; on the contrary, it is a very important instrument, which has several stages to tackle the issue at stake in different ways, starting with the dialogue and hearings, peer reviews and recommendations, up to sanctioning. In any case, it would be premature at this stage to draw negative conclusions about this very complex procedure, which is being used, as you know, for the first time.

To conclude: we, the Council, will continue to follow this debate closely, and I can assure Members that I have paid particular attention to the views expressed here today during this debate.

Presidente. – La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà durante la prossima tornata.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy (S&D), *par écrit*. – Notre débat est de la plus grande importance car il permet de remettre les pendules à l'heure. J'entends ceux qui dénoncent la prétendue impuissance du Parlement à répondre aux dérives autoritaires en Europe. Mais nous avons des solutions outre la procédure de l'article 7. En octobre 2016, il y a 2 ans, cette assemblée a voté un mécanisme pour l'État de droit, la démocratie et les droits fondamentaux. Nous avons exhorté la Commission à en faire une proposition législative mais notre demande est restée lettre morte. Pourtant, les violations graves n'ont fait que se multiplier ces deux dernières années. Ce mécanisme comporterait un tableau de bord indiquant en permanence la situation dans tous les États. Le Parlement et le Conseil débattront annuellement de recommandations par pays. C'est une surveillance systématique et complète, qui permet à l'Europe de réagir avant qu'il ne soit trop tard. Cette proposition existe déjà en ce qui concerne notre gouvernance économique. L'Union s'est dotée ici d'une

base législative solide pour scruter les règles économiques et fiscales. Nous demandons simplement la même intransigence et fermeté quand il s'agit de nos valeurs fondamentales, quand il s'agit des droits fondamentaux de nos citoyens.

Alfred Sant (S&D), in writing. – Assessing whether democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights are being breached systemically depends on analysis of the available facts, duly proven. It also frequently depends on subjective points of views adopted for political and other reasons that filter into the assessments being made. Unless this is recognized, there can be no worthwhile approach to spotlighting and correcting breaches. Mutual trust among Member States and their legal systems underpins what the EU stands for. Yet the ideological consensus that used to prevail among Member States seems to be breaking down. The risk has increased that allegations of breaches of our fundamental values get instrumentalised from within polities for partisan reasons. They are then promoted at European levels to foment criticism directed at the government of the day. I have seen this happening for my country Malta. And in this House, I cannot rule out that it might be happening for other Member States. We cannot allow procedures by which allegations of breaches in fundamental values are investigated to be politicised and made suspect. The urgency therefore is to construct a mechanism that can be accepted by all as objective, fair, transparent and deliberate in correcting any such breaches.

18. Utworzenie, funkcjonowanie i użytkowanie systemu informacyjnego Schengen (SIS) w dziedzinie kontroli granicznych – Utworzenie, funkcjonowanie i użytkowanie Systemu Informacyjnego Schengen (SIS) w dziedzinie współpracy policyjnej i współpracy wymiarów sprawiedliwości w sprawach karnych – Użytkowanie Systemu Informacyjnego Schengen do celów powrotu nielegalnie przebywających obywateli państw trzecich (debata)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca, in discussione congiunta,

— la relazione di Carlos Coelho, a nome della commissione per le libertà civili, la giustizia e gli affari interni, sull'istituzione, l'esercizio e l'uso del sistema d'informazione Schengen nel settore delle verifiche di frontiera (COM(2016)0882 - C8-0533/2016 - 2016/0408(COD)) (A8-0347/2017),

— la relazione di Carlos Coelho, a nome della commissione per le libertà civili, la giustizia e gli affari interni, sull'istituzione, l'esercizio e l'uso del sistema d'informazione Schengen nel settore della cooperazione di polizia e della cooperazione giudiziaria in materia penale (COM(2016)0883 - C8-0530/2016 - 2016/0409(COD)) (A8-0349/2017), e

— la relazione di Jeroen Lenaers, a nome della commissione per le libertà civili, la giustizia e gli affari interni, sull'uso del sistema d'informazione Schengen per il rimpatrio di cittadini di paesi terzi il cui soggiorno è irregolare (COM(2016)0881 - C8-0532/2016 - 2016/0407(COD)) (A8-0348/2017).

Carlos Coelho, Relator. – Senhor Presidente, Senhor Comissário Avramopoulos e Senhor Comissário King, Senhor Ministro, Caros Colegas, todos nós queremos reforçar a segurança das nossas fronteiras, proteger melhor os nossos cidadãos e defender a livre circulação. Para tudo isto, precisamos de melhorar o Sistema de Informação de Schengen.

Demorámos cerca de seis meses nas negociações interinstitucionais sobre o SIS, metade do que tínhamos demorado na reforma anterior. Neste meio ano, lutámos por mais segurança, por mais liberdade, por mais Schengen em prol dos cidadãos europeus.

Com efeito, esta reforma do Sistema de Informação de Schengen adapta o sistema aos desafios colocados pela migração, responde às novas ameaças do terrorismo e da criminalidade organizada, tira proveito dos desenvolvimentos tecnológicos e reforça o respeito pelos direitos fundamentais, em particular a proteção de dados.

No momento em que a União Europeia é acusada de não responder atempadamente às necessidades dos cidadãos, a implementação desta reforma inicia-se já no início do próximo ano. Pela primeira vez, aliás, temos uma data limite para que esta reforma entre em funcionamento, assim como mecanismos que asseguram maior controlo e transparência sobre os custos. Medidas do mais elementar bom senso, dir-se-á, mas que encontraram desde sempre muita resistência, mas desta vez vai ser diferente. Estados-Membros e Comissão têm de cumprir prazos e orçamento. Dentro do calendário dos custos previstos, o novo SIS tem de estar em pleno funcionamento.

O impacto desta reforma é profundo. O novo Sistema de Informação de Schengen vai mudar a forma como as autoridades de polícia de fronteira partilham informação na Europa. Não precisamos de mais informação, precisamos de melhor informação. Vamos proteger melhor as nossas crianças, não apenas quando o pior já aconteceu e não sabemos o seu paradeiro, pelo contrário, através de novos alertas para crianças em risco. Vamos poder prevenir estes raptos ou realidades tão dramáticas como a mutilação genital, mas também vamos melhorar a segurança de todos através de uma monitorização mais estreita dos chamados *foreign fighters* e outros criminosos, através de novos meios de obtenção de informação, os *inquiry checks*, através de melhores dados biomédicos, como impressões digitais e imagens faciais. Será possível não apenas efetuar pesquisas com estes elementos, como procurar em toda a Europa autores de crimes desconhecidos, mas cuja impressão digital foi encontrada no local do crime.

Vamos melhorar os controlos nas nossas fronteiras externas. Levamos a cabo a maior revisão de sempre às proibições de entrada em Schengen. Será virtualmente impossível que alguém recusado por Portugal consiga entrar pela Alemanha, mas certos requisitos terão de ser cumpridos.

Melhoramos a capacidade de resposta do sistema, aumentamos a sua capacidade de processamento e reforçamos as suas defesas contra potenciais ataques, problemas de segurança ou simples falhas. E pedimos mais eficácia aos Estados-Membros. Os prazos de resposta dos Gabinetes Sirene foram encurtados e os pedidos de informação em casos relativos a crianças ou terrorismo requerem resposta imediata.

Por fim, mas nem por isso menos importante, colocamos o SIS no centro da ação europeia, providenciando o acesso à Frontex e à Europol, aumentando ainda mais o valor da sua ação.

Estou confiante, Sr. Presidente, em que, amanhã, esta Câmara irá aprovar sem reservas a terceira reforma do Sistema de Informação de Schengen. Acredito que mais Europa, que mais SIS permite melhor informação e melhor coordenação, permite mais segurança e mais liberdade.

Jeroen Lenaers, *Rapporteur*. – Voorzitter, laat me ook allereerst collega Carlos Coelho, commissarissen King en Avromopoulos en alle schaduwrapporteurs bedanken, die samen met ons aan dit resultaat gewerkt hebben, en natuurlijk de Raad, met name het Estse en het Bulgaarse Voorzitterschap. Ik denk dat we een heel goed resultaat bereikt hebben.

Het Schengeninformatiesysteem is een cruciaal onderdeel van ons veiligheidsbeleid. Het is een onderdeel dat eigenlijk heel goed functioneert, maar waarover we toch vaak weinig horen. Het is cruciaal dat nationale autoriteiten, politie, justitie via dit systeem toegang kunnen krijgen tot informatie over bijvoorbeeld gezochte personen, personen die discreet gevolgd moeten worden, die aangehouden moeten worden, vermiste personen en vermiste kinderen, maar ook bijvoorbeeld gestolen voorwerpen als auto's, paspoorten of wapens.

Laat me toch een aantal cijfers noemen om te vertellen wat er met dat systeem gebeurt. Het wordt vijf miljard keer per jaar geraadpleegd. We hebben meer dan 70 miljoen van dit soort signaleringen in dat systeem opgenomen. 450 keer per dag in de EU hebben we een hit op basis van dit systeem. We hebben 40 000 verdachten gearresteerd op basis van dit systeem, 150 000 mensen geweigerd aan de grens, 28 000 vermiste personen gevonden, 200 000 objecten teruggevonden. Dat zijn stuk voor stuk hele indrukwekkende cijfers, maar het kan altijd beter en het moet altijd beter, en daarom deze hervorming van het Schengeninformatiesysteem.

Carlos Coelho heeft al een aantal dingen gezegd, dus laat mij op één specifiek onderdeel wat dieper ingaan en dat is het opnemen van terugkeerbesluiten in het Schengeninformatiesysteem. Een belangrijke stap, want we weten allemaal dat we er tegenwoordig maar heel moeizaam in slagen om mensen die geen asiel hebben gekregen in Europa en die eigenlijk moeten terugkeren naar het land van herkomst, ook daadwerkelijk te laten terugkeren. Op dit moment lukt dat maar in 37 % van de gevallen. Dat betekent dat in bijna twee derde van de gevallen mensen die hier gekomen zijn, die geen asiel gekregen hebben, toch gewoon blijven. Dat getal, dat percentage moet absoluut omhoog, als wij het draagvlak onder het gemeenschappelijk asielbeleid willen behouden. Dat moet beter en het Schengeninformatiesysteem kan daarbij helpen.

Nu is het zo dat, wanneer een lidstaat besloten heeft om geen asiel te verlenen en dat een persoon terug moet naar het land van herkomst, we bij wijze van spreken een vrijwillige terugkeer aanbieden, een vinkje erachter zetten en maar geloven dat het goed is. Hier doen zich twee problemen voor. In de eerste plaats, weten we niet of die persoon daadwerkelijk vertrokken is. In de tweede plaats, mocht die persoon in een andere lidstaat opduiken, dan weten de autoriteiten daar vaak niet dat er in een ander land al een terugkeerbesluit genomen is en beginnen we weer van voren af aan.

Die twee problemen lossen wij vandaag op. Op het moment dat iemand ook daadwerkelijk de buitengrens van de EU overschreden heeft, wordt de originele lidstaat geïnformeerd en wordt dat gecorrigeerd, zodat we onze energie kunnen richten op de mensen die hier nog steeds zijn. Politiediensten kunnen voortaan in het systeem zien of iemand al gesignaleerd staat als persoon die terug moet naar het land van herkomst, zodat de samenwerking veel gemakkelijker is om dat ook op een efficiënte manier te laten gebeuren. Dit is een belangrijke stap om het terugkeerbeleid efficiënter te maken.

Tegelijkertijd moeten we daarom voorzichtig zijn. Het is juist daarom dat we vanuit het Europees Parlement ervoor gezorgd hebben dat de waarborgen dienaangaande, ook ernstig versterkt worden. Wanneer een terugkeerbesluit opgeschort wordt of uitgesteld, wordt het *alert* verwijderd. Het principe van non-refoulement en het Verdrag van Genève worden expliciet opgenomen. De waarborgen op het gebied van databescherming worden sterk verbeterd, zowel ten aanzien van het bewaren van data als van de samenwerking met derde landen op dat gebied.

Dus samengevat, Voorzitter, we zijn erin geslaagd om het terugkeerbeleid een stap dichterbij echte efficiëntie te brengen, terwijl we tegelijkertijd ervoor zorgen dat de waarborgen en de rechten van personen te allen tijde gerespecteerd worden. Dat is een heel mooi resultaat en daar mogen we trots op zijn.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I am very pleased to be here with you tonight for the final debate on our three proposals for a reinforced Schengen Information System. I would like to thank wholeheartedly the rapporteurs, Mr Coelho and Mr Lenaers; the shadow rapporteurs, their teams and all those involved on this file for enabling us to have this debate tonight. This agreement was the result of intense work and I would like to congratulate them for it.

At the core, the Schengen Information System is about one thing: trust. The trust to share sensitive information with EU partners. The trust to follow up on alerts shared by EU partners. The trust to rely on the Schengen Information System when the security of our citizens is at stake.

The SIS today contains over 80 million alerts on wanted and missing persons and objects. Just last year it was accessed 5.2 billion times. Since 2013, when we first had SIS in its current form, it has led to 50 000 arrests and the tracking of 200 000 serious criminals. These numbers are clear testament to its value for our Member States. It is no exaggeration to say that it is the centrepiece of our security cooperation in Europe and our most important instrument for information exchange in the European Union.

It was against this background that we proposed – in December 2016, as you will remember – to further strengthen the system. But the question is: why change a system that performed so well? Because with the dramatic improvements in information-sharing during the past three years, a stronger SIS can open a new chapter in our cooperation on internal security and can contribute to the coherent application of the rules and principles governing the Schengen area.

The new rules will help with the effective enforcement of entry bans for third-country nationals at the external borders by making the entry of their data into the SIS compulsory. With the introduction of a new alert category for return decisions, the SIS will also provide an efficient tool for the implementation of EU policies on return. Member States will now be obliged to enter alerts where a person or an object is sought for a terrorist offence.

The role of Europol will be strengthened, as it will now have access to all alerts and supplementary information exchanges, while Member States will be obliged to inform Europol of any alerts related to terrorist offences. The operational teams of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency will also have their own access to SIS in order to carry out checks at the hotspots. The new SIS will make better use of biometric data, with the possibilities of using palm prints, facial images and DNA profiles in specific cases, when safeguards are met. This will build on the Automated Fingerprint Identification System we introduced to SIS earlier this year, which has already led to a 25% increase in the number of alerts containing fingerprints.

In parallel, the reinforcement of SIS will strengthen the protection of personal data by aligning the SIS provisions with the new data protection framework. There will also be important improvements for the work of law enforcement authorities and strong links to our work on interoperability, which Julian will tell you more about in a minute.

