

PEŁNE SPRAWOZDANIE Z OBRAD 27 LISTOPADA 2019 R.

(C/2024/4044)

PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI

SESJA 2019-2020

Posiedzenia od 25 do 28 listopada 2019 r.

STRASBURG

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PEŁNE SPRAWOZDANIE Z OBRAD 27 LISTOPADA 2019 R.

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. DAVID MARIA SASSOLI

Presidente

1. Otwarcie posiedzenia

(La seduta è aperta alle 9.10)

2. Debata nad przypadkami łamania praw człowieka, zasad demokracji i państwa prawa (ogłoszenie o złożonych projektach rezolucji): patrz protokół

3. Przedstawienie kolegium komisarzy i ich programu przez nowo wybraną przewodniczącą Komisji (debata)

Presidente. – Oggi è una giornata importante, come sapete. L'ordine del giorno reca la Presentazione del Collegio dei commissari e del suo programma da parte della Presidente eletta della Commissione (2019/2801(RSP)).

Diamo subito la parola alla signora Ursula von der Leyen per la sua introduzione al dibattito.

Ursula von der Leyen, Commission President-elect. – Mr President, on 27 November — exactly 30 years ago — the clock strikes 12, church bells ring, sirens blare, workers down tools, and factories, mines and shops empty as the streets fill up with dance and hope. The historic two-hour general strike in the middle of the Velvet Revolution saw people from Prague to Bratislava take part in a beautiful, peaceful wave of freedom, courage and unity.

(Applause)

For me, these two hours go to the heart of what the European Union has always meant. It is not only about parties and politics, rules or regulations, markets or currencies. It is ultimately, and above all else, about people and their aspirations. It is about people standing together for their liberty, for their values — simply for a better future.

There is one quote from the great Václav Havel, one of the heroes of 1989, that stands out for me when I look ahead to the future: 'Work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed'. I chose this quote because, over the next five years, our Union will embark together on a transformation which will touch every part of our society and of our economy, and we will do it because it is the right thing to do — not because it will be easy.

(Applause)

We sometimes forget that our greatest achievements have always come when we are bold. We were bold when we sought peace where there was pain. We were bold when we created a single market and a single currency. We were bold when we welcomed the part of our European family that had been out in the cold for too long. But in the last years, we have had to focus on the here and now, managing crisis after emergency, fighting to keep our unity and solidarity intact. If we have emerged stronger in that time — and I believe we have — it is, in great part, thanks to the leadership and conviction of my predecessor, Jean-Claude Juncker. A great European, he has devoted his heart, his soul and his life to our Union, and his legacy speaks for itself. Jean-Claude, *merci de nous tous*.

(Sustained applause)

Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs les membres du Parlement européen, cela fait quatre mois que vous m'avez accordé votre confiance. Depuis, j'ai rencontré tous les groupes politiques et tous les chefs d'État ou de gouvernement. Ensemble, nous avons formé une équipe européenne exceptionnelle. Vous, les membres du Parlement, avez auditionné chacun d'entre nous. Je vous avais promis de vous écouter, c'est exactement ce que j'ai fait, et je continuerai de le faire, accompagnée de Maros Šefčovič et de tous les autres membres du Collège. Nous avons souvent été d'accord et, parfois nous ne l'avons pas été, mais c'est la démocratie à l'œuvre. Aujourd'hui, ici, au cœur de cette démocratie européenne, je vous demande votre soutien pour un nouveau départ de l'Europe.

The team you are voting on today come from different cultures and countries and have different backgrounds and political colours. We have teachers and farmers, mayors and ministers, doctors and diplomats, engineers and entrepreneurs. We have those born before the Berlin Wall was built and those born after it was torn down, those who lived in dictatorships and those who helped young democracies join our Union. It is a team with almost – almost – as many women as men, only one woman away from gender balance.

(Applause)

This shows we have made real progress, but also that we still have to do more. As the first woman to be President of the Commission, every member of my College will have a gender-balanced cabinet – for the very first time.

(Applause)

And by the end of our mandate, we will have gender equality at all levels of management for the very first time, and this will change the face of the Commission. Every Member of my team will bring their own personal stories and perspectives on Europe. They will each have their own policies and priorities to manage.

But all together we will be one team that works in the common European interest. We will be one team that works with this House and with Member States to tackle our generation's defining challenges. We are ready but, most importantly, Europe is ready. My message is simple: let's get to work.

(Applause)

This is an unsettled world, where too many powers only speak the language of confrontation and unilateralism, but it is also a world where millions of people are taking to the streets to protest against corruption or to demand democratic change.

The world needs our leadership more than ever: to keep engaging with the world as a responsible power, and to be a force for peace and for positive change. We must show our partners at the United Nations that they can rely on us as a champion of multilateralism. We must demonstrate to our friends in the Western Balkans that we share the same continent, the same history, the same culture, and we will share the same destiny. Our door remains open.

(Applause)

We also share the same destiny with our transatlantic partners. Yes, we have issues – without any doubt. But our ties have lasted the test of time. While we are speaking, thousands of students, researchers, entrepreneurs and artists continue to build zillions of friendships, business contacts, and science projects. This myriad of fine threads woven together make a bond that is stronger than any individual point of discord. Countries from east to west, from south to north, need Europe to be a true partner. We can be the shapers of a better global order. This is Europe's vocation and it's what European citizens want.

I am happy to have such an experienced diplomat as Josep Borrell on our team, working alongside Jutta Urpilainen, Olivér Várhelyi and Janez Lenarčič. They will do an invaluable job together. We will invest in alliances and coalitions to advance our values. We will promote and protect Europe's interest through open and fair trade. We'll strengthen our partners through cooperation because strong partners make Europe strong too. My Commission will not be afraid to speak the language of confidence, but it will be our way, the European way. This is the geopolitical Commission that I have in mind and that Europe urgently needs.

If there is one area where the world needs our leadership, it is on protecting our climate. This is an existential issue for Europe and for the world. How can it not be existential when 85% of people in extreme poverty live in the 20 countries most vulnerable to climate change? How can it not be existential when we see Venice under water, Portugal's forests on fire or Lithuania's harvests cut by half because of droughts? This has happened before, without any question, but never with that frequency and with that intensity. We do not have a moment to waste anymore on fighting climate change.

(Applause)

The faster Europe moves, the greater the advantage will be for our citizens, our competitiveness and our prosperity. The European Green Deal is a must for the health of our planet, our people and for our economy. Frans Timmermans is the right person to make this happen.

(Applause)

And I am delighted that he will be supported by Kadri Simson, Adina Vălean and many others. The European Green Deal is our new growth strategy. It will help us cut emissions while creating jobs. At the core of it will be an industrial strategy that enables our businesses – big and small – to innovate and to develop new technologies, while creating new markets. We will be global standard setters. This is our competitive advantage and is the best way to ensure a level-playing field.

But all of this has to serve the European people. They want and expect Europe to act on climate and environment, but they also need affordable, clean and secure energy. They need to be skilled to work in the jobs of tomorrow. They need to commute to those new jobs or be connected from home and we have to make sure that those needs are fulfilled in a sustainable way. It is a generational transition towards climate neutrality by mid-century, but this transition must be just and inclusive or it will not happen at all.

(Applause)

It will need massive investment in innovation, research, infrastructure, housing, and the training of people. It will require public and private investments at the European and at national levels. And, once again, Europe is already leading the way. The European Union will mainstream climate financing throughout its budget, but also throughout capital markets and the entire investment chain. In regions that will have to make a bigger step than most we will support people and businesses with a targeted just transition mechanism. It will cut across different funds and instruments and attract the private investment we need.

To help us achieve this, the European Investment Bank will be a trusted partner. I am particularly happy that the progress it has made to strengthen its role as European climate bank is obvious. This will boost investment in European technologies and the solutions the world is looking for.

But there is more to do. We only account for approximately 9% of global emissions. We have to bring the world with us and this is already happening. From China to Canada and through to California, others are working with us on their own emissions trading system, and Phil Hogan will ensure that our future trade agreements include a chapter on sustainable development because we know that climate change is about all of us. We have the duty to act and the power to lead.

(Applause)

Meine Damen und Herren, die Digitalisierung ermöglicht Dinge, die noch vor einer Generation undenkbar waren: weltweit miteinander kommunizieren, Zugang zu Informationen, Fortschritte in Medizin, Umweltschutz, Mobilität, Inklusion. Es gibt keine Zukunft ohne Digitalisierung. Margrethe Vestager ist diejenige, die uns auf diesem Weg weiterbringen wird.

Wir werden Tätigkeiten automatisieren, die uns Menschen schwerfallen, zum Beispiel das Tragen von schweren Lasten oder das Repetitive, die Wiederholungsaufgaben, egal ob in der Fabrik oder am Schreibtisch. Aber das hat auch etwas Gutes: Das wird uns Zeit schenken. Zeit für das, was uns Menschen auszeichnet und was Computer eben nicht können: Empathie und Kreativität.

Der Pflegeroboter kann zum Beispiel beim Umbetten helfen und die Digitalisierung kann bei den Verwaltungsaufgaben helfen. Aber immer mit einem Ziel: dass Pflegepersonal wieder Zeit hat, das zu tun, was wirklich wichtig ist, nämlich mit den Patienten sprechen und für sie da sein.

Digitalisierung wird uns ermöglichen, effektiver und effizienter mit Ressourcen umzugehen, weil wir alles ganz genau werden aussteuern können: Wasserverbrauch, Energie und all die wertvollen Ressourcen unseres Planeten.

Ja, die Digitalisierung wird unsere Gesellschaft, unsere Wirtschaft, unsere Verwaltung von Grund auf verändern, und sie tut es ja schon bereits heute. Um die großen Chancen zu nutzen, aber um auch die Risiken einzudämmen, müssen wir da klug ausgleichen, wo es der Markt nicht kann. Wir müssen sowohl unseren europäischen Wohlstand als auch unsere europäischen Werte schützen. Wir müssen unseren eigenen europäischen Weg gehen – auch im digitalen Zeitalter.

Wie wollen wir das konkret machen?

Erstens: Wir müssen Schlüsseltechnologien beherrschen und in Europa besitzen. Dazu gehören mit Sicherheit Quantencomputer, künstliche Intelligenz, Blockchain und kritische Chiptechnologien. Damit uns das aber gelingt, damit wir diese vorhandenen Lücken schließen können, müssen wir das zusammen angehen, da wo wir dann immer stark sind. Also lasst uns unsere Ressourcen bündeln, unser Geld, unsere Forschungskapazitäten, unser Wissen, auch unsere große Fähigkeit der Umsetzung dann in die Praxis.

Wir haben das schon einmal getan beim Supercomputer. Europa ist derzeit dabei, auf dem Weltmarkt einen – einen! – der drei leistungsstärksten Rechner zu erwerben. Das ist klasse, dass wir ihn bekommen, aber ich möchte, dass wir ihn in der nächsten Generation als Europäer selber bauen. Das muss unser Ziel sein.

Europa hat alle Wissenschaftler und industriellen Kapazitäten, um auf diesen Feldern wettbewerbsfähig zu sein. Lassen wir uns das nicht kleinreden, weder von außen noch von uns selbst. Klar, Innovation braucht kluge Köpfe – gar keine Frage –, aber Innovation braucht auch Diversität. Innovation braucht Freiräume, um zu denken. All das haben wir hier in Europa. Die Menschen wollen hier leben, sie wollen hier forschen, sie wollen hier ihre Zukunft gestalten.

Wir brauchen zukunftsfähige Infrastruktur mit gemeinsamen Standards sowie Gigabit-Netzwerke und sichere Clouds, nicht nur der heutigen, sondern vor allen Dingen dann auch der nächsten Generation.

Das Rohmaterial der Digitalisierung, das sind Daten. Mit jedem Klick, den wir hier in Europa tun, füttern wir Algorithmen – meistens eher transatlantische – die wiederum unser Verhalten beeinflussen. Das ist kein guter Zustand.

Deshalb: So wie wir das bei der Datenschutz-Grundverordnung getan haben – nämlich den Rahmen für die Welt gesetzt haben und das konnte nur Europa tun –, so müssen wir dieses auch bei der künstlichen Intelligenz tun. Weil wir in Europa vom Menschen her denken, nicht vom Markt und vom Geld her. Nicht vom Staat her, sondern vom Menschen her.

Es geht nicht darum – das ist wichtig –, den Datenfluss einzudämmen. Es geht darum, dass wir die Regeln setzen, wie verantwortungsvoller Umgang mit Daten geht. Denn für uns Europäer hat der Schutz der digitalen Identität absolute und oberste Priorität. Uns ist das wichtig.

Gleichzeitig wollen wir Innovation. Heute werden 85 % aller nicht-personenbezogenen Daten – 85 %! – nicht ein einziges Mal genutzt. Sie werden automatisch gesammelt, sie werden nicht ein einziges Mal genutzt. Das ist eine Riesenverschwendung. Denn in diesen Daten schlummern Erkenntnisse, die wir haben in Europa und die wir nutzen sollten.

Wir müssen deshalb einen Rahmen beschreiben, damit Regierungen und Unternehmen Daten teilen und in einem sicheren Pool zur Verfügung stellen können. Ich kann mir keine kompetentere Person vorstellen als Thierry Breton, um dazu eine Datenstrategie zu entwickeln.

Ja, und dann gibt es das Thema Cybersicherheit. Das ist die Kehrseite von Digitalisierung, also ist es für uns auch Priorität. Wir brauchen für die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der europäischen Unternehmen höchste Sicherheitsanforderungen und eine einheitliche europäische Vorgehensweise.

Dazu müssen wir Wissen über Gefahren teilen: nicht *need to know*, aber *need to share*. Wir sollten eine gemeinsame Plattform schaffen, gewissermaßen eine erweiterte Cybersicherheitsagentur. Nur so stärken wir das Vertrauen in die vernetzte Wirtschaft, und nur so erhöhen wir die Resilienz gegen alle Arten von Risiken.

Das kann uns alles gelingen, wenn wir gemeinsam vorgehen, wenn wir auf unseren europäischen Werten aufbauen. Und dann bin ich zuversichtlich, dass Europa auch im digitalen Zeitalter eine führende Rolle spielen wird.

Das kann Europa!

Honourable Members, Europe has a lot to be proud of. We are the world's trading superpower. We rank first globally in exporting manufactured goods and services. We are the largest source and destination of foreign direct investment anywhere in the world. Our industry is world class in high value sectors, for instance making a third of the world's space satellites, and our companies are at the cutting edge, holding 40% of the world's renewable technology patents.

We should harness this transformative power of the twin digital and climate transition to strengthen our own industrial base and our innovation potential. This can only be done through investment. We have to scale up. For years, we have invested less in innovation than our competitors do. This is a huge handicap to our competitiveness and our ability to lead this transformation. This is why we should not see the next Multiannual Financial Framework as a simple accounting exercise. The world seven years ago looks nothing like the world in seven years' time. Our budget must be significantly modernised. I know that in this field I can rely not only on the experience and skill of Johannes Hahn, but also on this Parliament. But public budgets can only go so far. We must make sure that investment can flow to where it is needed by completing the Capital Markets Union. This will help improve access to finance for small businesses and start-ups to let them grow, innovate and take the risks they need.

The same goes for the Banking Union. We have to complete it in order to make our financial system stronger and more resilient. I have entrusted this task to Valdis Dombrovskis, the right person for the right job.

(Applause)

He will make sure our economy works for people: quality jobs, equal opportunities, fair working conditions and inclusion. He knows that we need sound public finances for sustainable growth and he will drive our competitiveness and our sustainability. They go hand in hand. We should never forget that competitive sustainability has always been at the heart of our social market economy. We just called it something different.

Think of the family-owned businesses all across our Union. They were not built solely on shareholder values or the next bonuses. They were built to last, to pass down generations, and to provide a fair living for the employees. They were built on passion for quality, tradition and innovation. The things we make today may have changed, but we must rediscover our competitive sustainability.

It was in this spirit that each and every Member State committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and it is in this spirit that Paolo Gentiloni will oversee the implementation of the Goals. He believes in it and I believe in him.

(Applause)

The European economy has recovered from one of the worst economic and financial crises since the end of the Second World War. The labour market remains strong and unemployment continues to fall. However, with clouds forming on the horizon, Europe should prepare for what is ahead. We need to rely on what makes us strong: our single market and our single currency. It is high time to complete our Economic and Monetary Union to deliver growth and jobs by increasing macroeconomic resilience. We must use the flexibility allowed under the Stability and Growth Pact to give the time and the space for our economies to grow. At the same time, we must support Member States with targeted investments and structural reforms. I cannot think of a better person to lead this work than Elisa Ferreira.

(Applause)

Last month, 39 people lost their lives in the back of a lorry after having been trafficked through at least four EU countries. It is a tragedy that a mother in Vietnam receives a message from her daughter in Europe saying that she does not have room to breathe. For those 39 people, for their mothers, fathers, and friends, we all agree that this should never ever happen.

(Applause)

People expect Europe to find common solutions to the shared challenge of migration. This is an issue that has divided us but we should step forward. We need solutions that work for all. This is the task that I have entrusted to Margaritis Schinas and Ylva Johansson. With their different skills and perspectives, they will form a formidable team. One thing is for sure: Europe will always provide shelter to those who are in need of international protection.

(Applause)

It is in our interest that those who stay are integrated into our society, but we also have to ensure that those who have no right to stay return home.

(Applause)

We have to break the cruel business model of smugglers. We must reform our asylum system, never forgetting our values of solidarity and responsibility. We need to strengthen our external borders to allow us to return to a fully-functioning Schengen. We need to invest in our partnerships with countries of origin to improve conditions and create opportunities. It will not be easy, but let us remember the words of Václav Havel: it is the good thing to do.

(Applause)

Migration will not go away – it will stay with us and, therefore, I think that a Europe that is so proud of its values and so proud of its rule of law has to be able to come up with an answer that is both humane and effective. We should be able to do that.

The same team of Margaritis Schinas and Ylva Johansson will also be responsible for strengthening our internal security. They will ensure that law enforcement cooperation can deal with new and emerging threats and they will make sure that Europol, our best tool to fight crime, is fit for purpose.

When I was a girl, living in Brussels, my little sister died of cancer at the age of eleven. I remember the utter sense of helplessness of my parents, but also of the medical staff who looked after her with such care. Every one of us has a similar story – or knows someone who has. The number of cancer cases are rising but we are getting better at diagnosis and treatment. Europe will take the lead in the fight against cancer. Early next year, Stella Kyriakides will launch an ambitious cancer plan. She is the right person to make sure that Europe's Beating Cancer Plan helps to reduce the suffering caused by this disease.

(Applause)

The point is that Europe needs to care for the things people care about. People care about the future of our children and our society. Culture and education are what link our history with our future. This is what makes us unique: our soul, our culture, our diversity, our heritage. And I know that with Mariya Gabriel it is in safe hands. This is why I am happy to announce that her portfolio will be renamed Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

(Applause)

People care about fairness and equality in every sense of the word. This is why I chose Nicolas Schmit to be in charge of implementing our European Pillar of Social Rights and fighting poverty from childhood onwards. He will put forward a framework to ensure that every worker in our Union has a fair minimum wage.

(Applause)

Helena Dalli will be the champion we need to break through the glass ceilings, those barriers holding people back because of who they are, what they believe and who they love. These barriers have to disappear! Period.

People care about their rights, values and freedoms. The rule of law, as our foundation, can never be compromised. We must ensure that it is respected and upheld everywhere, with every country treated equally. We must focus on dialogue and prevention but never hesitate to take all necessary measures.

We need experience and engagement, and Věra Jourová and Didier Reynders are exactly the right people for that.

(Applause)

People care about the air they breathe, the water they drink, the food they eat and the nature they cherish. We can all be happy that Virginijus Sinkevičius will be leading Europe's fight to preserve our biodiversity and oceans, while ensuring our coastal and fishing communities can thrive. And we have Janusz Wojciechowski, who will ensure that our farmers can also thrive as they adapt to new realities.

The twin transitions – climate and digitalisation – will bring changes for all, but let there be no doubt: farming will remain a valued part of our culture and our future. We need a sustainable farm-to-fork strategy – from capital access for young farmers to the fact that imported food products from third countries must comply with the European Union's environmental standards.

(Applause)

People care about having a say in their future. The turnout in this year's European elections was the highest in a quarter of a century. But democratic participation does not stop on election day. We will mobilise Europe's best energies from all parts of our Union, from all institutions and from all walks of life to engage in the Conference on the Future of Europe. It should be inclusive for all institutions and citizens and the European Parliament should have a leading role. From the Commission side, Dubravka Šuica, an experienced Member of this House, will work closely with you to make this a success.

(Applause)

We all know that one Member of our family intends to leave our Union.

(Applause from certain quarters)

A vast majority of this House seems to be happy about the fact that a very, very, very small group in this House will not be able to clap as loudly anymore.

(Loud applause)

I have never made any secret of the fact that I will always be a remainer.

(Applause)

We will respect the decision taken by the British people. We will work closely together to find a solution to common challenges, especially on security matters, but one thing has to be absolutely clear: whatever the future holds, the bond and the friendship between our people are unbreakable.

(Applause)

Monsieur le Président, Mesdames et Messieurs les parlementaires, dans trente ans, d'autres, ici-même, porteront un regard sur nos actions, comme je l'ai fait au début de mon discours. Que diront-ils? Cela dépend de ce que nous ferons ensemble.

Si nous faisons bien notre travail, l'Europe de 2050 sera le premier continent du monde neutre en carbone et elle sera une puissance de premier plan dans le numérique, elle restera l'économie qui réussit le mieux à assurer l'équilibre entre le marché et le social, et elle sera chef de file dans la résolution des grands enjeux mondiaux. Le chemin est ardu et la tâche n'est pas facile, mais ensemble nous pouvons y arriver. Inspirons-nous de cet esprit optimiste et volontaire d'il y a trente ans qui a fait tomber le rideau de fer.

Pour en revenir à Vaclav Havel, il y a des millions d'Européens qui s'engagent parce que c'est la bonne chose à faire. Il y a ceux qui s'investissent pour renforcer leur communauté; ceux qui donnent de leur temps pour prendre soin des personnes âgées ou pour nettoyer un parc; ceux qui sortent dans la rue mais qui, aussi, changent leur style de vie pour protéger le climat. Ce sont des gens qui veulent faire la différence.

Nous aussi, le Parlement, le Conseil et la Commission, nous devons faire la différence. C'est dans cet esprit que j'ai construit mon équipe et c'est dans cet esprit que je suis ici, aujourd'hui, devant vous, pour demander votre confiance.

Mettons-nous au travail, afin de pouvoir dire dans trente ans, également: vive l'Europe, *es lebe Europa, long live Europe!*

(L'Assemblée, debout, applaudit l'oratrice)

Manfred Weber, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, clear priorities, well balanced, forward looking: that was the speech we heard today from Ursula von der Leyen. I thank you for this.

The last weeks were prime time for us as the European Parliament. We checked all the candidates proposed by the Member States, whether they were ready for the job. Not everybody was ready for the job, but finally we now have Commissioners in front of us who the responsible committee gave the green light to. The EPP was always insisting during the whole period on a transparent and fair procedure.

Ursula, the last weeks and months were challenging for you, but you were finally very successful. You worked hard and presented to us today your new colleague: the team for the leadership for Europe. Together we delivered, and today, hopefully with the full support of this House, we can also give the new Commission a strong democratic legitimacy.

One of the key achievements of your team is the better gender balance – the improvement of gender balance. We have more female Commissioners than ever before, and I'm proud to say, as an EPP responsible politician, that from the EPP part of the college, we have 50% women, so we achieved our goal to get a 50% balance. Others still have to work on this, and we brought, as the EPP, the first female Commission President-in-Office, so for us it's not only about Sunday speeches; for us, we deliver when it is about gender balance.

(Applause)

And we have a good mixture from experienced colleagues like Johannes Hahn, like Phil Hogan, Valdis Dombrovskis and Mariya Gabriel. We have new Commissioners like Stella Kyriakides, Margaritis Schinas and Olivér Várhelyi, and we have two colleagues who served for years in the European Parliament: Adina Vălean and Dubravka Šuica. So from our team as EPP, we have a good mixture and we count on their contribution.

My Group, the European People's Party, got in the last elections 40 million votes, and we have now the responsibility to deliver what our people, our voters, ask us to do. As the biggest party in Europe, in the European Parliament, in the Group we want to deliver now. In 2024 we will have implemented an ambitious and smart climate policy based on innovation, without attacking farmers and without doing politics against the industry. In 2024 we will have achieved a situation whereby the European Union has a master plan against cancer. We will have achieved, in 2024, to build up five million new jobs. And we have to stop the brain drain between East and West. In 2024 we will have agreed on further trade agreements; when Trump is building up trade walls, we as Europeans have to build up trade bridges. And in 2024 we will have transformed Europol into a full European FBI, where the mafia and organised crime is really under pressure. In 2024 we will have defined the final borders of Europe. Turkey is a strong partner, but Turkey cannot become a member of the European Union. And in 2024 we will have established a strong European Border and Coast Guard with at least 10 000 Frontex officers to protect our borders, so it is they and not the smugglers who decide who is arriving in Europe.

That is what we have in mind when we speak about delivering. That's why the European People's Party will today vote in favour of the Commission. Let's start now to deliver our promises.

Ambitious projects are important – no doubt about this. But in the coming years there is even more at stake. We feel our societies are falling apart. Our European common feeling is more and more under attack because of the split between people who feel threatened by globalisation and those who enjoy the new opportunities. What makes Europe unique is at stake. A feeling of belonging is needed so much; identity is needed so much. All of us know how to describe our national identity: by our history, by our achievements, our culture. But we, as Europeans – can we describe our way of living, our European way of life? Even in the poorest countries in Europe we have a health system based on solidarity; in the US they are still discussing Obamacare. All over Europe the death penalty is forbidden; that's not the case at global level. Democracy, rule of law, equal treatment of men and women; and, as the headline for the European way of life 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, freedom: freedom of speech, of religion, of the press.

I'm fascinated by the Chinese culture but I don't want to live the Chinese way of life, and the Americans will always be Europe's closest partner – but I don't want to live the American way of life. I prefer the European way of life. We will always protect, promote and guarantee the European way of life. I like being a European, and the next five years will decide whether Europe keeps its heart and soul, or whether it will be pushed aside in a more and more brutal world.

The EPP is ready to work together with all democratic groups in this House for a better Europe. This EPP have proven, in the tradition of De Gasperi, of Adenauer, Schuman and Helmut Kohl, that we fight for a united Europe. The people count on us. Let's start now to deliver.

(Applause)

Iratxe García Pérez, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. –Señor presidente. Señora Von der Leyen, en julio le dimos un voto de confianza —a pesar de que no era nuestra candidata—, porque se comprometió a incluir en su programa de trabajo unas prioridades que para nosotros son fundamentales. Usted aceptó hacer de la transformación ecológica el gran eje de la próxima legislatura. Y además, se comprometió a hacerlo de una manera justa, sin dejar a nadie atrás. Nosotros queremos comenzar a trabajar cuanto antes, pero necesitamos tener la seguridad de que no nos defraudará.

Antes de que comenzaran las audiencias, los socialistas y demócratas dimos nuestro voto final a que ese gran objetivo de la sostenibilidad medioambiental, económica y social se materialice con medidas muy concretas que transformen y mejoren la vida de nuestra ciudadanía. Para eso estamos aquí. Para eso nos han elegido.

Por eso, y para garantizar la competencia de todos y cada uno de los comisarios y comisarias, mi grupo político ha actuado con responsabilidad y exigencia durante las audiencias de los veintiséis comisarios que van a formar parte de su futuro Colegio. Porque esta vez no podemos fallar. No podemos fallar a los jóvenes que se manifiestan cada viernes para decirnos que el planeta y su futuro están en juego. No podemos fallar a las mujeres, y por eso, gracias a nuestra presión, se ha empleado a fondo para lograr la Comisión más paritaria de la historia. Nuestro Grupo seguirá dando la batalla por la igualdad de género, no solo en el número de cargos sino también en las políticas que se deben llevar a cabo. Una de ellas, debería ser intentar acabar con la lacra de la violencia machista con una directiva europea.

(Aplausos)

Tampoco podemos fallar a tantos ciudadanos y ciudadanas que ven con preocupación cómo su territorio se queda despoblado por falta de oportunidades. Y por ello, apostamos por un Fondo de Transición Justa, ambicioso y con recursos adicionales, que ayude a que la transición ecológica sea socialmente justa y no deje a nadie atrás.

Tenemos cinco años por delante para demostrar que la política sí tiene soluciones. Que la unión hace la fuerza y que Europa tiene mucho que decir en un mundo cada vez más convulso. No vamos a escuchar a los agoreros del miedo, a quienes quieren volver atrás y renacionalizar las políticas. Sabemos que solo juntos y juntas podremos afrontar estos grandes retos. Y para eso necesitamos una Comisión fuerte, una Comisión valiente, una Comisión capaz de hacer un nuevo dinamismo, superando las viejas políticas.

Los nuevos retos exigen hacer nuevas formas de política, una realidad cada vez más compleja. Y la mejor guía para renovar nuestros principios, para asegurar la sostenibilidad de nuestro modelo social y para asegurar la coherencia de nuestras políticas son los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible y la Agenda 2030. Nos alegra que, gracias a nuestra demanda, haya aceptado que cada comisario individualmente, y todos como Colegio, sean responsables de aplicarlos, así como su integración en el Semestre Europeo, una cuestión fundamental.

Estamos muy satisfechos de que el Nuevo Pacto Verde sea la prioridad de la futura Comisión Europea, y sabemos que Frans Timmermans hará un excelente trabajo. La emergencia climática no puede esperar.

(Aplausos)

Y para nosotros, más que una «agenda verde», para los socialistas, será una «agenda sandía», verde por fuera y roja por dentro. La Unión Europea debe recuperar su alma social y poner a las personas y la lucha contra las desigualdades en el corazón de la acción política, y esto requiere políticas muy concretas. En la legislatura anterior establecimos las bases de un pilar social europeo que ahora nos toca desarrollar. Los socialistas y demócratas tenemos una batería de propuestas para fortalecer el pilar social europeo, así como la arquitectura financiera y fiscal de la Unión, y tenga seguro que los próximos cinco años seguiremos insistiendo en ello.

Y estos mismos principios de respeto a la dignidad humana, de solidaridad y de justicia deben orientar también la política exterior, la cual, debo decir, que no podría estar en mejores manos. A Josep Borrell le corresponde la enorme labor de intentar hacer valer nuestros intereses y nuestros valores: paz, reglas y multilateralidad en un mundo con enormes turbulencias. También seremos exigentes con el cumplimiento de los principios en política migratoria y política comercial. De este modo, perderemos nuestra legitimidad si no lo hacemos así, si no somos coherentes.

Y seamos ambiciosos también con el próximo presupuesto. No podemos hacer más con menos. Y los nuevos proyectos necesitan más dinero. Por ello, nuestro Grupo será muy exigente con el nuevo marco financiero plurianual.

Por último, los socialistas y demócratas no damos la batalla de mayor democratización europea por perdida. Queremos mejorar y reforzar el sistema del *spitzenkandidaten* y debatir de nuevo las listas transnacionales. Por ello, nos implicaremos al máximo en la próxima Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa.

La Unión Europea se construye día a día, y por eso es tan apasionante. Decía Paul-Henri Spaak, uno de los padres del proyecto europeo, que los experimentos científicos se ensayan una y otra vez hasta que consiguen el éxito. No debe ser menos nuestro experimento por una Europa unida, próspera, justa e igualitaria. De lo que hagamos en esta legislatura dependerá en gran medida la continuidad del proyecto de la Unión Europea y que la ciudadanía vuelva a confiar en las instituciones. Los socialistas y demócratas lo tenemos muy claro. Queremos estar a la altura de las circunstancias y por eso apoyaremos hoy con nuestro voto exigente, leal y vigilante a este Colegio de comisarios. Confiamos en que esta Comisión sea consciente de ello y actúe con responsabilidad. Nos jugamos demasiado.

(Aplausos)

Dacian Cioloș, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Présidente élue, chers collègues, cette commission est le fruit d'un processus d'examen sévère que ce Parlement lui a réservé mais qui devrait la rendre plus forte. Elle va devoir maintenant exécuter ses engagements, ceux que Ursula von der Leyen nous a présentés ici.

Je demande à cette Commission de nous montrer trois choses: vision, passion et ambition. C'est la seule manière de préparer l'Europe à faire face aux nouveaux défis de ce monde et, en même temps, d'enthousiasmer les citoyens. C'est bien d'enthousiasme que nous avons besoin pour mener à bien ces projets. M^{me} von der Leyen a parlé d'une commission géopolitique; c'est très bien, mais cela nécessite des changements en profondeur.

En tant que groupe, nous avons mis en avant quatre grandes priorités. Premièrement, nous avons l'ambition de faire de l'Europe le premier continent neutre en carbone en 2050, dont l'économie devra être prête à relever ce défi. Cela sera possible avec des entrepreneurs, des agriculteurs et des chercheurs prêts à agir. Investissons donc dans la transition avec un *Just transition Fund* et une banque pour le climat, dotés d'un budget à la hauteur de cette tâche.

Deuxièmement, le numérique transforme déjà notre société en offrant des possibilités considérables aux citoyens et à notre économie, mais il comporte aussi des risques. Face à cette évolution, construisons des entreprises chefs de file dans ce domaine et aidons nos petites et moyennes entreprises en leur facilitant l'accès au financement dans un cadre réglementaire pour l'intelligence artificielle, y compris à l'aide d'une réelle stratégie européenne pour les données. Je suis sûr que Margrethe Vestager et Thierry Breton seront à la hauteur de cette tâche.

Troisièmement, dans cinq ans, l'Europe parlera-t-elle encore sur un pied d'égalité avec la Chine et les États-Unis et sera-t-elle encore une voix entendue en Afrique? Nous devons aussi montrer que nous sommes capables de gérer une politique d'asile et de migration à la hauteur de nos valeurs, de construire une politique commerciale tout en ayant des clauses de durabilité mises en œuvre de manière effective, et de bâtir une vraie Europe de la défense, néanmoins ouverte sur ses partenariats.

Pour ce faire, nous devons reconnecter les citoyens à l'Europe. Nous voulons une démocratie européenne qui ne se résume pas à des élections tous les cinq ans, mais dans laquelle chacun se sent partie prenante; c'est exactement la mission de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe, dont mon groupe sera un moteur. Ce sera le moyen d'enlever les obstacles institutionnels qui empêchent l'Union d'agir comme elle le doit. Le syndrome du *too little too late* doit être éradiqué une fois pour toutes. Sinon, ce ne sera pas M. Schinas, avec son portefeuille, mais les Américains ou, pire encore, les Chinois qui décideront demain de notre mode de vie.

Ska Keller, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, dear Commissioner candidates, you are running today for leading the European Union: a Union that started out as a project of peace, of democracy, of human rights – a fantastic project. Whereas, right now, if we look around us, thousands of people are drowning at our borders. More than five women get killed by their partners every day. And a Union where some of the Member States are turning away from these basic values of democracy, of rule of law and of freedom that so many of the European citizens have fought so hard for. A Union that risks to fail in the face of the climate crisis, thereby risking the livelihood of the younger generation and future generations.

But it's also a Union with a great potential to be the front-runner for climate protection, to be the place of innovation and for visionaries; the continent that would stand up for its values and for human rights, be it at home or in the world. So today, the question is: will the new Commission, will you be ready to fulfil those potentials? Will you be able to meet the challenges of the environmental, social and democratic crisis that we do have in Europe right now? This will take courage. It will take conviction. During the hearings we've heard conviction in some of you, but not in all of you, and not on all topics. How, for example, is the Commission going to deliver an ambitious climate-protection programme if there is no will to change the agricultural and the trade policy? I can tell you that this is not going to work. Green headlines are just not enough. We need ambitious content. We need an ambitious agenda, and without a deep reform of the agricultural policy and of the trade agenda, any climate policy must remain half-hearted. And we just don't have the time for that.

(Applause)

Let me point out some other problems as well. It is an unprecedented situation that the boss of one of the biggest IT companies in Europe will be a Commissioner for the internal market, including the digital economy, and thus overseeing the area his former company is one of the biggest players in. We acknowledge and we appreciate even the steps that Mr Breton has committed himself to undertaking in order to minimise the conflict of interest, but we do think that the conflict of interest here is inherent in his portfolio, and he didn't have a voice over that. But we do think that this is a big, big problem and that the digital market should have been removed from his portfolio. And as Greens, we cannot accept this sort of conflict of interest, which risks our reputation as EU institutions.

Another big problem lies, unfortunately, with our Commissioner from Hungary, sent to us with best regards from Mr Orbán. How can somebody who represents a government that is constantly undermining and breaking EU law and values, how can someone like that be telling countries that want to join the European Union that they absolutely have to follow rule of law and European law? That is cynical.

(Applause)

I believe that hardly anything embodies the European spirit as much as our integration policy. The idea that countries are willing and eager to join the European Union, to join our common union built on peace, democracy and freedom: that is the flame burning for us in Europe. And what are we telling those countries that are right now willing to change their policies, even their name? We're telling them that they're not important, that their voice doesn't matter, that their aspirations don't matter. I think we have made enough mistakes in that area recently. Let's not add another.

(Applause)

President von der Leyen, we have raised those issues continuously. This is nothing new to you, but it's really for those reasons that we cannot support your Commission. But we are willing to work with the Commission in order to strengthen European democracy and human rights; in order to tackle the climate crisis and to foster European integration. Whenever you and your college take initiatives in that regard, we are more than eager to cooperate with you, to work together with you. You will find in us a constructive partner, but rest assured that we will also be critical if you don't. You can count on that.

Colleagues, it is time for us to act: climate cannot wait, social inequality cannot wait to be resolved. And we hope that this Commission will surprise us in many positive ways, and we're willing to give you a head start in that as well. Thank you very much. Good luck.

Jordan Bardella, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Monsieur le Président, Madame von der Leyen, lors des débats de la campagne européenne, droite et gauche ont pu donner l'illusion de désaccords quant à l'orientation à donner à l'Union européenne. Mais aujourd'hui, par une conjuration d'intérêts, vous allez, mes chers collègues, élire une Commission qui s'inscrit dans la continuité de la précédente. Le jeu de chaises musicales des postes de commissaires auquel nous avons assisté ces dernières semaines n'y fera rien: un bon commissaire est avant tout un homme ou une femme qui doit pouvoir rentrer sans broncher dans le moule des réglementations et des procédures dont seule Bruxelles a le secret.

L'émergence, sur tout le continent, de forces politiques défendant l'intérêt des peuples et des nations auraient dû vous pousser à revoir votre copie et à rompre avec les logiques totalement obsolètes que vous allez pourtant prolonger: traités de libre-échange, concurrence déloyale, travail détaché, libéralisation de nos services publics, mirage d'une Europe fédérale et, bien sûr, laxisme migratoire. Autant de mots auxquels vous resterez sourds, embarqués dans une machine infernale, technocratique, sans frontières et sans âme. Peu après avoir accordé le titre de commissaire à la protection du mode de vie européen, votre courage sémantique a cédé sous la pression des socialistes pour devenir la promotion des modes de vie européens, autant d'ores et déjà le nommer parce qu'il sera: un commissaire à la promotion de l'immigration.

Cette Commission, j'en suis persuadé, remplira à merveille le rôle qui est le sien, celui de chape de plomb destinée à étouffer l'aspiration à la liberté et à la continuité historique des nations européennes. Le Brexit devrait être l'occasion, pour le Conseil, de remettre les traités sur la table et d'aller vers une Europe des nations plus juste, plus protectrice et surtout plus démocratique. M. Juncker, M^{me} von der Leyen, un jeu de chaises musicales pour surtout ne rien changer.

Raffaele Fitto, a nome del gruppo ECR. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la nostra posizione oggi parte da un dato. Il dato è quello del dibattito che abbiamo ascoltato e anche dei tanti proclami e delle tante indicazioni che sono emerse in questo dibattito.

Esiste però un punto di partenza che viene ignorato, o addirittura esaltato ed enfatizzato: il lavoro della Commissione Juncker. Ecco, questo è il primo punto di dissenso, sul quale noi esprimiamo un giudizio totalmente negativo, perché è una Commissione che in questi cinque anni ha avuto un'azione politica talmente lenta nel trovare le soluzioni che, quando qualche volta le ha trovate, è arrivata con i problemi totalmente e profondamente cambiati.

Quindi dobbiamo ragionare anche sulla questione politica che ha determinato questo, una questione che torna a fasi alterne. Ieri una proposta di un documento da parte della Francia e della Germania torna allo schema precedente, cioè a quello della gestione della Commissione Juncker, cioè esattamente quella impostazione che ha portato questi risultati negativi.

A questo si aggiunge una seconda questione, che è altrettanto importante rispetto a questo: le differenze che hanno caratterizzato gli scontri politici nei giorni scorsi, nei mesi scorsi, anche tra Francia e Germania, e non su questioni di poco conto. Avere un approccio diverso, critico o polemico o alternativo alla NATO, signora Presidente, non è la stessa cosa, all'interno di queste istituzioni. Dobbiamo chiarirle queste posizioni. Noi su questo vogliamo, da parte della Commissione e della Presidente, una posizione di chiarezza.

E poi ci sono i temi. Sicuramente il discorso della Presidente della Commissione, il programma è un programma che guarda avanti, un programma che punta a risolvere tutte le grandi questioni che ci sono sul tappeto, però dobbiamo essere anche realisti. Come? Il *Just Transition Fund*. Come? Il tema dell'abbattimento delle emissioni inseriamolo non in un ragionamento di estremismo ambientalista, ma cerchiamo di mettere in campo alcuni punti fermi. Il 9 % delle emissioni globali è prodotto in Europa, oltre il 40 % tra Stati Uniti e Cina. E qual è la nostra domanda di politica industriale? Qual è il nostro obiettivo e la nostra risposta sul mondo del lavoro, sulle scelte che devono essere compiute in questa direzione?

Poi c'è il nodo del bilancio europeo e del quadro finanziario pluriennale. Vogliamo fare tutto: il *green deal*, le politiche agricole, le politiche di coesione. Come? Quando affronteremo e come affronteremo il nodo del bilancio? Quali saranno le risposte che su questa questione verranno? Così come il grande tema del bilancio, con il rischio di inserire la deriva, ancora una volta, che punta a mettere in campo meccanismi di penalizzazione per alcuni paesi, come questo Parlamento ha già fatto in passato con l'articolo 7, trovando una risposta, proprio in quei paesi nei quali ha attivato questa procedura, da parte della gente, perché in quei paesi gli elettori hanno dato una risposta opposta all'azione della Commissione europea sostenuta da questo Parlamento.

Allora su questi punti abbiamo bisogno di chiarezza, così come voglio toccare, in ultimo, il tema dell'immigrazione. Il suo richiamo, il suo riferimento all'evento drammatico dei 39 morti all'interno di un camion è un fatto che certamente fa riflettere. Ma qui c'è un fallimento di questa politica, perché il 21 novembre sono morti 67 immigrati nel Mar Mediterraneo e dal gennaio 2019 ad oggi ne sono morti mille. Qual è la strategia sull'immigrazione? Qual è la politica? Quella di promettere maggiori risorse all'interno del bilancio per poter aumentare e sostenere la polizia di frontiera o quella di avere una strategia per dare una risposta vera e seria, nella quale responsabilizzare complessivamente tutto e porre e risolvere il problema in quei luoghi dai quali partono gli immigrati, e non certamente nella fase finale nella quale arrivano?

Questi sono i nodi che noi poniamo. Il nostro gruppo ha una posizione differenziata, non faccio mistero a dirlo perché, come è noto, abbiamo un partito al nostro interno che esprime anche un Commissario. Detto questo, il nostro approccio sarà realista: verificheremo sulle questioni che affronterete, punto per punto, l'azione e le cose dette e su questo daremo una nostra azione e un nostro contributo, laddove questo contributo sarà utile a migliorare. Laddove ci renderemo conto che emergerà una strategia distante da quelle che sono le nostre posizioni, saremo chiaramente su una posizione di opposizione.

Martin Schirdewan, *im Namen der GUE/NGL-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Frau von der Leyen, wir haben ein Problem: Sie haben heute und auch in den vergangenen Monaten immer alles Mögliche versprochen. So ist die Rede von Investitionen von bis zu einer Billion EUR in einen *Green New Deal*, und gleichzeitig reden Sie von massiven Investitionen in den digitalen Umbau von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Doch haben Sie bislang den all diesen Aussagen innewohnenden Widerspruch nicht auflösen können: Wie wollen Sie Ihre politischen Vorhaben umsetzen, wenn Sie an der falschen Spar- und Kürzungspolitik festhalten? Frau von der Leyen, Sie werden mit Ihrem politischen Programm scheitern, wenn die Austeritätspolitik nicht beendet wird und die Staaten nicht endlich wieder investieren können.

Und, Frau von der Leyen, ein anderes Europa ist möglich, doch unterscheiden sich unsere Visionen von Europa und die Wege, die dorthin führen. Frieden erreicht man nicht durch Aufrüstung und die Militarisierung der europäischen Außenpolitik, sondern indem man einen Stopp von Waffenexporten verhängt und internationale Abrüstung betreibt. Soziale Gerechtigkeit erreicht man nicht, indem man Arbeitsmärkte dereguliert, sondern indem man verbindliche soziale Standards durchsetzt, die vor Armut schützen und Würde garantieren. Umweltschutz braucht keine blumigen Versprechungen, sondern eine ambitionierte Politik, um die Erderwärmung auf 1,5 ° zu beschränken und die CO₂-Emissionen bis 2030 um 70 % zu senken. Die Steuerbetrügereien der großen Konzerne beendet man nicht, indem man auf die OECD verweist, sondern indem man effektive Unternehmenssteuern durchsetzt und die Steueroasen schließt. Und die Menschenrechte und Menschenleben schützt man nicht durch eine tödliche Abschottungspolitik an den europäischen Außengrenzen, sondern durch eine europäische zivile Seenotrettungsmission.

Frau von der Leyen, heute mögen die Augen der Öffentlichkeit auf Ihnen ruhen. In der Linksfraktion im Europäischen Parlament finden Sie eine kraftvolle, eine entschlossene, kreative, demokratische Opposition, die – und das verspreche ich Ihnen hier – Ihnen und Ihrer Kommission in den kommenden fünf Jahren Tag für Tag bei Ihrer Politik auf die Finger schauen und sich im Interesse der Europäerinnen und Europäer für einen Kurswechsel, für ein anderes Europa einsetzen wird.

Tiziana Beghin (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signori Commissari, signora Presidente eletta, l'Europa ha bisogno di un governo subito. Abbiamo già perso troppo tempo e i cittadini ci chiedono risposte che non possono più attendere.

Non le nascondiamo che non tutta la sua squadra ci convince. Durante le audizioni abbiamo visto giganteschi conflitti di interesse, ascoltato troppi distinguo, troppi se, troppi ma. Noi invece dalla sua Commissione ci aspettiamo solo dei sì. Sì al ricollocamento obbligatorio dei migranti, sì alla riforma del Patto di stabilità, sì agli investimenti *green*, sì «*made in*» per proteggere le nostre imprese.

Grazie a queste priorità lei a luglio ha ricevuto la nostra fiducia. Adesso però i cittadini si aspettano delle azioni ferme e concrete. Ci sono migliaia di lavoratori che rischiano di perdere il loro posto di lavoro a causa della sovrapproduzione dell'acciaio? Bene, utilizziamo il *Just Transition Fund* anche per l'acciaio, oltre che per il carbone. I cambiamenti climatici distruggono l'Italia? Reagiamo escludendo dal Patto di stabilità i fondi per la ricostruzione e per la prevenzione idrogeologica.

Concludo dicendo che il Movimento 5Stelle valuterà ogni decisione e ogni provvedimento nel merito. Il nostro sì di oggi non è una cambiale in bianco.

Daniel Caspary (PPE). – Herr Präsident, sehr geehrte Frau Kommissionspräsidentin! Sie haben im Juli einen überzeugenden Start hingelegt und auch heute ein überzeugendes Programm – ein sehr ausgewogenes Programm – dargelegt. Dazu herzlichen Glückwunsch!

Wenn wir heute 30 Jahre nach dem Fall der Mauer zusammensitzen, dann erleben wir immer noch, dass in einigen Mitgliedstaaten der Europäischen Union Korruption blüht, dass Rechtsstaatlichkeit gefährdet ist und Journalisten um ihr Leben fürchten müssen oder sogar ermordet werden. Ich bin Ihnen dankbar, dass Sie darauf hingewiesen haben. Wir müssen uns wirklich dafür einsetzen, dass überall in der Europäischen Union – auch darüber hinaus – Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Frieden und Freiheit gelten. Dafür alles Gute und vielen Dank!

Zum Dritten: Wir haben das Thema Sicherheit angesprochen. Wir haben uns als Europäische Union jahrelang darauf verlassen, dass die Vereinigten Staaten unsere Sicherheit garantieren. Wir erleben, dass sie das leider zunehmend nicht mehr überall tun, dass wir in unserer Nachbarschaft selbst für Ordnung sorgen und sicherstellen müssen, dass dort nicht Bürgerkriege explodieren und hunderttausende Menschen ermordet und vertrieben werden, und dass wir selbst dort Verantwortung übernehmen müssen. Dass Sie hier einen Schwerpunkt setzen, unterstütze ich auch sehr.

Viertens: das Thema Klimawandel. Ich bin Ihnen sehr dankbar. Ja, wir brauchen einen grünen Deal. Aber – Sie haben darauf hingewiesen – er darf nicht einseitig grün sein. Davor haben viele Menschen Angst. Davor haben die Menschen Angst, die in den Fabriken an den Bändern stehen. Davor haben die Menschen in den ländlichen Räumen Angst, die sich abgekoppelt fühlen. Davor haben die Landwirte Angst, die sich fragen: Wie sollen wir eigentlich die Nahrungsmittelproduktion und all diese Sachen zusammenbringen?

Sie haben gesagt: Wir müssen das nachhaltig machen, wir müssen alle Aspekte zusammenbringen. Wir dürfen den Menschen nicht Angst machen, sondern wir können den Menschen zuversichtlich sagen: Wir haben einen Plan, wir haben Orientierung, wir haben Ideen für die Zukunft.

Dafür bin ich Ihnen dankbar, und ich würde mich freuen, wenn wir in den nächsten Jahren eine offene und zuversichtliche Kommission und eine offene und zuversichtliche Europäische Union aufbauen könnten.

IN THE CHAIR: MAIREAD McGUINNESS

Vice-President

Simona Bonafè (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Presidente von del Leyen, signori Commissari, con il voto di oggi inizia un nuovo percorso.

Gli impegni che lei, Presidente, ha presentato e che noi sosteniamo convintamente da domani dovranno concretizzarsi in misure per migliorare la qualità della vita dei nostri cittadini. E lo prometto: saremo leali ma molto esigenti nel verificare il rispetto del suo programma. Non faremo sconti, anzi ne alzeremo l'ambizione.

Con le ultime elezioni europee, nonostante il vento nazionalista, i cittadini hanno dimostrato che ancora hanno fiducia nel progetto dell'Unione, ma è l'ultima chiamata. Sta a noi adesso non deludere le loro aspettative. Ecco, Presidente von der Leyen, Commissari, parafrasando – me lo permetterete – una frase celebre di un eroe dell'Unità d'Italia, «qui si fa l'Europa o si muore». Abbiamo davanti a noi un lavoro enorme per fare l'Europa.

Lei ha citato una serie di sfide. Io voglio mettere l'attenzione su tre parole chiave: sostenibilità, inclusività, giustizia sociale. Dobbiamo allora puntare con decisione e senza ambiguità a uno sviluppo inclusivo socialmente e sostenibile ambientalmente, come unico asset, oggi, per rilanciare la competitività economica, creare nuovi posti di lavoro di qualità e preservare il pianeta, senza lasciare indietro nessuno.

Per fare questo servirà stabilire un nuovo approccio della *governance* economica che punti alla crescita, non solo rivedendo criteri e parametri ma incorporando la sostenibilità sociale e ambientale a partire dal Semestre europeo. E soprattutto, per realizzare questo programma, serve un bilancio adeguato: senza risorse rischiamo di rimanere solo con buoni propositi.

Ecco Presidente, il gruppo dei Socialisti e Democratici saprà fare la sua parte. Saremo pronti a lavorare su ogni provvedimento senza risparmiarci, dimostrando giorno dopo giorno a ognuno dei cittadini che rappresentiamo che l'Unione europea è la migliore garanzia per il futuro di tutti noi.

Stéphane Séjourné (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Présidente élue, nous avons déjà beaucoup communiqué. Il y a quelques mois, vous avez obtenu une majorité dans cet hémicycle; vous êtes venue pour une audition; nous avons pu auditionner l'ensemble des commissaires. Vous-même, vous avez fait le tour des groupes et des arguments ont été largement échangés. Je ne formulerai donc pas de questions supplémentaires mais une remarque, peut-être.

Comme tout le monde ici, nous savons que nous sommes à un moment de bascule de l'Union européenne, et je fais d'ailleurs partie de ceux qui pensent que cet hémicycle n'est pas éternel et qu'il faut soigner l'Union européenne et nos institutions si nous souhaitons préserver notre modèle européen et notre construction politique européenne. Je pense également que notre Commission et nos futurs commissaires sont issus de ce processus démocratique qui fait d'eux des hommes politiques européens et pas des chefs d'administration ou des chefs de direction de la Commission européenne. Nous avons besoin d'incarnation des politiques publiques et – je m'adresse à l'ensemble de votre futur Collège – nous avons besoin d'incarnation des politiques publiques dans les médias nationaux en Europe, y compris au contact des citoyens et en réponse à la fois aux attentes exprimées par les Européens aux élections européennes et à ce qu'ils nous ont dit pendant ces élections, c'est-à-dire une Europe plus efficace, une Europe qui obtient des résultats, une Europe qui parle des priorités dont il a été question.

J'avais fait cette même intervention, la dernière fois, pendant votre première investiture et le premier vote vous concernant et, objectivement, je ne comprends pas la position du groupe des Verts sur cette Commission. On a une Commission qui est la plus progressiste et la plus écolo de l'histoire de la Commission, et je ne comprends pas la recherche des arguments. M^{me} Keller s'exprimera peut-être davantage sur les arguments mais, en tout cas, je vous remercie des discussions et des débats ainsi que des priorités. Évidemment, nous voterons pour cette Commission... (*mots inaudibles*)

Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, it's a pleasure to be here, and Dr von der Leyen, the Scottish National Party will support your Commission this morning. We believe the domestic context with Brexit has coloured our thinking. Colleagues, I have to say frankly to you that the world looks different when you face the prospect of your country being removed against your democratic will from this family of nations. You look at the big picture, not the minutiae. But Dr von der Leyen, we do need a new dynamism in Europe. For too long it's been too easy to present the European Commission as stale, out of touch, uncaring. I truly do hope that you and your new College do bring a new energy to the European Union.

Madam President, in my last speech in this House – I'm a candidate for the Westminster election within the UK for Sterling constituency; Scotland's problems are not coming from this place, they're coming from Westminster – and if I win, I must leave this place. Remember this: you are a blessed generation. Cherish Europe. It is an amazing achievement. With all its faults, never forget what an amazing project you are part of. It's not perfect, but never take it for granted. Learn from our experience: reversal is also possible. And if Scotland is taken out of our European Union against our will, we'll be back, and we count on you.

(Applause)

Paolo Borchia (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, quante sfide attendono la nuova Commissione europea! Ma le sfide, per essere vinte, necessitano di credibilità.

Signora von der Leyen, lei ha dichiarato di voler aumentare del 30 % le spese per la politica estera, ma non basta buttare denaro dei contribuenti per superare le posizioni, legittimamente diverse, tra i vari Stati. Poi, mi chiedo, servono davvero uffici dell'Unione europea alle isole Fiji o alle Barbados?

Clima: il vicepresidente Timmermans vorrebbe un'Europa campione del clima, ma se i paesi terzi non fanno la loro, non si accollano impegni avremo solo oneri per i cittadini e per le nostre imprese.

Bilanci nazionali: speriamo di non vedere più vincoli e parametri che vengono utilizzati dalla Commissione europea per giudicare se un governo democraticamente eletto sta simpatico o meno.

Concludo con una riflessione: come potete pensare di essere una Commissione inclusiva se avete rifiutato il confronto con chi rappresenta milioni di cittadini che a maggio hanno chiesto una discontinuità rispetto al passato? Buona fortuna, ne avrete tanto bisogno!

Roberts Zīle (ECR). – Prezidentes kundze, jums izdevās sabalansēt ļoti grūto uzdevumu kompromisa portfeļa sadalē un pat nosaukumu sadalē (komisāru portfeļu). Rezultātā, protams, ir kāds portfelis, kas vairāk atgādina mugursomu, kurā ir ielikti ķirši no kūkas un ir ļoti lielāki nekā citi, bet tas nav tas būtiskākais.

Jūs varat balstīties arī uz Eiropas Konservatīvo un reformistu grupas lielas daļas atbalstu, ja jūs uzturēsiet vienota tirgus principu bez protekcionalisma, dzīves kvalitātes izlīdzināšanos visā Eiropas Savienībā, ja vides politika nesabremzēs Eiropas biznesa konkurētspēju globāli.

The most important, Madam President, is the so-called geopolitical Commission, and it's the same as was said by the very important country President recently in some interviews. But if the navigation of this geopolitical Commission is in the same direction, it's caused some troubles. If we are going to erode our transatlantic cooperation and instead create new links with aggressive countries in the east which occupied some other European countries only because they decided to go west, I think it creates a dangerous geopolitical development in your Commission. Please be careful in this direction.

Anja Hazekamp (GUE/NGL). – Voorzitter, de belangen van multinationals staan lijnrecht tegenover de belangen van mensen, dieren, natuur en milieu. Dat zie je bijvoorbeeld bij de energietransitie, en dat zie je bij het toelaten van schadelijk landbouwgif en gmo's. De Europese Commissie heeft hierover veel macht en daarom is het van cruciaal belang dat de eurocommissarissen onafhankelijk zijn.

Hoe is het in godsnaam mogelijk dat hier personen naar voren worden geschoven die financiële belangen hebben in multinationals zoals Bayer-Monsanto of olie- en gasbedrijven, bedrijven die miljoenen euro's uitgeven om het Europese beleid naar hun hand te zetten? En dan de beoogde klimaatcommissaris, de heer Timmermans, die ontkent dat een krimp van de vee-industrie noodzakelijk is om de klimaatverandering tegen te gaan, terwijl dit al onomstotelijk vaststaat.

Het is teleurstellend dat de ambities van deze Commissie volstrekt ontoereikend zijn om de biodiversiteitscrisis en de klimaatcrisis op te lossen. De Partij voor de Dieren heeft daarom weinig vertrouwen in deze Commissie, maar multinationals vast wel.

Ivan Vilibor Sinčić (NI). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, gospođo von der Leyen, ovdje ste danas nahvalili svoju Komisiju, ljude koji su Vaši komesari, povjerenici za razna područja. Međutim, čovjek bi stekao dojam da tražite izvrsnost, izvrsnost u svim područjima, pa se pitam onda, iz svojeg hrvatskog pogleda, zašto ste Hrvatskoj dali povjerenika ili komesara za demografiju. Hrvatski *establishment* od kada je preuzeo vlast nad Hrvatskom izgubio je, mogu slobodno reći, milijun stanovnika. To je katastrofa.

