

## TUESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 2009

IN THE CHAIR: MR BUZEK

*President*

### 1. Opening of the sitting

*(The sitting was opened at 09.05)*

### 2. Debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (announcement of motions for resolutions tabled): see Minutes

### 3. Action taken on Parliament's resolutions: see Minutes

### 4. Decision on urgent procedure

**Proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (single CMO Regulation) (COM(2009)0152 - C7-0223/2009 - 2009/0152(CNS))**

**Paolo De Castro**, *Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development*. – (IT) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, here we are once again discussing the crisis in the milk sector.

The dramatic nature of this crisis continues to concern us, just as European farmers continue to express their hardship and voice their fears for the future. Parliament has already expressed its views on this matter, both by adopting a resolution with our proposals and by adopting the Commission proposal to extend the intervention period for milk powder and butter, to which we added the request for the measure on the private storage of cheese. At that time, we pointed out that the measures proposed by the Commission did not go nearly far enough.

We now have to decide whether or not to allow the urgent procedure for the extension of Article 186 of the single CMO Regulation to the dairy sector, namely the possibility for the Commission to decide, in the event of a market crisis, to implement emergency measures without going through the normal procedure in Parliament. Yesterday evening, an extraordinary meeting of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development was held to discuss this, with Mrs Fischer Boel attending.

Firstly I, and the committee which it is my honour to chair, would like to thank the Commissioner for coming to us in Parliament right at the end of the Agricultural Council which was held in Luxembourg. This gesture was one of great attentiveness which we appreciated.

Yesterday evening, the debate was very spirited, Mr President, and our fellow Members voiced a lot of criticism. First of all, it was pointed out that the Commission was very slow to act, and did not adequately grasp the seriousness of the crisis under way.

Then the objection was raised that Article 186 deprives Parliament of its decision-making prerogatives, thereby giving carte blanche to the Commission. It was also said that the Commission should have made more funds available to tackle the crisis. These are legitimate concerns which we agree with in part.

Nevertheless, Mr President, I feel compelled to admit that the Commission has made considerable efforts and progress, showing that it takes Parliament's opinion and wishes seriously. It has explained how it intends to use a fund of EUR 280 million – which, I would remind you, we will be voting on this Thursday in the context of approval of the 2010 budget – and set out some of the measures it will implement, such as the private storage of cheese and raising the ceiling of *de minimis* aid from EUR 7 500 to EUR 15 000, as requested in our resolution which was adopted in September.

Although I am aware that all this still does not go far enough, I nevertheless believe, Mr President, that today we should vote in favour of the urgent procedure. European farmers expect immediate answers and too much time has already been wasted.

Today we must take responsibility for speeding things up in order to face the crisis head on. Let us show, ladies and gentlemen, the same responsibility which pervades our preparations for the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon with codecision in agricultural matters.

**Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we are arguing against the urgent procedure, not because we do not believe that there is an urgent need for measures, but because we believe that the Commission is not implementing the right measures and is not willing and able to solve the current crisis in the dairy sector.

The Commission is not part of the solution to the problem, but is actually the problem. We must point out, therefore, that the Commission has caused part of the problems itself by increasing the quantity of milk. It failed to react in any way for months as the crisis went on. The Commissioner told us as recently as four weeks ago that there were no problems, that the market would improve and that we must be patient. This, of all Commissions, is the Commission to which we are handing our powers and this, of all Commissions, is the Commission from which we are expecting help. No, I do not think that is the right way to proceed.

Even yesterday, the Commission was unable to tell us what the additional funds are to be spent on. The Commission talks of restructuring. Over recent years, all restructuring has meant has been fewer and fewer dairy farmers. The Commission has also failed to say how it intends to reinforce the producer organisations going forwards. No, it wants to continue paying out export refunds. We have also heard no answer about how we are to strengthen the producers' position in their struggle against the supermarkets. The Commission was unable to put forward any solution in this regard yesterday either. In the light of all this, we are highly doubtful that the Commission is wholeheartedly working to resolve this crisis. We are writing a blank cheque without knowing what the Commission is doing, how it is doing it and with what it intends to do it.

Yet another issue was the crucial reason for our decision to reject this procedure, however. We, Parliament, have long been fighting for more rights – particularly in the field of agriculture. Yet just as we are on the verge of the Treaty of Lisbon being ratified, the first thing we do is to give these rights away again! That simply cannot be allowed to happen. As a new Member of this House, this strikes me as somewhat extraordinary. We must exercise our rights, we must hold the debates in this House and we must keep our hand on the tiller. We, too, have responsibility here, I am happy to accept that. We must not, however, give up any responsibility. Rather, as parliamentarians, that responsibility is our calling. We must provide the dairy farmers with serious and long-lasting help.

(Applause)

**Albert Deß (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the request to use the urgent procedure put forward by the Commission is certainly not perfect. I can partially agree with what the previous speaker said. However, to not allow this request to use the urgent procedure now would send completely the wrong signals to the dairy farmers, who are expecting at least initial responses. That is why I support this request to use the urgent procedure.

In the course of this procedure, we will have the opportunity to improve the motion by means of amendments and, as Mr Häusling suggested, to cede powers. It is absolutely the case that there are possibilities to put a time limit on these powers so that we only give the Commission a power for two years before we then decide on the matter again. I would therefore ask for your support in order to put this request for use of the urgent procedure on the agenda.

(Applause)

(Parliament approved the request for urgent procedure)<sup>(1)</sup>

## **5. Climate change and developing countries in the framework of the UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the statements by the Council and the Commission on climate change and developing countries in the framework of the UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Further details: see Minutes

**Andreas Carlgren**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Mr President, we are at a decisive point in time. In just under two months' time, the world will sign an agreement in Copenhagen for combating the climate challenges that we face. This agreement must meet three conditions: it must keep global warming to less than two degrees Celsius, it must encompass all nations and it must adapt future efforts to higher levels of ambition as new knowledge becomes available.

With just 48 days left to the opening of the UN's major Conference on Climate Change, it is high time that political will was transformed into concrete actions. Negotiations are moving too slowly, however. A number of key issues have not yet been resolved. Many people are now taking the easy way out – by giving in to pessimism.

Let me make one thing clear: that is not what the EU is here to do.

We want the EU to show leadership by expressing a clear, unequivocal political will. A comprehensive and ambitious agreement on climate change has the very highest priority for the Swedish Presidency.

The EU's response to the negotiating difficulties is that we must step up the pace. We must drive things forward to ensure that the world reaches the agreement required. We will take on the challenge of bringing the other nations of the world with us into an agreement that is sufficiently capable of meeting the challenge of climate change. We are therefore taking an intensive two-track approach: firstly, sending a powerful message to our negotiating partners; and secondly, bringing the EU together behind a strong negotiating mandate ahead of the Copenhagen conference. The EU has already laid the foundation for this with the climate and energy package agreed on by the European Parliament and the Council in December 2008.

I would like to express particular thanks for the commitment shown by many here in Parliament in the work on the climate and energy package. The decision made by the European Parliament at that time places the EU in a strong negotiating position. This week, the final pieces will be put in place to provide a complete picture of this strong position. The negotiations will be concluded in the European Council next week and I know that many of you will be following this closely. I am pleased that some of you will also be able to be present in Copenhagen. I also welcome the resolution that the European Parliament is in the process of preparing.

Emissions must be restricted to the level required to keep global warming down to less than two degrees Celsius. This means that the bids currently on the table are not enough. The EU will reduce emissions by 30% by 2020 provided that other parties also make adequate commitments. We view the 30% goal as a way of leveraging others to join us in raising their ambitions. Emissions should be cut by at least 80% by 2050. However, measures by the EU alone are not enough to ensure that global warming does not exceed two degrees Celsius. We need to get everyone on board. We have seen promising signals, for example, from the new government in Japan. We now urge other developed countries – not least the US – to raise their bids.

The developing countries have an opportunity to achieve sustainable development while, at the same time, reducing emissions. This means planning low-carbon growth, integrating climate measures and adapting national development strategies. It is a way of making sure that climate and development measures are incorporated into all political decisions and ensuring that growth benefits everyone; a way of constructing and opening up democratic governance, contributing to equality and fighting and reducing poverty.

We make particular demands of the fastest-growing developing countries – not least China, which is the country with the highest emissions. Emissions need to be cut by approaching 30% by 2020 compared with the situation where no measures are taken.

Development issues must be absolutely central in the agreement reached in Copenhagen. The European Council has concluded that climate change is undermining efforts to combat poverty and achieve sustainable development. Climate change poses a threat to the Millennium Development Goals. Experts in development will also take part in the negotiating work. We will particularly highlight development issues within the context of the ongoing negotiations.

All nations – except those that are least developed – should share responsibility for the costs of measures to combat climate change, but those of us in the developed countries must take the lead by ourselves reducing emissions and financing important measures. We need a sustainable international structure for cooperation and support for developing countries. Such a structure would also allow us to assist the very poorest and most vulnerable countries, which are often the hardest hit by climate change. Adaptation measures are required in this regard.

Finally, let me state that the EU is prepared to take its responsibilities seriously. The Council is aware of the scale of the financing required. The Commission estimates that the costs will amount to nearly EUR 100 billion per year in the developing countries by 2020. We in the EU are also prepared to provide prompt financing for immediate measures in the period up to 2012, as a way of increasing trust between North and South in the climate negotiations. We face a great challenge in these final weeks leading up to Copenhagen. I am therefore asking you to set the pace. We need leadership from the governments of the Member States, efforts by national parliaments and support from the populations of the EU Member States. The European Parliament has a very important part to play in this work if we are to achieve our goals in Copenhagen.

**Karel De Gucht**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, let me first of all thank you for giving me the opportunity to express the Commission's views on this sensitive issue.

You are already aware that there will be no ambitious deal in Copenhagen if the concerns of the developing countries are not taken into account, not only those of emerging countries, but also very much the concerns of the most vulnerable and the poorest developing countries.

Nevertheless, reaching a good deal in Copenhagen is in our common interest. Developing countries are the most vulnerable countries to climate change. The EU is the first donor in the world and a leader in the fight against climate change. We have to combine our efforts. There is no place for North-South confrontation when you are dealing with climate change.

I would even go further and say that no other alliance can be as determining and effective as the one engaging the most vulnerable countries and the ones who have put on the negotiating table the most ambitious proposals to fight this plague – that is to say, Europe.

Our general approach towards the most vulnerable countries, followed up to now through the Global Climate Change Alliance, is made up of three parallel strands, which are interlinked and are mutually reinforcing.

First, building political alliances through reinforced dialogue on climate change. Three joint political declarations have been signed respectively with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, plus one with the ACP group as a whole.

Second, promoting sound policies and strategies linking climate change and development. I am of the opinion that climate resilience and low-carbon policies must be integrated into wider developments and the poverty reduction strategies of our partners. There can only be a single development strategy, which incorporates climate concerns pursuing the objectives of sustainable development and poverty reduction. It is not a matter of choosing one or the other: both are essential.

In this spirit, we already support the implementation of the existing national adaptation programmes of action of LDCs in 15 eligible countries.

Third, encouraging adequate EU contribution to finance climate actions, in particular, for adaptation, which is the priority concern for those countries that are most vulnerable to climate change impact, but who barely contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

We are only 50 days away from Copenhagen. Expectations are very high. And we are worried because the negotiations are dangerously close to deadlock at the moment. It is now the time for putting offers on the table. That is what Europe has done, and that is what we expect our partners to do as well.

Firstly, we have made offers in terms of commitments. The EU has already put on the table ambitious targets and commitments – so far, the second most ambitious on the table of negotiations. We have already guaranteed a unilateral 20% emission reduction by 2020, and we are committed to increase to 30% if comparable efforts are made by others according to their responsibilities and capabilities.

Second, offers in terms of financing. We are all conscious that a deal on financing will be crucial to achieving an agreement in Copenhagen. To move forward in the negotiations, the EC issued in mid-September its own proposals on finance.

One of them is the need for short-term international public funding for climate to be scaled up for the period 2010-2012 to respond as a priority to urgent needs identified in the most vulnerable developing countries and, in particular, LDCs, SIDs, and African countries as defined in the Bali Action Plan.

Another one is the readiness of the EU to take on its fair share of the estimated financing requirements, public funding contributions being based on preferred criteria of ability to pay and responsibility for emissions.

This may lead to an EU contribution between EUR 2 billion and EUR 15 billion annually in 2020. These proposals will be discussed by the European Council at the end of October and will hopefully be the basis for a fully-fledged EU negotiation position on finance.

But action by the EU alone is not enough. We strongly hope that other developed countries will follow our paths as the pressure grows before Copenhagen. We count on developing countries as well. They have to take the opportunity offered by climate financing to fully integrate adaptation into their development strategies and to move gradually to low-carbon development paths for the longer term.

Although the focus has been, up to now, on adaptation for the poorest and most vulnerable developing countries, there is some ground to promote the design of low-carbon development paths (i.e. mitigation), which are compatible with poverty reduction objectives in those countries.

A specific focus on mechanisms to avoid deforestation and promote sustainable management of forests is crucial. Indeed, the fight against tropical deforestation is the largest immediate mitigation challenge for the LDCs, and they can be beneficiaries, through mechanisms such as reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation schemes, of its international financing.

Similarly, ensuring in the future a more balanced distribution of the CDM (clean development mechanisms) investments in favour of the LDCs should also be part of the current reflection on the reform of this mechanism.

Finally, a word on the delivery channels for climate funding. We as the Commission are not in favour of creating new funds. New funding for climate should use existing and potentially improved delivery channels, promoting a decentralised bottom-up governance structure in support of country-owned actions.

**Karl-Heinz Florenz**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, I am very pleased to see you here for this debate, particularly as you are a former member of the Committee on Climate Change. President-in-Office of the Council, Commissioner, it is absolutely right that the European Union should send a clear signal to Copenhagen. Over the next 50 days, however, it is not so much in Copenhagen, but behind closed doors at the conference that the real activity will take place. I have been involved with this since the climate conference in Rio in 1992. The mood before these conferences is always the same, but there are also opportunities.

Commissioner, I would like to see you engaged somewhat more enthusiastically in putting your US colleagues under a positive pressure to negotiate, as you continue to exude a certain phlegmatic quality that we need to work on. I think it is right that we should not start with some sort of financial competition now. One party says 15 billion, another says 30 billion. There are some who simply put up the money, who want to put 150 billion on the table each year, starting now. Let us develop criteria for how the money is used. We will then be able to provide a large contribution from Europe, but it cannot be a bottomless pit.

Enough has been said about the crisis. I would like, however, to once again go into the opportunity that the industrialised world in the United States and Europe has. If we lay down the right standards, we will be able to develop efficiently. That will then enable Europe to sell efficient machinery across the globe, for example, to China, where, at the moment, for example, energy is produced in the most inefficient ways. I also do not see only the threat of climate change but also very much the opportunity to drive forward business and the economy through developing ultra-modern technology. We must seize this opportunity, we must be much bolder and we must act as entrepreneurs, as political entrepreneurs, because if we do not do so, then we will be being neglectful and we will have chosen the wrong path.

Commissioner, I wish you a great deal of luck and all power to your elbow! Go forward positively! Take the Americans and the Indians with you, and we will already be half way there.

**Véronique De Keyser**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (FR) Mr President, climate change is responsible for more than 300 000 deaths each year. It affects 325 million people, and more than 90% of the people affected, more than 90% of the deaths, are in developing countries.