Interoperability, like our security initiatives on electronic evidence, explosives and terrorist content online, is vital for the security of our citizens, and it is essential that they advance rapidly to adoption before the May elections.

What I would like to leave you with is that, with this debate tonight and tomorrow's vote, Europe's most widely-used secure database will become even stronger. A strengthened SIS will provide police and border guards with the information they need to do their jobs and help keep Europeans safe. It is the most concrete example of all our work to change the culture on how we cooperate on security in the European Union: a Europe that protects; a genuine and effective Security Union to ensure the security of our citizens. With this in mind, I encourage you to support this important initiative when you vote tomorrow.

Julian King, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, the Schengen Information System (SIS) is the centrepiece of our network of information exchange and the main law enforcement database that we have. But its real strength lies in the fact that it is used. It is used every day. It has been integrated into the everyday work of over two million police officers and border guards across Europe, whose job it is to try and keep us safe. It is an undoubted success.

In addition to some of the figures that we've already heard, between 2013 and 2017 the SIS also contributed to over 28 000 missing persons being found; to the tracing of more than 180 000 persons needed to assist with a criminal judicial procedure; and to almost 200 000 cases concerning stolen objects – vehicles, identity, travel documents and firearms – being solved, all using the SIS.

I would like to join the speakers who have already thanked Mr Coelho, Mr Lenaers and all those who worked on reaching agreement on these proposals for improving the system. The improvements that we've agreed – that you've agreed – will make a real, positive contribution to the fight against terrorism and serious and organised crime. As we have heard, they will make the exchange of information more efficient. The new obligation to enter an alert in relation to a terrorist offence will be applicable immediately. Together with the provisions on information sharing in the directive on countering terrorism, this is an important step towards information sharing by default, which many of you in this House have argued for.

New alert categories, like the new inquiry check, will provide key investigative tools for law enforcement authorities. The proposed changes will also allow the SIS alerts to be used for unknown persons wanted in connection with a crime on the basis of fingerprints or palm prints discovered at the scene of the crime – for instance, when fingerprints are found on a weapon that has been used – all subject to certain safeguards. The new SIS will strengthen support for the prevention and investigation of theft and counterfeiting by providing for alerts to be issued on a wider range of stolen and falsified goods and documents. In parallel to these measures, we've also been working with the Member States to make the system more user friendly for frontline officers, and we have thus seen the number of checks made against the SIS increase by 40% in 2016, compared with the year before, and by a further 30% year-on-year in 2017.

Dimitris Avramopoulos has already mentioned the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). To date, 12 - Member States are using AFIS to identify people at the external borders or on their territory. This has already led to a number of hits on people who would not have been identified otherwise, such as, to give one example, the man who claimed asylum on arrival at Schiphol without identity documents. After a fingerprint check on AFIS, it was found that there was a warrant out for his arrest in Germany. That's the kind of practical result that these new systems, incorporating biometrics, can deliver. We are now working with the other Member States to ensure that they too implement biometrics. Under the new proposals, the use of AFIS will be mandatory for all Member States by the end of 2020, which in itself will mark an important milestone in the fight against multiple or fraudulent identities. But, as Dimitris

Avramopoulos underlined, there's still more to do on this.

So, finally, let me briefly link the strengthening of the SIS with our wider work towards the interoperability of EU information systems for security, border and migration management. The reinforced SIS sits at the core of our proposals on interoperability, i.e. our work to ensure that national authorities have the information they need, when and where they need it, with all the safeguards offered by our fundamental rights framework. By closing down the gaps that terrorists and criminals can exploit, we can cut down on identity fraud and strengthen our external border security and our internal security.

I very much welcomed the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee adopting its negotiating mandate on interoperability last week, and I look forward to the start of trilogues soon on this important subject. Thank you for your support.

PRESIDE: RAMÓN LUIS VALCÁRCEL SISO

Vicepresidente

Hilde Vautmans, *Rapporteur voor advies van de Commissie buitenlandse zaken*. – Meneer de Voorzitter, commissaris, we hebben het al gehoord, het Schengeninformatiesysteem vormt de kern van de veiligheidssamenwerking binnen de Europese Unie. De aanpassingen die we vandaag gaan voorstellen zijn eigenlijk broodnodig om onze veiligheid te vergroten in de strijd tegen terreur. Vandaar ook de gezichtsherkenning en het gebruik van vingerafdrukken. Het zijn allemaal noodzakelijke aanpassingen.

Maar vandaag ben ik vooral heel blij met hetgeen mijn collega Gérard Deprez mee heeft bewerkstelligd. De preventieve waarschuwingen voor kinderen die het gevaar lopen slachtoffer te worden van een ouderontvoering, van een kindhuwelijk of van genitale verminking. Die hervorming was broodnodig. Net zoals de hervorming die we doorvoeren voor de kinderen in migratie, voor de kinderen op de vlucht. Eindelijk zal het mogelijk zijn om DNA-profielen te gebruiken om hen sneller te identificeren en op te sporen. Collega's, deze derde hervorming van het Schengeninformatiesysteem zal onze veiligheid in Europa ongetwijfeld vergroten.

Kinga Gál, *a PPE képviselőcsoport nevében*. – Tisztelt Elnök Úr! A Schengeni Információs Rendszer, akárcsak a schengeni térség, maga az európai sikertörténet. Az európai polgároknak a legkézzelfoghatóbb vívmányát jelenti, a belső határnélküliséget, ugyanakkor nem veszélyeztetve biztonságukat. Hiszen csak 2015-ben az illetékes nemzeti hatóságok közel 2,9 milliárd alkalommal ellenőriztek személyeket és tárgyakat biztonsági céllal a SIS-ben tárolt adatok alapján. A holnap szavazásra kerülő új javaslat ezt a biztonsági elemét a schengeni rendszernek erősíti tovább, hogy az megfelelő választ tudjon adni az új migrációs és terrorizmus általi kihívásokra is. Üdvözlendő, hogy végre nagyobb figyelmet kap, gyorsabb és hatékonyabb lesz az eljárás az eltűnt gyermekek felkutatásában, amelynek sikere sokszor az első huszonnégy órán múlhat. Hatékonyabbá válik a kitoloncolásra váró vagy a beutazási tilalom alá eső illegális migránsok elleni eljárás. Az arcképek tárolásával könnyebben beazonosíthatóvá válnak bűnözők és terroristák. Az Európai Néppárt törekvéseivel egyezik a megújított rendszer, hiszen tükrözi valamennyi meggyőződését, hogy nincs szabadság biztonság nélkül. Ezen új generációs információs rendszer pedig épp biztonságunkat növeli majd. Ugyanakkor nem szabad felednünk, hogy belső határnélküliségünk csak addig fenntartható, ameddig külső határaink biztonságát garantálni tudjuk.

Miriam Dalli, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, let me first of all thank the rapporteurs, Mr Coelho and Mr Lenaers, with whom we worked closely and had a good working relationship. I can say that the Schengen Information System that we negotiated together is a valuable tool which can help build resilience against terrorist threats and can help keep our citizens secure and safe. The effectiveness and efficiency of the system can always be further strengthened, but I believe that what we have achieved is a good balance to ensure the safety of our citizens across the European Union.

As the S&D Group we have welcomed the revision of SIS. However, we wanted to strike the right balance between gathering data and the fundamental rights of our citizens. This is a system primarily designed for the purpose of police and border control, and with this in mind, it is crucial to establish a system that will not jeopardise the right to privacy, the right to the protection of personal data, and procedural rights in criminal cases.

On behalf of my Group, I have pushed for proper safeguards for the biometric data stored in the system. Our focus was to establish uniform rules for securely addressing and processing Schengen Information System data. We have given special attention to the safety of all civilians and included preventive alerts for vulnerable third-country nationals and victims of human trafficking, but also for missing children or children at high risk of parental abduction. For me, it was pivotal not only to address the fight against human trafficking and child abduction but also to ensure that their fundamental rights with regard to their personal data are protected.

Information exchange in the field of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters and in the field of border checks is essential, particularly since the great majority of individuals involved in perpetrating terrorist attacks in Europe within the last decade have been EU citizens. Many were foreign fighters; most were already known to the European authorities.

Let me emphasise a final point about SIS II. SIS II is based on the principle of mutual trust and requires Schengen states to enforce each other's SIS alerts. It means that states have a duty to check an alert's lawfulness and proportionality, particularly if its enforcement would violate the fundamental rights of the person involved. Based on this principle, the relevant authorities should check first whether any action would violate the person's fundamental rights, because the improvement of the system should never come at the expense of the protection of the individual's fundamental rights. We have the tools to guarantee the safety of our citizens; now we need to make sure that Member States implement properly this regulation. Thanks a lot, and once again thank you to the rapporteurs.

Helga Stevens, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, collega's, ik ben zeer tevreden met het wetgevingspakket over het Schengeninformatiesysteem. Hiermee verhogen we de efficiëntie van de SIS-databank op het vlak van grensbewaking, het opvolgen van de terugkeer van illegalen en de politiesamenwerking. Deze databank is trouwens cruciaal voor onze veiligheid in het licht van het vrij verkeer van personen binnen het Schengengebied.

Een evaluatie bracht echter gebreken aan het licht, gaande van kwaliteitsproblemen, een gebrek aan opleiding bij politiemensen tot onvoldoende informatie over signalisering en vertragingen bij de opvolging van treffers. Deze voorstellen werken deze gebreken nu weg, maar het gaat verder dan puur cosmetische aanpassingen of technische verbeteringen. Nu kunnen personen enkel aan de hand van bijvoorbeeld hun naam of geboortedatum in de databank worden opgezocht. Maar in de toekomst kunnen criminelen worden opgespoord aan de hand van hun vingerafdrukken. Gedaan dus met identiteitsfraude. Ook van belang is dat vingerafdrukken, gevonden op de plaats van de misdaad, kunnen worden ingevoerd in het systeem. Hiermee verhogen we de pakkans van misdadigers die op de vlucht zijn.

Een efficiëntere en gebruiksvriendelijkere databank is absoluut nodig, zodat onze politiediensten en grenswachters hun werk naar behoren kunnen doen. Samen met de interoperabiliteit van databanken door allerlei gegevensbanken aan elkaar te koppelen, zetten we een nieuwe stap vooruit in de strijd tegen criminaliteit, mensensmokkel en terreur. Ik roep alle fracties dan ook op om voor deze zeer nodige aanpassingen te stemmen. Veiligheid is immers een zaak van ons allen.

Gérard Deprez, *au nom du groupe ALDE*. – Monsieur le Président, Messieurs les Commissaires, chers collègues, ils sont nombreux les citoyens européens – et j'en suis – à se réjouir et à profiter de la liberté de circulation dans l'espace européen.

Mais ce que les citoyens savent moins et que nos deux excellents rapporteurs Carlos Coelho et Jeroen Lenaers connaissent à la perfection – je tiens à les féliciter – c'est le rôle central que joue le système d'information Schengen (SIS) pour garantir cette liberté. Car le corollaire obligé de la liberté de circulation, c'est le contrôle efficace des frontières extérieures et une coopération accrue entre les forces de police à l'intérieur de l'espace commun européen.

Les commissaires Avramopoulos et King, ainsi que Jeroen Lenaers, ont rappelé des chiffres indiscutables sur l'efficacité actuelle du système d'information Schengen. Mais cette efficacité, pour grande qu'elle soit déjà, comportait encore trop de lacunes que nous avons dénoncées. Il était donc nécessaire de l'améliorer. C'est ce qui est proposé à notre assemblée dans ces trois rapports.

Premièrement, dorénavant les États membres devront introduire un signalement dans le SIS pour toute personne impliquée dans des infractions ou des crimes terroristes. Europol en sera instantanément averti, ce qui permettra le déclenchement rapide de la coopération entre les polices européennes.

Deuxièmement, dorénavant, les États membres devront introduire dans le SIS, un signalement pour toute personne frappée d'une interdiction de séjour sur le territoire européen. Ce n'est pas le cas actuellement et cela entrave considérablement l'exécution des décisions de quitter le territoire.

Troisièmement, dorénavant, les États membres pourront introduire dans le SIS un signalement pour les enfants disparus, les enfants menacés d'enlèvement, les jeunes filles menacées de mariage forcé ou de mutilations génitales.

Avec ces changements, chers collègues, le SIS ne sera plus seulement un outil répressif, ce qui reste nécessaire, mais deviendra aussi un moyen efficace de protection des personnes les plus fragiles, ce qui doit nous réjouir tous.

(L'orateur accepte de répondre à une question «carton bleu» (article 162, paragraphe 8, du règlement)

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI), *pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki*. – Chciałem spytać, skoro Pan martwi się o usprawnienie systemu informacji Schengen, to może zwróci się Pan do przewodniczącego Pana ugrupowania, pana Verhofstadta, który zaprosił do tego Parlamentu Ludmiłę Kozłowską, która dostała zakaz wjazdu na teren Unii Europejskiej od polskich służb specjalnych, co potem potwierdziły służby ukraińskie – potwierdziły, że jest to osoba niebezpieczna. Przewodniczący Pana ugrupowania obwozi ją jako jakiegoś rzekomego polskiego dysydenta i pokazuje w tym Parlamencie wbrew zakazowi wydanemu przez władze polskie. Jak Pan to skomentuje?

Gérard Deprez (ALDE), *réponse «carton bleu»*. – M. Verhofstadt a eu parfaitement raison de faire ce qu'il a fait, parce que dans le cas que vous avez mentionné, le signalement dans le système d'information Schengen par les autorités polonaises était un véritable détournement et c'est la raison pour laquelle nous ne l'avons pas accepté et que nous avons accordé un droit d'accès à cette personne.

Eva Joly, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Monsieur le Président, le système d'information Schengen est un outil indispensable pour garantir la liberté de circulation dans l'espace Schengen et la sécurité des citoyens.

Mon groupe soutient les propositions qui améliorent l'échange d'informations pertinentes entre États membres, un élément essentiel pour lutter efficacement contre le terrorisme, le crime organisé et l'enlèvement d'enfants. Mais l'extension de l'utilisation de ce fichier pour les décisions de retour contribuera à accroître la criminalisation de la migration.

Par ailleurs, les menaces à l'ordre public sont des notions trop vagues qui permettent à certains États membres d'en abuser en entrant des alertes dans le système sur des bases strictement politiques. C'est notamment le cas de la Pologne, qui interdit l'entrée dans l'espace Schengen à la défenseuse des droits humains ukrainienne, Lyudmyla Kozlovska via ce type d'alerte.