U nekim dijelovima Hrvatske, u Slavoniji, u zadnjih šest godina izgubili smo svakog petog, odnosno svakog četvrtog učenika. To su porazni podaci. Iz mojeg kuta gledanja nema smisla da netko tko toliko malo zna i sposoban je u demografiji vodi demografiju cijele Europe.

Međutim, taj paradoks se lako objasni. Iz Vašeg pogleda, iz Berlina kad gledate, pozicija demografskog komesara Hrvatskoj je nagrada hrvatskom *establishmentu* što je napunio njemačke gradove s minimalno 50 000 stanovnika godišnje prema znanstvenim istraživanjima. Ako se ovako nastavi, u Hrvatskoj će ostati samo penzioneri i političari, da ne kažem da sljedeće godine Austrija otvara vrata i očekuje se još 200 000 iseljenika. Gdje je biološka održivost? Govorimo o klimatskoj održivosti. Gdje je biološka održivost zemalja članica?

Andrzej Halicki (PPE). – Szanowna Pani Przewodnicząca! W imieniu polskiej delegacji skupionej w Europejskiej Partii Ludowej, ale także większości polskiego społeczeństwa, które jest proeuropejskie, prodemokratyczne, z dużą nadzieją czekamy na skuteczną pracę Komisji Europejskiej w przedstawionym przez Panią składzie. To rzeczywiście jest tak, że obywatele martwią się o jakość życia, dlatego tak ważna jest polityka klimatyczna, ochrona środowiska, ale także kwestia zdrowia. Dlatego z taką dużą satysfakcją odnotowujemy wśród priorytetów konieczność skutecznej walki z rakiem, bo to jest największy zabójca. Prewencja i edukacja są niezbędne i potrzebne.

By realizować zadania gospodarcze, potrzebny jest dobry budżet. Stawiamy siebie do dyspozycji, żeby był on większy, a nie mniejszy, żeby można było tworzyć nowe miejsca pracy, żeby można było stawiać na innowacyjność, rozwój gospodarki, na kwestię rozszerzenia i edukacji.

Jest też kwestia fundamentalna, o której Pani wspomniała kilkakrotnie: to Komisja Europejska stoi na straży Traktatów. Obrona wolności i wartości, praworządności to jest fundamentalny element naszej wspólnoty, nikt nie może stawiać siebie ponad prawem, wszystkie rządy są równe. Dlatego życzymy także konsekwencji i aktywności, by tę wspólnotę, z której jesteśmy tak dumni, nadal tworzyć, by nikt jej nie zagrażał i by nikt jej nie podważał.

Sergei Stanishev (S&D). – Madam President, Madam President-elect, Commissioners-designate, today you will receive much broader and consolidated support from the Socialist Group than you did in July, and there are three reasons for this to happen.

First, Madam President, you took strong pledges and made serious political commitments for a progressive change of the European Union – a change which is social, environmental and economic. The most progressive, actually, political agenda for the Commission is at the table, and we have to back it. But we Socialists shall be very vigilant and demanding on what you deliver, and the first test will be the Multiannual Financial Framework, because you cannot make policies without resources.

Second, we have a strong team of Socialist Commissioners who have the vision, competence and energy to deliver, and the Commission cannot be seen anymore as the domain of the EPP, where one party dominates the policies. It's a balance of policies and political forces.

Third – last but not least – European citizens have no patience anymore. They want us to deliver. In the last European elections there was record participation, but the patience of citizens is at its limits, so please start acting and delivering from today. You only have five years.

(Applause)

Caroline Voaden (Renew). – Madam President, Ms von der Leyen, Commissioner-designates, it took a while to get here and it involved compromises for many, but the time has come for Europe to get on with its work and start producing legislation that benefits the lives of all Europeans. Ms von der Leyen, I admire your ambition to create a gender-balanced team. You fell slightly short at the last minute, but there has never been such high female representation in Europe's top jobs. Thank you for your determination to make this happen, and I now look forward to seeing similar balance in all of Europe's institutions – on its boards and at its top tables. We must also work hard to ensure higher minority representation across all our European institutions too.

Of course, I am very disappointed that there is No British Commissioner sitting with you today. Yet again, our infantile government has damaged the credibility and reputation of our nation. But let me assure you that the last remaining sane Brits are working on fixing that little problem, and we welcome your support. In our meeting, before we supported you as Commission President, you told us that you would consult with British pro-Europeans on language and Brexit policy, and I look forward to us meeting on that shortly.

I believe there are serious challenges facing Europe today, but also many reasons for optimism. You have rightly prioritised the climate emergency, digitalisation and migration. I look forward to seeing file after file come before this House for our scrutiny, policies that will leave Europe in a better position than it is in now.

Ms von der Leyen, it is my deepest wish that I will still be sitting in this House in five years' time to see the results of the work you are embarking on today. As Alyn Smith said, this is an ambitious and brilliant project, and you should all value it greatly.

(Applause)

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE). – Madame la Présidente, cette démocratie européenne, encore jeune et fragile, n'est pas totalement mature et n'est certainement pas fédéraliste. Ce sont les États membres qui nomment les commissaires et cela permet à deux gouvernements, la Hongrie et la Pologne, d'envoyer des commissaires qui leur sont loyaux. Pourtant, l'article 7 a été déclenché contre ces deux pays car ils enfreignent les règles de l'état de droit les plus élémentaires et nos valeurs.

Aujourd'hui, le candidat envoyé pour la Hongrie est censé représenter les droits fondamentaux de l'Union européenne dans des pays demandant l'adhésion. Quelle terrible provocation de cette Commission, qui s'est engagée, en paroles, sur les questions d'état de droit et des libertés fondamentales. Pourrez-vous réellement agir malgré les pressions des États membres et malgré la trop grande puissance du processus intergouvernemental? Saurez-vous être au service des citoyens européens et des valeurs européennes et non aux ordres des États membres?

Le Parlement a joué son rôle en rejetant des candidats ayant trop de conflits d'intérêts. Il joue aussi son rôle en interrogeant les commissaires désignés sur le respect des valeurs de notre union et leur indépendance à l'égard de leurs États membres. À votre tour d'être courageux!

Un portefeuille n'a pas changé de nom au cours des semaines. Vous maintenez un portefeuille qui s'intitule démocratie et démocratie. Pour une féministe, cette association de mots fait froid dans le dos et cette commissaire, M^{me} Suica, est celle qui est chargée de la conférence sur le futur de l'Europe. Lors de son audition, cette candidate a refusé de condamner la théorie du grand remplacement. Vous comprendrez alors, encore une fois, notre inquiétude à l'égard de cette Commission. Saurez-vous assurer un avenir de l'Europe féministe, inclusif et garant des libertés fondamentales?

Maximilian Krah (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Wir nehmen zur Kenntnis, dass diese Kommission tatsächlich eine im Wesentlichen linksliberale Agenda verfolgt – was erstaunlich ist angesichts des Trends der nationalen Wahlergebnisse, die eben klarmachen, dass die Menschen eine mehr konservative Richtung wollen. Als Schwerpunkt hat man sich die Klimapolitik ausgesucht, also die Frage, ob es in 100 Jahren drei Grad wärmer sein wird – auch das ein Thema, das nach allen Umfragen die Menschen und die Wähler nicht wirklich beschäftigt, sondern sie sorgen sich um Migration, sie sorgen sich um die Sicherheit ihrer Jobs und um die Zukunft in ihrer Heimat.

Wir glauben also, dass diese Kommission zwar sicherlich dasjenige verfolgt, was die Mehrheit hier im Haus für wichtig hält, dass das aber bedauerlicherweise nicht das ist, was die Menschen in Europa und was die Nationen wollen. Wir werden Sie deshalb kritisch begleiten. Wir sagen auch, dass wir keine Hohepriester irgendeiner linksliberalen Religion wollen, sondern Diener des Gemeinwohls. Wir befürchten, dass die Kommission genau das nicht sein will.

Derk Jan Eppink (ECR). – Voorzitter, de Green Deal is het grote experiment van deze Commissie: in 2050 Europa klimaatneutraal. Daarbij heb ik mij de vraag gesteld: "Wat kost dat nu eigenlijk?" Die vraag heb ik tot nu toe, na twee uur debat, nog niet gehoord. Uiteraard bestudeer ik de documenten van de Commissie als waren zij Bijbelse documenten, en daarin lees ik een bedrag van jaarlijks 575 miljard euro. Zoveel kost het om dit doel te bereiken. In een periode van 20 jaar – want dat staat achter elkaar – leidt dat tot een bedrag van 11 500 miljard euro. Ter vergelijking: dat is drie keer het Duitse bnp. Mevrouw, u heeft zelf in de Duitse regering gezeten, u weet wat een begroting is. Mijn vraag is eigenlijk heel eenvoudig: wie betaalt dit?

Ik hoor helemaal niks. Ik hoor niks. Zal ik dan maar het geheim verklappen? Dat is de burger. De burger gaat dat betalen. De burger krijgt hogere rekeningen – energierekeningen, hogere belastingen – en moet daarvoor opdraaien. Ik zie zelfs in Nederland al dat er klimaatrevoltes zijn overal in het land, van boeren, bouwvallers. Waarom is dat? Omdat men dit niet meer kan betalen. Er staat u dus nog wat te wachten, mevrouw.

(De spreker stemt ermee in te antwoorden op een "blauwe kaart"-vraag (artikel 171, lid 8, van het Reglement))

Petros Kokkalis (GUE/NGL), blue-card question. – Mr Eppink, you refer to the cost of the Green New Deal by 2050. Recent research and scientific evidence shows that the cost of climate inaction by 2050 will be in the trillions. Do you have any idea what it will cost us not to go forward with the Green Deal?

(Applause)

Derk Jan Eppink (ECR), “*blauwe kaart*”-antwoord. – Het beste zou zijn om deze Green Deal te veranderen. Als ik dan mag voortgaan: ik vind dat wij moeten vasthouden aan nucleaire energie. Dat is een van de belangrijke bronnen van klimaatvriendelijke energie. Ik weet dat een groot deel van dit Parlement het daar niet mee eens is, maar dat is heel belangrijk. Ten tweede is er het vasthouden aan gas. Nederland is gas aan het afschaffen. Dat is erg slecht. Dat kost ontzettend veel geld en gas is een klimaatvriendelijke grondstof. Bovendien moeten we stoppen met biomassa, want biomassa is niet groen, zoals de groenen zeggen. Het is zeer vervuilend, erger dan kolencentrales. Dat is de oplossing.

Κωνσταντίνος Αρβανίτης (GUE/NGL). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, είχατε πραγματικά μια εξαιρετική σκηνική παρουσία. Υποσχεθήκατε τα πάντα στους πάντες – μάλλον όχι στους πάντες αλλά σε συγκεκριμένα συμφέροντα και σε συγκεκριμένες πολιτικές απόψεις. Μας είπατε για στρατιωτικοποίηση της Ευρώπης. Για το περιβάλλον έχουμε εντελώς διαφορετική άποψη από εσάς. Δεν μιλήσατε καθόλου για τα εργατικά δικαιώματα, για τη διαφθορά και τη διαπλοκή. Δεν μας πείσατε για το προσφυγικό. Επιμένετε στον απαράδεκτο για εμάς τίτλο «προστασία» ή «προώθηση του ευρωπαϊκού τρόπου ζωής». Δεν ακούσατε καθόλου καμία πολιτική ομάδα εκτός από το κόμμα σας· δηλαδή, όπως είπε ο κύριος Weber, το Λαϊκό Κόμμα έχει πρόεδρο στην Επιτροπή.

Δεν είναι έτσι. Χρειάζεται σύνθεση, και με τη σύνθεση δεν τα πάτε και πολύ καλά, από ό,τι φαίνεται ήδη, οπότε θα πάμε στο άλλο επίπεδο της Δημοκρατίας που είναι η πολιτική σύγκρουση. Καλό κουράγιο.

Márton Gyöngyösi (NI). – Madam President, dear Ms von der Leyen, after a difficult, protracted task of setting up the Commission and the negative message of ditching the *Spitzenkandidat* system for electing the President of the Commission, we should be happy and congratulate you for putting together a team of Commissioners – a college – and lining them up behind a very ambitious programme indeed.

But to be successful at the end of your term, I think there must be two conditions that must be fulfilled. First of all, I think you have to regain the confidence of the European citizens by strengthening the European institutions, including the European Parliament. And I think it would be a good start to investigate some of the suggestions that Mr Weber has put forward in his op-ed in Politico yesterday.

The second is policy and actions. The social pillar must be strengthened. Not only the minimum wage but wage differences have to be eliminated across Europe; climate change and the rule of law have to be acted upon. And I think you have to provide answers to these questions to counter the often legitimate arguments and criticisms of Eurosceptics and populists.

Siegfried Mureşan (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to welcome President-elect von der Leyen back to the European Parliament and wish her all the best for the vote today.

We are all united by the task to deliver the best policy for the people of Europe. We may disagree on the details, but this is the task which all of us in this House have, together with the Commission. One of the key tools at our disposal to deliver is the budget of the European Union for the next seven years. President-elect von der Leyen, let me tell you what Parliament expects in this area.

We have all seen the people of Europe come out and vote: students, farmers, SMEs, people expecting more on security, expecting us to deliver more on tackling climate change. And we have to be honest with the people of Europe. We cannot do more with much less. If we agree that Europe should do more, this needs to be reflected in the budget of the European Union, and the position of Parliament is clear: fresh priorities require fresh funding. Please join us, President-elect von der Leyen, in convincing the Council and the Member States to put their money where their statements are. This is my first point.

My second point: which areas should we invest in? We should strike a balance between old priorities and new priorities. Just because cohesion and agriculture have been our priorities for decades doesn't mean that they are outdated. We need to continue to invest there, but of course we need to invest in digital, climate and so on.

My last word is on timing. The budget is important, but it has become urgent as well. Let us work together to achieve, in the European Council in December, a common understanding on what we expect from Europe and what we expect from the budget. Let's not start with small discussions on figures, because those would be divisive. Firstly, a political agreement on what we expect and then to put the money where our statements and our expectations are.

Thank you very much. We are ready to work with you on this.

(Applause)

Miriam Dalli (S&D). – Madam President, I'm glad that this morning we are speaking with a European Commission that has committed to make the European Green Deal its priority. But the European Green Deal should not remain a headline. It should become a reality that makes a positive difference in our citizens' lives wherever they live, no matter how big or small their Member State is.

Embarking on a serious decarbonisation programme that keeps at its core the transformation of our industries will only strengthen our competitiveness, and the European Green Deal should go beyond targets and revolutionise the way we do business and our industries. It should revolutionise the way we act, how we help our current workers acquire new skills, and how to educate our kids for the industries of the future. We have industries and businesses that are realising that transformation needs to happen and they are looking to our institutions for clear commitment.

For the Socialists and Democrats, the Green New Deal is an opportunity to ensure a new economic model that puts employees and the most vulnerable people at the centre of our policies. It is an opportunity to enhance our relationships with neighbouring continents such as Africa, for example, to foster partnerships and provide cleaner and renewable energy. And it is our opportunity to protect the social well-being of all our citizens.

We are ready to work with the European Commission, and we look forward to being partners in this transformation to concretely show to our citizens, wherever they are, that the EU project is very much alive and working.

Malik Azmani (Renew). – Madam President, the EU faces huge challenges in the coming years. Some of them are threats but others are opportunities. We cannot stand still or choose not to act on these challenges. We need to renew Europe.

The record high turnout during the European elections, already six months ago, shows us that our citizens have placed their confidence in us – in all of us. In return, they expect us to deliver concrete results. That is why the European Commission needs to start work as soon as possible so that we can start delivering on our promise for a strong European Union that works for our people.

The task ahead is not a small one. We need to tackle climate change, ensure a stable economy, be innovative, the digital agenda, but also protect the rule of law, gain control on migration and provide safety and security in an unstable world, where we cannot always rely on our old allies. Therefore, I urge the new European Commission to start and to work together to renew Europe to deliver the results that we need for a prosperous new European future.

Madam President-elect, together with your team – and I am proud to see your work on the composition of that team – I hope we can start together to work on a renewed Europe.

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, I say to the President-elect: thank you very much for your priorities. They sound like the right ones and we are willing to work with you on those priorities. But it is also clear that we have our concerns, and they have been elaborated before by Ska Keller. It is on the rule of law, the social dimension of our internal market and on the humane treatment of refugees in and outside the EU.

They are our concerns, so that's why we will not give you a blank cheque, but as Greens we will work with you on the Green Deal, on digitalisation, on making sure that in those communications – and on the Green Deal we can expect one in two weeks – we can deliver further, further on probably the great words that we will hear in two weeks. But it comes down to legislation to really change our way of life within the planetary boundaries.

That's where we are going to make sure that is the direction Europe is going in. And we are going to work on the actual laws that come later, and there we expect real action. One thing, for example: the climate law, next year will be the only and last chance where we can make our ambition higher before Paris really starts. Let's use that momentum next year and we will work with you on that.

Gerolf Annemans (ID). – Voorzitter, collega's, zowel met Juncker als met mevrouw Von der Leyen heeft de meerderheid hier in het Europees Parlement een burgerlijk aandoende figuur, het imago van degelijkheid en lichtjes aan de saaiheid grenzende grijsheid aan het hoofd van de Europese Commissie geplaatst. Maar schijn bedriegt. De saaiheid moet verbergen dat mevrouw Von der Leyen aan het hoofd staat van een zeer links, globalistisch, mondialistisch, gecentraliseerd en centraliserend project in het teken van en ten bate van de multilateralistische staatsgodsdienst. Mevrouw Von der Leyen wordt hier in het zadel getild om de teugels aan te snoeren en de zweep van het verdergaande federalisme te doen knallen in de Europese Unie.

Mevrouw Von der Leyen, uw project is strijdig met de vrijheid van de verschillende Europese volkeren en wij zullen dus vanuit de toekomstige lidstaat Vlaanderen hoffelijk, maar uit volle overtuiging, uw overigens wankele en gammele coalitie bestrijden.

Assita Kanko (ECR). – Madam President, this is a make or break Commission. The UK is leaving, or trying to. Enlargement strategy has stalled, our European way of life is under pressure and Turkish troops continue to bite at the heels of our border management policy.

Let's face facts: confidence and trust in the EU is fading, reforms are needed. We all need this Commission to deliver. You will, therefore, need to work hard to unite this fractured Union and win majorities around your agenda, especially on important issues like protecting the European way of life, ensuring effective solutions on internal security, migration management and economy. And we must lead by example on human rights. We need to increase jobs, growth and trade and to protect our environment while ensuring Europe can remain competitive. It is no small undertaking, but I hope it can be achieved.

It's a great moment to have a female President of the Commission. Suffragette Alice Paul said: 'there will never be a new world order until women are a part of it'. My hope is that you, Madam President, and your team will show us every day that you are the woman for the job and for the change and I look forward to working with you.

José Gusmão (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Von der Leyen, esta Comissão não responde a nenhum dos problemas da União Europeia. Tudo o que está pior não muda e tudo o que muda, muda para pior. A única linguagem da Comissão para a política económica continua a ser a da austeridade e a escolha para a vice-presidência da economia é a confirmação dessa continuidade.

Todas as políticas que nos permitiriam responder à necessidade de superar o paradigma de austeridade estão subalternizadas. A política de coesão tem um corte previsto brutal que a nova Comissão já disse apoiar. O «Green New Deal» tem pasta, tem vice-presidente e tem um comissário que anda em declarações públicas a pedir recursos para as suas políticas, políticas essas que ainda não teve o cuidado de nos apresentar. Já o orçamento da zona euro é uma montanha que pariu um rato, um pequeno envelope financeiro que servirá para implementar as reformas estruturais de austeridade que a Comissão Europeia ainda não tenha conseguido impor aos Estados-Membros.

Esta Comissão será aprovada porque a maioria dos deputados desta Casa prefere um bloqueio político de cinco anos a um bloqueio institucional de alguns meses. Nenhum entusiasmo, nenhuma esperança, nenhum projeto de mudança consegue mobilizar esta Casa para a sua Comissão.

Lucy Elizabeth Harris (NI). – Madam President, I would like to thank the President of the Commission for saying that she is a Remainer. Clarification is always very welcome, and can I just say that it is a devastating revelation and loss to the Brexit cause. *(Laughs)*

The EU has warned that it's going to take legal action against my country because we refused to name a Commissioner. But what's the point? We're leaving anyway, and two that we've already had – Kinnock and Mandelson – have used it as an opportunity to feather their nests to the tune of GBP 10 million. They are extreme EU federalists with no intention to stand up for their people, but merely to comply and feather their nests.

So we're not bothering: a decision by my country which confirms that we are indeed leaving the European Union. And remember: if we're causing you too much trouble, you can always kick us out prematurely.

(Applause from certain quarters)

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 171(8))

President. – Ms Harris, there are just two points. This may come as some surprise to you. I'm a remainer too. The second point is: will you accept a blue card from Mr Smith?

Alyn Smith (Verts/ALE), blue-card question. – I am grateful to Ms Harris for giving way. I would point out that it is a legal obligation – because the EU is a community based on justice and the rule of law – for the UK to appoint a Commissioner. The UK is flagrantly in breach because of our nihilistic, irresponsible government. As fellow MEPs of course we have our own rights and privileges. But, presumably you're in favour of you yourself giving up your salary and allowances for the time that you're here if you're happy for us not to have a Commissioner?

Lucy Elizabeth Harris (NI), blue-card answer. – Under UK law we also can't do it during election period under purdah, so that's one reason. And another reason is that we also have to answer to the British public. We don't answer to the EU law, and we made that very clear in 2016 when we voted to leave the European Union, sir, but thank you very much.

Dolors Montserrat (PPE). – Señora presidenta, presidenta Von der Leyen, le pedimos que la Comisión continúe trabajando por una Europa más fuerte, unida y segura. Fuerte, para que crezca y cree empleo. Unida, para que desde el estado de Derecho hagamos frente a los nacionalismos y a los populismos que la amenazan. Y segura, para que defienda nuestras fronteras exteriores, luche contra el terrorismo y defienda las democracias en el mundo.

Pero también necesitamos una Europa más útil para todos los ciudadanos. Pedimos a la nueva Comisión que sea útil, para que los jóvenes tengan oportunidades, para que los emprendedores, las pequeñas y grandes empresas, continúen creando empleo, porque el empleo es la mejor política social para no dejar a nadie atrás.

Velemos por una inmigración legal. Y también debemos ser útiles para afrontar el reto demográfico de nuestro viejo continente, cuidando de nuestro mundo rural y defendiendo nuestra agricultura, la ganadería y la pesca.

Continuemos siendo ambiciosos en la lucha contra el cambio climático para cuidar de nuestro planeta y, sobre todo, lideremos la revolución tecnológica, innovadora y digital para una Europa más competitiva. Si somos útiles, Europa estará más cerca y conseguiremos la Europa de las personas, la Europa de la igualdad.

Necesitamos más Europa, con una gestión más cercana y con menos burocracia. Solo juntos continuaremos siendo el mejor espacio de paz, de libertad, de igualdad y de progreso del mundo. Estoy convencida de que la nueva Comisión y su presidenta estarán a la altura. Tienen todo el apoyo de la delegación española del Partido Popular.

Kati Piri (S&D). – Madam President, since the elections we have had a long and intense run to get to where we are today, and while I regret that we have failed to deliver on our promise on the *Spitzenkandidaten*, I'm proud that all key issues that my political family campaigned for are now part of this Commission's works programme. And the S&D - Group has not been shy with our concerns and demands and we have achieved key results.

In the field of foreign affairs, let me underline that the credibility of the EU as a global actor rests on our ability to have a successful policy at our very doorstep, but first it relies on our capacity to have our own house in order. We expect this Commission to take a very firm stance on protecting the rule of law both at home and abroad, and that implies a strong stance against the Putins, Erdoğans, Bolsonaros, Trumps and Viktor Orbáns of this world.

My Group also urges this Commission to do everything in its power so that early next year a green light is given to the start of accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania. Commissioners, it is time to start the really important work: to deliver results on an ambitious plan to tackle the climate crisis while ensuring a fair transition; to deliver on sustainable development goals; to give better protection to workers; and to have a value-driven foreign policy. I'm fully confident that, under the leadership of our first Vice-President and lead candidate, Frans Timmermans, with a strong team of Social Democratic Commissioners, this Commission will stand close to its citizens, is ready to listen and is determined to address their hopes and concerns.

Sophia in 't Veld (Renew). – Madam President, I would like to say to the President-elect that she has my vote, but it's a vote of pragmatism and not of passion – yet. There are several positives: there are many excellent – and even exceptional – personalities, the highest number of women and even a woman President, a Green Deal, and a focus on geopolitics. That's all good. But I also have doubts, I'll be honest.

Madam President-elect, your stubborn refusal to withdraw the controversial title of the migration portfolio shows that you are keener to placate Warsaw and Budapest than to work with progressive forces in Parliament – and no, the cosmetic change does not convince me. An independent Commission is crucial for a well-functioning EU, and so far you've been the candidate mainly of the national governments. But the 200 million Europeans who voted in May this year did not vote for the old intergovernmental Europe of backroom deals, but for a modern and transparent parliamentary democracy. You need to show if you belong to the old or the new Europe.

You have my vote. Now you must earn my enthusiasm. Good luck.

(Applause)

Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE). – Señora presidenta. Señora Von der Leyen, a pesar de contar con algunos excelentes representantes, este Grupo no va a votar hoy el Colegio que hoy nos presenta. Hay algunos peajes que lo hacen inviable. El más visible y obvio, haber dejado la política de vecindad en manos de Viktor Orbán, algo que podemos pagar muy caro. Pero nos preocupan también las carteras de Demografía o la cartera de Modo de Vida Europeo, títulos que indican una orientación para estas carteras que nos preocupan profundamente como feministas y defensores de los derechos humanos.

Le aseguro que estaremos particularmente atentos a los pasos que se den en cada una de estas carteras. Sin embargo, señora Von der Leyen, nosotros no hemos venido aquí a ser meros espectadores. No hay nada más inútil que estar en las instituciones de forma testimonial. Hemos venido aquí a cambiar las cosas y a dar un giro y un nuevo impulso al proyecto europeo.

Por ello, en la medida en que podamos trabajar en áreas como la feminización de la política exterior, en responder de forma seria a la amenaza climática, en responder a las urgencias sociales de muchos de nuestros conciudadanos encontrará en este grupo parlamentario un grupo de diputados y diputadas dispuestos a trabajar.

Pero ahora le toca a usted demostrar que existe voluntad política para construir esas mayorías de avance en Europa en clave social, ambiental y feminista que tanto necesitamos.

Harald Vilimsky (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren, viele von Ihnen bejubeln diese neue Kommission. Ich erlaube mir, hier eine gegenläufige Meinung zu artikulieren. Aus meiner Sicht hat sie einen glatten Fehlstart hingelegt.

Warum? Zwei Dinge: Erstens: Wir haben eine Festlegung im Lissabon-Vertrag, dass diese Kommission, bestehend aus 26 oder 27 Kommissaren, zumindest um ein Drittel verkleinert werden soll, um effizienter, schlanker und auch arbeitsamer die ganzen Geschichten angehen zu können. Das ist verabsäumt worden. Diese große Zahl von Kommissaren bringt das Problem mit sich, dass immer neue Regulative erdacht und erarbeitet werden, weil viele Personen, die in den Heimatländern vielleicht auch gar nicht bekannt sind, hier die Herangehensweise haben, ihre eigene Funktion begründen zu wollen.

Zweitens: Es ist kein Bezug darauf genommen worden, dass hier eine Kluft in Europa ist zwischen denen – der Nomenklatura –, die mehr Zentralisierung wollen und denen, die mehr Lockerheit wollen, die auch mehr nationalstaatliche Souveränität wollen. Da ist auch keine Antwort gegeben worden.

Es wäre aber auch möglich, das zu machen, wenn man endlich auf diese Flut von Regulativen verzichtet und sich darauf konzentriert, was Europa wirklich braucht: mehr Sicherheit an den Grenzen und mehr Wohlstand. Der Kontinent sollte nicht mit mehr und mehr Regulativen malträtiert werden.

Hermann Tertsch (ECR). – Señora presidenta, antes que nada quería recordar, honrar aquí a los trece soldados franceses muertos en la lucha de la civilización contra el terrorismo islamista.

Después, señora Von der Leyen, quería decirle que nosotros vamos a votar en contra de su Comisión, porque creemos que se ha metido en una aventura ideológica que realmente no viene a representar los intereses de los europeos y de las diferentes naciones europeas en sí; de los sectores que están en este momento muy asustados porque ustedes se han metido —como digo— en una aventura que tiene a todos muy preocupados: lo que llaman en este momento el *Green Deal*.

Es una auténtica fantasía, basada sobre quimeras, basada sobre supuestos postulados científicos, que nadie demuestra — como hemos visto ahora mismo—, que está exigiendo no solo unas inmensas cantidades de dinero, que se van a movilizar aquí, para controlar más a las naciones, para controlar más a los individuos y para controlar más a las empresas, en contra de la libertad, sino también unos enormes sacrificios a las diferentes naciones y a los diferentes sectores, que después no van a tener compensación ninguna.

Κωνσταντίνος Παπαδάκης (ΝΙ). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η νέα Επιτροπή διακρίνεται από τα ίδια αντιδραστικά υλικά που είναι φτιαγμένη και η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, δηλαδή αφοσίωση στην αντιλαϊκή πολιτική για ευέλικτη εργατική δύναμη, ακόμα πιο φτηνή στα ελάχιστα, κατεδάφιση της κοινωνικής ασφάλισης, ψίχουλα στην ακραία φτώχεια, χτύπημα της συνδικαλιστικής δράσης, μαζικό φακέλωμα, γενικευμένες απελάσεις προσφύγων και μεταναστών. Σε περίοδο αναιμικής ανάκαμψης και με σημάδια στον ορίζοντα μιας νέας πιθανής συγχρονισμένης κρίσης προωθούνται τα πράσινα ταμεία και αδρές επιδοτήσεις για τα ψηφιακά, μεγάλα πεδία κερδοφορίας των ομίλων. Κι αυτά εν μέσω εμπορικών πολέμων, αντιθέσεων και στο εσωτερικό της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για τη στάση απέναντι σε ΗΠΑ, Κίνα και Ρωσία, την έκβαση του Brexit, την ένταση τη στρατιωτικοποίησης.

Συμβολικό και ουσιαστικό χαρακτήρα έχει το γεγονός ότι επικεφαλής της Επιτροπής επιλέχθηκε η πρώην υπουργός Πολέμου της Γερμανίας. Ανοίξατε και κλείσατε την ομιλία σας, κυρία von der Leyen, με αντικομμουνισμό, δείχνοντας τον αντίπαλό σας, φανερώνοντας αδυναμία και φόβο για την ιστορική αλήθεια και την πάλη των λαών, που θα δυναμώσει ενάντια στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, το κεφάλαιο και τις κυβερνήσεις, και για τις σύγχρονες ανάγκες τους.

Antonio Tajani (PPE). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora von der Leyen, voteremo la fiducia alla sua Commissione perché condividiamo gli impegni che ha preso qua sulla centralità della persona, sull'immigrazione, sulla flessibilità, sul ruolo dell'industria, sulla sicurezza interna, sull'identità digitale, sulla lotta al cancro, sull'innovazione e la ricerca, sui rapporti con gli Stati Uniti. Insomma, condividiamo una visione politica e non burocratica dell'Unione.

Però vigileremo affinché gli impegni si trasformino in scelte concrete, anche nel prossimo bilancio dell'Unione. Certo che siamo impegnati nella lotta contro il cambiamento climatico, ma dobbiamo anche fare attenzione che non venga penalizzata l'industria, che non venga penalizzata la nostra agricoltura. L'industria è fondamentale, come è fondamentale l'impresa, per creare nuovi posti di lavoro. Ecco perché serve una politica della concorrenza adeguata ai tempi, che permetta alle nostre imprese di competere non soltanto a livello nazionale ma anche a livello globale.

Serve un'azione di tutela di fronte alla concorrenza sleale. Attenzione alla Via della Seta, alla strategia egemonica cinese, che rischia di mettere in difficoltà, con azioni di *dumping* anche ambientale, anche sociale e non solo commerciale, tutto il nostro sistema produttivo.

Attenzione anche alla tutela dell'agricoltura, dicevo. Non possiamo permettere tagli alla politica agricola comune. L'agricoltura rimane uno strumento fondamentale per la tutela dell'ambiente e per la difesa dell'occupazione nella nostra Unione europea. È quindi un ruolo non sostenibile.

Anche per quanto riguarda l'immigrazione, attenzione all'Africa perché dobbiamo investire di più, io credo, in un grande piano Marshall per permettere a quel continente di crescere e quindi ridurre i fenomeni migratori verso l'Europa.

Un'ultima parola per quanto riguarda la tutela dello Stato di diritto. Non possiamo dimenticare l'omicidio di Daphne Caruana Galizia, bisogna continuare a parlare finché non si scoprono che siano i reali mandanti, e siamo vicini, fortunatamente, alla verità.

Heléne Fritzon (S&D). – Fru talman! I dag är en viktig dag i parlamentet. Vi ska godkänna en kommission för de kommande fem åren, och det är ett högt satt mål att Europa ska bli den första klimatneutrala världsdelen. Green Deal är så oerhört viktigt för att vi tillsammans ska ta vårt ansvar och lämna över ett hållbart Europa och en hållbar värld – också en fredligare värld – till våra barn och barnbarn.

Klimatomställningen handlar nämligen om att ingen ska lämnas efter. Det krävs en rättvis fördelning. Det krävs också att arbetet för att skapa fler jobb med goda villkor i EU tar fart; inte minst för Europas kvinnor, där en tredjedel saknar ett eget arbete. Det krävs att medborgarnas sociala rättigheter stärks i medlemsstaterna, och arbetet ska fortsätta med den sociala pelare som alla medlemsstater står bakom.

Det krävs också att vi snarast finner en solidarisk och ansvarsfull migrationspolitik tillsammans, och där vet jag att Ylva Johansson är kvinnan som klarar det. Jag välkomnar också kommissionens initiativ att presentera både en jämlikhetsunion och en jämställdhetsstrategi. Jag ser fram emot arbetet där vi tillsammans ska stå upp för våra demokratiska grundläggande värderingar, ha fokus på att förbättra för människor och leverera i viktiga frågor.

Hilde Vautmans (Renew). – Voorzitter, mevrouw de Commissievoorzitter, ik ga straks met overtuiging wél ja stemmen. We hebben nog nooit een Commissie gehad die zo ambitieus is op het vlak van klimaat. Die zo vrouwvriendelijk is en geleid wordt door een vrouw. Die zo ambitieus is wat betreft asiel en migratie en defensie. Die inzet op innovatie, digitalisering en onze economie. Met meneer Borrell, die gaat vechten voor de plaats van Europa in de wereld. En met u. Ik reken erop dat u de conferentie over de toekomst van Europa steunt. Dat het een conferentie is zonder limieten, die over heel veel dingen kan nadenken, over hoe de toekomst van Europa er moet uitzien. Ik denk, mevrouw Von der Leyen, dat dat een heel belangrijk signaal aan onze burger is: dat we een conferentie hebben over hoe Europa in de toekomst voor onze burgers gaat werken.

Mevrouw Von der Leyen, het zal u niet verbazen dat ik u aanspreek als amazone. Ik verwacht van u dat u nu de teugels in handen neemt. Dat u Europa, het paard van Europa, in de juiste richting duwt. Dat u benen geeft, strakke teugels, en vooruitgaat. Gaan voor dat eigen beleid. Dat is wat ik de komende jaren van u en al uw commissarissen verwacht. En weet u, als u dat niet doet, gaan wij vanuit het Parlement de zweep erop leggen. Maar u gaat het doen met de benen en de strakke teugel.

Ivan David (ID). – Paní předsedající, při pohledu na Evropskou komisi mám značné pochybnosti, bude-li působit v souladu se zájmy občanů Evropské unie. Jestli opravdu mají zájem o ztrátu identity a plnění příkazů ze vzdáleného centra.

Při dojemné péči o životní prostředí najednou nevdí vypalování brazilských pralesů a dovoz hovězího masa přes půl zeměkoule v rámci smlouvy s Mercosurem.

Největší problém vidím v budoucí náplni práce komisařky Věry Jourové. Údajně má jít o evropské hodnoty, jako jsou svoboda, demokracie, rovnost, nepřipustnost diskriminace, tolerance, spravedlnost. Jak se to slučuje s několikanásobnými rozdíly mezi zeměmi v zemědělských dotacích nebo vyhlášením *cordon sanitaire* proti poslancům zvoleným jinak smýšlejícími občany? Pod nejrůznějšími ušlechtilými záminkami je zaváděna cenzura a trestány odchylné názory. Vidím pomalou realizaci děsivých vizí ze známého románu Georga Orwella 1984.

Matthew Patten (NI). – Madam President, dear Ms von der Leyen, there are many things I disagree with you about on the creeping federalisation of the European Union towards a super state, and I'm really disappointed that, after 40 years' membership of the European Union, we've failed to persuade you that Europe's success depends on protecting the sovereignty of our Member States. But we are shortly to leave, and I wanted to let you know that, despite our differences, Europe has no greater friend than the UK. We recognise your priorities of climate change, economic competitiveness, migration, security and the rule of law, and you'll find no greater ally than the UK to achieve our mutual goals in those areas.

The coming months will present many challenges as we seek to redefine our relationship. I hope that the EU will remember that a strong and free-trading UK has always been in the best interests of Europeans, as it is of British citizens. And speaking personally, in the short time I've been an MEP, I've really enjoyed the company, the passion, and the arguments with my fellow MEP colleagues. I look forward to working with you – and them – as we look for a better future for all our citizens.

(Applause)

Paulo Rangel (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Presidente indigitada da Comissão, em primeiro lugar deixe-me cumprimentá-la pelo discurso que fez, pelo programa que fez, pela equipa que constituiu, e deixe-me também cumprimentá-la pela capacidade de inspiração que tem dado a tantos e tantos europeus, e em particular a nós que estamos aqui nesta Casa. E por isso eu posso dizer, ao contrário da minha colega neerlandesa, que conta com o meu voto, mas conta, desde já, com o meu entusiasmo.

Queria chamar a atenção para o seguinte: não podemos aceitar um orçamento que seja um orçamento menor que o anterior, e, em particular, temos que olhar para as políticas de coesão, porque há hoje uma ameaça à coesão, e sem coesão não haverá unidade europeia.

Eu chamo, por exemplo, a atenção para o risco que existe agora de, para se fazer algo que é fundamental – que é o fundo de transição justa –, desviarmos 5 mil milhões de euros da coesão para este fundo. Ora novas prioridades implicam novos financiamentos. A política de coesão não deve ser afetada.

Finalmente, deixe-me dar uma palavra sobre a Conferência do Futuro da Europa. Peço que se comprometa a sério com este desígnio, que sejamos capazes de envolver os cidadãos e que a Comissão não faça, como alguns colegas já fizeram hoje aqui, esta manobra de ter as conclusões tiradas antes mesmo de ouvir os cidadãos e de os envolver nessa mesma Conferência. Eu considero que será um passo fundamental para esta Comissão, mas também para todas as instituições, que nós tenhamos uma Conferência do Futuro da Europa com grande sucesso.

Claude Moraes (S&D). – Madam President, the British general election does not preclude sending a Commissioner to the Commission. It is a legal obligation and it is a matter of regret because sincere cooperation means that. That is why we are here and that is the spirit in which we should have continued. So you're not legally complete and that is a fact.

This Commission was part of a process in its building. That is why I'm proud of the progressive Commissioners and what they can achieve, but it was part of a process. Building a Green New Deal, a just transition to a low carbon economy, workers' rights, equality, the horizontal discrimination directive: many of these have been characterised by delay, but delay because they were challenges, challenges that had to be overcome. So the process in building you was part of our groups' wish to create a more progressive Commission.

And so we vote, but I want to mention two things which I've spent my last 20 years on, and which the President-designate of the Commission mentioned. One was the 39 people in the lorry, the thousands of people who have lost their lives in the Mediterranean. There will be a pact on migration within days of this Commission taking office. This is a challenge because we have not got it right, and this is an extraordinary challenge for this new Commission because it is feeling the bad politics of the European Union. So I wish you all the very best with this, but it must be in line with our fundamental EU values of human rights and dignity.

For the challenges of the future, the President-designate mentioned AI and having responsible data in the future. We don't want China and the United States still doesn't have GDPR, so it is up to the European Union. But dealing responsibly with data innovation, that is for the European Union. These are extraordinary challenges and I'm proud to have been part of this European Union which can deal with that.

Charles Goerens (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, il n'y a pas de doute, les membres de la future Commission sont des acteurs de qualité. Je pense au commissaire de ma famille politique, mon compatriote Nicolas Schmit dont la compétence n'est contestée par personne, et à bien d'autres.

Je ne peux cependant pas m'empêcher de penser aussi à Sylvie Goulard, qui n'a nullement démérité mais qui, de mon point de vue, a été malmenée par certains lors de son audition parlementaire. Bien entendu, une audition parlementaire n'est pas un moment de loisir. Bien sûr, en ces circonstances, des questions critiques sont non seulement souhaitables mais absolument indispensables. Cela étant, rien ne justifie l'attitude franchement tendancieuse, hostile, voire haineuse de certains parmi les acteurs du Parlement européen à son endroit, qui a culminé avec l'annonce «*We will kill her*», attitude d'ailleurs peu compatible avec un comportement parlementaire correct.

Quand une décision de cette nature est prise sans respect ni objectivité, on arrive à barrer la route à un talent exceptionnel. Je ne peux pas accepter la forme dans laquelle cette décision a été prise par certains de mes collègues.

Jaak Madison (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Es ist leider unmöglich, diese Kommission zu unterstützen. Warum? Der zur Wahl stehenden Kommission fehlt jede demokratische Legitimation. Die gewählte Präsidentin, Frau von der Leyen, stand nicht einmal auf dem Stimmzettel für die EU-Wahl. Über ihre Bestellung könnte man auch diskutieren, wenn sie die Spitzenkandidatin für diese Position gewesen wäre. Aber das war sie nicht. Es wäre auch verständlich gewesen, wenn sie am besten qualifiziert wäre. Sie ist es nicht. So war das deutsche Verteidigungsministerium unter ihrer Leitung durch beispiellos schlechte Leistungen und fragwürdige externe Aufträge gekennzeichnet.

Was wird mit Europa unter ihrer Leitung geschehen? Mit dieser neuen Kommissionspräsidentin sieht die Zukunft Europas ziemlich düster aus. Leider hat diese Kommission keine realistische Sicht auf die Zukunft. Den Fokus hat sie jetzt auf die Klimahysterie und die Erschaffung der Vereinigten Staaten von Europa verlagert. Aber die EU ist kein Bundesstaat mit Mitgliedstaaten als Gemeinden, sie ist eine freiwillige Vereinigung souveräner Staaten.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, na rozdíl od svého předřečníka se domnívám, že tato Komise by měla získat důvěru. Já děkuji paní předsedkyni za to, že vzpomněla ve svém úvodním projevu sametovou revoluci a Václava Havla.

Nová Komise se po dnešním schválení konečně bude moci ujmout své role a my můžeme začít pracovat na úkolech, které nás čekají. Já teď budu hovořit jako koordinátorka své frakce za Výbor pro kulturu a vzdělávání. Velmi oceňuji to, že paní předsedkyně Komise vyšla vstříc našemu požadavku a také požadavku odborné veřejnosti a doplnila název portfolia paní komisařky Gabrielové o slova „kultura, vzdělávání a výzkum“.

Věřím, že Komise také podpoří sport jako důležitý nástroj pro zlepšení zdraví a sociální inkluzi. Protože toto slovo není v tom portfoliu, tak bych prosila kolegy, aby podpořili vznik meziskupiny pro sport, aby tato meziskupina mohla pracovat a podporovat sport v rámci Evropského parlamentu.

V této souvislosti bych ráda vyzvala Komisi, aby podpořila ztrojnásobení rozpočtu na program Erasmus. Je to program, který má vysokou přidanou hodnotu, který pomáhá učitelům a žákům zlepšovat jejich dovednosti, jejich zkušenosti a má velkou přidanou hodnotu v jejich evropských zkušenostech. Je to program, který umožňuje inkluzi, ale bude lepší jedině tehdy, pokud se zvýší rozpočet, proto je to důležité.

Očekávám, že také rozjedeme program *Solidarity Corps*, který je velmi důležitý pro mladou generaci.

Andrius Kubilius (PPE). – Madam President, first of all I would like to congratulate President von der Leyen on what she has done up till now and on what she is going to do. Ms von der Leyen, as a Lithuanian and as a human being with some political experience, I simply trust you. I will not try to give you any more political advice – you have had a lot of that. You know very well what you will need to accomplish. This will be a huge task. Perhaps, during the next five years, there will be more challenging days compared with this day. I would simply like to wish you not to lose your personal motivation, your energy and your leadership skills, even in the most difficult circumstances. From my own experience of being Prime Minister during the crisis, I know how difficult it can be, and I simply share the hope that this House will be a constructive partner to you personally, and to your Commission, despite our political differences.

Let's get back to the serious job. Let's leave simple and primitive political infights behind. Good luck!

(Applause)

Catch-the-eye procedure

Μαρία Σπυράκη (PPE). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κυρία von der Leyen, πρόεδρε της νέας Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, η ψήφος μας που σας δίνουμε σήμερα είναι ψήφος εμπιστοσύνης. Είναι ψήφος εμπιστοσύνης στην πράσινη συμφωνία που μπορεί να αποτελέσει την αιτία για την αλλαγή της οικονομίας και της ζωής μας στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Αρκεί να συμφωνήσουμε εδώ ότι χρειάζεται γενναία χρηματοδότηση, συμμετοχή του ιδιωτικού τομέα και ενθάρρυνση με όλα τα διαθέσιμα μέσα που έχουμε για την καινοτομία.

Μαζί με την Ευρώπη που θα πάει μπροστά, που θα είναι η πρώτη ήπειρος με μηδενικό ανθρακικό αποτύπωμα το 2050, υπάρχει όμως και η Ευρώπη που εξαρτάται από τον άνθρακα και δεν πρέπει να μείνει πίσω. Οι χιλιάδες οικογένειες στις σαράντα μία περιφέρειες που εξαρτώνται από τον άνθρακα στη Δυτική Μακεδονία, στη Μεγαλόπολη, περιμένουν από σας σήμερα να υποστηριχθούν, να έχουν τη διαβεβαίωση ότι θα έχουν πολλές και βιώσιμες δουλειές, στις οποίες μπορούν να ανταποκριθούν. Η δίκαιη μετάβαση, που θα βασιστεί στο ταμείο δίκαιης μετάβασης, οφείλει να είναι στην κορυφή της ατζέντας σας.

Milan Brglez (S&D). – Gospa predsednica! Podprl bom celotno ekipo Komisije, čeprav se ne strinjam s celotno sestavo.

Vsak mesec nedelovanja Komisije je izgubljen mesec tako za Evropsko unijo kot za Slovenijo. Želim si, da bi Komisija delala predvsem v skupno dobro in da bi se držala vseh obljub, ki jih je dala v Evropskem parlamentu.

Še zlasti pa se mi zdijo pomembni naslednji izzivi: najprej transformacija, in to zelena, socialna in digitalna, ki je združena skupaj s pravičnim in solidarnim prehodom vanjo.

Pomembno je delo na večji integraciji, ki bo v prid vseh ljudi in človekovih pravic, evropska strategija za trajnostni razvoj, skupni tehnološki napredek ter lastno infrastrukturo.

In končno do same širitve na Zahodni Balkan in tudi igranja geopolitičnega branika multilateralizma in vladavine mednarodnega prava.

Martin Horwood (Renew). – Madam President, President von der Leyen, thank you for your declaration that you are a remainer. I am too, and so are tens of millions of Britons who will warmly welcome your words. Now we've completed a thorough process of democratic scrutiny, I welcome the opportunity to vote for the Commission today and see it get down to work on the huge issues that face our continent: climate change, trade wars, exploitation, injustice and discrimination. But can I say that I, too, am embarrassed and saddened that the United Kingdom has broken EU rules, and so far failed to nominate a Commissioner?

While 27 other countries compete for portfolios and put their brightest and best forward to serve all of Europe, our government has chosen to leave its seat at the table empty. This must be one of the first examples in world history of a nation working hard for less influence, shouting for a smaller voice, lobbying to be silent. I very much hope that a new British Government will show much more sense.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, novosti koje donosi novi sastav Europske komisije nisu ograničene na nova lica i veći broj žena, već svjedočimo potpunom organizacijskom preustroju. Novi nazivi i nadležnosti pojedinih resora prilično su zbudjujući i sigurna sam da neće dovesti do povećanja učinkovitosti.

Nekadašnji tehnokratski ustroj Komisije, koji je imao svojih mana, ali je služio svrsi, zamijenjen je prilično ideologiziranim novom strukturom. Iako u svojim redovima ima povjerenike iz različitih grupacija, ovakva Komisija sve manje izgleda kao izvršiteljica onoga što je dogovoreno među državama članicama, a sve više kao struktura s vlastitom političkom agendom.

Gospođo von der Leyen, moj glas dobivate iz čistog pragmatizma i najiskrenije se nadam da ćete me uskoro ugodno i pozitivno iznenaditi.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Von der Leyen, pela sua composição, pelo seu programa político, esta é uma Comissão escolhida e mandatada por quem manda na União Europeia para defender os seus interesses, uma Comissão com que as grandes potências podem contar para defender e aprofundar os seus instrumentos de domínio – do mercado único ao euro –, à custa do crescente sacrifício dos países enfrentando maiores dificuldades. Uma Comissão em que salta à vista a promiscuidade entre o poder político e o poder económico, o grande capital, grandes grupos económicos e financeiros que têm assento direto no Berlaymont. Uma Comissão que assume uma secundarização e subversão da política de coesão, associando-a às chamadas reformas estruturais, que não têm servido para outra coisa que não destruir serviços públicos e semear a precariedade no trabalho e na vida. Uma Comissão que assumiu uma visão e concessões próprias da extrema-direita, como se viu na distribuição que foi feita dos portefólios. Uma Comissão que demonstra que, afinal, está bem viva a grande coligação entre a direita e a social-democracia que os Verdes querem agora...

(A Presidente retira a palavra ao orador)

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Madam President, both personally and politically I am delighted to support President von der Leyen, and indeed the college, and I look forward to working with them over the next four years – especially my colleague from Ireland, Commissioner Hogan. Ms von der Leyen, I saw how you tried to build support for your candidacy – and especially how you bent over backwards to get the support of the Greens, who make up less than 10% of Parliament, promising them a new green deal. Given that they fail to support you, that they may not support the College of Commissioners today, and that they may not be happy with whatever you come forward with in the New Green Deal, saying that it is not ambitious enough, would you and Mr Timmermans consider changing the title to what it actually is, or will be: ‘an enhanced climate change strategy for Europe’. Because all sides of the House here are committed to combating climate change: no one Group has ownership of it, and I think calling it an ‘enhanced climate change strategy’ would be sensible.

Pedro Marques (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Presidente da Comissão Europeia, precisamos mesmo de começar a trabalhar. Terá o apoio deste grupo político porque fez suas as nossas propostas e porque tem alguns dos nossos melhores na sua equipa. Mas um bom programa ou discurso não será nada mais do que palavras bonitas se não for implementado sem desculpas e com os recursos suficientes.

É tempo de nos unirmos em torno do futuro da Europa. As emissões de CO₂ não esperam pelas nossas hesitações, como temos visto nos fogos e inundações por toda a Europa. A China e os Estados Unidos agradecem a nossa hesitação na liderança da digitalização. Os mais pobres da Europa e aqueles que morrem no Mediterrâneo não conseguem atravessar sozinhos o mar da indiferença. Por isso é tempo de agir.

Conto com este Parlamento para tomar a iniciativa, contamos convosco para estabelecer pontes com e dentro do Conselho. Temos que estar à altura dos desejos dos nossos cidadãos.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew). – Señora presidenta, el Partido Nacionalista Vasco apoya a la Comisión Europea más paritaria de la historia. Necesitamos que gestione en femenino, que demuestre a la ciudadanía que nuestra Unión se basa en valores, no en los intereses, con una política industrial fuerte que integre los sectores productivos en la transición de nuestro modelo productivo hacia la economía circular. Así hay que abordar la emergencia climática, junto con una movilidad integrada, inteligente y sostenible.

Apostar por la sostenibilidad es, además, subordinar la economía financiera a la productiva, lograr unos estándares de protección social para toda la Unión basados en el principio de vida digna, una renta de garantía de ingresos y una política de inmigración humana que cuente con ciudades y regiones, las que integran y acogen.

Esperamos además un impulso definitivo al instrumento para controlar la calidad del Estado de Derecho, la mejor respuesta frente a los ultras que quieren volver al pasado y amenazan la democracia. Más democracia, política con mayúsculas, diálogo, empatía, acuerdos, humanidad: así era Paco Gambús, compañero de coalición y de escaño, una gran persona. *Goian bego*. Descanse en paz.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης (GUE/NGL). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κυρία von der Leyen, θα καταψηφίσω τη νέα Επιτροπή και το πρόγραμμά της, γιατί πιστεύω ότι οι στόχοι που θέσατε είναι αδύνατο να πραγματοποιηθούν με έναν προϋπολογισμό ύψους μόνο 1% του ευρωπαϊκού ΑΕΠ. Γιατί διαφωνώ με τις μεγάλες περικοπές που κάνει η Επιτροπή στις πολιτικές για την κοινωνική και περιφερειακή συνοχή και στην Κοινή Αγροτική Πολιτική. Γιατί θεωρώ ντροπή η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να έχει παραλύσει και να μην μπορεί να δώσει μια ευρωπαϊκή απάντηση στηριγμένη στην ανθρωπιά και στο κράτος δικαίου στο προσφυγικό ζήτημα. Γιατί δεν θέλω η Επιτροπή να είναι όμηρος των κυρίων Orbán και Salvini. Και γιατί πιστεύω ότι χρειαζόμαστε πιο φιλόδοξους στόχους και για την αντιμετώπιση της κλιματικής αλλαγής και για την αντιμετώπιση της διαφθοράς και για την αντιμετώπιση της αδιαφάνειας.

Γι' αυτό, η ευρωομάδα της αριστεράς θα καταψηφίσει τη νέα Επιτροπή και θα ασκεί εποικοδομητική, αυστηρή αντιπολίτευση επί πέντε χρόνια.

Ljudmila Novak (PPE). – Spoštovana gospa predsednica, spoštovani komisarji. Iskrene čestitke za odlično predstavitev vašega programa. Tudi tega sem vesela, da je v ekipi polovica žensk, ker sem prepričana, da je delo bolj uspešno, če moški in ženske pri delu sodelujejo.

Izpostavili ste tudi prave prioritete: podnebne spremembe, digitalizacija, inovacije, zdravje, varnost. Vse to je pomembno. In tudi to, da morajo biti vaši cilji, ukrepi podprti s proračunom, kajti samo tako bomo te cilje tudi veliko lažje in učinkovito dosegli.

Najbolj pa me navdušuje to, da ste postavili v središče vaših politik človeka, človeka s svojimi potrebami.

In ljudje povsod po Evropi imamo enake potrebe: želimo varnost, mir, sodelovanje. To so tiste vrednote, zaradi katerih je Evropa ... *(Predsedujoča govornici odvzame besedo)*

Leszek Miller (S&D). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Komisja Europejska przedstawiła w ubiegłym roku projekty dwóch dyrektyw mających na celu ustanowienie podatku od przychodów za świadczenie niektórych usług cyfrowych. Także pani przewodnicząca von der Leyen wspominała o konieczności wprowadzenia sprawiedliwego podatku cyfrowego. Pragnę Panią serdecznie poprzeć w tej mierze oraz życzyć uporę i konsekwencji, bo to jest konieczne do zrobienia. Niestety, prace w Radzie Europejskiej pokazują, jak podatek cyfrowy jest trudny do wprowadzenia, ilu ma przeciwników i z jakim oporem się spotyka. Ale tym bardziej, Pani Przewodnicząca, życzę Pani uporę, konsekwencji i wyrażam nadzieję, że Pani się z tego zamiaru nie wycofa.

Franc Bogovič (PPE). – Spoštovana gospa predsednica, spoštovana gospa von der Leyen, spoštovana ekipa. Imate moje podporo. Čestitke za kompetentno, uravnoteženo ekipo.

Predstavili in naslovili ste prave probleme, s katerimi se soočamo, od klimatskih sprememb, migracij, digitalizacije, zdravja, demografskih problemov. In kar me posebej veseli, probleme želite reševati na takšen način, da ustvarimo nove priložnosti.

To je zagotovilo za to, da bo Evropa še naprej najlepša celina, celina, na kateri bo najkvalitetnejše življenje in kjer se bodo ljudje z veseljem počutili in ostali in tudi razvijali ta lep kontinent.

Veseli me, da podpirate širitev Evropske unije na Zahodni Balkan. Mislim, da je to nuja, da moramo vse storiti, da demokratiziramo te države, hkrati pa jim tudi pomagamo v razvojnem zaostanku.

Vsekakor je pa ključen poudarek tudi na demografskih problemih in s projektom pametne vasi bom tudi sam poskušal pomagati iskati rešitve. Za posebej *(nerazločne besede)* in ... *(Predsedujoča govorniku vzame besedo.)*

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Doamna Președintă investită, vreau să vă anunț de la bun început că v-am votat, v-am acordat un cec în alb, am ascultat cu atenție ce ați spus astăzi. Aveți de dat răspuns la multe întrebări și mi-ar fi plăcut să puneți accent pe o Europă unită. Avem încă trei state care nu sunt în Schengen, avem rezoluții ale Parlamentului. Țara mea de 12 ani este membră a Uniunii Europene, dar nu este în Schengen. Aș fi vrut să dați răspuns la lucrurile care se întâmplă și sunt negative. Nu trebuie să punem preșul peste gunoi. Avem probleme mari, cu acte de terorism, cu copii furăți, cu violență a femeilor. Ce soluții găsim aici? Cu ingerințe în alegeri și da, ați ezitat foarte mult în formarea Comisiei și asta a scăzut din încrederea pe care noi am avut-o în dumneavoastră. Trebuie să recăpătați încrederea. Votul de astăzi este mai ales un vot de conjunctură și încredere, de acces în căpătarea încrederii.