The economic losses due to climate change are estimated at more than USD 125 billion per year and, once again, 90% are borne by developing countries.

These countries are being hit at the same time by the financial crisis, climate change and the extremely unequal mechanisms of a form of unbridled capitalism that plunders them in every corner of the world.

So, what are we calling for? Firstly – and it is true, as you said, I am addressing the Council here – large-scale and long-term action to combat climate change, which means having a new, more ambitious Kyoto Protocol, and that is why the Copenhagen Summit in December is so important; secondly, an increase in the financial aid for the commitments already made so as to attain 0.7% of GDP by 2015; and, lastly, thirdly, legal protection for these new environmental refugees who are starting to flood in.

For what are we going to do with them? To where are we going to return them if, by chance, they want to enter Europe? To Libya, as this trade agreement that I invite you to study, Mr De Gucht, this future agreement that we will have with Libya, proposes? We absolutely must establish a proper plan and proper means of managing the flows of environmental migrants and we must bridge the legal gaps that affect the protection of these migrants.

I believe that we have a huge responsibility because it is clear that there is much more at stake here than solidarity; we really are dealing with the future of this planet.

**Corinne Lepage**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, we MEPs have a twin responsibility towards, firstly, our citizens, who expect us to make real efforts in Copenhagen, and, secondly, the countries of the South, of which Europe has always been a supporter, if not the supporter, at international level. We must send out a genuine message to the countries of the South by means of a clear financial commitment that will permit an aid package to be agreed on in addition to development aid, which absolutely must reach the agreed level, i.e. 0.7%. The Union's contribution should not be less than EUR 35 billion per year by 2020 and, from 2010, between EUR 5 and 7 billion should be made available to the countries of the South to cover the most urgent requirements.

My second point concerns the method of financing. We will not limit ourselves – we will be unable to limit ourselves – to the existing funds alone. Other methods of financing will have to be found, because if there is no money in Copenhagen, then there will be no ambitious agreement in Copenhagen either. This will most probably mean – even though the subject is very controversial – that we will have to raise the issue of a tax, a kind of 'green Tobin tax', to finance the fight against climate change.

Thirdly, on the matter of deforestation, which I would point out accounts for 20% of today's greenhouse gas emissions, it is absolutely imperative that we uphold the target of zero gross deforestation by 2020. I would draw your attention to the difference between gross deforestation and net deforestation, which would enable primary forests to be replaced with poplars, the idea being that it produces the same result. We all know that it does no such thing.

It is true that we do need to be realistic about our industry, but we also need to be realistic about our survival and that of our children.

**Eva Joly**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, Mr Carlgren, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, there is no doubt that the world's future will be at stake in Copenhagen, but before that, it is the credibility of the European Union, as the global leader in the fight against global warming, that will be at stake at the end of October in Brussels. The Member States must make climate-related financing proposals that are proportionate for a tragic situation.

Together with the commitment – which I hope will be ambitious – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the issue of financing and of reducing and adapting to climate change in developing countries will represent a major theme in the forthcoming negotiations.

The figures speak for themselves: 100 countries, most of them poor, account for only 3% of global emissions. Although developing countries have contributed the least to these greenhouse gas emissions, they are already the worst affected.

According to a recent report by Oxfam, 26 million people have already been forced to migrate due to the effects of climate change or other forms of environmental damage. By 2050, these climate refugees could number more than 200 million. The effects of climate change could destroy the progress made in some developing countries and could quite simply prevent the Millennium Development Goals from being achieved.

This is therefore not a question of charity. It is a question of us accepting our full responsibility and laying the foundations for a fair and peaceful world. The European Union's current strategy is unworthy of the ambitions declared by the leaders of environmental diplomacy. It must lay its cards on the table now in order to relaunch the negotiations.

The Union cannot reasonably pledge less than EUR 35 billion in public finances. It goes without saying that these funds can only supplement those already pledged for official development assistance, all the more so because the commitments made in this area are not always honoured by our Member States.

Minister, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the future of our planet is in our hands. If we do not stop the damage being done to our environment and the inequalities, we can fear the worst.

We have a choice between an ambitious and proactive Europe and a timid Europe that is aligned with the United States, which cares little about the fate of developing countries. I urge you to make the right choice.

**Miroslav Ouzký**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – (CS) Mr President, Mr Carlgren, Commissioner, I would like to begin by responding to the previous speech. I do not believe that the European Parliament or the European Union should restrict themselves to modest ambitions in this area. A year ago, we completed the preparation of a climate package which is clearly the most advanced and most ambitious of its kind in the world. We should also acknowledge the fact that it will have perhaps the greatest economic impact of any legislation that has been passed here in the last decade. When I read through the declaration drafted by the European Parliament for Copenhagen, I see things there that I like. The declaration talks of the need to strengthen the role of the European Parliament, of the need to get ready for adaptations to climate change and we can surely all agree with the article on deforestation, in connection with which I would like to stress that deforestation is not, and has not been, a problem just of the developing world, but is also a European problem, so we must focus our attention on it.

What is missing, however, is a reference to the need for global agreement, as has been pointed out both by the Council representatives and the Commission representative who is present here. Without a global agreement, we will go nowhere. We talk here about assistance for the poorest countries, which is all very well, but if you look at the current numbers for greenhouse gas production, you can see clearly that even if we were more ambitious in Europe and actually disconnected all of our energy sources, it would not change anything at all in terms of climate change as it is simply impossible for us to slow down this phenomenon. We know there is a need today to talk not only about China, which is repeatedly mentioned, but also about other rapidly developing economies such as Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and particularly India. I cannot imagine what India's next steps will be and what I have heard so far has not, I must admit, been very pleasing. I would like to emphasise in this Chamber that if we do not reach a global agreement, then all of our efforts will simply amount to a burden on the European economy and a masochistic annihilation of European competitiveness.

**Bairbre de Brún**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (GA) Mr President, we must give support to developing countries to help them adapt to climate change – a phenomenon for which they are not responsible, but as a result of which they are suffering disproportionately.

Developing countries do not have the resources to combat climate change that we have in Europe. As we turn our attention to the United Nations negotiations in Copenhagen, what we need is solidarity that is real and practical.

This solidarity must be demonstrated through financial and technical support. This support must be in addition to our Overseas Development Aid. We should not give something with one hand while taking it away with the other.

The countries must have a full participatory role, no matter what financial mechanisms are in place to distribute this financial support.

One of the most important ways in which we should measure any deal made in Copenhagen is to look at the way in which it helps the developing world deal with the challenge of climate change. For example, significant help to combat deforestation will be vitally important in a comprehensive agreement.

Without financial solidarity and the transfer of technology, we will not see the progress which we all need.

There is no doubt that climate change is accelerating. No further time can be wasted. If climate change is not dealt with, it will result in disasters all over the world. The economic recession should give us the courage to move more quickly towards a green economy. Our scientific approach should not be changed. We should not back down from the courage and political will we have shown hitherto.

Actions that will be carried out at international level must be ambitious and tied to the scientific reality of our own weather, and we must move ahead with the understanding that it is not the developing countries who created that problem. We created it ourselves.

**Anna Rosbach**, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – (DA) Mr President, last night, to great applause, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted a Christmas list for the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December. The list includes a lot of well-intentioned, large and heavy presents. But, dear Santa Claus, a.k.a. the Commission: is there any chance at all of all these well-intentioned desires being realised, when 500 million US citizens have health, pensions, jobs and welfare on their agenda, and 2.5 billion Chinese and Indians just want the same living standards that some of us here in western Europe have?

We have no influence on what the Sun does. As we all know, it determines a great deal of the climate on our planet. To put it another way: what can the Commission realistically do to make all 6 billion people on this Earth use fewer resources, not in the future but right here and now?

**Nick Griffin (NI)**. – Mr President, there are two overriding themes in this place: first, concern with the growing gulf between the political elite and the ordinary taxpayers. Second, a hysterical obsession with man-made global warming. These two themes are intimately linked.

The global-warming fixation is a classic example of how the political class here is out of touch with the little people who have to pay the bills. While the EU backs the Copenhagen proposals to further the deindustrialisation of the West and the corporate domination of the Third World, a growing majority of ordinary people regard climate change as an elite scam – an excuse to tax and control us and to impose internationalist dogma and global government at the expense of the nation state. Can you not see the danger in this growing gulf? It is time to look at the facts.

Man-made global warming is an unproven theory based on manipulative statistics. The so-called consensus on the issue is the product not of debate but of the suppression of expert dissent. Before the political class and the green industrial complex dare to impose a single new tax, poisoned light bulb or useless wind farm on the ordinary taxpayer, they need to try to convince the public that global warming is man-made, that returning to the warmer climate of medieval times would be a bad thing and that there is something that Europe – as opposed to the United States, China and India – can actually do about it. Either hold a debate and close the gap between you and the people, or do not complain when we nationalists – the ones who listen to the people – close it for you.

**Andreas Carlgren**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Mr President, I would like to thank more or less everyone who has taken part in this debate for the support you are giving the EU in its highly important work in the climate negotiations. The EU has a vital responsibility. We will really need Parliament's support if we are to successfully play our part. The efforts and views of Parliament are crucial to this work.

Can I also state outright that I very much appreciate the fact that development issues have been so central in this part of the debate. I agree with Mr Florenz's comment that it is incredibly important that this does not simply become a 'beauty contest'. It is not a London auction in which our task is to outbid each other. Rather, it is about creating a robust architecture that genuinely creates foreseeable and extended initiatives for developing countries in the long term. In this context, the very strong work of the EU is vital.

Consequently, I also agree with Mrs de Keyser's challenge to developed countries to finally meet the 0.7% goal for development aid. Ultimately, this is a matter of solidarity. As one of the wealthier regions of the world, the EU has good reason to demonstrate its strength and solidarity. I would also say to Mrs Lepage that I absolutely agree that there is a need for new, increased and foreseeable initiatives and resources. However, Official Development Assistance will also play a part in ensuring that development issues are integrated with climate policy. Consequently, both ODA resources and new funding will be required.

One crucial development issue is ending the deforestation of rainforests. I would like to see strong support in Copenhagen for initiatives to combat rainforest deforestation and to promote reforestation and sustainable forestry. The system currently being constructed under the name REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) will be of vital importance in this context.

I believe that those who deny the climate problem are actually passing on the bill to the ordinary people. Moreover, it is a way of hiding the problem and of hiding the reasons why ordinary people are having to pay the price of climate degradation. This is the case in developed countries – and it is even more the case in developing countries, where the very poorest are likely to be those hit hardest by climate degradation. That



is why we are turning to the group of developed countries as a whole. As Mr Florenz says, we need to cooperate with major nations such as the US. However, pressure is also needed to increase efforts to drive home the message that emissions must be sufficiently reduced. That is why it is so important for the EU to get to the heart of the emissions problem, i.e. the actual increases in emissions. We have the most ambitious and the most far-reaching targets in the world. It is now a matter of making sure that we get others to join us in taking measures at the level required to save the climate.

The economic crisis provides an excellent opportunity to increase investments in green initiatives; in other words, in new green products, in new companies with green production, in growth companies with green production, and in new jobs created through green initiatives. It is also a way of rejuvenating our economies. We must take the lead in the offensive towards a low-carbon society, which will also create the conditions for real development opportunities in developing countries. We must make it possible for developing countries to bypass the fossil fuel-dependent economies route taken by the developed countries and to create low-carbon growth for the future instead.

It is also a way of finally turning to the rapidly growing developing economies and telling them that developed countries have a responsibility for the poorest and most vulnerable; but the fastest growing economies among the developing countries – and China already accounts for the world's highest emissions – must also shoulder their responsibility and make a contribution to solving the climate problems. With this approach, Europe will be able to play a vitally important role as we lead the way towards an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen.

**Karel De Gucht**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, firstly, what I have noticed in the debate is that all political groups agree on the principles that we should put forward in Copenhagen. I think this is a very important feature. It is not very common in a Parliament with so many political parties and political groups to nevertheless have unanimous support for what you are proposing.

Secondly, Mr Florenz and others have said that there should not be a competition to put bids on the table – it is about commitments. This might be true but, on the other hand, I think it is important that we have put a bid on the table and said that we are ready to do this, provided, of course, that we get the green light from the European Council later this month. This is not simply a competition. It is about an engagement of the European Union. We look forward to the other political and economic heavyweights also putting bids on the table, which has not been the case up to now for several of them. We understand that the situation of the United States is not very easy at the moment but it is important that they put a bid on the table so that we can negotiate. Otherwise, the deadlock that we fear we are in at the moment will continue.

(FR) I believe that it is true that developing countries are the worst affected, both by the economic crisis, for which they are not responsible, to say the least, and by climate change. We must offer developing countries a substantial amount of support in this regard.

However, we will not only have to support developing countries in this spirit, but we will also have to be courageous with regard to our own industries and our own economic operators. When people talk about deforestation in developing countries, this too is a responsibility of our countries, of the European Union. I believe that, following Copenhagen, we will have to acknowledge the need to adopt laws with extraterritorial aspects so that we are not confronted with a situation in which, on the one hand, we are financing the adaptation to climate change and the mitigation of that phenomenon and, on the other, economic operators are having an opposite effect in developing countries.

A last word on ODA: I think that this is a very important topic that we will also have to tackle amongst ourselves, because one of the biggest fears is that the 0.7% of GDP would be reached by adding adaptation efforts.

Already now, ODA includes many topics which constitute adaptation, and that is quite normal. That will continue, of course, but we should find a measuring mechanism by which we can clearly distinguish the present efforts we are making from the additional efforts which have to be made for climate change. That is something that we will certainly have to come back to after Copenhagen.

**Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE)**. – (NL) Mr President, following 10 years of discussion, we are now approaching the Copenhagen climate change conference. We have 50 days left in which to reach an ambitious agreement with binding targets, not only for Europe but also for the United States and countries such as China and India. An ambitious agreement requires adequate financial resources – as was mentioned a moment ago in this debate – and these not just from the European Union. All countries will have to provide financial

resources so that developing countries, too, can participate in a climate agreement. After all, solidarity with the very poorest must be firmly embedded in any climate deal.

The Commission has rightly taken the lead on financing, but what Mr Florenz was mainly driving at was that, in this House, we are pretty much trying to outbid one another as to who gives the most, and the question is whether this is really helpful. You have rightly challenged the Member States to participate, and I also commend the Swedish Presidency on its efforts. Yet the United States and the emerging economies, too, must put their hands in their pockets. You can count on our support.

Much remains to be done in Europe, too, however. Although we are among the world leaders when it comes to our emission standards, we are lagging far behind the United States in terms of private-sector investment in technological innovations and sustainability. I see positive incentives for green investments and innovations by enterprises as more promising than a new European tax. After all, particularly at a time when we urgently need more activity and employment, European investors and enterprises must be increasingly challenged to do their bit towards this necessary transition in Europe and worldwide.

**Marita Ulvskog (S&D).** – (SV) Mr President, Mr Carlgren – who is representing the Council here today – started by saying that many people are tending to give in to pessimism ahead of the Copenhagen conference. I can only agree, and I really hope that a majority of the European Parliament can ensure that the pessimists that Mr Carlgren must do battle with within his own Presidency government and on the Council are not allowed to have the casting vote.

We have to resolve two specific issues if we are to prove the pessimists wrong. The first, which has already been mentioned, is, of course, the financing of climate efforts in developing countries. The Commission's proposal is quite simply not enough. The EU's contributions to developing countries must be at least EUR 30 billion per year by 2020 and we must provide substantial support for restructuring measures as early as 2012. Naturally, this support must be in addition to regular aid. Reallocating money that has already been promised would only jeopardise our ability to reach a global climate agreement. I would like to ask Mr Carlgren whether he has the Council's backing for his high ambitions.