Des garanties sont donc indispensables pour que ces fichiers ne deviennent ni un instrument politique entre les mains d'États peu scrupuleux, ni un *Big Brother* avec toutes nos données biométriques.

Marie-Christine Vergiat, *au nom du groupe GUE/NGL*. – Monsieur le Président, le SIS II sera-t-il le nouveau *Big Brother* européen?

Le système d'information Schengen créé en 1990 était le pendant de la suppression des contrôles aux frontières. Il concernait essentiellement les véhicules volés, les personnes disparues et les ressortissants de pays tiers interdits de séjour. Un simple outil de coopération policière.

Sa portée n'a cessé de s'élargir au regard des signalements inclus, des données collectées et du nombre de personnes y ayant accès. Plus de 5 milliards de consultations, 76 millions de signalements et plus de 2 millions d'utilisateurs. Moi, cela m'inquiète pour le droit des personnes signalées et qui n'avaient rien à se reprocher.

Le ratio n'est pas beau et on va encore en élargir le champ, en y intégrant notamment des personnes soupçonnées d'avoir l'intention de commettre une infraction. Le soupçon d'intention: voilà une nouvelle norme pénale qui est assez loin de la présomption d'innocence. On pourra intégrer dans un fichier de criminalité un peu n'importe qui – nous venons de l'entendre – sans que les intéressés même ne le sachent vraiment.

On va aussi fichier tous les ressortissants de pays tiers faisant l'objet d'une mesure de retour ou d'un refus d'entrée sur le territoire. C'est un cran supplémentaire dans la criminalisation des migrants en situation dite «irrégulière» qui sont, rappelons-le, dans leur immense majorité, des personnes en situation de détresse.

On augmente aussi les collectes de données alphanumériques, images faciales, données digitales ou palmaires, voire ADN dans certains cas.

Oui! nos citoyens ont droit à la sécurité, les nouvelles technologies peuvent y aider mais pas à n'importe quel prix, pas en développant un climat de suspicion généralisée au détriment des droits fondamentaux, surtout entre de mauvaises mains. Pour nous, c'est non!

Giancarlo Scottà, *a nome del gruppo ENF*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, perché continuare a voler mettere in secondo piano i cittadini europei?

La proposta della Commissione europea, seppur migliorabile, era già condivisibile. A fronte di ciò, invece, l'azione del Parlamento ha indebolito un testo che avrebbe potuto, date le ampie differenze tra Stati membri soprattutto in tema di magistratura, rafforzare la cooperazione tra le autorità competenti degli Stati per affrontare compatti l'immigrazione irregolare.

Ancora una volta, quindi, abbiamo perso un'opportunità. Il diritto alla richiesta d'asilo non è mai stato messo in discussione ma noi, come espressione diretta dei nostri cittadini, abbiamo il compito di garantire la sicurezza dei nostri territori.

Seppur in un quadro, quindi, di piena garanzia per ciò che riguarda la tutela dei diritti fondamentali delle persone e i principi sanciti dalla Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione europea, dobbiamo lavorare a una revisione e a un riordino della disciplina legata al tema dell'immigrazione irregolare guardando alla realtà dei fatti in modo più franco.

Steven Woolfe (NI). – Mr President, nothing illustrates the long-term aim of the European Union more clearly than the increasing weakening of the national borders by Schengen. The Commission brags that the Schengen Information System is the most important information exchange system in Europe. No doubt it is. The vast body of information kept on you, me and everyone else who has ever crossed a European border makes George Orwell's 1984 nightmare look kind, generous and liberal.

Schengen is supposed to keep those inside safe and control who comes in from outside. It does neither. Terrorist slaughter has taken place inside the Schengen Area, committed by evil men who go between Europe and the Middle East at ease and at will. Schengen stops none of it. Still, the Commission wants to hold more information on all of us. It is further to weaken powers of the nation states. Without control, borders dissolve. Without borders, nations dissolve. That is the long-term aim of the European Union.

Agustín Díaz de Mera García Consuegra (PPE). – Señor presidente, apoyo estas propuestas, naturalmente. Todo un universo en materia de seguridad resumido en un minuto. Esto demuestra la baja calidad de nuestro sistema parlamentario: tres informes, dos comisarios. Así es que, haciendo un esfuerzo de síntesis, diré cuatro palabras.

Felicidades a Carlos y a Jeroen y me quedo con estos cuatro *inputs*: entrevistas, huellas, imágenes faciales y perfiles ADN. Son determinantes para mejorar la seguridad de los europeos, son necesarios para utilizar adecuadamente la revisión del sistema y así se facilitará, comisario King, su empeño —que comparto— de la interoperabilidad en el ámbito del año 2020.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señor presidente, comisarios, desde que se puso en marcha en 1995, Schengen equivale para los europeos a libre circulación de personas y, por tanto, es uno de los activos más preciados del acervo y de la construcción europea y hay que protegerlo. Y estamos dando un paso en esa dirección con estos tres Reglamentos en un debate conjunto: fronteras exteriores, cooperación policial y judicial, y también retorno.

Tres Reglamentos que se incardinan en el refuerzo de la seguridad en la gestión de las fronteras exteriores, también para controlar mejor los flujos migratorios, lo que se conecta con el sistema de entradas y salidas, con el sistema de información de visados, e incluso con Eurodac —registros biométricos, con todas las nuevas tecnologías—.

Pero hemos puesto el acento también en algunos elementos que son muy relevantes. El primero, que estamos poniendo a disposición de la interoperabilidad de las bases de datos elementos que afectan a los derechos fundamentales de las personas, y el objetivo garantista es irrenunciable para este Parlamento y no puede ser ignorado ni olvidado.

En segundo lugar, que Schengen está cuestionado porque las amenazas contra la seguridad han dado lugar a suspensiones temporales en un buen número de Estados miembros y es imprescindible que el objetivo irrenunciable sea la plena restauración de la libre circulación de personas y, por tanto, la preservación del activo Schengen.

En tercer lugar, que esta interoperabilidad de datos puede servir también para proteger mejor a las personas, particularmente a las más vulnerables, por ejemplo, a los niños, a los menores que atraviesan las fronteras de la Unión y no pueden desaparecer después, como ha puesto de manifiesto el terrible informe de Europol —nada menos que diez mil niños desaparecidos—.

Y, finalmente, que no se puede vincular enteramente el sistema de Schengen al retorno de los inmigrantes irregulares, porque, si es cierto que debemos reforzar la seguridad, también es cierto que no podemos renunciar a la visión que llamamos holística, comprensiva, general del fenómeno migratorio, del hecho migratorio, para darle el tratamiento adecuado que tantas veces ha reclamado en sus resoluciones este Parlamento Europeo.

Kristina Winberg (ECR). – Herr talman! Informationsutbyten är i grunden bra, särskilt när det gäller tredjelandetsmedborgare. Vi behöver ha kontroll på vilka som rör sig inom EU:s gränser. Därför kommer jag att rösta ja på detta förslag. Men glöm inte bort de havererande inre gränskontrollerna. Sverige har i veckan fått kraftig kritik för sina bristande gränskontroller i en hemligstämplad rapport. Underkänd av EU på 95 punkter. Men exakt vad det gäller vet vi inte, och får inte veta det heller.

Men även fungerande gränskontroller löser inte alla problem. En asylprocess i Sverige ligger tidsmässigt på cirka 500 dagar. Många av dem som får avslag vägrar att acceptera beslutet. EU borde uppmana medlemsstater som Sverige att effektivisera återvändandet med kortare handlingsstider och fler förvarsplatser, vilket tyvärr behövs.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η ανεξέλεγκτη παράνομη μετανάστευση και η ανάγκη να καταπολεμηθεί η τρομοκρατία υποχρεώνει τα κράτη να αυξήσουν τους ελέγχους στα σύνορά τους. Αυτό είναι πολύ φυσιολογικό να συμβαίνει. Παράλληλα όμως, επιδιώκουν να βελτιώσουν και το Σύστημα Πληροφοριών Σένγκεν. Μία από τις βελτιώσεις είναι και η προσθήκη σε αυτό πληροφοριών που αναφέρονται σε βιομετρικά χαρακτηριστικά. Αυτά τα δεδομένα είναι ιδιαίτερα ευαίσθητα και δεν πρέπει να καταχωρίζονται στο σύστημα, εάν προηγούμενως δεν έχουν εξετασθεί και αναλυθεί με προσοχή.

Ιδιαίτερη προσοχή πρέπει να δίδεται στα βιομετρικά δεδομένα ευάλωτων ομάδων, όπως είναι τα μικρά παιδιά. Από την άλλη πλευρά, επιβάλλεται να υπάρξει και η ασφάλεια αυτών των δεδομένων, ούτως ώστε να μη χρησιμοποιούνται κατά τρόπο που προσβάλλει τα θεμελιώδη δικαιώματα. Επιπλέον, θα πρέπει να έχουμε υπόψη ότι ο σκοπός αυτού του συστήματος είναι η προστασία μας από την τρομοκρατία και το οργανωμένο έγκλημα και όχι η δημιουργία ενός «μεγάλου αδελφού».

Innocenzo Leontini (PPE). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, migliorare l'efficacia dei rimpatri è fondamentale per mantenere la fiducia dei cittadini nei confronti delle politiche dell'Unione europea in materia di immigrazione e asilo.

Grazie alla revisione del sistema d'informazione Schengen sarà possibile istituire per la prima volta un sistema per lo scambio di informazioni tra gli Stati membri relativo alle decisioni di rimpatrio. Tale sistema consentirà di verificare se i cittadini di paesi terzi abbiano effettivamente lasciato il territorio degli Stati membri.

Inoltre il nuovo SIS permetterà di contrastare più efficacemente anche il terrorismo e la criminalità organizzata, attraverso le segnalazioni obbligatorie delle persone legate ad attività terroristiche, la condivisione del DNA dei criminali ricercati e la maggiore collaborazione con Europol.

Per tutte queste ragioni sostengo pienamente l'eccellente lavoro svolto dai colleghi Lenaers e Coelho, volto a potenziare ulteriormente il SIS in ambito europeo e a colmare alcune lacune presenti fino a oggi a livello nazionale. Auspico, al fine di fornire alle forze di polizia e alla guardia costiera gli strumenti più adatti, che il nuovo quadro giuridico diventi applicabile il prima possibile.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, stimați colegi, cred că eforturile din ultimii ani ai Uniunii Europene – pentru că au fost eforturi – ne-am confruntat de fapt cu lucruri noi, cu gestionarea migrației, cu gestionarea integrată a frontierelor, cu criminalitate transfrontalieră. Aveam un sistem SIS, modificarea pe care vrem acum să o facem dacă se va vota – și sper să se voteze acest nou regulament – este absolut pornită de la o constatare.

În 2016, Comisia a făcut o evaluare – și eu cred că trebuie să facem asemenea evaluări, pentru că lucrurile sunt în schimbare – și concluzia Comisiei a fost că trebuie să facem și a venit cu o propunere în fața Parlamentului de modificare a regulamentului SIS. Raportorii și noi toți am încercat să găsim o situație, au fost colegi care au criticat. Nu avem situații ideale – sigur că putem să ne gândim că vor fi persoane care vor fi suspectate fără să fie de vină sau se ia amprenta și nu convine unor persoane – dar important este să crească siguranța și securitatea cetățenilor în spațiul Uniunii Europene – vorbesc „spațiul”, nu numai în zona Schengen – și cred că raportul, prin propunerea Comisiei și amendamentele aduse, își atinge scopul. Evident că la un anumit interval putem să îmbunătățim, după o analiză, dar acum cred că scopul este de creștere a siguranței – și aici s-a spus în ce direcție merge raportul – și sper să fie votat, pentru că avem nevoie de creșterea siguranței. Criminalitatea transfrontalieră a crescut și avem nevoie de un sistem mai sigur.

Heinz K. Becker (PPE). – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar King! Die Neuregelung des Schengener Informationssystems ist ein großer Schritt zur europäischen Sicherheitsunion, um an den Außengrenzen der EU sowie bei der täglichen Arbeit in Polizei und Justiz, Europol, Frontex und Eurojust die Schlagkraft gegen Terrorismus, Schwereverbrechen, organisierte Kriminalität, illegale Migration – jawohl – und Asylmissbrauch massiv zu stärken. Der Einsatz von Gesichtserkennung, Biometrie, Finger- und Handabdrücken und DNA wird schon ab 2019 bis 2020 selbstverständlich werden. Das ist ein Erfolg Europas. Der nächste Schritt wird die Vollvernetzung aller EU-Datenbanken sein. Denn das ist unser Ziel: Jede Beamtin, jeder Beamte muss zu jeder Zeit augenblicklich gefährliche Personen erkennen und sofort amtshandeln können. Und das ist dann die verwirklichte Interoperabilität.

Gratulation an Kommission und an die Berichterstatter. Setzen wir diese effektive Arbeit konsequent fort, das sind wir den Menschen Europas schuldig!

Francisco Assis (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, queria começar por saudar os relatores e muito em particular o Senhor Deputado Carlos Coelho que, ao longo dos últimos anos aqui no Parlamento Europeu, tem contribuído de uma forma extraordinária para que se encontrem soluções equilibradas e justas num sector tão difícil como este.

Aqueles que pensam que é possível garantir a liberdade num contexto de insegurança estão rotundamente enganados. Não há melhor caldo de cultura para favorecer a emergência de soluções tirânicas do que um quadro de insegurança.

A insegurança é que gera muitas vezes o desejo de uma proteção excessiva que leva imediatamente à valorização das tiranias e, portanto, temos de ter a noção de que uma sociedade livre também tem de ser uma sociedade segura e temos de alcançar o equilíbrio entre estas duas dimensões, entre a dimensão da proteção da segurança dos cidadãos e a dimensão, naturalmente, do respeito pelos direitos fundamentais desses mesmos cidadãos.

Ora, o trabalho que aqui foi desenvolvido vai justamente neste sentido: a modernização de um instrumento essencial, o sistema SIS que é o instrumento fundamental para garantir o reforço da segurança, nomeadamente nas fronteiras externas, e, ao mesmo tempo, a salvaguarda dos direitos fundamentais dos cidadãos europeus.

Só temos razões para estar satisfeitos com este trabalho.

Dubravka Šuica (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedavajući, znamo da je Schengen jedna od velikih uspješnih europskih priča, ali, svakako, i ta priča treba doživjeti nadogradnju da bi naši građani bili mirni i mogli živjeti u potpunoj slobodi i koristiti tu slobodu kretanja.