(End of catch-the-eye procedure)

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 171)

Andrus Ansip (Renew), kirjalikult. – On kahetsusväärne, et uus komisjon ei saanud tööle asuda ettenähtud ajal, s.o 1. novembril. Teatavasti Euroopa Parlamendil pole õigust teha seadusandlikke algatusi, eelnõud koostab Euroopa Komisjon. Kui pole uut komisjoni, pole eelnõusid ja seega pole ka täit rakendust uuel parlamendi koosseisul. Kindlasti ei ole komisjoni tööle hakkamise edasilükkumisel positiivset mõju Euroopa majandusele. Lisaks on ülimalt kahetsusväärne, et juba viis kuud pole Euroopa Komisjonis volinikku Eestist ja Rumeeniast. Volinikud esindavad Euroopa kui terviku, mitte pelgalt oma riigi huve. Kuid aluslepingute järgi langetab komisjon parimaid otsuseid siis, kui seal on volinikud kõigist liikmesriikidest. Eestile ja kogu Euroopa Liidule on kasulik uue komisjoni võimalikult kiire tööle hakkamine.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), raštu. – Pirmiausia noriu pasveikinti naująją Komisijos pirmininkę ir jos pastangas formuojant naująją Komisijos sudėtį. Jūs perimate vadovavimą Komisijai, kai mūsų laukia daug neišspręstų problemų, ir tuo pat metu daugybė naujų iššūkių, kuriems reikalingi skubūs sprendimai. Europos piliečiai deda daug vilčių į Jus ir tikisi, jog bus tinkamai atsakyta į jų lūkesčius. O jų yra daug – didėjantis dirbančiųjų skurdas, išliekantis aukštas jaunimo nedarbas, nepateisinamai didelis skurdą patiriančių vaikų skaičius. Taip pat išliekanti struktūrinė lyčių lygybės problema, kuri pasireiškia mažesniais moterų atlyginimais bei grėsme patirti skurdą išėjus į pensiją, ir daug kitų. Labai tikiuosi, gerbiama Pirmininke, kad ši Komisija sugebės rasti pusiausvyrą tarp ekonominių interesų ir socialinės Europos prioritetų. Per ateinančius penkerius metus tikimės visiško socialinio ramsčio įgyvendinimo ES valstybės narėse ir daug aktyvesnio Komisijos vaidmens įgyvendinimo procese. Gerbiama Pirmininke, tik socialiai stipri ir atsakinga Europa gali suvienyti mūsų piliečių tikėjimą ir pasitikėjimą Europos Sąjunga bei sugebėti susivienyti atsakant į naujus globalius iššūkius, kaip migracija, klimato kaita, perėjimas prie švarios ekonomikos ir daug kitų.

Andrea Bocskor (PPE), írásban. – Nagy öröm számomra, hogy az új Európai Bizottság biztosi testületé áll itt előtünk, és hogy a mai napon szavazhatunk végre a megválasztásukról. Külön köszönöm Von der Leyen Asszonynak, hogy Mariya Gabriel portfóliójának a nevébe a kultúra és az oktatás is belekerült, ahogyan azt már sokszor kértük mi is itt az Európai Parlamentben. Örülök, hogy Magyarország biztosa pedig olyan kulcsfontosságú portfóliót kapott, mint a bővítés és szomszédságpolitika. Bízom benne, hogy az új Európai Bizottság jobban odafigyel majd a kárpátjai magyar közösség gondjaira és az Ukrajnával való párbeszéd során a kisebbségi jogok tiszteletben tartását, egyenlő, diszkrimináció-mentes oktatási és nyelvi lehetőségeinek megteremtését is el tudják majd érni!

Tanja Fajon (S&D), pisno. – Po petih mesecih napornih pogajanj in zaslišanj smo danes izglasovali novo Evropsko komisijo. Socialisti in demokrati imamo v novem kolegiju 9 komisarjev. Prepričana sem, da bodo delovali v dobrobit ljudi in našega planeta in pustili pozitiven pečat na svojih področjih, ki so ključna za prihodnost: zagotavljanje socialne države in pravične družbe, krepitve demokracije, ciljev trajnostnega razvoja, enakosti med spoloma, novega dogovora o migracijah, sklada za pravičnost.

Velik prijatelj Slovenije prvi podpredsednik Timmermans prevzema v skrb za vse generacije in planet najpomembnejšo nalogo – boj proti podnebnim spremembam in pravičen prehod v brezogljicho družbo.

V kampanjo za volitve v Evropski parlament smo stopili z iskreno željo po spremembah političnega, gospodarskega in družbenega stanja naše celine. Borili smo se za napredno levo – levo – zeleno zavezništvo, za preobrat k razvoju, solidarnosti, boju proti neenakosti, za postavitev varovanja okolja v središče vseh politik Unije.

V novo obdobje z novo Komisijo tudi sama stopam odločena, da si bom tudi vnaprej prizadevala z uresničevanjem obljub in zavez, ki sem jih dala ljudem: za evropski standard minimalnega dohodka, prepoved uvoza blaga, izdelanega z otroškim delom, vladavino prava, demokracijo in svobodo medijev, širitev Unije na Zahodni Balkan, predvsem pa za dostojanstvo vseh Evropejk in Evropejcev.

Alexis Georgoulis (GUE/NGL), in writing. – Being sceptical about the College of the European Commission I decided to abstain from the vote. Some Commissioner-designates still face issues with their conflicts of interest. However, Europe requires an urgent action and cannot remain for long without guidance. The request I sent in the form of a letter to the President of the Commission regarding the portfolio of the Commissioners responsible for culture and education, was not answered. My firm belief is that culture and education should be prioritized. A priority mirrored not only in the titles of the portfolios but also in the policymaking of the relevant Directorate-General. Our stance and fight now moves to the different proposals and files to arrive to the Parliament. As a House, we should make sure to exercise our right of scrutiny as efficiently as possible holding it accountable at every occasion. The new Commission nonetheless, represents a much more diverse setting than previous colleges and I look forward to constructively engage with the relevant Commissioners to serve all the people in the Union without discrimination.

Enikő Győri (PPE), írásban. – A magyar emberek bizakodóan tekintenek az új Bizottságra. Abban bízom, nem éri családás őket. Ursula von der Leyen elnök asszony bátor cselekvést ígért. Kívánom, hogy ez így is legyen. Kérem, hogy a húsbavágó kérdésekre koncentráljon, a sehova nem vezető ideológiai csaták és szlogenek hangoztatása helyett. Tudjon kilépni az aktuális divattémákból, adjon tartalmat minden mozdulatának. Csak így fog tudni ellenállni a balról jövő nyomásnak, s annak, hogy felelőtlen döntéseket hozzon. Csak így fog tudni érvényt szerezni az alapító szerződésnek. Ne legyenek illúziók: sokan fognak előállni ötletekkel, amelyek elfogadása megroggyantaná az uniós intézmények és politikák közötti egyensúlyt.

Mindennek megfelelően kérem, becslje meg az unió alapját jelentő nemzeteket, tagállamokat, tisztelje alkotmányos identitásukat. Mert mi 27-28-an egyenlőek, de nem egyformák vagyunk. Legyen érzékeny arra, hogy az egyes helyeken a polgárok másra fogékonyak. Eltérő a helyzetük, legyen szó a zöld gazdaságra való áttérésről, a migrációról, vagy a társadalmi együttélés normáiról. Fogadja el, hogy ezekben gondolkodhatunk máshogy. Tartsa tiszteletben, ami a szuverenitásunk körébe esik, de járjon el a közös hatáskörbe eső kérdésekben. Ne áldozza fel az európai mezőgazdaságot és ipart az éghajlatpolitika oltárán. Ehelyett találja meg az egyensúlyt a fenntarthatóság és a finanszírozhatóság között. Ilyen hozzáállással fogja tudni felszámolni a korábbinál jóval erősebbé vált kelet–nyugat törésvonalat.

Robert Hajšel (S&D), *in writing*. – I supported the new European Commission and I hope that the strong political mandate will allow President Ursula von der Leyen to deliver what our citizens expect. Higher turnout in May European elections means that the expectations of citizens are also higher. I am aware that the task will not be easy. EC is expected to deliver good results in traditional areas as cohesion policy, new priorities as digital market, artificial intelligence and fighting climate change, but especially to protect social rights. For all this EC will need sufficient financial resources, so it is of utmost importance to have a balanced MFF focused on the implementation of all priorities mentioned above. A transition to greener economy based on new technologies and artificial intelligence will also require enormous resources in order to be implemented properly. The countries dependent in energy resourcing on fossil fuels and nuclear will need to get substantial financial assistance from the EU if they want to be successful in satisfying the climate goals. Taking into account the strong mandate I expect the EC to act and effectively deliver in line with the ambitious priorities in order to meet the expectations of the citizens.

Πέτρος Κόκκαλης (GUE/NGL), *γραφτώς*. – Οι Ευρωπαίοι πολίτες απαιτούν έργα και όχι λόγια για τη δραστική επίλυση σοβαρών προβλημάτων, και μετά από τη μακριά προβλεπόμενη δημοκρατική διαδικασία οφείλουμε να στηρίξουμε την Επιτροπή στο έργο της. Η ηγεσία του Φρανς Τιμερμανς αποτελεί εγγύηση για την άμεση, αποτελεσματική και δίκαιη μετάβαση σε ένα κόσμο κλιματικής ασφάλειας. Πιστεύω ότι το Ευρωπαϊκό Πράσινο Σύμφωνο σηματοδοτεί την αρχή του τέλους της ηγεμονίας του νεοφιλελεύθερου δόγματος και την αρχή μιας προοδευτικής πολιτικής με επίκεντρο τον άνθρωπο.

Κώστας Μαυρίδης (S&D), *γραφτώς*. – Σε καίρια θέματα που αφορούν την ΕΕ υπάρχει σιωπή, όπως στην αντιμετώπιση της επεκτατικής Τουρκίας. Η ομόφωνη απόφαση του Ευρωπαϊκού Συμβουλίου με επιβολή μέτρων κατά της Τουρκίας δεν επιτρέπει την σιωπή. Ούτε είναι απλά θέμα αλληλεγγύης της ΕΕ προς ένα κράτος μέλος της, την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία. Αφορά το πώς αντιμετωπίζουμε την ωμή παραβίαση του Διεθνούς και Ευρωπαϊκού Δικαίου, που είναι υπαρκτικό ζήτημα για την ΕΕ και αφορά τα 500 εκατομμύρια ευρωπαίους πολίτες. Επιπλέον, αφορά το πώς προχωράμε προς την στρατηγική αυτονομία της ΕΕ στο διεθνές περιβάλλον στο μέλλον. Σήμερα ψηφίζουμε το κολλέγιο των Επιτρόπων, ανάμεσα στους οποίους περιλαμβάνονται αρκετά αξιόλογα μέλη, με ορισμένα εκ των οποίων έχω συνεργαστεί και έχω προσωπική αντίληψη των ηγετικών τους ικανοτήτων. Με θετική ψήφο παρέχουμε πίστωση χρόνου, ώστε με την απαιτούμενη θέληση να υλοποιηθούν οι δεσμεύσεις της Επιτροπής, όπως στα θέματα οικονομίας με ολοκλήρωση της Τραπεζικής Ένωσης μέσω πανευρωπαϊκής εγγύησης των καταθέσεων, στα θέματα κοινωνίας και στα καυτά θέματα του περιβάλλοντος. Πρόκειται για θέματα, για τα οποία απαιτείται αποφασιστικότητα, και θα παρακολουθούμε στενά και εποικοδομητικά. Όμως, προσωπικά, δεν θα διστάσω να σας επικρίνω έντονα εάν δεν ανταποκριθείτε στην πράξη -πέραν από τα λόγια- σε αυτές τις αρχές που μας ενώνουν και αποτελούν το μέγιστο συμφέρον της ΕΕ.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D), *por escrito*. – O Colégio de Comissários e o programa apresentado pela Presidente da Comissão eleita resulta de um processo de escrutínio institucional em que o Parlamento Europeu assumiu um papel ativo e fundamental. O plano de ação e a equipa proposta para o executar resultaram de compromissos políticos assumidos com as forças políticas que quiseram privilegiar a solidez institucional num momento de enorme desafio para o futuro da União Europeia.

Destaco, em particular, os pilares progressistas inseridos no programa em domínios como o combate às alterações climáticas, a transição energética justa, a transição digital ao serviço das pessoas e da redução das desigualdades e a atenção dada às políticas de proximidade, convergência e coesão, e que resultam de propostas do Grupo S&D. Destaco também a consonância entre estas prioridades e as pastas atribuídas aos comissários progressistas.

A questão determinante para o sucesso na concretização do programa é o seu financiamento. Para ser coerente com a ambição do seu programa, a nova Comissão tem que ser solidária com o Parlamento Europeu para conseguir um Programa Plurianual de Financiamento 2021-2027 que garanta a aposta conjugada na coesão, na convergência e na inovação, consolidando o projeto europeu e a sua afirmação num mundo em mudança.

(The sitting was suspended at 11.52)

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. DAVID MARIA SASSOLI

Presidente

4. Wznowienie posiedzenia

(La seduta è ripresa alle 12.01)

5. Powitanie

Presidente. – Innanzitutto abbiamo il piacere di dare il benvenuto nella tribuna d'onore ai delegati della Dieta nazionale, della Camera dei rappresentanti e della Camera dei consiglieri, del Giappone. Sono qui per l'incontro interparlamentare Unione europea-Giappone. La delegazione è guidata e presieduta per la Dieta dall'onorevole Onodera, deputato della Camera dei rappresentanti. È un onore accogliere i nostri amici a Strasburgo.

Ho il piacere anche di accogliere in tribuna d'onore ottanta alunni accompagnati dai loro insegnanti che sono giunti al Parlamento europeo per presentare la loro dichiarazione sui diritti del pianeta. Benvenuti ragazzi! Li ringraziamo e siamo lieti di accoglierli al Parlamento europeo.

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Yannick Jadot (Verts/ALE). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, il y a deux jours, treize militaires français ont trouvé la mort dans une opération de lutte contre le terrorisme et ce parlement n'a pas eu l'occasion d'honorer leur sacrifice par une minute de silence. Je vous propose donc, Monsieur le Président, d'observer une minute de silence et que tous nos collègues se lèvent pour nos soldats qui se sont sacrifiés au Mali.

Presidente. – Onorevole Jadot, forse lei ieri non era presente in Aula quando abbiamo salutato i militari che sono caduti in Mali. Forse era distratto o forse non era presente, ma quest'Aula ha già reso omaggio ai militari che sono caduti in Mali. No, non le do la parola. Alla sua distrazione, siccome questo è un sentimento comune di tutti i parlamentari, invito io a fare un minuto di silenzio.

(Il Parlamento, in piedi, osserva un minuto di silenzio)

6. Głosowanie

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca il turno di votazioni.

(Per i risultati delle votazioni e altri dettagli che le riguardano: vedasi processo verbale)

6.1. Wybór Komisji (głosowanie)

Presidente. – Iniziamo con la votazione sull'elezione della Commissione. Vorrei informarvi che le votazioni saranno precedute da un turno di interventi dei gruppi politici in ordine inverso.

Claire Fox (NI). – Mr President, my fellow MEPs, let's be honest with our voters at home. This process is a sham. We are being used as a stage army marched out today to rubber-stamp a thoroughly anti-democratic imposition of a top-down power at Commission level.

This Parliament is no more than a faux-democratic charade used to give a veneer of legitimacy to an illegitimate decision-making process. We may salve our consciences by rejecting a few bad eggs at bogus committee hearings, but the truth is all we can do is accept or reject from a bunch of pre-selected candidates, with no real choice. You can heckle as much as you want, but I'm finishing.

This hypocrisy is summed up for me by that gigantic poster of Ursula von der Leyen outside the Parliament in Brussels. It is frankly distasteful Orwellian propaganda. It reads: 'In fair and free elections the power of the people determines the people in power'. That is true in national democracies but it is a flagrant lie, fake news and disinformation in relation to the Commission.

Ms von der Leyen herself was not elevated to a position of power due to people power. The only power on display in her election was a behind-the-scenes cabal, which pushed her forward as a last-minute compromise candidate. And although she only scraped through, she now has the power to dictate the priorities of Europe. She has the power to impose her agenda on millions of European citizens, whether they like it or not.

From the Commission's ambition for a Green New Deal, for deeper monetary integration or austerity, or appointing Josep Borrell, who endorses qualified majority voting on foreign policy that strips nation states of the right to determine their own foreign policy. This federalism steals power from the people and is a naked power grab from the demos to technocrats in the Commission, and we're expected to nod it through.

(Protests)

In the UK, we're mid general election. Voters will directly vote on who they will loan their authority to, yet that...

(The President cut off the speaker)

Manon Aubry, au nom du groupe GUE/NGL. – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, le vote d'aujourd'hui n'est pas un vote comme les autres, c'est un vote majeur, peut-être le vote du siècle pour faire face aux deux plus grands défis de notre temps: la catastrophe climatique et la crise des inégalités, deux enjeux qui ne peuvent s'accommoder d'engagements flous ou contradictoires. Pourtant, à la sortie de cette séquence d'auditions, force est de constater que nous restons sur notre faim.

Du point de vue éthique tout d'abord, trois commissaires candidats ont été écartés pour conflit d'intérêts, et des doutes sérieux persistent sur l'indépendance d'autres membres de la Commission. Sur le fond, il y a bien sûr des promesses à saluer, comme le salaire minimum, le droit d'engagement, le droit d'initiative des parlementaires ou encore la perspective d'un grand plan d'isolation des bâtiments. Sur tous ces sujets, nous serons des alliés vigilants pour former des majorités de progrès social.

Toutefois, au-delà de ces quelques progrès, vous restez accrochés aux dogmes responsables des crises sociales, démocratiques et écologiques actuelles. Comment ambitionner un pacte vert tout en poursuivant les accords de libre-échange climaticides? Comment lutter contre l'évasion fiscale en protégeant, en son sein, parmi les pires paradis fiscaux du monde? Comment penser une politique humaniste en refusant un accueil digne des exilés? Enfin, comment redonner de l'espoir aux peuples européens en continuant à leur imposer le carcan de l'austérité? Vous ne pouvez pas être à la fois pompiers et pyromanes. L'incendie menace partout, l'Union européenne joue aujourd'hui sa survie, tant la défiance des citoyens envers les institutions a déjà dépassé le seuil d'alerte.

Face à ces enjeux, les peuples et la planète méritent mieux. Les peuples et la planète méritent un nouveau pacte vert réellement ambitieux qui crée des centaines de milliers d'emplois en changeant nos systèmes agricoles, nos pratiques industrielles, nos modes de consommation et nos moyens de transport. Les peuples et la planète méritent la justice fiscale et que l'on mette fin à l'impunité des multinationales qui ne paient pas leur juste part d'impôts. Les peuples et la planète méritent un corps civil de sauvetage en mer, et non un commissaire à la promotion du mode de vie européen qui fermera les yeux sur les morts en Méditerranée. Les peuples et la planète méritent enfin des services publics et des protections sociales renforcées pour sortir les 113 millions d'Européens de la grande pauvreté. Ce programme ne serait-il

pas mille fois plus enthousiasmant pour notre avenir qu'un énième réchauffé d'un projet, certes au package renouvelé, mais usé jusqu'à la corde?

Vous l'aurez compris, Madame von der Leyen, notre groupe de la gauche unitaire européenne n'est pas prêt, dans ces conditions, à vous confier les rênes de l'Union européenne. Les peuples et la planète méritent bien mieux.

Ryszard Antoni Legutko, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I would like to say to Ms von der Leyen that, Madam President, your Commission is a chance for a new beginning, and we hope there will be a new beginning. My Group will support you in many things. We will definitely support you in finding a compromise on the budget. We will support you in the opening up of the single market in services, in finding a lasting solution to migration and in implementing ambitious climate plans, but let me emphasise we will give full support to the communities whose livelihoods are threatened by the absurd ramping-up of climate ambitions.

Please keep in mind that there is not, and there never will be, an EU nation. The EU is made up of 26 (or 28, if you will) sovereign countries, and no two countries are the same. Do not try to take away power from Member States by removing the rights of veto. Remember that the institution that sets the EU's agenda is the European Council, not the European Parliament. Please do not continue the previous Commission's practice of violating the letter and the spirit of the Treaties to enforce the process of integration. Despite what you hear in this Chamber or in meeting rooms in Brussels, there is a completely different view of what the EU is or what the EU should and shouldn't be in communities across our Member States, so please let this be about evidence-based policy, not policy-based evidence. Ms von der Leyen, good luck.

Marco Zanni, *a nome del gruppo ID*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Presidente von der Leyen, finalmente, dopo mesi di litigi e di sgambetti tra le diverse anime che compongono questa maggioranza, abbiamo una Commissione.

Purtroppo, nel momento di più grande crisi che vivono le Istituzioni europee, avremo la Commissione più debole, una Commissione che è già nata zoppa e che, dalle sue parole o da quanto ha promesso in questi cinque mesi, sembra anche una Commissione cieca, una Commissione che non ha capito il messaggio dei cittadini europei e che si rifiuta di proporre un approccio radicalmente diverso su quelli che sono oggi i problemi dei nostri cittadini.

Lei, nel suo discorso oggi, ha parlato di *gender balance*, ha parlato di *green new deal*, ma purtroppo quello a cui pensano i cittadini europei la mattina quando si svegliano non è se la Commissione europea ha un *gender balance*, pensano a come arrivare alla fine del mese, pensano a come trovare lavoro, pensano a come sostenere i propri salari.

E anche sul *green new deal* il vostro approccio sembra molto ideologico e non vorremmo che questo portasse a un ulteriore svantaggio competitivo per le nostre imprese. L'Europa oggi ha già fatto tanto in termini di riduzione delle emissioni, sono altri, fuori, che devono fare il loro mestiere. Non vorremmo che i vostri provvedimenti su questo tema portino un ulteriore fardello per le nostre imprese e portino un ulteriore fardello per le nostre economie.

Non ho sentito parlare invece degli elementi molto importanti. Sappiamo delle minacce alla nostra competitività che arrivano da fuori, ma non ho sentito nessuna proposta su come correggere il funzionamento del nostro mercato interno, non ho sentito parlare del *dumping* sociale e salariale che avviene all'interno dell'Unione, non ho sentito parlare del *dumping* fiscale e della deindustrializzazione, che sono processi in atto dentro all'Unione per le distorsioni del nostro mercato interno.

Orgogliosamente questo gruppo oggi dirà no a chi, con il suo immobilismo, vuole davvero distruggere l'Europa. Il mio suggerimento è: rimettetevi in gioco, capite gli errori delle politiche che avete portato avanti nel passato e fate un cambio di marcia, che è quello che chiedono i cittadini europei, altrimenti l'Europa, purtroppo, non avrà futuro.

Ska Keller, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, the new Commission takes office at a time when the climate emergency doesn't leave us much time to act. We're happy to see that climate and environmental issues are a key priority for the new Commission and, by the way, also a key priority for more than 90% of the European population.

However, we're not so sure that the headlines will be followed by concrete action because if the Commission, as it has announced, does not change its agricultural and trade policy, then any climate measure will remain half-hearted. We are also happy to see that more women than ever are part of the Commission, even though it's curious to see that some governments couldn't find any women in their country. So, more work needs to be done to ensure a gender balance and also an overall better representation of European society in the Commission.

We have found in the hearings some very good candidates, but also some that made us have doubts – doubts on conflict of interest and how serious you are on European values, on the rule of law and on women's rights. Madam President-elect, we will not support a Commission that is not clear on those issues. But be sure that, whenever you take an initiative that protects the climate, that strengthens a social Europe and that enhances the rule of law, we are more than ready to support you. But we will also point out when we think that the Commission is taking a wrong turn or is being too timid. Europe needs decisive action now and we hope that you will feel the courage and the strength to push for change, to stand up against the Council when needed, and to base your work on European values, such as human rights for all and on the rule of law. We want you to act because it's high time and that's why we don't give you a red card, even though we have pointed out all of those problems I've mentioned today at various times and we haven't seen them addressed.

But we also don't want to give you a blank cheque either and that's why our group has decided to abstain today as a head start in terms of trust that we hope will be justified. We're looking forward to a good cooperation with you and we wish you and your College all the strength, all the courage and energy that it takes not just to hold our continent together, but to bring it forward.

(Applause)

Dacian Cioloș, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Présidente, il y a beaucoup de choses sur lesquelles cette Commission va devoir démontrer sa détermination, son efficacité ainsi que sa capacité à convaincre les États membres et les citoyens qu'ils ont toutes les raisons de croire dans ses projets.

Nous devons cependant reconnaître que jamais l'Europe n'a eu une Commission avec un tel niveau d'ambition pour l'environnement et le numérique, avec un angle d'attaque qui semble efficace et prometteur. Jamais nous n'avons eu une Commission qui applique ainsi l'égalité des genres, puisque l'égalité des genres est bel et bien importante pour nous tous, puisque l'égalité veut dire aussi donner la possibilité à tous de s'exprimer. Jamais nous n'avons eu une Commission qui s'engage à promouvoir l'état de droit et à protéger les libertés individuelles. Jamais nous n'avons eu un tel dialogue pour construire ensemble un programme politique. Le Parlement a mis son empreinte sur ce programme.

Notre groupe va donc soutenir votre Commission, Madame la Présidente. Je tiens cependant à dire que ce ne sera pas un chèque en blanc. J'espère que tous ceux qui ont fait de l'environnement, de l'égalité et de l'état de droit leur étendard feront de même et assumeront leur responsabilité plutôt que d'exprimer simplement des souhaits. Pour que le programme soit mis en œuvre, nous devons, ici au Parlement, bâtir un partenariat clair, honnête et fondé sur la confiance, puisque sans confiance entre nous, il n'y aura pas de résultats, et sans perspective de résultats, Renew ne pourra pas être de la partie.

Nous serons donc très vigilants sur les propositions qui seront formulées. Chaque commissaire a un rôle-clé pour redonner l'envie d'Europe, assortie d'une vision, d'une ambition et d'une passion pour l'Europe. D'est en ouest, du nord au sud, nous avons tous, ici, une mission claire, celle de réenchanter le projet européen et nous n'y parviendrons pas avec de grandes déclarations ou seulement de belles promesses, mais avec des faits et des mesures qui rendront l'Europe concrète et utile dans la vie quotidienne de nos citoyens. C'est pour une telle Commission que nous allons voter, Madame la Présidente.

Iratxe García Pérez, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señor presidente, en mayo de este año la ciudadanía europea nos dio un mensaje muy claro: quieren Europa, pero una Europa distinta, una Europa transformada, una Europa que vuelva a ser ese espacio de oportunidades.

El Grupo socialista tiene muy claro cuál es nuestro trabajo durante los próximos cinco años. Vamos a trabajar por una Europa más ecologista, por una Europa más feminista, por una Europa más social. Y esperamos de la Comisión que actúe también con responsabilidad.

Esperamos que actúe con valentía. Les vamos a permitir incluso que se equivoquen; lo que jamás vamos a permitir es que se resignen, es que sean inmóviles, es que no sean capaces de afrontar los retos y los desafíos que Europa necesita. Por lo tanto, vamos a ser vigilantes; vamos a ser comprometidos; vamos a cooperar; vamos a controlar. Pero estoy segura de que por delante tenemos cinco años de intenso trabajo para devolver la esperanza a la ciudadanía que está fuera de este Parlamento en el proyecto que los hombres y mujeres europeos esperan de nosotros.

Manfred Weber, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Wir leben in einer Zeit, in der Extrempositionen populär und in den sozialen Medien verbreitet sind. Deswegen ist gerade die Präsentation von Ursula von der Leyen heute wohltuend: den Ausgleich zu suchen, das Miteinander zu praktizieren, das Angebot auf den Tisch zu legen, für diesen Kontinent gemeinsam zu arbeiten. Sie hat uns heute ein starkes Team vorgestellt, das anpacken will, das motiviert ist, und wir haben heute die Chance, diesem Team ein demokratisches Mandat zu geben.

Die Kommissare sind über ihre Mitgliedstaaten ins Amt gekommen, über den Rat. Aber sie werden erfolgreich aus dem Amt hinausgehen, gemeinsam mit dem Parlament. Sie sind darauf angewiesen, dass wir sie unterstützen, dass wir am Ende des Tages gemeinsam zwischen dem Parlament und der Kommission Partnerschaft aufbauen und miteinander für dieses geeinte Europa arbeiten. Das ist die Verantwortung, die wir haben.

Und wenn ich in der Schlussrunde jetzt höre, wie Linke und auch leider viele, viele Rechte hier in diesem Haus schon Agitation gegen die neue Kommission betreiben und wieder Angriffe starten und sich der Verantwortung verweigern, dann ist die beste Antwort, die wir heute geben können, ein starkes Ja zu dieser Kommission.

Let's start to deliver, let's deliver a strong and united European Union.

Presidente. – Possiamo ora alle votazioni. Vorrei informarvi che, in via eccezionale, le dichiarazioni di voto sono rinviate a domani. Vi ricordo che le dichiarazioni di voto possono essere presentate anche per iscritto.

Colleghe e colleghi, ai sensi dell'articolo 125 del regolamento, il Parlamento elegge o respinge la Commissione a maggioranza dei voti espressi per appello nominale. Dopo la votazione annuncerò i risultati dei voti. Se la Commissione riceverà la maggioranza dei voti espressi, firmerò la lettera di trasmissione che annuncia l'approvazione del Parlamento, la consegnerò alla Presidente della Commissione e ne informerò il Consiglio. Su tale base, il Consiglio europeo nominerà ufficialmente la Commissione.

(Elezione della Commissione per appello nominale)

Approvato con 461 voti favorevoli, 157 contrari e 89 astensioni.

(Applausi vivi e prolungati)

Prima di firmare l'atto della nomina, vorrei dire a tutto il Parlamento, alla Commissione e al Consiglio che siamo molto orgogliosi del lavoro che ha svolto il Parlamento europeo. È stato un processo democratico, serio e trasparente, nel rispetto dei trattati e delle regole e del regolamento del nostro Parlamento. Vorrei ringraziare le commissioni parlamentari, i loro presidenti, tutti i deputati e i gruppi politici. Vorrei sottolineare il grande lavoro che ha svolto l'amministrazione del Parlamento. Voglio infine ringraziare la stampa e i mezzi di comunicazione per l'attenzione che hanno prestato al lavoro della nostra Istituzione.

Rivolgo alla Presidente von der Leyen e alla nuova Commissione i migliori auguri di buon lavoro.

Adesso firmiamo la lettera e devo venire a consegnargliela.

(Applausi vivi)

6.2. Uruchomienie Funduszu Solidarności Unii Europejskiej w celu udzielenia pomocy Grecji (A9-0040/2019 - Eva Kaili) (głosowanie)

6.3. Uruchomienie instrumentu elastyczności na sfinansowanie natychmiastowych środków budżetowych służących do rozwiązywania bieżących problemów wynikających z migracji, napływu uchodźców i zagrożeń bezpieczeństwa (A9-0039/2019 - Monika Hohlmeier) (głosowanie)

6.4. Uruchomienie Funduszu Solidarności Unii Europejskiej w celu zapewnienia środków na wypłatę zaliczek w budżecie ogólnym Unii na 2020 r. (A9-0036/2019 - Monika Hohlmeier) (głosowanie)

6.5. Procedura budżetowa 2020: wspólny projekt (A9-0035/2019 - Monika Hohlmeier, Eider Gardiazabal Rubial) (głosowanie)

— *Dopo la votazione:*

Kimmo Tiilikainen, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, I congratulate honourable Members for concluding their vote on the budget of the European Union for the financial year 2020. The Council notes with satisfaction that the Parliament confirmed the agreement reached at the Conciliation Committee meeting on 18 November with such wide political support from here.

I take this opportunity to once again thank the Chair of the Committee on Budgets, Johan Van Overtveld, and the rapporteurs, Monika Hohlmeier and Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, as well as all other Members of Parliament who participated in the budgetary procedure, for your constructive approach. I would also like to thank the Commissioner for his support of this work.

(Applause)

Presidente. – Il progetto comune su cui il comitato di conciliazione ha raggiunto un accordo il 18 novembre è stato approvato sia dal Parlamento che dal Consiglio. La procedura di bilancio è stata attuata a norma dell'articolo 314 del trattato sul funzionamento dell'Unione europea. La procedura di bilancio per l'esercizio 2020 può dunque considerarsi conclusa. Dichiaro pertanto definitivamente adottato il bilancio dell'Unione europea per l'esercizio 2020 e procederò ora alla firma del bilancio.

Con questo si conclude il turno di votazioni.

7. Wyjaśnienia dotyczące sposobu głosowania: patrz protokół

8. Korekty do głosowania i zamiar głosowania: patrz protokół

(La seduta è sospesa alle 12.33)

(Cerimonia: Assegnazione del Premio LUX)

VORSITZ: KATARINA BARLEY

Vizepräsidentin

9. Wznowienie posiedzenia*(Die Sitzung wird um 15.01 Uhr wieder aufgenommen.)***10. Przyjęcie protokołu poprzedniego posiedzenia: patrz protokół****11. Akty delegowane (art. 111 ust. 2 Regulaminu): patrz protokół****12. Środki wykonawcze (art. 112 Regulaminu): patrz protokół****13. Składanie dokumentów: patrz protokół****14. Przesunięcia środków i decyzje budżetowe: patrz protokół****15. Ingerencja innych państw w nasze procesy demokratyczne i wyborcze (debata na aktualny temat)**

Die Präsidentin. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über ein aktuelles Thema (Artikel 162 der Geschäftsordnung) über die Einmischung anderer Länder in unsere Demokratien und unsere Wahlen (2019/2941(RSP)).

Ich möchte den Mitgliedern mitteilen, dass es bei dieser Aussprache keine spontanen Wortmeldungen gibt und keine blauen Karten akzeptiert werden.

Caroline Voaden, *representative of Renew Group.* – Madam President, in the last few years we have seen a sea change in the way politics and elections are conducted. We may still deliver leaflets, knock on doors and transmit party political broadcasts on TV, but increasingly our voters are getting their information online through social media platforms and cleverly targeted advertising that takes advantage of ever more effective algorithms to target them individually from thousands of miles away.

It's fair to say that citizens all over Europe are at the mercy of anyone with a sinister agenda and a computer. We are undergoing a quantum leap in our electoral processes, one that eclipses the advent of the printing press, the newspaper, the radio and the television, but the gap between this evolving technology, on the one hand, and regulation and legislation on the other, has now become a great digital chasm. Both literally and metaphorically, the old rules cease to apply as our legislation falls woefully behind reality. The stubborn refusal of companies such as Facebook to take clear and decisive action to police their platforms opens a door into our elections that any foreign actor can waltz through unimpeded. The proper regulation of platforms such as Facebook is not an infringement on freedom of speech. It is our moral duty.

We must take stronger action against fake profiles and accounts. We must strengthen the EU Code of Conduct on disinformation, and we must reform electoral laws to cater for the modern era. We must investigate the financing of political parties by the Kremlin. For instance, in the UK, we know that Russian oligarchs have paid huge sums of money to play tennis with Boris Johnson.

Hostile governments are taking advantage of the digital space to interfere in our elections to further their own political goals. With over 50 national, regional and local elections due in Europe before the end of 2020, we must start taking this threat seriously. Those who detest the idea of democracy and view the messy process of elections as a charade to shore up their positions – Vladimir Putin chief amongst them – pour millions in economic and human resources into targeting European voters.

We have seen this in the UK, France and Spain, too. But it's not just Putin who is playing this sinister game. We know that Dominic Cummings, who is advising our own government, spent time in Russia. This must be investigated, and there are many in this House who are here because of the darling of the US alt-right, Steve Bannon. There are those within our own Member States who are more than happy to accept the help of these external actors in their quest for power. I would look at Nigel Farage but he hasn't turned up this week. I also look to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom who has refused to disclose a parliamentary report on Russian interference in the Brexit referendum of 2016. He knows what is in that report. We know what is in that report, but he refuses to release it because the truth stands in the way of his personal ambition. Boris Johnson – release the Russia report now!

Things have got so bad that in the UK electoral campaign the government is now impersonating fact-checking websites to spread misinformation. Vladimir would be proud. He doesn't even need to interfere any more. That one of the oldest political parties in Europe is willing to do this, says much about how foreign electoral interference takes root, infects our society and becomes the norm.

There must be a parliamentary response to this unacceptable behaviour and there must be decisive action, both in Member States and in Europe, and yet politicians have so far come up short. Facebook still operates as the Trojan horse into our democracy. The time has come for this new Parliament, for this new Commission, for this new reality we live in, to get serious. If not, we will be forever at the mercy of any authoritarian at a keyboard. I welcome your opinion, colleagues, and I hope you sense the same danger that I do.

(Applause)

Tytti Tuppurainen, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, John F. Kennedy once said: 'The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all'. I believe that maliciously-influenced or misled voters could pose a similar risk to our societies. Evolving malicious interference and online manipulation shows that this risk to our democratic institutions is real and requires our constant attention. We are therefore grateful for this new opportunity to engage with you on this important topic.

Let me repeat that our Presidency's priority is to make sustained efforts to raise awareness, increase preparedness and strengthen the resilience of our democracies to disinformation. Hybrid threats, including foreign interference in our democracies, remain, therefore, at the top of our political agenda. The Presidency has taken a number of steps, in particular a dedicated and permanent horizontal working party of the Council was created during the first month of our Presidency. It discusses how to strengthen the EU's capabilities in countering hybrid threats and to build resilience in the EU and Member States. The mandate of the group includes election interference and disinformation campaigns.

We have proposed Council conclusions to be adopted in December on complementary efforts to enhance resilience and counter hybrid threats, building on the important work done at the EU level in recent years. The conclusions also pay attention to countering disinformation and securing free and fair elections.

The last debate held in this House in September sought broad agreement that foreign interference and disinformation pose a major threat to democracy and EU values. Without a doubt, the EU institutions and the Member States have an important role to play; this is in the remit of their competencies in the protection of democratic processes.

It is therefore appropriate that protecting European democracy is also a priority for President von der Leyen. We have in particular noted with great interest that Vice-President Jourová will be responsible for coordinating the work on a Europe and Democracy Action Plan that will include a set of initiatives. This will require a focus on building up resilience and countering disinformation while pursuing and protecting fundamental freedoms.

Countering hybrid threats requires a comprehensive approach and a horizontal working method. This is why the work needs to be done in close alignment with all relevant stakeholders in the EU institutions as well as in the Member States to enhance the EU's ability to prevent, detect and respond to hybrid threats. Protection of our democracies and elections involves concerted efforts by the EU and the Member States, but also by civil society and industry. Our response has to be comprehensive, with a focus on both the internal and external dimensions of the threat.

Much has been done already, both by the EU institutions and individual Member States. Let me just briefly mention the main milestones, such as regular exchanges in the European election cooperation network, setting up the Rapid Alert System, enhancement of strategic communication, facilitating networks of independent fact checkers, promotion of media and digital literacy and awareness-raising activities, and monitoring of the implementation of the code of practice by social media platforms. But it is also important that we further develop institutional mechanisms and tools to fulfil the objectives set by the European Council.

It is also essential to continue developing partnerships, especially our cooperation with NATO. In this regard, the Helsinki European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats also contributes to fostering cooperation in this field. Likewise, disinformation strategies by foreign actors are deployed beyond our borders. So we need to work with partners in the eastern and southern neighbourhood and in the Western Balkans.

As stressed in the conclusions on democracy adopted by the Council last month, exposing disinformation, effective scrutiny over the financing of political messaging, strengthening media, information and digital literacy skills are key elements in this regard. We need to act together in a structured and coordinated way in order to tackle these challenges. Protecting elections is at the core of defending our European values.

Věra Jourová, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, thank you for giving me the opportunity to take the floor on the issue of interference from other countries in our democracies and elections. The Commission has been deeply engaged in broad efforts to address the manifold risks stemming from lack of transparency, disinformation and other manipulations of electoral and democratic processes, and is committed to strengthening this path in the upcoming term. Indeed, as we heard from the Presidency, it will be one of my biggest tasks in the new Commission. Thank you for the support.

The conduct of free and fair elections is primarily the responsibility of Member States. Nevertheless, a European approach is necessary given the cross-border dimension of efforts to manipulate democracy and the importance of joining efforts to address the threats. Just as with the rule of law, what affects one Member State can affect all and impact the Union itself. The threats at stake are complex and the targets are constantly evolving. For instance, external actors are more often using domestic proxies. We also see new technological developments allowing for new forms and strategies of interference.

In the context of the 2019 elections, the Commission has taken a number of concrete steps to address the challenges, including with the election package of measures to secure free and fair elections in Europe, with the Code of Practice on Disinformation, which has been signed by Facebook, Twitter, Google and Microsoft, and with the Action Plan on Disinformation, with which we have also made some progress. We will build on this work in the upcoming term. We have worked to put a holistic and permanent framework in place, with an aim to strengthen the resilience of our democracies and adapt to the evolving threats and coordinated and intentional manipulation.

To address the threats at stake, a coordinated and comprehensive approach is necessary, involving all actors across government, including regulatory and enforcement authorities, political parties, journalists, fact-checkers, researchers, educators and society and civil society at large, as well as industry and the online platforms. Some of them I mentioned, but of course we need to invite more to work with us. And of course we will need citizens to work on strengthening their own resilience against these new threats. I sometimes say that we have to work on increasing the demand for truth, and this will be a very big task ahead of us.

We need to get better when it comes to detecting, analysing and exposing disinformation and other manipulations of European democratic processes, whatever the tactics and actors employed. This needs to go hand in hand with wider efforts on monitoring cybersecurity and resilience against hybrid threats.

In terms of cooperation, we can be pleased with the European cooperation network on elections, which meets today for the fifth time to discuss its future work on safeguarding elections. This is a new club and a very important piece of our toolkit. We also need to further enhance cooperation between EU institutions and EU Member States via this network and the Rapid Alert System, which will help us build a genuine community of practitioners. It will also allow us to build meaningful cooperation with international partners, such as the G7 or NATO, because we are facing a real global problem. We can improve the effectiveness of communication through a coordinated response to disinformation incidents, as well as raising public awareness more generally.

To this end, it is important to pursue our efforts aimed at facilitating the establishment of an independent community of fact-checkers and academic researchers to detect and expose disinformation campaigns across social networks.

Following its initial 12-month period of implementation, the Code of Practice on Disinformation is now in the process of being evaluated. Should the results under the Code prove unsatisfactory, the Commission may propose further measures, including of a regulatory nature. We also need to invest in strengthening media literacy, which is key to resilient and democratic societies. Citizens must be empowered to have the adequate tools for a well-informed participation in democratic processes.

President-elect von der Leyen has proposed a new digital services act, which will upgrade our liability and safety rules for digital platforms, services and products. She has also pledged to put forward a coordinated European approach on artificial intelligence. These efforts will be vital if we are to ensure a prosperous, safe and democratic digital future for Europe.

Building on the political guidelines of President-elect von der Leyen, I will in the new Commission lead on the work towards a European democracy action plan addressing the threat of interference in our European elections, whilst being mindful of the need to protect the freedom of expression. I will look into possible legislative proposals to ensure clearer rules on the financing of European political parties and greater transparency on paid political advertising. In our actions we must never lose the balance. Our goal is to protect our European democracy. So it is clear that the respect for freedom of speech and our fundamental rights and values must be our cornerstones.

Paulo Rangel, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, first I would like to congratulate Commissioner Jourová for her nomination and to wish her well.

Commissioner, we know from experience that you are truly and deeply committed to the tasks that are involved in your portfolio. We know that your challenge is a difficult one, but I think there is also some enthusiasm, so I wish you all the best. You know that you will have the cooperation of our group and, I believe, of the House. The House has supported the whole Commission in a very strong and clear way, so I think we will have a very good relationship. I will now turn to my national language.

Senhora Presidente, a tentativa de ingerência, seja por potências estrangeiras, seja por vezes com alguma cumplicidade de forças internas, é, sem dúvida, um problema grave.

A desinformação não é um problema novo na História, mas hoje, mercê dos elementos tecnológicos, tem uma repercussão muito mais forte em toda a sociedade. Nós sabemos que, por exemplo recentemente, os serviços de informação checos chamaram a atenção para a interferência russa e chinesa no processo político e institucional. Sabemos que, no caso do Brexit, como aqui já foi dito, houve interferência. Sabemos que no caso da Catalunha uma parte importante dos IPs está sediada na Grande Moscovo.

E portanto nós sabemos que há interferências estrangeiras, que aproveitam a dinâmica política interna, que é real e em que há tensões, para a explorarem, ampliarem e criarem instabilidade, e criarem também desinformação, no contexto das nossas sociedades. E portanto aqui eu considero que é fundamental, que é mesmo decisivo, que nós tenhamos, em primeiro lugar, uma grande preocupação com a educação dos cidadãos. Os cidadãos, e os jovens em particular, têm de estar habilitados a discernir, a diferenciar o que é verdadeiro do que é falso, têm que ter capacidade crítica.

Há aqui operadores sociais muito importantes: os políticos, com certeza, os líderes religiosos, os cientistas na academia e os jornalistas, em particular, são quatro grupos que nós devemos ter como grupos-alvo para, justamente, fazer formação e transmitir, digamos, isso à sociedade.

Por outro lado, eu acho que nós também poderíamos usar o Serviço de Ação Externa, porque ele deve ser eficaz junto das capitais onde nós suspeitamos que há estas interferências, para mostrar o desagrado da União Europeia.

E já agora devo dizer: há também algumas interferências ligadas a problemas, a ameaças à democracia interna, e eu aqui não posso deixar hoje de lembrar o caso de Malta, onde realmente o assassinato da jornalista Daphne Galizia foi algo de aterrador e que mostra que a livre informação está em perigo até com a ameaça física, e não apenas com a ameaça digital.

Kati Piri, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, I would like to congratulate the Commissioner on behalf of the S&D Group. Free and fair elections are at the very heart of democracy, of our European project and our Union, but free and fair elections are not a given and should not be taken for granted. Election interference challenges the foundations of our democratic systems and risks are growing day after day and they are there to stay unless we take action. This is a major issue in many of our Member States and current policies are insufficient to counter this hybrid assault on our democracies. Millions of Europeans are being exposed to massive disinformation campaigns due to foreign interference. Cyberattacks have risen to an unprecedented level, with dangerous access to strategic infrastructure and data. Electoral rules on the financing of political parties by third countries are being breached. However, EU governments are still failing to act. Some governments are even hiding the truth from the public. This is the case of the UK Government of Boris Johnson, for instance. It recently refused to release the Intelligence and Security Committee report on the Russian threat to UK democracy. But this is far from being an isolated case. This comes after a plan by Russian actors to fund the Lega of Matteo Salvini, the Austrian FPÖ Ibiza scandal, the case of the French Front National, the Leave.EU campaign in the UK and suspicious online activities during the last European elections in Germany.

Last month, at the initiative of the S&D Group, the European Parliament adopted a resolution in which we called for bold action here in Parliament. We understood the importance of this issue and we called for the establishment of a special parliamentary committee on election interference to address the challenges effectively and holistically. But the proposal did not pass, due to the opposition of 52 Renew colleagues. I am puzzled why our colleagues from Renew, and more specifically the UK Lib Dems, insisted on having this topic on the agenda yet voted against the special committee addressing this issue here in the European Parliament. However, sometimes we find that it takes time to come to challenges. So let's unite, let's work together and let's ensure that in the European Parliament too, we take this issue very seriously.

Pascal Durand, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Vice-présidente, évidemment, je vous félicite au nom du groupe Renew pour votre réélection ce matin. J'ajoute, à titre personnel, tout le plaisir que j'ai à vous retrouver sur les sujets qui nous avaient déjà associés dans la précédente législature, à savoir la démocratie et l'état de droit.

Notre histoire est faite de la recherche d'un équilibre un peu compliqué. Comme M^{me} von der Leyen l'a rappelé ce matin, la fragilité de nos démocraties et de l'Union européenne tient à cette recherche historique entre la défense de la liberté, la défense des libertés, du droit de penser et du droit de s'exprimer et, en même temps, le respect des règles de droit qui s'imposent à toutes et à tous pour que nous puissions vivre ensemble dans la société.

Au cours de notre histoire, nous avons inventé l'imprimerie, grâce à laquelle nous avons développé la connaissance et les idées et nous avons fait progresser l'humanisme. Nous avons inventé et défendu la liberté de la presse et la liberté de penser, mais nous avons su équilibrer – vous le savez Madame la Vice-présidente, d'autant plus que vous venez d'un pays qui n'a pas toujours connu la liberté d'expression et la liberté de penser librement – cette liberté de penser par le principe de responsabilité de ceux qui diffusent et, en même temps, par des règles qui s'imposent à la presse et à la diffusion. On ne peut pas tout diffuser dans nos démocraties.

Lorsque j'entends, à un moment où internet vient remplacer le schéma de l'imprimerie, la presse, etc. et va beaucoup plus vite, qu'il faut lui laisser une liberté totale, qu'il ne faut pas le réguler, qu'il faut lui laisser s'autogérer, je pense, Madame la Vice-présidente, que nous portons atteinte à l'essence même de la valeur de la démocratie européenne, celle de l'équilibre entre la liberté et la règle.

Je terminerai par ceci: ne faisons pas d'internet un espace de non-droit, ne faisons pas des réseaux sociaux un espace de liberté sans contrôle.

Sergey Lagodinsky, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin! Herzlichen Glückwunsch auch von den Grünen, Frau Vizepräsidentin, zu Ihrer Wahl. Heute reden wir aber erst mal über ein anderes Thema. „Der Konflikt zwischen Russland und Ukraine ruiniert unsere Wirtschaft“ – das war die Betreffzeile der E-Mail, die den Bundestag wochenlang lahmgelegt hat. Das war ein Virus, der – wie sich später herausstellte – von einer Gruppe eingeschleust wurde, die dem russischen militärischen Geheimdienst GRU nahesteht. Das war nur das offensichtlichste Beispiel einer Intervention von außen in unsere demokratischen Institutionen.

Vieles läuft aber unter dem Radar, und das ist wirklich ein Grund zur Sorge. Alles, was an agitatorischer Einmischung in dieser Form stattfindet, ist Teil einer regelrechten ideologischen Konfrontation, eines Propagandakrieges im digitalen Bereich, muss man schon sagen, zwischen Russland und China auf der einen Seite und den liberalen Demokratien auf der anderen Seite. Das passiert nicht nur auf Deutsch oder Englisch, das passiert auch auf Russisch. Der Fall Lisa in meiner Stadt Berlin – Berlin-Marzahn –, wo viele Hunderte Russischsprachige durch Berichte im russischen TV, durch Fake-Berichte im russischen TV regelrecht mobilisiert wurden, ist allgemein bekannt.

Doch auch auf Deutsch passiert diese Propaganda, und zwar nicht nur in Form von Russia Today; Redfish auf Facebook ist eine linksradikale Gruppierung, die eigentlich zu interessanten und guten und wichtigen klimapolitischen Anliegen aufruft, aber gleichzeitig agitatorische Propaganda einbaut und den russischen Nachrichtenagenturen gehört. Also auch diese Wege, auch diese Nachrichtenagenturen müssen wir in den Blick nehmen.

Aber wir müssen auch unsere eigenen Kolleginnen und Kollegen unter die Lupe nehmen. Da gibt es Parteien, die eine tiefe Verachtung für unsere heutige Demokratie haben und auch Verachtung für dieses Europa, und die sitzen auch hier. Gerade heute gab es Berichte über die AfD – schade, dass die Kollegen nicht dasitzen: Jörg Meuthen 95 000 EUR, Guido Reil 45 000 EUR – das sind die Spenden, die – gerade wurde es klar – über Fake-Spender für diese Kollegen, die tagtäglich unter uns sitzen, angeworben worden sind. Wir müssen sie fragen, woher diese Gelder kommen, wenn die AfD schon offen sagt, dass sie immer wieder zu Beratungen in die russische Botschaft geht. Woher kommen denn diese Gelder? Viele von diesen Geldern kamen über die Schweiz. Es wäre interessant, auf diese Fragen Antworten zu bekommen.

Aber es geht nicht nur um die Antieuropäer, es geht auch um uns. Wir müssen unsere eigenen demokratischen Institutionen stärken, wir dürfen selber nicht den antidemokratischen Mustern verfallen. Dazu gehören auch die digitale Kultur, die digitale Kompetenz und die Resilienz unserer Institutionen – auch hier und auch gegenüber unseren Kolleginnen und Kollegen, die uns Antworten schulden.

Jordan Bardella, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Madame la Présidente, pardon de troubler la paranoïa ambiante, mais ne tournons pas inutilement autour du pot. Si ce thème nous est imposé, c'est évidemment pour renforcer l'idée que la Russie de Vladimir Poutine se cacherait derrière les succès enregistrés par les forces souverainistes à l'échelle du continent européen.

Si le président Macron, la chancelière Merkel et leurs amis accumulent les revers électoraux, cela ne pourrait s'expliquer que par une manipulation de l'étranger. L'Agence nationale de la sécurité des systèmes d'information a affirmé l'an dernier que lors de la campagne présidentielle française, aucune cyberattaque russe n'était à déplorer, donnant tort au camp du président Macron. Mieux encore, le rapport publié le 14 juin par la Commission européenne a été bien incapable de relever la moindre campagne de désinformation organisée depuis l'étranger et axée sur les élections européennes. Il est donc assez amusant de voir que ce sont ceux qui prétendent découvrir des complots qui ont recours au complot en imaginant régulièrement une main russe invisible.

Des ingérences sont pourtant bien visibles et bien réelles, mais elles ne sont pas là où vous voudriez les voir. L'ancien président américain Barack Obama n'a-t-il pas interféré dans l'élection française en soutenant ouvertement Emmanuel Macron durant l'entre-deux tours? La chancelière Angela Merkel n'affirmait-elle pas en 2016 vouloir faire reculer le Front national? Enfin, que dire des affirmations menaçantes de dirigeants ou de fonctionnaires européens pour intimider les Britanniques lors du référendum sur le Brexit ou encore après l'élection de M. Salvini en Italie?

Mesdames, Messieurs, cessez donc de faire passer le réveil des peuples pour un phénomène dont les causes seraient irrationnelles ou obscures. Il s'explique par l'impasse dans laquelle vous les conduisez depuis si longtemps et dans votre incapacité à répondre aux aspirations réelles des peuples européens.

Peter Lundgren, *för ECR-gruppen*. – Fru talman! Utländsk valpåverkan är något som oroar många människor. De flesta tänker nog på det amerikanska valet och på länder som Kina, Iran och Ryssland som valpåverkare.

I Sverige går nog tankarna just nu extra mycket till Kina, som nyligen helt öppet försökte påverka en minister och den svenska regeringen att inte dela ut ett pris till en person som misshagade den kinesiska regimen. Det väcker givetvis tankar om hur mycket valpåverkan Kina försöker med under ytan när de är så fräcka i det offentliga rummet.

Det är inte bara antidemokratiska främmande makter som försöker påverka valen i demokratiska länder. Även EU använder propaganda för att påverka val genom att måla upp en bild av vilka som är onda och vilka som är goda. De målar även många gånger upp en rent apokalyptisk bild om vilka hot som finns mot EU och den gemenskap och det samarbete som finns. Detta är givetvis ren och skär skrämpropaganda för att just påverka de nationella valen.

Och är det någon skillnad på vem som försöker påverka ett val? Nej, det är det inte. Att försöka påverka valet i ett demokratiskt land och inte respektera ett valresultat är aldrig accepterat. Vi ska aldrig tillåta det och måste alltid stå upp mot påverkan från såväl EU som främmande makter som Kina och Ryssland.

Martina Anderson, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – Madam President, we cannot talk about foreign interference in elections without calling out the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which has never been held to account for taking half a million pounds of dark money during the Brexit campaign – dark, shadowy money that was given to the DUP through an alleged international criminal businessperson. They did not spend it in the North of Ireland; instead, the DUP spent it in a country where they do not field candidates – England – in order to circumvent English electoral law. There was no investigation into where it came from.

After the Brexit referendum, legislation was put in place that protected the DUP from having to disclose the source. This is the same DUP which is currently inciting loyalist mobs to campaign for DUP Brexiteers. Loyalists have put up intimidatory posters against Sinn Féin candidate and Mayor of Belfast, John Finucane, whose father, Pat, was murdered by Loyalists and British State Agents.

If this was happening anywhere else, the EU would be condemning it. However, the partition of Ireland with an in-built unionist majority was designed to facilitate gerrymandering and obstruct the democratic will of the people – by whatever means. This underpinned the foundation of a discriminatory Orange State with oppressive laws that were the envy of apartheid South Africa.

Thankfully, the Orange State and the inbuilt undemocratic Unionist majority are gone, and we are on a pathway towards an inclusive, democratic United Ireland.

Jeroen Lenaers (PPE). – Voorzitter, het is niet de eerste keer dat we het hier over nepnieuws en buitenlandse inmenging hebben. Een jaar geleden stonden we hier al. Twee maanden geleden hadden we dit debat. Vorige maand hebben we nog een resolutie aangenomen, en vandaag staan we hier weer. We staan hier weer omdat het belangrijk blijft en omdat het lijkt alsof echte actie uitblijft.

De Europese verkiezingen zijn voorbij. We hebben verschillende onderzoeken gezien waaruit blijkt dat bijna de helft – 250 miljoen – van de Europeanen tijdens de aanloop van die verkiezingen blootgesteld werd aan nepnieuws van Russische trollen. We hebben netwerken gezien die in verschillende landen opereren om desinformatie te verspreiden. Gebruikers en pagina's zijn verwijderd van onder andere Facebook, maar pas nadat ze honderden miljoenen keren bekeken zijn. De factcheckers van onze eigen East StratCom Task Force registreerden meer dan 1 000 gevallen van Russische inmenging, meer dan een verdubbeling van het jaar daarvoor: een duidelijke bevestiging van de uitdaging waar we met z'n allen voor staan, en dat bevestigde ook de Commissie. De Task Force werd uitgebreid, maar is dat wel genoeg? Ik stelde die vraag aan de EU-buitenlanddienst en het antwoord was heel duidelijk: met dit budget kunnen wij het probleem niet adequaat aanpakken.

We moeten dus meer doen. Minder praten, meer actie. Ik zou de oproep willen doen aan de Commissie om dat zeker in de komende periode echt aan te gaan pakken. Dit moet gebeuren op twee specifieke gebieden. Middelen, meer middelen beschikbaar stellen om het probleem echt aan te pakken. Meer geld voor analyse en onderzoek, meer geld voor antidesinformatiecampagnes, investeringen in technologie, meer inzet voor onze eigen weerbaarheid en onze bewustwording van ons allemaal. Ten tweede, de techreuzen: maak een einde aan de "vrijheid, blijheid"-aanpak ten opzichte van platforms als Facebook. Hoog tijd dat zij eindelijk hun verantwoordelijkheid gaan nemen. Geen vrijwillige gedragscodes, maar bindende maatregelen om transparantie en medewerking af te dwingen.

Claude Moraes (S&D). – Madam President, Mr Lenaers just said that we have just had a resolution, we've just had a debate and now, of course, we're back debating the same thing, but there is a reason for this and the reason is that something is happening. This is not an exaggerated issue; this is an issue on which the Commission – Commissioner Jourová and Commissioner King – have been working now for months. This is an issue on which we have been working. We wanted a special committee for a reason and the reason is not that some Donald Trump says to Boris Johnson, I like you, I want your NHS, I'd like to buy it. That is not the interference we're talking about. I don't like it, but it is not what we're talking about. It is talking about a growing body of evidence that there is illegal and covert interference, what John F Kennedy would not have liked. Because at least one voter is voting differently because they have been targeted. Cambridge Analytica, the theft of private information for covert and illegal use against a constitution and against a body of jurisprudence and law.