Secondly, we must take the two degree target seriously. If we are to succeed in this, it is not enough for the developed world to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases by 20%. I would therefore like Mr Carlgren, as the Council's representative, to once again state his position on this matter. Many of us consider it necessary to reduce emissions by between 30% and 40% by 2020. What level of ambition does the Council have – and does Mr Carlgren have the Council behind him?

**Charles Goerens (ALDE).** – (FR) Mr President, there are, in my view, three essential points in this debate.

Firstly, the Copenhagen conference is a gamble on the future. The gamble has not yet paid off, as the Presidency has just pointed out. I will not go so far as to say that everything depends on the European Union, but without determination and credibility, as Mrs Joly has just mentioned, nothing will be achieved in this area.

My second point is that we must be careful not to add confusion to uncertainty. The European Union must remain credible when it comes to the impact of climate change on developing countries. It made a commitment in 2005 concerning the level of official development assistance, which must reach 0.7% in 2015. Skimping on that objective is out of the question.

There can be no question of diluting that promise, either through a reduction in the commitment as I just explained it, or through a reallocation of the amounts paid in official development assistance for the purposes of combating climate change.

It should be pointed out that the sums that are due to be announced in Copenhagen as being earmarked for developing countries must be additional funds. The sum of EUR 35 billion has just been mentioned; we are talking here about an additional EUR 35 billion.

The European Union would be well advised not to allow the slightest doubt to remain about its determination to fight for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, on the one hand, and against climate change, on the other. Were the European Union to deviate from this path, it would amount to a political breakdown that would undoubtedly undermine developing countries' confidence in the European Union. If we even manage to agree on this point, this debate will not have been in vain.

Thirdly, we need the United States, China, India and all of the industrialised countries, but we also need emerging countries and, of course, developing countries. To that end, it would be wise to think about new

North-South partnerships, particularly in the area of alternative energy production. The use of solar energy to generate electricity in the south of the Mediterranean can become, if we so wish, one of the major North-South projects, in response to the economic crisis, on the one hand, and the climate-change crisis, on the other. This should not, under any circumstances, undermine the efforts that must be made in the context of combating deforestation, for example, where the responsibility – I am also keen to point out – of emerging countries, some of which are members of the G20, is overwhelming.

**Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE).** – (FI) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, a Finnish poet compared humanity to passengers on a train who are on a journey to hell, but who focus their attention on squabbling over a seat in first class. Once again, this is a time for EU leadership. The best way we can help break the deadlock over climate talks is for the EU Summit next week to make an offer to finance climate measures in the developing countries.

Yesterday, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety gave its support for a figure of EUR 30 billion as the EU's share of financing. It is obvious that the EUR 2-15 billion proposed by the Commission cannot be enough. If we are honest, we must recognise our historical responsibility for climate change and that our emissions per capita are still many times greater than those of China or India, for example.

**Peter van Dalen (ECR).** – (NL) Mr President, the climate change summit has to succeed, and so Europe must speak with one voice and set its sights high in the negotiations. Copenhagen is important because God's creation is highly vulnerable, and is deeply affected by man's actions.

Special attention is required for developing countries. People in these countries make barely any contribution to climate change, but it is they who bear the brunt of it. Crops wither or are washed away by flooding, villages are destroyed by cyclones, the development of whole regions is set back years in a single night. Our industrialised countries have greatly contributed to climate change, and therefore bear responsibility for providing developing countries with adequate and sustainable financial and technical support. The Bali Action Plan put that well.

Therefore, it is also important to make sufficient European funds available; after all, that is what this is all about. That is why we are saying that an annual minimum of EUR 15 billion must go into the Climate Fund, plus a contribution from the other major world economies. They, too, must face up to their responsibilities.

Finally, I am pleased that the President-in-Office of the Council has drawn attention to deforestation. We consider this an essential area. Combating deforestation is the best way of reducing CO<sub>2</sub>.

**Kartika Tamara Liotard (GUE/NGL).** – (NL) Mr President, deforestation is often somewhat neglected when climate issues are debated in the light of development aid. Fortunately, this is not the case in today's debate in this House. Forests, including the tropical rainforests, counteract a substantial proportion of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Land-use change, such as deforestation and destruction of the rainforest, accounts for at least 18% of contemporary CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. An equally sinister result of deforestation is that many indigenous peoples in developing countries are driven from their territories and are no longer able to meet their subsistence needs. Nor does the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) work; that is, the financing of projects in developing countries in order to be able to emit more CO<sub>2</sub> ourselves.

Unfortunately, it is still the way of the world that the interests of rich countries and major industries are deemed more important than social and economic justice. Deforestation must be stopped, but industrialised countries are morally obliged to give developing countries financial and technical support with this.

**Oreste Rossi (EFD).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, yesterday evening, the *Lega Nord* delegation was the only political party which voted, in committee, against this resolution. We voted against as we consider it to be euro-folly.

At a time of industrial crisis such as the one we are experiencing, with the loss of competitiveness and jobs, the idea of funding the technological innovation of third countries that are developing countries equates to sounding the death knell for European businesses. This text lays down an appropriation of EUR 30 billion a year until 2020 for countries such as China, India and Brazil, which are our most dangerous and dishonest competitors, and, at the same time, asks our industries to further cut emissions, with serious economic consequences.

We cannot transform the legitimate battle to protect the environment into a war between poor peoples. As long as there are countries like China, which make unfair competition their industrial policy, there can be no eco-sustainable global market.

We in the *Lega Nord* support the workers, the businessmen and women who, on a daily basis, have to fight the mammoth industrial groups of countries which have no concept of rules. 'Yes' to the environment but 'no' to funding our competitors at the expense of our workers.

**Zoltán Balczó (NI).** – (HU) Mr President, opinions vary as to what extent mankind influences climate change. My view is that we do have an influence, and the purpose of the Copenhagen climate conference is to mitigate this. I strongly believe that the outcome will be decided in the political domain.

What means can we use to successfully persuade the biggest polluters to cut their emissions? We will not do it by promoting the strong message from Europe that we will make cuts of not 20%, but 30 and 40%. We must get the biggest polluter in the world, the United States, to reduce its large-scale pollution. A decision implementing such an amendment was actually proposed in the relevant committee. There were many people who optimistically expected that Barack Obama would bring about major changes and travel to Copenhagen. However, he attended the International Olympic Committee meeting to campaign for Chicago instead. Without success.

The European Union's leaders act on behalf of 500 million people on many occasions unnecessarily. The question is why they are not daring to act more decisively now because it is only with their intervention that we will be able to achieve success on a global issue, something which cannot be done at a local level.

**Filip Kaczmarek (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, it was with great unease that I received news of the meeting of finance and environment ministers, and specifically of the draft final document, which does not contain a solution to a key question: how does the European Union want to support the poorest countries of the world in their efforts to limit carbon dioxide emissions and adapt to climate change?

This is, indeed, a key matter. In the draft document, there is not even a repetition of the sums which the European Commission is proposing – that the needs of developing countries in this area are estimated at EUR 100 billion annually to 2020, and what the EU's contribution to that amount might be. What is more, there is no decision as to what mechanism of cofinancing by Member States would be introduced, and we know that proposals on this are very diverse.

Of course, we can understand arguments which say that we should be cautious about making specific declarations, and that we should wait for proposals from other countries, especially those which have strong economies. If, however, the EU wants to be a leader in the fight against climate change, it must present specific proposals and specific solutions, especially because part of the problem is our internal affair, as is the cofinancing mechanism.

It is our duty to negotiate a fair agreement with developing countries. The poorest countries of the world have contributed to climate change to the least extent and, at the same time, are bearing the greatest consequences of that change. The significant dependence of many of the poor countries on agriculture and fishing, and also their weak infrastructure, leave them in a very difficult situation when it comes to climate change. Over the last four years, Africa, which is the poorest continent and one of the most exposed to the consequences of climate change, has received less than 12% of the funds which are available for fighting climate change. This is not the way to persuade such countries to become involved in the process.

**Thijs Berman (S&D).** – (NL) Mr President, in the Pacific region, thousands of people are having to move because their islands are being flooded; in Sudan, the livestock is dying of thirst. Everyone has seen the pictures, and the most important thing with regard to these and other effects of climate change is that the polluter must pay. In Copenhagen this December, the world faces the historic task of giving substance to those words.

However, Oxfam calculates that, to date, three quarters of changes in poor countries have been made by the countries themselves. Meanwhile, the oil disappears unhindered from these developing countries, often without fair payment reaching their treasuries. In the future, climate change will cost developing countries more than EUR 100 billion per year. This money goes not towards development but merely towards creating the preconditions for development, as a Pacific island may just escape submersion thanks to climate policy, or desertification may be prevented, so that people can continue to live and work where they want.

Of course, there are climate measures that can also stimulate the development of poor countries. Planting trees helps to combat desertification. At present, however, money for climate policy comes mainly from development-policy funds, and that is unacceptable. 'No new funds,' says Commissioner De Gucht. Fair enough, but then it should be ensured that the existing funds are topped up.

The developing countries are now suffering a triple blow. Most EU countries are failing to keep their own promises with regard to development policy, the economic crisis has meant that less is being invested in poor countries, and the development budget is decreasing. A fourth point could be added: the poor countries themselves are having to pay for the climate damage they have not caused. We must break through this logic in Copenhagen by introducing new financing mechanisms. Development policy must also be coordinated with climate policy from now on. The two will have to be aligned with each other as never before. The most important thing is that the developing countries themselves be given a say when it comes to spending the Climate Fund transparently. This fund must be introduced, therefore, for the EU and for the world.

**Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE).** – (FR) Mr President, we are the main ones responsible for climate change, but developing countries are its main victims, which is why the developed countries, which are also the biggest polluters, will have to make some strong commitments in Copenhagen. This is necessary for us, but it is even more necessary for the countries of the South.

We have accumulated a debt over a long period of time, particularly with Africa. That is why we will have to find the right level of financial and technological compensation. Europe will have to step up to the plate even if it is painful for our fellow citizens. We will have to help these countries to adapt their economies and to combat climate change, but we will also have to think up a radically different development policy. Africa needs a protected market if sustainable agriculture is finally to emerge. Africa needs to protect its forests, its soil and its resources from the plunder of the developed countries. Copenhagen will only succeed if we can convey this message of shared responsibility and solidarity.

**Yannick Jadot (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, climate change has already caused 300 000 deaths and will cause millions more in the future.

Inaction is a crime against humanity. This is an emergency, but the negotiations are at a virtual standstill. However, countries such as Japan, Australia, Norway, China, Brazil and South Africa are making efforts that are commensurate with their responsibilities. This is not the case with the United States, and it is unfortunately no longer the case with Europe. Extending Europe's ambitions to the entire planet would result in global warming of 4 degrees. That is totally unacceptable. However, it is Europe that holds the key to Copenhagen.

Mr President-in-Office of the Council, if the European summit, acting on the European Parliament's recommendations, takes the right decisions at the end of the month, then Europe can boost the negotiations – with targets of a 30% reduction and a EUR 35 billion aid package for the countries of the South.

Mr President, the way in which certain Member States today use aid for the countries of the South as a negotiating tool is, in our view, absolutely shocking. The distress of the countries of the South is not a matter for negotiation.

**Sajjad Karim (ECR).** – Mr President, it is critical for an international consensus to be reached on tackling climate change and global warming. The Copenhagen Summit provides us with an opportunity. But let us think for a moment of the problems facing this summit. The US, the world's biggest economy, has failed to agree to specific greenhouse gas emission reductions for 2020, and many other developed industrialised nations are uncertain as to whether the ambitious actions required are possible.

Let us be clear: we really have no choice. The EU, in setting ambitious targets for 2020 and 2050, has acted courageously and must now urge others to do the same. We cannot meet our targets without cooperation from other states. The establishment of an effective global carbon market is crucial, as is international consensus if we are to avoid the risk of protectionist measures relating to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions within the EU. At Copenhagen, we must encourage courageous leadership from the national governments of large industrialised nations. Although individual states in the US have begun to tackle climate change, there is a woeful lack of leadership from the Federal Government. We need the US and emerging economies such as India and China to form a partnership with us for the future of our planet.

We can encourage developing nations to follow a different, less environmentally damaging path of industrialisation. They still have time to take a fresh approach that will be less environmentally damaging, and we must help them in the planning and building of the infrastructure which will achieve this.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, the approach to the problem of climate change has been stripped of certain essential aspects and, above all, skewed by so-called ‘market solutions’. At present, fossil fuels provide for almost 85% of the world’s energy needs. A consistent approach to climate change should focus on reducing this dependence. Instead, the main tool proposed by the European Union to tackle climate change, carbon trading, will not only fail to help alleviate this dependency; it will itself prove an obstacle to the necessary change in energy paradigm.

Experience tells us that trading in emission allowances has not led to a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases; quite the contrary. Various examples belie the ability of the market to control emissions, while others demonstrate the effectiveness of normative regulation and targeted investment, particularly in relation to impacts and safeguarding the environment.

The environmental problems that humanity faces today are many and diverse, and are serious enough to threaten the existence of life on earth as we know it, but they are unlikely to find a solution within the irrational system that caused them in the first place.

**Godfrey Bloom (EFD).** – Mr President, I take this opportunity of wishing well the east European cities in the coming of the very early skiing season, with the snow and ice that have come there. Of course, this is indicative of the fact that, as independent science has now confirmed, the globe is actually cooling and has been cooling since 2002, and temperatures have been broadly flat since 1998. So we are all talking here about something which is not happening.

Time and time again I have heard Members here talk of CO<sub>2</sub> as a pollutant. A pollutant! It is a life-giving natural gas. It gives me the impression that some of our Members have not had the benefit of a formal education.

Isn’t this really just about the state being able to get its hand in ordinary people’s trouser pockets to steal yet more tax from them? Isn’t this all about political control? Isn’t this all about politics and big business? The whole thing is a sham – this bogus hypothesis, this ridiculous nonsense that man-made CO<sub>2</sub> is causing global warming. Enough please, before we damage irrevocably the global economy.

**George Becali (NI).** – (RO) I include myself among the MEPs who believe that agriculture is a solution to and not merely a cause of climate change. I think that it is even one of the victims of this phenomenon because drought and floods are affecting us all in Europe with ever-increasing regularity, but their impact is felt primarily by farmers.

I also include myself among the MEPs who believe that we need a common agricultural policy in the future as well. We need it so that we can develop new models and new methods of production to restore the agricultural and domestic biodiversity which we had already lost 70% of at the start of this millennium. When we talk about agriculture, we are talking about living beings, starting with the soil, then the plants and especially the trees, forests and pasture land. I would like to think that this is the kind of message and approach which will be in evidence in Copenhagen in two months’ time and that the EU’s policy in this area will be seen in a concrete and strategic manner, as well as in budgetary terms, to treat agriculture as a solution, as I mentioned at the start of this speech.

**Richard Seeber (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, it is politics, and not religion, that we are debating here. For that reason, we should make a distinction between facts and empirical certainties on the one hand and hypotheses on the other. It is a fact that the global temperature has risen by around 0.7 °C when compared with the pre-industrial age. It is also a fact, however, that the temperature has hardly risen at all over the last ten years.