Fascinantne su brojke koje ste spomenuli ovdje, i jedan i drugi povjerenik, o broju ulazaka u SIS1, u SIS 2, o broju otkrivenih slučajeva. Dakle, brojke su zaista fascinantne i taj SIS 1 i SIS 2 su sigurno dobri, međutim, definitivno ih treba nadograditi kako bismo spriječili sve moguće situacije koje se događaju na granicama. Međutim, želim napomenuti da unutarnja sigurnost građana Europske unije ne može biti dobra ukoliko nije osigurana vanjska granica.

Ja ne bih bila dosljedna ako i danas ne bih iskoristila prigodu u ovoj raspravi spomenuti Hrvatsku, koja ima najdužu vanjsku granicu u Europskoj uniji, od 1350 km, i koja još uvijek nije schengenska granica. Stoga još jedanput, znam da radimo na tome, znam da ispunjavamo kriterije, ali svakako očekujemo da, iako koristimo već i SIS 1 i SIS 2, konačno pristupimo toj slobodnoj schengenskoj zoni kako bismo i mi pomogli da Europska unije ne bude tvrđava, ali da znamo tko se nalazi na našem teritoriju, tko ulazi preko naših granica. Vjerujem da je to u interesu i svima vama iz ostalih zemalja Europske unije.

Michał Boni (PPE). – Mr President, firstly I would like to thank Carlos Coelho and Jeroen Lenaers, the rapporteurs, for the great job and balanced solution. These three regulations establish not only significant improvements for the Schengen Information System but create the new order. They open up the possibility to exchange more information among Member States' agencies and to improve the security of our borders against terrorists by real time checks and the sharing of information. They support the effectiveness of the prevention, detection and investigation of criminal offences. On the other hand, they also make it possible to speed up searches, with the help of an adequate alert system, for missing children.

These improvements strengthen trust and boost cooperation between Member States. Also, thanks to common technical standards, rules and semantic interoperability, they guarantee the efficiency of using the digital tools to collect the data – not more but better data – for a legitimate purpose and in an adequate way.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 162(8))

Róża Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE), pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. – Panie Pośle! Pan mówił o *efficiency*, o sprawnym systemie. Ja chciałam zapytać, czy Pan, znający casus Ludmiły Kozłowskiej wydalonej z Polski, nie uważa, że jest pewna luka, że trzeba by dodać do SIS jakieś zabezpieczenia przed politycznym wykorzystaniem? Czy nie powinniśmy osobom wpisanym do systemu Schengen, na tę listę osób, które nie mogą wjeżdżać do krajów Schengen, stworzyć możliwości ewentualnego odwołania, żądania wyjaśnienia? Co Pan Poseł o tym sądzi?

Michał Boni (PPE), odpowiedź na pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. – Dziękuję za pytanie. Systemu informacyjnego Schengen nie powinno używać się pod żadną presją polityczną ani wykorzystywać do celów politycznych. Tak jak powiedziałem na końcu swojego wystąpienia, musi być uzasadniony interes. Wtedy, kiedy używa się – tak jak w przypadku władz polskich – bezpieczeństwa kraju jako rzekomego powodu wstrzymania możliwości poruszania się Ludmiły Kozłowskiej, to uważam, że jest to naruszenie zasad Schengen, i zgadzam się, że możliwości odwoławcze istnieją – być może powinniśmy jeszcze o nich podyskutować.

Przy okazji tylko chcę powiedzieć koledze, który wcześniej już mówił o sprawie Ludmiły Kozłowskiej, że – po pierwsze – była zaproszona nie tylko przez pana Verhofstadta, ale także przez Zgromadzenie Narodowe Niemiec, przez wiele instytucji. A oprócz tego nawet na dzisiejszej konferencji prasowej pytany o tę sprawę minister spraw zagranicznych Ukrainy nie dał odpowiedzi mówiącej, że jest ona jakimkolwiek dla Ukrainy zagrożeniem i nigdy władze ukraińskie oficjalnie jasno tego nie powiedziały, a o sprawach związanych z Ludmiłą Kozłowską rozmawialiśmy w oficjalnej delegacji ukraińskiej w Kijowie miesiąc temu.

El presidente. – Señorías, ruego que se vayan ajustando a los tiempos, por favor. Señor, Soñierz, usted antes ya tomó la palabra levantando una tarjeta azul, veo ahora que en el turno de «catch de eye» va a intervenir otra vez. Habida cuenta de que este turno tiene numerosas peticiones, le pido que renuncie a la tarjeta azul y tome la palabra en su momento, en el turno que ahora, dentro de nada, va a comenzar.

Mihai Țurcanu (PPE). – Domnule președinte, securitatea frontierelor externe ale Uniunii Europene este fundamentală și statele membre au responsabilitatea de a-și proteja cetățenii. Pentru a îmbunătăți sistemele de informații Schengen, statele membre și Europol trebuie să aibă o colaborare mai strânsă și un schimb de informații consistent, iar acest sistem este soluția.

Sistemul comun de informații este în vigoare în toate cele 28 de state membre, inclusiv în România. Uniunea Europeană se poate bucura de rolul activ pe care îl are România, o țară care împărtășește informații prin aceste sisteme comune. România a câștigat dreptul de aderare la spațiul Schengen când a semnat Tratatul de aderare la Uniunea Europeană, iar acest lucru nu mai trebuie întârziat prin inventarea unor varii motive de alte state membre. Inclusiv în discursul său de astăzi, președintele Juncker a susținut că, până la finele mandatului său, România va face parte din spațiul Schengen. Și vreau să subliniez, domnule președinte Juncker, că mai aveți doar șase luni la dispoziție.

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedavajući, koncept Europe kao otvorenog prostora bez granica jedna je od temeljnih vrijednosti koja je spojila tisuće građana i potakla daljnju međusobnu integraciju. Od izazova migrantske krize 2015. godine do terorističkih prijetnji schengenski prostor postao je primarno sigurnosno političko pitanje. Gubitak povjerenja u sustav podigao je zidove tamo gdje su oni već desetljećima bili srušeni.

Republika Hrvatska ima za cilj ulazak u schengenski prostor do 2019. godine i brine o vanjskim granicama Europe prema zapadnom Balkanu te odgovorno ispunjava svoje zadaće na tom putu. Zato dobro razumijemo značaj kontinuiranog unaprjeđenja sustava između država članica, kako bi izbjegli propuste nastale za vrijeme i nakon migrantske krize.

Schengen će najbolje funkcionirati ako zajedno branimo europske granice, kako se ne bismo zatvarali u unutarnje. Hrvatska strana sigurno napreduje u tom smjeru uspješno implementirajući Schengenski informacijski sustav te ostale schengenske instrumente. Ohrabrena ovim napretkom, vjerujem kako će Hrvatska ostvariti svoj strateški cilj i pristupiti zajedničkom prostoru do 2019. godine te nastaviti štititi Europu od budućih ugroza.

Intervenciones con arreglo al procedimiento de solicitud incidental de uso de la palabra («catch the eye»)

Cristian-Silviu Bușoi (PPE). – Domnule președinte, felicitări domnului Coelho. Schengen este, fără îndoială, un sistem eficient în a apăra Uniunea Europeană, în a proteja frontierele împotriva terorismului și a crimei organizate. Este însă foarte important ca el să fie permanent îmbunătățit și toate statele participante să coopereze cât mai strâns. România este parte a SIS încă din anul 2010 și instituții ca Inspectoratul General al Poliției Române sau Inspectoratul Poliției de Frontieră se bucură de un deosebit respect colaborând într-o manieră eficientă în combaterea criminalității transfrontaliere.

România joacă, de altfel, un rol decisiv în securitatea întregii Uniuni Europene și acționează ca un stat Schengen *de facto* apărând cu profesionalism peste 2 000 de kilometri de frontieră. Din păcate, accesul României este restricționat la spațiul Schengen de 7 ani de o decizie politică cu dedesubturi economico-maritimo-protecționiste, mai ales din partea Olandei, și această opoziție alimentează cu succes fenomenul sceptic din România. Sper ca, în viitorul foarte apropiat, România să devină parte a spațiului Schengen, așa cum este drept și corect.

Maria Gabriela Zoană (S&D). – Domnule președinte, deși România și Bulgaria îndeplinesc criteriile de aderare la spațiul Schengen – România încă din 2011 — și, deși în plenul Parlamentului European a fost adoptată o rezoluție încă din luna mai pentru sprijinul aderării acestor două țări în spațiul Schengen, suntem în luna octombrie, iar perspectiva aderării nu pare să fie una apropiată.

Țin doar să atrag atenția, domnule președinte, asupra unei realități pe care, uneori, o ascundem sau o negăm. Lipsa încrederii europenilor în instituțiile europene provine și din astfel de situații, în care cetățenii Uniunii constată că, la acest nivel, încă mai vorbim despre birocrăție și interese politice care primează, se pare, în fața intereselor individului.

Proape douăzeci de milioane de români sunt privați de un drept care le aparține, întrucât țara noastră a îndeplinit exigențele cerute. Pe lângă aceștia, discutăm de miile de operatori români care efectuează schimburi comerciale și care se văd nevoiți să aștepte zeci de ore la intrarea în spațiul Schengen în autovehicule pentru a fi controlați și verificați. Doresc să mulțumesc pentru rezoluția adoptată în acest plen în luna mai. Nu pot totuși să nu observ o lipsă de operativitate a celorlalte instituții europene în ceea ce privește transpunerea în practică a rezoluțiilor adoptate în plenul Parlamentului European, consecințele de imagine în ceea ce privește Uniunea Europeană în ansamblul ei fiind dintre cele mai serioase.

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε King, σας άκουσα πριν, και εσάς και τον κύριο Αβραμόπουλο, και σκέφτηκα πραγματικά τι θα έλεγαν οι κάτοικοι των νησιών του Αιγαίου ακούγοντάς σας. Διότι αναφερθήκατε στο ότι θα περιορίσετε την παράνομη είσοδο στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, θα γίνεται έλεγχος, θα λαμβάνονται δακτυλικά αποτυπώματα. Πού; Στη Μόρια; Στο hotspot της Μόριας όπου υπάρχουν 10.000 άτομα; Τολμάει η αστυνομία να μπει μέσα να κάνει έλεγχο; Έχετε πάει να δείτε τι υπάρχει στη Μόρια; Δεν τολμάει άνθρωπος να περάσει. Οι καταστάσεις είναι ανεξέλεγκτες. Θα κάνετε έλεγχο στη Σούδα, δηλαδή στη Χίο, που δεν τολμά να μπει ούτε η ελληνική αστυνομία; Θα κάνετε έλεγχο στη Σάμο;

Ακούστε, για ποιο λόγο δεν έχουν επαναπροωθηθεί χιλιάδες παράνομοι μετανάστες που είναι αυτή τη στιγμή στα νησιά του Αιγαίου; Έτσι θα σας ρωτούσαν οι κάτοικοι των νησιών του Αιγαίου, αν είχαν τη δυνατότητα να παρακολουθήσουν τη συζήτηση. Θα σας ρωτούσαν οι κάτοικοι του Έβρου, γιατί τώρα οι παράνομοι μετανάστες περνάνε από Τουρκία σε Βουλγαρία και μετά στην Ελλάδα. Αυτούς θα σταματήσετε; Θα τους πάρετε δακτυλικά αποτυπώματα; Πρέπει να υπάρχει σοβαρότητα στη λειτουργία της Frontex. Δεν υπάρχει φύλαξη των συνόρων και εντάξει τα θαλάσσια σύνορα. Δεν υπάρχει φύλαξη της Frontex στον Έβρο, που είναι χερσαία τα σύνορα. Δεν υπάρχουν απαντήσεις σε αυτά τα θέματα.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – Señor presidente, aprovecho este debate sobre el funcionamiento del Sistema de Información Schengen para insistir en que un servicio europeo de seguridad eficiente obliga a acabar con los filtros que tienen su origen en el nacionalismo de los Estados que frena tantos proyectos europeos.

La Ertzaintza es la Policía integral responsable de la seguridad pública de Euskadi. Atesora un enorme conocimiento sobre delincuencia organizada y terrorismo. Actúa en un enclave geográfico estratégico para el tránsito de personas y bienes entre el norte y el sur de la Europa más occidental.

Por eso, una participación operativa directa en el SIS, sin intermediaciones ni dependencias ineficaces e ineficientes, es clave para aportar los recursos y el conocimiento de esta Policía en las políticas de seguridad de la Unión.

Atendiendo a la legislación del propio Estado miembro y la comunitaria, y desde la lógica operativa, la Ertzaintza debe tener representación propia en todos los foros y comisiones internacionales donde se deciden y coordinan las estrategias de seguridad; donde se establecen puntos de conexión directos entre Policías europeas y se propicia la continuidad de muchas investigaciones. Por eso, señor comisario, me gustaría conocer su opinión al respecto.

Florent Marcellesi (Verts/ALE). – Señor presidente, el muro de Trump está aquí, está con nosotros en Europa, en la frontera sur del espacio Schengen. Es una gran valla con cuchillas en Ceuta y Melilla. Es una valla que mata. Este mismo domingo dos personas han muerto al intentar cruzarla. Otras, sí, llegan, pero ¿cuál es a menudo la respuesta?: las devoluciones en caliente. Es decir, incumplir la legislación internacional y las sentencias del Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos, sin importar que sean menores, demandantes de asilo o personas heridas que necesitan atención sanitaria.

España y la Unión Europea no pueden seguir pisoteando los derechos humanos ni seguir externalizando nuestras fronteras a países terceros no seguros. Porque la cuestión migratoria es clave para el futuro de Europa. Así que seamos responsables, terminemos con las devoluciones en caliente, respetemos los derechos humanos y abramos vías de entrada seguras y legales al espacio Schengen. Que nadie más tenga que morir por tener que migrar a Europa.

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI). – Panie Przewodniczący! Ja pytam, po co jest ten system, skoro każdy poseł do tego Parlamentu może podważać decyzje stosownych władz, stosownych służb i zapraszać wykluczone osoby, w blasku reflektorów obnosić się z nimi. Panie Pośle Boni! To jest Pana obrona praworządności? I na jakiej podstawie kwestionujecie decyzję władz polskich? Skoro wicie lepiej od nich, to możemy sporo zaoszczędzić. Zamiast tych wszystkich służb granicznych, władz i służb specjalnych zatrudnijmy posła Boniego, posła Verhofstadta, posłankę Różę Thun, niech siądą przy stoliku i decydują za nas, to nie będziemy musieli wydawać na te wszystkie służby tych milionów euro.