So let's just be clear what we are talking about. It is illegal and it is covert. Today it will harm us; maybe tomorrow it will harm you. So, this is what we are talking about and I welcome what my UK colleagues have done in initiating this debate because what they are doing is uncovering the latest element of this in my own country, which is where our Conservative Government is covering up the truth from the public by refusing to release the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) report on the Russian threat to UK politics. One of our big Member States of the European Union. The report has been approved by the UK intelligence agencies, there is no impediment to publication, and yet, they're not publishing.

How much more evidence do we need to understand that this evidence is real? Well, the Commission, of course, talked about continued and sustained misinformation during the last May elections, similar to those carried out in the US and France. The report, of course, talks about limited action and I encourage the Commissioner, of course, in her new role, with the new College, to do as much as possible. Because what we're talking about is online and offline safeguards, the banning of profiling for electoral purposes, the content shared by bots, the removal of fake accounts. Neither the private sector nor indeed our governments are doing enough yet. There can be nothing more important than free and fair elections. This is against the law, it's covert, it is illegal and we must do something about it to safeguard our democracies.

Martin Horwood (Renew). – Madam President, I would like to congratulate the Vice-President on her election. I apologise for not being here for your opening statement but I understand you promised a coordinated response to foreign interference. It must be coordinated with Member States, Brexit or No Brexit. We know Russian money is invested in the UK in particular and in London in particular and that should have given us leverage in resisting and sanctioning against interference in our democratic processes. But the still unpublished Intelligence and Security Committee report, which has already been referred to, may reveal just how inadequate our response has been. Will it detail Russian influence in the narrowly won Brexit referendum? We don't know because our government, as has just been said by Mr Moraes quite rightly, has tried to silence our national parliament but still refuses to publish this report, although we know that no government agency or department stands in the way of publication, only the Prime Minister's political will. Perhaps this is because the report may detail Russian donations to our ruling Conservative party and to the Brexit campaign. Our national parliament is currently dissolved and our government may have been at best asleep on the job, but I'm delighted that the European Parliament has provided a democratic forum in which we can ring the alarm bell and sound the wake-up call and I hope the Commission's response will be much more determined.

Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE). – Fru talman! På många sätt är cyberangreppen en mardröm, en fiende som inte syns men som finns och är livsfarlig. Det kan låta stort, men det är, som vi alla vet, ingen överdrift. Angreppen pågår och de utgör ett tydligt och starkt hot mot de värden och demokratiska principer som vi har byggt den Europeiska unionen på. Den vetenskapen kräver handling.

Förra året presenterade kommissionen en plan för hur vi ska bekämpa desinformation online. Vi har därmed tagit de första stegen i arbetet för att bekämpa cyberangrepp. Men det räcker inte. EU måste göra väldigt mycket mer.

Europols avdelning som arbetar just med cyberkriminalitet – där analyser och forskning kopplas till strategier och handlingsplaner – är bra, men det är inte tillräckligt. EU måste se till att varje medlemsland tar cyberhotet på allvar, eftersom förtroendet för EU och för oss folkvalda politiker står och faller med huruvida vi tar hotet mot våra demokratier på allvar. Regeringar, parlament, civilsamhället och skolor måste få uppdrag och resurser så att vi alla rustas för att kunna ta ansvar och utifrån våra olika plattformar agera mot de krafter som hotar vår demokrati.

Laura Huhtasaari (ID). – Arvoisa puhemies, yritykset vaikuttaa eurooppalaisiin vaaleihin ulkopuolelta tulee torjua. Meidän tulee pitää huolta eurooppalaisten korkeasta sivistyksestä, jotta pystymme erottamaan oikean tiedon propagandasta. On täysin sietämätöntä, jos Venäjä, Kiina tai joku kolmas valtio pyrkii vaikuttamaan vaalien toimittamiseen eurooppalaisessa demokratiassa.

Tätä todellista ilmiötä ei pidä väärinkäyttää johtamalla ihmisiä harhaan. Venäjän trollitehtaat sosiaalisessa mediassa eivät ole saaneet ihmisiä äänestämään kansallismielisiä puolueita. Te konsensuspuolueet saatte ihmiset äänestämään vaihtoehtoa, jota isänmaalliset puolueet tarjoavat. Avointen rajojen maahanmuuttopolitiikka, islamisaatio, ilmastohysteria, teollisuustyöpaikkojen kato ja hyvinvointipalvelujen rapistuminen ovat eräitä syitä sille, miksi valtavirtapuolueet häviävät vaaleja.

Ruotsissa pommi-iskut ja ammuskelut ovat nyt osa ruotsalaista arkea. Tähän valtavirtapuolueiden politiikka on johtanut. Tämän me kansallismieliset puolueet korjaamme. *Make Europe safe again!* Täällä joku peräänkuulutti, mistä olemme saaneet rahaa. Minä olen ainakin maksanut kampanjani itse, koska minä uskon parempaan ja turvalliseen Eurooppaan.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Уважаема г-жо Председател, уважаема г-жо Комисар, поздравления за Вашия избор. Чака Ви нелека работа. Уважаеми колеги, за пореден път виждаме един много ясно изразен двоен стандарт в тази зала. Повечето от вас, които се изказаха, бяха против намесата и финансирането отвън на политически партии. Но само когато става дума за партии, които не ви харесват – като Консервативната партия във Великобритания, например.

Когато става дума обаче за бездънните джобове на милиардера, скандалния милиардер и финансов спекулант Сорос, който финансира много здраво пропаганда в Централна и Източна Европа, вие не сте против. И това е двоен стандарт. Трябва да си изберете – или сте против външното вмешателство, или не може да правите министерство на истината.

Чух тука няколко колеги – титани на политическата мисъл, да заявяват, че ще спрат интернета, ще го цензурират. Успех ви желая! Джордж Оруел е писал за вас „Министерство на истината“. Когато говорим за външната намеса, трябва да има еднакъв стандарт. Трябва всички да бъдат поставени под общ знаменател, а да не се действа така лицемерно и избирателно.

Sandra Pereira (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, a defesa da democracia exige um setor de comunicação social pluralista, democrático e independente. Exige a defesa da independência dos órgãos de comunicação social face ao poder económico, impedindo a concentração monopolista das empresas de comunicação social e defendendo o reforço do serviço público, garantindo os direitos dos jornalistas e de outros profissionais da informação e o seu respeito pelos princípios éticos e deontológicos.

A crescente concentração promovida na União Europeia servindo os interesses das políticas dominantes e dos grandes grupos económicos segue no sentido contrário, limitando a liberdade e a independência da imprensa, facilitando a disseminação de mentiras ou o silenciamento das forças comunistas e progressistas, das suas propostas e das suas ações, enquanto se promove o imperialismo, o obscurantismo, o populismo e os seus objetivos antidemocráticos, abrindo as portas à extrema-direita.

As pretensas ameaças externas que a União Europeia e este Parlamento insistem em apontar são apenas um pretexto para mascararem esta realidade e para prosseguirem no perigoso caminho do pensamento único e reacionário.

Vladimír Bilčík (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to congratulate the Commission Vice-President on her election today. It was only timely that Ms Ursula von der Leyen in her speech today mentioned the many Czechs and Slovaks who, 30 years ago during the Velvet Revolution, fought for freedom. Thanks to that fight, freedom and free and fair elections are something that we have across Europe in a much larger number today. It also something that we must safeguard, and we must take action, because we have been under threat. This is not just a debate about the lies before Brexit; it's something which concerns all of us and which we experienced in every election, including the European election – in every national contest. Indeed, this Parliament did adopt a resolution last month on how to best approach the fight against foreign interference and against the spread of disinformation. I think this is a very good start for political action.

Let me just underline three things which we would expect from the Commission. First, this fight against external interference, and also the fight against disinformation, must become our political priority. This is not just a technical issue; this has to be at the forefront of the Commission's political fight in the next five years. We have to make it a political issue; we can't just keep on talking about who is responsible, who is to blame. We must take action, and indeed, we must be bold in terms of proposing also regulation. We must safeguard the space on the internet. We must safeguard Europe's values. We must safeguard our democracy. We must also invest more money, more resources, into education – indeed, into education in the area where our citizens are most vulnerable: in cyberspace; on the Internet; in the digital space. I hope we can all do this.

Simona Bonafè (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il Parlamento europeo, è vero, ha già approvato una risoluzione nello scorso mese di ottobre, su iniziativa del gruppo dei Socialisti e Democratici, per condannare le interferenze nei nostri processi democratici di potenze straniere, ma nuovi casi stanno emergendo.

Intanto la magistratura italiana ha aperto recentemente un'inchiesta per corruzione internazionale sulla vicenda di presunti finanziamenti russi alla Lega di Matteo Salvini, ma al di là delle implicazioni penali restano in evidenza vicende torbide, mai chiarite fino in fondo.

Il caso italiano è stato preceduto da un caso austriaco, da un caso francese e, solo per stare alla cronaca più recente, sono emerse interferenze durante la campagna referendaria per l'uscita della Gran Bretagna dall'Europa.

Tutto questo non è complottismo, tutto questo è pericoloso per la tenuta dei nostri sistemi democratici, perché spesso, fomentando campagne di odio sul web, si condiziona l'opinione pubblica e dunque si influenzano i processi elettorali.

Ecco perché è importante che la discussione prosegua e che i riflettori non si spengano, nel caso anche proponendo di nuovo una commissione parlamentare. Abbiamo il dovere di fare chiarezza e di difendere le nostre istituzioni democratiche.

Nathalie Loiseau (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Vice-présidente, ce qui fonde notre modèle européen, c'est d'abord la liberté de choisir ceux qui nous gouvernent. Or, de plus en plus souvent, nous voyons des puissances étrangères chercher à influencer le résultat de nos votes dans le but évident de nous affaiblir. Nous pouvons le constater, nous pouvons le déplorer, nous pouvons condamner ces ingérences, ou plutôt ce cancer qui s'acharne à abîmer notre monde libre. Mais nous devons surtout agir et agir sans tarder.

Pour ce faire, pourquoi ne pas créer une agence européenne de protection des démocraties qui apporterait à chaque État membre l'expertise nécessaire pour contrer les cyberattaques, les manipulations et la désinformation qui visent les processus électoraux? Nous avons bien une agence européenne de protection de notre sécurité alimentaire. Si nous sommes capables de protéger ce qui vient dans notre assiette, nous devrions pouvoir protéger ce qui passe par nos urnes et nos bulletins de vote. L'intoxication démocratique a des conséquences au moins aussi graves que l'intoxication alimentaire, elle est parfois beaucoup plus difficile à guérir.

Madame la Présidente, je vous félicite pour votre élection et je vous remercie pour votre engagement à protéger nos démocraties.

Christian Allard (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, I would like to congratulate you as well on your election. We adopted the text of this resolution in October, and today I very much welcome this debate. Like many speakers before me, I think a lot more should be done because – as we have already heard – in the US it is now accepted that Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election took place.

In the UK we are not there yet, as our Prime Minister – Boris Johnson – claimed last week that he had never seen any evidence of Russian interference in UK democratic processes. However, in December 2017, the then UK Foreign Secretary – Boris Johnson – said that he had seen evidence of Russian interference in UK democratic processes. Which Boris Johnson is telling the truth? As our First Minister of Scotland said today, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is dangerous and unfit for office.

In this climate of xenophobia, racism and intolerance towards foreigners, I'm very pleased to hear the tone of the debate today. When I read the text first of all, earlier this year, on our right to engage and make sure that when we talk in this debate, we choose our words very carefully. It is the state organisations and their representatives that get involved in this interference, in which it is not the people who exercise their democratic right to vote and to stand for election in their adopted country. I would know, as a French citizen who represents Scotland in this Parliament. Let's stop the interference of foreign states, but let's open up our democracies to all the people who live among us – foreigners like me included.

In this coming election, I will not be voting at Westminster, but I wish all the candidates good luck – especially the MEPs here, and especially Alyn Smith, my *cher collègue*, to whom I wish all the best in the coming election.

(Applause)

Thierry Mariani (ID). – Madame la Présidente, en France, après 1870, une terreur s'empara des milieux parlementaire et journalistique qui virent la main de l'Allemagne dans tous les scrutins. Des phénomènes similaires ne cessèrent de parsemer l'histoire des États membres. Parfois, ces craintes sont légitimes; souvent, elles ne sont que fantasmes. Toujours elles furent dépassées par un élément: le sentiment de la nécessaire unité nationale pour maintenir les patries européennes.

L'Union européenne est aujourd'hui paradoxale dans son attitude face à ce danger. Elle décrit tout retour au sentiment national comme un danger et prétend à la fois nous protéger des interférences étrangères. Tout débat ou résolution concernant l'ingérence des pays étrangers dans les élections représente en réalité des attaques politiques très claires envers les mouvements patriotes européens et, souvent, envers la Russie, accusés d'être des acteurs majeurs de l'ingérence électorale étrangère et de la désinformation dans les processus démocratiques nationaux et européens.

Je peux citer aussi des cas avérés d'ingérence étrangère directe et manifeste de dirigeants ou de groupes de pression dans les récents scrutins qui se sont déroulés dans l'Union européenne: M. Soros et son Open Society, qui placardent sur les murs de Budapest des mots d'ordre hostiles au gouvernement hongrois; les dirigeants algériens, qui demandent régulièrement la dissolution du Rassemblement national; M. Erdoğan, fort des subsides abondants que nous lui versons, qui donne des instructions de vote à des ressortissants binationaux en Allemagne et en France; et M. Obama, qui apporte un large soutien médiatique à M. Macron à deux jours du scrutin de la présidentielle.

Enfin, Madame la Présidente, je sors d'une réunion où les députés européens demandent plus de soutien à l'opposition en Biélorussie. Avant de recevoir des leçons, veillons à ne pas être coupables nous-mêmes.

Hermann Tertsch (ECR). – Señora presidenta. Felicidades a la comisaria por la reelección. Yo quería hablar de las injerencias. Injerencias estamos viendo muchas. Se ha hablado de las injerencias en Cataluña por parte de agentes rusos. Los hay, sin duda. Pero injerencias hemos estado viendo en Europa muchísimas. Hemos visto las injerencias de la señora Merkel prácticamente en todas las elecciones europeas que se han celebrado desde Hungría a Austria masivamente, etcétera, etcétera. ¿Qué no injerencias ha habido por parte de los europeos hacia los Estados Unidos en 2016 cuando todos se dedicaron como un coro a insultar a Trump?

Pero voy a hablar de una injerencia mucho más grave que esa y es la que tenemos en este momento en España. En España el Partido Socialista está a punto de hacer una alianza electoral con apoyo de los separatistas catalanes, pero con una alianza con los comunistas de Podemos. Podemos es una franquicia venezolana formada en Venezuela por Chávez y por los cubanos, financiada por ellos y que va a tener puesto en el Consejo de Ministros, con lo cual prácticamente vamos a tener a Maduro dentro del Consejo de Ministros en España. El riesgo de la injerencia masiva del Foro de São Paulo en toda Latinoamérica se va a repetir en Europa con esa alianza de los socialistas y los comunistas en España.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já jsem chtěla položit otázku zvednutím modré karty svým dvěma předřečníkům, protože myslím, že tady dochází ke směšování dvou pojmů. Jednak je to pojem ovlivňování, to znamená, když někdo někoho o něčem informuje pravdivě, nezávisle, a pojem šíření lživých zpráv, a to je ten problém, se kterým se setkáváme. Šíření dezinformací je šíření lží! Nikdo tady není proti tomu, aby svobodná média včetně sociálních sítí šířila pravdivé informace. Proti tomu nikdo tady neprotestuje. Ale my všichni jsme si vědomi, že na sociálních sítích se šíří lživé informace, a proti tomu se musí postavit jak Evropská unie, tak členské státy. V České republice před ruskými a čínskými vlivy varuje například civilní rozvědka. V její výroční zprávě se upozorňuje na Ruskem podporovanou kampaň na sociálních sítích a v médiích s cílem oslabit Evropskou unii i NATO, a to formou lživých informací.

Ovlivňování politických procesů se snaží postavit členské státy do konfliktu a samozřejmě právě ve Velké Británii se to podařilo. To znamená, že tady jde o to zabránit šíření lží, ne omezovat svobodu médií. Naopak, my chceme svobodná média, po tom všichni voláme. Proto si myslím, že jak Evropská unie, tak členské státy musí podporovat autory, musí podporovat svobodu médií, veřejná média.

Já myslím, že teď tady právě stojíme před situací, kdy musí členské státy implementovat směrnici o audiovizuálních službách, směrnici o autorském právu, která zajistí podporu kvalitních médií. A já myslím, že o to jde. Prosím také o větší podporu StratComu, aby Evropská unie čelila tomu, co je jinde masivně finančně podporováno. Mluvím konkrétně o Číně a Rusku. Prosím, udělejte to!

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D). – Señora presidenta, felicidades también a la señora Jourová por ser de nuevo comisaria y volver a la Comisión; tenemos muchos asuntos en los que trabajar conjuntamente, además de este. Sobre este, a mí me gustaría decir que los europeos y los responsables políticos de la Unión Europea tenemos que dejar de tener cualquier esperanza de ingenuidad, porque hay claramente una coalición de enemigos, exteriores a la Unión Europea, que busca debilitarla —si es que no también destruirla— y que además está en alianza con personas en el interior de nuestros Estados miembros, bien en movimientos políticos o en otras estructuras.

Esta es una realidad, y tenemos que dotarnos de los medios necesarios para hacer frente a esta amenaza y desactivarla. Pensemos que, por supuesto, tenemos en el ámbito de la Unión Europea prohibiciones para que potencias extranjeras financien campañas electorales para las elecciones europeas, pero ¿estamos seguros de que tenemos el mismo grado de protección en los Estados miembros? Porque a través de ahí también se desactiva y se daña a la Unión Europea.

Lucy Nethsingha (Renew). – Madam President, this debate is particularly timely for the UK where the issue of electoral interference is really high on the agenda in our current election. The Conservative Party in the UK has transformed beyond recognition over the last three years, and there are many in the UK who have huge concerns about the influence from both Russia and the USA in that massive change.

At the most basic level, the scale of donations from Russian oligarchs or their wives is extraordinary: GBP 200 000 from one individual in the first week of this election campaign alone. Those with deep pockets have always tried to influence elections, but the scale and the technology is new.

The impact of misinformation has been recognised by serious research, which has shown that those who have been fed false information are significantly harder to persuade of the true facts than people with no prior knowledge.

Years of relative peace and security after the end of the Cold War have allowed us here in Europe to grow relaxed about the dangers of foreign propaganda. We need to wake up to the serious threats facing our democracies. That means publishing the Russia files in the UK and getting tough with all forms of media about their responsibilities to validate the truth of what they publish.

Catherine Rowett (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, once upon a time, we would surely have named the British Parliament alongside Athens as twin archetypes for democracy. But every democracy needs safeguards; its sanctions need to match the power of its emerging oligarchs.

If the UK safeguards once sufficed when the right honourable members in parliament were honourable and not so far right, those times seem long gone, as Boris Johnson's ignominious cronies obstruct publication of the UK Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) report on Russian interference, redact the names of those involved, bribe millionaire lobbyists with cash for access, and avert their eyes from incriminating evidence against their own team over the 2016 Brexit campaign.

All this should have been rectified before precipitating yet another election accompanied by profligate spending, misinformation and manipulation with the very same individuals in the driving seat.

In Ancient Athens a pile of broken pot-shards solved such problems. Empowered with these, the demos could ostracise anyone who threatened the rule of law, isolating him from political office for 10 years. Modern democracy, too, needs a decent tool for this job, and it should include exclusion, since to the super-rich any fine seems just fine.

Silvia Sardone (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ma davvero stiamo parlando per l'ennesima volta delle interferenze di altri paesi nella nostra democrazia e nelle nostre elezioni? Io trovo veramente che siamo al tragicomico.

Voi non capite il voto del popolo. Voi vedete il voto della Brexit, Trump, Bolsonaro, le vittorie dei sovranisti in Europa o il trionfo della Lega di Matteo Salvini alle europee e vi domandate come sia possibile, per voi è un mistero. Quindi cercate di giustificare il voto popolare, che non accettate, inventando complotti assurdi e andando a imbavagliare Internet, perché secondo voi noi siamo i produttori di *fake news*.

Peccato che le notizie senza senso siete voi a darle, con la vostra propaganda europeista pagata dai contribuenti. È colpa vostra, e solo vostra, se l'Europa piace sempre meno. Siete chiusi nei palazzi e incapaci di ascoltare e rispondere alle esigenze dei cittadini. Schifate i populisti, perché voi siete incapaci di ascoltare e dare risposte al popolo.

Però, devo dire, davvero continuate così! Non fate autocritica e inventatevi delle giustificazioni complottiste al voto popolare. Noi continueremo a stare tra la gente, a rispondere alle esigenze dei cittadini e a tutelare gli interessi del nostro paese, con orgoglio e a testa alta.

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! To jest kolejna debata na ten sam temat. Temat, problem wydaje się bardzo ważny, natomiast debata niepotrzebna. Wydaje mi się, że Parlament Europejski zdaje się ulegać teoriom spiskowym, wietrząc zewnętrzne interwencje w przypadku każdego wyborów, które nie odpowiadają głównym partiom. Wydaje mi się natomiast, że powinno nas martwić coś innego, inne formy ingerencji w procesy demokratyczne w Europie: na przykład wpływy rosyjskie w niemieckiej SPD poprzez dawnego kanclerza Gerharda Schrödera czy wpływy Gazpromu w tym kraju, wpływy na austriacką SPÖ poprzez byłego kanclerza Gusenbauera, wpływy rosyjskie także w innych partiach czy na prezydenta Macrona, co można odczuć w jego ostatnich wypowiedziach, szczególnie w słynnym wywiadzie dla *The Economist*. Jest to poważny problem i o nim też powinniśmy dyskutować.

Javier Zarzalejos (PPE). – Señora presidenta. Muchas felicidades, señora comisaria, por su renovación. La injerencia es un hecho, pero al mismo tiempo hay que saber que la injerencia es una estrategia. Por tanto, es un plan y es un objetivo. Y ese objetivo es debilitar nuestros sistemas democráticos y a la propia Unión Europea. Y, puestos a debilitar los sistemas democráticos y a la Unión Europea, nada mejor que utilizar a aquellos que en el pasado han destruido los sistemas democráticos europeos y han destruido a Europa, es decir, los nacionalismos y los populismos.

Afortunadamente, vivimos en sistemas democráticos y en una Unión Europea democrática en la que, entre otras cosas, permiten que se escuchen afirmaciones tan bizarras como la de que la canciller federal, Angela Merkel es una interferencia externa en Europa. Dicho lo cual, hay que afirmar que el desafío que lanzan países como Rusia, China y otros son desafíos existenciales que no admiten compromisos.

La injerencia no es solo cosa de redes sociales. Es manipulación de medios, es infiltración de agentes, es falsificación, es financiación de organizaciones pantalla y de partidos políticos. Resulta extremadamente grave, y además no es ningún secreto, que en Europa se haya detectado ya la presencia y la actividad de agentes del espionaje ruso en varios países de la Unión. El último, por cierto España, lo que ha determinado la apertura de una investigación judicial sobre la presencia y las actividades de estos agentes en Cataluña en torno a las fechas de la votación ilegal de 2017.

Pues bien, esta grave amenaza da un nuevo significado a la posición de la Comisión Europea como garante de los Tratados, en este caso como garante también de la arquitectura democrática de Europa. Tenemos que ser claros en la denuncia, tenemos que ser activos en la utilización de todos los medios y tenemos que ser claros también en exigir que todos, actores públicos y actores privados, asuman su responsabilidad a la hora de dar respuesta a esta amenaza.

Tonino Picula (S&D). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, drago mi je što ova tema opet dolazi na našu agendu unatoč nedavnom tijesnom odbijanju inicijative socijalista i demokrata za osnivanjem posebnog odbora.

Sa svakim novim izborima u zemljama članicama uvidamo opseg ovog problema. Zadnji slučaj su skori izbori u Velikoj Britaniji. Nedopustivo je da strane digitalne platforme bez provjeravanja istinitosti sadržaja, samo na osnovu plaćenih oglasa, dijele neproverjene informacije. Građani su jasno prepoznali ovaj problem. Čak dvije trećine izrazilo je zabrinutost.

No, treba naglasiti kako prevenciju stranog uplitanja u izborne procese ne treba ograničiti samo na sprečavanje širenja lažnih vijesti. Neophodno je raditi na otkrivanju stranih izvora financiranja političkih stranaka i njihov utjecaj na sadržaj političkih kampanja. Zato još jednom pozivam kolege da podrže osnivanje posebnog odbora za istraživanje stranih utjecaja na naše izborne procese.

Slobodni i transparentni izbori su temelj demokratskog procesa i obrana europske vrijednosti. Zbog toga institucije Europske unije moraju pružiti konkretan odgovor na ovaj rastući problem.

Barbara Ann Gibson (Renew). – Madam President, looking at this issue, I feel like I've discovered the arch-villain in a James Bond film. All the plot lines seem to lead to one man – Steve Bannon – who has openly declared his plans to fund and orchestrate a populist nationalist movement to take over the world. This incredible plot is credible, because he's been the driver behind Cambridge Analytica and Breitbart News, a propaganda machine synonymous with fake news. We've seen allegations of dark money, dirty data and campaigns based on lies and hate, designed to discourage specific groups of people from voting. The evidence is strong that this interference influenced the outcome of the Brexit referendum. Steve Bannon is a puppet master and his puppets include Donald Trump, Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. Investigations have uncovered foreign dark money pouring into their campaigns. This is not a fictional film plot: this is a strategic campaign of manipulation that threatens not only the outcome of single elections, but also our democracies, our cultures and our freedoms. It must be stopped.

Ellie Chowns (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, today we are debating interference from other countries in our democracies and elections, a topic which is sadly very topical in my own country of the UK. We've all had enough of lies and misinformation, so my speech is composed of three facts and one question.

Fact one: on 17 October, the UK Intelligence and Security Committee of our Parliament finalised its report on allegations of Russian interference in UK elections, particularly the June 2016 Brexit referendum. It passed that report to Downing Street. It should have been published within ten days, according to the Chairman of that Committee.

Fact two: a leaked early version of that report found that Russia could indeed have influenced the outcome of the referendum and also raises questions about links between Boris Johnson – our current Prime Minister, the Conservative Party, and Russian donors.

Fact three: that same Boris Johnson has sat on that report and refused to publish it according to the normal timetable. The Chairman of the Committee, Dominic Grieve, has called that action jaw-dropping and said that Boris Johnson's excuses are bogus.

So my question is this: what is it that Boris Johnson is so desperate to hide? You don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to deduce the answer.

(Applause)

Hélène Laporte (ID). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, lorsqu'on aborde la question des ingérences extérieures dans nos élections, il est bon ton de taper systématiquement sur la Russie. Ces accusations relèvent de l'obsession et n'ont vocation qu'à justifier des sanctions à l'égard des Russes ainsi qu'un rapprochement plus atlantiste, comme si la guerre froide était toujours d'actualité.

On en oublie les ingérences internes à nos démocraties. Car, qui a voté une résolution afin de sanctionner le gouvernement de Viktor Orbán, officiellement pour violation de l'état de droit, officieusement pour le refus du plan de relocalisation des migrants? C'est le Parlement européen. Qui regarde avec bienveillance les ONG, comme celle de George Soros, qui font la promotion de l'immigration de masse et servent les intérêts politiques contraires à ceux de nos nations? C'est l'Union européenne. Qui s'est montré intraitable avec le gouvernement britannique sur les négociations du Brexit afin de dissuader toute autre initiative de même nature? C'est également l'Union européenne. Pour finir, qui a créé en 2015 une *task force* chargée de contrôler les informations qualifiées de douteuses circulant sur la toile? Dans la langue française, cela s'appelle la censure. Là encore, c'est l'Union européenne.

La désinformation à laquelle vous ne cessez de faire référence ne serait-elle pas, finalement, une information qui ne rentre pas dans le cadre de votre politiquement correct? Nous pouvons en effet nous poser la question. Ces éléments démontrent une nouvelle fois qu'en matière d'ingérence, l'Union européenne et son Parlement ne sont pas en reste, raison pour laquelle cette institution perd en effet toute légitimité à débattre de ce sujet.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, uplitanje stranih država u izborne procese u Europi, bilo da se radi o nacionalnoj ili nadnacionalnoj razini, nije ništa novo. Strane sile oduvijek pokušavaju ostvariti politički utjecaj na europske države, između ostalih i na takav način. Zbog tehnološkog napretka danas smo možda izloženiji nego prije, ali je namjera vanjskih faktora ista.

Važno je zaštititi se od stranog utjecaja na naše izborne i općenito političke procese. To je u interesu naših građana koji su često meta propagandnih djelatnosti, posebno osmišljenih da ih dovedu u zabludu.

Ali jednako je tako važno da prestanemo sami sebe obmanjivati pripisujući drugima vlastite propuste. Rastuće nezadovoljstvo političkim elitama i demokratskim institucijama u Europi samo je dijelom plod strane propagande, a puno više lošeg rada europskih političara koji su se udaljili od naroda.

Frances Fitzgerald (PPE). – Madam President, we are living in an age of misinformation. We are facing a crisis in our 'information ecosystem', as Lydia Polgreen described it. The viral spread of misinformation has wreaked havoc in our political systems, namely through interference in our democracies and elections. To emphasise the threat we face: in the first quarter of 2019, 2.2 billion fake Facebook accounts were removed, and Twitter challenged almost 77 million spam or fake accounts. From the Brexit referendum, to the election of President Trump, to the recent European elections, all have been subjected in some way to disinformation campaigns.

While fake news proliferates, high-quality journalism suffers. Populations are best served by a political system held to account by a well briefed, expert media who are sceptical – not cynical, and inquisitive – not inquisitorial. Consensus is not truth. Rumour is not fact. Defamation is not heroism. Career destruction is not systemic reform. Europeans recognise the threat of misinformation, and they want action.

A recent Eurobarometer poll showed that 83% of Europeans think that fake news is a threat to our democracy. There is a serious urgency to this. Doing nothing risks the fundamental foundations of our democracy. We need a quick-access route to deal with online lies. For too long, social media has operated as a Wild West of human discourse. The snowflake never needs to feel responsible for the Avalanche. We must have well-funded cybersecurity systems in place to counter the threat of fake news and foreign interference, with all Member States working together. Without proper facts and information, our laws will have little value. Without proper facts, our citizens cannot be confident in our institutions, including this one. So for this mandate, let's ensure that our political system places the highest value in truth and fact.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, comisaria Jourová, muchos esta mañana hemos votado con una amplia mayoría el apoyo a la Comisión de la que usted es vicepresidenta. Esperamos mucho de su equipo: un presupuesto al alza —por fin con recursos propios—, la restauración de la agenda social, pero sobre todo la defensa del estado de Derecho, la democracia y los valores europeos, de los que usted es responsable en su cartera de Valores y Transparencia.

En todas las lenguas de la Unión se han relatado en esta sesión, de nuevo, episodios de interferencia en procesos electorales. Imposible que yo no mencione la investigación activada en la Audiencia Nacional, en España, por la injerencia del siniestro grupo de espías rusos expertos en desestabilización de la Unidad 29155.

Pero no están solos, ni es la única amenaza. También el siniestro Steve Bannon habita entre nosotros, y siempre en favor del populismo, la ultraderecha y el nacionalismo reaccionario. Y, por tanto, no basta solo con poner en marcha un *working group*, ni tampoco con la comisión especial que requerimos en este Parlamento Europeo. Es imprescindible invertir en una arquitectura de inteligencia europea que defienda la democracia. Nada hay más importante que defender los valores europeos y defender la democracia en la Unión Europea.

Katalin Cseh (Renew). – Madam President, behind the Article 7 procedure there is George Soros, as his people cannot accept that Hungary will not welcome migrants. Cohesion funds will be taken away and given to Soros' organisations. We won't be a European colony. Just a few examples of good old school disinformation at its finest, straight from the heart of the European Union. Fake news, bots, troll farms, propaganda, disinformation. In case you haven't noticed, we are at war, and the stakes could not be higher. We are fighting for truth. Not our truth, not their truth, not anyone's truth: it is the fight for objective facts and reality and – eventually – our sanity, and we are losing.

We live in an era where facts and fiction are intertwined, and the border between arguments and propaganda is blurred. But I believe we have much to protect: the very foundation of our democracies depends on our ability to defend our values, our principles, and the right to objective truth. The EU as a community of shared values must be at the forefront of this fight. With Brexit, we have already witnessed how disinformation leads to disintegration, and for once, history should not repeat itself.

Maximilian Krah (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Ich bin im kommunistischen Teil Deutschlands aufgewachsen, und ich erinnere mich noch an die Schulbücher, in denen erklärt wurde, dass der RIAS in Berlin oder Radio Free Europe versuchen würden, die demokratischen Prozesse des Sozialismus zu unterminieren. Insofern stelle ich fest: Ich komme offenbar aus der Zukunft, wenn ich die bemerkenswerten Verschwörungstheorien der Kollegin Gibson höre oder den spanischen Vorschlag, am besten gleich mit einem europäischen Geheimdienst der freien Meinungsäußerung und dem Wettbewerb der Nachrichten den Garaus zu machen.

Meine Damen und Herren, die Leute wählen deshalb Parteien, die Ihnen nicht gefallen, weil ihnen Ihre Politik nicht gefällt. Die Leute informieren sich deshalb aus objektiven – auch ausländischen – Nachrichtenquellen, weil sie merken, dass sie von den öffentlich-rechtlichen, aber auch den regierungsnahen privaten Fernseh- und Radiosendern nicht ausreichend informiert werden.

Wer konnte denn im öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunk erklären, warum Trump gewählt wurde oder wie es zum Krieg in der Ostukraine kommt? Nichts als Verschwörungstheorien findet man da, aber keine profunde Analyse.

Wer sich also um die Demokratie Gedanken macht, der muss den Wettstreit der Meinungen und die Konkurrenz der Anbieter herstellen, aber sicherlich nicht mit Geheimdiensten versuchen, andere Meinungen mundtot zu machen.

Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Komisarz! To Pani pierwszy dyżur, pierwsze wystąpienie po wyborze Komisji Europejskiej, więc gratulacje! Głosowałem na Panią po raz drugi w ciągu pięciu lat i życzę Pani i Komisji powodzenia. Ja powiem w ten sposób, że trzeba mówić bardzo otwarcie o tej ingerencji z zewnątrz. Nie wolno tego demonizować. Jest to duży problem, choć też nie byłoby dobrze, żeby ci, którzy przegrywają wybory, upatrywali źródła porażki właśnie w ingerencji czynników zewnętrznych. To nie jest poważne.

Przestrzegalbym przed takim bardzo jednostronnym spoglądaniem na ten problem, to znaczy, że jeżeli ja słyszę w wystąpieniu, że nie ma w ogóle problemu Rosji i że jest tylko Steve, a nie ma Władimira Władimirowicza, to mam takie wrażenie, że ktoś tu jest w świecie wirtualnym, i zapraszam do realu. Oczywiście Rosja – ale nie tylko Rosja – ingeruje, powinniśmy to wiedzieć, powinniśmy to napiętnować, powinniśmy tu być solidarni.

Bartosz Arłukowicz (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Żyjemy w ciekawych, ale bardzo trudnych czasach. Żyjemy w czasach, w których żeby zdestabilizować inne państwo, nie trzeba już wjeżdżać czołgami czy płynąć łodziami podwodnymi. Ale skoro żyjemy w ciekawych czasach, musimy uświadomić sobie, jak wielka odpowiedzialność spoczywa w rękach polityków. Jestem lekarzem i moje wykształcenie nauczyło mnie tego, że aby dobrze problem rozwiązać, trzeba go dobrze zdiagnozować, czyli mówić prawdę o tym, co się dzieje tu i teraz. Bezpieczeństwo naszych dzieci – nie nas, ale naszych dzieci – leży dzisiaj w naszych rękach i zależy od naszych decyzji.

Powinniśmy uświadomić sobie to, że wielkim wyzwaniem dla naszych przeciwników, dla wielkich mocarstw jest dokładnie destabilizacja i chaos w Unii Europejskiej. Nie trzeba wyważać otwartych drzwi, wystarczy zapoznać się ze strategią Gierasimowa (Gierasimow był szefem Sztabu Generalnego Sił Zbrojnych Federacji Rosyjskiej). Napisał on w siedmiu punktach, co trzeba zrobić, żeby zdestabilizować inne państwo, nie wjeżdżając tam ani jednym czołgiem. Odpowiedzmy sobie na pytanie, czy te procesy nie dzieją się w naszych państwach.

Punkt pierwszy strategii Gierasimowa to dezintegracja społeczna, przeciwstawienie sobie grup społecznych, budowanie lepszych i gorszych. Punkt drugi strategii Gierasimowa to dewaluacja elit i wymiana elit spośród ludzi, którzy dzisiaj elity stanowią, na ludzi, którymi będzie łatwiej sterować i manipulować. Punkt trzeci to dezorganizacja administracji państwowej – odpowiedzmy sobie na pytanie, czy to nie dzieje się dzisiaj w Unii Europejskiej i w państwach członkowskich. Kolejny punkt, czwarty, strategii Gierasimowa to centralizacja władzy – musimy sobie odpowiedzieć, czy dzisiaj władza nie ulega właśnie centralizacji, którą jest łatwiej potem sterować? W końcu następuje zmiana historii, zmiana bohaterów historycznych, zmiana prawdy historycznej. I ostatni punkt strategii to niszczenie prawa. Odpowiedzmy sobie na pytanie, czy Gierasimow nie przewidział skutecznej metody dezinformacji i chaosu.

VORSITZ: OTHMAR KARAS*Vizepräsident*

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, a democracia faz parte da nossa matriz genética. Por ela temos lutado arduamente e somos uma referência global do Estado de direito, liberdade de expressão e escolha política.

Mas hoje estamos colocados perante novos desafios, difusos, disseminados pela torrente cada vez mais forte de informação, verdadeira ou manipulada, indutora de emoções e contextos que influenciam os resultados e a escolha dos eleitores, a partir de territórios virtuais não delimitados pelas fronteiras físicas.

E por isso temos que travar um combate global. E que armas temos? A literacia digital generalizada e o acesso universal à Internet são uma base fundamental. A aplicação dos valores partilhados, como embrião de uma identidade digital europeia, é muito urgente.

O aprofundamento de um código ético interno e incluído nas nossas parcerias internacionais faz, Senhora Comissária, mais sentido do que nunca.

Temos que nos unir em torno da defesa da democracia europeia e fazer de cada cidadão um soldado neste combate, antes que outros os continuem a recrutar para, em última análise, nos enfraquecerem.

Dragoș Tudorache (Renew). – Domnule președinte, dragi colegi, aș vrea să vorbesc astăzi despre responsabilități. Prima este responsabilitatea celor care comandă, dirijează sau finanțează acțiuni de subminare a proceselor democratice în statele noastre membre. Să o spunem foarte clar, e vorba de o formă de agresiune asimetrică de care este responsabilă Rusia și răspunsul nostru politic trebuie să rămână cât se poate de ferm. În al doilea rând vorbim de o responsabilitate a celor care gestionează tehnologiile folosite pentru asemenea acțiuni subversive. Codul de conduită semnat cu marile platforme online e un pas bun. Dacă e și suficient, rămâne de văzut. Noi trebuie să ne păstrăm spațiul politic de analiză și apreciere și să cerem acestor platforme un grad cât mai ridicat de transparență și responsabilitate. A treia este răspunderea noastră, a instituțiilor europene. Dacă luăm în serios aceste amenințări la adresa democrației, trebuie să alocăm resursele necesare pentru a le combate. E o responsabilitate pe care vă propun să o discutăm serios în cadrul dezbaterilor bugetare viitoare. Mulțumesc.

Jaak Madison (ID). – Mr President, this is a very important topic, and foreign and local interference in European democracies and elections is a clear and direct violation of Member States sovereignty and should be treated as such. It is key for all Member States to ensure that, specifically in relation to cyber threats, security policies are developed and effectively implemented.

However, the current trend of blaming an unfavourable election result on foreign interference must end. The left has been notorious in blaming election results that do not suit them on interference from a foreign power. This not only undercuts European democracies but also underestimates the intelligence of European voters. Equally, the impact of the distribution of this information by foreign powers and local actors alike must not be underestimated.

It should also be pointed out that right-wing political parties have been disproportionately and unfairly accused of using and benefiting from such disinformation. In this regard, I will therefore emphasise that all forms of disinformation should be countered even when directed against right-wing political parties, in accordance with the European values of equality, rule of law and democracy.

Geoffroy Didier (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, dans ce débat, il ne s'agit pas d'empêcher les dirigeants d'un pays étranger d'afficher leurs préférences et, encore moins, leur vision du monde. On se souvient, par exemple, que François Hollande avait – à tort, certes – fait d'Hillary Clinton la future présidente des États-Unis en 2016. On se rappelle qu'un an plus tard, Emmanuel Macron avait suggéré aux Polonais – non sans une certaine arrogance, d'ailleurs – de se doter de meilleurs dirigeants.

L'objet de ce débat ne doit pas être de souhaiter que des responsables politiques ne puissent plus donner leur avis. La vraie question, c'est celle de la nature des moyens employés. Aujourd'hui, certaines puissances étrangères ont bien compris que plus de la moitié des Européens s'informent uniquement sur les réseaux sociaux. Grâce à un usage détourné des algorithmes, des bots et de l'intelligence artificielle, beaucoup d'internautes européens finissent malheureusement par davantage croire des anonymes, qui postent des avis diffamatoires et haineux, que leurs dirigeants, qui ont pourtant été élus démocratiquement. Sur Twitter, plus de 150 000 comptes russophones ont été créés en anglais en 2016, quelques semaines avant le référendum sur le Brexit, et ce pour déstabiliser l'Europe.

Je vous annonce que je saisisrai ces prochains jours la toute nouvelle Commission européenne – que je félicite – pour qu'elle mette en place un programme de détection des messages convergents venus des puissances étrangères, et ce pour alerter la population sur les réseaux sociaux en temps de campagne électorale. Les moyens technologiques de cette ambition existent parfaitement, et le rôle de l'Union européenne est d'être beaucoup plus offensif et d'aller concurrencer les manipulateurs sur leur propre terrain. Les internautes européens n'ont quand même pas vocation à devenir les valets numériques des intérêts russes ou américains.

Faisons nôtre cette belle conviction d'Hannah Arendt, qui disait: «Le totalitarisme, c'est quand la distinction entre le fait et la fiction n'existe plus». La naïveté de l'Europe n'étant malheureusement pas une fiction, faisons au moins de la réactivité de l'Union européenne une réalité.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, felicitări, doamna comisar, pentru realegere. Sigur, nu e prima dată când dezbaterem acest subiect. Uniunea Europeană declară încă din 2015 că se va ocupa în mod activ de dezinformare și știri false. Însă iată ce avem acum: jumătate din țările membre OECD unde au fost alegeri în 2018 au fost vizate de atacuri cibernetice, de trei ori mai mult decât în 2015. Evident, trăim în epoca rețelelor sociale și alegătorii sunt principala țintă, chiar mai mult decât candidații în alegeri. Știm toți în țara noastră că se întâmplă acest lucru. Ingerințele străine online au ca obiectiv imediat, evident, manipularea informațiilor și schimbarea opiniei alegătorului. Nu trebuie, doamna comisar, să fugim de reglementare. Democrația nu înseamnă numai drepturi, nu înseamnă haos. Fără a îngrădi libertatea presei, trebuie să luăm decizia și aveți rezoluția Parlamentului. Comisia nou aleasă trebuie să vină cu o propunere concretă. Nu putem lăsa fiecare stat să reglementeze. Informațiile trec peste graniță și de aceea cred că trebuie să avem măsuri concrete pentru eliminarea știrilor false și influența în alegeri în fiecare țară.

Irina Von Wiese (Renew). – Mr President, despite knowing that there was large-scale foreign interference in the 2016 Brexit referendum, the UK has failed to implement measures to protect voters from malicious influence online. Experts, including the Commons Digital Committee, have warned that the UK is vulnerable to foreign meddling – notably by Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump, who both have a keen interest in fostering Brexit and weakening the EU.

We urgently need to update our electoral laws and improve social media regulation. Previous UK governments have outlined plans to improve transparency and clamp down on digital election interference, but nothing has happened. Boris Johnson has neglected the integrity of our democracy and ignored his duty to protect citizens. Why? Because investigating this vital issue raises uncomfortable questions about the legality of the 2016 Brexit referendum. Is this the reason Johnson refuses to disclose the Russian interference report? It is time to get rid of Johnson, his Brexit and his lies, and to give the British people the brighter future they deserve.

Mathilde Androuët (ID). – Monsieur le Président, bien que ce débat ait été demandé pour dire du mal de la Russie, permettez-moi de déroger à votre règle afin de dénoncer une ingérence plus proche, celle de la Turquie. En effet, ce pays ne cache pas ses ambitions européennes, qui ne sont pas franchement amicales.

Les récents forages turcs au large de Chypre confirment la fâcheuse tendance qu'a la Turquie de faire fi de l'intégrité territoriale européenne. Le chantage permanent et l'envoi de colonnes de migrants en Europe est aussi une démonstration de force insupportable que nous ne devrions pas accepter. L'ingérence politique est criante lorsque M. Erdoğan, après que l'Allemagne et les Pays-Bas ont légitimement empêché des ministres turcs de faire campagne pour le renforcement de ses pouvoirs sur leur territoire, s'est vexé et a exhorté sa diaspora à faire beaucoup d'enfants pour jouer sur l'avenir de l'Europe. Cela s'appelle une menace de conquête démographique.

Lors des dernières élections législatives en France, nous avons vu fleurir 68 candidatures du parti Égalité et justice, parti islamiste qui souhaite développer le communautarisme turc en Europe. L'ingérence se retrouve également dans la liberté de la presse. Lorsque M. Erdoğan est critiqué en une des magazines, des hommes de main attaquent les kiosques de journaux. Quand la France débat de l'interdiction du port du voile des accompagnatrices scolaires – sujet purement intérieur – le ministre des affaires étrangères turc condamne le Sénat français par la voie officielle.

Toute cette liste, hélas non exhaustive, prouve qu'il serait bienvenu que la Turquie s'occupe de ses affaires et cesse de vouloir revivre les plus grandes heures de l'Empire ottoman, mort il y a de cela un siècle. Le sultan Erdoğan n'a pas vocation à devenir empereur d'Europe. Il serait bon que notre instance le lui rappelle.

Isabel Benjumea Benjumea (PPE). – Señor presidente, la diferencia entre una dictadura y una democracia está precisamente en el hecho de poder votar en libertad cada cierto tiempo para confirmar o cambiar a los gobernantes. Es uno de los derechos y obligaciones más importantes que tienen los ciudadanos.

Como española, les hablo con conocimiento de causa y no puedo pasar por alto, en este debate sobre el ejercicio libre del derecho a votar, el testimonio de heroísmo de aquellos que, en el País Vasco y en Navarra, durante décadas, defendieron la democracia y la libertad bajo la presión de la banda terrorista ETA, que mantenía un brazo político dependiente de ella, y se aprovechaba del terror que provocaba para obtener una representación política que no le correspondía. Por cierto, uno de sus líderes destacados, el señor Pernando Barrena, condenado por pertenecer a la banda terrorista ETA, es hoy eurodiputado.

Señorías, hoy afrontamos una nueva amenaza exterior, provocada por quienes desean el fracaso de nuestro ambicioso proyecto político. Las injerencias en los procesos electorales son el instrumento de los enemigos de las sociedades abiertas, los regímenes autoritarios y las fuerzas populistas. Se trata de una amenaza global que hemos visto con las *fake news* en el *Brexit*, o en la injerencia en procesos electorales en la Unión Europea, como en Francia, y que también sufrimos en España durante la crisis del desafío secesionista en Cataluña en 2017.

Conscientes de ello, debemos asumir que vamos a recibir ataques permanentemente contra nuestra estabilidad, es decir, contra nuestra libertad. Algunos de esos ataques y amenazas resultan evidentes, otros aparentemente invisibles, pero igualmente perturbadores. Como sabemos, todos estos ataques pretenden lo mismo: desestabilizarnos, dividirnos, confundirnos y, por último, debilitarnos.

Por tanto, debemos reaccionar ya y defendernos de ellos, y para ello necesitamos más medios para detectar cómo lo hacen, más inteligencia compartida para prevenir sus efectos indeseables, más unidad para enfrentarnos juntos a nuestros adversarios y sus ataques. Necesitamos unas instituciones que garanticen la limpieza de los procesos electorales, y necesitamos incidir en la educación, en las humanidades, formando ciudadanos responsables. Si no protegemos que el proceso de votar se realice correctamente y en total libertad, estaremos aceptando la devaluación de la calidad democrática en nuestros países. Nos jugamos nuestra propia credibilidad.

Raphaël Glucksmann (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, nous voici encore une fois réunis pour débattre de l'ingérence de forces extérieures dans nos élections. Cette fois, c'est à la demande de nos amis anglais; avant, c'était à la demande de nos amis italiens, et cela continuera ainsi.

Qu'allons-nous faire face à cela? Allons-nous passer cinq ans à nous lamenter que Vladimir Poutine manipule notre système électoral? Allons-nous passer cinq ans à multiplier des résolutions creuses et non suivies d'effet? Nous, nous avons proposé une commission spéciale chargée d'enquêter sur ces ingérences et d'établir les moyens qui permettent de lutter contre. Mais pour de vils calculs politiques, vous n'avez pas voté pour cette commission, ce qui a retardé notre effort.

Alors, si nous sommes sérieux, nous devons arrêter de commenter les ingérences extérieures et nous devons agir. Mettons en place cette commission spéciale, faisons les recommandations qui protégeront nos démocraties et agissons, parce que nos adversaires, eux, n'attendent pas qu'on se réveille pour agir.

Naomi Long (Renew). – Mr President, in the middle of a UK general election campaign, it is right to be vigilant to the threats posed to our democracy by foreign powers, not least as the lessons of the Brexit referendum have not been learned. Investigative journalism first uncovered the dark money that flowed through Northern Ireland into Great Britain in the crucial last week of that campaign, but some of the murkier details have yet to be fully exposed. And across the UK, we still don't know the extent of the Russian interference in our politics, as Boris Johnson refuses to release the intelligence report into Russian covert actions in the UK. The way we consume information and conduct our politics in the digital age leaves us vulnerable to targeted propaganda and disinformation campaigns, including those orchestrated from overseas. Social media platforms have largely failed us. Just this week, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the World Wide Web, has called for action to tackle disinformation. But we should not ignore the old ways of distorting and disrupting democracy. In Northern Ireland candidates and parties have faced intimidation and threats by paramilitaries in this election, we must fight to continue to uphold the integrity of our democracy.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, zasahování do našich demokracií a voleb je skutečně mimořádně závažné téma. I já se připojuji ke svým kolegům. Samozřejmě k tomuto jednání docházelo i v minulosti, ale je otázka, jaké nástroje jsme schopni používat a jestli už jsme některé bitvy skutečně neprohráli, viz otázka například brexitu. Já sám si říkám, že pokud taková demokracie, náš vzor demokratických pravidel – Velká Británie –, tento soubor prohrála, jestli není opravdu vhodné využít nějakou celoevropskou akci. Já mám velkou důvěru v paní komisařku a velká očekávání máme, myslím, všichni. Do jejího portfolia patří právě hodnoty demokracie, svobodných voleb, které ona opakovaně vyzdvihuje. A my samozřejmě vnímáme, že tato hodnota je skutečně klíčová. Ty příklady, které byly uvedeny, jsou jenom špičkou ledovce. Vměšování do našich členských států probíhá frontálním útokem ze strany Ruska, Číny, ale i dalších aktérů. Byli zde již také zmíněni.

Ruské nástroje v zahraniční politice: ten první je vždycky jasný, lež. Dále *fake news*, šíření dezinformací a samozřejmě také dezintegrace těchto společností. Já bych si dovolil vyzdvihnout ze všech těch států, o kterých zde bylo hovořeno, například i Českou republiku a zprávu, kterou vydala Bezpečnostní informační služba České republiky. Cituji: „Rusko se podle Bezpečnostní informační služby pokouší manipulovat rozhodovacími procesy na všech úrovních státní správy. Využívá přitom ekonomické, politické, vojenské i informační tlaky a zdánlivé nedokonalosti státních institucí a demokratických procesů, například dlouhý legislativní proces, parlamentní diskuse nebo správní procedury.“

Já myslím, že tomuto nebezpečí nemůžeme čelit nějakou izolovanou akcí nebo kooperací pouze se soukromým sektorem. Toto vyžaduje skutečně celoevropskou akci a pevně věřím, že se jí dočkáme.

Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (S&D). – Mr President, what is the difference between the recent acts of interference in democratic procedures and meddling in domestic politics of other countries so well known from history? Due to the new communication techniques, it is possible to reach millions of people by sending them fake news and suggestive comments without disclosing the authors, thus depriving the receivers of any possibility to verify and interpret the news independently. Unfortunately, the worst is yet to come, and it will happen soon. The artificial intelligence revolution offers unlimited opportunities to create so-called deep fake. Voters in democratic countries will be totally disoriented. Democracy is at risk and should defend itself. This Parliament has a special mandate and responsibility in that regard. It should empower itself with new instruments to be able to execute its role.

Petras Auštrevičius (Renew). – Mr President, at the House of European history the exposition starts with introducing visitors to the myth about the abduction and seduction of Europe by a white bull. I am afraid that today's Europe, and to be more precise, the European Union, is facing a very similar attempt, only this time, instead of the charming god, we are under siege of internet trolls which, thanks to modern technology, do not even need to cross physical borders. These intruders are undermining our democratic processes and compromising our values.

The response to that must be seen as our joint fight for our common future. In my country, Lithuania, journalists and civil society were the first ones, and the most efficient ones, to expose Russian disinformation and to increase our societies' resilience. Last month we passed a resolution on foreign electoral interference and disinformation in our democracies. Colleagues, it's time to act and implement approaches listed in this resolution.

Milan Zver (PPE). – Gospod predsednik! Bolj kot smo spletno povezani, večja je verjetnost, da postanemo žrtev tistih, ki v kibernetnem prostoru kradejo podatke, delajo propagando, nadzirajo ljudi in sisteme, uničujejo infrastrukturo ali celo prirejajo volilne izide.

Število kibernetnih kriminalnih dejanj potencialno narašča, tarče bojevnikov 21. stoletja niso le vlade, multinacionalne organizacije, kot je NATO, gospodarstva in infrastruktura, ampak tudi nebojleni posamezniki.

Napadalci pa običajno niso volkovi samotarji. V kibernetni vojni, ki je postala globalni fenomen, tanke in vojake zamenjujejo strežniki in računalniški eksperti. V digitalnem okolju lahko en računalniški virus prinese večje opustošenje kot konvencionalni vojaški napad.

Dejstvo je, da ruski režim vodi kibernetno vojno proti Evropski uniji, ki jo razpozna kot naravnega sovražnika ravno zaradi naših vrednot in domnevno našega dekadentnega načina življenja.

Rusi so se dokazano vmešavali v kampanjo za brexit in posegali v evropske volitve. Do potankosti so dokumentirani tudi Putinovi naporji za vpliv na izid volitev v ZDA, kar je dokazala tudi preiskava FBI. A za ZDA me ne skrbi, saj so te grožnje pravočasno zaznali in vzpostavili imunost.

Bolj me skrbi za Evropo. Mislim, da zamujamo pri varnosti in zaščiti naših demokratičnih procesov in institucij. Grožnje protiobveščevalnih služb naraščajo tako v obsegu kot v kompleksnosti.

Sem pa vesel, da se predsednica Evropske komisije Ursula von der Leyen zaveda problema. Danes je omenila, da bo z novo agencijo za kibernetno varnost zagotovila usklajen evropski odgovor. Bolj bi mi bila sicer vseč beseda enoten odgovor, a tudi to je korak naprej.

Klára Dobrev (S&D). – Tisztelt Elnök Úr! Európában a huszadik században számos alkalommal láttuk, amikor a demokrácia, az alkotmányosság eszközeit felhasználva végül diktatúrák kerültek hatalomra, és mindegyiknek szörnyű és gyászos vége lett. És amikor azt hittük, hogy már magunk mögött tudjuk ezt az időszakot, azt látjuk, most itt a huszonegyedik században, hogy a szólásszabadság, – úgy is mondanám, hogy a szent szólásszabadság – mögé bújva törnek újra gonosz erők az európai demokráciára és szabadságra.

És persze pontosan látjuk, hogy Oroszország mindenáron veszekedést akar szítani Európában. Pontosan látjuk, hogy a célja az, hogy ne tudjunk erős Európát építeni. Csak teszi ezt úgy, hogy felhasználja közben szélsőséges pártok segítségét. Látjuk ezt Olaszországban, Franciaországban, Ausztriában, Nagy-Britanniában, és ami nekem a legfájdalmasabb, hogy Magyarországon, a saját kormányom működik közre az orosz dezinformációban.

Európának határozott eszközökre van szüksége, és cselekednie kell ez ellen.

Ivars Ijabs (Renew). – Dārgais prezidenta kungs, dārgā Jurovas kundze! Ja mēs gribam cīnīties pret maldinošas informācijas plūdiem un šo manipulāciju, mums šeit nepietiek pieņemti likumi. Mums ir vajadzīgas tādas digitālās tehnoloģijas, kas apsteigtu un neitralizētu demokrātijai naidīgos spēkus Krievijā, Ķīnā un visur citur, lai viņiem vienkārši neļautu graut mūsu vērtības.

Viens piemērs šeit ir tā sauktie dziļie viltojumi jeb *deepfakes*, kad ar mākslīgā intelekta palīdzību par kādu cilvēku tiek izplatīti maldinoši video un audio. Ļaunprātīgās rokās tie var ļoti nopietni apdraudēt vēlētāju iespējas izdarīt jebkādu informētu un patstāvīgu izvēli. To mēs varam apkarot tikai ar gudrākām tehnoloģijām, kas ļautu identificēt un izķert, un brīdināt pilsoņus par šādiem masveida meliem, taču tam ir nepieciešamas savlaicīgas investīcijas mākslīgā saprāta tehnoloģijās un par to ir jādomā tādās programmās kā Apvāršnis Eiropa, Digitālā Eiropa un Eiropas Aizsardzības fonds. Visbeidzot, cīņa ar meliem mūs neatbrīvo no pienākuma palīdzēt patiesībai, proti, godīgiem un godprātīgiem medijiem.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, continuano a ripetersi con preoccupante frequenza gravissimi episodi di ingerenza negli affari domestici nei nostri paesi.

La lista è lunga: da *Cambridge Analytica* a *Leave.EU*, i prestiti presso banche estere del 2016 al *Front National*, le accuse di finanziamento illecito verso il Partito della libertà austriaco, le indagini giornalistiche e giudiziarie nei confronti della Lega, in occasione della campagna per le elezioni europee. La notizia più recente riguarda la decisione del premier Boris Johnson di bloccare la pubblicazione di un *report* contenente i risultati di 18 mesi di indagine su possibili interferenze russe nel Regno Unito.

Abbiamo il dovere di difendere l'Unione europea e i nostri cittadini da questi attacchi, che rappresentano una forma di guerra ibrida volta a destabilizzare la nostra democrazia. Serve una commissione speciale del Parlamento europeo per far luce su questi fatti, una volta per tutte.