A further fact is that Copenhagen is an international conference and that the Community’s CO<sub>2</sub> emissions make up approximately 17% of the global total. The Community has already implemented legislation requiring that its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions be cut by 20% by 2020.

Now let us consider the hypotheses. One hypothesis is that the global temperature will continue to rise. A second hypothesis is that there is a direct connection between CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the CO<sub>2</sub> content in the air and the rise in the temperature, while a third hypothesis has it that humanity can have a real influence on this CO<sub>2</sub> content in the air. There are various scientific opinions on this. This is a dilemma that we, as politicians, are facing, and that we must make a decision about.

It would be useful, however, to take a second observation into account in order to provide orientation for our policy making, and that observation is that all societies which work in a very efficient way with their energy and resources are very successful. In the light of this it makes sense to operate a policy that makes it possible to be energy and resource-efficient and to do so at Community level so that we can continue to play a leading role internationally from a economic policy point of view, but also to offer help to other States, especially less developed States, to take the same path.

If we now look at the funds transfers that are being discussed in this regard, it is a key point that they should be very well monitored and be tied to conditions, because otherwise all we are doing is opening a second route to development aid.

**Linda McAvan (S&D).** – Mr President, I do not think Godfrey Bloom heard the BNP speaker, but if he had he would have seen that they have so much in common, as I always suspected. It was almost a carbon copy speech.

We heard something about polling. In fact, in a recent survey, more than two thirds of Europeans said that climate change was a very serious issue, and 20% said it was a fairly serious issue. For the UK, that same figure was 51% saying it was a very serious issue and 30% a fairly serious issue. That is 81%. In fact, only 10% of Europeans said it was not a serious issue at all. The opinion polls show that people in Europe do care about climate change and they do understand. That is why all the mainstream parties in this House are backing the Council and the Commission in Copenhagen and why we backed the legislative package last year.

Last night in the Environment Committee, Members voted by 55 to 1 to back an ambitious negotiating position of the European Union in Copenhagen. On the financing side, which is extremely important this week – and we know the finance ministers are meeting today – we want funds, additionality, no double counting and good governance structures.

Sometimes in life you see things you never forget. About three years ago, Fiona Hall and I went to northern Kenya. We went to one of the poorest communities and met pastoralist farmers there. We met young women – girls – who were being married at ever younger ages in northern Kenya. Why? Because when a young woman gets married in Kenya, in return for her hand in marriage, her father receives cows in payment because cows are the currency. Cows are becoming a rare commodity in northern Kenya because of climate change. We will never make poverty history unless we tackle climate change, and this House has a duty to respond to that call.

**Marit Paulsen (ALDE).** – (SV) Mr President, if you include the complete production chain, around 40% of all greenhouse gas emissions come from food production. You could say that agriculture is the big villain in this context. We have to understand that agriculture and forestry are probably one of the most crucial areas to look at if we are to get to grips with the emissions problem. To do so, however, we rich countries must be brave enough to adopt new technology and to move away from our past experience. We have to change our agricultural policy so that we no longer dump produce on the developing countries' markets. Perhaps that would be one of the most useful measures we could take to get Africa's agriculture standing on its own two feet and to liberate the women of Africa.

**Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE).** – (SV) Mr President, Mr Carlgren, you come here time after time with fine speeches, but what about the actual content? In developing countries, the land is drying out and diseases are spreading. There are growing numbers of climate refugees. Do you ask them to smile in the face of death?

You can turn around the pessimism that you on the Council are yourselves creating by making some specific promises. So I wonder: will you offer EUR 35-40 billion a year in new aid for climate measures? Will you rule out nuclear power and carbon capture and storage from projects qualifying for assistance? Will you accept compulsory licensing of important green technology to the poorest countries? Will you save the forests by refusing the market-based mechanisms of REDD? If you can promise all this, then you will also achieve a 40% reduction – and then we will all leave here with a smile on our faces.

**Konrad Szymański (ECR).** – (PL) Mr President, the position of Parliament on the global division of obligations concerning CO<sub>2</sub> reduction unfortunately lacks balance regarding the way the costs of this reduction are to be borne. By adopting the resolution, we are undermining the climate package, which was so hard to negotiate, and the costs of which currently fall unequally on the Member States of Central Europe. Adopting the solutions proposed today will increase the inequality still further. We are trying to force on Member States norms which are lethal to their economies while, at the same time, not requiring anything specific of the countries

which bear the greatest responsibility for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on a world scale. This is unjust and ineffective. Without proportion on a world scale, we are only increasing the competitive edge of China, India and Brazil.

The resolution goes even further – it proposes subsidising the poorest countries. The sum of EUR 3 30 billion until 2020 means a contribution from EUR 16.5 billion up to as much as EUR 40 billion from a country like Poland. This is political madness, which undermines the economic sense of membership of the European Union. Furthermore, it is an ineffective method, as is demonstrated by the preparations being made to begin the exportation of electrical power from the Kaliningrad region bordering Poland. In Copenhagen, it will not be worth signing an understanding in which the burdens associated with limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are not spread proportionally on a world scale.

#### IN THE CHAIR: MRS KRATSA-TSAGAROPOULOU

*Vice-President*

**Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Madam President, considering a plan of action for supporting developing countries in terms of climate change is a simple matter of justice and equality. They are the worst affected countries, yet they are also those who have contributed least to the situation in which we find ourselves. That is why we have to go beyond a mere declaration of intent. Going beyond a declaration of intent shows that we are decided and serious about fundamental issues such as financing.

However ambitious our strategy may be, if the funding issues are not clearly defined, we cannot have any kind of concrete policy. The Council is talking about EUR 100 billion by 2020. There are various estimates, including those that mention the need for EUR 120 billion per year, every year, to support developing countries. We need our own resources, therefore, not just palliatives. For this reason, it is vital to establish how this financing is going to be implemented, and who is going to provide it. We must have the courage to tackle this issue and get all the stakeholders involved, while also including the private sector and industry. Or are we hoping that they will offer to contribute to this undertaking of their own accord?

**Timo Soini (EFD).** – (FI) Madam President, the climate mafia is using gullible green politicians to shift hundreds of millions of euros of the developed nations' tax resources to supranational companies making huge profits in developing countries, and to state-owned companies in developing countries, in the form of this type of climate charge now being promoted. For example, China could very easily attend to its obligations itself: it is the world's richest country in terms of its reserves of foreign currency.

Finland and the European Union need to rescue their own steel, engineering and forest industries by calling for a decision at Copenhagen to be taken to introduce a specific emissions system to achieve climate targets for climate products, instead of the present targets based on percentages and emissions trading. This is the fairer option.

(Applause)

**Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE).** – (ES) Madam President, I would like to thank the Council and the Commission. With regard to the subject that we are debating, there are some certainties and a set of uncertainties.

The first certainty, or the first common element, is that there is now a major convergence of opinion that emissions need to be reduced and that clean energy sources need to be developed.

The second certainty is that there needs to be a global approach to or way of dealing with the problem. Therefore, the countries that emit the most CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere need to take part in all international agreements. The major producers of CO<sub>2</sub> include the United States, China, India and Brazil.

The third certainty is that the European Union is putting a proposal on the table that is an obligatory system of targets: 20% or 30%.

The fourth certainty is that there are no reasonable signs, for various reasons, that the major CO<sub>2</sub> emitting countries are going to accept an agreement of this nature, and that is the reality.

There is not such a lack of optimism if we acknowledge the reality; pessimism wins the day if we do not know the reality. It is only by acknowledging the reality that we can create an effective policy, and it will be a more optimistic policy.



I think that the European Union, as it takes the lead on this issue, has a duty to put additional measures and additional proposals on the table. Japan has been mentioned here, and we have to talk about the success of projects such as the Sector Focus project, which affect the most polluting industries. On the basis of a process of benchmarking, such projects have achieved extraordinary objectives in Japan. These are the realistic ways of tackling climate change.

Copenhagen is an opportunity, but it will only be an opportunity for efficiency rather than rhetoric if we base it on reality.

**Jo Leinen**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner Olli Rehn has praised this Parliament for its activities in bringing about the climate protection package and, in fact, we aim to continue to be ambitious.

Last night, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety voted 55-1 in favour of adopting a resolution that sets high targets for the negotiations in Copenhagen. This result shows that the denial of climate change, the ignorance of these matters, is represented by a vanishingly small minority of individuals here in this House whose views really should be disregarded and who have made their views known here on a number of occasions, but who are actually swimming against the tide of opinion of the citizens of all the countries of the European Union.

It makes no difference to the Earth's atmosphere where the CO<sub>2</sub> comes from. That means that we need a global agreement for every country and not – as is already being argued in Bangkok – multiple agreements, with one for the US, one for Europe and one for the developing countries – that would be disastrous. We need a global pact against climate change and that means that we also need a global pact of solidarity of the rich countries with the poor ones. This point has already been made many times.

Climate change represents an opportunity for us and also for the developing countries to set in motion low-carbon development with new technologies, together with the modernisation of the infrastructure. Europe must help this come about. When it comes to funding, we have endorsed the demand that the EU needs EUR 30 billion by 2020 and that we must develop funding tools that are durable and predictable. They must not simply be dependent on funds from the budget, but must also have other sources of funding.

I want to stress, once again, that marine transport and aviation must be included and that, of course, the forests and agriculture have their own, significant share. Development and climate protection are not opposites – rather, they must be brought together into a synthesis in Copenhagen.

**Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (ALDE)**. – (NL) Madam President, when all is said and done, there is only one solution to the problem of climate change, and that is technology. Only new technology can enable us to maintain our way of life. Yet the development of technology is too slow and its diffusion, especially to developing countries, is particularly slow. The climate is a global problem, but has not been tackled by sharing the best available technology. This was a complete failure under Kyoto, and so let us learn the lessons.

We must, of course, take account of intellectual property. Particularly enterprises at the forefront of such development must be encouraged and rewarded accordingly. Yet this knowledge must be diffused more quickly. A fund was established to this end with regard to the ozone problem under the Montreal Protocol, and the idea of a Multilateral Climate Technology Fund has been raised. Can the Commission and the Council explain their views on this?

Finally, halting deforestation is particularly important as far as developing countries are concerned, yet I gather that the European Union is now divided as to the role of forests, especially thanks to Sweden, Finland and Austria. How can we induce developing countries to halt deforestation if the EU itself has an ambiguous attitude towards its own forests? I would welcome Mr Carlgren's comments on this.

**Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE)**. – (NL) Madam President, we are talking about climate change, but we should be talking about the people who are hardest hit by it, namely those in the least developed countries. In the Maldives, people are fighting rising sea levels, and in Sudan they are fighting for fertile land.

The Commission keeps assuming that market actors will make a substantial contribution to climate-change adaptation. If one talks to all the investors, however, they keep saying the same thing: 'Yes, we are giving money, but mainly to the emerging economies. We are not going to invest in vulnerable countries.' After all, these are unstable markets, and the projects involved when it comes to investing in climate-change adaptation are small in size. This is not the kind of thing investors put their money into.

It must now be made very clear that public funding must be channelled to the least developed countries. The World Bank states clearly that the amount concerned must be at least EUR 80 billion. It is time the EU showed serious leadership by making a serious offer rather than offering the vague figure of EUR 2-15 billion. The EU must simply follow Parliament's lead and come forward with at least EUR 30 billion.

**James Nicholson (ECR).** – Madam President, the climate change conference in Copenhagen in December presents us with a unique opportunity to address this massive and huge problem. If we consider the consequences of global warming, it is obvious that the developing world is paying the price for environmental damage caused by the richer nations.

Climate change is not the only environmental problem we face but it is imperative that we attempt to address it in Copenhagen. It is the opportunity for the EU to speak with one voice and find solutions to a problem which is affecting us all. All countries must play their part in terms of achieving targets and sustainable development. The developing world must be supported and encouraged, but the targets set for these nations must be realistic.

I know that there are others who hold a different view from the one that I hold, but I do not believe that we can afford to wait 50, 60 or 70 years to find out who was right or who was wrong. We have a responsibility today to act now to do what we can while we are here.

**John Stuart Agnew (EFD).** – Madam President, what a relief that they have stopped burning heretics or I would be well and truly alight by now. I am, though, glowing hot in my opposition to the concept of man-made climate change.

Carbon dioxide accounts for only 0.038% of our atmosphere and only 4% of that is influenced by man's activity. It is a vital and irreplaceable food for plant life. The more plants receive, the faster they grow. A shortage of this gas will be far more serious than a surplus. The alarmist and incorrect statements that suggest any increase in carbon dioxide will create significant rises in sea levels is being used as an excuse by local authorities not to maintain low-cost wooden sea defences. When these inevitably rot, after 40 years' service, nothing is done to repair them and homes are lost. This is creating an aura of despair among coastal communities. If computer predictions cannot forecast the weather properly in the short term, they have no place whatsoever in predicting long-term changes.

**Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE).** – (SL) Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank Minister Carlgren and Commissioner De Gucht for the statements which they have given, but there is still something causing me concern. What concerns me is that we are talking about quantitative targets which will not have to be met until 2020 and 2050, respectively, while the experts are warning us that we need to start reducing global emissions as early as 2015. I would like to know whether perhaps the Commission has overlooked or abandoned this target.

Secondly, we will need to come up with an all-encompassing agreement in Copenhagen, one which includes all countries. It is not enough for us to impose these ambitious environmental standards on Europe alone, as that will just mean that the technology that causes high emissions shifts to other parts of the world. I would be really interested to hear from the Commission how it intends to introduce into the negotiations the issue of apportioning the burden equally across developed industrial countries and what arguments it is going to use to encourage developing countries to shoulder their responsibilities. How are we going to prevent carbon leakage? I would really like us to have an ace in our hands, a good card up our sleeves.

Thirdly, I would like to point out that we cannot close our eyes to reality. Fossil fuels are the main source of emissions and we are not going to be able to ban them in the immediate future. Expecting countries to abandon coal just like that is unrealistic. Developed countries are not going to do it and developing countries are even less likely to do so. This is why we also need to devote a great deal of attention in international negotiations to the continuing development and use of technologies which enable fossil fuels to be used efficiently, without emitting greenhouse gases. There is one more thing that Europe can do right now: we can increase funding for the Seventh Framework Programme, which has been designed for the purposes of international cooperation on climate change.

**Matthias Groote (S&D).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, Mr Carlgren, ladies and gentlemen, the subject of climate change will keep us occupied much longer than the financial and economic crisis. There are parallels – both cost lots of money, and Copenhagen will be about reaching an agreement on the financial tools for the third world and the developing countries.

The Copenhagen conference must succeed, and we can play our part in achieving that. Yesterday, we did a good job, we adopted the resolution in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety by a large majority, and I think that the resolution will achieve a large majority here in Parliament, and in so doing, we will change the political climate as Copenhagen approaches. There is often a psychological side to it, and we should all play our part in that.

I do still have one specific concern. In the European Parliament, we have worked to get aviation included in emissions trading, and in the end we succeeded. I therefore call on the Commission and the Council to ensure that this subject is pursued consistently in Copenhagen. We must achieve international agreement to the effect that shipping, and also aviation, are incorporated into the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol. This is because these two transport sectors are growing to a disproportionate degree and are therefore contributing in a disproportionate way to global warming.

We should not exceed the 2 degree Celsius mark. That, in fact, is where the parallels between the financial crisis and climate change cease. If we go over this mark, we will have done irreparable damage to our planet and that means that it is damage that we will not be able to reverse.

**Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE).** – Madam President, we must look at the opportunities that can flow from striking a comprehensive international agreement in Copenhagen so that we can effectively arrest climate change. The Union is committing to ensuring that 20% of all our energy needs will come from the renewable energy sector by 2020. Europe – and indeed my own country, Ireland – can become world leaders in developing new and innovative wave and tidal technologies.

The development of such technologies is a vital component of our strategies to achieve our climate change targets. We must ensure that we maximise funding under the seventh and eighth EU research and technology framework programmes between now and 2020.

(GA) The investment in green technology will help to create jobs in Europe at a time of economic crisis. We know about the great difficulties that will result if we do not accept our international responsibilities. We know about the challenges ahead of us. As such, we'll face these challenges steadfastly and responsibly.

**Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE).** – Madam President, do you know Russian roulette? Have you ever played Russian roulette? Of course not, because you have one chance in six of being killed or injured. If Copenhagen is not a success, we do not even have a 50% chance of keeping this planet from going into dangerous climate change.

Why are we in this impossible situation? We have basically lost twenty years – twenty years from the big Rio conference, twenty years of being lobbied by dirty industries from oil to coal to cars. Twenty years of the Centre-Right in the US and in Europe making it too difficult for Greens and others to push an ambitious agenda.

So next week's European summit in Copenhagen is the last occasion for the Centre-Right in Europe – with the Swedish Presidency of the Council, and Denmark, as well as France and Germany, being ruled by Centre-Right politicians – to act responsibly.

**Bogusław Sonik (PPE).** – (PL) Madam President, the European Union is seen as a leader in the international arena in the area of promoting dialogue on action against climate change and setting policy priorities for the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As part of the preparations which are under way for the Copenhagen conference, the European Union has made more pledges than any other region of the world. To date, not one of the industrial powers – the United States, Japan, Australia – has sent a specific proposal, with specific figures, giving details of aid for developing countries in their efforts to limit CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and of support for the development of energy-efficient technologies based on renewable energy sources.

Europe will only be a credible partner in negotiations if it presents realistic, achievable and common-sense proposals, which will be a starting point for reaching international consensus and understanding. Now Europe needs allies, and support for its existing proposals. Therefore, we should also be careful about increasing pledges on reduction from 20% to 30%, since other industrialised countries are not showing the will to set themselves such ambitious goals, while financial support for developing countries should also be a realistic undertaking. This must not just be a wish list. It should be a system of giving aid which complies with the principle of sustainable development, and which should make it possible for the beneficiaries to plan what they do.

There is one more thing, which is significant from the point of view of the citizens of Europe. We should not forget that the summit in Copenhagen, our resolutions, and the preparations of Parliament for the summit should be accompanied by a clearly defined system of communication with the citizens, with society. We do not want a barrier or a gap to be created between society and the EU institutions in the system of communicating information about global warming.

**Michael Cashman (S&D).** – Madam President, I will keep my CO<sub>2</sub> emissions down and I will be brief. Commissioner, it is good to see you in place. Presidency, it is good to see you here.

Talk of 2020 or 2050 is not good enough. We need agreement and achievement now because climate change is placing poverty reduction at risk. We are seeing the diversion of ODA budgets away from development. That is unacceptable and puts at risk the Millennium Development Goals, which must be achieved. At Copenhagen, we will see 27 countries acting as one to achieve ambitious targets.

We have heard the climate change deniers here in this House. Let me just say this: there is talk of plants and CO<sub>2</sub>; there is deforestation and desertification. This means that in some places there is no water. There are no trees. Climate change kills. It is as simple as that. Let us be clear – Member States should maintain their 0.7% of GNI for development and cap any use of that GNI at 10% maximum, and then bring in the additional funds needed to combat and defeat climate change.

**Fiona Hall (ALDE).** – Madam President, I am concerned that the Commission's calculations on international climate finance are just smoke and mirrors.

First, it has claimed that 90% of energy efficiency measures can be financed by developing countries themselves. That is EUR 30 billion per annum. In the EU, the biggest obstacle to introducing energy efficiency measures for both governments and for individual citizens is the lack of upfront financing. Why does the Commission believe that developing countries can finance efficiency measures without upfront funding when EU Member States themselves have struggled to do so?

Also, the idea that the international carbon market can fund EUR 38 billion a year is unrealistic. We have seen how slow the EU ETS carbon market has been to get off the ground and how badly the carbon price has been thrown off course by the economic crisis. It is likely to be many decades before there is a properly functioning international carbon market, so we need a new and additional financing measure now.

**Françoise Grossetête (PPE).** – (FR) Madam President, climate change, as we have been saying since this morning, is quite simply an increase in desertification and drought; it is deforestation, it is natural disasters, it is the spread of famine and of poverty, mainly in the countries of the South, and it is migratory flows.

The Copenhagen Summit must have the commitment of the world's nations to find a balance between four important objectives, the first being, of course, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but it is also a question of not holding back our economy, of preventing environmental dumping and of promoting Europe's new technologies.

Therefore, on this subject, since we must take account of the poorest countries, I should like to draw your attention to developing countries, in particular, to the most advanced developing countries. This notion does not appear in the international texts, and these countries fall into the category of developing countries. Thus, they are not regarded as countries that are obliged to contribute to the effort to reduce greenhouse gases, even though they are some of the biggest consumers of carbon. I am, of course, thinking of China, India and Brazil, which absolutely must make a commitment in Copenhagen to achieve similar targets to those of the industrialised countries since, strictly speaking, they are nothing like most of the other developing countries.

The efforts to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> must be shared under the fairest of conditions. We must prevent all distortions of competition. The negotiations must also be an opportunity to stimulate the deployment of our new technologies and to enable substantial investment to be made in research and development.

In Copenhagen we will have to – and this is a necessity – create the conditions for sustainable trade among countries, on the basis of mutual interests. Success will consist in promoting the dissemination of technologies in the least developed countries in return for the recognition of intellectual property rights and the opening up of their markets to these technologies.

**Enrique Guerrero Salom (S&D).** – (ES) Madam President, the two most serious crises in the world are poverty and the effects of climate change: two crises that will be even more closely linked to each other in the future, two crises that become more devastating as each day goes by.

There are now many more poor people than there were a year ago, tens of millions more. Today, the effects of climate change are more serious and more intense than they have ever been.

We are a month and a half away from Copenhagen, just a few weeks away. In Copenhagen, we need to make a big effort. We need to focus more effort on combating climate change, but not using the resources that we are currently using for development aid, not with the resources that we are currently using for education or health.

Developing countries need both types of resource. We therefore need to go beyond 0.7% of GNP. This was the message from various leaders at the recent United Nations meeting. This was the message from the President of the Spanish Government.

**Peter Liese (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, a gathering involving the Health Commissioner, Mrs Vassiliou, and medical experts from across Europe a few days ago in Brussels discussed the subject of 'Health and climate change'. It was a very informative event entitled 'Prescription for a healthy planet'. The President of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) used a very good image – the patient planet Earth is like a person suffering from a serious illness. The later you intervene, the more painful is the treatment and there comes a point when it is even too late for treatment. At that point, the patient is damaged beyond recovery. That is why we need to act quickly and determinedly for patient planet Earth. I hope that we all agree on that.

It is equally as true that climate change affects everyone – every country on earth and every sector of the European economy. I see an imbalance – we put very heavy burdens on the traditional participants in European emissions trading, yet they represent less than 50% of the European Union's emissions. We therefore need more shoulders to bear the burden – we decided that last night. We also adopted Amendments 198 to 202 on the inclusion of aviation – as mentioned by Mr Groote – and marine transport. Perhaps this needs to be better worked out and differentiated, but it is a move in the right direction. The Commission and the Council must finally get more involved in this regard. At the EU summit in the run-up to Pittsburgh, and in Pittsburgh itself, no progress at all was made on this. The Council and the Commission must do more in this connection.

I have one final word to add. Other regions in the world, too, must do more. I am pleased that Barack Obama has won the Nobel Peace Prize, but if he does not come to Copenhagen and if he does not put forward a decent proposal, then he will be frittering away his credibility and, for that reason, he must deliver something at Copenhagen.

**Kriton Arsenis (S&D).** – (EL) Madam President, developing countries have contributed less than anyone to climate change. At the same time, however, they experience the very worst repercussions. In Africa, millions of people need to travel further and further year on year in order to find water, wood for cooking and food. These are people who depend on the services provided to them by natural ecosystems and people who have contributed nothing to climate change.

These natural ecosystems, such as the forests of Africa, store three times more carbon than they have emitted into the atmosphere, three times more carbon than exists in the atmosphere at present, while they absorb 50% of the carbon that we emit into the atmosphere every year. That is why protecting and extending forests, on the basis of natural processes and without commercial intentions, should be the top priority of our policy, both in order to combat and to adapt developing and developed countries to climate change.

**Theodoros Skylakakis (PPE).** – (EL) Madam President, I should like to take a position on the specific but very important matter of shipping in connection with Copenhagen and the developing countries. I have two comments: it would be a huge mistake to deal with shipping and aviation as if they were one and the same thing. Shipping is the most efficient and environmentally-friendly mode of transport, while aviation is more or less the worst. Targets therefore need to be set in shipping, but they must be fair in relation – in particular – to road transport, which competes with shipping and is much more polluting. By striking disproportionately at shipping in comparison with road transport, we are striking disproportionately at the core of the economies of developing countries, because developing countries are based predominantly on raw materials, agricultural products and industry which basically use shipping, whereas our economies are mainly service economies.

Will we, I wonder, be able to persuade developing countries of our good intentions by proposing that we finance the climate change endeavour from money that we shall take, to a disproportionate degree, from shipping and which, as a percentage of GDP, will encumber developing countries more than developed countries?

I also wonder, having been informed that the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance refused yesterday to back a debate on the correlation of targets for shipping with targets for land transport, if driving along a European motorway in a luxury car at 180 kilometres an hour is more ecologically friendly than carrying food and raw materials for the planet's economy.

**Gilles Pargneaux (S&D).** – (FR) Madam President, Mr Carlgren, Mr President of the Commission, we are facing a challenge for humanity, a challenge for the future generations. In order to take up the gauntlet, Copenhagen must provide the conditions for a global agreement, a single agreement, because, as the chairman of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Mr Leinen, was saying earlier, a universal alliance, involving industrialised countries and emerging countries alike, is necessary.

Today, with our debate, but also with the drafting of a resolution by Parliament, we are once again calling on the European Union to maintain its leading role in this necessary policy to combat climate change. Let us remember that we must speak with one voice if we are to maintain our credibility.

Yes, we must come to an agreement in Copenhagen to limit the increase in the global mean temperature so that it does not exceed the pre-industrial levels by more than 2 degrees. Yes, we must sign an agreement in Copenhagen in order collectively to ensure that, by 2020, there are 30% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than there were in 1990. That will not be enough, however. Not only is it necessary for developed countries to substantially reduce their emissions, but developing countries must help achieve the targets too.

It follows that the industrialised countries must provide developing countries with adequate, long-term and predictable financial and technical support to encourage them to make a commitment to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Copenhagen must also enable developing countries to move in the direction of low-carbon models.

Thus, allow me to address two areas that I feel are necessary for our future. Firstly, the introduction, at international level, of funding to combat global warming, based on the taxation of financial transactions. Secondly, I feel it is necessary to introduce a tax adjustment at Europe's borders that would hit imports of goods manufactured without the slightest concern for environmental protection, a tax adjustment linked to the contractually stipulated repayment to the countries of the South of the carbon tax collected in this way at Europe's borders, and which would be used to finance investment in the equipment they need to combat global warming.

**Rachida Dati (PPE).** – (FR) Madam President, following the example of the recent G20, which was an opportunity for Europe to play a leading role in the definition of a new world economic order, at the Copenhagen conference in December, Europe will again have a responsibility but, above all, an obligation, to show its international partners the path to pursue.

Contrary to what was said just now, particularly by some of my fellow Members from the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance, Europe has begun to assume its responsibilities in terms of environmental protection, since in December 2008, the energy and climate change package was adopted. With this package, Europe will have all the legitimacy it needs to guide the negotiations towards the definition of an ambitious, practical and global response to the challenges of climate change.

The agreement that must be reached in Copenhagen will have to be based on a principle of shared responsibility, but also of differentiated responsibility. In concrete terms, as Mrs Grossetête just said, it is up to us, as industrialised countries, to ensure that our partners, the developing countries, have the means to follow us as we take the ambitious step of combating climate change.

We also need to set an example, not least by committing ourselves to an ambitious programme aimed at an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. I heard it said just now that this is not enough, but it is already a good start. At the same time, we must also create the conditions to ensure that developing countries can participate alongside us in this global effort.

We have a responsibility, but we also have duties towards these countries. The simple fact is that we have a common challenge to overcome that requires everyone's involvement. However, as we know, we do not all have the same capabilities and we do not all have the same history. Copenhagen must therefore be a success,

but a success achieved by means of a genuine contribution that goes beyond a mere commitment. The European Union will be judged on this contribution and on this commitment.

Should Copenhagen not result in our international partners making firm, shared commitments to take concrete action, then, as the last speaker just said, we in Europe will have to impose a carbon tax at our borders. This will be the only way of making ourselves heard and of ensuring that our virtuous commitment has meaning. It is up to Europe to ensure that this message is clearly heard.

**Anni Podimata (S&D).** – (EL) Madam President, the basic challenge which we have before us seven weeks before the Copenhagen Summit is whether or not we shall manage to reach agreement in terms of taking responsibility for the global financing of policies for the moderation of climate change on the part of developing countries. Europe has made important steps by defining sources of financing and ways of organising it, but now the time has come for us to persuade other developed countries to take their share of responsibility, bearing in mind that support for efforts by developing countries to combat climate change also affords an opportunity to combat global inequalities and to narrow the divide between developed and developing countries.

There is something else which we must not forget, especially here in the European Union. We are on the point of creating a new order of refugees, climate refugees who are not protected today under any international convention, and, as a result, they have no rights. Closing this legal loophole and substantially supporting climate refugees is a basic obligation of the international community in which the European Union must take a leading role.

**Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE).** – (PT) Madam President, Mr Carlgren, Mr De Gucht, the European Union should continue to play a leading role in the international negotiations to achieve an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen. This agreement should be based on the principle of shared yet differentiated responsibility. This principle should be applied equally to developing countries, but each one requires measures tailored to its individual situation, as they are at different stages and have different circumstances. All developing countries, with the exception of the least developed, should adopt national low-carbon development strategies.

Developing countries will be faced with a cost of about EUR 100 billion to reduce their emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change. Some of the funding will come from the private sector, but international public funding will also be necessary, in addition to official development aid. It is paramount that we define how this funding system will be structured, along with the source and the amount of funding, so as to secure an agreement in Copenhagen.

On the other hand, the clean development mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol should be reformed so that credits are only given to projects that allow supplementary reductions to be achieved. The economically more advanced developing countries and economically more competitive sectors should be gradually excluded from this mechanism, so that it can focus mainly on the poorest countries, especially those in Africa.

**Justas Vincas Paleckis (S&D).** – (LT) The European Union is setting an example for other continents by tackling threats hovering over our planet. This also strengthens the fight against climate change. The European Union is ready to be the leader in the future as well, but all the countries participating in the Copenhagen conference must join this fight.

Additional aid is required for developing countries. Their economic growth, like that of the BRIC countries, must be based on 'green technologies'. More attention must be paid to sharing the most advanced technologies and knowledge. The EU should show an appealing example, not just by making commitments to reduce emissions, but also by promoting renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency.