Rozszczelniacie system w imię walki politycznej. Mówicie, że to jest decyzja polityczna? A w jakiej sprawie pan Verhofstadt zaprosił tutaj Ludmiłę Kozłowską? W imię interesów politycznych. W imię politycznej walki z polskim rządem wysadzacie w powietrze system, który ma nas chronić przed terrorystami i niebezpiecznymi osobami. Służby ukraińskie wydały – to Pan przegapił – oświadczenie na temat Kozłowskiej, że uważają ją za osobę niebezpieczną, która dążyła do zmiany granic Ukrainy. Jest to najprawdopodobniej osoba powiązana z rosyjskimi służbami specjalnymi. I w ten sposób Rosjanie jeszcze raz Wami tutaj sterowali.

Róża Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! Dziękuję bardzo, to się dobrze składa, bo skorzystam z okazji i odpowiem na te pomówienia, które przed chwileczką słyszeliśmy. To rzeczywiście jest pewna luka w systemie SIS, bo to jest rzeczywiście głośna sprawa z obywatelką Ukrainy, która mieszkała w Polsce, jest zamężna z Polakiem i – dla wyjaśnienia – obydwoje angażują się w fundacji Otwarty Dialog, która piętnuje łamanie praw człowieka w Europie Wschodniej.

Fundacja Otwarty Dialog ostatnio wzięła pod lupę również stan praworządności w Polsce. Za to Ludmiła Kozłowska natychmiast została wydalona z Polski i wpisana na listę SIS osób, którym nie wolno wjeżdżać do Schengen. Od razu pojawiły się też informacje – te które słyszymy też tutaj – że służby bezpieczeństwa Ukrainy uznały ją za osobę niebezpieczną. Ale służby bezpieczeństwa Ukrainy skierowały natychmiast do portalu, który to rozprzestrzenia, dementi, że nie ma w ogóle takiej procedury w sprawie pani Kozłowskiej. Te plotki powtarzają tylko ci, którzy czerpią informacje z putinowskich *fake news*.

Mam króciutkie pytanie do pana komisarza. Co Pan na to, Panie Komisarzu? Czy nie powinniśmy natychmiast stworzyć jakiegoś systemu zabezpieczenia dla takich osób? Gdzie one mogą się w szybkim tempie odwołać? Ta sprawa jest rzeczywiście bardzo paląca.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, when we discuss the Schengen Information System it is important to bear in mind that some Member States are ready to abuse it for their own anti-democratic agenda. Last month, Open Dialogue Foundation President Lyudmyla Kozlovska was deported out of Poland through the Schengen Information System because of her peaceful human rights activities. Although I knew that this excellent human rights organisation had been the target of intimidation and smear campaigns by several governments, I was shocked to learn about what happened to Lyudmyla.

The backlash against freedom of expression and rule of law in several Member States should be very concerning for all of us. I believe we should deeply question the way this system works and how it can be used by Member States that deliberately choose to overlook their human rights obligations and act like authoritarian regimes.

The case also says much about the way we approach our migration policies. Locking our borders at all costs has terrible consequences for human rights. I call on the EU to wake up and rethink its migration policy and come up with a more humane approach.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospodine predsjedavajući, dorada i jačanje Schengenskog informacijskog sustava prijeko su potrebni budući da pritisak na vanjske granice Unije ne jenjava, a s njime ni sigurnosne prijetnje za naše građane.

Rješenja predstavljena u izvješćima predstavljaju napredak u odnosu na dosadašnju praksu. Doista je zapanjujuće to da je Komisija učinila toliko malo da se usklade kriteriji za upozorenja u svrhu odbijanja ulaska u schengenski prostor. Predložene izmjene konačno ispravljaju očite pogreške, a posebno mi je drago što se i osobe osuđene za terorizam uvrstavaju među nepoželjne. Glavno je pitanje zašto to dosad nije učinjeno.

Hrvatska je napokon dobila pristup Schengenskom informacijskom sustavu, što će joj olakšati put prema članstvu u Schengenu. Ovim putem pozivam sve nadležne da se to dogodi što prije.

Rory Palmer (S&D). – Mr President, forgive me, Members, for looking at these reports through the context of what might happen next March and Brexit, but the UK is the third-heaviest user of data on a daily basis through the SIS systems. Having recently joined Lord Willy Bach, the Police Commissioner for Leicestershire, in a series of meetings in Brussels, including with the Commissioner (who was very generous with his time), with parliamentarians and other agencies concerned with law enforcement, it is clear to me that that data and those tools are as important to modern policing as handcuffs. So it is critical over these next few months that we ensure – the UK government and the negotiators here – that that close cooperation through these systems between the UK and our partners here in the EU can continue, to ensure that our citizens on both sides of the Channel can be kept safe long into the future.

(Fin de las intervenciones con arreglo al procedimiento de solicitud incidental de uso de la palabra («catch the eye»))

Julian King, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, I would like to thank honourable Members for this debate. Speaking for myself, I think we can rightly be proud of what we have achieved with Schengen and with the Schengen Information System (SIS). Today's debate and the vote tomorrow will further reinforce that information system, making Europe's most widely used security database even more effective and, at the same time, reinforcing data protection safeguards. That is what modernising the SIS means.

After the legislation enters into force and the necessary technical changes have been implemented, Member States' authorities, together with Europol, eu-LISA and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, will be able to make better use of the system in the fight against terrorism and serious and organised crime. We will work with all Member States and all Member States' authorities and encourage them to use that system and to use it for the purposes it is intended for, in the full respect of our fundamental rights, the fundamental rights that underpin all our work in this area, the values that we are protecting. A strengthened SIS will provide the police, the border guards, those on the front line whose job it is to keep us safe, with the information they need to do their jobs.

Thanks again to the rapporteurs and to all who have been involved on these proposals. I encourage you to support this key file when you vote tomorrow.

Carlos Coelho, Relator. – Senhor Presidente, agradeço as referências simpáticas de várias colegas. Creio que no final deste debate é evidente que a grande maioria daqueles que usaram da palavra foi para defender a importância do Sistema de Informação de Schengen, para assegurar as liberdades de Schengen, para sublinhar que necessitamos de uma livre circulação com segurança e para recordar que os direitos dos cidadãos também se fazem reforçando a proteção de dados, e nós fazemos isto neste regulamento.

Estou confiante, como disse o Sr. Comissário King, que amanhã vamos aprovar a reforma do Sistema de Informação de Schengen. Quero sublinhar que este é o resultado do trabalho de uma equipa constituída por elementos de todas as instituições, que trabalharam de forma muito empenhada e muito célere para este resultado.

Quero agradecer a toda a equipa do nosso Parlamento, ao nosso secretariado em especial, pelo imenso esforço e dedicação que colocaram neste dossiê.

Agradeço ao Secretariado do Conselho, às equipas das Presidências da Estónia e da Bulgária, com que trabalhámos de forma leal e dedicada na busca do melhor resultado, e quero lamentar a ausência austríaca durante este debate sobre o SIS.

Um agradecimento à equipa negociadora da Comissão Europeia, naturalmente aos Srs. Comissários King e Avramopoulos, que foram cruciais na elaboração dos compromissos que garantem o sucesso do Sistema de Informação de Schengen, aos meus colegas relatores-sombra agradeço naturalmente a colaboração e a abordagem muito construtivas em todo este processo, e termino com o meu colega Jeroen, meu parceiro neste desafio, de quem não poderia ter tido melhor cooperação, fomos uma boa equipa, a todos muito obrigado.

Jeroen Lenaers, Rapporteur. – Mr President, I would like to thank Carlos Coelho once again. I'm not sure that the term 'partners in crime' is the most appropriate when it comes to the Schengen Information System (SIS), but I do very much appreciate the sympathy. I would like to thank all my colleagues who have worked so hard in a good spirit and a very constructive way. It almost makes me sad to think that, after tomorrow, this work will actually be finished. I don't want to scare Commissioner King but, on the basis of this experience, I am already looking forward to the next SIS reform.

We have worked on this legislation in a diligent and efficient way. We have a result that we can be proud of, as Commissioner King said. SIS is crucial for the security of our citizens. It already works well and it will work even better in the future thanks to this reform, not only in the area of security but also in that of migration management. These are two issues that are very important for many European citizens, and the fact that we have this result also shows that the European Union can deliver on these key issues. I think that is very important.

I am very happy with the result and I hope we can get widespread support when the House votes on this tomorrow. Thank you very much to everybody concerned, especially my dear friend Carlos. We look forward to tomorrow's vote.

El presidente. – Se cierra el debate conjunto.

La votación tendrá lugar mañana.

Declaraciones por escrito (artículo 162 del Reglamento interno)

Barbara Kudrycka (PPE), na piśmie. – Panie Przewodniczący! Wszyscy wiemy, jak ważne jest sprawne funkcjonowanie strefy Schengen. To jeden z symboli wspólnej Europy i wielki sukces integracji – nasz sukces. Nie możemy tego zaprzepaścić i musimy pamiętać o ciągłym ulepszaniu tego systemu – przy jednoczesnym zapewnieniu nam bezpieczeństwa. Dlatego dzisiaj gratuluję posłom Coelho i Leinarsowi sprawozdań, które mają za zadanie wprowadzenie nowych systemów i zabezpieczeń do funkcjonującego już Systemu Informacyjnego Schengen. Dotychczasowe rozporządzenie SIS II jedynie zezwalało krajowym organom egzekwowania prawa, aby wprowadzały ostrzeżenia o odmowie wjazdu i pobytu do systemu. Nie był to jednak obowiązek, co stanowiło lukę w całym systemie, którą sprawozdanie posła Coelho eliminuje. Należy także zwrócić uwagę na zapewnienie możliwości wykorzystywania obrazów twarzy czy profilu DNA do łatwiejszej identyfikacji osób zaginionych – szczególnie w przypadkach, w których dane daktyloskopijne czy zdjęcia nie są dostępne bądź nie nadają się do identyfikacji. Zwiększa to nie tylko szanse na właściwą identyfikację, ale także nasze bezpieczeństwo. Z mojej perspektywy ogromnie ważne jest, by nowe rozwiązania usprawniały Schengen i zwiększały bezpieczeństwo Europejczyków, lecz nie zmuszały nas do rezygnacji z wartości i swobód, które stanowią istotę Unii, istotę bezpiecznej Europy, Europy bez granic. To udało się osiągnąć.

Vladimír Maňka (S&D), *pisomne*. – Návrh nariadenia EP a Rady o zriadení, prevádzke a používaní Schengenského informačného systému (SIS) v oblasti hraničných kontrol posilňuje vonkajšiu ochranu hraníc a vnútornú bezpečnosť Únie. Opatrenia sú zamerané na posilnenie systému tak, aby bol schopný absorbovať viac údajov o osobách (najmä biometrických), aj aby bol systém technicky a informačne bezpečný. Spresňujú sa podmienky prístupu do systému pre európske agentúry a zavádza sa postup konzultácií, ktorý by mal na základe spolupráce členských krajín zamedziť tomu, aby ten istý príslušník tretej krajiny mal v členských krajinách Únie odlišný status na pobyt. Opatrenia by mali prispieť k väčšej flexibilitě a efektívnosti kontrolných orgánov na hraniciach Únie a tým aj k vyššej bezpečnosti.

Tonino Picula (S&D), *napisan*. – Rastúci osjećaj nesigurnosti među europskim građanima očekivano je i opravdano utjecao na preslagivanje prioriteta Europske unije koja nastoji odgovoriti na potrebe država članica i njihovih građana. Imajući u vidu takve izmijenjene okolnosti, podržavam namjeru da se poveća sigurnost vanjskih granica Unije od kojih je 1351 kilometar u nadležnosti Republike Hrvatske.

Prilagođavanje Schengenskog informacijskog sustava II u cilju učinkovitijeg zajedničkog rješavanja sigurnosnih problema povezanih s graničnom kontrolom treba pozdraviti. Međutim, valja istaknuti da potrebe sigurnosti ne smiju poslužiti kao izlika za kršenje prihvaćenih standarda zaštite ljudskih prava ili osobnih podataka. Unaprjeđenje sustava nipošto ne bi trebalo dovesti do otežanog pristupa Uniji za one koji legalno traže ulazak i/ili izlazak. Suradnja je temelj uspješnosti Europske unije te je ključna za njezinu sigurnost, pri čemu Schengen ima važnu ulogu.

Uključivanje Rumunjske, Bugarske i Hrvatske, koja od svih članica ima najdužu vanjsku kopnenu granicu Europske unije, u šengenski prostor zato ima i važnu sigurnosnu komponentu. Hrvatska je u samo 4 mjeseca od pristupanja Schengenskom informacijskom sustavu obavila 75 milijuna kontrola i identificirala preko 4000 prekršaja. To dokazuje važnost Hrvatske kao partnera u osiguravanju vanjske granice Europske unije te opravdava njeno što skorije priključenje Schengenu

Theodor Dumitru Stolojan (PPE), *în scris*. – Discuțăm, din nou, despre sistemul Schengen, din care România încă nu face, pe nedrept, parte. Îndeplinim condițiile tehnice de securizare a frontierelor noastre externe, care sunt și frontierele Uniunii Europene. Există un număr mic de state membre ale Uniunii care se opun, în mod repetat, la intrarea României în spațiul Schengen. Este timpul ca aceste state membre să renunțe la această opoziție și ar fi bine să facă acest lucru în timpul Președinției României a Consiliului Uniunii Europene. Orice stat membru poate constata că România exercită controlul frontierelor sale în condiții foarte bune și își respectă pe deplin obligațiile în ceea ce privește schimbul de informații cu celelalte state membre în acest domeniu.

Janusz Zemke (S&D), *na piśmie*. – Schengen jest jednym z najważniejszych rozwiązań w ramach Unii Europejskiej, gdyż pozwala obywatelom UE na nieskrępowane przemieszczanie się po Europie. System Schengen musi jednak także sprzyjać bezpieczeństwu Europejczyków. Dlatego też jedną z najważniejszych spraw jest skuteczny powrót osób niebędących obywatelami UE, które znalazły się i przebywają nielegalnie w Europie. Niestety system ten nie jest w pełni skuteczny. Często osoby przebywające nielegalnie w jednym unijnym państwie otrzymują nakaz jego opuszczenia. Jednak ponieważ nie ma sprawnego przepływu informacji o tych nakazach, osoby takie w większości nie opuszczają Europy a jedynie przemieszczają się do innego państwa UE. Dane Eurostatu potwierdzają, że z UE wyjeżdża jedynie około 40% nielegalnych migrantów, od których zażądano jej opuszczenia. Z tego powodu chciałem zdecydowanie wesprzeć stworzenie skutecznego, ogólnounijnego systemu przekazywania informacji na temat decyzji nakazujących powrót. Rzecz w tym, by decyzje podjęte tylko w jednym unijnym państwie docierały jak najszybciej do wszystkich państw i były przez nie egzekwowane. Bez wątplenia poprawiłyby to bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne UE i poprawiło stosunek Europejczyków do tych imigrantów, którzy przebywają w UE legalnie.