Quest'Aula ha già approvato lo scorso 10 ottobre, a larghissima maggioranza, una risoluzione molto netta, che dice chiaramente che abbiamo bisogno di nuovi strumenti. Chi ha votato contro? La Lega di Salvini, il *Brexit Party* di Farage, il *Rassemblement National* di Marine Le Pen. Che strano, proprio loro!

Maite Pagazaurtundúa (Renew). – Señor presidente, comisaria Jourová, necesitamos una comisión especial sobre las injerencias y la desinformación para acumular todos los datos —los que están hoy aquí y muchos otros— para defender la democracia en toda Europa.

Algunos hechos. Nuestro país es víctima de la injerencia rusa en Cataluña para debilitar a España a través de la desinformación —investigaciones judiciales lo acreditan—. Fondos privados rusos patrocinan portales web en español donde se difunden tesis ultraderechistas.

Más hechos. Esta semana hemos sabido que un espía de una unidad de élite rusa visitó España en 2016, cuando los medios del Kremlin publicaron las primeras noticias falsas sobre el independentismo catalán, y que un círculo de asesores del expresidente catalán Puigdemont —fugado de la justicia— ofreció cooperación diplomática a Rusia a cambio de que este país diera por válida la declaración ilegal de independencia en Cataluña en 2017.

Colaboran con nacionalpopulistas de uno y otro signo, porque, al debilitar a España, debilitan a toda la Unión Europea, debilitan nuestras democracias. Debemos, por tanto, comisaria, hacer todo el esfuerzo y tener una comisión especial de investigación: la necesitamos. Necesitamos defender nuestras democracias.

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Gospod predsednik! Naša nedavna resolucija pravi, da je Evropska unija uspešno izvajala vrsto ukrepov za zmanjšanje tujega vpliva na evropske parlamentarne volitve leta 2019.

Predlagam, da nova Evropska komisija nemudoma natančno preuči te dobre prakse in uspešne tehnologije in preveri možnosti njihovega prenosa na nacionalne ravni, saj nas samo v prihodnjem letu čaka več deset volitev v članicah Unije.

Pazljivi moramo biti, da zaradi velikega osredotočanja na Rusijo ne spregledamo dejanj iz drugih delov tujine.

Skrbi me večkrat poudarjena odvisnost Unije od tuje programske opreme, infrastrukture in tehnologij. Mislim, da lahko in moramo več sredstev in energije vložiti v razvoj lastnih virov zaščite, če želimo ostati vodilna celina demokracije.

In v luči dezinformacij in lažnih novic ponovno pozivam k sistematični vzgoji in izobraževanju o pomenu javnih medijev in odgovornega novinarstva v evropskih šolah in širši javnosti.

Michal Šimečka (Renew). – Pán predsedajúci, asi netreba hovoriť, že slobodné a spravodlivé voľby sú základom demokratického procesu. A problém, keď sú manipulované zo zahraničia, je potom v tom, že to vrhá tieň pochybnosti na nielen legitimitu parlamentu a vlád, ale vlastne aj na všetky rozhodnutia, ktoré sú potom urobené.

A nehovoríme iba o manipuláciách v online priestore, o fake news, o dezinformáciách, ale aj napríklad aj o financovaní politických strán, alebo politických kampaní zo zahraničia. A tie prípady poznáme aj z Európy, či už išlo o britské referendum, alebo aj o niektoré národné voľby.

A to čo treba urobiť, aj sa o tom veľa hovorilo, je samozrejme posilniť tie existujúce nástroje, StratCom East alebo early warning mechanism, a investovať do kybernetickej bezpečnosti, samozrejme tak, aby sme neohrozili tie hodnoty, ktoré chceme chrániť.

V každom prípade, čokoľvek urobíme, musíme to urobiť spoločne, lebo útok na demokratické voľby v jednej krajine je útok na demokraciu v celej Európskej únii.

Pierfrancesco Majorino (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, viviamo oggi, è bene ricordarlo, in democrazie solide, mature, che sono evidentemente la base essenziale per costruire pace e rispetto dei diritti e della dignità dei cittadini.

Democrazie solide e mature che potrebbero però riscoprirsi improvvisamente fragili, sotto attacchi spregiudicati di varia natura. Dalle campagne di disinformazione sui *social media* fino a presunti finanziamenti, diretti e non, abbiamo infatti assistito a ingerenze esterne preoccupanti e pericolose, che potrebbero anche moltiplicarsi e intensificarsi. Ingerenze che sono evidentemente a tutto vantaggio di forze che perseguono un obiettivo semplice: far saltare l'Europa, far saltare la nostra casa comune.

L'Europa deve reagire e ci sono molte zone d'ombra da guardare con sospetto. Pensiamo, ad esempio, al vergognoso comportamento dell'ex ministro dell'Interno italiano, Matteo Salvini, il quale non ha ancora avuto il coraggio politico di intervenire pubblicamente su quell'intreccio estremamente opaco che lo ha legato alla Russia attraverso incontri tutti da chiarire.

Ondřej Kovařík (Renew). – Mr President, first let me congratulate Madam Vice-President, and wish her every success in her new assignment. Democracies are fragile things and some of us know that better than others. The recent 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution reminded us of that fact once again. We must remain vigilant with regard to foreign interference, which could undermine the very basis of our societies: free and democratic elections. We must be also vigilant with regard to foreign actors using domestic proxies, which the Commission has identified as a growing threat. We need to reinforce our resilience.

The European democracy action plan should be a positive step towards combating electoral interference, but in developing it we must ensure that we strike the right balance between targeted action and protecting our democracy. Yet the authorities cannot work alone. The online environment is ripe for foreign interference. Therefore, we must have the right tools at our disposal to take action against disinformation. We need to take action to increase trust in our democracies, our governments, media and online platforms themselves.

Věra Jourová, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, the congratulations from the honourable Members just show me how responsible and strong I have to be, especially on this topic, because all the debates showed that this is really a very strong – and I would even say existentially important – political topic for the EU, because we are surrounded by actors whose doctrine for Europe is: 'the worse, the better'. And another doctrine: 'a lie repeated one hundred times becomes the truth'. We know this from the past, especially the former communist countries, and I lived half of my life in such a country. We were brainwashed by everyday propaganda, which was created in the Kremlin. That's why I am quite happy that I can work on this agenda, because it has something to do with Russian propaganda, which is spread in the EU.

We cannot only blame the external actors. We have also our own very hard-working and capable producers inside the EU, so we have to be very clear about who we have against us. We are taking lessons from some past events – you mentioned some elections in recent years, so this is exactly what we are doing, and we are clearly saying we will not be passive. We will continue what we have already started. We will upgrade the action plan against disinformation. We will upgrade all the efforts and plans around the elections. We will continue working with the electoral network, and we will continue working and cooperating with the platforms which have subscribed to the code of practice against disinformation.

There is plenty of work ahead of us, and I think the debate also showed where we still have the gaps. We work and will continue to work against illegal content. There is some illegal content which we recognise as illegal by our criminal laws. What I mean is child pornography, terrorist content and illegal hate speech, which is spread through online networks. My doctrine is: what's illegal, what's prohibited offline must also be prohibited online. There must be crime and punishment also in the online world. It cannot be a space without the law. I have had many debates with police and prosecutors, telling them that they have to go after the cases of detected and clearly illegal content online.

This disinformation is a little bit more problematic because we cannot clearly say that this is illegal content. Lying has always been here, and it was always recognised as not prohibited by the criminal law, and this is the legal issue. But we have to recognise the fact that this kind of lying, this kind of disinformation can be pretty dangerous. That's why we are working against disinformation in the framework of working and fighting against hybrid threats, because this is also connected with our security. We work with the definition of disinformation which is needed to be focused and where we are concentrating our attention. We work with the definition that disinformation is verifiably false or misleading information which is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public and which may cause public harm. For us, what's important is its verifiably false factor – we are not fighting against opinions, we are fighting against lies which are proven lies which we can counter through information. We will focus on intensity of disinformation attacks, on the level of threat – that's why I mentioned before that we will work with NATO also on this issue. We will look at the intensity of manipulation and we will look at intentions. So our response will also have to be coordinated and well targeted.

I think that we all are aware of the fact that the digital transformation and the revolution, having internet and social media, it is on one side a fantastic thing for a better life for the people. But also we have to see the risks. When I see what can happen from the sitting room – you can either initiate humanitarian help, save lives and the health of people or you can organise humanitarian crises or even genocide. Look at what happened to Rohingya. We also can see the cases when it is the starting point for revolutions. Look, for instance, at Maidan in Ukraine. It started on social media. So this is not a black and white picture. We have to support the good things, but also to address the risks.

I just want to briefly react on some of your comments on the budget – that it's underestimated. We have already increased the budget of StratCom and of the professional units which deal with the fight against disinformation. We have to be better in analytical work; we have to support research; we have to be better in detection and education. We will not pay for all that with big money, because we have something very valuable, we have started cooperation between the EU institutions, the Member States, with the platforms, with civil society and with research, because as you rightly said, we need to develop better technologies for detection and analysing disinformation which might cause harm to our society.

We have to protect better the elections and to be very serious about the strong demand for GDPR to be used, is applied to protect the private data of voters so that we don't have any further Cambridge Analytica cases. We have to do much better and more on transparency, including the transparency of the financing of political campaigning. We have the obligation to guarantee that in our Member States and in the EU there will not be the cases that the last elections will be the last free ones. You never know, but we have the obligation to guarantee that we will have free and fair elections. We must not have winners of the elections who will win because they can lie better. We must not have winners who will be better at using dirty money and dirty methods. I think that this is what we have to work together on.

I have many more comments, but I am quite far beyond the time. Thank you very much for your attention. I am looking forward to your cooperation and again, thank you for your support for the new Commission.

Tytti Tuppurainen, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this debate which is a really topical issue, and also a priority area for our presidency. It is indeed our obligation to spare no efforts to protect our elections and our democracies from foreign interference, in full respect of fundamental rights, such as freedom of speech, media and association.

Dear Members, many of you have referred in particular to Russian influence and we take note of this concern. Efforts to target malign actors, notably Russian sources, have been highlighted in the General Affairs Council Conclusions of February this year, and we will continue working horizontally across sectors and across borders, learning from each other through the exchange of information and best practices. Although progress has been made, we must remain vigilant.

We very much look forward to the European democracy action plan to be presented by the new Commission, and to working with you, and with you, Vice-President Jourová, to take forward the initiatives which will be proposed.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Dominique Bilde (ID), par écrit. – Qu'une puissance étrangère, de la Russie à la Chine, tente de promouvoir son image et ses intérêts, voire d'influer sur l'orientation politique d'États étrangers n'a en soi rien de surprenant. Les États-Unis et l'Union européenne ne s'y sont-ils pas eux-mêmes employés, par exemple par l'intermédiaire d'organisations comme celle de M. Soros, active notamment en Hongrie? Que dire également des allégations relatives à une possible ingérence chinoise au sein de certains pays comme l'Australie, à en croire des révélations récentes? On pourrait enfin parler de la Turquie de M. Erdogan, qui renforce chaque jour son emprise sur les Balkans. Ce haro sur la Russie est donc contestable sur le fond. Il est aussi, et ce n'est guère étonnant puisque l'inspiration de cette politique nous vient des États-Unis, en totale contradiction avec les intérêts vitaux, économiques et géostratégiques, des grandes nations européennes de la France à l'Italie, en passant par l'Allemagne. Enfin, il prend racine dans une insulte à la mémoire, je l'avais déjà exprimé entre ces murs, en rayant d'un trait de plume la contribution fondamentale de la Russie à la libération de l'Europe.

Romana Tomc (PPE), pisno. – Vedno več zunanjih sil se vmešava v našo notranjo politiko, s čimer vplivajo na realno politično dogajanje z namenom ustvarjanja nestabilnosti in širitve lažnih informacij.

Takšno vmešavanje ogroža našo notranjo demokracijo. Zato je ključnega pomena, da se posvetimo ozaveščanju državljanov, ki morajo biti zmožni razlikovati med lažnimi in resničnimi informacijami.

Del svoje odgovornosti morajo sprejeti tudi tehnološki velikani. Raziskave so namreč pokazale, da je bilo med volitvami v EP okrog 50 milijonov Evropejcev izpostavljenih lažnim novicam preko družabnih medijev.

Države članice morajo s skupno politiko zaščititi temelje demokracije in se odločno upreti zunanjim poskusom spodkopavanja ugleda EU.

16. Sytuacja w krajach sąsiedztwa wschodniego (debata)

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über die Erklärung der Vizepräsidentin der Kommission und Hohen Vertreterin der Union für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik zu den Entwicklungen in der östlichen Nachbarschaft (2019/2934(RSP)).

Ich darf die Vizepräsidentin der Kommission, Frau Mogherini, recht herzlich in unserem Kreis willkommen heißen.

Nachdem es wahrscheinlich das letzte Mal ist, dass ich den Vorsitz habe, wenn Sie zu uns sprechen, ist es mir schon ein Anliegen, Ihnen dafür zu danken, dass Sie trotz Ihrer globalen Aufgaben so viel Zeit in diesem Hause verbracht haben, und dafür, wie Sie Ihre Arbeit auch im Verhältnis zum Europäischen Parlament ausgeübt haben. Herzlichen Dank für diese Arbeit und Ihre Präsenz hier im Hause.

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, thank you for your very kind words. Indeed, I was first of all thinking, I think it's the third or fourth time that I say goodbye to this Hemicycle either here or in Brussels but indeed it is a pleasure to be back for the last session in which I will be in office, and just to reassure you that not only will I take the debates tonight, but also the urgencies tomorrow and the vote tomorrow, so I will be there until the very last moment possible and that is indeed somehow a sign of dedication and recognition of the work that this Parliament is doing, in particular on foreign policy.

Let me also thank you for the opportunity with this debate to look back at these five years of work with our Eastern partners. I remember very well when I took office in 2014 that was the most important element of our foreign and security policy agenda for sure. I can now proudly say that we have become closer, as the European Union, to all our Eastern partners, to all six of them, in different ways, and I believe we have managed to improve the situation of each and every one of them in this partnership and through this partnership even if, obviously, challenges remain, and I will try to go briefly through the achievements, the positive sides, but also the shortcomings and the things on which we will, I think, still need to work a lot together.

I believe that this positive path that we have followed has been possible because our work has been focused always on our greatest common interests that we share between the European Union and our Eastern partners, and that is our people, the people of Europe, whether they live inside or outside the European Union. Indeed, the 20 deliverables that we are implementing within the Eastern Partnership focus on the issues our people care the most about – jobs, energy security, education, strong civil society, independent media – things that are indeed on top of our citizens' agendas.

In these years, we have put in place ambitious association agreements and free-trade areas with Georgia, with Moldova and Ukraine. Their citizens can now also travel to the European Union without a visa when they come for business, for tourism or to visit family. We have also achieved good progress in trade, energy, connectivity or the digital sphere. At the same time, we need to do more in the fields of rule of law, judiciary and fighting corruption.

Earlier this year we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership together with our partners, and we decided to launch a broad consultation process on the future of this Partnership. We have collected now more than 200 contributions coming not only from governments and civil society, but also academia, the business community, Members of the European Parliament and other stakeholders, and I want to thank you for the contributions you have given us.

I am proud I can now leave to you and to my successor this huge capital of ideas, achievements, but also aspirations and dreams, as a very solid foundation for the next Eastern Partnership summit and for the future of our Partnership itself. Of course each of the six countries has a different situation and different aspirations too, so let me very briefly go through them.

Ukraine has faced unparalleled challenges, with Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Since 2014, we have put together for Ukraine the biggest support package in the history of the European Union. We have invested more in Ukraine than in any other country in the world and no other partner has invested in Ukraine as much as we have done.

This has led to some very important tangible results. I would say that Ukraine today is a stronger, more resilient country than it used to be. The new government has taken a bold approach to reforms as the people of Ukraine expect substantial change on the rule of law, on the fight against corruption and the prosecution of bank fraud.

In recent months, positive developments have also materialised on the security side, mainly thanks to Ukraine's constructive approach and the Normandy Four Summit on 9 December is now an opportunity for substantial progress.

Our priorities are the same as those of our friends in the Eastern Partnership countries, be it security, good jobs, good governance or institutions that they can trust and rely on. This is also the case in the Republic of Moldova, where we have supported structural reforms to fight corruption, improve the electoral framework, and to ensure an independent and accountable justice system. Moldova now has a new government and the need for genuine reform remains.

As always, the European Union, is ready to support reforms in all possible ways and as always our support remains conditional. Our support is – and I believe will continue to be – focused in particular on reforms to fight corruption and vested interests and in ensuring that state institutions preserve, or rather sometimes build, their autonomy and are not politicised.

Moving to Armenia. The government has committed to substantial democratic reforms in line with our partnership agreement. In fact, Armenia considers the agreement with the European Union as a true blueprint for reforms and we are proud of that. Our support to the reform process has increased after last year's political revolution, including to the ongoing justice reform and I am confident that this Partnership will become even closer in the years ahead.

With Azerbaijan the work continues in order to finalise a new agreement. We want an ambitious agreement in line with international standards, one that ranges from human rights to the support of the diversification of their economy. We will also continue to work for the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, encouraging and supporting dialogue at the highest level between Armenia and Azerbaijan. We fully support the mediation efforts and the proposals of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, including through the work of our Special Representative.

The European Union was born as a peace project. Building peace is our DNA, it is our *raison d'être*. It goes to the core of who we are. We need I believe to continue investing enormously on this, as conflict has not yet disappeared from our continent. On the contrary, the security situation along the administrative boundary line with the Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia has worsened in recent months. That is why we are increasing our EU monitoring mission's presence on the ground, because our support to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity is not just a statement or a declaration of principle: it is the foundation of our daily concrete work on the ground.

Georgia is a close and reliable ally in the neighbourhood in our Partnership, and this is precisely why we don't shy away when we see risks – as today we see the risk in the country of a backsliding on some important reforms in the rule of law area.

Finally, on Belarus. The recent parliamentary elections were somehow a lost opportunity to deliver on international standards and we have called on the authorities to implement electoral reforms before next year's presidential elections. You will know that we have divergences with Belarus, particularly on human rights, yet I'm convinced the only way forward is to continue engaging and to finalise our partnership priorities. This would be the best way, not only to work on our mutual interests, such as the economy or nuclear safety, but also to better address the human rights situation, which is so important for us.

So putting people first was our approach throughout these five years, with all the six partners, as diverse as they are, with a differentiated approach respectfully, and we've always focused on people and not on geopolitics, and I want to close on this: to stress once again something that I have discussed several times, not only with our partners in the East of Europe, but also with our interlocutors a little bit further east, explaining clearly that our Eastern Partnership is not, and I believe will never be, against anyone – it's for. It's for our people. It's for improving living standards, including democratic standards, for a more peaceful European continent based on partnership and cooperation.

I went to close my short remarks by thanking you and this Parliament for all the support you have given to our work with our Eastern Partners because, in particular in this field, the work of Parliament has been key in liaising with the national parliaments through your many delegations, through your many visits, and this has been a fundamental pillar in accompanying our work, not only with the institutions, but also the societies of our six Eastern Partners.

(Applause)

David McAllister, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, sehr verehrte Hohe Vertreterin und Vizepräsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren! Wir haben es gerade von der Hohen Vertreterin gehört: Die Östliche Partnerschaft ist ein wichtiges Instrument, um die Transformation von ehemals autoritären, sozialistischen Systemen hin zu demokratischen, rechtsstaatlichen und marktwirtschaftlichen Ländern zu fördern.

Aus meiner Sicht sind es drei Ziele, die die weitere Gestaltung der Östlichen Partnerschaft jetzt begleiten sollten: Erstens: Die Europäische Union sollte die politische und wirtschaftliche Integration der östlichen Partnerländer zu einer strategischen Priorität des nächsten Jahrzehnts machen. Das gilt insbesondere für die Ukraine, für Georgien und für Moldau, mit denen wir bereits vertiefte und umfassende Assoziierungsabkommen vereinbart haben.

Zweitens: Dieser Integrationsprozess erfordert von uns als EU eine klare, konsequente Strategie und aktive Unterstützung und – auf der anderen Seite – ernsthafte Bemühungen von unseren Partnern. Es gilt – und das haben wir oft betont in diesem Hohen Hause – der Grundsatz „mehr für mehr“, *more for more*, aber – daran darf eben auch kein Zweifel bestehen – auch der Grundsatz „weniger für weniger“, *less for less*. Und so, wie es die Hohe Vertreterin gerade erläutert hat, sollten wir uns bei den Anreizen für weitere Reformfortschritte konzentrieren auf die Bereiche Demokratie, Rechtsstaatlichkeit, unabhängige Justiz und Kampf gegen die Korruption.

Drittens: Um die Dynamik der Östlichen Nachbarschaft zu nutzen, ist es notwendig, dass die Europäische Union in der Tat weiter voranschreitet und einen qualitativ differenzierten Ansatz verfolgt. Einen Beitrag dazu könnte die von Andrius Kubilius – der hier im Plenum sitzt und gleich das Wort ergreifen wird – maßgeblich initiierte Trio-Strategie 2030 für die Beziehungen mit der Ukraine, mit Georgien und mit Moldau leisten.

Die Östliche Partnerschaft ist auch Teil einer langfristigen Strategie gegenüber Russland, denn die Erfolgsgeschichten der mit der EU assoziierten Länder können auch den Menschen in Russland Hoffnung geben, dass positive Veränderungen möglich sind. Diese Ziele sollten wir als Europäisches Parlament in enger Zusammenarbeit mit der heute neu gewählten Europäischen Kommission entschlossen vorantreiben. Und diese Ziele sollten rechtzeitig vor dem entsprechenden Gipfel im nächsten Jahr vorgelegt werden.

And finally, dear Federica, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, your committee in this European Parliament, let me say a word of thank you. Like nearly every Wednesday during plenary sessions in Strasbourg, you're sitting on your seat discussing foreign policy with interested colleagues from all the political groups, wholeheartedly let me once again thank you for the excellent work you have done in the last five years. I'm saying that as a representative of the EPP to a socialist. We always had a wonderful cooperation. I wish you all the best for your future and hopefully we will come together at some other stage again. Thank you so much, Federica.

Kati Piri, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, while today's debate is more generally about the Eastern Partnership, allow me to focus on two countries specifically – Georgia and Azerbaijan.

Let me start with recent developments which are to my group's concern in Georgia. Large protests are currently held in Tbilisi, since the government failed to deliver on its commitment to change the electoral code in 2020 to a full proportional system. This promise was given to the Georgian voters and we expect all Georgian parties to deliver on this promise. While Georgia did come a long way in democracy during the last few years, the current political crisis risks great instability in the country and that's something that Georgia can simply not afford. We expect from all political parties that dialogue is initiated on how to solve the current deadlock.

Then in Azerbaijan, which is far from Georgia's level of democracy, the Aliyev dynasty has a horrible track record when it comes to human rights. Only last month, authorities have violently dispersed peaceful rallies of opposition parties and dozens of participants were detained, beaten and mistreated. Illegal wiretapping of EU diplomats in private conversations with opposition and civil society makes their job impossible, and the failure of the EU to confront all this is sometimes tied to a fear that Azerbaijan may turn to Moscow. Well, I believe that already happened a long time ago and now we see unfortunately the confirmation. High Representative, let me also, on behalf of the S&D Group, thank you for the last 5 years. We have always been proud to see you heading our Foreign Service, being the face of the EU's foreign policy and we only wish you all the best in the future.

Petras Auštrevičius, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Mr President, High Representative, no goodbyes yet and thank you indeed from the very start for the cooperation we have had with ALDE and the Renew Group along and looking forward for your future. I don't know what position you will take but I am sure our roads will cross and we will have a good and effective cooperation.

The Eastern Partnership initiative allowed us, the European Union, a very unique opportunity of creating a zone of partnership and security along our external eastern borders. For our partners it is a chance to attain prosperity and stability by adopting European standards.

We have learned many lessons over the past ten years, including the one that application of programmes without adjusting them to realities, needs and the aspirations of concerned countries does not work. For the next decade of the Eastern Partnership, we need to be more ambitious and, instead of inventing projects, we should invite our partners to join the ones that we ourselves are implementing in the EU. Our Eastern partners must be given a real partnership, therefore, to be included into our initiatives on climate, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, connectivity, energy and social inclusion programmes and priorities.

It is evident that those who put more efforts and present positive results on reforms carried out should be allowed to deepen their aspirations with the European Union. We have several countries which, without EU membership, are participating in our single market. Ukrainian workers are already important contributors to Lithuanian, Polish and other economies, and they deserve to have their labour rights fully guaranteed.

It needs to be emphasised once again that democratic criteria, especially adherence to human rights and the rule of law, need to be our ultimate priority. Seconding Kati Piri's concerns, I wish to express our concern on the situation in Georgia as well as to make it clear that we have to react to the situation in Tbilisi.

Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, looking at our Eastern neighbourhood, many people tend to see it in black and white. Does this action support Russia's interest in the region? Are those people the representatives of the West? But those are the wrong questions. The leaders of these countries do not have to believe in us, they need to believe in the future of their countries.

Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine are all at a critical juncture. In all three cases, we have seen ambitious starts of reforms, and yet in each case, but for different reasons, today we are not sure whether those reforms will continue or whether they will end up in democratic backsliding. And the question is not whether politicians can write nice press releases about Western liberal values – I'm sure they all can – the question is whether they can carry out reforms backed by their societies. Meanwhile, the Eastern neighbourhood countries expect us to support them, especially since other neighbours are working against the success of these countries.

The economic success of those neighbourhood countries would be Putin's biggest defeat. The societies of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova want us to help in the process of transforming their societies, which is not without sacrifice. I know what I want to see in these countries. I do not advocate reforms because that would serve our geopolitical interest, as you have mentioned Ms Mogherini, or the business interests of Germany's car industry. I'm advocating painful reforms because the overwhelming majority of the people living there want to see democratic and prosperous societies; an economy which works for the people and not for a few oligarchs; a state which serves the citizens, not the politicians' personal interests.

For meaningful change, we need strong and committed governments. However, strong government does not mean having an executive power without control. It is worrying to see those trends in Georgia and in Ukraine, as already mentioned. Yes, the governments are under pressure, but they can by no means neglect or oppress criticism. Our criticism is not about someone being pro-Kremlin or pro-Brussels, it is about being pro-democratic and in favour of functioning institutions. And yes, it is in Putin's short-term interest to have politicians in power whom he can personally influence or buy off, but this is not our style. We need leaders to be pro-reform. Our interest is to have functioning institutions which will work well without Putin, without the oligarchs and even without us.

Bernhard Zimniok, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Die EU geht mal wieder sehr blauäugig an ein Projekt heran: dieses Mal an die Osterweiterung.

Lassen Sie uns doch mal den Blick auf die Ukraine richten. Der Ukraine wird seit Jahren die größte Aufmerksamkeit unter den ganzen östlichen Nachbarstaaten zuteil, insbesondere aufgrund ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit Russland. Seit 2014 wurden der Ukraine 14 Milliarden EUR an Zuschüssen und Darlehen gewährt, um die Reformbemühungen zu unterstützen. Hierzu gehört auch die Reform des Justizwesens und eine Angleichung an den europäischen Standard.

Darunter fällt auch die Umsetzung des Haager Kindesentführungsübereinkommens, kurz HKÜ. Wird ein Kind durch ein Elternteil in ein Land entführt, das das HKÜ unterzeichnet hat – zum Beispiel jetzt konkret in die Ukraine –, so soll die Justiz des Landes dafür sorgen, dass dieses Kind wieder in das Land zurückgeführt wird, von wo aus es entführt wurde.

Die Ukraine scheitert seit der Unterzeichnung des Abkommens daran. Berichte über Korruption und Vetternwirtschaft häufen sich, und bis 2017 gab es 33 Kindesentführungen von Deutschland in die Ukraine. Der damalige ukrainische Vize-Justizminister gab in einem Interview zu, dass kein einziges dieser Kinder nach Deutschland zurückgeführt wurde – trotz positiver Urteile der ukrainischen Gerichte.

Ich fordere die Ukraine daher auf, das Haager Kindesentführungsübereinkommen endlich in nationales Recht zu implementieren und umzusetzen. Die EU sollte der Ukraine sämtliche Kredite und Zuschüsse verwehren, bis diese ihrer Pflicht nachgekommen ist und die Kinder endlich zurückführt.

Anna Fotyga, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I thank Madam High Representative for the last five 5 years of cooperation and wish her good luck.

My support for the nations of our Eastern Partnership is unequivocal since my time spent in the foreign department of Solidarnosc. After all these years, I think that two issues are stable there. One is the very stable Western vocation of societies and their will to stay with us. The second one is Russia's will to subordinate them and to destabilise them.

Despite our efforts, there are still very difficult issues that we have to raise. Many dynamic things are very positive. Yes, we have successes in our policies for sure but there are some matters for concern – Ukraine still under occupation, Azov seaports still blocked, and prisoners still having their place in Russian prisons and prisons in the eastern part of Ukraine. In Georgia, that is a matter of real concern. I'm really concerned by recent developments. I think that political crisis is extremely dangerous. We have to counter this.

Helmut Scholz, *im Namen der GUE/NGL-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, Hohe Vertreterin! Unsere östlichen Nachbarschaftsländer stehen noch immer vor gravierenden Herausforderungen: Klimawandel, Energiearmut, eigenständige Verwaltung der Ressourcen, Schaffung von guten Arbeitsplätzen und Überwindung von Konflikten aus der Vergangenheit, um nur einige zu nennen, vor allen Dingen aber auch: Demokratisierung dieser Gesellschaften. Und deshalb muss unsere Nachbarschaftspolitik diese Länder gemeinsam mit ihren Menschen in diesem Prozess weiterhin unterstützen. Das heißt auch mehr Rechtsstaatlichkeit, unabhängige Justiz, Einbeziehung der Zivilgesellschaft und Befähigung der Akteure, einzugreifen in die gesellschaftliche Entwicklung, Anstrengungen zur Bekämpfung der Korruption, Entwicklung stabiler demokratischer Institutionen, Förderung des politischen Dialogs und vertrauensbildender Maßnahmen, Transparenz, unabhängige Medien, friedliche Beilegung von Konflikten und Förderung von Frieden, Sicherheit und Stabilität.

Die aktuellen Entwicklungen aber sind beunruhigend, und sie sind konkret. Beispiel: Republik Moldau. Die Wahl von Maia Sandu war ein Hoffnungsschimmer. Als Sandu am 8. November eine Gesetzesänderung vorschlug, die es ermöglicht hätte, Kandidatinnen und Kandidaten für das Amt des Generalstaatsanwalts direkt vorzuschlagen, beantragten Sozialisten und Demokraten ein Misstrauensvotum, das die Regierung knapp verlor. Die Sandu-Regierung erwies sich offensichtlich als Gefahr für das kleptokratische System der alten Eliten.

Nun scheint Moldau zu den düsteren Praktiken zurückzukehren, die die Regierungen der Vergangenheit geprägt haben. Mit Ion Chicu ist offensichtlich indirekt Oligarch Vladimir Plahotniuc wieder an die Macht gelangt, und Oppositionsaktivisten wie Ana Ursachi und Grigore Petreco werden weiterhin strafrechtlich verfolgt.

Ich fordere auf, dass wir gemeinsam darüber nachdenken, wie wir die Verfassungsrealität und unabhängige Justiz bei unseren östlichen Nachbarn real gewährleisten.

Andrius Kubilius (PPE). – Mr President, as the new Co-Chair of Euronest, I would like sincerely to thank the Vice-President for what she did for the Eastern Partnership region. Everybody understands why we are fighting for the possibility of European integration of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. But, we cannot be bigger fighters for the integration of those countries than the leadership of those countries.

Today I will talk mainly about Georgia, not about Moldova, whose new prime minister decided to go for the first visit to Moscow. Recent developments in Georgia force us to be really very much concerned about the situation and future of democracy in Georgia. It's obvious: no democracy, no integration. You know that the leader of the ruling party in Georgia decided not to implement his own promise, which he gave to Georgian citizens and the opposition to support the introduction of a proportional election system. He gave this promise in order to convince, to answer the previous wave of protest in the middle of last summer.

Now the trust of Georgian people towards Parliament and to democracy in Georgia is lost. It's obvious that the ruling party decided not to fulfil their promise because, perhaps, they became afraid that they will lose proportional elections next year. What are the conclusions we can make from such a decision of the ruling party? Perhaps it means that the ruling party is planning to use old administrative tricks to win elections. That is why this discussion is a very good opportunity to urge ruling party leadership and leadership of Georgia to come back to real and trustful dialogue with the opposition.

Second, we need to urge both the ruling party and the opposition to agree on major reforms of the election system because people will not trust in the old system. The so-called German system could be a basis of such an agreement because that would not demand a change of the Georgian constitution.

And the last point, the European Parliament should urge political parties in Georgia really to implement all the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OHDIR) recommendations on how the administration of elections should be improved in order to stop the practice of influenced elections. We need to assist Georgia, sometimes speaking openly, rash and critical.

Tonino Picula (S&D). – Poštovani predsjedavajući, poštovana visoka predstavnice, prije svega zahvaljujem Vam za pet godina dobre suradnje uz želje za uspjehom u daljnjem radu.

Europska unija je pokretanjem Istočnog partnerstva 2009. težila poboljšanju odnosa sa zemljama s kojima dijeli snažne interese u energetici, dakle i sigurnosti, uz jačanje opće, multilateralne i regionalne suradnje. Preko sveobuhvatnih trgovinskih odnosa Europska unija htjela je ojačati svoj utjecaj.

Zadnjih mjeseci svjedočimo događajima u ovim zemljama koji itekako utječu na te planove. Dok u Ukrajini traju pripreme za samit u Normandiji, prvi nakon tri godine, ohrabruje prekid sukoba i razmjena zatvorenika. U Gruziji nažalost izbija novi val nestabilnosti zbog izostanka kompromisa oko izborne reforme. Izbori u Bjelorusiji kontinuirano ne zadovoljavaju međunarodne standarde. Oporba u ovom mandatu nema više zastupnike. U Moldaviji se nedavno raspala vladajuća koalicija. Dok prilike u Armeniji izgledaju stabilno, osim permanentnog konflikta s Azerbajdžanom, želim posebno naglasiti odnos Europske unije s Azerbajdžanom. Nedopustiv je izostanak reakcije dok razgovore službenika Europske unije objavljuju preko javnih medija, a vodstvo otvoreno istupa protiv Europske unije.

Jasno je da nakon deset godina od uspostave Istočnog partnerstva geopolitički izazovi i političke okolnosti u ovim zemljama traže jače djelovanje Europske unije. Skori samit za vrijeme hrvatskog predsjedanja predstavlja izvrsnu priliku. Pozivam novu Komisiju na temeljito preispitivanje odnosa s našim istočnim susjedstvom u skladu s najavljenim geopolitičkim ambicijama.

Urmas Paet (Renew). – Mr President, first I'd also like to thank Federica Mogherini for the very good cooperation we have had here. The Eastern Partnership must remain high on the agenda of the European Union. It is in the interests of the EU to have a stable and safe neighbourhood. Of course, we must continue to encourage Eastern Partnership countries to move forward with their much-needed reforms and help them on their way. But what is hampering most the progress in all these countries is still Russia's wish to hold them in its sphere of influence. Five out of six Eastern Partnership countries have conflicts on their territory. This is what prevents these countries from moving forward.

The new European Commission should have as one of its priorities working towards finding solutions to these frozen, or not so frozen, conflicts, so that the Eastern Partnership countries can focus their energy on the much-needed reforms and development. It is imperative for the EU to support the territorial integrity of the Eastern Partnership countries.

Also, we must guarantee adequate funding in the new MFF to help them continue with reforms. High-level, regular dialogue is also necessary, and more concrete goals are needed for post-2020.

Finally, special attention still should be on Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, which have shown keen interest to move closer to the European Union.

Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, it is also my pleasure to thank the High Representative for so actively cooperating with the European Parliament. I have taken note of your growing appreciation of parliamentary cooperation in the Eastern Partnership and I believe that we have achieved quite a lot during these five years because our colleagues have been very eager to cooperate, and the cooperation has reached ever-deeper areas of policy-making. I believe that we have to continue on that path.

But you also said that more needs to be done in the area of the rule of law and the judiciary, and I couldn't agree more with you because we should not be complacent about what we see happening at the moment. I believe that what colleagues have already mentioned concerning the recent developments in Moldova and Georgia are very much due to the lack of stability of the institutions. We have tried to support institution-building, but we see that, for instance, in Moldova, the grip of the old regime is very hard, and it is a question of the old power trying to defend its vested interests. If we can do more there, in these areas in our neighbouring countries, I think it's worth increasing the efforts on the rule of law and the judiciary.

It's interesting that International IDEA, which has published its annual global report on democracy, says that on our continent the only country that has improved its democratic standards in the past year is Armenia. I'm very happy to say that the developments in Armenia are a bright light in this area, but we definitely need to invest more in fighting corruption, promoting good governance and supporting the resilience of our neighbouring countries against propaganda and disinformation.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card question under Rule 171(8))

Bernhard Zimniok (ID), Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“. – Ich hätte eine Frage an die beiden Vorredner. Aber ich glaube, der erste ist nicht mehr da.

Dieses Projekt EU-Erweiterung ist ein reines Elitenprojekt, und es gibt dafür in der Bevölkerung keine Mehrheit, die das mitträgt. Allein in Deutschland haben sich in aktuellen Umfragen mehr als 46 % dafür ausgesprochen, nicht zu erweitern. Aber das wird anscheinend ignoriert, denn das Volk scheint dumm zu sein. Sind wir klüger?

Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE), blue-card answer. – We are not talking about enlargement tonight, we are talking about creating a more stable and democratic neighbourhood in the European Union. Its aim, as the High Representative has explained, is to benefit people. And a very concrete outcome of this cooperation is visa-free travel for Georgians, Moldovans and Ukrainians. So, it's not an elitist project.

Der Präsident. – Herr Kollege, ich muss Ihnen sagen, Sie wissen ganz genau, dass für jeden Erweiterungsschritt Einstimmigkeit erforderlich ist und dass jeder Erweiterungsschritt nach einem klaren Prozedere von Pflichten, die zu erfüllen sind, erfolgt und dass daher niemand willkürlich etwas tut, sondern die Regeln von beiden Seiten einzuhalten sind. Streuen Sie der Bevölkerung nicht Sand in die Augen.

Thierry Mariani (ID). – Monsieur le Président, chaque pays est à la fois marqué par ses frontières et son histoire, et tous ces pays sont à la fois des ex-républiques socialistes soviétiques qui ont tourné le dos aux communistes et des pays – à l'exception de la Moldavie – qui ont tous une frontière commune avec la Russie. La politique européenne devrait tenir compte de cette réalité et ne pas demander systématiquement à ces pays de tourner complètement le dos à leur passé et à leur histoire en trente ans. Nous avons la possibilité de faire en sorte que ces pays soient des ponts entre l'Europe et la Russie et qu'ils contribuent aux discussions et aux progrès entre nos deux blocs. Leur demander systématiquement de choisir entre l'un et l'autre, c'est courir à la catastrophe.

Nous avons peut-être oublié un peu vite que c'est après un accord d'association, en vue duquel nous demandions à l'Ukraine de tourner le dos à son histoire, que la guerre et les événements que vous connaissez se sont déclenchés, entraînant le pays dans le chaos. Je pense que cela devrait nous inciter à montrer un peu d'humilité à l'égard de cette région et à faire en sorte d'essayer, je le répète, d'avancer au rythme de ces États.

Ангел Джамбазки (ЕСР). – Уважаеми г-н Председател, уважаема г-жо Върховен представител, моите поздравления и за Вас. Ще имате труден мандат, но Ви желаем успех и се налявам да работим заедно за него. Сега по отношение на Източното партньорство – то е изключително важно, особено за държавите, които са в източната част на Европейския съюз. Но за да бъде то успешно, г-жо Върховен представител, трябва да бъде ориентирано към резултати, а не към обещания и към празни приказки.

Що се отнася до държавите в Черноморския регион – говорим за Азербайджан, говорим за Грузия – има проекти, които могат и трябва да бъдат изпълнени с помощта на Европейския съюз, като създаването на такава инфраструктура, която да помогне да бъдат развити пристанищата в Поти, за да може да се достига по-лесно до тези държави, за да може те да бъдат отворени към Европейския съюз.

Това е реална работа, която ще даде реален резултат, а няма да бъде само декларация и само приказки, които да остават във въздуха. В миналия мандат бяхме свидетели на много такива приказки, но те не вършеха работа. Трябва да се съсредоточите върху конкретни неща, които да се случват.

Radosław Sikorski (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! W 2008 r., gdy Polska i Szwecja proponowały program Partnerstwa Wschodniego, inspirowały nas dwa procesy: Unia dla Śródziemnomorza, czyli projekt ustabilizowania jednego z naszych sąsiedztw, i Grupa Wyszehradzka, czyli projekt przygotowania grupy krajów do hipotetycznego członkostwa. Chciałbym potwierdzić słowa Wysokiej Przedstawiciel, że nie było projektu, aby to był głos skierowany przeciwko Rosji. To sama Rosja zdecydowała, że zagrażają jej demokracja i wolny handel. Unia Europejska zaprosiła Rosję jako obserwatora w grupie przyjaciół Partnerstwa Wschodniego.

Pytanie, na ile nam się udało? Wydaliśmy ponad 10 miliardów euro na wartościowe projekty, mamy umowy o pogłębianiu strefie wolnego handlu, ruch bezwizowy z trzema z tych krajów. 80 tysięcy młodych ludzi skorzystało z programu Erasmus+.

Natomiast we wszystkich tych krajach jest jedna rzecz, z którą nam się nie udało wygrać, mianowicie niekonkurencyjne struktury w gospodarkach tych krajów. Uważam zatem, że udało nam się lepiej niż w przypadku Unii dla Śródziemnomorza, ale jeszcze nie tak dobrze jak w przypadku Grupy Wyszehradzkiej.

Chciałbym podziękować Wysokiej Przedstawiciel za wszystko, co zrobiła dla tego projektu. Mam nadzieję, że Komisja, którą dzisiaj zatwierdziliśmy, będzie kontynuowała Partnerstwo Wschodnie, bo jest to wartościowy projekt, który przybliża naszych wschodnich sąsiadów do naszych standardów.

Marina Kaljurand (S&D). – Mr President, Dear Federica, thank you so much for the work you have done.

My remarks concerning Georgia: as was mentioned by my colleagues, the Georgian parliament voted down constitutional amendments on a transition to a fully proportional system for the 2020 parliamentary elections. It was unexpected, as there was a clear and multi-partisan consensus over these changes. It caused turbulence in society and it brought people to the streets.

I would like to urge all Georgian political parties to come together and to find a solution that will not jeopardise the hopes of people and the democratic future of Georgia. Today we listened to the newly elected President of the Commission, she did not mention the Eastern Partnership.

It was disappointing, and as the Chair of the delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, I would like to reassure all our Eastern partners of the full support of the European Parliament to the democratic reforms and European aspirations of these nations.

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew). – Mr President, I will use this opportunity to thank you, Ms Mogherini, for all your presence and active participation in this House, and I wish you good luck in your future work. Indeed, the Eastern Partnership has a strategic importance for the European Union, and the spread of European rules in the neighbourhood is the essence of the EU's external relations. But today we need to rethink our approach and to introduce new priorities.

Significant changes have occurred in our Eastern neighbours. In recent years, despite their own historical pact, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have shown a desire to become closely involved with the EU. Unfortunately political processes are still complex, democracies are still fragile, and we are constantly witnessing mass protests and the collapse of governments. The main reason for these governments is the existence of hot and frozen conflicts on their territories. Therefore I call on the incoming Commission to continue and deepen our assistance in building stable and prosperous European democracies in the Eastern neighbourhood.

Witold Jan Waszczykowski (ECR). – Mr President, it was a pleasure to work with the High Representative in the Foreign Affairs Council and also to host her briefly during this term of the European Parliament.

Thirty years after the collapse of the communists, I think the project of a Europe free, democratic and united, is not fully implemented. There is a long list of countries and candidates wanting to participate in this project. After 10 years of the Eastern Partnership, it's time to reassess that initiative. We need more initiatives and a new strategy for the Eastern Partnership. Making our candidate countries into look-alikes is not enough. The new strategy of the Eastern Partnership, based on a differentiation approach, was supposed to lead to enlargement – yes, enlargement, we're not supposed to be afraid of this term, which is a key pillar of European foreign policy. Even a distant perspective of membership is a powerful tool to promote democratic transformation in peace in our neighbourhood. Membership is a catalyst for reform. So, contrary to President Macron, we support keeping Europe open and ready to accept new members.

Siegfried Mureșan (PPE). – Doamnă Președinte, doamnă Mogherini, vreau să vorbesc despre Republica Moldova, un stat la frontiera estică a Uniunii Europene. Ultima dată când am discutat despre Republica Moldova în plenul Parlamentului European tocmai fusese instalat un guvern pro-european. Între timp acest guvern a fost răsturnat de partidul pro-rușilor, iar situația în Republica Moldova s-a înrăutățit semnificativ. Este acest lucru un lucru grav pentru Uniunea Europeană? Da, fiindcă doar dacă avem în vecinătatea noastră state cu guverne pro-europene, state care doresc să se apropie de Uniunea Europeană, doar atunci putem trăi și noi în siguranță și-n stabilitate în interiorul Uniunii Europene.

Situația în Republica Moldova s-a înrăutățit și vă cer Doamnă Înalt Reprezentant, dragi colegi, să acționăm. Doar vorbe frumoase cum că sprijinim forțe pro-europene nu sunt suficiente. Ce trebuie să facem? În primul rând să spunem pro-rușilor care sunt condițiile relației dintre Uniunea Europeană și guvernul lor. Prim-ministrul pro-rus al Republicii Moldova s-a aflat în vizită la Moscova, prima sa vizită, întâlniri netransparente, presupuse ajutoare economice netransparente. Noi trebuie să spunem care sunt regulile jocului și că așteptăm ca aceste reguli să fie respectate. În plus, trebuie să sprijinim forțele pro-europene, trebuie să le aducem la Bruxelles, trebuie să le aducem la masa dialogului și trebuie să spunem foarte clar că vom lucra diferit cu oameni politici pro-europeni care doresc să ducă Republica Moldova spre Uniunea Europeană, de modul în care lucrăm cu oameni politici pro-ruși. Trebuie să acționăm. Doar vorbele și declarațiile politicoase, diplomatice nu sunt suficiente.

ELNÖKÖL: DOBREV KLÁRA*alelnök*

Sven Mikser (S&D). – Madam President, our continued commitment to the Eastern Partnership serves not only the best interests of the six countries to our east, but also our Union itself. Political stability and growing prosperity in the Eastern Partnership countries provide us with a more secure and more predictable neighbourhood, and limit the ability of our adversaries to exert their malignant influence over those countries.

As the rapporteur on Georgia, I share the concerns about the developments in that country. The voting down by the Georgian Parliament of the electoral law amendments that would have implemented the switch to a fully proportional system was regrettable. While we do not and should not prescribe to our partners the precise electoral systems they should use, we do fully expect them to abide by their own previous commitments. European aspirations are almost universally shared by all Georgian political players, as well as a significant majority of the country's people. It is crucial not to let those legitimate aspirations become collateral damage in domestic political turmoil.

The Georgian political leaders will have to find a political solution to the crisis and be able to assure their own people, as well as their international partners, that the integrity and transparency of the political process is guaranteed.

Klemen Grošelj (Renew). – Gospoda predsednica! Evropska vzhodna sosesčina je poleg južne sosesčine regija strateškega pomena za Evropsko unijo in se sooča z resnimi izzivi.

Po valu demokratizacije se danes večina držav sooča z naraščajočim vplivom oligarnih političnih elit, ki ne upoštevajo volje in ne zasledujejo interesov prebivalstva ter tako regijo oddaljujejo od evropskih vrednot.

Seveda pa navedeni procesi ne potekajo v geopolitičnem vakuumu ali brez udeležbe zunanjih akterjev.

Rusija odkrito in vse bolj agresivno spreminja notranjepolitično, družbeno in varnostno ureditev v večini držav regije.

Vse aktivnejša je tudi Turčija, ki bolj kot reformni in demokratični napredek držav uresničuje lastne geopolitične interese.

In tu je Kitajska, ki deluje morda tiše in modreje, a deluje dolgoročno za regijo in še posebej za Evropsko unijo škodljivejše.

Zato je zadnji čas, da Evropska unija državam regije, še posebej pa civilni družbi ponudi mehanizme stalne podpore pro demokratičnim in reformnim silam.

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Komisarz! Partnerstwo Wschodnie odniosło oczywiście sukcesy. Zwłaszcza gdybyśmy porównywali je z Unią Śródziemnomorską, możemy powiedzieć, że sukces jest ogromny. Ale nie powinniśmy zamykać oczu na problemy. W niektórych krajach obserwujemy nawet regres. Takim krajem jest na przykład Gruzja, która wydawała się być na bardzo dobrej drodze. Obserwujemy to w ostatnich miesiącach: przeciągające się protesty, które są coraz ostrzej traktowane przez władze, nominacja na stanowisko premiera Giorgiego Gacharii, który jeszcze niedawno był obywatelem Federacji Rosyjskiej itd. Nie wiadomo też, czy sukces demokratyczny i poprawa demokratycznych standardów Armenii są skutkiem tego programu. Wydaje się więc, że powinniśmy przemyśleć naszą strategię. Myślę, że sukces zależy od wiarygodności i konsekwencji polityki zagranicznej Unii, ale też od tego, jak my sami będziemy stosowali własne standardy.

(Mówca zgodził się odpowiedzieć na pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki (art. 171 ust. 8 Regulaminu))

Tomislav Sokol (PPE), pitanje koje je podizanjem plave kartice postavio. – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, kolega spomenuli ste da su neke države nažalost otišle korak unatrag što se tiče zaštite demokracije i ljudskih prava.

Mene zanima smatrate li da je Europska unija napravila dovoljno da im pomogne, je li bila dovoljno konzistentna u toj podršci tim državama i smatrate li da Europska unija ima jedinstvenu politiku i da se možemo u budućnosti nadati doista jedinstvenoj politici Europske unije u podršci tim državama?

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR), odpowiedź na pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. – Odpowiem krótko koledze. Nie, nie sądzę, żeby tak było. I właśnie na tym powinna polegać reforma tej polityki, żebyśmy byli konsekwentni i więcej robili konsekwentnie dla sił demokratycznych w tych państwach.

Andrzej Halicki (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Wysoka Przedstawiciel! Rzeczywiście program Partnerstwa Wschodniego jest sukcesem. Muszę powiedzieć, że problemy poszczególnych rządów czy symulowanie reform nie może zastąpić rzeczywistej współpracy z tymi, którzy mają aspiracje – z obywatelami tych państw, z przedsiębiorcami, z przedstawicielami wspólnot lokalnych. Pochodzę z rodziny, która została podzielona przez wojnę. Dzisiaj nadal część mojej rodziny to obywatele tych państw. Dopiero od niedawna mają możliwość spotkania się z nami na zasadzie ruchu bezwizowego. Chciałbym jednak bardzo mocno podkreślić, że kolejna dekada musi być dużo bardziej intensywna, bo to te relacje – *people to people*, między ludźmi, z organizacjami pozarządowymi, w ramach programu Erasmus dla młodych – stanowią rzeczywiste działania, które zmieniają także te społeczeństwa. Nie możemy także być obojętni na to, co musimy poddać krytyce, ale mamy trzy kraje, trzy społeczeństwa, które ewidentnie w tej szóstce są wiodące. Dla nich też musimy przebudować strategię i odnowić ją, bo Gruzja, Mołdawia i Ukraina zasługują na więcej. Te społeczeństwa zasługują na więcej, bo widzą w nas także nadzieję na poprawę swojego poziomu życia i na rozwój. Musimy o tym pamiętać, bo oni liczą na nas, i pomimo problemów, które napotykały w poszczególnych krajach – rzeczywiście czasem następuje regres – nie możemy odpuścić i nie wolno nam tych społeczeństw w ich aspiracji zostawić.

Neena Gill (S&D). – Madam President, I just want to thank the High Representative for our collaboration over the last five years and to say that we won some, and maybe not so much others, but I really want to wish you all the best for your future endeavours.

We have a growing number of concerns in our neighbourhood. I think the signals coming from Chişinău send a worrying message of regression away from reforms for democracy and the rule of law. Some would say that the Commission has been naive by helping broker a deal here, which led to a doomed coalition with President Dodon who then enabled a power grab.

Meanwhile, we have already heard in Georgia that people are calling for a more democratic and fair electoral system and they are facing riot police who are using rubber bullets and tear gas against them.

And when we look at Baku, the opposition leader who was recently arrested during a rally says he was savagely tortured in police custody.

So what is happening in these countries is a growing trend in the world: authoritarians trying to get a stranglehold on fragile democracy. Maybe our policy of softly-softly in the region is not delivering the results we wanted. I wondered what advice the High Representative would have for her successor regarding how they should look at a new strategy.

(The speaker declined to answer a blue-card question from Mr Băsescu)

Bernard Guetta (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, c'était un devoir et une nécessité. Comme l'Union devait s'ouvrir aux pays d'Europe centrale, elle devait offrir un partenariat au pays orientaux dont cet élargissement avait fait nos nouveaux voisins.

Ce partenariat a ses faiblesses et ses succès, mais dix ans après, une évidence doit s'imposer à nous: dans notre partenariat oriental, nous avons oublié la Russie ou, plus exactement, nous n'avons pas voulu la voir, tant les problèmes qu'elle pose nous semblaient insolubles. Aujourd'hui, nous devons nous employer à réparer cette lâcheté politique en explorant la possibilité de nouveaux accords d'Helsinki avec Moscou, d'accords de sécurité et de coopération. Ce sera difficile, dira-t-on. Non, ce sera extrêmement difficile et totalement incertain, mais nous devons tenter de le faire car la Fédération de Russie, c'est l'autre moitié du continent, le pays le plus étendu du monde; un pays appauvri et délabré, dont la capacité de nuisance reste cependant considérable.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, Europska unija dugi niz godina razvija posebno dobre odnose s neposrednim susjedima. Koliko takav pristup može biti važan i koliko se tu još krije potencijala, vidjeli smo za vrijeme migrantske krize. Bolji odnosi sa susjedima i jači političko-trgovinski odnosi s njima bili bi jamstvo veće otpornosti na takve krize.

Na našem istoku nalazi se nekoliko zemalja s kojima u okviru Istočnog partnerstva razvijamo dobre odnose, ali dug je put prema tome da nam postanu stabilni partneri. Neke od tih država još uvijek se nalaze u ratnom stanju, a neke su usred tranzicijskog puta koji je izrazito bolan.

Sve su nam te države iznimno važne i u pogledu pozicioniranja prema Rusiji. Europski interes tu mora biti da se one razviju u potpuno funkcionalne demokracije s razvijenom vladavinom prava i slobodom tržišta. Takve partnere trebamo i u to se isplati ulagati.

(Zastupnica je pristala odgovoriti na pitanje postavljeno podizanjem plave kartice (članak 171. stavak 8. Poslovnika))

Tomislav Sokol (PPE), pitanje koje je podizanjem plave kartice postavio. – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, evo gospođo Tomašić jako mi je drago da hvalite, koliko sam shvatio, vanjsku politiku Europske unije i zalazete se za zajednička rješenja i za zajedničke interese.

S obzirom na to i na tragu toga što ste sada rekli smatrate li da treba ojačati nadležnosti Europske unije u vanjskoj politici kako bi ta vanjska politika bila još jača i kako bi mogla jačati odnose upravo prema ovim državama koje ste spomenuli?

Ruža Tomašić (ECR), odgovor na pitanje postavljeno podizanjem plave kartice. – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, naravno da smatram da bi trebalo jačati svoje pozicije, ali u suradnji sa svim državama članicama. Dakle, ne samo da Bruxelles odlučuje što će biti nego da sve države članice mogu odlučivati.

Traian Băsescu (PPE). – Doamnă președintă, vreau să mă refer la două țări din parteneriatul estic, Ucraina și Republica Moldova. Ucraina este o țară cumplit lovită de Federația Rusă, o țară care a pierdut Crimeea, care are un război civil disimulat de fapt în estul teritoriului, o țară care are porturile blocate adesea la Marea Neagră. De ce acest lucru? Pentru că Federația Rusă nu poate accepta orientarea acestei țări către Uniunea Europeană. Soluția pentru ca Ucraina să rămână întreagă este să fie sprijinită și să fie ajutată de experții europeni, arătându-se guvernului eroarea, dacă s-ar aplica planul Steinmeier. Este riscul de a pierde estul Ucrainei, pentru că va urma un referendum după federalizare și va urma declararea independenței, precum în Osetia, în Abhazia, în Crimeea. Este tehnica rusă.

Legat de Republica Moldova, din păcate doamna Maia Sandu a intrat singură și deliberat în situația de a pierde guvernarea. În Moldova este un paradox. Opoziția care este formată din două partide pro-europene asistă la o guvernare dură, minoritară a pro-rusului Dodon. Este timpul ca Uniunea Europeană, care investește bani, să ceară celor doi lideri din opoziție și care, repet, constituie majoritate, să-și facă datoria față de Republica Moldova, reorientând țara, preluând guvernarea și reorientând țara către vest.

Петър Витанов (S&D). – Г-жо Председател, г-жо Върховен представител, политиката на Европейския съюз към източните съседи веднъж е декларирана като политика с висок приоритет, а от друга страна е силно подценявана и negliжирана заради проблемните точки в отделните страни, в отношенията между тях или в отношенията с Европейския съюз. И сякаш ние отчитаме повече огромните находища на енергийни суровини и възможностите за преноса им до европейските пазари, отколкото сериозното геостратегическо положение на региона.

Същевременно този регион е арена на противоборство на две конкурентни концепции: тази на европейската интеграция и на евроазиатското коопериране. След десет години Източно партньорство трябва да направим според мен две неща. Първо – откровен преглед на постигнатото до момента, и второ – необходимо е да бъде демонстрирана по-голяма ангажираност на Европейския съюз за определяне на следващите приоритети за развитие на сътрудничеството в региона. Защото в противен случай рискуваме да тласнем страните в друга политическа орбита и да улесним реализирането на чужди на Общността интереси.

Ramona Strugariu (Renew). – Doamna președintă, un mesaj direct către cei vizați. Demiterea și înlocuirea fulger a guvernului pro-european de la Chișinău ca urmare a curajului Maiei Sandu de a nu face jocul președintelui Dodon și de a nu subordona justiția intereselor politice ale unor oligarhi sau propunerea guvernului de la Tbilisi de a schimba legea electorală pentru ca puterea să își asigure locurile în Parlament sunt pași mari înapoi în drumul spre Europa. Cei vinovați trebuie să se simtă responsabili, fiindcă ei îi îndepărtează pe cetățenii țărilor lor de Uniunea Europeană și de beneficiile ei. Condiționalitatea strictă este un principiu ferm în acordarea asistenței macro-financiare, însă e vremea ca Uniunea să investească mult mai mult în a explica cetățenilor acestor state de ce sunt importante condiționalitățile și ce presupune reforma. Altfel orice guvern anti-reformă deturnezează discursul într-unul anti-UE și o luăm etern de la capăt. Țările din vecinătatea estică trebuie să fie cu adevărat o prioritate a noii Comisii, iar ușa Europei trebuie să rămână deschisă, să investim în aceste țări economic, energetic și să finanțăm cu adevărat reforme pro-democrație, pro-justiție și pro-stat de drept.

Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Wysoka Przedstawiciel! Partnerstwo Wschodnie to instrument ważny. Może kiedyś wiązaliśmy z nim wszyscy większe nadzieje, ale dalej jest potrzebny, dalej jest pomostem. Uwaga! Wydaje mi się, że – oczywiście formalnie – możemy dzielić te sześć państw na trzy grupy: peleton prymusów, o których wspominał pan poseł Andrzej Halicki, mój szacowny kolega, Ukraina, Gruzja, Mołdawia. Dwa kraje, które podpisały układy z Rosją, Białoruś i Armenia. Oraz Azerbejdżan, który nie jest ani tu, ani tu. Wydaje mi się jednak, że powinniśmy być otwarci na wszystkie te sześć państw. Nie odwracajmy się plecami do Białorusi i Armenii, żeby nie oddawać ich w ręce Rosji. Współpracujmy bardzo silnie z Azerbejdżanem, nagradzając ten kraj za pewną neutralność, którą wykazał, i to, że nie podpisał żadnych porozumień gospodarczych z Moskwą. Wydaje mi się, że tutaj powinniśmy być bardzo otwarci także na te kraje, które z nami jeszcze umów stowarzyszeniowych nie podpisały. I oto apeluję.

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Madam President, first of all I would like to thank the Vice-President / High Representative and thank her for all the work she has done in promoting the Eastern Partnership. This is such a strong tool for peace and reconciliation and for the security of the European Union. Together with the Committee on Foreign Affairs all of us are working hard to get citizens of these countries to understand that European values are the only values that will transform their societies and bring better things for their societies, and we will continue working on it.

I strongly support the idea of my colleague, Mr Kubilius, to focus on three countries that we are still hoping will get on the right track. We have provided visa-free travel and all the opportunities for young people, and we have provided them with a window of opportunity to see how much the European Union can contribute to better their societies. I hope that this Parliament and the new Commission will continue along this path and the Commission will have the strongest allies in us.

Leszek Miller (S&D). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Szanowna Pani Mogherini! Doświadczenia wynikające z dziesięciu lat Partnerstwa Wschodniego uzasadniają konieczność jego dalszego istnienia. Jest z nami na sali minister Sikorski, twórca tej idei. Konieczne są jednak decyzje, które odpowiedzą na nowe wyzwania i dylematy. Podstawowy problem to model partnerstwa, który z jednej strony integruje ekonomicznie i w mniejszym stopniu politycznie kraje do niego należące z Unią Europejską, zaś z drugiej zatrzymuje je na etapie przedakcesyjnym. Partnerstwo w dotychczasowej postaci jest bowiem uważane przez członków jako swego rodzaju alternatywa dla pełnego członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej.

Po dziesięciu latach trzeba się na coś zdecydować, bowiem utrzymywanie dotychczasowego modelu nie przyniesie powodzenia. Uważam, że nasi wschodni partnerzy powinni otrzymać jasny przekaz przez nas wypracowany, co do ich przyszłości w Unii Europejskiej.

Tomislav Sokol (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, slavimo deset godina Istočnog partnerstva i možemo reći da se ovaj program doista pokazao uspješnim. Naravno, to nije bilo lako. Činjenica je da je Euroazija područje gdje se križaju ključni interesi svjetskih geopolitičkih igrača, gdje živi više od 70 % svjetskog stanovništva, gdje je situirano 75 % svjetskih zalih energenata. I naravno da tu i Rusija i Kina i mnoge druge države vide svoj interes, a Europska unija naravno treba definirati svoj.

U tom smislu doista su dobri rezultati postignuti, ali nažalost vidimo da u pojedinim državama imamo obrnut proces, da se određeni demokratski standardi srozavaju i da proces usvajanja zapadnih standarda demokracije i zaštite ljudskih prava nažalost ne ide kako bismo možda svi skupa trebali.

Ovdje bih poslao tri poruke što mislim da bi Europska unija trebala napraviti, koja bi načela trebala voditi njenu politiku. Prvo, ona treba biti jedinstvena. Ne smijemo dozvoliti da pojedinačni individualni geopolitički interesi nekih država članica Europske unije onemogućavaju postizanje ili ruše kredibilitet zajedničke europske politike. Ta jedinstvenost, to definiranje zajedničkih interesa je jedini način kako bi Europska unija bila ozbiljan igrač na svjetskoj sceni.

Druga stvar, Europska unija treba biti jasna i otvorena, bez fige u džepu. Ona treba jasno definirati svoje interese i na taj otvoreni i transparentan način pristupiti onim proeuropskim i prozapadnim snagama u ovim državama o kojima se radi.

I treća stvar, Europska unija treba ispunjavati svoja obećanja. Bez ispunjavanja obećanja, bez honoriranja onih rezultata koji se postižu u pojedinim državama dugoročno te države će izgubiti bilo kakav motiv da se približavaju Europi, da se približavaju Zapadu.

Naravno, treba osuditi negativne pojave, ali isto tako treba honorirati sve one pozitivne stvari. I naglasio bih da nitko nije dobar samo zato što je prozapadno orijentiran, politički ili na riječima, nego to treba pokazati djelima. Poštivanjem svih onih standarda na kojima se Europska unija zasniva i koje svi mi štitimo, a to je vladavina prava i zaštita ljudskih prava, demokracija i sloboda.

Monika Beňová (S&D). – Pani predsedajúca, chcem sa v úvode poďakovať pani Mogherini za jej päťročnú prácu a nasadenie, ale ak dovolíte, teraz by som sa chcela obrátiť na novú Komisiu a aj na jednotlivé členské štáty, aby boli v budúcnosti dôslední a zodpovední.

Nemôžeme pripustiť, aby sme zanevreli na našich východných susedov, a pokladám za nesprávne, že sme zastavili procesy prístupové s Macedónskom a s Albánskom. Špeciálne Macedónsko urobilo obrovské rozhodnutia a kus práce na to, aby sme ich takýmto spôsobom demotivovali, a musíme si uvedomiť, že takéto rozhodnutia sú demotivujúce aj pre našich východných partnerov.

Pre EÚ je stabilné susedstvo nevyhnutné. Aj kvôli samotnej stabilite, prosperite a bezpečnosti tu u nás v EÚ. Spolupráca s našimi východnými partnermi je aj obrovskou príležitosťou rozširovať európske myšlienky. Prístupové rokovania, ale aj medzinárodná spolupráca smerom na východ slúži aj ako nástroj rozširovania hodnôt, ktoré chceme, aby vo svete prevládali.

Ukrajina, Moldavsko, Arménsko vzhliadajú k Európe, tak by sme ich nemali našimi negatívnymi postojmi v budúcnosti sklamať.

Jarosław Duda (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Na wstępie chciałbym wyrazić satysfakcję z postępu krajów Partnerstwa Wschodniego – mimo trudności, o których była tutaj mowa – a zwłaszcza z postępów Ukrainy, Gruzji i Mołdawii we wprowadzaniu zmian zmierzających do dalszej integracji z Unią Europejską. Uważam, że Unia powinna wysłać jasny sygnał, że docenia wysiłki i determinację tych krajów. Popieram inicjatywę wypracowania strategii „Trio 2030” oferującej konkretne długofalowe instrumenty wsparcia dalszych reform i inwestycji.

Droga do integracji europejskiej nie jest łatwa. My w Polsce to pamiętamy. Tym bardziej cenimy i chcemy wspierać wysiłki naszych wschodnich sąsiadów. Chciałbym w szczególności odnieść się do postępu reform na Ukrainie. Gratuluję nowym władzom zapału i odwagi we wprowadzaniu zmian, na które czeka zarówno społeczeństwo ukraińskie, jak i partnerzy unijni. Walka z korupcją, reforma sądownictwa, odpowiedzialne i skuteczne sprawowanie rządów to wielkie wyzwania. Również postęp decentralizacji i wzmocnienie społeczeństwa obywatelskiego są kluczowe dla rozwoju ukraińskiej demokracji.

Doceniając determinację władz, chciałbym jednak podkreślić znaczenie szerokich konsultacji, włączenia wszystkich partnerów – w tym społeczeństwa obywatelskiego – na wszystkich szczeblach wprowadzania zmian. Ma to podstawowe znaczenie zarówno dla społecznej akceptacji, efektywnego wdrażania, jak i trwałości reform.

Pragnę też podkreślić pozytywny wpływ uczestnictwa Ukrainy w programach europejskich, w tym liczny udział młodzieży w programie Erasmus+. Moje spotkania z fantastyczną, żądną wiedzy, ambitną, otwartą młodzieżą ukraińską napawają mnie ogromnym optymizmem.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já chci konstatovat, že jsem rád, že toto partnerství po deseti letech zde můžeme vyhodnocovat. Před deseti lety bylo spuštěno v době, kdy Česká republika předsedala Evropské unii, a tehdy jsme my Češi stáli u toho. Pamatuji si ty debaty i ze strany české vlády, ve které jsem měl tu čest být, kdy tou hlavní filozofií bylo pomoci zemím, které jsou mezi Evropskou unií a Ruskem, vyplňují tento prostor a bohužel jsou často pod obrovským tlakem a vlivem Ruska. Tento geopolitický důvod myslím, že toto partnerství splňuje.

Pokud bychom tento prostor vyklidili a přestali s těmito zeměmi komunikovat, podporovat je, tak se obávám, že vliv Ruska, který v některých z těchto zemí bohužel v poslední době narůstá, viz třeba Moldavsko, by do budoucna ještě dále narůstal. Tedy ta geopolitická rovina je zde jednoznačná, ale pak je zde i prostý důvod, že se jedná o země, jejichž obyvatelé, alespoň v nemalé části, chtějí žít ve svobodě, demokracii a prosperujících státech. To jsou naše evropské hodnoty, které bychom v těchto státech měli podporovat.

Myslím, že i přes určité problémy lze toto partnerství veskrze hodnotit pozitivně a pro další desetiletí bychom měli tu spolupráci více zintenzivnit a posilovat. Je třeba říci to, co říkali někteří kolegové, že těchto šest zemí nemá logicky jednotný vývoj – jsou tam určité vnitřní problémy, je tam různá míra ingerence Ruska – a že bychom tedy k jednotlivým státům měli mít odlišnou strategii. Ale ten obecný trend, že takovéto partnerství má smysl, že máme podporovat spolupráci těchto států s Evropskou unií je, myslím, jednoznačný a v žádném případě se nejedná o to, že by tyto státy v nejbližší době měly vstupovat do Evropské unie.

„Catch the eye” eljárás

Robert Hajšel (S&D). – Pani predsedajúca, reakcia na vývoj, ktorý nastal na Balkáne po tom, ako Európska rada odmietla otvoriť rokovania o vstupe severného Macedónska a Albánska do EÚ, dokazujú, že EÚ si nemôže dovoliť hazardovať s priateľstvom a dobrými vzťahmi so susednými krajinami. Inak geopoliticky stráca. A jej miesto veľmi radi zaujmú iné mocnosti, ako napríklad Rusko, alebo Čína, prípadne aj Irán.

Preto je dobré, že EÚ pokračuje v upevňovaní svojich vzťahov aj s krajinami na východ od nej, a to na rôznych úrovniach. Preto je to v prospech nášho ľudu, ako aj ľudu týchto krajín. Pre politiku východného susedstva je kľúčovým slovom diferenciácia. To znamená, že musíme diferencovať medzi jednotlivými krajinami. Z niektorými máme už dohodu o asociácii, s inými iba nejaké dobré obchodné vzťahy, ale s každým my musíme sa snažiť o to, aby tie vzťahy išli aj do hĺbky a aby boli v náš prospech aj v oblasti energetiky, dopravy alebo výmeny študentov, prípadne v oblasti kultúry. Ako každý zo štátov Ukrajina, Gruzínsko, Moldava a Arménsko, Azerbajdžan, a dokonca aj Bielorusko musia mať naozaj vhodné miesto v našej politike. A myslím si, že my môžeme im pomôcť aj v ich reforme ako napríklad súdnictva, alebo aj ďalších oblastiach.

Mick Wallace (GUE/NGL). – Madam President, Ms Mogherini, you said that the Eastern Partnerships are not against anyone. Would you not do not admit that US and European involvement in Ukraine has very much an anti-Russian element to it? I think it would be very hard to ignore that. Do you not think that if Russia was interfering in Canada or Mexico that there would be serious tensions also with America? Do you not think that it is about time that Europe worked for peace with Russia? The European project was built on a peaceful one, and it would make so much more sense now to look for peace with Russia and engage those countries around it, make them independent, so they don't need the West or Russia. At the moment, Europe is increasing its militarisation, instead of decreasing it. We are liable to go into another arms race. Why don't we work with Russia and lift the sanctions? Ms Mogherini, I haven't been here very long and we haven't agreed on very much, but I'll still miss you. Good luck.

Tudor Ciuhodaru (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, parteneriatul estic cred că este cea mai mare realizare pe politică externă în ultimii zece ani, dar el trebuie dezvoltat. Eu sunt din Iași, România, și apreciez multe dintre proiectele transfrontaliere, iar România poate fi un exemplu de bune practici în ceea ce privește asistența medicală de urgență transfrontalieră cu Republica Moldova sau în ceea ce privește bursele de studiu. Pe de altă parte vă mai spun că pe lângă cele două sute de proiecte poate mai introduceți și altele. Cei din Republica Moldova, cetățenii români din Republica Moldova vor ca acele tarife de roaming să fie același ca și în Uniunea Europeană. Au rude plecate în străinătate și pe care nu le pot suna, ori pe de altă parte să poată și ei munci în Europa pentru că, dacă suntem în această fază în care oamenii sunt cei mai importanți, le putem dobândi astfel încrederea în valorile Uniunii Europene și, de ce nu, să ajungă ușor până în Uniunea Europeană pe acea autostradă a unirii finanțată prin fonduri europene de la Târgu Mureș și Iași și Chișinău. Sunt convins că puteți include aceste proiecte pentru ceea ce vreți să dezvoltați, iar parteneriatul estic să treacă la o nouă etapă, pentru că într-adevăr dincolo de geostrategie, dincolo de politici, oamenii sunt cei mai importanți, iar pe cei de acolo, chiar din est, îi văd tot ca cetățeni europeni în următorii zece ani.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Madam President, Oleg Sentsov's visit to our European Parliament this week to receive his well-deserved 2018 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought reminds us of the terrible price still being paid every day by the Ukrainian people for defending their territorial integrity. There's a war going on in our Eastern neighbourhood and it's barely mentioned in the media, yet the UN Human Rights Agency estimates that 13 000 people or more have already lost their lives in the Donbass area. The illegal annexation of Crimea is an affront to all of us who care about democracy. I'm proud that this Parliament supports Ukraine and its aspirations to move closer to our European family.

In 2011, I was involved in a year-long cultural exchange project with Ukrainian partners. I fell in love with the country and its people. I learned about the largely unknown *Holodomor*, or hunger, a planned genocide which killed 7 million Ukrainians. Russian abuses continue, and I urge colleagues to join our MEP Friends of Ukraine group, because there's never been a more important time to reach out and embrace Ukraine.

(„Catch the eye” eljárás vége)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Madam President, I think this discussion shows once again the relevance of parliamentary work in support of our partnerships. I've said it several times, not only with the Eastern partners but also with other partners we have around the world: the role of Parliament is key.

I believe that when it comes to the Eastern Partnership specifically, in the terms of both the partnership with the six countries and on the specific parliamentary work you have done and also the work you have done with the civil society and the social players that have roots in each of the six specific countries: the added value is enormous.

This is quite an unusual session for debates for me because, obviously, I cannot commit for the future steps. That will be, obviously, in the wise hands of my successor and the next Commission. But I am sure that the track that was started wisely ten years ago and then followed in this most recent years – that of deepening our partnership in all fields with the six countries we have to our east – is going to be strengthened even more in the future. I'm sure that it will have the possibility of counting on your full support, as I have been privileged to be accompanied in this particular work by you, with your advisors, with your work.

Many of you have thanked me for this partnership. Let me pay back by thanking you because I think that we have shown that, even if not always sharing exactly the same perspectives, but that's the positive point of democracy. You can disagree on some points, but you can still work in the same direction on some issues. I think that, in particular on the Eastern Partnership, we have proven that Parliament, Commission, Council can work together in unison and try to bridge some of the difficulties are still lying ahead.

Again, thank you for five years of support on this file and looking forward to staying in touch. But, as I was mentioning to the previous President of the session, I will stay with you for the rest of the evening and tomorrow. So that's not yet the last word of goodbye.

Elnök asszony. – A vitát lezárom.

Írásos nyilatkozatok (171. cikk)

Karol Karski (ECR), na piśmie. – Dzisiejsza debata jest wyraźnym sygnałem, że ogólna sytuacja naszych wschodnich partnerów staje się coraz bardziej skomplikowana. W tym kontekście powstaje pytanie, co my jako Unia Europejska powinniśmy uczynić. Musimy pracować – w ramach Partnerstwa Wschodniego, ale również bilateralnych kontaktów między poszczególnymi państwami członkowskimi – nad wspieraniem naszych partnerów tam, gdzie jest to potrzebne. Przede wszystkim zaś powinniśmy zastanowić się, w jaki sposób uatrakcyjnić formułę sąsiedztwa, aby zachęcić ich do większych wysiłków na rzecz zacieśnienia współpracy z UE oraz przeprowadzenia demokratycznych reform.

17. Sytuacja w Izraelu i Palestynie, w tym w osiedlach żydowskich (debata)

Elnök asszony. – A következő napirendi pont vita a Bizottság alelnökének/az Unió külügyi és biztonságpolitikai főképviselőjének nyilatkozata: Az Izraelben és Palesztínában, többek között a telepeken kialakult helyzetről (2019/2935(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Madam President, let me start by sharing with you a personal memory, maybe an anecdote, it is no mystery. When I took office exactly five years ago, five years and a couple of weeks ago, I paid my first visit outside of the European Union to Israel and Palestine, including a visit in Gaza. And I said at that time that I believe that a two-state solution could be achieved during my mandate.

This was the goal that I kept in my mind and in my actions all of these years. And, at some points, I have to say this goal seemed to be getting closer, but we all know what the situation looks like today. This doesn't mean that the perspective is not there and is not valid anymore. I think it is a matter of political will and political conditions, and I'll get back to that.

But today, clearly, if I paid the same visit probably I wouldn't say that I believe that that solution could be achieved in the coming months or years. The very idea of two states today has come under attack as never before from many sides.

Yet, we should all know that a two-state solution remains – I'm profoundly convinced of this – the best and the only realistic chance for peace and also for security in the holy places. This is a principled and a pragmatic position at the same time.

Nobody – nobody – has presented a credible alternative to two states so far. Many have argued against, but nobody has expressed any clear view that can substitute that objective realistically. And any plan that is not firmly anchored in international law – and let me add, also in the profound aspirations and interests of the people, not only of Palestine and Israel but also of the region – would ultimately fail.

Our support for the two states is a matter of international law, is a matter of justice and democracy, but, as I mentioned, is also a matter of realism. In these years, we have worked full time to avoid the dissolution of the two-states perspective. And the work continues today, even in such difficult circumstances, let me say especially in such difficult circumstances. Because sometimes we have the impression – as do some of our friends in the UN system, in the Arab world, but also a little bit farther away in Africa and Asia – that especially in this moment where it is so difficult to keep the perspective alive, that the voices of wisdom and realism need to be heard and need to speak up. This is why we have, as the objective was fading away, kept our position and our work at full speed and with all our strength.

This explains our position on all recent developments. First, on settlements: we have always believed that border changes can only be decided through direct negotiations between the parties based on the pre-1967 borders. Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory are illegal under international law. They constitute an obstacle to peace and threaten to make a two-state solution impossible.

In addition, settlement activity in East Jerusalem seriously jeopardises the possibility of Jerusalem serving as the future capital of both states. We have never shied away from restating this position, including just a week ago, and it is a united European position. I frequently hear many people inviting us to speak with one voice. In difficult times in difficult years, this has remained and remains the strong united European Union position.

Our position is also clear and unchanged regarding the security of the state of Israel. Firing rockets on Israel's civilian population is simply unacceptable, and I'm grateful to Egypt for their diplomatic efforts, which helped to stop the recent escalation. And I will repeat once again: Israel has the right to security, Israelis have the right to security. But we are also convinced that security will only be sustainable and real if it is built on peace and on a two-state solution.

As you know, in recent years we have also worked constantly to alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza. With the Gaza desalination plant we are providing concrete and long-lasting support which will benefit hospitals, schools, enterprises and every citizen of Gaza. Yet the crisis in Gaza is inherently political in nature and requires a political solution. The closure must end and crossings must be fully opened. At the same time it is also clear that Gaza is part of the future state of Palestine and that Palestinians themselves must find unity beyond their divisions.

We know that the current political outlook is uncertain, both in Palestine and in Israel. Discussions among Palestinian factions have not yet led to a substantial reconciliation. President Abbas has announced his intention to set a date for elections. And on the Israeli side, the political stalemate continues and might lead to an unprecedented situation with the third election in just one year.

It is my firm conviction that, with courageous leadership, a return to negotiations is possible. I am still convinced today, five years after my first visit as a High Representative in Palestine and Israel, that that is the goal and that is realistically achievable. Actually, I'm convinced that this is the only achievable, sustainable, realistic solution to this conflict.

And let me say, personally I'm also deeply convinced that, out of all the crises and conflicts of the region of the Middle East, this is probably the easiest to settle in concrete terms, provided – and this is the most difficult thing to achieve – there is political will among the parties and among the international players to accompany this process. There won't be peace without a strong political commitment by both sides and by the international community.

On the European Union side, we have always been, and we will continue to be – I'm sure about that – ready to support, to encourage and to accompany all efforts to build peace and security and a negotiated two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.

Antonio López-Istúriz White, *en nombre del Grupo PPE*. – Señora presidenta, quiero aprovechar esta oportunidad para darle las gracias por estos cinco años de franco intercambio de opiniones con ella aquí. Lo que acaba de decir ahora sobre el tema de Israel y Palestina me consta que seguro que ha sido uno de los temas más duros que ha tenido que lidiar. Le doy todo el apoyo, y desde luego, comparto mucho de lo que ella ha dicho en una situación que lógicamente no se va a resolver inmediatamente, pero en la que todos intentamos de buena fe, desde distintos ángulos de vista, participar para que haya por fin una paz, que dará la estabilidad no solo a la región, por este conflicto terrible que lleva años desgastándola, sino también a nosotros, los europeos, y al resto del mundo. Enhorabuena, vicepresidenta, por el trabajo realizado.

Y, en el caso nuestro, quiero decir claramente que Israel es un socio estratégico preferente con quien compartimos historia y valores. Somos, al fin y al cabo, la Unión Europea e Israel, democracias que nos esforzamos por promover en todo el mundo nuestros principios y nuestra visión de un mundo que respete el derecho a la asistencia de los demás Estados y pueblos.

Israel está preocupado por su seguridad. Es lógico y normal. Todos hemos visto cómo empezó la nube de cohetes que salieron de Gaza. No es menos cierto, también, que convendría que no hubiese escaladas, y saludamos que, al final, esto se haya frenado. No podemos nosotros hacerlo con nuestras declaraciones; y siempre tengo un poco la sensación de que estamos hablando siempre en función de lo que dicen los americanos. A ver si ya en la Unión Europea reaccionamos y actuamos por nuestra cuenta en este asunto. Creo que podemos contribuir al diálogo, podemos contribuir a la paz a nuestra manera.

Yo creo que es importante no dejarse llevar por los tuits y por las declaraciones. Creo que es importante que trabajemos, que vengan miembros de la Knesset, como van a venir -yo lo he pedido y vendrán, yo creo, dentro de dos semanas al Pleno de Estrasburgo-; que también, a nivel ejecutivo, continúen esas reuniones ministeriales que se interrumpieron, y que continuemos con ese diálogo.

Y luego, el trabajo que podemos hacer. Lo de los etiquetados en los productos de las zonas de los asentamientos creo que es un gran error. Creo que es al revés, la Unión Europea tendría que estar colaborando con Israel y con los palestinos y ayudar al desarrollo de la región. Creo que sería necesario hacer una nueva aproximación que dé mayor prosperidad a la zona. Tal vez, con eso sí podamos ayudar efectivamente a poner fin a esto.

Algunos compañeros comunistas de la extrema izquierda ya se ríen. Lógicamente, ya les escucharemos. Yo no quiero insultar a nadie, yo no quiero meterme con nadie. Creo que, entre palestinos e israelíes, la Unión Europea sí podría hacer la aproximación adecuada. Hagámosla y ya verán. En mi intervención no ha habido ninguna referencia ni ningún ataque a Palestina. Veremos a ver lo que dicen algunos compañeros. Escucho con atención.

Kati Piri, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, we are extremely concerned about the recent US statement. Only days after yet another round of violence in and around the Gaza Strip, US State Secretary Pompeo announced a major U-turn of US policy towards Israeli settlements. He declared, and I quote: ‘the establishment of Israel’s civilian settlements in the West Bank is not, per se, inconsistent with international law’. This declaration clearly goes against the 4th Geneva Convention, UN Security Council resolutions and the 2004 opinion of the International Court of Justice. I welcome and fully support the immediate and strong reaction by you, High Representative. Israeli settlements are illegal under international law and Israel has the obligation to end all settlement activity as an occupying power.

Pompeo’s announcement is yet another example of the Trump administration’s obsessive support for Prime Minister Netanyahu. This includes the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, moving the US Embassy there and recognising Israel’s sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights. It seems that the Trump administration, instead of coming up with the so-called deal of the century, has decided to play with escalating the conflict at the expense of Palestinians, Israelis and the international community at large.

President Trump must understand that the Middle East is not his foreign policy playground. It is the home of millions of Israelis and Palestinians striving for peace, day after day. The steady increase in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including in east Jerusalem, clearly undermines the prospect of any viable two-state solution. This is our only hope for a just and lasting peace in the region. It is in this spirit that we also support the recent ruling by the European Court of Justice about the labelling of Israeli settlement products in the EU market.

Hilde Vautmans, *namens de Renew-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, mevrouw de hoge vertegenwoordiger, ik wil u in de eerste plaats heel hartelijk bedanken. We hebben hier de voorbije vijf jaar heel vaak gedebatteerd tot heel laat in de avond. Ik vond het altijd aangenaam om met u de debatten aan te gaan. Ik denk trouwens dat we over Israël en Palestina het vaakst hebben gedebatteerd. U zei dat het uw eerste zending buiten de EU was. Wel, ik denk, collega’s, dat we de afgelopen legislatuur het grootste aantal keren gedebatteerd hebben over de situatie in Israël en Palestina, omdat het ons zorgen baart, en omdat het ons zorgen blijft baren.

Als we nu gewoon maar kijken naar het feit dat Israël sinds 2017 jaarlijks 12 000 woningen bijbouwt op de Westelijke Jordaanoever, dat er 26 illegale buitenposten zijn bijgebouwd, en dat er sinds 2009 niet minder dan 6 000 Palestijnse gebouwen op de Westelijke Jordaanoever zijn vernietigd, inclusief gebouwen gefinancierd met Europees belastinggeld, dan denk ik dat het toch duidelijk moet zijn. Israël werkt stap voor stap aan een éénstaatrealiteit, aan een fragmentatie van het Palestijnse grondgebied waar straks helemaal geen plaats meer is voor de Palestijnen. We mogen dit niet laten gebeuren. Ik heb u graag horen zeggen: “Er is politieke wil nodig”. Wel, Europa staat voor een internationale rechtsorde, gebaseerd op regels. Het is aan ons om in te gaan tegen die machtspolitiek van Netanyahu en Trump, tegen de nederzettingenpolitiek die zij doelgericht escaleren. Het is aan ons, Europa, om te blijven vechten voor die tweestatenoplossing, die volgens mij de enige oplossing is.

Mevrouw de hoge vertegenwoordiger, het zal waarschijnlijk een van uw laatste debatten zijn hier in de plenaire vergadering in Straatsburg. Ik vraag dus aan u, maar ook aan uw opvolger, om in te gaan tegen elke beslissing die een stap terug is in het vredesproces, om hard op te treden wanneer onze projecten vernield worden en om u ondubbelzinnig uit te spreken – zoals u al deed tegen Trump en Netanyahu – wanneer een beslissing de internationale rechtsregels met de voeten treedt. Mevrouw de hoge vertegenwoordiger, dan heeft u de steun van dit Parlement, en ik wil u nogmaals bedanken en u veel succes wensen in uw verdere carrière, loopbaan of wat u ook gaat doen.

Grace O’Sullivan, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, the Trump administration’s move to recognise the illegal settlements in the West Bank is just the latest in a litany of deeply destructive interventions from a government that seems determined to wreck any chance of peace. By recognising the illegal settlements, the United States has once again put itself outside the norms of international law. It has supported those that seek to ensure that any future Palestinian state would be unviable.

Israel's right to exist is beyond debate. Any country's right to illegally occupy territory seized in military conflicts is not beyond debate. There are differing views, I know, across the Chamber in regard to this conflict, but I believe there is a common wish to see a lasting peaceful solution that represents both sides. Each step along the road to occupation and annexation is a step away from a stable two-state agreement. What does it mean for the EU? Firstly, we know that the US has not been, and will not be, a reliable partner in this process while the current administration is in place. The EU is therefore the leading world power interested in promoting a lasting solution for the region and willing to act as an honest broker between peace-seeking elements in both governments.

Secondly, we need to consider how we as an economic union can influence the situation. I do not, and will not, support the BDS Movement but, nor can I support the economic activities taking place on stolen land in contravention of international law. In the Irish Senate I supported a bill from my colleague Senator Frances Black to prohibit goods from illegal settlements being imported into Ireland, a measure that would only have called on the Irish Government to make real its commitment to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

Currently goods grown or produced in illegal settlements in the West Bank are being imported into the EU as part of a trade agreement with Israel that does not extend to the territories. I would ask you to consider how, and why, that is allowed to continue?

Nicolaus Fest, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Mogherini! Sie sagten, die Zweistaatenlösung sei die beste, die nachhaltigste und die pragmatischste Lösung.

Das Gegenteil ist richtig. Die Zweistaatenlösung ist schon lange ein Ausdruck der politischen Ahnungslosigkeit und des Realitätsverlustes der EU. Die Zweistaatenlösung bedeutet die Rückgabe des Westjordanlands und des Gazastreifens. Wird das den Frieden bringen? Nein.

Erinnern wir uns: Im Jahr 2000 hat Jassir Arafat ein sehr großzügiges Angebot zum Gebietstausch abgelehnt. 2008 hat Mahmud Abbas genau das Gleiche getan. Als sich Israel 2005 zurückzog, forderte Hamas umgehend die totale Befreiung Palästinas, also die Vertreibung und Ermordung aller Israelis. Begreifen Sie endlich: Es geht Hamas und Al Fatah nicht um das Westjordanland, und es geht ihnen auch nicht um Gaza. Es geht ihnen um Haifa, um Tel Aviv und eben auch um Jerusalem.

Sie sprachen, verehrte Frau Mogherini, vom politischen Willen, der erforderlich sei, um dieses Problem zu lösen. Nehmen Sie doch bitte endlich zur Kenntnis: Aufseiten der Palästinenser, der palästinensischen Führung gibt es diesen Willen nicht, und es wird ihn auch nicht geben. Deshalb ist Ihre Politik, die Politik der Zweistaatenlösung, falsch.

Bert-Jan Ruissen, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, mevrouw de hoge vertegenwoordiger, de verklaring van minister Pompeo over de nederzettingen heeft heel wat stof doen opwaaien, maar ondertussen had hij wel degelijk een punt. Wie de nederzettingen als illegaal bestempelt, gebruikt immers wel hele grote woorden. Die doet geen recht aan de gecompliceerdheid van het Palestijns-Israëliëse conflict, loopt vooruit op de uitkomsten van noodzakelijke vredesbesprekingen en gaat er helemaal aan voorbij dat Israël zowel historisch als juridisch gezien wel degelijk terechte aanspraken maakt op de betreffende gebieden. Het zijn daarmee geen bezette gebieden, maar feitelijk betwiste gebieden, waar alleen via onderhandelingen een oplossing voor gevonden kan worden.

Ik zou de hoge vertegenwoordiger er dan ook toe op willen roepen geen energie te stoppen in de woordenwisseling met de VS hierover. Dan komen we echt niet verder. Investeer in plaats daarvan in maatregelen die er wel toe doen, die de vrede in het gebied wel dichterbij kunnen brengen. Daarom zeg ik: stop met het indirect steunen van terroristen en hun families via de Palestijnse Autoriteit, dit in navolging van een recent besluit van Nederland. Stop met betalingen aan de UNRWA, die al decennia een ongezonde vluchtelingensituatie in stand houdt. En kies voor een veel hardere opstelling tegenover Iran, dat een zeer agressieve en dubieuze rol speelt in de regio.

Manu Pineda, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señora presidenta, lo primero que quiero es felicitar a la señora Mogherini por la declaración que hizo tras las declaraciones del señor Pompeo en las que este daba carta de garantía a los asentamientos ilegales israelíes en territorio palestino ocupado. La quiero felicitar por el contenido de la declaración y por la inmediatez de su reacción. Y también quiero señalar que eso ha sido una constante en su mandato. Espero —y estoy convencido de que así será— que con el señor Borrell siga siendo lo mismo.

Pero tendremos que convenir, señora Mogherini, en que, aunque esas declaraciones han sido siempre oportunas y necesarias, y tienen valor —tienen valor porque, de algún modo, se están oponiendo a la vulneración sistemática por Israel de los derechos humanos del pueblo palestino y de la legalidad internacional—, el efecto ha sido muy limitado.

A los Acuerdos de Oslo se llega por la generosidad del pueblo palestino, que cede el 78 % de su territorio y reconoce a la potencia ocupante como Estado a cambio de que en el 22 % restante se establezca un Estado palestino. Eso está firmado en los Acuerdos de Oslo.

Israel ha incumplido los Acuerdos desde el primer momento, y no solo los Acuerdos: ha incumplido el Derecho internacional y las Resoluciones de la ONU. Mientras tanto, Palestina ha cumplido de forma exhaustiva todos sus compromisos.

¿Cuáles son los incumplimientos de Israel que puedo poner de ejemplo? El bloqueo a Gaza; los bombardeos sistemáticos sobre la población civil de Gaza; hace diez o doce días, el último ataque. Porque Netanyahu tiene un problema interno, lo resuelve bombardeando Gaza, provocando. Llegan cohetes... Le pido que pasemos de las palabras a los hechos.

La Unión Europea tiene que reconocer al Estado palestino e impulsar que los Estados miembros lo reconozcan también. Y tenemos que poner en cuestión, suspender el Tratado... *(la presidenta retira la palabra al orador).*

Lance Forman (NI). – Madam President, it is a lie that Israeli settlements are illegal. Disputed, yes, illegal no. Israel's future boundaries were drawn up in the 1920 San Remo Agreement and confirmed by the League of Nations in 1922. No other internationally legally binding agreement has ever superseded that, and the West Bank is part of Israel in that agreement. It is never been a separate sovereign state.

When the British left in 1948, war broke out between Arabs and Jews, and the West Bank was seized by Jordan. But their annexation was never recognised. So, when Israel took back control of its land 19 years later in a defensive six-day war in 1967, it did not cross an international boundary. So, those who say the settlements are illegal are completely misinterpreting Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention.

Two weeks ago, the EU passed a law forcing Jewish-owned businesses in the West Bank to label their goods differently to non-Jews. This racist law, reminding us of an earlier period in European history, will not lead to peace in the region. The EU should be ashamed of itself for perpetuating the myth that settlements are illegal under international law when that ruling lacks legal evidence.

Someone once said, 'if you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it'. You know who that person was. And it's time Europe moves on. Peace can only come if it is based on truth.

Željka Zovko (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to thank the High Commissioner for these positive words and that bringing in the Middle East, bringing peace between Israel and Palestine will be a lasting peace and it can be easily done if we can open the channels of communication. I must remind you that Israel is an important partner for the European Union. Colleagues in this House have declared several times the importance of a comprehensive solution in the Middle East to end the conflict and contribute to the security and stability in the region, and that includes also a safe Israeli state. The EU has to remain relevant as an honest and balanced broker in the future of the political process between Israel and Palestine.

Lasting peace can be based only on an enduring commitment to non-violence, justice and mutual recognition, building upon previous agreements and legal obligations. The two-state solution envisaged in the region, where two states, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace within secure and recognised borders. I must remind you that Israel has been singled out many times in the UN Human Rights Council and that's not right. Israel shouldn't be the only country that is being treated separately from other countries and this should be corrected as the EU is financing a multilateral system and it should be an honest broker that includes Israel that is the greatest democracy in this part of the region.

Maria Arena (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, le Conseil de sécurité réaffirme que la création, par Israël, de colonies de peuplement dans le territoire palestinien occupé depuis 1967, y compris Jérusalem-Est, n'a aucun fondement en droit et constitue une violation flagrante du droit international ainsi qu'un obstacle majeur à la réalisation de la solution à deux États et à l'instauration d'une paix globale et durable. C'est le paragraphe 1 de la résolution 2334 du Conseil de sécurité de 2016.

En vertu du droit international, le plateau du Golan et la Cisjordanie, y compris Jérusalem-Est, ne font pas partie des territoires israéliens (point 16 de l'arrêt du 12 novembre 2019 de la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne), et je pourrais continuer à énumérer les références du droit international et européen décrétant l'illégalité des colonies; la liste est longue. Dans ce contexte, l'annonce de M. Pompeo, le 18 novembre, apparaît comme une provocation supplémentaire. Que devons-nous faire? Respecter le droit international, respecter le droit européen. Je remercie Madame Mogherini pour le travail qu'elle a fait dans ces deux sens, dans le respect du droit international – soit les frontières de 1967 –, mais aussi dans le respect du droit européen.

La Cour de justice nous le rappelle: le 12 novembre, elle oblige l'Union européenne et les États membres à garantir au consommateur un étiquetage correct et précis, distinguant les produits provenant des territoires palestiniens, ou israéliens, ou de ses colonies. Nous sommes au Parlement européen, vous êtes à la Commission, nous devons tous respecter le droit international et le droit européen; c'est notre devoir, c'est notre responsabilité.

Javier Nart (Renew). – Señora presidenta, el activo principal en las relaciones internacionales no es la fuerza militar sino la potencia económica. Por ello, la Unión Europea debería ser principal actor estratégico en el conflicto entre Israel y Palestina. Pero Israel viola sistemáticamente las resoluciones de las Naciones Unidas, la Cuarta Convención de Ginebra y el propio Acuerdo de Asociación con la Unión Europea -y cito textualmente-, que determina y se basa en el respeto de los principios democráticos y los derechos humanos, constituyendo un elemento esencial del Acuerdo.

Yo pregunto: ¿Cuándo exigiremos el cumplimiento de este Acuerdo? Cooperación, sí, pero con quien cumple. Y, si ello fuera poco, nuestro supuesto aliado, los Estados Unidos, nos ignora, dinamitando los acuerdos de Oslo, reconociendo la soberanía israelí sobre los territorios ocupados.

Somos irrelevantes, porque no nos respetan y porque nosotros no nos respetamos a nosotros mismos. Medio siglo de ocupación es algo intolerable, inadmisibile. Sobran todas las condenas, porque son perfectamente inútiles. Pasemos a los hechos.

Mounir Satouri (Verts/ALE). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Haute représentante, à l'heure où les États-Unis réinventent à leur guise le droit international, je salue la sobriété juridique et la constance européenne.

Conformément au droit international, le jugement de la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne réitère ses positions. Elle distingue Israël de ses colonies implantées en Cisjordanie, à Jérusalem-Est et sur le plateau syrien du Golan, c'est essentiel. Nous le savons, la colonisation est un frein réel à la paix. Depuis 1967, sans même compter Jérusalem-Est, nous sommes passés de 16 000 à 427 000 colons, ce sont les chiffres de 2018 de l'organisation israélienne Peace Now. Merci donc à l'Europe qui reste forte sur ses valeurs, mais il est aussi temps pour notre Europe d'être à la hauteur de par ses actes.

Il est temps de contribuer à faire la paix concrètement. L'Union européenne a suffisamment proclamé le droit; il lui appartient désormais de l'appliquer et de le faire respecter, car elle en a les moyens. Il appartient à la Commission de s'assurer que les États membres respectent l'étiquetage des produits des colonies. Il incombe également au Conseil d'avoir le courage d'aller plus loin et d'assumer de faire appliquer le droit international.

Elena Lizzi (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Alto rappresentante Mogherini, secondo il Segretario di Stato americano gli insediamenti ebraici in Cisgiordania non violano la legge internazionale. La sentenza della Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea, invece, impone che Israele segnali sull'etichetta dei propri prodotti se provengono da insediamenti situati in uno dei territori cosiddetti occupati. Perché all'Europa non interessa etichettare allo stesso modo nessun prodotto degli oltre duecento contenziosi territoriali nel mondo?

Le proteste degli Stati arabo-sunniti alla politica di Washington sono state deboli e fanno capire come la maggiore preoccupazione sia l'azione iraniana. L'Unione europea continua a colpire Israele, l'unica vera democrazia del Medio Oriente, quando dovrebbe essere il terrorismo islamico il nemico da combattere. L'Unione europea stanza milioni di euro all'islamica Turchia ma si dimentica di etichettarla per l'occupazione di Cipro. Ha forse allora ragione Netanyahu a parlare di un nuovo antisemitismo in Europa?

Alexandr Vondra (ECR). – Madam President, I think that the settlement issue is a part of the broader framework of the negotiations between Israel and Palestine, and singling it out does not contribute to the promotion of peace. Israel is an important partner for the European Union in the area of security, in the area of economy, and with shared values. We need Israel and Israel needs us.

The EU has to remain relevant in a future political process between Israel and Palestine, and to be received as an honest and balanced broker it's important for the EU not to undermine its position by mishandling this. Peace between Israelis and Palestinians can only be when the Palestinians are under one legitimate, democratic leadership that rejects all violence, and Europe here has to be not just a payer but also a player. The EU must therefore use this leverage to end the 'pay-for-slay' scheme, to end the systematic incitement of the Palestinian Authority and, last but not least, to work to phase out a United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) whose mandate perpetuates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL). – A Uachtaráin, tá mé sásta a bheith anseo ag caint ar an díospóireacht seo inniu mar...

finally the European Court of Justice ruled that the selling of food and drink produced in illegal settlements and stolen Palestinian land must be labelled, and that's a start. However, this does not go nearly far enough. The UN special rapporteur, Michael Lynk, was right when he said any trade or investment with Israeli settlements provides them with the economic oxygen to continue to grow. We in the EU cannot call these settlements illegal and an obstacle to peace and, at the same time, continue to provide them with the economic means to thrive. Trade with illegal settlements makes us complicit in the oppression of the Palestinian people.

Both houses of the Oireachtas in Ireland have voted in favour of a bill which would prohibit imports from illegal settlements, yet the Irish government continues to block this legislation. Member States, including Ireland, wax lyrical about supporting the two-state solution but fail to recognise one of these states – Palestine. Fence-sitting by EU Member States emboldens the unstable Trump administration and its dangerous policy towards Israel.

(The President interrupted the speaker)

I have one and a half minutes, Chair. For years we've had and we've heard mealy-mouth sentiments from the EU about Israeli violence, Israeli violation of human rights and breaches to the EU and yet the EU applies moral equivalence to the occupier and the occupied.

Is mór an náire é.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, in una mossa forse non troppo inaspettata, dati i precedenti, il Segretario di Stato Mike Pompeo ha annunciato il 18 novembre un cambio radicale nella politica USA riguardo agli insediamenti israeliani in Cisgiordania, affermando che non li riterranno più illegali, non corrispondenti alla legge internazionale.

Con questa scellerata decisione l'amministrazione USA ha rinunciato, probabilmente in modo definitivo, a essere un mediatore credibile nel conflitto mediorientale e, al contempo, ha inferto un ulteriore doloroso colpo alle prospettive della soluzione a due Stati.

È davvero difficile, data la situazione, ma voglio essere costruttivo. Con gli Stati Uniti che volontariamente hanno abdicato da quell'imparzialità necessaria per svolgere tale ruolo, ora più che mai all'Unione spetta fare un passo in avanti e cercare di far rinascere dalle ceneri un processo di pace che è sì complesso, ma assolutamente necessario.

Infatti, mentre l'intero Medio Oriente è in fiamme, si tende a mettere in secondo piano il decennale conflitto israelo-palestinese, ritenendolo una non priorità, uno status quo tutto sommato «sostenibile». Questo è un grande errore. Si tratta infatti della madre di tutte le contese regionali e la sua soluzione è una *conditio sine qua non* per la stabilità dell'intera macroarea.

Ringrazio l'Alto rappresentante uscente per il suo impegno e chiedo alla nuova Commissione e al nuovo Alto rappresentante di avere coraggio e di mostrare spirito d'iniziativa, presentandosi davanti alle parti, Israele e Palestina, con una nuova tabella di marcia, con una nuova proposta concreta e una nuova speranza.

Rispetto del diritto internazionale, rispetto delle sentenze della nostra Corte di giustizia e coerenza. Lo dobbiamo ai nostri valori, lo dobbiamo al nostro ruolo di mediatori credibili, altrimenti perderemo un'altra chance per essere davvero determinanti nel nostro vicinato.

Lukas Mandl (PPE). – Madam President, there is a political aspect, there is a moral aspect, there is the role of the European Union, and there is the overall position of the European Union.

The moral aspect, in my view, is that we are talking about the only Jewish state on this planet, and we are talking about the ancient home of the Jewish people, which has been the home of the Jewish people not only for decades or for centuries, but for thousands of years. So who are we as the European Parliament to judge any Jew who settles there?

Then there is the political aspect. If we isolate the question of settlements from everything else, this would mean violating the peace process, not to support it. Because it is only one aspect of many different aspects. The role of the European Union in the peace process must be the one of an honest broker, of a force that underlines that security is the thing that Israel needs.

Security is the thing that is needed and that's why it is important that Israel remains in control of the areas where threats for the civilians in Israel come from. And as long as there is not security provided from these areas, it is important that this control remains and the peace process needs the EU as an honest broker.

The overall position of the European Union must be, more than ever, to stand beside Israel in order to support Israel. Israel is the only democracy, the only rule of law state in the Middle East.

Ms Mogherini, thank you for your work. I will also demand that this is the position of the EU, and is clearly underlined in the work of your successor.

Evin Incir (S&D). – Fru talman! Två demokratiska stater – Israel och Palestina – som lever i fred, säkerhet och trygghet sida vid sida är målet, men för det krävs att alla sidor respekterar de gemensamma åtagandena och internationell rätt. Den nuvarande situationen går stick i stäv med det.

Det hjälper inte heller att andra globala aktörer som USA bidrar till polarisering i stället för en lösning bland annat genom att flytta amerikanska ambassaden till Jerusalem och nu senast genom deklarationen att de inte längre ser israeliska bosättningar som illegala.

Ett viktigt led en tvåstatslösning är att även erkänna Palestina som stat. Fler stater borde ha följt Sveriges exempel 2014. Ockupationen måste få ett slut för att folk i båda länderna skall kunna leva i fred och frihet.

Som vice ordförande för EU:s delegation för förbindelserna med Palestina skulle jag vilja se att EU gjorde mer. Det handlar bland annat om ockupationen. Det handlar om bosättningar. Det handlar om produkter från bosättningsområden, och det handlar också om humanitärt stöd.

Byggnader och annan typ av infrastruktur som EU och medlemsstaterna har bidragit med förstörs dessvärre konstant av israeliska militären. Min fråga är därför ganska simpel: Vad gör kommissionen för att säkra att detta inte får fortgå, och vad gör kommissionen för att säkerställa att vi kompenseras av israeliska myndigheter för alla förstörda och konfiskerade byggnader?

Klemen Grošelj (Renew). – Gospa predsednica! Rešitev palestinskega vprašanja se po odločitvi predsednika Trumpa o prestolnici Jeruzalem in o statusu izraelskih naselbin na palestinskih območjih vse bolj odmika. Hkrati se pogloblja humanitarna kriza na palestinskih ozemljih, še posebej v Gazi.

Ne morem se znebiti vtisa, da si del mednarodne skupnosti zaradi ozkih lastnih interesov ne želi trajne rešitve palestinskega vprašanja in ji status quo celo ustreza.

Sam menim, da mora Evropska unija v okviru skupne zunanje in varnostne politike odločneje vztrajati na že dogovorjeni rešitvi dveh držav, pri čemer mora od Izraela zahtevati, naj prekine s politiko širitve naselbin na palestinskih ozemljih.

Od vseh strani pa tudi zahtevati, da se vrnejo za pogajalsko mizo in k iskanju trajne miroljubne rešitve tega vprašanja.

Ne glede na nedavne poteze in nasilje pa ostaja dejstvo, da to vprašanje, ki je vprašanje vseh na Bližnjem vzhodu, ne more biti rešeno drugače kot za pogajalsko mizo.

Gina Dowding (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, it is time for the EU to step up as the neutral peace broker in Israel and Palestine. That requires an unwavering commitment to international law. That is why last week's ruling by our Court of Justice is so important. Products from illegal Israeli settlements must now be labelled as such, and now concrete steps must be taken to enforce the Court's judgment. This is the first step.

Going forward, the EU needs to impose a ban on all imports of settlement products into the EU. Similar measures have been taken with products from Crimea and Northern Cyprus; why not from the settlements? The UN should urgently release the database of companies operating in Israeli settlements that are profiting from their construction and growth. Together these will send a clear message to the world. Any attempts to legitimise annexation and contravene international law will have concrete repercussions.

Finally, I would like to ask the High Representative and her successor what other concrete steps will the EU take to ensure international law remains a respected point of reference for the Middle East peace process?

Jan Zahradil (ECR). – Paní předsedající, já se musím přiznat, že jsem vždycky nervózní, když se tady v Evropském parlamentu začne mluvit na téma Izrael, protože málokdy z toho vyjde něco objektivního a vyváženého.

Já si myslím, že bychom měli především uvažovat v intencích toho, co je důležité pro Evropu a co přinese výhodu jejím občanům. Měli bychom umět číst geopolitickou mapu, uvědomit si, že Izrael je důležitým regionálním partnerem, možná tím nejdůležitějším pro Evropskou unii, zejména v bezpečnostní oblasti. Když tak často hovoříme o evropských hodnotách, tak bychom měli umět uznat, že Izrael z hlediska všech možných parametrů je evropská země, je to parlamentní demokracie, je to země, kde vládne právo, a je to prostě evropská země, přestože neleží na evropském kontinentu, takže bychom jí měli prokazovat zásadní solidaritu. V neposlední řadě v situaci rostoucího antisemitismu v mnoha evropských zemích je jakékoliv symbolické podryvání pozice Izraele jenom nahrávání těm antisemitským náladám. Takže já bych volal po daleko vyváženějším přístupu Evropské unie a myslím, že máme být s Izraelem solidární.

PŘESEDNICTVÍ: MARCEL KOLAJA*místopředseda*

Miguel Urbán Crespo (GUE/NGL). – Señor presidente, la Unión Europea no puede ser cómplice del *apartheid* en Palestina. Relaciones comerciales y militares con empresas e instituciones israelíes implicadas en graves violaciones de derechos humanos contra el pueblo palestino: así se materializa la complicidad de la Unión Europea con el *apartheid* que sufren las y los palestinos.

La Unión Europea también se ha negado a hacer que se respete la cláusula de derechos humanos que su Acuerdo de Asociación con Israel contempla. Y tampoco se escucha a las innumerables organizaciones que exigen que se dejen de apoyar los crímenes contra el pueblo palestino.

Es justamente la sociedad civil europea, con campañas como BDS, la única que está plantando cara a las violaciones de derechos humanos por parte de Israel. Y por eso justamente se la intenta criminalizar. Desde aquí, toda nuestra solidaridad con la sociedad civil.

Toca poner medidas encima de la mesa: el reconocimiento del pueblo palestino, el fin de la ocupación, el embargo de armas a Israel hasta que se respeten los derechos humanos, y la prohibición de las importaciones procedentes de los asentamientos ilegales. Toca (*palabras inaudibles*) medidas, no podemos seguir mirando hacia otro lado.

Λευτέρης Νικολάου-Αλαβάνος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η αναγνώριση από τις Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες Αμερικής των ισραηλινών εποικισμών στη Δυτική Όχθη, η λεγόμενη «συμφωνία του αιώνα», που ουσιαστικά νομιμοποιεί την παράνομη απόσπαση και κατοχή παλαιστινιακής γης από το Ισραήλ, και η αναγνώριση της Ιερουσαλήμ ως πρωτεύουσας του Ισραήλ πριμοδοτούν την κλιμάκωση της επιθετικότητας απέναντι στον παλαιστινιακό λαό, που πλήττεται από δολοφονίες – ακόμα και ανήλικων παιδιών – επιθέσεις, εποικισμούς, το «τείχος του αίσχους», χιλιάδες πολιτικούς κρατούμενους.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει μεγάλες ευθύνες, κρατά ίσες αποστάσεις, ταυτίζοντας το θύμα – τον παλαιστινιακό λαό – με τον θύτη, το Ισραήλ. Η στάση της δίνει άλλοθι και τροφδοτεί τη συνέχιση των θηριωδιών του ισραηλινού κράτους στη Λωρίδα της Γάζας και στη Δυτική Όχθη. Οι ελληνικές κυβερνήσεις της ΝΔ και του ΣΥΡΙΖΑ έχουν επίσης βαριές ευθύνες: επέκτειναν και αναβαθμίζουν συνεχώς την πολιτική, οικονομική, στρατιωτική συνεργασία με το ισραηλινό κράτος.

Υποστηρίζουμε τον δίκαιο αγώνα του παλαιστινιακού λαού και απαιτούμε: τη δημιουργία ανεξάρτητου και κυρίαρχου παλαιστινιακού κράτους με πρωτεύουσα την Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ, την αποχώρηση του ισραηλινού στρατού από τα κατεχόμενα εδάφη, την παύση της εποικιστικής δραστηριότητας και την αποχώρηση όλων των εποίκων, το γκρέμισμα του «τείχους της ντροπής», την επιστροφή των Παλαιστίνιων προσφύγων στις εστίες τους, την άμεση απελευθέρωση όλων των Παλαιστίνιων πολιτικών κρατούμενων. Απαιτούμε να τεθούν τώρα σε ισχύ οι αποφάσεις των κοινοβουλίων 14 κρατών μελών, ανάμεσα τους και της Ελλάδας από το 2015, που έχουν αναγνωρίσει το παλαιστινιακό κράτος.

Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou (PPE). – Mr President, in this House, I'm going to state the obvious: we are not deaf, we are not blind, and we are not mute.

We are certainly not deaf: we've heard the European Union's position on Israeli settlement policy. We heard it, in fact, from the High Representative here today, as we have heard it many times in the past, including last week. We've certainly heard President Donald Trump, as well as Secretary Pompeo, speak very clearly on Israel.

We're also not blind: for decades we've seen blood-soaking terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians. I've seen this with my own eyes, in fact, in the Nahal Oz kibbutz, which is very close to the Gaza Strip, where four-year-old Daniel was murdered inside his own home by Hamas rockets. I've seen this with my own eyes, looking over villages – Israeli villages – near the Golan Heights, where the local population is often used as a human shield against Hezbollah-smuggled missiles, which are being used to attack Israeli citizens. It's quite plain to see, in fact, that Israel has legitimate security concerns.

We're also not mute: in fact, the European Union has been very vocal in the past as a voice of peace and stability in the region. Israel is one of Europe's closest allies and we share so many common values and common interests. What we need to do now is to advance a common bilateral agenda for deepening EU-Israeli ties, and it is critical that the newly elected Commission prioritise this. Working more closely together will not only advance peace, it will also help Europe reinforce its role as an honest and balanced broker of peace.

Finally, given the current political instability in Israel, I think that Parliament has to act responsibly and refrain from interfering in internal politics. We're not deaf, blind or mute, but sometimes silence is golden.

Carmen Avram (S&D). – Mr President, I would like to welcome Ms Mogherini's balanced presentation regarding the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories. I would also like to remind this Chamber and the people who are following our debate that Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, and maybe we should put more of our energy into persuading all countries in the area to also follow the path of a real democracy. I believe many things would be easier to solve in the Middle East, including peace.

Coming to the settlement issues, I think this should be part of the framework of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Sanctioning only one side has never contributed to the promotion of peace. Israel is an ally and a friend and an important trade partner. Also when it comes to security, innovation, agriculture, fighting terrorism, or even fighting climate change, Israel has so much to give Europe. So we should not alienate friends by pointing them out every single time without going deeper into the region's background and complicated reality.

I call on the EU to remain an honest and balanced broker. It's the only way we can reach a long-term agreement, and hopefully, peace in the region.

Martin Horwood (Renew). – Mr President, we debate this issue only days after the Israeli government has joined the Venezuelan, Iranian and Egyptian regimes in banning a researcher for Human Rights Watch. I really regret that and I really think Israel is better than that, but we're also seeing a growing alignment between the Trump and Netanyahu administrations, which increasingly damages prospects for peace. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's declaration that the West Bank settlements are not, per se, inconsistent with international law is first of all wrong but also an endorsement of Netanyahu's strategy of changing the facts on the ground in a way that aims to undermine the feasibility of a two-state solution, the outlines of which have been clear for decades and which remains the only viable plan for peace. We must steadfastly defend Israel's right to exist as a state, but also recognize Palestine's right to statehood. Many believe Palestine has been fulfilling the Montevideo criteria for statehood for many years and, against the odds, it still has moderate Arab leaders on the West Bank at least. I hope a new Israeli government will recognize that compromise with such leaders is in Israel's best interests and the best pathway to peace and security, but we must stand ready to step up the pressure in support of that pathway.

Magid Magid (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, *as-Salaam-Alaikum*. My message to the heroic Palestinian people who have resisted the extermination of their culture, their nationhood and their right to exist for 70 years is this: there are millions and millions of Europeans who grew up under occupation behind the Iron Curtain, the permanent choking hand of occupation, the never-ending nights of oppression, the daily torture and the disturbing murders. These Europeans and their allies – some are right wing and some are left wing – they know the horrors of occupation too well to allow or dismiss your struggle.

And to my friends in Parliament: give the Palestinians what you would want for yourselves: the promise that weapons made in the EU will not be used to kill your children, and a comprehensive ban on all and any settlement goods entering the EU. If the settlements are illegal, then the products are illegal, and those who profit from them are criminals.

Justice in words requires justice in action, so let us remember and repeat and honour the great words of Nelson Mandela when he said: 'Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians'.

Martina Michels (GUE/NGL). – Herr Präsident, Frau Mogherini! Wir sind uns offensichtlich weitgehend einig, dass Pompeos und Trumps Legitimierung der Siedlungspolitik Netanjahus das Völkerrecht mit Füßen tritt. Die Konfliktschneise zwischen Raketenbeschuss und Vertreibung geht in die nächste Runde. Luxemburgs Außenminister Asselborn schlägt eine neue europäische Anerkennungswelle Palästinas mit Ostjerusalem als Hauptstadt vor. Das ist charmant, doch nur eines der Ziele einer EU-Nahostpolitik.