Let us not forget that in the European Union too, there is a considerable gap between those countries successfully implementing new technologies and saving energy and those that are straggling behind. There must be a joint effort to eliminate that gap, and that would again be a good example to everyone.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE).** – (FI) Madam President, certain facts need to be acknowledged. Firstly, our efforts with regard to climate so far have brought us no benefits. The strategy has proven ineffective because emissions have increased in absolute as well as in relative terms. Contrary to expectations, global carbon intensity has only increased at exactly the same time as there has been actual international investment in the area. Emissions per tonne of production in the countries that ratified the agreement have not fallen with any greater degree of success than in the countries that have remained outside the Kyoto Protocol. It is a poor agreement that

we have, and it has to be replaced with a better, more comprehensive, more effective and more ambitious one.

Secondly, it has to be said that we know less than we thought we did some time ago. Although emissions have increased more than was predicted, the temperature is not now logically following the rise in emissions. Now it has stopped increasing, and global cooling is predicted to continue over the years to come. Nevertheless, the time series is too short to draw any conclusions or to allow us to forget all about the earlier warming pattern. This information, which is confusing to the general public, does not therefore mean that we no longer have to worry about climate change, but it does mean that we need more research. Consequently, emissions have to be at a reasonable level in all circumstances, irrespective of whether there is rapid warming or not. The starting point for this should be the ideas on sustainable development in the UN's Millennium Development Goals Report. It does not merely scrutinise the carbon issue, but is also a comprehensive policy on climate.

Thirdly, we are living through an economic crisis, and as a result we have a responsibility to our citizens. What we do must be wise and effective. The world can no longer afford a poor agreement on climate. The mistakes of Kyoto cannot be allowed to continue, and we do not need the sort of agreement that is content with simply moving emissions around from one place to another without actually reducing them. As the criteria underlying climate policy are currently about emissions from production and not consumption, the cause of the problem can be shifted elsewhere. Given the carbon leak that results from this, it is even possible that as local emissions fall, global emissions will rise. Instead, we need a huge investment in decarbonisation and in technology that reduces emissions. Dirty production must not be possible anywhere. We cannot create loopholes, though emissions trading in the EU is a model example of how to do that!

**Ivari Padar (S&D).** – (ET) Mr President, the ambitious climate measures would help to solve the current economic crisis through the creation of new jobs and an increase in economic activity. The International Energy Agency regards it as necessary to come to an agreement in Copenhagen in order to direct the investments which were delayed due to the crisis into investments in the environmentally sustainable energy sector.

I can see opportunities for my home country of Estonia here as well. We need an extensive energy savings programme, and also an ambitious and long-term approach in the area of renewable energy. However, we cannot limit ourselves to this. We should review our own transport and logistical regulation, make use of environmentally-friendly building materials and technologies, reduce the use of materials and chemicals in industry, reform the packaging methods used in retail, and develop organic farming.

These and many other solutions will be the essential growth sectors of the future. Many of these new solutions require the efforts of our scientists; some can only be created by our own efforts.

**Elisabetta Gardini (PPE).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I have noticed that the vote which took place yesterday in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety has been mentioned several times.

I would, however, like to make it clear that not everything can be put down to one single extremist ideological position. We have heard many positions of our fellow Members which are very diverse, much more nuanced, based much more on common sense and therefore, given that they reflect reality more closely, I think that they are more likely to provide real solutions.

Science is not a totem. When the mistake was made to pick out one issue in such an ideological way, solutions were not provided but it led to disaster. Europe should be an expert at this, at not repeating the same mistakes, albeit when they take different forms and have labels which appear, on the surface, much friendlier. I must point out that the emissions trading directive itself stipulates precisely that the virtuous path followed by the European Union must be assessed by the Commission, according to the outcome of the conference.

We must go to the conference with strong positions and clear ideas certainly, but also with the absolute aim of sharing our efforts fairly among, first and foremost, all the industrialised countries, which must accept equivalent emissions reduction targets. We must also keep in mind what Mrs Grossetête expressed very well, namely that we can no longer fail to differentiate between developing countries: some countries truly are developing and some are newly emerged economies, such as India, China and Brazil. These, too, are countries which must shoulder commitments of their own.



Well, if a balanced outcome is not achieved in Copenhagen, I, on the other hand, strongly urge the European Union to continue to ensure that allowances are allocated free of charge to sectors at risk, in accordance with Directive 2003/87/EC. These are key points. We want the Kyoto Protocol itself to retain its importance for the environment and, above all, we want to avoid creating a financial bubble at the expense of European businesses.

**Vincent Peillon (S&D).** – (FR) Madam President, as our fellow Members have said repeatedly this morning, the problem of financing the developing countries' fight against global warming may cause the Copenhagen Summit to fail, when we were all hoping it would be a success.

As we know, however, these countries are often the main victims of global warming, but they are not responsible for it. The industrialised countries have provided a substantial financial aid package. It is insufficient today, and even the declared amounts are not actually being honoured. This is what obliges us and will oblige us to find new sources of finance.

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, following the lead of the Committee on Development, has acknowledged that there is now a need to consider the introduction of a tax on financial transactions of the Tobin tax kind. This 0.01% tax on speculative transactions would bring in USD 100 billion per year; in other words, the amount that it is estimated will be required by 2020 to combat global warming in developing countries.

Therefore, Parliament, in following the lead of certain national political leaders, is assuming its responsibilities. I should like to know the position of the Council and the Commission and whether they will support us on this point.

**Lena Ek (ALDE).** – (SV) Madam President, the world is currently facing three major crises: the financial crisis, the employment crisis and the climate crisis. The solutions that we come up with together must help to solve all three of these crises. Our businesses face major challenges, but there are also great opportunities for new jobs and for dealing with a number of social crises. Applied in the right way, with the right decisions and with sufficiently tough decisions from those leading these negotiations, we could see a renewal and a new environmentally sustainable economy in the world.

People all over the world expect the Copenhagen conference to come up with vigorous measures. We must be aware that the US will want market-based solutions, Europe will want solutions based on legislation and China will want to solve its own domestic social problems. There are also differences in approach within Europe. In the European Parliament, there are Members who want the thresholds set so high that it will be impossible to achieve a solution in Copenhagen, while others want to insist on only voluntary solutions.

The future lies in a green, liberal market economy. We must ensure that consumers are given the opportunity to use their power in the market through knowledge and transparency.

**Rareș-Lucian Niculescu (PPE).** – (RO) Deforestation, a phenomenon often alluded to during this debate, is certainly something which affects developing countries in particular. However, before laying the blame on these countries, we need to realise that deforestation meets certain needs for survival.

I would like to mention in today's debate the conclusions from a study carried out recently which highlight that almost half of the agricultural area in the world has at least 10% forest cover. This agricultural area covered by forest vegetation amounts to double the area of the Amazon Rainforest. I believe that this prompts us to realise the value of this vegetation. It goes without saying that farmers would make greater efforts to protect this vegetation if they were given sufficient finances to do so.

Another aspect which could also be taken into consideration would be to encourage stratified agri-forestry systems which combine the growing of crops with trees. Crops of this type, which are less viable than monocultures, are often abandoned. I believe that any solution aimed at avoiding deforestation must also take into account systems for compensating farmers, including those farmers in Europe who grow these types of stratified crops.

**Judith A. Merkies (S&D).** – Madam President, 'success or failure, that is the question'. All types of crises have already been mentioned, but one has been forgotten next to global warming, which is the crisis of public confidence in politics.

I agree with Mr Carlgren. Let us not make this a beauty contest about who is more or less ambitious, more realistic or less realistic or more or less willing to pay. We need four clarities, because too much is at stake:

we need a clear and ambitious political stance; we need a clear commitment; we need a clear path and clear deadlines; and last but not least, we need clarity on financial support. If Copenhagen is not a complete success, let us not cry wolf and start naming and shaming, but let us set out a clear process and time path in order to come to a result. Let us show we are reliable and responsible, both in target setting and in a fair financial perspective.

**Graham Watson (ALDE).** – Madam President, we talk a lot about the melting of the ice caps, but as well as the Arctic and the Antarctic, there is also the ‘third pole’: the Himalayan ice cap and its glaciers which give water to some two billion people – almost a third of the world’s population – in China, India and elsewhere on the subcontinent.

These glaciers are retreating fast because of black carbon coming largely from industrialisation, but also from fossil fuel-powered generators in use in agriculture, and will deprive billions of people of water for both drinking and irrigation. The European Union needs to recognise that help is going to be needed to improve the quality of the machinery that is being used, and to cut down its polluting impact.

I believe this should be put on the agenda for Copenhagen, but it should also be put on the agenda for the forthcoming European Union summit with India and other summits with the countries affected. Unless we help them, we will not be able to prevent the melting of the Himalayan glaciers or serious water provision problems for a third of humankind.

**Iosif Matula (PPE).** – (RO) We live on a planet with a diverse climate. However, there is a single factor that affects all this: climate change. Reality shows us that the effects of this change do not respect borders or geographical areas. Each and every one of us is affected in different ways, whether in the form of flooding, drought, fire or powerful storms.

The main cause of these disasters is obviously the rampant development of certain groups of activities resulting in a rise in carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. According to current statistics, the ratio of carbon dioxide emissions per capita may be hundreds of times higher for developed countries compared to developing countries.

Given the current situation, I feel duty bound to ask the following rhetorical question: is it our duty or not to support developing countries with initiatives and technologies in order to keep our planet clean? I think the answer to this is obvious. We cannot therefore procrastinate in any way in adopting specific measures for our own sake and the sake of future generations.

**Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D).** – (FI) Madam President, it is very important to make the switch to a low-carbon world fairly and to have a viable policy system, because the market never has any time for fairness. That is why the Copenhagen meeting is important.

I would have liked Minister Carlgren to have prioritised things more. You made everything a priority and so, in fact, nothing took priority.

I believe that climate policy must also have a prominent part to play in income distribution effects. How can we also make it easier for households on a low income in Europe to adapt? Has no country in Europe given consideration to this yet? For example, more flexible use of the Structural Funds could be made to promote green structural change. It is not enough to save the world: we also have to save the people in it.

**András Gyürk (PPE).** – (HU) Madam President, one of the key topics at the forthcoming Copenhagen climate summit may be forest management. It is no coincidence, in fact, that more harmful gases accumulate in the air as a result of deforestation than can be attributed to transport, for instance. The inability to resolve this situation is highlighted by the fact that according to estimates, almost 40% of the logging in the world is carried out illegally.

When we talk about logging, we first of all think about tropical forests, but we do not have to look so far from home. According to a study recently published, one third of the timber used in Hungary is felled illegally. Due to the lack of sanctions in this area, the ground apparently gained by renewable energy sources actually conceals the partially illegal burning and felling of trees. Based on what I have described, we must tighten the regulations governing sustainable forest management. The Copenhagen climate summit may provide the opportunity for forest management to become an integral part of climate protection systems.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE).** – Madam President, the issue of food security needs to be mentioned in this debate on climate change, for the developing world in particular. It is very difficult to ask people to look at

climate change mitigation if their basic needs for food are not met. We need to allow them to use the best available technology to produce, in a sustainable way, food which does not harm the environment, and to tackle the issue of climate change.

I have a concern in relation to the World Trade Organisation and a deal on agriculture which does not take into account the impact, for example, of deforestation in Brazil as it supplies beef to the European Union. These are very complex issues. We might solve a problem in one place and create another elsewhere. We obviously need a global agreement which tackles climate change but we also need to recognise the very serious issue of food security.

**Andrew Henry William Brons (NI).** – Madam President, the evidence is not that rising levels of CO<sub>2</sub> lead to temperature rises, but that the causal connection is the other way round; but, of course, we must not let facts get in the way of a good story.

However, let us accept for the moment that man-made emissions are a bad thing for various reasons. Why, then, does the British Labour Party support aggressive and illegal wars that not only kill British soldiers, Iraqis, Afghans and, in the future, Iranians, but also produce vast increases in global emissions?

**Edite Estrela (S&D).** – (PT) Copenhagen is a great opportunity for a global agreement to be reached before it is too late. For the first time, the United States has an administration committed to building solutions, and there are also positive signals from other countries, such as Japan. However, we need a new approach to climate change that takes its impact on security, economic recovery, immigration and even combating terrorism into account. Nor must we forget that climate change will require the contribution of science, technology and economics.

The major obstacle to an agreement in Copenhagen is the question of funding. There cannot be an agreement unless there is funding tailored to developing countries. Moreover, Commissioner, it must be stressed that the funding currently in place is not sufficient. Developed countries must lead by example, by setting ambitious emission reduction targets of at least 30%, and helping developing countries by providing funding and technology.

**Milan Zver (PPE).** – (SL) Good afternoon, Madam President, Commissioner, Mr Carlgren, ladies and gentlemen and visitors, including those of you who have come from Slovenia. Allow me to briefly remind you of one thing: Copenhagen is happening at what may be a bad time. We are living in a time of crisis, which makes it difficult to make the kind of decisions on weighty and important issues which we will have to make in December in Copenhagen.

Nonetheless, let me stress that Copenhagen will only be a success story if it upholds both the environmental and the social dimension, that is, if we succeed in reducing, or agreeing to reduce, emissions. On this score, the Council and the Commission are yet to reach an agreement on the targets to be attained by 2020. In addition, Copenhagen will only be a success story if it ensures sustainable development, if it also includes a social dimension and, in particular, if we, the developed part of the world, succeed in financing developing countries. If that does not happen, I think that this generation will have missed an exceptional historic opportunity.

**Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE).** – (PL) Madam President, in the context of our debate, I should like to draw attention to two issues. Firstly, when submitting a proposal regarding the limitation of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the means allocated for developing countries, we must not forget the present economic and financial situation brought about by the world crisis, because setting ambitious goals is very important, but I think that achieving them is even more so.

Secondly, we should pay attention to the question of the awareness of citizens and the necessity of change in the area of ecological issues. Research carried out at the time of the Climate Conference in Poznań last year showed that society does regard climate change as a serious problem, but thinks that solving this problem is a matter exclusively for the authorities. An appeal is therefore needed, an information campaign which will change attitudes and promote models of behaviour aimed at increasing the effectiveness or reducing the consumption of energy in homes. We need a campaign to make people aware that the way we live, and the way we work, has an economic and an ecological price attached.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) Development and cooperation mechanisms and the allocation of considerable resources to developing countries for tackling climate change are important measures in terms of concluding an international post-Kyoto agreement.

However, the best argument for persuading other states to comply with a post-Kyoto agreement is provided by the measures which the European Union is adopting in order to fulfil the commitments that it has already undertaken.

In the case of non-ETS sectors, the measures considered may include the following: renovating buildings with poor energy efficiency, creating an energy efficiency fund in each Member State; and increasing considerably the ERDF rate which can be used to boost energy efficiency in buildings and develop public transport. These measures will allow us to create around 7 million jobs across Europe by 2020.

In the case of ETS sectors, financing mechanisms are required for the low-carbon economy. Modernising the technology used by European companies operating in the energy production or metallurgy sectors will enable them to use an environmentally-friendly method of production.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – Madam President, deforestation has been mentioned by many speakers and absolutely correctly so – both industrialised deforestation and individual deforestation.

I myself noticed that, when I worked on a voluntary basis in Africa, day in day out, I saw people climbing up the mountain, spending the whole day with their little axe cutting down timber, and coming down in the afternoon carrying their little bundle of timber on their head or on their bicycle.