19. Absolutorium za rok 2016: Budżet ogólny UE – Rada Europejska i Rada (debata)

El presidente. – El punto siguiente en el orden del día es el debate sobre el segundo informe de Marco Valli, en nombre de la Comisión de Control Presupuestario, sobre la aprobación de la gestión en la ejecución del presupuesto general de la Unión Europea para el ejercicio 2016, sección II – Consejo Europeo y Consejo (COM(2017)0365 - C8-0249/2017 - 2017/2138(DEC)) (A8-0300/2018).

Marco Valli, relatore. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor Commissario, signora Ministro, vi ringrazio per essere venuti, aver riempito i banchi ed essere qua ad ascoltare le indicazioni che adesso darà questo Parlamento.

Per la seconda volta, quest'anno, ci troviamo a parlare del discarico del Consiglio. La gestione della spesa amministrativa è una questione di fondamentale importanza: le risorse dei contribuenti devono essere gestite in modo efficiente e il lavoro che siamo chiamati a fare e a svolgere in questo Parlamento deve andare senza dubbio in questa direzione.

Tuttavia sono purtroppo costretto a ricordare le difficoltà ripetutamente incontrate sino ad oggi e affermo quindi che la spesa del Consiglio dovrebbe essere controllata al pari di quella delle altre istituzioni. Tuttavia il Consiglio, seguendo la tendenza degli esercizi precedenti, non ha ancora fornito delle risposte alle osservazioni che abbiamo formulato nella risoluzione dello scorso 18 aprile.

In questa seconda relazione ho voluto quindi ribadire le questioni attualmente in sospeso. Siamo in attesa di ricevere, ad esempio, le informazioni relative ai progressi compiuti in seguito alla rielezione del Mediatore sulla trasparenza del processo legislativo del Consiglio, nonostante lo stesso Mediatore abbia chiesto un riscontro sulle proprie raccomandazioni entro lo scorso 9 maggio. Chiedo quindi al Consiglio di trasmettere le sue conclusioni quanto prima a questo Parlamento.

Accolgo senz'altro con favore i negoziati interistituzionali attualmente in corso per rafforzare il registro per la trasparenza, negoziati che però spero abbiano esito positivo e che portino all'adesione dello stesso Consiglio al registro.

In merito invece alla parte legata alla politica immobiliare, nonostante gli scambi occasionali di informazioni tra i servizi competenti per gli edifici delle due istituzioni, il Consiglio continua a non fornire le precisazioni che abbiamo richiesto al riguardo. Chiedo pertanto che tutti i dati e le relative spese siano pienamente accessibili al pubblico, in segno di trasparenza nei confronti dei cittadini che tutti rappresentiamo. Rinnovo dunque l'invito al Consiglio a presentare delle relazioni sullo stato d'avanzamento dei progetti immobiliari e a illustrare una ripartizione dettagliata delle spese sostenute fino ad adesso.

Il punto cardine resta quindi sempre lo stesso: il rispetto del ruolo del Parlamento nel quadro della procedura di discarico, così come è disciplinata dal trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea e dal regolamento finanziario. È una questione di primaria importanza, così come il controllo della spesa di tutte le istituzioni. Sono pertanto molto lieto che il Consiglio ritenga necessario affrontare la procedura del discarico e il fatto che sia qui stasera presente ne è la dimostrazione.

Come sappiamo, attualmente sono in corso degli scambi informali tra il Parlamento e il Consiglio per discutere delle possibili soluzioni a questa *impasse* attuale. Sottolineo dunque l'importanza di negoziati bilaterali costruttivi che sfocino in una soluzione reciprocamente accettabile, pur sempre mantenendo la distinzione nella procedura di discarico tra il ruolo del Parlamento e il ruolo del Consiglio.

Concludo quindi auspicando che i negoziati procedano e che un accordo venga raggiunto al più presto, in modo che le risorse dei contribuenti siano garantite e rendicontate nella massima trasparenza.

Karoline Edtstadler, President-in-Office of the Council. – Mr President, I would like to thank the rapporteur and assure him that with regard to his words about feeling disappointed, I was told that they are all watching our debate on TV so there are more people watching than are here in the room.

Let's come to the subject of the debate. This issue has been controversial between Parliament and the Council for a long time. Let me first say something about the specific exercise of discharge for the 2016 budget and then comment on the state of play in general. In relation to the implementation of the 2016 budget, you know of course that the Court of Auditors, in its annual report, and I quote: 'did not identify any issue concerning the Council'. This will, most probably, not affect your vote this week, which is expected to be the same as in previous years, but it is worth underlining.

I would now like to share with you my assessment of where we are on this issue in more general terms. Since 2011, the Council has proposed a memorandum of understanding to Parliament in order to better organise the cooperation between our two institutions during the discharge procedure. For several years this initiative was not followed up by any concrete discussion between our two institutions. Finally, over the last 11 months, some new efforts have been made on both sides. The idea is to reach an understanding which allows a pragmatic cooperation, while preserving the position of principle of both institutions.

The Council has contributed to these efforts by revising its 2011 position and sent a new proposal to Parliament in May 2018. Following further contacts and exchanges, the competent preparatory bodies of the Council are currently examining the situation. I can assure you that the Austrian Presidency of the Council is ready to do its utmost to find a solution if there is sufficient political will on both sides to bridge the gap.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, *en nombre del Grupo PPE*. – Señor presidente, señor comisario, señorías, quisiera simplemente agradecer el trabajo realizado por el ponente, señor Valli, en la preparación de este informe, que reproduce una vieja y larga polémica que venimos manteniendo con el Consejo de Ministros de la Unión.

El ponente nos ha recordado muy bien cuáles son las competencias que los Tratados asignan al Parlamento Europeo en lo que se refiere a la aprobación de la gestión, y desde el año 2009 este Parlamento ha venido rechazando sistemáticamente la aprobación de las cuentas anuales, cosa que se va a producir también en lo correspondiente al año 2016. No es un problema de equivalencias y de reciprocidad, señora presidenta en ejercicio del Consejo, es una cuestión de respeto a las competencias que asignan los Tratados y, en este sentido, el Parlamento Europeo no puede aceptar una equivalencia o una reciprocidad en el ámbito de las competencias respectivas.

Sí saludamos la buena disposición para encontrar un entendimiento que sea respetuoso de las competencias de ambas instituciones. Mientras tanto, el informe del ponente señala algunos aspectos que se tienen que mejorar. El Consejo no ha presentado cuentas separadas del Consejo Europeo y del Consejo de la Unión. Los gastos de personal tienen que ser separados por categorías, por sexo, por función, por grado y por competencia profesional.

Y es evidente también que tenemos que felicitarnos de los esfuerzos que se han realizado en el marco de consolidar el registro de transparencia de la Unión Europea, que afecta también al Consejo de Ministros de la Unión. Por lo tanto, señor presidente, es claro que esta situación debería ser superada, pero debería ser superada —como ha dicho la representante del Consejo— sobre la base de una movilización de voluntad política que pueda de alguna manera representar el respeto a las normas, el respeto a las instituciones, el respeto a los Tratados y a las normas derivadas, como el Reglamento financiero de la Unión.

Arndt Kohn, *im Namen der S&D-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, liebe Frau Staatssekretärin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Zum achten Mal in Folge verweigert das Europäische Parlament aller Voraussicht nach dem Europäischen Rat und dem Rat der Europäischen Union die Entlastung.

Warum ist das schon seit so vielen Jahren so? Warum weigert sich der Rat beständig, auf die Fragen des Europäischen Parlaments im Rahmen der Entlastung zu antworten? Wo ist der Rat, wenn wir bei der Aussprache im Haushaltskontrollausschuss über seine Verantwortung gegenüber den Bürgerinnen und Bürgern sprechen? Umso mehr freue ich mich, dass Sie heute Abend hier sind, um ein Zeichen zu setzen – auch dahingehend, denke ich.

Bei der Entlastung geht es aber darum, dass alle EU-Institutionen vor der Bürgerschaft Rechenschaft ablegen, wie sie mit ihren Steuergeldern umgehen. Die Information über den Haushalt und die Tätigkeiten des Rats kann man in den jährlichen Berichten nachlesen. Das ist aber nicht genug. Die Zahlen müssen für die Bürgerschaft verständlich und nachvollziehbar sein. Wenn das im Jahresbericht nicht der Fall ist, dann muss im Rahmen der Entlastung für Klarheit gesorgt werden.

Was unterscheidet bitte den Rat von den anderen EU-Institutionen und deren Pflicht zur Transparenz bei der Mittelverwendung? Ich begrüße ausdrücklich die Gespräche zwischen Rat und Parlament und hoffe auf eine baldige Einigung, aber dabei muss das Prinzip, dass das Europäische Parlament als einzige direkt gewählte Kammer die Entlastungshoheit hat, schon Berücksichtigung finden. Aber ich würde mich sehr freuen, wenn ich als Berichterstatter für die Entlastung des Rats für das Haushaltsjahr 2017 auf einer neuen gemeinsamen Arbeitsgrundlage zum ersten Mal seit acht Jahren die Entlastung des Rats empfehlen könnte.

Ryszard Czarnecki, w imieniu grupy ECR. – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! No mam poczucie takiego swojego *déjà vu*, ponieważ w gruncie rzeczy mówimy o tym co roku i jest to, prawdę mówiąc, rzecz, która łączy wszystkie grupy polityczne w naszym Parlamencie, bo w praktyce mamy ten sam problem: brak niezbędnych informacji ze strony Rady, brak odpowiedzi na pytania pisemne, jednym słowem ilustracja starego polskiego przysłowia: gadał dziad do obrazu, a obraz doń ani razu.

Te odpowiedzi na nasze pytania, na które nie mamy odpowiedzi, mają zasadnicze znaczenie procedurze udzielania absolutorium. Potrzebujemy odpowiedzi na temat głównych niedociągnięć stwierdzonych przez Trybunał Obrachunkowy w Luksemburgu odnośnie wysokich przeniesionych kwot czy niejasnej polityki dotyczącej budownictwa. Rada wciąż nie przygotowała odpowiedzi na sprawozdanie strategiczne Europejskiego Rzecznika Praw Obywatelskich w sprawie przejrzystości procesu legislacyjnego Rady, mimo że pani rzecznik prosiła o udzielenie odpowiedzi na swoje zalecenia i propozycje usprawnień do dnia 9 maja 2018 r. To jest brak poszanowania także dla Europejskiej Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich.

I kończąc, Panie Przewodniczący, nad sprawozdaniem rzecznik pracowała duża liczba pracowników. Skoro nie doprowadziło to ze strony Rady do odpowiedzi, taka bezsensowna praca jest marnowaniem pieniędzy podatników.

Wolf Klinz, im Namen der ALDE-Fraktion. – Herr Präsident, Kolleginnen und Kollegen!

Ich bedaure außerordentlich, dass wir dieses Jahr – genauso wie schon in den Vorjahren – wiederum feststellen müssen, dass wir dem Rat keine Entlastung zuteilwerden lassen.

Wir tun das nicht, weil wir dem Rat böse sind, oder weil wir hier auf Rechte bestehen, die uns nicht zustehen. Wir tun es, weil wir es für unsere Pflicht halten, tatsächlich für den Steuerzahler kritisch zu prüfen, wo seine Steuerzahlungen tatsächlich geblieben sind und ob sie sinnvoll ausgegeben worden sind. Der Rat beruft sich hier auf ein Gentlemen's Agreement aus dem Jahr 1970, in dem seinerzeit die beiden Institutionen festgelegt haben, dass sie die Zahlungen oder Ausgaben der jeweils anderen Seite ohne große kritische Prüfung akzeptieren.

Das mag vor 48 Jahren in Ordnung gewesen sein. Aber heute ist es meiner Meinung nach ein grober Regelverstoß, und wir sollten das nicht länger hinnehmen. Ich bin froh, dass die Vorsitzende des Rates auf das *memorandum of understanding* verwiesen hat und gesagt hat, dass sie auf der Basis jetzt weiterarbeiten und möglichst schnell zu einem Arrangement mit uns kommen möchte.

Es geht nicht an, dass der Rat seine Ausgaben wie ein Staatsgeheimnis behandelt und dem Bürger die Einsicht in diese Ausgaben und damit die Transparenz verwehrt, zu der er eigentlich verpflichtet ist. Der Rat muss sich genauso – meine Vorgänger haben es ja schon gesagt – an die Spielregeln halten wie alle anderen Institutionen auch.

Wir Liberalen legen Wert auf eine ordentliche Haushaltsführung, auf eine gute Verwaltung und auf Transparenz. Ob diese Ziele erreicht werden, können wir nur beurteilen, wenn wir eine angemessene Prüfung der Haushaltsmittel und ihrer Verwendung sicherstellen können. Das ist nicht der Fall. Deshalb müssen wir die Entlastung einmal mehr verweigern – sehr zu unserem Bedauern.

Ich muss noch hinzufügen: Im zuständigen Haushaltskontrollausschuss ist diese Entscheidung einstimmig – ohne Gegenstimme und ohne Enthaltung – getroffen worden.

Bart Staes, namens de Verts/ALE-Fractie. – Dank u, Voorzitter. Ik wil eerst en vooral de rapporteur danken, mijnheer Valli, voor het werk dat u in dit dossier gestoken hebt. Ik wil ook de Raad danken voor de aanwezigheid. Het is ooit anders geweest.

Ik wil meteen ingaan op wat de voorzitter van de Raad ons verteld heeft. Er is inderdaad een non-paper sinds 2011. Wij hebben dat als Parlement – we moeten dat ootmoedig erkennen – veel te lang laten liggen, niet concreet beantwoord. Toen ik de rapporteur was, vóór de heer Valli, heb ik mijn verantwoordelijkheid genomen en heb ik ervoor gezorgd dat wij een antwoord bezorgd hebben aan de Raad, unaniem gesteund door alle leden van de Commissie begrotingscontrole en goedgekeurd door de Conferentie van voorzitters.