Wir werden Oslo nicht verteidigen, wenn wir einen ständig scheiternden Friedensprozess zwischen Israel und Palästina losgelöst von Friedenslösungen zum Beispiel für Syrien – für die ganze Region – anpacken wollen. Wie glaubhaft ist unsere Diplomatie im Nahen Osten, wenn wir andererseits eine EU-Abschottungspolitik mit der Türkei und Libyen betreiben? Wie glaubhaft sind wir, wenn die Mitgliedstaaten völkerrechtliches Versagen überall mit Waffenexporten und der Ausbildung von Sicherheitskräften unterstützen? Wir brauchen eine internationale Friedenskonferenz, um ehrliche Antworten zu finden.

Sven Mikser (S&D). – Mr President, let me thank the High Representative, dear Federica, for the excellent cooperation during the last five years, and also for her personal commitment to finding a just and sustainable resolution to this almost intractable conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Let me also thank her for her unwavering commitment to preserving the EU's unity regarding our approach to the peace process.

A negotiated two-state solution remains the only just way of resolving the conflict, and it is also the only intellectually convincing solution which can simultaneously address Israel's very real and legitimate security concerns and deliver the legitimate Palestinian aspirations of statehood. EU support for the negotiated two-state solution has been clear and consistent and needs to remain so.

Settlement activity in the occupied territories presents an obstacle to the peace process and that's why we should be very clear in our opposition to that activity. The same goes for the encouragement provided for such activity in the form of the recent US declaration regarding the legality of the settlements. I do not believe that unilateral actions which are clearly inconsistent with international law, are in anyone's long-term security interests.

José Ramón Bauzá Díaz (Renew). – Señor presidente, el cumplimiento del Derecho internacional es un deber de todos los Estados, e Israel —en eso yo creo que estamos todos de acuerdo— no puede ni debe ser una excepción.

Dicho esto, señora Mogherini, me preocupa el uso que ciertos partidos quieren hacer del conflicto para mostrar un odio cada vez menos disimulado hacia Israel. Porque el auge del antisemitismo es uno de los mayores problemas que vive la Unión Europea. Como denunció la Agencia de los Derechos Fundamentales el año pasado, en doce de los Estados miembros más de un tercio de los entrevistados temían ser agredidos por causa de su religión judía y casi la mitad se enfrentaba diariamente a insultos y a vejaciones.

Pero los insultos y las agresiones son siempre el preludio de algo peor, como, desgraciadamente, comprobamos con horror tras el reciente atentado en Halle durante la celebración del Yom Kipur.

Cuando permitimos que se normalice el antisemitismo, alimentamos la violencia que sufren nuestros compatriotas judíos en las calles europeas. Que después de setenta años los judíos no se sientan a salvo en su tierra evidencia un terrible fracaso, y, sobre todo, nos exige una responsabilidad y la participación activa de la Unión Europea.

Νιαζί Κιζιλγιουρέκ (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κυρία Mogherini, για ακόμη μία φορά η κυβέρνηση των ΗΠΑ προσπαθεί να νομιμοποιήσει τις απαράδεκτες πολιτικές του Ισραήλ. Προκλητικά χαρακτηρίζει ως νόμιμους τους ισραηλινούς εποικισμούς στην κατεχόμενη Παλαιστίνη, ενώ προηγουμένως μετέφερε την πρεσβεία της στην Ιερουσαλήμ και αναγνώρισε την κυριαρχία του Ισραήλ στα Υψώματα του Γκολάν. Την ίδια ώρα το Ισραήλ επεκτείνει διαρκώς τους εποικισμούς. Έποικοι και ισραηλινές δυνάμεις ασφαλείας συνεχίζουν τις παραβιάσεις των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων των Παλαιστίνιων.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση δεν μπορεί και δεν πρέπει να είναι απαθής. Πρέπει να ασκήσει πιέσεις στο Ισραήλ προκειμένου να τερματίσει την πολιτική των εποικισμών και να δεσμευτεί σε έναν οδικό χάρτη για την ειρήνη και την εξεύρεση λύσης στη βάση δύο κρατών. Από το βήμα αυτό καλώ και την κυβέρνηση της χώρας μου, της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, να καταγγείλει τις ενέργειες των ΗΠΑ και του Ισραήλ. Ο εποικισμός συνιστά έγκλημα πολέμου.

Isabel Santos (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Representante, cumprimento-a nesta sua última participação numa sessão do Parlamento Europeu e sirvo-me das palavras assertivas que usou num texto recentemente publicado para, de forma simples e direta, retratar o dilema com que hoje nos confrontamos.

A solução de dois Estados é a única via para garantir, por um lado, o direito dos palestinianos à liberdade, à autodeterminação e ao desenvolvimento humano e, por outro, o direito dos israelitas à segurança e à paz.

Assumir posições que entram em rota de colisão com esta solução, como fez a administração americana, ao legitimar os colonatos israelitas e ao reconhecer Jerusalém como a capital de Israel, significa ir contra o Direito Internacional, inviabilizar a resolução do conflito israelo-palestiniano, e, com isso, qualquer possibilidade de paz duradoura no Médio Oriente.

Exige-se da União Europeia mais do que palavras, atos, na busca de compromissos necessários à materialização dos acordos de Oslo, bem como da resolução do Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas de 2016.

Nikolaj Villumsen (GUE/NGL). – Hr. formand! De israelske bosættelser i de besatte palæstinensiske områder er ikke alene en klokkeklar krænkelse af international lov, de er også et bevidst forsøg på at undergrave muligheden for en fredelig tostatsløsning.

Vi skal ikke acceptere, at Trump og Netanyahu fortsætter med at trampe på palæstinenserne menneskerettigheder.

Det er helt afgørende, at EU tager sig sammen og står vagt om international lov. Vi skal have et importforbud mod varer fra de ulovlige israelske bosættelser. Vi har behov for en anerkendelse af den palæstinensiske stat, og vi har behov for et frit og levedygtigt Palæstina.

Nacho Sánchez Amor (S&D). – Señor presidente, gracias señora Mogherini por el trabajo de estos años. En materia de política internacional americana estamos ya fuera del límite del asombro, pero no hay que dejar de subrayar el carácter venenoso de esta doctrina que convierte la posesión de hecho de un territorio en un título jurídico que legitima esa capacidad porque, sencillamente, tira a la basura el sistema de seguridad de Helsinki. Porque este caso excede de la cuestión de Israel y Palestina.

¿Podemos aplicar esta doctrina de que sostener *de facto* un territorio legitima su ocupación en el caso de Crimea? ¿Podemos considerar que, si Turquía se queda en Siria, no sé cuántos meses o años, sería un poseedor legítimo de ese territorio? ¿Aplicamos la doctrina Pompeo a Osetia del Sur? Por eso digo que el caso excede mucho del caso de Israel y Palestina.

Lo que hay que decir es que nunca podemos convertir la estabilización de un conflicto en una frontera en un título jurídico que legitima al agresor. Y, por eso, lo que ha hecho el señor Pompeo no es una violación del Derecho internacional: es un ataque al corazón de las simples relaciones internacionales civilizadas.

Pierfrancesco Majorino (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ringrazio Federica Mogherini per tutto quello che ha fatto.

È con grande preoccupazione che dobbiamo guardare alla situazione determinatasi da tempo in Israele e Palestina, una situazione che impone all'Europa e alla comunità internazionale di reagire con nettezza. Serve infatti il protagonismo europeo per tentare di ripercorrere la strada che porti alla soluzione dei due popoli e due Stati, ed è un nostro dovere proseguire su questa strada, senza titubanze.

Una soluzione che per essere realizzata deve basarsi sul reciproco rispetto e sull'attuazione dei diritti fondamentali: quello dello Stato di Israele di vivere in pace e sicurezza entro i confini riconosciuti dalla comunità internazionale e quello, assolutamente identico, del popolo palestinese che in quei confini deve vedersi riconoscere il proprio Stato, la propria sovranità e la propria legittimità.

Dobbiamo anche essere espliciti nel denunciare ciò che va nella direzione opposta. La politica del governo di Netanyahu sulle colonie, ad esempio, è stato un fattore enormemente destabilizzante, un ulteriore ed enorme elemento di tensione non giustificabile e contrario al diritto internazionale.

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Gospoda predsednik! Spoštovana Federica, tvoj mandat se izteka in hvala za vse opravljeno izvrstno delo.

Žal razpravo o razmerah v Izraelu in Palestini spet zaznamuje obsodbe vredno nasilje, več deset mrtvih v napadu izraelskih sil na Gazo, nenehno nazadovanje razmer na terenu.

Rešitev je v dialogu in v okviru mirovnega procesa, a sta oba povsem ohromljena. Zastrupljajo in onemogočajo ju enostranske in močno škodljive poteze ZDA in predsednika Trumpa, nazadnje s spremembo stališča do nezakonitih izraelskih naselbin na Zahodnem bregu.

To potezo gre razumeti tudi kot odgovor na nedavno odločitev Sodišča Evropske unije, ki Evropi nalaga, da produktom iz nezakonitih naselbin jasno označi izvor.

Judovske naselbine so vojni zločin! Kako je mogoče, da Unija z njimi sploh posluje? Izdelki, ki so tam proizvedeni, so po mednarodnem pravu nezakoniti in v Evropi nimajo mesta.

Zato naj Komisija hitro in odločno ukrepa, da se sodba prične izvajati danes, saj je Izrael že napovedal popolno priključitev okupiranega ozemlja. To pa bo dokončno pokopalo možnost mirne rešitve palestinskega vprašanja.

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Sur President, ser immur dritt għall-punt. L-abitazzjonijiet Izraeljani fit-territorju okkupat Palestinjan huma illegali taht il-liġi internazzjonali. Il-pożizzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea dwar il-politika ta' insedjament min-naħa tal-Izrael hija ċara hafna u nispera li tibqa' kif inhi.

Id-deċiżjoni tal-amministrazzjoni ta' Trump li ddu madwar il-liġi internazzjonali tikkostitwixxi theddida sinifikanti għall-paċi u s-sigurtà fir-reġjun. Minflok jingħaqdu sabiex tinstab soluzzjoni paċifika fuq iż-żewġ Stati, din is-sitwazzjoni kurrenti qed tkompli tqajjem il-vjolenza u d-diviżjoni kif ukoll qed thedded il-vijabbiltà fragli ta' soluzzjoni li tinvolvi żewġ Stati differenti.

Ma hemmx u ma jistax ikun hemm l-ebda skuża biex tiddgħajjef il-liġi internazzjonali u għalhekk illi għandna bżonn: tmiem immedjat għal kull attività ta' insedjament; projbizzjoni fuq il-prodotti tas-saldu Izraeljan fis-suq tal-Unjoni Ewropea, inkella ser nagħtu aktar sahha ekonomika lil dan il-kunflitt; u anke t-tnaqqis minnufih tal-kunflitt fi u madwar l-istrixxa ta' Gaża.

L-inċitament u l-vjolenza għandhom jintemmu. In-nies iridu jkunu sikuri u protetti u gwerra ohra trid tkun evitata akkost ta' kollox.

Catch-the-eye procedure

Billy Kelleher (Renew). – Mr President, at the outset I just want to say that I respect Israel's right to exist and protect itself and to live in peace and security in the Middle East. But having said that, and having visited the West Bank and seen first-hand what occupation is doing in terms of undermining the existence of the Palestinian state, let us be under no illusions. The idea that Israel can continually encroach on Palestinian lands is simply designed to undermine any chance of a two-state solution coming about.

The Palestinian state is being slowly dismantled in front of our eyes, and Jared Kushner, the US envoy, simply is not seen as an honest broker in the Middle East, he's not seen as an honest broker by the Palestinians. And we have to accept that Europe must play a more active role in being that honest broker, supporting Israel's right to exist and, at the same time, ensuring that the two-state solution is the cornerstone of any future peace process.

Equally, I sponsored a bill in the Irish Parliament a number of years ago with regard to produce from illegal settlements. And I would urge that the European Union would look at that, not only in the context of illegal settlements in the West Bank, but across the globe.

Joachim Stanisław Brudziński (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Pani Komisarz! W 1492 r., kiedy Żydzi zostali wypędzeni z Hiszpanii, z Portugalii, z krajów niemieckich, kiedy byli tam paleni na stosie, znaleźli swoje miejsce na ziemiach polskich. W języku jidysz Polin znaczy „tu spocznij”, „tu możesz żyć spokojnie”. Po czterystu latach, kiedy do Polski trafili niemieccy nazistowscy barbarzyńcy, Żydzi znowu byli paleni, znowu zostali wypędzeni. W 1948 r. powstało państwo Izrael. Kiedy studiowałem, mój kolega ze studiów, Palestyńczyk Nidal, tłumaczył mi, że Palestyńczycy mają wyłączne prawo do Palestyny, ponieważ Ismail był ukochanym synem Abrahama. Nie potrafił odpowiedzieć mi na pytanie, dlaczego Abraham ustanowił swoim dziedzicem Izaaka.

Ten konflikt od czasów Księgi Rodzaju również wybrzmiewa dzisiaj podczas tej debaty. Kiedy słyszę takie słowa jak „apartheid”, kiedy słyszę o tym, że Izrael dokonuje okropnych przestępstw, przed oczami staje mi również cierpienie Izraelczyków. Pamiętajmy o tym, że Izraelczycy doświadczają terroryzmu ze strony Palestyńczyków. Europa musi stać na zdrowych nogach zdrowego rozsądku prawa międzynarodowego. Obydwa te państwa mają prawo do samostanowienia.

Karoline Edtstadler (PPE). – Mr President, Israel is embedded in a very unstable region called the Middle East. In German we call it *Nahе Osten*: that means ‘Near East’, because it’s only 3.5 hour’s flight from Vienna to Tel Aviv.

Besides the inner Israeli conflict, we should not lose sight of the fact that Israel is surrounded by countries – let’s say enemies – who want nothing else than to erase the country from the landscape. That is why they have one of the most modern and innovative security systems such as the Iron Dome. Security is a *raison d’être*, simply because they have to defend their own country on a daily basis. Israel, as the only democratic state in the region, deserves the full support of the European Union. It is our partner and it is our security guarantee also for the European Union. The EU also has to remain relevant in a future political process between Israel and Palestine and to be perceived as an honest and balanced broker.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, the US Secretary of State’s announcement that the US no longer considers Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land to be illegal is appalling. The Trump administration has done all it can to destabilise and bury the two- state solution: moving its embassy to Jerusalem, ending funding to the UN Palestinian Refugee Agency, and recognising Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. The settlements remain illegal. Mr Trump’s approval does not change international law.

Our Union was quick to reaffirm that all settlement activity is illegal, that it erodes the viability of the two-state solution and the prospects for a lasting peace, and that it should be ended. Palestinian representatives have rightly condemned the decision as a threat to the global order and one that destroys US credibility in the peace process.

We must continue to present a united position on settlements. They are illegal under international law, they present an obstacle to peace, and they threaten the viability of a two-state solution. We urge the Israeli Government to halt its counter-productive settlement expansion.

Mick Wallace (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, Ms Mogherini has criticised illegal Israeli settlements at times, and rightly so, but the EU has refused to take decisive action against Israel. We have no control over the fact that the US allows them to be lawless in how they treat the Palestinians. Truth be told, Israel practises apartheid at home and genocide in Palestine.

You said there was always hope for the two-state solution. The two-state solution is dead, it is beyond recovery. We need a one-state solution now, where the Palestinians and the Israelis both have an entitlement to full democratic human rights, and a return of the Palestinian refugees to their homeland. Anything else is not going to work anymore. And what the US is doing with Israel, they can only do because the EU and Europe tolerate it.

Tudor Ciuhodaru (S&D). – Domnule Președinte, din păcate această situație revoltătoare durează de mult prea mult timp, iar ceea ce se întâmplă acolo este de nedescris, o adevărată plagă pe fața lumii în secolul XXI. Eu sunt medic de urgență și văd că în spatele jocurilor politice sunt vieți, sunt oameni, sunt vieți pierdute și multă suferință și cred că este momentul ca Uniunea Europeană, Parlamentul European să îi aducă la masa negocierilor pe toți cei implicați, în așa fel încât să se găsească soluția corectă și nimeni să nu mai aibă de azi încolo de suferit. Deja a trecut prea mult timp și sper ca măcar noua Comisie Europeană să găsească soluția sănătoasă pentru ca astfel de fapte abominabile să nu se mai întâmple. Am speranța că această situație poate fi rezolvată și că soluția este aici, în Uniunea Europeană.

(End of catch-the-eye procedure)

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. – Mr President, I am sure that the incoming Commission, the incoming High Representative, will not only take good note of this debate in this Chamber, but will also find a way to preserve the unity of the European Union and the Member States, to preserve our strong position in defence of international law and also keep the constant relations and coordination with others in the world – starting from the UN system but also looking at the Arab world in the region, and not only in the Arab world, knowing the situation on the ground very well – and will try to indicate with wisdom and realism the way forward.

I am sure they will also manage to see what kind of further initiatives can be taken to try and help the situation move forward and avoid the wars becoming irreversible, if you will allow me to put it this way.

There are times when there are issues on which some advancements are possible, and some other issues and some other situations that, in certain particular periods of time or of history, require us – I would say the forces of wisdom and reason in this region, for sure, but I would like to say in the world – to try to avoid that the worst becomes a fait accompli, irreversible. And I have the impression – I have discussed this several times with many in the region – that these times we're living in are asking us to play that role, in this moment to try and avoid that things go so far, that the positive perspectives for a solution to the conflict are still viable in the future.

Let me just comment on one thing that I've heard during the debate and that has impressed me a lot, because there is the issue of the settlements itself, there is the work we have been doing and we will continue to do, I'm sure, as European institutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the Arab-Israeli conflict – because there are two conflicts in one – but then, even more than that, there's the role that the European Union has in defending and preserving the international rules-based order. And someone in this Chamber said, and I quote: 'the settlements are disputed, yes, but illegal, no'.

I have the impression that we are moving into a place – and I hope the European institutions, including this Chamber, don't move into that place – where it's international law that is disputed. That is a very dangerous place.

So I hope that, beyond differences and divergences, you will manage not only to advise and ask the Commission and the Council in this respect to help contribute to unblocking the situation in Israel and Palestine, to help implement international law when it comes to the settlement issues, but also that you will always keep in mind, as Members of the European Parliament, that international law is not up for discussion, it is to be respected. And that when you reach the point of discussing whether international law is good or wrong, then you're already in a place where Europe shouldn't be.

President. – The debate is closed.

18. Sytuacja w szeroko rozumianym regionie Bliskiego Wschodu, w tym kryzys w Iranie, Iraku i Libanie (debata)

President. – The next item on the agenda is the debate on the Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in the broader Middle East region, including the crisis in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon (2019/2917(RSP)).

I remind you that it is possible to request catch-the-eye and blue cards using both the standard registration and the electronic system. Instructions are available at the entrance of the hemicycle. Blue-card requests are accepted only after the round of the speakers on behalf of the political groups.

The debate will be opened by the Vice-President of the Commission, High / Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms Mogherini.

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. – Mr President, on the streets of the Middle East in Baghdad, in Beirut, in Tehran and other cities, I've witnessed large demonstrations, which are still ongoing in all countries.

Events are unfolding and each case is different, yet there seem to be some common causes. The triggers have been specific policy initiatives but the protests have then expanded, targeting inequality, sectarianism and corruption and asking for better governance and better job opportunities.

Our response to these protests has common elements, too. We have condemned any act of violence, from all parties. We have urged restraint in handling the demonstrations. We have asked for respect for freedom of expression and prompt investigation of instances of violence. We have also demanded that external actors always respect this country's sovereignty.

Now, let me briefly comment on a few specific cases, the ones you mentioned on the title of the debate. First on Iraq. The challenges that Iraq is facing are unique. The country is finally coming out of a long conflict, it needs reconciliation and reconstruction. It also needs to deliver on its people's aspirations to a better life and better opportunities for all.

These expectations need to be fulfilled if Iraq is to stabilise in the long term, and I've seen myself during my last visit there – in July, if I'm not wrong – how far the country has come when it comes to being ready to work on reconciliation and reconstruction, but also how fragile this progress is. And I think we are now seeing this clearly.

From the beginning of the protests we have been asking for dialogue and steps to quickly address the protesters' concerns, including those steps suggested by the UN mission. This is even more urgent today. We also continue to encourage Iraq to maintain its policy of constructive engagement with all its neighbours in times when its role as a voice of wisdom is essential in the region.

We Europeans have always said that we want to help the people of Iraq win the peace, and this is what the people of Iraq are asking right now. So, we will continue to be on their side and to accompany Iraq on its path towards a stronger, more inclusive and more just democracy.

In Iran, the recent protests also stem from genuine frustration with the current economic hardships. Citizens have the right to peacefully demonstrate, and there is no justification for the disproportionate use of violence by the security forces. All reports of incidents deserve swift and full investigation by the relevant independent authorities.

I also want to emphasise that we expect the Iranian authorities to ensure the free flow of information and access to the internet at all times. Let me add something that is clear and obvious, but it is important to clarify this once again, that this has nothing to do and should have nothing to do with the implementation of the nuclear deal with Iran. We continue to fully believe in the diplomatic and security value of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), of the nuclear deal with Iran. Yet it is no secret that the preservation of this agreement has become increasingly difficult.

And let me announce today that we will have a joint commission with Iran that will be convened on 6 December to this end. As you know, together with the role of High Representative also comes the role of a coordinator of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA of the nuclear deal with Iran, and we have worked in this capacity so far very hard to keep the unity, not only of the Europeans – that has been done – but also of the participants to the nuclear deal that have remained in the agreement after the US withdrew.

And I believe this unity is key to preserve the agreements as much as possible. We all agreed just a few weeks ago that we must spare no efforts to preserve the deal, and let me also say that I wish my successor all the best as he takes over also this difficult essential role: that of coordinating the Joint Commission of the JCPOA.

Third and last, but not least at all, let me say a few words on Lebanon where protests have led to the prime minister's resignation. Lebanon is a very special partner for the European Union and it holds a very special place in our heart. Today, the people of Lebanon are asking for good governance, good governance and good governance, beyond any sectarian line, and this is truly inspiring, as Lebanon society often is.

It is urgent to address the demands of the Lebanese people while preserving the peace and the stability that Lebanon has worked so hard to achieve in all these years. This calls, first and foremost, for the swift formation of a functioning government to ensure political and economic stability, followed by the rapid and decisive implementation of effective reforms on governance and corruption, in line with the Lebanese people's aspirations. This moment can become somehow an opportunity to deliver the reforms that Lebanon so urgently needs while, at the same time, preserving the country's stability and resilience.

And let me add one word on something that is not on our focus specifically tonight but is still there. Let us not forget that the whole Middle East remains an incredibly fragile place. We have just discussed the situation in Israel and Palestine, let us not forget that the situation in Syria is still far from being settled. On the contrary, in the north-west of Syria, the situation has got worse once again, only a few weeks after the Turkish military operation opened a new front in the north-east of Syria.

So, regional tensions are still running high, and this is putting even more importance and pressure on those in the region and beyond the region who are trying to calm down the situation and find sustainable outcomes to the current dynamics. In these years, we've been trying to build multilateral solutions to all crises in the region and we have worked very closely with our partners – including Lebanon and Iraq – to stabilise those countries to bring investment for reconstruction and economic growth and to support these countries in their reform agendas.

Each of these countries will have to find its own way to overcome their current difficulties. Nobody can do it for them. But the European Union will continue, I believe, to support dialogue and accompany reforms. It is one of the regions that is closest to us, I often say it is our common region, and the European Union, I believe, will continue to engage as a reliable partner and as a force for peace in the Middle East.

Ivan Štefanec, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, we have heard about the recent demonstrations and uprisings in Iran. These protests, which have been going on for over 11 days, took place in all 31 provinces of Iran and in 176 cities. The main opposition has announced that the number of those killed during the Iranian people's nationwide uprising is over 450, but the number of deaths could be much higher.

The names of over 150 of the young men and women who were brutally murdered by Iran's security forces have already been published and this is really a very sad list. For example, this list includes Nikta Esfandani, who was just 14 years old, and in her case the regime's officials told her family that since she was only 14, and was a kid, they would not ask for the cost of the bullets – this really is unbelievable. President Rouhani's government, which some regarded as so-called moderate, quickly shut down the internet to prevent the news and videos of these crimes from coming out of Iran. The government is also refusing to hand over the bodies of those killed to their families or preventing funerals for them.

I am very concerned about the fate and treatment of over 10 000 detainees. Some of the regime's top officials have hinted that many of those who have been arrested will soon be executed – executed by public hanging even. They are especially focusing on the members of the resistance units of PMOI, which the regime has blamed for this uprising.

The crimes carried out by the Iranian regime are, by any measure, crimes against humanity. We must not allow the people who have come onto the streets to stand for their rights to be arrested, tortured or silenced. I should remind you that the Iranian opposition leader Ms Rajavi has called on the United Nations to dispatch quickly fact-finding missions to Iran, and that the regime leaders must face justice for perpetrating crimes against humanity.

To conclude, we in this Parliament should stand with the people of Iran and I urge the EU High Representative to do the same by ending current policy because, from my point of view, this current policy has failed and will only damage the credibility of Europe, not only amongst the people of Iran but also among people around the world. People are watching us and wait for our action. I believe that the European Union should act now.

Isabel Santos, *em nome do Grupo S&D*. – Senhor Presidente, assistimos a um período marcado pelo eclodir de movimentos sociais, de contestação política em diversos pontos do globo, tão complexos quanto à sua natureza e tão imprevisíveis quanto ao seu desfecho que não admitem generalizações ou simplismos na sua análise.

Contudo, podemos identificar os níveis de pobreza, o agudizar das condições humanitárias, a falta de liberdade e de expectativas, sobretudo para os mais jovens, a corrupção e a pouca confiança no poder político como elementos que têm conduzido a fortes tensões sociais.

Assim acontece com os protestos populares no Iraque, no Irão e no Líbano, países marcados por fortes convulsões internas e por crises, muitas vezes alimentadas por jogos de poder externos. Mas a compreensão de tal facto não pode, todavia, atenuar o nível da nossa apreensão diante da violência que, em diferentes graus, está a ser exercida contra os manifestantes. No Líbano, a violência repressiva contra os manifestantes exercida por grupos identificados não pode ser jamais tolerada.

No Irão, a repressão dos protestos pacíficos gerados pela subida dos preços dos combustíveis, o corte da Internet, as detenções arbitrarias, a tortura, os mais de 100 mortos e os apelos radicais à aplicação da pena de morte são inaceitáveis e levam-nos a apelar ao abandono do uso da violência e à busca do diálogo inclusivo, única via para a resolução da crise económica e social.

Finalmente, no Iraque, os últimos eventos devem merecer da parte da União Europeia e dos seus Estados-Membros uma resposta que, entre outros aspetos, deve passar pela imediata suspensão do fornecimento de tecnologia que possa ser utilizada para violações dos direitos humanos.

Bernard Guetta, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Monsieur le Président, le sang a coulé à Téhéran et coule toujours à Bagdad, avec ses centaines de morts. Pourtant, derrière cette tragédie, c'est à la naissance d'un nouveau Proche-Orient que nous assistons.

Observons d'abord ces manifestations à Bagdad et à Beyrouth. Dans ces cortèges, il n'y a ni sunnites, ni Kurdes, ni chiïtes, ni chrétiens; il y a ici des Libanais, là-bas des Irakiens, des citoyens de ces deux pays, protestant coude à coude contre la dégradation de leurs conditions de vie, l'ampleur de la corruption et l'effondrement des services publics. Personne n'aurait cru que les frontières communautaires puissent ainsi s'effacer, mais dans la colère sociale, un siècle après leur création par les puissances coloniales, ces pays mosaïques semblent enfin devenir des États nations. C'est une rupture.

Second tournant de ces dernières semaines, l'Iran est maintenant en difficulté. Au Liban, le Hezbollah, ce bras armé de la République islamique, est aussi contesté que tous les autres partis. En Irak, toutes les communautés, chiïtes en tête, dénoncent la mainmise de Téhéran sur le gouvernement et l'appareil d'État. Ces deux pays sont en révolte contre le protectorat que Téhéran voudrait leur imposer et c'est un grave revers pour ce régime au moment même où les Iraniens dénoncent l'envolée des prix et contestent les fondements mêmes de la théocratie.

Il y a donc plus de vingt ans maintenant que ce pouvoir va de crises en crises, mais leur rythme s'accélère tandis que s'accroît leur profondeur. La puissance que l'on voyait ascendante au Proche-Orient ne l'est peut-être plus et tout pourrait en être changé dans cette région dont les équilibres se modifient de mois en mois. Or tout cela, chers collègues, se passe à nos portes. Plus que jamais, il faudrait être aveugle et sourd pour ne pas vouloir affirmer notre union sur la scène internationale et la doter de tous les instruments d'une puissance.

Hannah Neumann, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, 30 years ago people took to the streets in Europe and they stood up for freedom and for democracy. They were not organised, but they were united in one claim: 'we are the people'.

Two weeks ago in this House we congratulated ourselves on the successful demonstrations and how they have changed our lives for the better. Since this summer we have seen demonstrations in many countries around the Middle East. Algeria: ongoing. Egypt: violent and cruel crackdown. Lebanon: a Prime Minister stepping down and an old elite clinging to power. Iraq: their protest is met with the utmost violence. About 350 are dead. Iran: a massive media blackout. We don't even have viable information, but more than 100 are dead for sure.

In all of these uprisings we see people taking their claims to the street against corruption and for participation, against repression and for democracy. What is new in this protest is that they don't care anymore about sectarian or regional boundaries. We are all Iraqis is what they shout in the streets of Baghdad, and that is apparently scaring the old elites.

A tear gas canister fired at the head of a 17-year-old in Baghdad, a mother in jail for posting on Facebook in Cairo, protesters greeting security forces with flowers and met with live ammunition in Shiraz in Iran. And we, the European Union, the ones that have just celebrated 30 years of peaceful revolution, we are bystanders once more.

In Iraq we have been present for years. We have supported with humanitarian aid. We have had reconstruction projects. We actually have a mission on security sector reform in the very same country where medics are shot in the back when treating the wounded, where snipers are firing at peaceful protesters. And those in the streets of Iraq, they refused the interference of Iran and the US and they are very clear about that.

The UN has lost its credibility and protesters are clearly, clearly calling on us, the European Union, to fill the void, to organise dialogue, to stop the killing, to investigate the abuses, to do a proper security-sector reform and to just teach them crowd control. And the EU is issuing statements without commitments.

Let me be clear, doing nothing or only a little in such a situation can actually do a lot of harm. We failed the demonstrators of the Arab Spring in 2011, and we should not let them down once again. We are all human beings and we are human beings with human rights.

Jérôme Rivière, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Monsieur le Président, Liban, Irak, Iran: la région est soumise depuis longtemps à des ingérences étrangères et à de perpétuelles interférences régionales.

Déstabilisé par une intervention américaine non réfléchie, l'Irak n'en finit pas de se disloquer autour de ses fractures communautaires. L'Iran, étouffé par un régime totalitaire mais bousculé avec précipitation par les États-Unis, s'enfonce loin de nos yeux, la communication numérique ayant été coupée, dans une répression violente de l'aspiration d'un peuple à retrouver sa liberté.

Dans ces deux pays, nos interventions maladroites et souvent intéressées conduisent au chaos. Prenons soin d'éviter les mêmes erreurs au Liban. Pour paraphraser Montesquieu, qui recommandait de ne toucher aux lois que d'une main tremblante, appliquons cette sage précaution à cette civilisation du Levant, qui nous a apporté les grandes spiritualités monothéistes, le début de la civilisation urbaine mais aussi l'agriculture.

Les Libanais, dans une période qui s'apparente à une véritable révolution, ne portent que des revendications qui leur sont propres. Ne voir flotter au cœur des manifestations que des drapeaux du Liban est un véritable signe d'espoir. Notre responsabilité, c'est de ne pas pousser au pire et d'assister ce pays dans la préservation d'un système confessionnel, qui permet à des communautés religieuses si différentes de vivre ensemble. Cet équilibre au Liban est la meilleure réponse à la barbarie de l'islamisme qu'a tenté d'installer Daech dans la région. Avec nos histoires nationales respectives, assistons cette nation pour qu'elle sorte apaisée de cette période. Maintenons les aides dont les populations ont besoin. Défendre le pluralisme au Liban, c'est le défendre aussi en Europe.

Anna Fotyga, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, there are traces of Iran's operations all over the region, in every conflict, every war, and this presence is detrimental to stability and peace there. Yet, the worst of the actions has been reserved for Iran's own population that is multi-ethnic and diversified, yet acting in accord against the regime of the mullahs recently and during the past two years.

The recent protests are massive: in all 31 provinces, in the majority of Iranian cities. The internet has been suspended and there are really barbaric, violent acts by the regime against populations. There are over 300 dead already during the recent 11 days, more than 10 000 have been arrested and we should be concerned about their fate and their whereabouts. As happened many years ago with political prisoners, their fate seems to be the fate of victims of judiciary crimes. In view of a possible crime against humanity, we are obliged by international law to intervene, to act, instead of smiling at mullahs.

Cornelia Ernst, *im Namen der GUE/NGL-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Was in den letzten Wochen im Mittleren Osten geschah, ist wirklich eine Tragödie.

Dass im Iran Tausende wegen der sozialen Schieflage des Landes auf die Straße gingen, war und ist ihr gutes Recht. Und dass sie das trotz Demonstrationsverbot gemacht haben, das trotz fehlender Rede- und Kommunikationsfreiheit wagten, das hat sie enormen Mut gekostet und so viele Menschen das Leben.

Nein, auf Demonstranten schießt man nicht, und das muss man auch so klar sagen. Der Tod von Menschen ist auch kein Kollateralschaden im Namen einer größeren oder welcher anderen Sache auch immer. So stehe ich hier und verneige mich – auch im Namen unserer Fraktion, aber auch vieler anderer – vor den getöteten Demonstrantinnen und Demonstranten, vor ihren Angehörigen, Frauen, Kindern und Eltern.

Herr Präsident, im Namen der Iran-Delegation, deren Vorsitzende ich bin, wende ich mich an Sie und fordere Sie auf, einen Brief an Ihren Kollegen im Iran – an das iranische Parlament – zu schreiben, weil ich der Meinung bin, dass nicht nur die Kommission reagieren muss, sondern auch das Europäische Parlament. Wir erwarten das von Ihnen.

Zugleich sage ich offen: Ich fühle Scham, dass wir als Europäer buchstäblich nichts Wirksames zustande gebracht haben, um den verheerenden US-Sanktionen etwas entgegenzusetzen. Weil uns offensichtlich die transatlantischen Beziehungen teuer sind, sind uns die Hoffnungen vieler Iranerinnen und Iraner auf Zukunft nur noch billig. Die Enttäuschung über den Westen ist riesig.

Ich sage Ihnen eins: Wir sind Teil des Problems, und mit dieser halbherzigen EU-Politik muss endlich Schluss gemacht werden.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la situazione mediorientale è così complessa che andrebbe forse affrontata in modo più strutturato. Se da un lato è vero che esiste una situazione di crisi diffusa nella Mezzaluna sciita, bisogna ammettere che le specificità dei singoli paesi meriterebbero discussioni separate.

Mi voglio per questo concentrare su un paese molto vicino al mio cuore, piccolo ma dall'incredibile importanza strategica per l'intera regione: il Libano. Beirut sta affrontando una crisi senza precedenti, sia politica che economica, con un debito al 150 % del PIL, un'inflazione fuori controllo e il rating creditizio in picchiata, e l'economia è sull'orlo del collasso. Servirebbero urgenti riforme, impossibili da realizzare data l'altrettanto complessa situazione politica, precipitata dopo le dimissioni del Primo ministro Harīrī e le difficoltà nel formare un nuovo governo.

Cari colleghi, sappiamo tutti quanto questo paese sia cruciale geopoliticamente e le conseguenze nefaste che ci sarebbero nel caso di una sua destabilizzazione protratta. Serve un nuovo governo che si possa impegnare a realizzare le riforme economiche necessarie, ma che al contempo si impegni a combattere contro la diffusa corruzione, che rimane una delle cause che ha portato alle manifestazioni di piazza.

Ma da solo il Libano non può uscire da questa crisi, anche considerando che tuttora ad oggi vivono nel paese circa 1,5 milioni di rifugiati siriani. Serve un deciso e tempestivo supporto dell'Unione europea, molto più ingente, molto più importante dell'assistenza che già stiamo fornendo. Invito la nuova Commissione ad affrontare questa emergenza con la massima celerità visto che le conseguenze di un marcato intervento sarebbero imprevedibili e sicuramente drammatiche.

Στέλιος Κυμπουρόπουλος (PPE). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, διαφωνώ με αυτούς που λένε ότι σε αυτή την αίθουσα έχουμε υπάρξει υπερβολικοί για τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα, καθώς η Ευρώπη οφείλει να είναι ο φάρος της δημοκρατίας, των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, της ανάπτυξης διεθνώς. Όμως, είναι αλήθεια ότι είμαστε ιδεαλιστές. Θα θέλαμε πολύ η ευρύτερη Μέση Ανατολή, η γειτονιά μας, να μοιράζεται τις ίδιες αξίες με εμάς απέναντι στις γυναίκες, τα παιδιά, τους νέους, τους ανάπηρους, αλλά και τους αντιφρονούντες, τους αλλόπιστους και τις διαφορετικές εθνότητες.

Όμως, άλλο Σουηδία και Ελλάδα κι άλλο Αίγυπτος και Συρία. Απ' τον ενθουσιασμό μας κάποτε μπορεί να υποστηρίξαμε και κάποιες ζωηρές επαναστάσεις, που έφεραν πολύ, πολύ χειρότερα καθεστώτα από τα αρχικώς ανατραπέντα. Άρα έχουμε πλέον μάθει πως ο ιδεαλισμός πρέπει να εξισορροπείται με λίγο ρεαλισμό και εικόνα του αποτελέσματος. Πρέπει να πονηρευτούμε, καθώς παράγοντες αστάθειας δρουν στην ευρύτερη Μέση Ανατολή, παραμονεύοντας να εγκαταστήσουν σκληρά οπισθοδρομικά καθεστώτα.

Με όσες αδυναμίες κι αν έχουν, η Αίγυπτος και το Ισραήλ είναι βράχοι φίλιας και οι πλέον σταθεροί και αξιόπιστοι εταίροι της Ευρώπης στη Μέση Ανατολή. Και γνωρίζουμε καλά ότι αμφότεροι φέρουν την πρόθεση της αυτοβελτίωσης. Αναφορικά με το Ιράκ, φοβάμαι ότι, όσο δεν στηρίζουμε δυναμικά την ανοικοδόμησή του, θα το μετανιώσουμε. 11 από τα 36 εκατομμύρια της χώρας χρίζουν άμεσης ανθρωπιστικής βοήθειας. Αυτοί οι άνθρωποι είναι δυνητικοί πρόσφυγες. Μπορεί να μη βρίσκονται ακόμα στην ευρωπαϊκή γη, αλλά είμαι σίγουρος ότι ο καθένας από εμάς μπορεί να καταλάβει τον πατέρα και τη μητέρα που θα κάνει τα πάντα για να σώσει το παιδί του. Κι αυτοί θα αποτελέσουν την κύρια μάζα του ξεριζωμού. Είμαι σίγουρος ότι, πέραν της ανάσχεσης της προσφυγιάς, ο ανθρωπισμός μας παρακινεί να βοηθήσουμε αυτούς τους ανθρώπους που έχουν ανάγκη. Πολλούς παραξενεύει ο μεγάλος αριθμός αιτούντων άσυλο. Πρώτοι αυτοί μπορούν να αποδείξουν ότι δεν φείδονται αλτρουισμού και θέλουν να βοηθήσουν τους ανθρώπους που έχουν ανάγκη στον τόπο τους, προτού αναγκαστούν να προσφύγουν στη δική μας βοήθεια.

Στο Ιράκ γνωρίζουμε καλά το Νταές. Θα ηττηθεί ολοκληρωτικά μόνο όταν η χώρα σταθεροποιηθεί και αναπτυχθεί και πάλι. Είναι εξόχως ευρωπαϊκό χαρακτηριστικό να προνοούμε για να σταθεροποιούμε τα κράτη, προτού να πρέπει να αντιμετωπίσουμε νέα μεγαλύτερα προβλήματα αύριο. Αναφορικά με το Ιράν, ας υποστηρίξουμε ενεργά τις συμφωνίες μας. Ας στηρίξουμε το κοινό συναινετικό σχέδιο δράσης.

Ο Λίβανος είναι μια ώριμη δημοκρατία. Οι κατά βάση ειρηνικές διαδηλώσεις αποτελούν δείγμα της ποιότητας της κοινωνίας. Κατανοούμε τη μετάβαση σε μια τεχνοκρατική κυβέρνηση, που θα επιτρέψει στη χώρα να κάνει τις απαραίτητες μεταρρυθμίσεις και να προκηρύξει εκλογές. Η ευρωπαϊκή στάση προς τις χώρες της περιοχής οφείλει να είναι η εσωτερική σταθεροποίηση, με παράλληλη προώθηση των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, η προάσπιση του διεθνούς δικαίου, η συνεργασία και το εμπόριο με ρήτρες αιρεσιμότητας.

Maria Arena (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, Madame Mogherini, je ne peux être que 100 %, voire 200 %, d'accord avec la déclaration que vous venez de faire au sujet de la situation au Moyen-Orient.

Il est vrai que le Moyen-Orient est en ébullition depuis un certain temps et, partout, les revendications qui naissent sont pour l'essentiel les mêmes: des revendications sociales et des revendications pour une bonne gouvernance. Je ne répéterai pas ce que mes collègues ont dit, que ce soit M. Guetta ou M^{me} Neumann. Partout, l'on revoit des gouvernements qui répondent à ces revendications – qui sont légitimes – par la répression et, souvent, trop souvent, par la violence.

L'Union européenne a un réel rôle à jouer en fondant sa politique étrangère sur le respect du droit, encore une fois, et sur le respect du multilatéralisme. L'Union européenne, contrairement à l'administration Trump, doit contribuer concrètement à la désescalade des tensions dans la région et continuer à défendre la paix et le respect des droits fondamentaux. La stabilité du Moyen-Orient, nous l'avons dit, passera par une transition démocratique que nous, Européens, nous devons soutenir par le dialogue – vous l'avez fait – mais aussi par le soutien et la protection des populations.

Klemen Grošelj (Renew). – Gospod predsednik! Bližnji vzhod postaja niz kriz in vojn, ki lahko regijo in soseščino potisnejo v še globlja brezna.

Poleg sirijske tragedije so v ali na robu brezna tudi Jemen, Irak in Libanon. Ironično pri tem je, da je ključ do rešitve mnogih problemov v rokah Irana, ki odločilno in usodno sooblikuje usodo regije.

Države regije so postale talke iranskega vpliva in politike preko tako imenovanega šiitskega polmeseca. Iran po propadu jedrskega sporazuma poleg jedrske karte zlorablja krize v regiji kot sredstva pritiska na regijo in na mednarodno skupnost. Gre za surovo real politiko, na katero niti EU niti mednarodna skupnost nimata odgovora, pri čemer ameriške sankcije ne vplivajo na vedenje Irana.

Širitev nestabilnosti v regiji pa vse bolj neposredno ogroža tudi varnost Evropske unije, zato novega skupnega predstavnika zunanje in varnostne politike pozivam, da se temu posveti prednostno in prepreči dodatno destabilizacijo regije, ki bi se med drugim odrazila tudi v povečanem številu beguncev na mejah Evropske unije.

Ernest Urtasun (Verts/ALE). – Señor presidente. Señora Mogherini, en pocos meses han estallado protestas sociales en varias zonas de Oriente Medio. Aunque puedan parecer aisladas, las protestas del Líbano, Irak e Irán tienen mucho en común en algunos aspectos: la provisión de servicios básicos, el desempleo, la corrupción. Las protestas antigubernamentales en estos tres países han sido duramente reprimidas, causando la muerte de más de trescientas personas, por ejemplo, en Irak. Y el bloqueo total a internet en Irán no ha permitido confirmar aún las más de doscientas muertes cifradas por varias ONG.

Desde este Parlamento tenemos que condenar el uso de la fuerza y los medios letales empleados por las fuerzas de seguridad iraníes e iraquíes para aplastar las protestas, en su mayoría pacíficas. Tenemos que hacer un llamamiento a las autoridades iraníes a que respeten los derechos a la libertad de reunión pacífica y a la libertad de expresión, incluyendo el levantamiento del bloqueo total del acceso a internet que ha sido decretado.

La subida de los precios de la gasolina, decretada por el Gobierno iraní, se suma al impacto de unas sanciones económicas impuestas por parte de la Administración estadounidense el pasado verano, que están teniendo un efecto devastador sobre la economía y la población iraní, y además, como sabemos, están poniendo en riesgo el futuro del acuerdo nuclear. Según las Naciones Unidas y varias ONG dichas sanciones económicas están haciendo sufrir muchísimo a la población de forma diaria y no tan solo afectan al Gobierno. Ello no exime, evidentemente, al régimen iraní de sus responsabilidades en lo que respecta a los derechos humanos de la población, que sabemos que es algo que también le preocupa a usted y que desde este Parlamento debemos constantemente reclamar.

En cualquier caso, desde Irán hasta el Líbano, pasando por Irak, los líderes de estos países deben escuchar a su pueblo e iniciar las reformas económicas que mejoren las condiciones de vida y el bienestar social de la población y acaben con la corrupción. Y nosotros, como Unión Europea, debemos tener una aproximación regional a la zona para entender y ser capaces de acompañar y de ser un actor de resolución de las distintas causas profundas que en estos momentos afectan a estos países y que tanta inestabilidad están generando.

Elena Lizzi (ID). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Alto rappresentante, voglio ancora ricordare i cinque militari italiani che sono stati feriti in un attentato nell'area di Kirkuk, in Iraq, proprio alla vigilia dell'anniversario della strage di Nassiriya.

In Iraq le manifestazioni di questi giorni sono le più intense dal 2005 e stanno avvenendo soprattutto nelle zone sciite: si tratta di persone che chiedono lavoro e lottano contro la corruzione. Sono rimasti finora estranei alle manifestazioni il Nord curdo e le aree interessate dalla conquista territoriale dello Stato islamico.

In Iraq si moltiplicano gli attentati e lo Stato islamico si sta riorganizzando. L'Unione europea non può restare a guardare.

Una delle opere che adornano il tunnel che da Baghdad passa sotto piazza Tahrir, centro delle proteste antigovernative, raffigura il volto di Gesù incoronato di spine, simbolo anche delle pene irachene. In Iraq ci sono anche cristiani, calati dal 2003 da un milione e mezzo a 250 000 e che rischiano di essere cancellati dopo duemila anni di storia. I capi delle chiese e delle comunità cristiane sostengono le manifestazioni popolari di protesta pacifica.

Anche Trump ha giustamente finanziato le organizzazioni cristiane irachene. Nell'Iraq il ruolo delle minoranze è fondamentale, quale garanzia che la regione non diventi scontro tra sunniti e sciiti. Anche l'Unione europea deve sostenere la minoranza cristiana irachena.

Charlie Weimers (ECR). – Mr President, I say to High Representative Mogherini: instead of bowing before the mullahs and stringing along the failed Iran deal, which only enables the regime, European leaders should raise the spirits of the Iranian people, throw off the hijab and state: we recognise that this is a regime that cares more about terrorists than its own people, that cannot tolerate dissent and free thought, that faces annual widespread protest, that orders soldiers to fire at will on their fellow citizens, that oppressed its people for decades.

In our hearts, we Europeans join the brave Iranian people in their outcry: *jumhuuriya islami namikhaaham namikhaaham*. 'We don't want an Islamic republic'.

Idoia Villanueva Ruiz (GUE/NGL). – Señor presidente, no solo América Latina está en medio de un terremoto político y social, también Oriente Medio. Irak, Líbano, Irán, Egipto, Sudán, Argelia: países que atraviesan profundas crisis en un Magreb y en un Oriente Medio que han sufrido la pelea descarnada por apropiarse de sus recursos.

Muchas personas salen a la calle y exigen pan, libertad y justicia social, dignidad, desde hace años. La respuesta ha sido más represión, más impunidad y más geopolítica del caos en una región arrasada: desde la invasión ilegal de los Estados Unidos en Irak al drama en Siria, Yemen y Libia, sin olvidarnos de la ocupación israelí en Palestina, el Sáhara Occidental o los pueblos kurdos. Todas y cada una de estas crisis sufrieron intervenciones europeas; ahora sufren su abandono.

Señora Mogherini, ¿va a tener Europa algún papel en Oriente Medio o vamos a dejar que estos pueblos sufran y la extrema derecha saque partido de las consecuencias de este desastre? Europa debe enterrar las intervenciones militares, ser un actor independiente, estabilizador, apostar por relaciones de igual a igual. Por justicia con quienes se manifiestan en las calles de los países que hemos destrozado, y por el propio destino de nuestro continente.

François-Xavier Bellamy (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, Madame Mogherini, vous l'avez dit, cette région dont nous parlons ce soir, le Moyen-Orient, est en proie à de graves tensions. Dans cette situation, les Européens que nous sommes doivent avoir trois objectifs majeurs.

Premièrement, il faut aider ces pays dans leur quête de démocratie, en tous les cas, dans leur volonté d'aller vers un état de droit plus solide. Je pense en particulier, en tant qu'élu français, à nos amis du Liban qui peuvent et doivent bénéficier de notre soutien dans cette transition.

Deuxièmement, il y a lieu de garantir – tel est notre rôle historique – la protection des minorités. Je pense en particulier aux minorités chrétiennes, dont nous devons être les protecteurs dans cette région, mais aussi, par exemple, aux yézidites et à tous ceux qui pourraient être touchés par des violences. Garantir la paix et le respect des droits de chaque être humain dans cette région, quelle que soit sa confession, devrait être une priorité de notre diplomatie.

Enfin, troisièmement – comme le rappelait mon collègue à l'instant –, il importe de veiller à ce que ces évolutions ne soient pas captées par ce qui est aujourd'hui notre ennemi majeur, non seulement dans cette région, mais sur notre territoire, c'est à dire l'islamisme. Nous le savons très bien et nous l'avons déjà vécu, la manière dont l'Islam radical peut prendre le contrôle de ces territoires, à l'occasion d'une demande de démocratie, doit nous inquiéter. Aujourd'hui, nous devons être vigilants.

Treize militaires français sont morts avant-hier dans la bande sahélo-saharienne, au Mali, pour lutter contre cet ennemi. Chers amis, nous avons été très touchés du soutien que vous avez témoigné à la France dans ce moment de deuil, mais ce soutien doit aussi être concret aujourd'hui. Notre pays ne peut pas porter tout seul ce combat. Nous devons unir nos forces dans cet engagement, unir nos forces militaires, bien sûr. Nous n'aurons pas une diplomatie forte et efficace si nous n'avons pas, en même temps et collectivement, les moyens de notre action. Grâce au Fonds européen de défense, par exemple, comme par un engagement plus constant dans cet effort pour la défense de l'Europe, cette dernière peut servir la paix de demain en assumant de développer son autonomie stratégique et de servir une voix libre dans le monde qui se dessine.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, discutiamo di paesi molto diversi ma che oggi condividono un ampio movimento di protesta da parte di migliaia di persone che chiedono una vita dignitosa, un lavoro, inclusione sociale, lotta alla corruzione.

Proteste certamente lontane, anche per caratteristiche, dagli eventi del 2011 ma che non sorprendono, come la relazione del Parlamento che porta il mio nome sulle post-primavere arabe ha paventato, per via del permanere di problemi strutturali.

La fragilità economica e sociale del Libano, per esempio, partner importante dell'Europa, che ha accolto, come sappiamo, ben oltre un milione di rifugiati siriani, oltre il 30 % della popolazione, una situazione che sta portando il paese al collasso. L'Europa non può e non deve lasciare che ciò avvenga e deve sostenere Beirut con ancora maggiore forza per dare risposte alle richieste dei cittadini libanesi.

Devo anche richiamare però l'attenzione sui molti casi di riconsegna di svariati rifugiati nelle mani dell'esercito siriano, casi che ci vengono riportati da varie fonti sul campo, come Amnesty e Operazione Colomba, che costituiscono una grave violazione dell'obbligo di non respingimento, oltre a condannare chi li subisce a morte certa.

In Iraq manteniamo alta l'attenzione sulla popolazione curda, affinché non si prendano a pretesto i disordini per mettere in discussione l'autonomia regionale.

Come italiano devo anche ricordare la tragica morte dei militari, il 10 novembre, rivendicata dal Daesh, e voglio dire che, ribadito il sostegno USA al Kurdistan iracheno, sorprende un po' dopo lo scandaloso disimpegno nei confronti dei curdi siriani.

Oggi come non mai c'è bisogno di un segnale chiaro da parte dell'Europa, forte nella sua azione esterna. Per questo voglio ringraziare, per il lavoro in questo senso fatto in questi anni, Federica Mogherini, che è qua in Aula con noi.

Abir Al-Sahlani (Renew). – Mr President, let me just start by saying that in this House, and under this roof, we have now tried twice to get a resolution about Iraq but have failed and I will ask the political parties here, the Groups, why are you blocking a resolution on Iraq? Talking the talk is one thing, but walking the walk is another.

Addressing the High Representative, Ms Mogherini, now we have a historical choice: either we stand with the Iraqi people or we choose to stand with the government. We know all the governments – they come and go – but the Iraqi people will always be there. What are the concrete measures, Ms Mogherini, that you are going to take to help the Iraqi people to facilitate a dialogue so those protesters who are screaming on Tahrir Square, 'Norid Waten' – 'We want our country' – their voice is heard.

I want to applaud the Ambassador of the EU in Iraq for his very obvious and strong positions, but we have to make those positions into concrete actions. The UN has lost its credibility and now someone else has to step up and take this responsibility. The only ones that have this credibility is the EU, the only union of democracies in the world.

Bernhard Zimniok (ID). – Herr Präsident, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich möchte Euch eindringlich auf ein Sicherheitsproblem hinweisen, welches nicht nur für den Nahen Osten, sondern auch für Europa eine massive Bedrohung darstellt: nämlich die IS-Kämpfer, die in Syrien und im Irak in Haft sind.

Etwa 4 000 Personen aus Europa haben sich damals dem IS angeschlossen. Wir Europäer haben immer noch keine kohärente Strategie entwickelt, wie wir mit diesen Terroristen umgehen wollen und müssen. Das ist eine politische Bankrotterklärung. Der türkische Einmarsch in Nordsyrien hat das Problem nun dringlich gemacht. Eine unbekannte Anzahl an Terroristen konnte bereits fliehen. Das ist ein enormes Sicherheitsproblem, das auf uns zukommt.

Wie gehen wir jetzt um mit diesen Verbrechern, diesen Schlächtern – diesem menschlichen Abschaum –, die brutal gemordet, vergewaltigt und gefoltert haben, die Menschen geköpft haben, gekreuzigt und bei lebendigem Leib verbrannt haben? Gerichtsverfahren in Europa würden in der Regel zu Freisprüchen oder maximal zu geringen Strafen führen, was ein fatales Signal für die unzähligen Opfer dieses Terrorregimes wäre.

Diese Terroristen müssen hart bestraft werden und verdienen keine Gnade. Unterstützen wir deshalb den Irak und Syrien bei der Einrichtung eines Kriegsverbrechertribunals! Europäische Terroristen und IS-Terroristen sind unser aller Feinde: Sie müssen sich dort für ihre Gräueltaten verantworten, wo sie begangen wurden. Nur so kann für Gerechtigkeit für die Opfer gesorgt werden. Wir alle hier sind für die Sicherheit unserer Bürger verantwortlich. Werden wir dieser Verantwortung gerecht!

Beata Kempa (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Droga Pani Komisarz! Chcę bardzo podziękować za wszystko to, co do tej pory zostało zrobione, też za szczyty, które Pani organizowała, gdzie kolejne kraje deklarowały swoją pomoc przede wszystkim dla Syrii, ale też dla krajów, które ponoszą bezpośrednio skutki wojny w Syrii i że cały region jest zdestabilizowany. Ale pozwoli Pani, że uważam, że Unia Europejska powinna w tej chwili mieć jeszcze bardziej skonsolidowany plan działania. W szczególności też – obok dyplomatycznych zabiegów, które są trudne – plan finansowy, bardzo dokładny. Plan, który powinien dotyczyć nie tylko Jordanii, Libanu, ale przede wszystkim w tej chwili również Iraku. Dlatego, że w Iraku poszczególne państwa starają się pomagać, na przykład Węgrzy odbudowali miejscowość Telskuf. To jest bodajże ok. 8 milionów dolarów. Ja myślę, że są kolejne miejscowości, szczególnie w dolinie Niniwy, Baszika, Bartella, Batnaja, gdzie, jeśli ci ludzie mieliby gdzie wrócić z obozów, wróciliby natychmiast. Myślę, że destabilizacja musiałaby ustąpić, i przede wszystkim też musimy myśleć o tym, aby te konkretne projekty pokazały w holdzie ojcom założycielom, że robimy tam bardzo konkretne rzeczy.

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D). – Señor presidente, señorías, gracias, señora vicepresidenta y alta representante, por su trabajo y también por la declaración que ha hecho hoy, que yo apoyo. Si vemos lo que está sucediendo en el mundo árabe islámico —vemos la situación en Argelia, la situación en el Líbano, la situación en Irak, la situación en Irán—, uno estaría tentado de pensar que nos encontramos ante una suerte de segunda primavera árabe islámica.

Si en Argelia hay un cambio de régimen, en el Líbano y en Irak hay un cambio de gobierno, y en Irán hay grandes protestas que han sido reprimidas de una manera totalmente inaceptable. Yo creo que lo que ha dicho nuestra colega de Renew es cierto. Este Parlamento debe posicionarse sobre la situación en Irak con una resolución, y nuestro futuro alto representante, el señor Borrell, tiene que tomarse con mucha seriedad la situación de estos tres países, y debemos tener una aproximación estratégica a toda la situación.

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew). – Mr President, today the Middle East is in the spotlight, but in reality we have never stopped thinking about that region in recent years. Unfortunately, it continues to be a cradle of poverty, suffering, wars and ethno-religious conflicts – without a clear direction for development and hope for millions of citizens, but spreading terrorism and extremism that has led to hundreds of thousands of innocent victims, with deadly demonstrations and violence in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and a refusal of politicians to accept reality and give hope for the future.

These are not movie scenes but a painful reality. Not by coincidence, one Iraqi newspaper asked the question: if you kill us all, whom do you rule over? Europe cannot stay silent. I urge the authorities of these countries to stop the violence against peaceful protesters immediately, and to open the door to dialogue. Parliamentarians must act by reflecting the public interest for a new and different way of conducting politics, restoring hope and bringing a brighter future.

Thierry Mariani (ID). – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Haute représentante, nous devons écouter et comprendre la colère du peuple libanais, mais nous devons veiller à ce que toutes les évolutions au Liban préservent la diversité religieuse et, notamment, la place de la communauté chrétienne, qui, comme vous le savez, est particulièrement menacée dans cette région.