It is quite obvious that this cannot be tackled without dealing with the whole question of global poverty, because individuals are not going to stop chopping down wood for the greater good of society if it means they themselves are going to starve. So climate change and global poverty will have to be tackled hand in hand.

**Diane Dodds (NI).** – Madam President, there has been much talk in this Chamber this morning about developing countries playing their part in tackling climate change, and that is indeed true. Like many others, I would draw attention to the fact that, in order for this to happen in regions of great poverty, this House, the Council and the Commission will have to take cognisance of the cost involved and there will have to be a strategy in order to tackle this.

However, I would not like to leave this House without saying that, in areas like my own in Northern Ireland, areas of high energy costs, there also needs to be some work done to take account of those who are disadvantaged – where there are high levels of fuel poverty amongst disadvantaged people, where we have an economic base which relies on small business – when considering the costs of tackling climate change.

**Zoran Thaler (S&D).** – (SL) I would like to express my agreement with the fundamental objectives of our strategy, i.e. preventing the climate from increasing more than two degrees in temperature, on average. This is a strategy which is primarily based on limitation: the smaller the emissions of greenhouse gases, the smaller the increase in temperature.

However, I would like to point out another dimension and here, I refer to the technological breakthroughs that are necessary. I, for one, am a believer in technology. Limitation alone will not help us attain our targets. We need greater investment in technological advancement and, above all, investment in the artificial reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and in the development of a fusion reactor. Therefore, I would urge the Commission to make as effective and rapid moves as possible to put such investment on its agenda.

**Andreas Carlgren, President-in-Office of the Council.** – (SV) Madam President, I would like to thank the Members of Parliament for their commitment to this debate and their far-sighted contributions. Naturally, the broad political support of the European Parliament plays a very important part in deciding Europe's position in the negotiations. I also genuinely welcome the resolution on climate change prepared by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. Parliament's commitment is very important for the 48 days remaining before the conference in Copenhagen. We really must use these days in the best way possible. That means that we must go out into the rest of the world and put pressure on other countries. A global threat calls for a global response. There has been mention in the debate of global partnership – I agree with that. There has been mention of the need to globally achieve low-carbon development – I agree with that. There has been mention of the need for new green technology – and I also agree with that. I would also like to say that we need a global solidarity pact.

I am now off to the Luxembourg Council meeting on the environment, at which we will also set out the EU's mandate for the Copenhagen conference. We are talking here about the long-term objectives of the EU, which must be to reduce emissions by more than 80% by the year 2050. We are talking about how to encourage other countries to increase their emissions reductions, so that we also achieve our 30% reduction

in emissions. Not least, it concerns what has been raised in the debate here – namely, measures to combat deforestation and towards sustainable forestry, financing that Ecofin is to decide on. Finally, it is about having a mandate that has been adopted by the European Council. I would like to thank Parliament for its support.

**Karel De Gucht**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, very briefly a couple of points. I think that after this debate, after what the Council has said, we can say that we are ready for this Copenhagen conference. I have noticed very broad support for our proposals, and that goes for the targets that we have put on the table, the financial commitments we have been making.

Very important also is the common understanding we have with the developing world – the commitments we have been making towards them and, maybe foremost, it is very important that we have also agreed on an internal redistribution of the efforts that have to be made by the European Union, because if you make commitments and promises but do not reach agreement among yourselves you will not be very effective in these kinds of things. We can move forward, provided that the European Council later this month gives support to these proposals. I have no doubt about that.

We also expect the others to come forward. Then we will speak about the United States; we will also speak about the BRIC countries. They have to come forward. I think we need a frank and open discussion in Copenhagen. It will certainly not be easy, that is the least one can say, but I think we really will be discussing our common future there.

**President** – The debate is closed.

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

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) We must not regard the costs involved in the transition to clean energy sources as an economic burden that will increase companies' production costs and public expenditure as part of national budgets, but as an investment that will bring tangible benefits in terms of creating new jobs, technical innovation and a clean infrastructure which will support the sustainable development of our respective countries.

Climate change poses a threat to the environmental balance and our habitat. Europe must show courage and adopt a consistent stance in leading the effort to combat global warming. Based on considerations of fairness and historical responsibility, poor countries must be helped not only to consolidate and adapt their economies to the new challenges, but also to protect themselves from the effects of global warming to which they are the most susceptible.

I hope that those attending the conference in December will realise that there is no alternative to cutting polluting emissions and that postponing any decision in Copenhagen on the mandatory objectives will mean failure not only for the conference, but also for the multilateral dialogue on global topics that affect the future of every one of us.

**Nessa Childers (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Negotiations for a new global climate agreement are now on a knife edge. The US seems unable to pass legislation to curb its excessive CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. China seems unwilling to accept binding targets. Developing countries claim correctly they did not cause this crisis.

Europeans have an historic responsibility to clean up the climate mess we helped create. It is actually our reckless abandon of the environment that has led to this dangerous changing of our climate. This is not only an environmental issue and it is not just an economic issue, but also an issue of international social justice. I join my colleagues in supporting calls for Europe to make a real offer of financing to the developing world to help it fight climate change in order to break the deadlock in the current negotiations.

This financing must be new and additional (the existing promises of 0.7% should not be touched) and it must be adequate enough to allow developing countries to fight climate change, with the necessary mitigation and adaptation measures. Some say we cannot afford such new financing. However, when the banks came begging, most governments, including the Irish Government, were only too quick to provide them with billions in taxpayers' money. Our economies will recover, but our environment will not...

**Vasîlica Viorica Dăncilă (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Climate change poses one of the most serious threats not only to the environment, but to the economy and society as well. Crop yields fluctuate from one year to the next, heavily influenced by the variation in extreme climate conditions. This has an impact on every sector of the economy, but agriculture remains the most vulnerable.

I believe that this problem must be dealt with in two ways:

- an action plan is needed for the most affected areas, which includes: using certain plant varieties which are resistant to the new climate conditions, adapting the calendar of farming activities to the new conditions, forestation, building greenhouses, managing water resources from agriculture and making polluted land more environmentally friendly;
- the other measure must be a plan for the future aimed at eliminating the causes of climate change by promoting a global economy based on reduced carbon emissions, combined with the promotion of energy security.

I also think it is important to devise strategies for preventing and managing natural disasters as droughts and flooding have occurred frequently over the last 10 years, exerting an adverse impact on both agricultural production and flora and fauna.

I strongly support the European Union in having to maintain its leading position in the battle against climate change. It must not slip to number two as a result of the current economic difficulties.

**Adam Gierek (S&D), in writing.** – (PL) For five years, I have been witness to how, here, in the European Parliament, a specific group of people, recruited from all political groups, but mainly from the Greens and the Socialists, have been whipping up unprecedented hysteria about the climate. This hysteria is cleverly maintained through the speeches by the President of the Commission, and also by the former President of Parliament, presenting us with the unimaginable cataclysms which they claim will result from climate change.

People who think rationally on this matter are accused of lacking moral principles, and simply – as was the case with me today – they are not given the opportunity to speak in a ‘democratic’ way. The economic decisions contained in the Climate and Energy Package, which were made on the grounds of a not-very-credible hypothesis of the cause of climate change, are not only a cynical gibe at common sense, but are also a portent of future economic catastrophe and the upheaval of civilisation. We should demand to hear honest discussion, based on the opinions of the entire objective world of science, on the subject of current climate change and its causes and, above all, on methods of tackling its effects.

**Zita Gurmai (S&D), in writing.** – (HU) In order to ensure success in the battle against climate change, an ambitious, comprehensive global agreement must be reached in Copenhagen. The issue of funding has become the keystone of the agreement in Copenhagen. Every country must make its contribution to funding the battle against climate change, according to its resources and economic potential. The European Union plays an important role in, and assumes a commitment to, funding the climate programme. According to estimates for providing support to developing countries and based on calculations for the 2010-2012 period, the EUR 5-7 billion required in funding every year will place a significant burden on both EU and national budgets.

However, on the last point, I feel it is important that when the European Union is considering how to distribute the financial burden deriving from its future international climate funding commitments, it will take into account individual Member States’ economic potential and the limits of their productive capacity. I also believe that every European citizen must participate in the battle against climate change, and comprehensive energy-saving campaigns are required to achieve this.

**Edit Herczog (S&D), in writing.** – (HU) It is already clear to us nowadays that among the dangers threatening the Earth, the biggest predicament by far is caused by greenhouse gases, primarily the emission of carbon dioxide. While this may currently seem in ruling political circles to be an ideological debate, this issue defines the limits for economic opportunities and development, determining future investment in these areas. When we talk in the European Parliament about climate change and preparations for the Copenhagen conference, we must not forget that our approval of the energy and climate package laid the foundations for a European energy policy that favours not only increasing competitiveness and strengthening supply security, but also energy efficiency, environmentally-friendly energy production and the assertion of consumer interests. The third energy package created the opportunity from a market perspective, and the climate package from a regulatory perspective, for newer investors and operators to enter the European energy market. This is the key to Europe’s climate change policy and its Copenhagen objectives. We need new investment in energy, new innovative technologies and new operators. After all, we can only achieve a significant reduction in carbon dioxide emissions both at a European and global level if we develop and implement new technologies. The European decisions made recently facilitate this. We must progress further along this road.

**Marian-Jean Marinescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Achieving an agreement in Copenhagen will give the necessary impetus for coordination at global level of the actions to be taken against climate change. The climate crisis must be inextricably linked to the economic crisis. This provides an opportunity to move from an unsustainable economy based on limited natural resources to a sustainable one. In addition to promoting the strategy for energy supply security and energy efficiency, Europe must devise a plan for investing in new energy technologies. The promotion of green technologies at Community level does not only involve finding an alternative solution to the energy crisis, but also boosting economic growth and creating new jobs. On the other hand, reaching agreement in Copenhagen offers an opportunity to promote the future links between the EU's system for trading emission allowances and the regional or federal trading systems in the US and other countries which operate this kind of system or similar systems. Last but not least, the EU must adopt a uniform position for maintaining its leading role in negotiations. It must also be actively involved in strengthening existing partnerships in the climate sector with developing countries, as well as in establishing new partnerships where they do not yet exist.

**Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PL) A month and a half before the summit in Copenhagen, and in view of unavoidable climate change, the world expects us to take specific action – action which demonstrates responsibility and careful thought in relation to working together on behalf of people and their safety. We are all familiar with the reports of the International Panel on Climate Change, which clearly state that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is the result of human activity. Climate issues have become the geopolitical and economic priority of the 21st century, a priority which requires decisions that are both bold and based on long-term measures.

To achieve world consensus, it is necessary to define climate treaties which will build new models for the reduction of greenhouse gases after 2012. The Kyoto Protocol was the first step to changing the mentality of world governments on the question of environmental protection. We should continue with this way of thinking. The point is, however, that we cannot confine ourselves to reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of developed countries such as the USA and China.

It is essential to support smaller, poorer countries, which have problems with the introduction of alternative, green energy sources. This is not only a matter of financial support, but also of education and sharing experience in the creation of green economies. When making decisions, we should also think of the citizens. We should inform and educate them, and persuade them to invest in protecting the environment. As with every political measure in the area of safety, the support and cooperation of the citizens is indispensable.

**Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FI) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, new results from research into the progress of climate change are obtained daily, and they suggest that the change is advancing all the time, and faster than was previously predicted. If we are to preserve the earth in the state that life here has adapted to, we will have to establish a carbon-neutral economy by the year 2050. In the light of these studies, the EU's climate targets cannot be called too ambitious. Everyone knows how serious the problem is. Nevertheless, time is still spent debating whether we are a hundred per cent certain that humans are causing climate change or not. This unwillingness to take the right action is incomprehensible, especially as, for a long time now, we have known how to implement change and we have been familiar with the technologies required to do so, at the same time improving the quality of life using new technology. There is a psychological explanation for this inertia. Some of our behavioural models are doggedly opposed to change, while the rest only change slowly. The only problem is that we have no time left. One of the biggest issues at the end of this year is the EU's readiness to work with determination to ensure that the agreement reached at Copenhagen measures up to the climate challenge. The Union must clearly commit to a 30% cut in emissions by 2020 and an 80% cut by 2050. Part of the agreement will be a credible promise given by the EU to help the developing countries with information and technology transfers and adequate sums of money in assistance.

**Rovana Plumb (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Over the next 50 years, climate change will have a significant impact on important economic sectors such as agriculture, energy, transport, ecosystems, tourism and health.

Climate change will also affect households, companies and certain sections of society, especially the elderly, people with disabilities and low income families. The EU is determined to take prompt action to cut greenhouse gas emissions. However, it is not enough to cut greenhouse gas emissions to alleviate the impact of climate change. Additional action is required to alleviate this problem in the short term.

The effects of climate change are expected to be more significant than was envisaged and they will appear, regardless of the measures implemented to alleviate them. Consequently, measures are required to strengthen

the resistance of natural and human systems in standing up to the impact of climate change, in other words, adaptation policies.

These policies are being applied in the EU, but policies are also required at a global level. This is why the Copenhagen conference must be an international success. We need to have a global solidarity pact for developing green economies by promoting certain clean technologies which will guarantee jobs, as well as protect the environment and the population's health.

**Pavel Poc (S&D), in writing.** – (CS) The EU is a world leader in the fight against climate change. This position clearly gives us a responsibility to help the developing countries. When we provide assistance, we must be responsible to a high degree for its consequences. If developing countries are to be given EUR 30 billion a year for their efforts to alleviate the effects of climate change, then the aim of this measure must be climate justice and solidarity. We cannot permit an aim or an outcome that would ignite new tension through new distortions in social and political development. The links between developing countries and the developed world are complex. When handing over resources, we need to look at all of the potential impacts of the development aid, including political and population-related consequences. The greatest proportion of the resources should be targeted on supporting education and the information society. Even in the European Parliament, not everyone is convinced that climate change is a real threat. If there is no understanding of the reality of climate change and its consequences in the target countries, our assistance will amount to nothing more than a bribe paid out for our prosperity to the governments of those countries whose inhabitants lack such prosperity. If the ambitious goals of the EU are not appropriately reflected by the other major parties - the USA, China, India and the countries of South and Central America - it will be necessary for the EU to concentrate on strengthening its internal adaptation measures and mechanisms, especially in relation to the health and security of EU inhabitants.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), in writing.** – The negotiations in Copenhagen on financing to developing countries will be crucial if this summit is to be successful. Already, some African countries have said they will not be able to commit to the kind of deal we need at Copenhagen if it does not contain suitable measures for financing of mitigation and adaptation in developing countries. There are two key points here - the first is that the public money given to these developing countries must be new, additional money and should not come from existing aid budgets. The second point is that it is not just public money which can be used in this context; in addition to providing aid directly, steps can be taken to encourage private sector investment in low-carbon economies. The extent to which the private sector is prepared to invest in developing countries will depend on international agreements on Emission Trading Schemes. Agreements on this issue will provide the policy coherence and stability which give the private sector the confidence to invest properly in developing countries. The negotiations must therefore aim for both comprehensive commitments regarding public financing and concrete measures to secure private sector investment.