Ondertussen zijn er tussen de voorzitter van de Raad en het Oostenrijks voorzitterschap, mevrouw Grässle als voorzitter van de Commissie begrotingscontrole en ikzelf als voormalig rapporteur, inderdaad gesprekken geweest. Ik denk dat we op een zuchtje van een oplossing zijn. Ik denk dat het document dat nu voorligt echt aanvaardbaar is. Ik moet alleen de collega's in het Europees Parlement oproepen om hun verantwoordelijkheid te nemen. Het zijn de Conferentie van voorzitters en de secretaris-generaal van dit Parlement die nu moeten ageren en die er moeten voor zorgen dat we nog onder dit Oostenrijks voorzitterschap tot een akkoord komen, zodat de heer Kohn straks, als hij de verantwoordelijkheid neemt als rapporteur, inderdaad op een eerlijke wijze deze kwijtingsoefening met de Raad kan doen.

Jonathan Bullock, *on behalf of the EFDD Group*. – Mr President, so here we are once again, with the Council refusing to cooperate with the discharge procedure. This is probably one of the few issues I actually agree with the Parliament on: that there should be more transparency and oversight over the use of the EU Council budget. It of course begs the question: does the Council have something to hide? Well, let's take a look at some of their spending. The Council spent EUR 55 000 to hold a staff party for up to 1 200 people on their premises in early 2018. The party included butlers, cooks, bartenders, champagne, wine and beer and a bar open until 3am in the morning. All very nice, no doubt. The Council also spent another EUR 25 000 for the staff and their children to have a party at an adventure park in Belgium, and in the previous year, the Council put a tender out to purchase 4 000 bottles of champagne. It's no wonder the Council doesn't want parliamentary oversight of their budget.

The EU institutions are public entities, paid for with taxpayers' money. It's outrageous that, certainly, British taxpayers have to pay for such vain and frivolous events, while at home we have front-line public services cuts. Thank goodness Brexit will mean we no longer have to give vast contributions to Brussels. But because of the Tory betrayal we are having at the moment and the never-ending transitional period proposed, the UK will still be giving billions to Brussels for many years to come. But I urge all colleagues to reject granting the Council discharge.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 162(8))

Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), *“blauwe kaart”-vraag*. – Mijnheer Bullock, er is een Vlaams gezegde dat zegt: “De pot verwijt de ketel dat hij zwart ziet.” U bent lid van Ukip. Uw partij, uw Europese partij, heeft met gemeenschapsgeld ongelooflijk veel geld uitgegeven, waarbij dit eigenlijk op een frauduleuze manier gebeurd is. U hebt zelfs met uw partij Europees geld gebruikt om opiniepeilingen in het Verenigd Koninkrijk te financieren. Wat vindt u daarvan? Zou u daar ook eens niet handelen naar eigen inzicht en naar een eerlijk omgaan met Europees belastinggeld?

Jonathan Bullock (EFDD), *blue-card answer*. – I think the Member's talking about polls done in constituencies in the UK. What you may not know – I don't know how informed you are (obviously not) – is that our electoral Commission has looked into this and reported very recently – only a few weeks ago – that there was absolutely no impropriety whatsoever. That was our electoral Commission – not a body we always agree with – but it said no impropriety whatsoever. And let's just face it: we in UKIP have voted to get out of this organisation. We don't want the money. We want to be out of this. We've made it clear and we stand by what we say.

Intervenciones con arreglo al procedimiento de solicitud incidental de uso de la palabra («catch the eye»)

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, ξανά στο ίδιο έργο θεατές. Τα ίδια βλέπουμε και συζητούμε όλα αυτά τα χρόνια, με τη μόνη εξαίρεση ότι βλέπουμε αυτή τη φορά να είναι εδώ το Συμβούλιο. Είναι κι αυτό ένα βήμα. Να συγχαρώ κατ' αρχάς τον εισηγητή, τον κύριο Valli, για την τοποθέτησή του και να πω ότι όλα οφείλονται στην άποψη του Συμβουλίου ότι δεν είναι δήθεν υποχρεωμένο να έρθει να ζητήσει απαλλαγή δαπανών από το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο. Εμείς θεωρούμε ότι η Συνθήκη το επιβάλλει αυτό και είναι δικαίωμά μας να το κάνουμε και εσείς ως Συμβούλιο πρέπει επιτέλους να δείξετε διαφάνεια, να είσαστε ανοιχτοί στην κριτική και, φυσικά, να ακολουθήσετε τους ίδιους τους κανόνες της Συνθήκης.

Έχουμε πολλά ερωτήματα: τι γίνεται με τα κτίρια, πώς προχωρούν τα κατασκευαστικά έργα, τι γίνεται με τις διοικητικές δαπάνες. Και θα πρέπει επιτέλους να απαντήσετε και στην Ευρωπαϊκή Διαμεσολαβήτρια, η οποία έχει βάλει θέμα λειτουργίας με διαφάνεια της ίδιας της νομοθετικής λειτουργίας του Συμβουλίου. Πρέπει να ακολουθήσει το Συμβούλιο αυτή την τακτική, διότι έχουμε ένα μέρος του Συμβουλίου, ένα άλλο όργανο που είναι το Eurogroup, στο οποίο συμμετέχουν πάλι υπουργοί, συμμετέχουν τα κράτη, και είναι ανεξέλεγκτο και ταυτόχρονα επιβάλλει και πολιτικές στα κράτη μέλη. Πρέπει, λοιπόν, ήρθε η ώρα, να έχετε και εσείς διαφάνεια για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο λειτουργείτε.

(Fin de las intervenciones con arreglo al procedimiento de solicitud incidental de uso de la palabra («catch the eye»))

Karoline Edtstadler, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, honourable Members, Commissioner, thank you very much for your remarks. I have taken good note of them.

The Council is not taking it personally, but I guess it is time to change the situation. There is a saying in German that 'wo ein Will ist, ist auch ein Weg', or in English 'where there's a will, there's a way', but my favourite translation is the French one, 'quand on veut, on peut'. We should bear in mind that the EU institutions can gain and keep the trust of the citizens of the Union only by working together. Let's change the situation.

Marco Valli, *relatore*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ringrazio i colleghi e ringrazio il Consiglio per la buona volontà della Presidenza austriaca nel cercare di risolvere questa *impasse*.

I colleghi hanno giustamente – quasi tutti, me compreso – ripetuto il ruolo del Parlamento sancito all'interno del trattato, ed è un ruolo che è condiviso a stragrande maggioranza anche dai cittadini europei, che votano i membri di questo Parlamento e li votano anche per controllare i soldi che versano per il suo funzionamento.

Quindi su questo è auspicabile che si trovi una soluzione, e la proposta avanzata dal mio collega Staes è fondamentale perché anche questo Parlamento, come il Consiglio, deve fare qualche passo in avanti per riuscire a risolvere questa situazione.

Se riusciremo a risolverla allora potremo concedere, in un futuro, con le cifre in mano, un discarico. Ad oggi, purtroppo, non avendo in mano queste cifre, noi non possiamo fare delle valutazioni e, inevitabilmente, per l'ennesima volta, dovremo negare il discarico. Di questo ce ne rammarichiamo tutti, compresi i cittadini.

El presidente. – Se cierra el debate.

La votación tendrá lugar mañana.

20. Absolutorium za rok 2016: Europejski Urząd Wsparcia w dziedzinie Azylu (EASO) (debata)

El presidente. – El punto siguiente en el orden del día es el debate sobre el segundo informe de Bart Staes, en nombre de la Comisión de Control Presupuestario, sobre la aprobación de la gestión en la ejecución del presupuesto de la Oficina Europea de Apoyo al Asilo para el ejercicio 2016 (COM(2017)0365 - C8-0288/2017 - 2017/2177(DEC)) (A8-0299/2018).

Bart Staes, *Rapporteur*. – Dank u, Voorzitter. Collega's, commissaris, we hebben in april de kwijting voor EASO uitgesproken, en ik denk dat we daar goed aan deden. We hadden daar ook voldoende redenen voor. Er waren opmerkingen vanuit de Rekenkamer, er was een begin van een OLAF-onderzoek, er was klokkenluidersinformatie, en de toenmalige uitvoerend directeur van EASO minimaliseerde alle zaken. De houding van het Europees Parlement was verstandig, want de weigering tot kwijting leidde tot actie. Gedurende die hele tijd stond ik in nauw contact met de verantwoordelijken van DG Home en ik had ook een aantal gesprekken met commissaris Avramopoulos.

Ik durf hier eerlijk getuigen dat DG Home de zaak in handen nam. Er werd druk gezet op de toenmalige uitvoerend directeur: die nam in juni ontslag. De Commissie besliste tot een snelle aanstelling van een nieuwe directeur, een nieuwe uitvoerend directeur ad interim, Jamil Addou. Ik heb mijnheer Addou ontmoet begin juli. We hebben hem gehoord in een gesloten zitting in de Commissie begrotingscontrole en ik was onder de indruk van zijn snel en daadkrachtig optreden. Het is duidelijk dat de nieuwe leiding binnen EASO lessen heeft getrokken uit het verleden. Het is duidelijk dat DG Home de zaak nu op de voet volgt. Er worden lessen getrokken uit de fouten van het verleden. Het is duidelijk dat er binnen EASO te veel macht was in de handen van één persoon. Er waren onvoldoende checks-and-balances. De Commissie handelt nu preventief, want ze vaardigt in de bestaande beheerraad bij iedere vergadering een directeur-generaal of een adjunct-directeur-generaal van DG Home af om erop toe te zien dat preventief de zaken juist beslist worden. Er is een betere aansturing en op 17 september keurde de beheerraad een actieplan goed van 16 bladzijden. Er zijn nu logische beslissingsmechanismen, voorspelbare beslissingsmechanismen en voorspelbare beslissingslijnen. Dat is een positief politiek signaal, en het is net daarom dat ik voorstel kwijting te verlenen aan de nieuwe uitvoerend directeur ad interim.

Ik moet toegeven: de eindresultaten van het OLAF-verslag zijn nog niet beschikbaar. Daarom dring ik er ook bij OLAF op aan de werkzaamheden intensief voort te zetten en snel met conclusies en aanbevelingen te komen, zodat alle ongeregelheden op tafel liggen, dat er aanbevelingen zijn, dat er conclusies zijn, dat ook dát kan worden opgeruimd.

Ik wil hier vanavond een oproep doen aan alle collega's, zowel ter linker- als ter rechterzijde. Laten we in dit dossier geen partijpolitieke spelletjes spelen. Laten we niet discussiëren in het luchtledige. EASO is een belangrijk agentschap. EASO moet kunnen werken. EASO wordt straks omgevormd tot een nog krachtiger agentschap, met meer middelen, met meer personeel. Laat EASO werken met het huidige personeel dat nu vertrouwen heeft in de nieuwe uitvoerend directeur ad interim. Laten we erkennen dat het vertrouwen hersteld is. Laten we dat honoreren door kwijting te verlenen aan de nieuwe leiding. Aan de heer Sarvamaa wil ik zeggen dat het inderdaad niet zo is dat alles nu peis en vree is en dat alle ongeregelheden opgelost zijn, maar het politiek signaal is dat de Commissie, dat DG Home, dat de nieuwe directeur het heft in handen hebben genomen. Laten we dat honoreren. Laten we ervoor zorgen dat EASO inderdaad verder kan op de nieuwe weg die het is ingeslagen.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I am glad that we have to discuss this important issue tonight, and my thanks to our rapporteur, Bart Staes. I am counting on an open and frank discussion because we share the same concerns and goals in dealing with this issue and making sure it will not be repeated.

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has a key role at the core of our migration policy. It has been supporting and continues to support Member State asylum systems in processing an increasing number of asylum applications and providing assistance to asylum seekers and refugees.

The EASO ensures an important part of the workload on the ground: it currently deploys more than 274 people directly to support the Greek and Italian asylum services. To ensure the convergence of the national asylum systems, EASO has developed standards for reception conditions, to be applied across Europe. All Member States can benefit from its expertise, for instance from its reports on the situation in countries of origin, in the assessment of asylum applications.

The Commission made a proposal, in 2016, to transform the EASO into a fully-fledged European Asylum Agency. To ensure that the EASO will be able to continue effectively facing the increasing migratory challenges and building on the agreement reached between the co-legislators last September, we have proposed that it be further strengthened to make sure it can provide Member States with all the technical support they may need.

Both proposals reinforce the governance of the agency. The importance of the work of this agency is one of the reasons why the Commission takes the matter of its governance, and the past issues, very seriously. We want to make sure that measures are implemented immediately to improve the agency's management and prevent something like this from happening again.

We want to leave this story behind and concentrate on reinforcing the agency and ensuring the efficiency of its work. That is why, when the first alleged irregularities were reported to the Commission, a number of mitigating and precautionary measures were immediately taken to improve oversight of the agency, including through reinforced and rigorous monitoring and control of the former Executive Director.

Several of these measures were initiated by the Commission itself, with support from the Chair of the Board. The rapporteur, Mr Staes, has rightly highlighted some points. But it should also be clear to everyone that the EASO is a decentralised and independent agency of the Union. It is governed by a Management Board composed of Member States' representatives. The Commission has only two members sitting on that board. The agency's Executive Director is appointed by the Management Board and is accountable for his actions to the Management Board, as well as to the European Parliament and the Council when his actions relate to the use of EU funds. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of the agency to remedy any shortcomings identified.

As I said, the Commission is closely and continuously following the situation in the EASO and it supports the ongoing efforts to improve the agency's governance and functioning. We are paying special attention to procedures in the areas of recruitment, procurement, budget and audits, and to the internal governance framework.

To this end, the Commission is closely following the implementation of the interim Executive Director's detailed Governance Action Plan that enumerates 53 detailed corrective measures to restore trust, reinforce the internal governance framework and rebuild the internal capacity of the agency.

I would like to express my thanks to Parliament for welcoming the actions implemented so far, in its second report on the 2016 EASO discharge, which we are discussing tonight. In addition, let me stress that the Commission takes equally seriously the 2017 Annual Report of the European Court of Auditors, as well as the recommendations of the Commission's Internal Audit Service and any upcoming report from OLAF.

We are monitoring the implementation by the EASO of these recommendations, and we will continue to do so. The Commission is counting, first and foremost, on the EASO management to take all the necessary measures to ensure the proper functioning of the agency, and it stands ready to provide its support and expertise.

Petri Sarvamaa, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, I have to say that, having dealt with the agency's discharge for several years now, this one is a really tricky one and I'll tell you why. Usually, I don't want to mix different discharge years with each other – we should be dealing only with the discharge year that we are dealing with – but, in this case, we have a situation which is a little complicated.