En tant qu'élus européens, nous devons cependant nous poser la question suivante: que deviennent les millions qui sont versées au Liban pour lui venir en aide? Je vous remettrai une lettre d'un élu du Liban, de la région de Tripoli, qui nous apprend que l'Union européenne a financé une station de traitement des déchets qui n'a jamais fonctionné. Pourquoi les donateurs ne contrôlent-ils pas? Pourquoi cet argent n'est-il jamais arrivé au destinataire? Enfin, pourquoi l'Europe ne fait-elle rien pour s'assurer, justement, que l'argent ne part pas dans les canaux de la corruption?

À mon avis, le service que nous pourrions rendre aux Libanais serait de faire en sorte que l'argent que les Européens leur donnent pour les aider profite réellement au peuple et ne se perde pas dans la corruption.

Jan Zahradil (ECR). – Mr President, in the previous debate I said Israel is our main regional strategic partner. Now I have to say that, particularly, Iran is our main regional strategic rival, the main anti-Western Force there. What we have seen over many years has been an endless attempt by Iran to achieve regional hegemony. The Iranian fundamentalist theocracy has been spreading its influence over Iraq, Syria and, of course, Lebanon, undermining constantly their internal coherence, and it is time to stop this.

It's time to change our appeasement policy vis-à-vis Iran. It is time to support the exiled opposition. If we want to pursue our own EU interests in the region, we are obliged to do that. To curb Iran, I believe, is the key to stability in the region.

Jytte Guteland (S&D). – Herr talman! Höga representanten Mogherini! Enligt vittnesmål från internationella organisationer använder iranska styrkor övervåld mot dem som protesterar mot orättvisorna i landet. Hundratals demonstranter har dödats, tusentals har skadats eller fängslats. Det är oacceptabelt att människor som protesterar för sina sociala och ekonomiska rättigheter dödas, skadas, fängslas eller bemöts med brutalitet från regimen.

Därutöver är nedsläckningen av internet djupt kränkande och ett brott mot mänskliga rättigheter. Det är också djupt osympatiskt att man samtidigt hör om presidenten, som twittrar, medan människors liv beskärs på grund av att man inte får tillgång till det som vi finner alldeles naturligt. Internet måste omedelbart öppnas.

Jag, liksom många av mina kolleger, fördömer det som händer i Iran och vill se ett resolut agerande och en tydlighet från EU. Jag vill passa på att tacka dig, Federica Mogherini, för ditt viktiga arbete under dessa år. Jag har följt dig och sett väldigt mycket av ditt arbete som beundransvärt. Jag vill se att du nu tydligt gör en sista markering mot Iran för att hjälpa de människor som nu drabbas.

Martin Horwood (Renew). – Mr President, as Vice-Chair of this Parliament's Iran delegation, I'm going to focus on that country, and I speak as a supporter of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, an outspoken critic of illegal US sanctions and one who would encourage, rather than undermine, moderates within the Iranian regime.

But all these positions become harder and harder with each infringement of international norms by Iran. The current civilian protests have been met with wholly disproportionate force, and we in Europe must condemn without reservation the killing of at least 100 civilian protesters and the arrest of, perhaps, 1 000 more. I remain a supporter of dialogue, so I very much welcome the announcement of a new joint commission, but we must robustly condemn atrocities when they take place.

Can I finish by thanking Ms Mogherini for her impressive, respectful and, above all, patient attendance at this Parliament and for all her hard work on behalf of all of us, including the United Kingdom? I do hope her successor can do likewise and won't have to deal with us as a foreign country.

Silvia Sardone (ID). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, violente proteste di piazza hanno sconvolto l'Iran in queste settimane. Che cosa ha fatto l'Unione europea? Nulla. Abbiamo qua l'Alto rappresentante dell'Unione europea per gli affari esteri Mogherini. Che cosa ha fatto lei? Nulla.

L'Europa in questi anni ha perdonato all'Iran l'imperdonabile: le torture, processi sommari, le minacce all'Occidente, persino il finanziamento al terrorismo. Ha fatto finta che non esistessero le impiccagioni. Tra i condannati ci sono state 90 donne, impiccate solo nel 2019. Dove sono finite le femministe e i movimenti #metoo?

L'Europa, invece di proporre modernità e libertà, ha deciso, in nome del petrolio e degli affari, di dialogare di fatto con l'ayatollah. Allora io chiedo, semplicemente: in considerazione dei morti, dei feriti, di internet censurato, e del fatto che i cittadini lì vogliono la fine della Repubblica islamica, quando l'Europa ne prenderà atto e sosterrà finalmente la libertà e la democrazia?

Javi López (S&D). – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, hoy nos encontramos aquí para hablar sobre la situación de Oriente Medio y especialmente de las graves protestas que han ocurrido, por razones diferentes, en varios países: en el Líbano, en Irak o en Irán.

Queremos explicar algunos patrones comunes sobre lo que está pasando hoy en Oriente Medio. Un enorme descontento social por la falta de oportunidades, acceso a servicios públicos, acceso a un crecimiento económico que llegue al conjunto de la población, lamentablemente, conflictos que durante los últimos años han padecido las poblaciones de Oriente Medio, una polarización regional. Y no solo eso, sino instituciones poco inclusivas para, además, países normalmente multiétnicos.

Nosotros lo que reclamamos —y lo que la Unión Europea también ha intentado durante los últimos años— es: uno, apoyar las piezas que la comunidad internacional pone para estabilizar la zona; el acuerdo nuclear con Irán es un ejemplo; dos, pedir a Irak que se pidan responsabilidades a aquellos que han estado reprimiendo las protestas y provocado muertos en las calles; y tres, en el caso del Líbano, por favor, apoyar a un país que está acogiendo a muchos refugiados, y que tiene problemas financieros y económicos muy graves.

PRZEWODNICTWO: EWA KOPACZ

Wiceprzewodnicząca

María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos (Renew). – Señora presidenta. Señora Mogherini, muchas gracias por su trabajo, esfuerzo y dedicación durante estos años. Las protestas que recorren la región son protestas en las que la ciudadanía pide más libertad, más democracia, más derechos sociales.

En Irán estas revueltas han sido reprimidas con una enorme dureza, con la utilización de armas de fuego contra la población civil. Amnistía Internacional nos indica que hay decenas, centenares de muertos, cuatro mil heridos, diez mil detenidos, aunque en el país se ha efectuado un cierre de información, un cierre digital.

De nuevo, las autoridades han puesto también la presión sobre las mujeres. Les están colocando un círculo rojo diciendo que son responsables y agitadoras de estos disturbios.

Pedimos, por lo tanto, a la Comisión y a la comunidad internacional que condene claramente estos hechos, que pida a las autoridades iraníes que cese la represión y que se haga un llamamiento claro al diálogo político y democrático.

Lars Patrick Berg (ID). – Frau Präsidentin, Hohe Vertreterin! Ich beschränke mich in meinen Ausführungen auf die Situation im Libanon.

Wir konnten alle mitverfolgen, wie sich die aktuelle Krise durch den Rücktritt der libanesischen Regierung angesichts öffentlicher Proteste und der Unfähigkeit der politischen Führer, eine neue Regierung zu bilden, entwickelt hat. Hinter allem steht die Hisbollah, eine als terroristisch eingestufte Organisation, und hinter der Hisbollah steht als Geldgeber die iranische Regierung.

Der Libanon leidet seit langem unter der Einmischung von außen und ist zu einem Schlachtfeld für konkurrierende Interessengruppen geworden. Die Hisbollah fungiert hierbei als Stellvertreter des Iran und destabilisiert durch ihren Terror die ohnehin fragilen Institutionen im Libanon weiter. Die Hisbollah und die Amal-Bewegung greifen regierungskritische Demonstranten in Beirut an und versuchen so sicherzustellen, dass der Einfluss des Iran weiterhin aufrechterhalten wird.

Israel hat erklärt, dass es weitere Angriffe der Hisbollah auf sein Staatsgebiet nicht tolerieren wird. Die Hisbollah handelt auf Veranlassung des Iran. Es muss unser Interesse sein, dass dies nicht weiter geschieht. Wir können nicht zulassen, dass der Libanon wieder einmal zu einem Schlachtfeld wird.

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Hohe Vertreterin! Ich möchte Ihnen zu Beginn besonders für die vielen Initiativen und für Ihre erfolgreiche Arbeit danken, auch gerade was den Versuch betrifft, ein Abkommen mit dem Iran zu erreichen.

Aber wir haben in den letzten Tagen erschütternde Bilder aus dem Iran erhalten: Demonstrationen und Unruhen, weil die wirtschaftliche, die soziale und die politisch-demokratische Lage für die Bevölkerung unerträglich geworden ist. Die brutale Reaktion des iranischen Regimes – hunderte Tote, tausende Inhaftierte – zeigt doch, wie unmenschlich dieses Regime agiert.

Die iranische Regierung muss die Menschenrechte, die Meinungsfreiheit, die Redefreiheit, die Versammlungsfreiheit, die Demonstrationenfreiheit, die Informationsfreiheit und auch das freie Internet respektieren. Es braucht aber auch Deeskalation, und es braucht auch außenpolitisch ein Zurück an den Verhandlungstisch. Die Krise gehört entschärft, und es darf nicht weiteres Öl ins Feuer gegossen werden, wie das zum Beispiel der amerikanische Präsident macht.

Елена Йончева (S&D). – Г-жо Председател, изразявам безпокойството си от възникналото напрежение от ситуацията в Близкоизточния регион. Идвайки от България – една от първите гранични държави на Европейския съюз по пътя на бежанските потоци, бих искала да обърна внимание на Европейския парламент, че ескалацията на напрежението създава реална заплаха от нова бежанска вълна към Европа.

Виждам опасност в намеренията на турската държава да разсели над 2 млн. арабски бежанци в кюрдските райони на северна Сирия, където в момента се провежда операция на турската армия. Считаю, че подобно заселване трябва да бъде осъществено само по свободната воля на бежанците. То не трябва да бъде за сметка на коренното кюрдско население.

Една промяна на етническата карта в региона, особено при неустановения мир в Сирия, крие голям риск за нова и дълготрайна бежанска вълна, този път от кюрдските бежанци към страните – членки на Европейския съюз. Затова призовавам Европейският парламент да предложи международен механизъм за мониторинг за прозрачност и контрол на процеса.

Eero Heinäluoma (S&D). – Arvoisa puhemies, on todellakin hyvin surullista nähdä joka ikinen päivä, mitä tapahtuu tällä hetkellä Lähi-idässä. Syyriassa kuolee edelleen ihmisiä. Iranissa loukataan vakavasti ihmisoikeuksia, ja myös Irakissa on uudelleen huomattavia ongelmia ihmisoikeuksien noudattamisessa. Mielenosoittajien demokraattisia oikeuksia kavennetaan, ja toisinajattelijoita kohtaan käytetään väkivaltaa. Kaiken tämän olemme nähneet sen jälkeen, kun Yhdysvaltain johdolla tunkeuduttiin Irakiin ja se osaltaan vaikutti suureen epävakauteen koko alueella ja käynnisti väkivaltakierteen, jota ei ole vielääkään saatu poikki. Euroopan unionin pitää olla selkeä mielipiteissään ja tukea ihmisoikeuksia ja demokratian vahvistamista. Mutta kärsivällisyyttä tämä vaatii. Pikavoittoja ei ole tiedossa.

Tudor Ciuhodaru (S&D). – Doamna președintă, Teheran, Beirut și Bagdad sunt trei puncte dureroase pe harta lumii în acest moment și, în loc de pâine și democrație, oamenii primesc gloanțe și violență. Sunt întristat de faptul că sunt colegi de-ai mei, medici, care mor în acest moment în timp ce își apără pacienții. Dar mă întreb oare noi, Parlamentul European, am făcut suficiente lucruri până acum? Și este nevoie de un mecanism internațional de intervenție, de transparență și de protecție a celor care suferă în acest moment. Iar, doamnă înalt-comisar, am o întrebare: ce măsuri lăsați moștenire viitoarei comisii pentru ca astfel de lucruri să nu se mai repete și, dacă este posibil, să-mi spuneți dacă există un anumit termen pentru ca acestea să fie implementate.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já chci nejprve na úvod poděkovat paní Mogheriniové za její práci po celé období. Mnohokrát jsme zde debatovali i o situaci na Blízkém východě a přiznám se, že v tomto tématu jsme se úplně neshodli.

Já se domnívám, že naše politika vůči iránskému režimu byla příliš pozitivní, příliš idealistická a teď se ukazuje, že bude na nové Komisi, aby zhodnotila, nakolik máme v této oblasti přitvrdit. Požadavky obyvatel Blízkého východu jsou zcela legitimní, sociální podmínky jsou otřesné, obrovská korupce, v každém státě trochu odlišný režim, ale já jsem přesvědčen, že největší problém je v iránskému režimu. Bude třeba, aby nová Komise přehodnotila, zda vůči iránskému režimu nemáme postupovat trochu tvrději a zda nemáme dát jednoznačně najevo, že iránský režim je dnes bohužel zdrojem destabilizace Blízkého východu a zdrojem potlačování lidských práv. Na druhou stranu musíme dělat vše pro to, aby tuto šanci nevyužili islamisté a v této lokalitě dále neposilovali.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, vicepresidenta Mogherini, en esta jornada en que hemos votado ampliamente a la Comisión Von der Leyen, me sumo al reconocimiento de su trabajo durante estos cinco años —que ha sido muy duro— y de su constancia en este Parlamento Europeo a estas altas horas, debatiendo la situación en tres países de Oriente Medio con muy poco en común entre sí, salvo la inestabilidad y las protestas.

El Líbano debe mucho su inestabilidad a la intrusión iraní en los últimos años. Y entre Irak e Irán hubo una guerra muy sangrienta. La situación más preocupante de lejos es la de Irán, exactamente porque es la que dura más tiempo; porque es la que más se ha encarnizado represivamente contra las mujeres; porque es la que arroja un balance mayor de penas de muerte ejecutadas; y porque en las últimas protestas arroja un balance de mortandad también inaceptable: cerca de un centenar de muertes, entre ellas la de Nikta Esfandani, apenas una niña de catorce años.

Según reportan todas las organizaciones internacionales, el uso de la fuerza no solamente es desproporcionado sino sistemático, para reprimir brutalmente toda disidencia, y eso es sencillamente inaceptable. Apoyamos el acuerdo nuclear, pero no podemos callar ante esta brutalidad sistemática del régimen iraní.

Anthea McIntyre (ECR). – Madam President, we really just can't stand by and ignore what is happening in Iran. Both the EU and the international community has got to absolutely denounce the intentional lethal use of force by the Revolutionary Guards, the Iranian police and the plainclothes agents of the Iranian regime. The deaths of some 143 people have been carefully documented by Amnesty International, but they believe that the death toll is significantly higher. Most of those who have been killed have been shot – like Nikta Esfandiari. She was 14 years old. She was shot in the head. Her family searched for her for three days before they were given her body by the officials of the regime.

Our response so far has been woefully inadequate. We have got to demand that the leaders of the regime face justice for their crimes. There must be no joint commission with Iran while the Iranian regime is perpetrating crimes against humanity.

Clare Daly (GUE/NGL). – Madam President, I was actually very glad to hear Ms Mogherini talk about Europe's continued opposition to the unilateral withdrawal of the US from the Iranian nuclear deal and the efforts to attempt to salvage that programme. But I think we have to go further and we have to acknowledge that the imposition of sanctions to coerce Iran has caused immense hardship on Iranian citizens and the poor and the vulnerable in particular – the very people that we are protesting that we need to defend.

We now have the spectacle of the US attempting to exploit the legitimate and authentic protests in Iraq and Lebanon in order to target Iran. I think we should be very careful not to fall for that trap. Mike Pompeo says the protests are caused by Iranian corruption. These are real people, with real problems: corruption, under-development, a wrecked economy. The Iraqis are still dealing with the after-effects of the Iraq war. We should not allow ourselves to fall into the trap of US manipulation. We must work for stability in Iran and Iraq and Lebanon, and peace in Syria and Yemen and oppose the US-Saudi attempts to isolate Iran.

Mick Wallace (GUE/NGL). – Madam President, I too found Ms Mogherini's contribution on Iran more balanced than a lot of the others I heard in here tonight. But the particulars and differences of the unfolding events in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon are huge.

That being said, there is something that these countries have in common. They've all suffered from relentless foreign interference in their affairs, regime change, wars, civil wars, long-standing economic sanctions, and the pillage of natural and public resources by politicians, bankers, billionaires and global corporations.

There are people dying in these different countries. Any killing of peaceful protesters by Iranian police has to be condemned by us. Obviously, it doesn't help matters that some foreign entities are funding opposition groups inside Iran in order to destabilise the government.

We should also condemn any deaths of protesters in Iraq and Lebanon. Likewise, we should condemn the death of protesters in Bolivia and Iran. Let's keep it even.

Matthew Patten (NI). – Madam President, I deplore the recent deaths and human rights violations in Iran and the continued imprisonment of political prisoners like Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who should be freed immediately.

But the number-one policy aim in Iran is to stop it building a nuclear weapon, but it is now restarting uranium enrichment. While I support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear agreement, I think we have to brace ourselves for its failure and urgently look for a plan B.

The EU is not blameless for this mess. The Instrument for Supporting Trade Exchange (INSTEX), its plan to circumvent US sanctions, has come up short. As a result, Iran is now threatening reprisals against the EU and its Member States. It must be right that a coalition of Member States and other global players is part of that solution, but only the active involvement of the US will help.

Many people in this Parliament deny President Trump, but if we want to keep the Middle East nuclear-free, resume trade and support the human rights of Iranians, we urgently need to restore friendships and influence in Washington, not Tehran. I'm certain that Britain's special relationship with the US can help.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Madam President, I have seen that the majority of interventions tonight on this topic confirm and encourage the approach that I described at the beginning of this debate. Thank you for that.

Let me just answer specifically one question that was asked, even if I don't see the Member of Parliament present in the room – but I am sure that she will be watching us carefully from her office. She was inviting the European Union to finance some concrete projects in the Middle East and she mentioned, in particular, the case of Iraq.

Just as an example, to name the numbers, just for Iraq specifically, we have been financing concrete projects and that means demining, that means job creation, that means reconciliation – projects that exist and that we visit constantly, at my level, at the level of our delegation on the ground. I'm sure some of you have visited as well some of these projects we finance in the Middle East. Just for Iraq in the last years: EUR 1.25 billion of concrete projects just for Iraq. That is to say that this is not just diplomacy – even though diplomacy in this particular time of global politics is a valuable element, and sometimes I believe we underestimate the power of our diplomatic engagement.

But it's not just diplomacy. It's also about supporting very concretely the projects that help people on a daily basis. Many of you have said it's real people, it's real people with real needs. It's children, women and men that have faced difficulties not just for years, but sometimes for decades, and that live under very difficult situations in security terms, in economic terms.

The European Union and the European institutions are also financing those concrete projects that are literally life-saving projects for millions of people. I would have expected that members of the European Parliament would know this. So if I can invite you to document yourself, at least on the projects you agree on financing in these areas, I think this would be a service to the way in which you can represent your constituencies.

Having said that, let me say clearly that obviously I cannot state – and it would not be appropriate for me to indicate – what the position of the next Commission and the next High Representative will be on this. It is obviously for them to shape it, together with the Council, but let me say that I hope and I believe that the European Union, with your support, will have to be – even more so in the future – a fundamental partner for the people of the region, because sometimes we don't realise how important the role we play is.

Whenever you visit you hear from your interlocutors, and not only the governments or institutions, but the people, civil society and simple citizens that are the key of democracy, that they count on us. Sometimes I have the impression that they recognise our role much more than Europeans do.

So I think that the road ahead will have to be investing even more in economic and diplomatic but also security terms, in supporting this region in finding its way to a sustainable peace and sustainable security. And obviously, as many all of you have said, and as I've said in the beginning, with the firmest rejection of any form of violence and disproportionate reaction and handling of the protests from the authorities. This is clearly unacceptable. And this is exactly why, for instance in Iraq, we are engaged in the security sector reform system, because we see the need for a reform – otherwise we wouldn't be engaging in that respect. We see the need to change and improve the way in which the institutions can handle the security situations of the country, and many other situations.

So again, I hope I that this Parliament will give all its support to an even further engagement and work of the European Union institutions in the Middle East.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

19. Trwające negocjacje w sprawie nowej umowy o partnerstwie UE-AKP (debata)

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dnia jest debata:

— nad pytaniem wymagającym odpowiedzi ustnej skierowanym do Rady przez Tomasą Tobé w imieniu Komisji Rozwoju w sprawie trwających negocjacji w sprawie nowej umowy o partnerstwie UE-AKP (O-000035/2019 - B9-0057/2019) oraz

— nad pytaniem wymagającym odpowiedzi ustnej skierowanym do Komisji przez Tomasą Tobé w imieniu Komisji Rozwoju w sprawie trwających negocjacji w sprawie nowej umowy o partnerstwie UE-AKP (O-000036/2019 - B9-0058/2019).

Chciałabym przypomnieć, zabrania głosu z sali i do procedury niebieskiej kartki można zgłosić się zarówno tradycyjnie, jak i w systemie elektronicznym. Instrukcje są dostępne przy wejściu do sali obrad plenarnych.

Tomas Tobé, author. – Madam President, the Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States is the most comprehensive partnership agreement which the EU has concluded to date. The Cotonou Agreement covers cooperation with nearly 80 countries worldwide and it covers a wide set of policy areas.

In these times, times of increasing global uncertainty, we, the European Union, must defend and promote multilateralism, global cooperation and a rule-based world order. These are all core values of our European Union.

The Cotonou Agreement expires in February next year. Negotiations for the next agreement have already started. Prior to that, Parliament has outlined what we want to see in the new agreement. Parliament's consent will be required once the negotiations are concluded.

So far, the ACP and the EU have agreed that the foundation of the future partnership shall focus on key values and principles and on overarching priorities. Attached to the foundation agreement, three regional partnership protocols will detail cooperation priorities tailored to the regions' specificities. It is agreed that the foundation and the regional partnerships will be one legally binding instrument. The latter was not a given when the first discussions with EU Member States started, but it was one of Parliament's key demands.

But in today's debate we need more clarity and we also need the new resolution, because some of Parliament's key concerns have not been addressed. On behalf of the Committee on Development, I have therefore tabled questions to the Council and to the Commission. We would like to hear clear answers to them today. We believe that these questions will provide guidance to the incoming Commissioner.

The first question is: where do we actually stand on the key demand of Parliament that the new agreement should reinforce the parliamentary dimension at ACP level? I would like to make clear that the European Parliament cannot accept that the executive level of government might have no parliamentary counterpart: that there will be a Joint Council of Ministers, a Joint Committee, but no parliamentary meetings. We agree with a reinforcement of parliamentary cooperation at the level of the three regional pillars, but this is not sufficient. We don't want to lose the benefits of peer-to-peer discussions at ACP level.

Another important issue, and also on behalf of the Committee on Development: where do the Council and the Commission and the ACP stand when it comes to reinforcing provisions to combat discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and to ensure that sexual and reproductive health and rights are integrated and supported through the new agreement? These are key values of the European Union, and we need to make sure that this will also be within the agreement.

Another important question is about civil society. We know that in some countries this is of very serious concern, and we want to see an increased role for civil society. This needs to be recognisable in the agreement and also at ACP-EU levels.

Last, but not least, Parliament clearly stated that the new agreement should provide for a peer-review mechanism for monitoring progress as well as gaps in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals on a regular basis. We need more clarity on which way this will be integrated into the next agreement.

Before I end with a very clear message from the European Parliament, I would like to thank Commissioner Mimica for all your hard work. You have worked very hard with the European Parliament and we are really thankful for the cooperation so far, and also with the Council.

We now count on the Commission and the Council to be champions of our demands in the coming weeks and the coming months and to provide answers also today; hopefully clear answers.

Tytti Tuppurainen, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, it's a pleasure to address this House on the ongoing negotiations for the future agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the European Union. This is indeed a very timely discussion. Post-Cotonou continues to be a key file for the Council. Negotiations are ongoing and until now five negotiation rounds took place at political level, the latest one in September in New York. The next meeting of the chief negotiators is foreseen to take place in December.

Both parties agree that the future development cooperation framework should be based on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change and must reflect and adapt to the changing global context, new challenges and opportunities. The ambitions are high on both sides to use the relationship for joint positions in international fora. The EU shares the ambition of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament to strengthen the parliamentary dimension.

Our EU negotiating directives clearly stipulate that the parties shall pursue an inclusive and open multi-stakeholder approach, including by strengthening the role of national parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector. These directives aim to strengthen regular political dialogue at all levels, enabling the active engagement of a wide variety of actors, including civil society, in dialogue and cooperation processes. They also aim to strengthen the role of civil society and the private sector as the key partners in realising the objectives of the partnership.

The negotiations on migration issues are ongoing. The EU's aim is to arrive at a more operational text compared to the Cotonou Agreement. The EU negotiation mandate also stipulates that all elements of migration cooperation would be addressed in the regular political dialogue, which would ensure regular discussions with our partners on this important topic.

Economic partnership agreements help regional economic communities by providing necessary expertise, technology and experience for trade integration. They are tools to enhance trade and investment, value addition and industrialisation, and economic integration. The work done so far on these agreements should inspire the future trade arrangements between the ACP and the EU.

The EU negotiating directives are very clear when it comes to non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and sexual and reproductive health and rights. They aim to commit the parties to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU aims for an agreement that ensures universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education and healthcare services.

Neven Mimica, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I would like to thank the honourable Chair, Mr Tobé, and all the members of the Committee on Development for their excellent work and for the close collaboration between our respective institutions on this important file. I welcome your resolutions and the questions on the ongoing negotiations on the renewed partnership agreement between the European Union and the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

The negotiations are progressing, I would say, at moderate pace. As chief negotiator, I have to be realistic. When the Cotonou Agreement expires on 29 February next year, the negotiations will not have sufficiently advanced and there will be a need to have transitional measures in place. Therefore, I am glad that the Council has adopted a decision supporting the extension of the Cotonou Agreement until 31 December 2020. This way, a solid legal basis can remain in place during the transition period. The EU-ACP Committee of Ambassadors will take the final joint decision by the end of January 2020 at the latest.

At this advanced stage of the negotiations I appreciate that Parliament wishes to reiterate the core elements formulated in the two earlier resolutions of October 2016 and June 2018. Your opinion has been heard. You have one key demand: the strengthening of the parliamentary dimension, including at the EU-ACP level. I strongly believe that the role of Parliament should be enforced in the future agreement. However, in line with the negotiation directives from the Council, I also believe that this can best take place at the level of the regional protocols and less so at the level of the EU-ACP. Nevertheless, the Commission takes note of the recommendation formulated by Parliament on this heading.

I would also like to recall that the recommendation by the Commission to the Council of December 2017 included the proposal that the three regional parliamentary configurations could be brought into one on specific occasions. Eventually, that proposal did not become part of the Council's negotiation directives.

Honourable Members, I welcome your question on political dialogue. We have put forward to our ACP partners a proposal for comprehensive dialogue covering all objectives, priorities and policy areas. I also welcome your concern for a genuine multi-actor partnership. The EU has a clear position: we are seeking from all parties a commitment to facilitate the active engagement of a wide variety of actors in dialogue and cooperation processes.

Concerning your call for reinforcing provisions to fight against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and for upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights, I can say that we are aligned on this but I note that our proposals to the ACP side have not received a positive feedback and further negotiation is required. So far, we have a bracketed part of this paragraph.

On migration, the Commission appreciates the concern of Parliament. The European Union and the ACP are currently negotiating a balanced text seeking a substantial compromise between the negotiation interests of both parties.

Concerning the economic partnership agreements, I would like to recall that these are self-standing international agreements. However, the post-Cotonou Agreement will provide a coherent framework for cooperation with ACP States, linking all negotiated and future EPAs to respect for essential and fundamental elements.

Lastly, honourable Members, your question on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is welcome. It gives me the opportunity to recall that the UN Agenda 2030 will frame the future ACP-EU partnership agreement. Our comprehensive dialogue with the ACP partners and a multi-actor approach will be essential to put in place the conditions and instruments for regular monitoring and implementation of the SDGs.

György Hölvényi, *a PPE képviselőcsoport nevében*. – Tisztelt Elnök asszony! Tisztelt Kollégák! Az afrikai, karibi és csendes-óceáni országok és az Unió együttműködése nélkül elképzelhetetlen, hogy olyan kihívásokra megoldást találjunk, mint a migráció, klímaváltozás, oktatáshoz való hozzájárulás, hozzájutás és a biztonság kérdése.

A jelenleg még érvényben lévő Cotonui Megállapodás éppen ezeknek a kihívásoknak a kezeléséhez kínál együttműködési keretet. Az új egyezmény életbelépésének lehetséges késése Európát egyszerűen versenyhátrányba hozza. Európa csak abban lehet érdekelt, hogy a fejlődő országokban csökkentse az elvándorlást fokozó hatásokat, megerősítse a demokratizációs folyamatokat és a biztonságot.

Az együttműködés fejlesztése vonatkozásainak legfontosabb eleme az oktatás és a szakképzés kérdése. Engedjék meg, hogy ebben egy speciális dologra felhívjam a figyelmet. Az AKCS-országok tekintetében az egyházi szervezetekkel való együttműködés szinte elengedhetetlen, de jelenleg majdnem a nullával egyenlő. Vegyük figyelembe, hogy a Világbank adatai szerint a Szubszaharai-Afrikában az egészségügyi és oktatási ellátás ötven százalékát vallási szervezetek biztosítják. Ennek megfelelően nagyon fontos, hogy a fejlesztési partnereink között ott legyenek az egyházi szervezetek is.

Az új megoldásban – a Bizottságnak megoldás kell – az új megállapodásban a Bizottságnak megoldást kell találnia a migráció kiváltó okainak kezelésére, legalábbis meg kell kísérelni. Ahogyan ezt meghallgatása során Urpilainen biztos asszony is elmondta, a kiváltó okok kezelésére kell összpontosítanunk a következő években. Olyan megállapodást várunk, amely az eddigieknél hatékonyabban rendezi a migránsok visszafogadását, stratégiai célként tekint a szülőföldön való megmaradásra, a biztonságra, a minőségi oktatásra, a tisztességes munka helyben történő megerősítésére.

A fenti célok érdekében 2021-től az NDICI -t kell alkalmaznunk, amelybe a Bizottság javaslata alapján lehetséges, hogy beolvad az EFA is, az AKCS-országok számára nyújtott fejlesztési hozzájárulások legfontosabb forrása. Világosan kell látnunk, hogy miként tervezi a Bizottság kialakítani a Post-Cotonui Megállapodás és az NDICI közötti összeköttetést. Figyelembe kell vennünk az AKCS-országok sajátos igényeit, egyenlő partnerként kezelve őket.

Összefoglalva: olyan megállapodást várunk el a Bizottságtól, amely a migráció kérdésében a helyben maradást és a visszatérést segíti, tekintettel van a különböző AKCS-országok sajátos karaktereire, és megerősíti az Európai Parlamentnek az AKCS-EU-együttműködésben betöltött szerepét. Köszönöm, hogy meghallgattak.

Carlos Zorrinho, em nome do Grupo S&D. – Senhora Presidente, o debate suscitado pela Comissão do Desenvolvimento sobre as negociações para um novo acordo ACP-União Europeia é muito oportuno, e saúdo o seu Presidente pela iniciativa. E como foi aqui dito, o Parlamento Europeu tem expressado ao longo do tempo posições muito claras sobre os objetivos e os mecanismos de concretização do futuro acordo.

Uma posição que, aliás, foi refletida e partilhada na passada semana em Quigali, no Ruanda, onde decorreu a 30.ª Assembleia Parlamentar Paritária, à qual copresidi em representação do Parlamento Europeu. E dessa reunião, entre mais de cem países que representam quase dois biliões de pessoas, emergiu um consenso forte, um consenso para que se cumpram os *timings* e os mandatos para ser possível fechar o acordo em novembro de 2020, traduzindo uma parceria robusta, entre iguais, inspirada pela Agenda do Milénio. Mas também um consenso para que prevaleça uma visão flexível que permita conciliar um quadro partilhado para o desenvolvimento sustentável no âmbito da relação ACP-União Europeia, mas também com as parcerias económicas e comerciais sub-regionais, e em particular com a parceria União Europeia-União Africana. E, finalmente, um consenso para que seja racionalizada e reforçada a dimensão parlamentar do acordo, como parte da nossa matriz diferenciadora num contexto geopolítico cada vez mais competitivo em que temos que saber fazer a diferença.

Tenho consciência que falar do Acordo de Cotonu ou do acordo que lhe vai suceder diz muito pouco à maior parte dos europeus. Mas se tornarmos claro como ele é decisivo para fazer face à certificação, às alterações climáticas, às migrações forçadas, aos conflitos gerados pela exploração da pobreza endémica e à fragilidade das instituições, seremos capazes de mostrar que um bom desenho, uma boa concretização do acordo, é boa para os povos de África, das Caraíbas e Pacífico, da União Europeia e para a Humanidade em geral. E então teremos a maioria dos europeus conosco e seremos mais fortes enquanto União Europeia.

Queria aproveitar os últimos segundos da minha intervenção para saudar e felicitar o Senhor Comissário pelo excelente trabalho desenvolvido.

Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire, au fond, nous savons tous, dans cette salle, que nos destins, ceux des pays ACP et de l'Union européenne, sont liés et qu'ils le seront encore plus demain. Ce n'est qu'ensemble que nous pourrions apporter les réponses aux défis globaux, en commençant par la gestion de la crise climatique et de la crise de la biodiversité.

Nos amis des pays ACP tirent la sonnette d'alarme car les conséquences des changements climatiques mettent en péril leur survie. Le soutien de l'Union européenne en matière d'adaptation au changement climatique est essentiel si nous voulons agir avant qu'il ne soit trop tard. Autre grand défi, la lutte contre le braconnage et le trafic d'animaux sauvages, qui doit faire partie des priorités pour sauver la biodiversité.

Ensuite, je voudrais rappeler le rôle de la jeunesse et des femmes. De la jeunesse africaine, en particulier, dépend absolument le destin d'un continent en transition. L'Union européenne et les pays ACP devront construire des ponts entre leurs jeunes dans le domaine de l'éducation, de l'entrepreneuriat et des échanges académiques et culturels. C'est ainsi qu'ils pourront bâtir leur avenir en commun mais aussi l'égalité des genres, l'autonomisation des femmes, leur éducation, y compris leur éducation sexuelle et reproductive, qui sont essentielles. Libérer le potentiel féminin est le meilleur pari que nous puissions faire pour l'avenir.

Monsieur le Commissaire, après plus de 60 ans de partenariat et alors que de nouveaux acteurs s'affirment sur la scène de la coopération internationale, l'Union européenne ne peut pas se passer de ses alliés historiques. À Kigali, nous avons vu que nos partenaires des pays ACP voulaient un vrai partenariat. Moi aussi, en tant qu'Européenne, je veux ce vrai partenariat. Nous avons tout en main pour bâtir une nouvelle relation, basée toujours davantage sur la coopération et le respect mutuel.

Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Madame la Présidente, le nouvel accord Union européenne-ACP sera l'occasion de nouer des relations de partenariat sur un pied d'égalité, basées sur un véritable partenariat et non sur une relation paternaliste. Tout dépendra de l'issue des négociations, qui s'avère déjà problématique. En effet, avec l'ouverture du libre-échange, de nombreux pays ACP ne sont pas en mesure de concurrencer les produits à bon marché de l'Union européenne qui inondent les pays du Sahel en Afrique. Illustrons notre propos avec l'exemple du lait en poudre venu d'Europe et vendu sur les marchés africains. Ce lait défie toute concurrence face au lait local.

En outre, la migration est le sujet d'actualité qui préoccupe aussi bien l'Union européenne que les pays ACP. Cependant, nous devons veiller à ce que les fonds de développement ne soient pas liés aux mesures draconiennes de la politique migratoire de l'Union européenne, qui est devenue un outil à double tranchant. Elle a permis aux racistes d'actionner les sirènes de la peur et de dissimuler ainsi leur haine et leur xénophobie sous le couvert du manque de sécurité. Nous devons au contraire chercher à ajuster nos priorités sur celle de nos partenaires – l'élimination de la pauvreté, l'éducation et la formation professionnelle, la promotion de la migration légale et la possibilité d'un retour au pays d'origine suivi d'une réinsertion volontaire – afin de parvenir à un véritable accord qui corresponde aux objectifs du développement durable.

Nous ne devons pas conditionner l'aide au développement en érigeant des barrières trop élevées en matière de climat, de migration et de sécurité. Promouvoir une telle politique est contradictoire aux valeurs de l'Union européenne et aux principes qui régissent les rapports entre partenaires. Imposer ce genre de politique aux pays ACP est par bien des points comparable à une politique néo-colonialiste. Nous devons avoir avec nos partenaires des atomes crochus en vue d'un partenariat qui reflète les aspirations aussi bien de l'Union européenne que des pays ACP.

Dominique Bilde, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Madame la Présidente, à l'heure où, de la Chine à la Russie, tous ont perçu le potentiel de l'Afrique comme continent du XXI^e siècle, l'Union européenne, quant à elle, aborde ces négociations en position de faiblesse, non seulement parce que rien n'a été prévu pour pallier le départ du Royaume-Uni, contributeur financier et acteur diplomatique majeur, mais parce qu'on ne peut que constater l'échec de Cotonou.

L'échec est d'abord politique, puisque ni le dialogue multilatéral, incarné par des institutions qui ont peiné à produire le moindre résultat concret, ni les instruments contraignants n'ont été couronnés de succès.

L'échec porte ensuite sur l'immigration, puisque, alors même que l'article 13 a été sans effet, cette résolution s'enferme dans le rejet de tout conditionnement de l'aide au contrôle des flux migratoires par les pays d'origine, ce qui devrait être, au contraire, une de nos premières exigences.

Enfin, sur le plan économique, le bilan d'étape indigent, révéla la semaine dernière, du pacte avec l'Afrique, lancé par l'Allemagne, est un énième coup d'épée dans l'eau en matière de relance de l'investissement privé. Il en sera de même de son cadre d'action global, pompeusement baptisé plan Marshall pour l'Afrique. Comment pourrait-il en être autrement alors que les conditions matérielles élémentaires ne sont pas garanties?

Dans le Sahel, la disparition tragique de treize de mes compatriotes rappelle que, contre le terrorisme islamique, les soldats français se battent bien seuls. Alors que tant d'engagements internationaux n'ont pas été tenus sur le terrain, l'indifférence se paye au prix du sang.

Miguel Urbán Crespo, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señora presidenta, hace un año el Parlamento Europeo aprobó las negociaciones para un nuevo acuerdo entre la Unión Europea y los setenta y ocho países de la Asociación de Estados de África, del Caribe y del Pacífico. Esta negociación integraba en su texto inicial la necesidad de enfrentarse a desafíos como el de la crisis climática. Daba mayor protagonismo a la sociedad civil y reforzaba el control parlamentario del acuerdo.

No entendemos cómo hace un mes, en la Comisión de Desarrollo, el texto de este acuerdo fue refrendado mayoritariamente, pero ahora el Grupo del Partido Popular amenaza con desvirtuar el acuerdo. ¿Qué es lo que quieren el Grupo del Partido Popular y la extrema derecha?

Lo decían alto y claro en la anterior intervención: condicionar la ayuda al desarrollo al control migratorio, que, en la práctica, está suponiendo en muchos lugares violaciones sistemáticas de los derechos humanos.

Demasiadas barbaridades hemos visto ya en estos años con la utilización de los fondos de la ayuda al desarrollo de la Unión Europea como para ahora seguir incidiendo en condicionar la ayuda al desarrollo al control migratorio. Esto, señorías, no solo es infame y neocolonial sino que también —y hay que decirlo alto y claro— incumple todos los protocolos internacionales.

No cometamos ese error mañana, señorías. Apostemos por una política de desarrollo que no esté al servicio de la «Europa fortaleza», que no responda a los intereses de la extrema derecha sino que esté al servicio de los pueblos y del planeta. De su voto dependerá lo que decidan, dependerá estar al servicio de la gente o estar contra la gente. Ustedes decidan.

Álvaro Amaro (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, em boa hora se faz este debate e se discute com a Comissão e o Conselho este acordo de parceria pós-Cotonu e o futuro do caminho que iniciámos juntos com os nossos países parceiros de África, das Caraíbas e do Pacífico, em Lomé, em 1975.

Nunca é demais lembrar que este acordo tem três objetivos fundamentais: reduzir a pobreza e a prazo erradicá-la, o desenvolvimento sustentável e ainda contribuir para a integração progressiva dos países ACP na economia mundial.

Se são estes os seus objetivos primeiros, e pós-Cotonu, tem que reassumir estes compromissos. O mandato negocial da Comissão diz exatamente isso: o acordo terá como base e reforçará os valores e princípios fundamentais deste acordo que termina agora no próximo ano. É esta, pois, a primeira ideia que gostaria de deixar num cenário atual em que é necessário tomar medidas concretas com vista a promover e fazer aplicar os direitos humanos ou defender a democracia, o crescimento económico e o investimento, combater as alterações climáticas, promover a paz e a segurança, bem como agir em termos de mobilidade e migrações. O objetivo primário de erradicar a pobreza em consonância com os objetivos do desenvolvimento sustentável deverá continuar a ser o nosso maior propósito.

E sobre o futuro do acordo gostaria de deixar três notas, até porque já muito foi dito também neste debate. Em primeiro lugar, a manutenção da dimensão parlamentar na futura parceria dos países ACP-UE. A resolução que votaremos amanhã sublinha muito bem este propósito, reiterando a importância de reforçar esta dimensão parlamentar, ou seja, o futuro quadro institucional deverá incluir uma Assembleia Parlamentar Paritária ACP-UE, e à semelhança do que os nossos Copresidentes da Assembleia Parlamentar Paritária fizeram, e cumprimento o meu colega Carlos Zorrinho, em Quigali na sua declaração conjunta, e naturalmente o Senhor Presidente da Comissão do Desenvolvimento sobre este tema, também eu considero que esta reivindicação não deve ser negociável no contexto da aprovação do futuro acordo pelo Parlamento Europeu.

Em segundo lugar, defender o multilateralismo como único caminho verdadeiramente eficaz para uma paz duradoura, prosperidade económica e o desenvolvimento sustentável. Só conseguiremos implementar na prática numa escala verdadeiramente eficaz os ambiciosos objetivos do desenvolvimento sustentável se o fizermos através dos diversos fóruns mundiais existentes, e com esta nossa parceria isto poderá funcionar como uma alavanca para posições comuns. Deveremos ainda, nesses fóruns, difundir os nossos ideais e princípios junto das populações, como muito bem diz aquele ditado: sozinhos até poderemos ir mais depressa, mas juntos vamos seguramente mais longe.

Em terceiro e último lugar gostaria de sublinhar algo que é pouco falado, e que é a importância da diplomacia parlamentar para o estímulo da aproximação institucional em termos multilaterais, quer a nível dos parlamentos, dos governos, dos poderes regionais ou locais e, obviamente, das administrações públicas, e também, para terminar, acrescentarei o maior envolvimento da sociedade civil no processo político para o incentivo à realização de vários tipos de eventos.

A diplomacia parlamentar contribui ainda, e termino, Senhora Presidente, para a divulgação dos valores fundamentais que defendemos, nomeadamente os direitos humanos.

Monica Semedo (Renew). – Madam President, last week I had the honour of attending the 38th ACP-EU Joint Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda, and I had many fruitful conversations with my ACP colleagues who expressed their regret and concern that the post-Cotonou negotiations are taking longer than anticipated. We agreed that the greatest future potential of the ACP countries lies with the youth, and we should promote it now.

Young citizens have innovative ideas for shaping the future relations between the ACP and the EU. Therefore, my question is, have youth organisations and associations been involved in the consultation on the post-Cotonou negotiations? If so, at what level and, if not, given that the negotiations are still ongoing, would you consider including their voices?

Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, we are at an important moment in time. The new treaty between the EU and the ACP countries will consolidate and give new impetus to our strong partnership and we are happy to learn that we are approaching the final stage of concluding a treaty. However, there are still some problem issues, and they seem to concentrate on the issue of migration and mobility, and this is why I focus on this issue.

The treaty is based on the principle of equality and shared responsibility. But if you look at the EU text proposal, it applies very concrete requirements on the ACP countries, such as readmission of migrants, strengthening border controls and combating irregular migration, whereas in exchange, the EU hardly offers any concrete commitment regarding legal migration. Adopting this text would deprive the countries of remittances and other benefits of migration, without any clear perspective on labour migration. This does not really resonate the equality of the partnership.

Regarding shared responsibility, I find the only provision on refugees and international protection pretty meagre. Africa hosts so many more refugees than we do. Why don't we see a stronger EU commitment to support the protection and reception of refugees through financial means or through resettlements? That would be shared responsibility, and also in line with the UN Global Compact on Refugees. The EU's responsibility for refugees in Africa will even grow if this migration cooperation leads to more refugees stuck in transit countries without any access to asylum. So, if this paragraph is still in negotiation, please make sure that the EU also delivers on migration, mobility and international protection.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, Senhor Comissário, a relação entre a União Europeia e os países ACP – de África, das Caraíbas e do Pacífico –, deve pautar-se por uma genuína cooperação para o desenvolvimento que se distancie de visões interesseiras e de práticas de recorte neocolonial, e que seja respeitadora da soberania destes países. O futuro quadro de cooperação deve reconhecer e preservar a integridade e a unidade do bloco ACP.

Rejeitamos, por isso, as tentativas de dividir para reinar que já foram patentes na imposição a todo o custo, por parte da União Europeia, dos chamados acordos de parceria económica contra a vontade dos países ACP, e são novamente visíveis na negociação da futura parceria.

Contrariando caminhos que acentuam a dependência e a subordinação dos países ACP, é necessário estimular a diversificação da sua base económica, fortalecer os respetivos sistemas produtivos, estimulando a sua autonomia e coerência, promover o desenvolvimento dos serviços públicos, investir na saúde, na educação, no saneamento e no abastecimento de água, na habitação e no melhor aproveitamento do potencial endógeno de cada país.

É necessário reforçar o papel do Fundo Europeu de Desenvolvimento, reforçando as suas dotações e alinhando-o com estas prioridades, rejeitando qualquer lógica de condicionalidade à aceitação das políticas da União Europeia, designadamente no domínio migratório. É necessário romper com a lógica das políticas de ajustamento estrutural, com o livre comércio e com as permanentes tentativas de exportar modelos neoliberais que se revelaram e revelam desastrosos.

O cancelamento da dívida dos países menos desenvolvidos, e termino, Senhora Presidente, é uma questão de justiça que permitiria canalizar recursos adicionais para o desenvolvimento. Isto mesmo foi aprovado na recente Assembleia Parlamentar Paritária em Quigali, no Ruanda, e não queríamos deixar aqui de o valorizar.

Pietro Bartolo (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, sono ancora tanti i quesiti che restano aperti sui negoziati per un nuovo accordo di partenariato tra l'Europa e il gruppo dei paesi ACP. Crescita sostenibile e riduzione della povertà, Stato di diritto e democrazia, sviluppo economico e culturale, gestione dei flussi migratori e cambiamenti climatici: ecco i temi cruciali da rilanciare nell'ambito di una cooperazione rafforzata congiunta dopo il 2020.

L'accordo di Cotonou ci ha consentito di intraprendere le vie del dialogo e della cooperazione e in questi anni i risultati raggiunti sono stati importanti, ma siamo sinceri, non sono significativi. Siamo ancora distanti anni luce dagli obiettivi della riduzione e dell'eliminazione della povertà, nonché dell'integrazione dei paesi ACP nell'economia mondiale.

Continuiamo quindi nel nostro percorso di dialogo parlamentare aperto, democratico e globale e non perdiamo mai di vista il rispetto dei diritti umani e dei principi democratici e dello Stato di diritto, che devono rimanere alla base della nostra cooperazione.

Marie-Pierre Vedrenne (Renew). – Madame Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire, l'avenir de nos relations, après février 2020, et l'expiration de l'accord de Cotonou ont été au cœur de nos échanges la semaine dernière à Kigali.

En tant que vice-présidente de l'Assemblée parlementaire ACP-UE, je regrette profondément que ce cadre multilatéral, pour lequel nous sommes ici tous profondément engagés, soit menacé par ces négociations. Un véritable partenariat gagnant-gagnant avec les ACP ne verra le jour qu'avec le maintien et le renforcement de la dimension parlementaire. S'il est vrai que le fonctionnement de cette assemblée doit être réformé pour gagner en efficacité, la supprimer serait un contresens.

Protection des droits de l'homme, état de droit, objectifs du développement durable ou encore lutte contre le changement climatique, autant de thèmes qui trouveront des solutions si nous agissons ensemble, et la diplomatie parlementaire est le vecteur de véritables progrès. À titre d'exemple, nous avons adopté, à Kigali, une approche commune pour la COP 25 qui se tiendra dans quelques jours à Madrid. Dans ce sens, je souhaite appeler de nouveau la Commission européenne à faire de l'accord de Paris un élément essentiel de ce futur partenariat.

Evin Incir (S&D). – Fru talman! Jag skulle vilja ta upp och verkligt betona fyra viktiga budskap till kommissionen och medlemsländerna.

1. Se till att avtalet är väl förankrat i FN:s globala hållbarhetsmål och förstärk frågorna om respekt för mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati, grundläggande friheter, rättsstatsprincipen och god samhällsstyrning.
2. Det är viktigt att framtida avtal innehåller en större roll för civilsamhället, och mångfald måste vara ett ledord för inkluderingen. Det är extremt viktigt för att kunna motverka det krympande demokratiska utrymme som vi ser runtom i världen.
3. Jämställdhet och kvinnors egenmakt måste genomsyra hela avtalet. Sexuell och reproduktiv hälsa och rättigheter måste vara prioritet.
4. Slutligen får vi inte glömma ödesfrågan: miljö- och klimatfrågorna. Vi måste alla ta ett gemensamt ansvar om vi vill säkerställa en planet att leva på i framtiden.

Jag hoppas att dessa budskap tas med, och att ni jobbar för ett brett, jämbördigt och mer modernt partnerskap som täcker in våra gemensamma utmaningar, och som kan hjälpa till att bekämpa fattigdom och ojämlikheter.

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Sinjura President, minn meta ġie adottat il-Ftehim ta' Cotonou ghoxrin sena ilu, id-dinja nbidlet b'mod mill-aktar sinifikanti. Ghalhekk in-negozjati taghna fil-Ftehim il-ġdid AKP-UE ghandhom iwasslu kunsens politiku ambizzjuż u komprensiv illi javvanza żvilupp sostenibbli u inkluziv, u jiffoka fuq il-prijoritajiet imfassla, bhad-demokrazija u d-drittijiet tal-bniedem, it-tkabbir ekonomiku u l-investment, it-tibdil fil-klima, il-qerda tal-faqar, il-paċi u s-sigurtà, il-migrazzjoni u l-mobbiltà.

Barra minn hekk nixtieq ukoll nenasizza l-importanza tat-tishih tad-dimensjoni parlamentari tal-futur, fejn jehtieg illi tkun assigurata responsabbiltà demokratika fil-livelli kollha. Ghalhekk huwa essenzjali illi l-Assemblea Parlamentari Kongunta AKP-UE tkompli tiltaqa' darbejn fis-sena fit-totalità taghha fis-sessjoni plenarja u darba fis-sena f'kull wahda mit-tliet regjuni.

Ix-xhur li ġejjin se jkunu kruċjali hekk kif wasalna biex nidhlu f'era ġdida fir-relazzjoni taghna mal-pajjiżi AKP, li se jippermettu wkoll l-iżviluppi ulterjuri ghar-relazzjonijiet taghna bhala "kontinent ma' kontinent" Afrikan.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Madam President, the Partnership Agreement between the EU and ACP, known as the Cotonou Agreement, was signed in 2000 and will expire in February 2020. Negotiations for the successor to the agreement are still ongoing and we must remember why this partnership is important. It's fostered key political dialogue, strengthening relations between us and the ACP countries via frameworks based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It's allowed for important discussions on issues such as freedom from discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and sex and relationship education, as well as provisions for corporate social responsibility and assistance to tackle tax evasion.

We must revitalise and reinforce the EU's relations with the ACP countries. We must emphasise the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the future agreement in order to ensure democratic accountability at all levels and to promote the legitimacy and visibility of the partnership. We must also scale up the involvement of civil society and ensure any new agreement is rooted in the 2030 Agenda with a peer review mechanism for SDG implementation. The EU and the ACP are collectively a strong global voice and we can tackle shared challenges, and the new Partnership Agreement must reflect this.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, comisario Mimica, le saludo con reconocimiento en esta su última comparecencia en un Pleno del Parlamento Europeo para debatir nada menos que el Acuerdo entre la Unión Europea y África-Caribe-Pacífico —setenta y ocho países— después de veinte años de vigencia, y con el mandato del Parlamento de reforzar el carácter de la sociedad civil, el compromiso con los valores y el control parlamentario.

Pero, sobre todo, hay que mantener vivo este ejercicio de diplomacia parlamentaria, que es una oportunidad de diálogo horizontal para explicar el esfuerzo gigantesco de la Unión Europea en cooperación y en ayuda humanitaria, que debe ser fiel a sus valores. En ningún caso debe ser una herramienta ni un subterfugio para la política de retornos o de control de emigraciones, sino que debe serlo para intercambiar buenas experiencias en materia de derechos humanos, de refuerzo del estado de Derecho, de integración, de inclusión, de lucha contra toda forma de discriminación y, por supuesto, de potenciación del papel de la mujer en África, el Caribe y el Pacífico. Son regiones muy distintas entre sí, pero África es el gran gigante. África es el interlocutor inexorable de la Unión Europea.

Animo a la Comisión Von der Leyen —que hoy acaba de recibir su investidura— a que lleve a buen término esta negociación y haga prevalecer el papel del Parlamento en la relación con África, el Caribe y el Pacífico.

Irena Joveva (Renew). – Gospa predsednica! Prejšnji teden sem imela privilegij biti del zasedanja skupne parlamentarne skupščine AKP in EU v Kigaliju, kjer sem izkusila, kaj tak partnerski sporazum dejansko pomeni.

Državam na različnih kontinentih omogoča povezovanje pri reševanju ali izboljševanju stanja na skupnih področjih, kot so človekove pravice, demokracija, enakost, mir in varnost, podnebje, okolje in še bi lahko naštevale.

Pred nami je dokument, ki bo vplival na oblikovanje prihodnjega sodelovanja med državami AKP in EU, zato je pomembno, da evropski poslanci kot vključeni institucionalni igralci v tem sporazumu prisostvujemo pri njegovem nastanku.

Temelj priprave novega sporazuma je nadgradnja dosedanjega, hkrati pa resolucija poziva k enaki zastopanosti držav Afrike, Karibov, Pacifika in držav EU, k večjemu vključevanju civilne družbe, političnemu dialogu in k trajnostnemu razvoju. Le skupaj lahko dosežemo mirne, stabilne, uspešne države in družbe.

(Konec zgłoszeń z sali)

Neven Mimica, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, since the official launching of the negotiations on 28 September last year, the European Union and the ACP Group of States have gone a considerable distance in establishing our future partnership.

Leading the negotiations for the EU has been an honour and a challenge for me. I believe we have made sufficient progress in a relatively short time. My successor, Jutta Urpilainen, will have a solid and comprehensive base upon which to conclude the negotiations with success.

I'm confident that already negotiated but bracketed parts of the future agreement, tabled differences in our respective positions and parts of the agreement that we still have to open and address do not constitute unsurmountable difficulties that could endanger final consent on the draft text of the post-Cotonou partnership agreement.

This negotiation process is very much about the time needed to conclude an agreement, rather than about the lack of political will of the parties to have it concluded. The support and the engagement of Parliament all along this process are so important.

I remain certain that Parliament will continue working to ensure a strong parliamentary dimension and will contribute to ensuring that the EU keeps on standing for its values in our partnership with ACP countries.

Tytti Tuppurainen, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, post-Cotonou continues to be the key file for the Council. Let me assure you of that. I would like to also take the opportunity to thank Commissioner Mimica for his strong commitment to this work.

The EU welcomes the commitment of the African, Caribbean and Pacific region's side to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change, as well as adapting the partnership to the changing global context, new challenges and the obvious opportunities that we also have.

We believe that the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement should facilitate reaching an agreement, even on the most difficult topics. Our Finnish Presidency will continue to pay the utmost attention to the ongoing negotiations and will seek to ensure that the Council contributes to the progress on this important dossier. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for your important and valuable remarks.

Przewodnicząca. – Otrzymałam jeden projekt rezolucji złożony zgodnie z art. 136 ust. 5 Regulaminu.

Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 28 listopada 2019 r.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 171)

Janina Ochojska (PPE), na piśmie. – Umowa z Kotonu podpisana w 2000 r. stanowi filar partnerstwa pomiędzy UE, jej państwami członkowskimi i 79 państwami AKP. Jej celem jest m.in. wyeliminowanie ubóstwa, zagwarantowanie praworządności, wspieranie zrównoważonego rozwoju gospodarczego i społecznego krajów partnerskich oraz stopniowa integracja ich gospodarek z gospodarką światową. Sytuacja globalna i nowe światowe wyzwania takie jak kryzys migracyjny, terroryzm czy zmiany klimatu spowodowały, że podstawowe założenia partnerstwa muszą zostać zdefiniowane na nowo. Negocjacje i prace nad nowym kształtem umowy przedłużają się, jednak musimy zadbać o to, aby podstawy prawne i założenia polityczne przyszłego porozumienia UE-AKP były solidne i oparte na zasadach równości między partnerami, a nie na dotychczasowej relacji biorca-darczyńca, która nie sprawdza się.

Trzeba zadbać też o to, aby trzy porozumienia regionalne oparte na innych założeniach ramowych między UE i osobno Afryką, Pacyfikiem oraz Karaibami nie odwróciły uwagi od głównych priorytetów całego partnerstwa. Dlatego cieszę się, że osiągnięcie celów zrównoważonego rozwoju jest uznawane za kluczowy element przyszłego porozumienia, i zgadzam się, że trzeba stworzyć mechanizm, dzięki któremu realizacja umowy skutecznie przyczyni się do osiągnięcia i promowania tych celów.

Jestem zdania, że Wspólne Zgromadzenie UE-AKP odgrywa znaczącą rolę w sprawowaniu demokratycznego nadzoru nad przyszłym porozumieniem i powinno utrzymać swoją pozycję jako organ kontrolny jak i opiniodawczy.

20. Porządek dzienny następnego posiedzenia: patrz protokół

21. Zamknięcie posiedzenia

(Posiedzenie zostało zamknięte o godz. 22.21.)

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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
Renew	Grupa Renew Europe
Verts/ALE	Grupa Zielonych/Wolne Przymierze Europejskie
ID	Grupa Tożsamość i Demokracja
ECR	Grupa Europejscy Konserwatyści i Reformatorzy
GUE/NGL	Grupa Zjednoczonej Lewicy Europejskiej/Nordycka Zielona Lewica
NI	Niezrzeszeni