I respect the rapporteur's creativity to get us all off this unpleasant hook, but I have to say, quite honestly – and noting also what Commissioner Avramopoulos said – that the Commission had rather limited ways and chances of really knowing what was going on, but that means that Parliament's role in this one is exceptionally important and that is why we should not make a compromise. Most of the problems and irregular activities were related to the actions of the previous management and now some people are mixing up whether we are discharging the person or the institution, but even looking at it both ways, it is the same outcome.

We should not discharge an agency for actions that were taken in 2016 when, as a matter of fact, the European Court of Auditors is telling us that the situation got even worse after that in 2017. So how are we going to deal with the 2017 discharge if we give them discharge now? This is why I honestly think that, in this case, it is a little different. We should look at 2016 and 2017. Also we don't have the report from OLAF yet so we are blindfoldedly giving discharge if we give one tomorrow. That's why I am asking all of you to reconsider this once more.

Claude Moraes, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, my thanks to the Commissioner, and Mr Sarvamaa knows very well that I respect very much his position in the Committee on Budgetary Control and his work on these matters. For the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) however, you will not be surprised to hear that we very much agree with Mr Staes and I thank him for his report, because this was a very difficult situation.

Can I just say for the Commissioner, for the Commission and for Members like Mr Staes, that it is when we have difficulties with such sensitive and important agencies that we see Parliament acting at its best, when we have such tough situations. For the LIBE Committee, we have just had a very experienced delegation, very experienced, and an experienced rapporteur, Mr Niedermüller, coming back. These are people who are highly independently minded, who have investigated thoroughly for our Committee and taken their responsibilities seriously.

They believe the improvements Mr Staes has mentioned have indeed been made – sorry, Mr President, I am just over-running slightly, if you'll allow me – they believe these improvements have been made as the Commissioner has underlined how important EASO is at this very sensitive moment relating not just to its activities – Italy and Greece – but to other files and other important developments.

So I return to what Mr Staes has said. He is satisfied that the key improvements have been made. Mr Sarvamaa is right, there were improvements that needed to be made. For the LIBE Committee, we have spent some considerable time on this, and indeed with the new Executive Director, and for this reason, we believe that discharge should be made. This is our recommendation. I thank the Commission again and thank you to Mr Staes for an excellent report.

Νότης Μαρίας, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας ECR. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, τα όσα συνέβησαν στην EASO τραυμάτισαν την αξιοπιστία αυτής της υπηρεσίας και δεν νομίζω ότι με την απομάκρυνση της προηγούμενης ηγεσίας, του προηγούμενου εκτελεστικού διευθυντή, ότι θεραπεύονται τα προβλήματα. Τα προβλήματα είναι βαθιά, γνωρίζετε πολύ καλά ότι η έρευνα της OLAF συνεχίζεται και δεν γνωρίζουμε ακριβώς τι θα προκύψει, όπως επίσης και οι παρατηρήσεις του Ελεγκτικού Συνεδρίου για τη δραστηριότητα του 2017, που παρατηρεί επίσης ιδιαίτερα προβλήματα. Προβλήματα στη νομιμότητα, στην κανονικότητα των πράξεων πάνω στις οποίες βασίζονται οι λογαριασμοί και οι αναθέσεις κονδυλίων. Άρα λοιπόν για μας το πρόβλημα είναι σοβαρό. Δεν συμφωνούμε με τον εισηγητή. Ως ECR δεν πρόκειται να χορηγήσουμε απαλλαγή στην EASO. Θεωρούμε ότι πρέπει να παραμείνουν τα ερωτήματα και η έρευνα. Καταλαβαίνουμε ότι κάποιος κάνουν την ανάγκη φιλοτιμία, όπως η πλευρά των Σοσιαλιστών, αλλά αυτό δεν σημαίνει ότι πρέπει να απαλλάξουμε την EAS. Και επί της ουσίας όμως, κύριε Αβραμόπουλε, γνωρίζετε ότι δεν έχει κάνει πολύ σοβαρή δουλειά και στην Ελλάδα. Έχουμε χιλιάδες αιτήσεις οι οποίες παραμένουν, αιτήσεις ασύλου. Θα έπρεπε να είχε βοηθήσει πιο αποφασιστικά η EASO στο θέμα αυτό, παρότι βεβαίως αναγνωρίζουμε την ευθύνη των ελληνικών αρχών στο ζήτημα αυτό.

Πρέπει, λοιπόν, εκεί να υπάρξει μια παρέμβαση σοβαρή στα ουσιαστικά θέματα. Δεν μπορεί να έχουμε χιλιάδες οι οποίοι αναμένουν να εκδικαστεί η αίτηση ασύλου. Έρχονται οι πάντες στην Ελλάδα, κάνουν μία αίτηση μέσα σε δέκα μέρες και περιμένουν τρία χρόνια για να κριθεί η αίτησή τους, που αν κριθεί, στο μεγάλο μέρος των αιτήσεων θα απορριφθούν και θα επαναπροωθηθούν. Να δούμε, λοιπόν, και το ουσιαστικό μέρος, κύριε Αβραμόπουλε, πέραν βέβαια της ουσίας ότι εμείς δεν χορηγούμε απαλλαγή στις λειτουργίες της EASO.

(Ο ομιλητής δέχεται να απαντήσει σε ερώτηση με γαλάζια κάρτα (άρθρο 162 παράγραφος 8 του Κανονισμού))

Petri Sarvamaa (PPE), *blue-card question*. – Mr President, as we all know, a blue card is for a question, so therefore I will ask you a question. When the dust has settled, after tomorrow, I will ask you, and also the rest of the right side of the Chamber: how on earth can you mix the work that the Agency is doing and the role that the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG Home) and the Commission is playing with the irregularities of a couple of people back in 2016 and 2017? How can you mix those two things? How do you explain this to the citizens?

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR), *απάντηση σε ερώτηση με γαλάζια κάρτα*. – Κατ' αρχάς, είναι βέβαιο ότι οι ατασθαλίες που έχουν γίνει έχουν σχέση και με τη λειτουργία της ίδιας της υπηρεσίας και φυσικά τον ρόλο τον οποίο έχει παίξει. Διότι, εάν ο εκτελεστικός διευθυντής και τα στελέχη του ασχολούνταν πραγματικά με το πώς πρέπει να λειτουργήσει η υπηρεσία και όχι να κάνουν πάρτι με τις δαπάνες, τότε προφανώς θα ήταν πολύ πιο επικεντρωμένοι στη δουλειά που έπρεπε να παρέχουν και στη βοήθεια που έπρεπε να παρέχουν στην Ελλάδα. Άρα, λοιπόν, υπάρχει άμεση σχέση της κακοδιοίκησης η οποία απεδείχθη και της απομάκρυνσης που ορθώς έγινε με την ανικανότητα λειτουργίας και βοήθειας από πλευράς EASO στις ελληνικές αρχές. Αυτό, λοιπόν, είναι πάρα πολύ σημαντικό. Το ότι επισήμανα επίσης ότι πρέπει να βελτιωθεί η λειτουργία στο μέλλον είναι μία επισήμανση πολιτική η οποία πρέπει να γίνει, μια και είναι εδώ ο κύριος Αβραμόπουλος που είναι ο αρμόδιος επίτροπος. Εμείς πάντως δεν πρόκειται να χορηγήσουμε την απαλλαγή και θεωρώ ότι και εσείς πρέπει να σκεφτείτε τη στάση σας αύριο ως ΕΛΚ.

Nedzhmi Ali, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) is supporting the Member States in preparing their policies in relation to the migration flows. EASO is delivering technical and operational support to those states whose asylum systems are subject to excessive refugee pressure by deploying expert teams. All of this necessitates the recovery of the full capacity of the EU agencies as soon as possible.

After Parliament's decision to postpone the granting of discharge to EASO for the year 2016, a number of developments occurred, answering our recommendations. A remedial action plan was produced, proposing a set of measurable objectives and deliverable aims to reinforce the internal governance of the office, rebuild internal capacity and restore trust. In addition, the office took some practical measures to overcome the mistakes made in the field of procurement. The former executive director was released from his duties and an interim director was designated.

The situation in the year 2016 was exceptional. It was the peak year of the refugee crisis. Many procedures were carried out in extreme circumstances with understaffed teams and in a situation where systems and procedures were still in the process of being adapted to cope with the new and rapidly-evolving scenario. Bearing in mind the overall picture during the voting on 27 September, with a slim majority the Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) recommended granting discharge to EASO, carefully taking into account the ambitious remedial action plan of the office.

Jonathan Bullock, *on behalf of the EFDD Group*. – Mr President, we are debating whether to approve the accounts for the European Asylum Support Office, based in Malta, which provides assistance for the arrival and processing of migrants. The agency has a budget of around EUR 70 million. However, OLAF, the anti-fraud body, is currently investigating several former and current members occupying middle or senior management positions, reportedly over a culture of irresponsibility and bullying. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the executive director, was released from the position and an interim appointed.

Irregular payments made by the Asylum Office for 2016 are estimated at over EUR 1.5 million. The Courts of Auditors in 2017 found there was inadequate or total lack of internal control and governance, and recently the Asylum Office put out a tender, worth EUR 1.5 million, for branded promotional items, merchandise garments and apparels. This tender included Christmas cards, virtual reality glasses, car chargers, inflatable flight pillows, leather goods, crystal glassware, gold/silver goods, ponchos, luggage, even executive gifts for VIPs. This is an absolute waste of taxpayers' money, and the Asylum Office clearly has little internal control over its spending. Asylum policy should be decided by independent sovereign countries in compliance with the Geneva Convention, not dictated or operated by unaccountable EU institutions. I urge MEPs to reject discharge for the EU Asylum Support Office.

Inés Ayala Sender (S&D). – Señor presidente, gracias, señor Avramopoulos por la información, y quisiera dar las gracias también al señor Staes y reconocerle su buena voluntad a la hora de trabajar con la Agencia, al haber sido yo también ponente para las agencias y haber trabajado con algunas de ellas de manera intensa, puesto que a veces no merecían la aprobación de su gestión.

Nos encontramos en una situación actualmente compleja en relación con la EASO, porque hemos de admitir que se ha cambiado el director solamente el primero de junio y el plan tiene justo un mes.

La investigación, las investigaciones —porque no son solo una— de la OLAF están todavía bajo secreto; no hemos conseguido tener información, pero siguen y, sobre todo, en el informe sobre 2017 del Tribunal de Cuentas se nos dice que, después de 2016, también siguió habiendo problemas graves en la EASO.

Yo, como coordinadora del Grupo socialista, voy a plantear a mi Grupo una abstención porque no queremos votar en contra, puesto que vemos, con el señor Staes, que hay esfuerzos y reconocemos que la Comisión ha hecho esfuerzos para mejorar la situación de la EASO. Pero la percepción por la ciudadanía es que, en el ámbito del asilo, la Unión Europea no ha hecho todo lo necesario, y menos en esos años críticos de los que todavía quedan bastantes circunstancias muy, muy complicadas.

Por lo tanto, no queremos votar en contra, porque creemos que sí que ha habido avances y, sobre todo, interés; pero en cambio, creemos que, a día de hoy, en octubre de 2018, a un mes de la presentación del Plan de Acción, no podemos tampoco aprobar la gestión. Creo que la ciudadanía no lo entendería.

Dimitris Avramopoulos, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I would first like to express my thanks for this debate. As I said at the beginning, it was very important to clarify where we stand. I know this is not easy. Our agents today are doing important work on the ground in order to support Member States and this work will continue because migration and security demand a coordinated European response.

I don't need, in particular, to repeat that the EASO plays a key role, and I am sure you agree that we should not undermine the important work done by our agencies. I have already highlighted the measures taken by these decentralised agencies and I will not repeat them. I hope that the OLAF report will also be available very soon. This, as you will understand, will allow us to have clarity and take further measures if necessary.

While taking all measures that are needed, we must be able to leave this story behind, focus on the real work and look to the future. Our agencies in the whole area of home affairs were established in a completely different context. Together with you, our common goal is to ensure that the agencies can effectively play the role they should, in order to face the challenges of today and of the future. You almost reached an agreement with the Council on our proposal to transform the EASO from a support office into a fully-fledged agency. The limited amendments we proposed in September will ensure that the mandate of the agency responds to this need.

Bart Staes, Rapporteur. – Dank u Voorzitter, collega's. Dank vooreerst aan eenieder die mij lovende woorden heeft toegezwaaid. Dat doet altijd deugd na het werk dat je in een dossier steekt.

Ik kan alleen maar herhalen: ik beveel aan, collega's, om de kwijting te verlenen. Niet omdat ik niet erken dat er onregelmatigheden zijn gebeurd. Die zijn er gebeurd, die liggen voor ons. Zowel de Commissie, DG Home als de raad van beheer van EASO hebben dat erkend. Ze hebben maatregelen genomen, er is druk gezet op de vorige directeur en die is opgestapt. Er is heel snel een nieuwe directeur aangeduid die een hele goede indruk maakt, die een stevige indruk maakt, die actie onderneemt, die ervoor zorgt dat er goede beslissingslijnen zijn. De specialisten in dit Parlement, aangevoerd door de heer Moraes in de LIBE-commissie, zijn het gaan bekijken en zijn ook onder de indruk van de nieuwe wind die waait binnen EASO.

Als we kwijting verlenen, collega's, betekent dat niet dat we van de feiten weggijken. Het betekent alleen dat we een politiek signaal geven. Dat we zeggen: kijk, er zijn belangrijke stappen gezet. Er is vooruitgang. De zaak is meer onder controle dan in april. Het is niet weggijken van de feiten, want we hebben aan ons verslag een heel stevige resolutie toegevoegd met een hele reeks zaken waarvan we zeggen: dit en dat moet beter. En dat dossier geven we in handen van de heer Sarvamaa, die de volgende rapporteur is en die mede met de feiten die er ondertussen zullen gebeuren, zoals het OLAF-verslag dat zal bekend zijn, nieuwe maatregelen zal kunnen afdwingen van DG HOME, van de commissaris, van de beheerraad en van de nieuwe directeur ad interim. Ik hoop dat ik alsnog een meerderheid in dit Parlement vind om die kwijting te verlenen.

El presidente. – Se cierra el debate.

La votación tendrá lugar mañana.

21. Porządek obrad następnego posiedzenia: Patrz protokół

22. Zamknięcie posiedzenia

(Se levanta la sesión a las 23.00 horas)

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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