*(The sitting was suspended at 11.55 a.m. and resumed at 12 noon)*

#### IN THE CHAIR: MR PITTELLA

*Vice-President*

### 6. Corrigendum (Rule 216): see Minutes

### 7. Voting time

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

*(For details of the outcome of the vote: see Minutes)*

#### 7.1. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Statute (A7-0026/2009, Herbert Reul) (vote)

#### 7.2. Obsolete Council acts in the field of the common agricultural policy (A7-0018/2009, Paolo De Castro) (vote)



**7.3. Delegation of the tasks of laboratory testing (A7-0017/2009, Paolo De Castro) (vote)**

**7.4. Reduced rates of excise duty in Madeira and the Azores (A7-0039/2009, Danuta Maria Hübner) (vote)**

**7.5. Conservation of wild birds (codified version) (A7-0024/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.6. Appliances burning gaseous fuels (codified version) (A7-0025/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.7. Provision of audiovisual media services (codified version) (A7-0029/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.8. Protection of workers against asbestos (codified version) (A7-0033/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.9. Veterinary checks on animals entering the Community from third countries (codified version) (A7-0028/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.10. Collection network for accountancy data on agricultural holdings (codified version) (A7-0031/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.11. Animal health conditions on intra-Community trade in and imports of poultry and eggs (codified version) (A7-0027/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.12. Pure-bred breeding animals of the bovine species (codified version) (A7-0032/2009, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg) (vote)**

**7.13. Agreement between the EC and Mauritius on the short-stay visa waiver (A7-0019/2009, Simon Busuttil) (vote)**

**7.14. Agreement between the EC and Seychelles on the short-stay visa waiver (A7-0012/2009, Simon Busuttil) (vote)**

**7.15. Agreement between the EC and Barbados on the short-stay visa waiver (A7-0013/2009, Simon Busuttil) (vote)**

**7.16. Agreement between the EC and Saint Kitts and Nevis on the short-stay visa waiver (A7-0014/2009, Simon Busuttil) (vote)**

**7.17. Agreement between the EC and Antigua and Barbuda on the short-stay visa waiver (A7-0015/2009, Simon Busuttil) (vote)**

**7.18. Agreement between the EC and The Bahamas on the short-stay visa waiver (A7-0016/2009, Simon Busuttil) (vote)**

**7.19. Draft amending budget 9/2009: earthquake in Italy (A7-0023/2009, Jutta Haug) (vote)**

**7.20. Mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (Germany) (A7-0022/2009, Reimer Böge) (vote)**

**7.21. Request for waiver of the immunity of Mr Marek Siwiec (A7-0030/2009, Diana Wallis) (vote)**

**7.22. Evaluation mechanism to monitor the application of the Schengen acquis (A7-0035/2009, Carlos Coelho) (vote)**

*- After the vote on the Commission proposal:*

**Karel De Gucht**, *Member of the Commission*. – (FR) Mr President, yesterday, my colleague, the Vice-President of the Commission, Mr Barrot, stressed that the aim of the proposals is to communitise the evaluation mechanism and to make it more effective, while maintaining mutual confidence among the Member States.

The Commission is convinced that Parliament should be involved in the Schengen evaluation, which is not the case at present. The citizens must have access to the results of these evaluations.

However, in accordance with the treaties in force, it is not possible to involve Parliament by way of codecision. The Commission therefore stands by its proposals on the basis of the treaties in force.

Nevertheless, once the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force, the matter will be reopened and the Commission will decide, when the time comes, what it considers to be the most appropriate legal basis for the proposed mechanism, and will involve the European Parliament as fully as possible.

The Commission could therefore submit amended or new proposals depending on the situation.

**Carlos Coelho**, *rapporteur*. – (PT) I appreciate the clarifications given by the European Commission, but would like to remind the House that, as was made clear during the debate, although the Legal Service of the European Parliament recognised the legitimacy of the legal basis of the Commission's initiative, it also said that, based on the Treaty in force, the European Commission could have taken the same initiative based on a legal formula according to the European Parliament the power of codecision.

As this was not the case, I propose that the initiative should be returned to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs so that the Commission can rethink its initiative. Then, within the term set out in Rule 56 of our Rules of Procedure, we in Parliament can expect to receive an initiative from the Commission that respects codecision and gives this European Parliament the power it deserves to intervene in upholding greater security within the Schengen Area.

**President**. – Thank you, Mr Coelho. There is no need to vote on this request because, once the Commission has decided to maintain its proposal, that proposal is automatically referred back to committee, as Mr Coelho asked.

**7.23. Evaluation mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen acquis (A7-0034/2009, Carlos Coelho) (vote)**

*- After the vote on the Commission proposal:*

**Karel De Gucht**, *Member of the Commission*. – (FR) Mr President, the scenario is the same. Therefore, the Commission's position is identical.

**President**. – Well then, I think that obviously this second report will also be referred back to committee, as the European Commission has decided to maintain its proposal.

## 8. Explanations of vote

### *Oral explanations of vote*

#### **- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0013/2009)**

**Antonio Masip Hidalgo (S&D).** – (ES) Mr President, I voted in favour of the reports on The Bahamas, Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Seychelles. In these reports, I like the elements of overcoming the bureaucratic processes of agreements, freedom of movement of citizens and the reciprocal nature that all of these actions must have.

However, with the utmost respect for all of these sovereign countries that are our friends, I would like to take advantage of the good relationships that are demonstrated by these agreements to help all of these countries which, I repeat, are sovereign and our friends, to immunise themselves against a pandemic that is even more deadly than the flu: tax havens. This has already been debated in the G20 and many other forums.

Tax havens have contributed very significantly and unfortunately to the economic crisis that we are experiencing. Something is being done, perhaps not much yet, to eradicate the most active tax havens, but let us not be naïve. Others could start up.

In Spain, the Gürtel case is in the news: not only a huge network of corruption but also one of flight of capital. Therefore, representatives of the Commission and the Council, let us take advantage of these agreements to insist on this immunisation which we have to demand sooner or later in order to have a broader and more radical policy against tax havens.

#### **- Report: Carlos Coelho (A7-0034/2009)**

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, the Schengen Treaty resulted in a qualitative change across the territory of the majority of countries in the European Union. Even though such a short time has passed since it came into force, we often forget what Europe was like when it had borders and the difficulties associated with moving from one Member State to another. The Schengen agreement is another success of our integration but it also bears a great responsibility. Responsibility for a significant part of our land borders has been assumed by the new Member States.

As well as the positive aspects, there are also negative ones, because excessive restrictions have been introduced on the movement of the residents of countries which share a border with the EU, and this means mainly the new countries, such as Poland and Latvia. As a result of these difficulties, there are, among others, serious restrictions on movement across our eastern borders. A new division has arisen, a kind of barrier between countries which had and have close relations resulting from a shared history, family connections and, above all, because they are neighbours.

In accordance with the provisions of Schengen, a common system of internal control has been introduced, and is being applied by the appropriate services in the countries of the European Union which are signatories to the agreement. It would appear, however, that this system of control is being applied with undue severity, which does not help to build a positive image of the unity of the European Union.

### *Written explanations of vote*

#### **- Report: Herbert Reul (A7-0026/2009)**

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE), in writing.** – (RO) I voted in favour of this report. I fully support the conclusion of the Statute of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) by the European Community. This body's main objective is to promote good practices in the renewable energy sector, both within the European Union and globally. The agency's Statute stipulates that it will promote and support the use of renewable resources throughout the world.

The Community's conclusion of the Statute of this agency will enable it to enjoy better, direct access to information about the activities going on in the renewable energy sector, both at European and global level. At the same time, its status as a member of the agency will allow it to reinforce the monitoring of the progress being made by Member States towards fulfilling the mandatory renewable energy objective by 2020.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D), in writing.** – I have voted for this report. Currently, there is no coordinated renewable energy strategy on both a European and world scale. For this reason, there is a big gap between

the countries which have achieved major progress and success in renewable energy and countries which are still lagging behind in this area.

If we want to accelerate the process of increasing the share of renewable energy sources, different countries should act in a coordinated way and leading countries should share their best practice. This agency, I think, would embark upon those goals and would give a new impetus and direction to renewable energy in general.

**Maria da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) I welcome the fact that the European Community is now represented in the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). The International Renewable Energy Agency aims to promote the adoption and the sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy, taking into account their contribution to the conservation of the environment, climate protection, economic growth and social cohesion (especially poverty reduction and sustainable development), the accessibility and security of energy supply, regional development and intergenerational responsibility.

The agency also aims to provide technical, financial and political advice to the governments of developing countries, thus contributing to their process of transition to a low-carbon society.

The use of renewable energy is one of the key objectives of the EU's climate and energy package. This agency will contribute to implementing the package's objectives, especially the aim of increasing the proportion of renewable energy used to 20% of total energy consumption by 2020.

**David Casa (PPE), in writing.** – IRENA was officially established on 26 January 2009. The purpose of this organisation is to become the headquarters for promoting a rapid transition towards the use of sustainable energy. The Statute of this organisation has been concluded. It is vital that this organisation starts to function as quickly as possible. I am in favour of the adoption of the Statute that has been presented and, hence, voted in favour of the report.

**Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), in writing.** – I support the conclusion of the Statute of the International Renewable Energy Agency by the European Community. The International Renewable Energy Agency aims to become a centre of excellence for renewable energy, which will enable it to help governments harness renewable energy sources, to disseminate know-how and best practice, and to provide training in this field. It is thus desirable for the Community to be represented in an institution whose goals coincide with an area of its competence, and whose Statute has already been signed by 20 Member States.

**Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) Portugal is the sixth most energy-dependent country in the EU 27, so investment in 'clean tech' is of prime importance.

I advocate a national renewable energy plan, with particular emphasis on wind power, wave energy (given the exceptional conditions offered by the Portuguese coast), solar-thermal and photovoltaic energy and microgeneration.

I am also in favour of researching and developing methods, technologies and strategies for the storage of surplus renewable energy.

I advocate an energy policy that takes account of economic challenges and social needs, while promoting sustainable development, without generating an environmental cost to be borne by future generations.

My abiding concern has always been to limit our energy dependence, and I am sure that the way forward is to support and develop renewable energy, so I welcome the fact that Portugal is a founding member of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

That is also why I support the European Community's endorsement of the Statute of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

**Rovana Plumb (S&D), in writing.** – (RO) In voting for this report, I want to emphasise the importance of creating this international organisation which will promote and support the use of renewable resources throughout the world, bearing in mind the benefits which can be derived from their contribution to protecting the environment and climate, economic growth and social cohesion, including reducing poverty, as well as to guaranteeing energy supply security and regional development.

At the Bonn Conference in January 2009, Romania, which was the first country to sign up, was appointed vice-chair of this first session. It was also invited to join IRENA's administrative committee, the core element which is acting temporarily as the Agency's secretariat until it begins to operate properly. At the moment, 137 states have signed the Statute, including 24 EU Member States.

**- Report: Paolo De Castro (A7-0018/2009)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report on the proposal for a Council regulation repealing certain obsolete Council acts in the field of the common agricultural policy, as it is necessary to eliminate acts that are no longer relevant from the *acquis communautaire* in order to improve the transparency and legal certainty of the Community's legislation, in view of the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making by the European Parliament, Council and Commission. This was recently reaffirmed in the Commission's communication entitled 'A simplified CAP for Europe – a success for all'; I am responsible for the European Parliament report on this communication, on behalf of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament. Within the scope of this strategy, therefore, it is worth removing acts that no longer have any real effect from the legislation in force.

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – Due to the vast quantity of European legislation, it becomes essential that any defunct material is efficiently repealed. In view of this, I have voted in favour of this report.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I believe it is essential that all stakeholders in the common agricultural policy (CAP) should be aware of the legal framework in place and the rules that apply at any particular time.

I accept that legal certainty requires that obsolete acts do not remain in force indefinitely in the Community's legal system.

Given the fundamental importance of the CAP for the governments and citizens of the Union, I argue that it should be as simple and clear as possible in terms of its implementation and the rules in force.

The CAP is central to the life of the Union, is of enormous practical importance, and cannot be a tangle of rules, regulations, acts and decisions that no longer apply, or it will not be effective.

In view of all the above, I support the Commission's proposal to repeal obsolete acts in the field of the common agricultural policy.

**Alan Kelly (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The issue voted on refers to the need of the European Institutions to repeal Council Acts which have, through the passage of time and the development of technology, become obsolete and irrelevant to the correct functioning of the Union. This vote refers to certain Council Acts in the field of the Common Agricultural Policy. I believe that certain aspects of the CAP have long been in need of review. If the policy is to be correctly implemented and used for the benefit of European citizens, the Acts which it has created must be relevant to the world of agriculture as it is today. It is also my firm belief that something must be done to rid the Union of its red-tape image amongst the people of Europe. Acts such as these serve simply to confuse, without serving any real purpose. Aspects of EU policy such as this tarnish the image of the Union amongst its citizens and discourage people from interacting with it. In conclusion, it is my firm belief that if the Union wishes to remain relevant, then modernisation of its laws and policies must always be voted in favour of.

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) It was with great pleasure that I voted in favour of adoption of the resolution on a regulation repealing certain obsolete acts in the field of the CAP, because we keep hearing that we have too much regulation in the EU, with negative consequences for the correct functioning of the market economy. This is particularly true of the CAP, in which, despite the introduction of many simplifications and the elimination of a host of regulations, many unnecessary acts remain in force.

Many of these acts no longer produce any legal effects, while the content of others has been embodied in subsequent documents. This creates a huge burden of time and cost for our farmers, and requires extensive administration. Therefore, I think that further updating, consolidation and simplification of EU law is essential, as is the repeal of a great many unnecessary legal acts, so that the provisions which are in force are simple, clear and understandable. This will bring the European Union closer to its citizens.

**Oldřich Vlasák (ECR)**, *in writing*. – (CS) I would like to explain my vote on the draft Council Regulation repealing a number of obsolete Council Acts relating to the Common Agricultural Policy. During the process of European integration, many acts were passed in the European Parliament and the Council. At the time of our accession to the EU, the *acquis communautaire* numbered almost 80 000 pages of text, half of which related to agriculture. It is therefore a good thing that EU bodies have agreed on an interinstitutional basis that Community law must be updated and condensed.

Laws that have no lasting significance should be eliminated from the *acquis communautaire* in order to improve the transparency and certainty of Community law. The Commission lately declared 250 agricultural laws

obsolete. We are now talking about 28 acts that have no use from a practical perspective but which still formally exist, and six acts that are obsolete. Although I supported this draft, I strongly believe that there are still further opportunities for slimming down European law and cutting back the Brussels bureaucracy and I am therefore asking the Commission to continue its work on the simplification of European law.

**- Report: Paolo De Castro (A7-0017/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – Laboratory tests must be carried out in order to identify harmful organisms that are not present within the EU. The regulations currently in place do not allow for certain laboratories to which such work can be delegated to take on this work due to the fact that they fall short of Article 2(1)(g)(ii) of Directive 2000/29/EC. I am in favour of allowing such laboratories to conduct this kind of work so long as certain conditions are complied with. Therefore, I have voted in favour of this report.

**- Report: Danuta Maria Hübner (A7-0039/2009)**

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the report which authorises Portugal to apply reduced rates of excise duty in the Azores and Madeira on locally produced and consumed liqueurs, eaux-de-vie and rum, because I see this as an important way of supporting the subsistence of the small industries in the sector involved in producing such goods, which are in a very unfavourable competitive position, faced with the liberalisation of markets and the growing sales of spirits in these regions.

The reduction of this tax will also contribute to a greater economic and social balance in these regions, thus ensuring the sustainability and even the creation of jobs, which are crucial for safeguarding the local economies.

**John Attard-Montalto (S&D)**, *in writing*. – The Government of Malta should follow similar initiatives for the island of Gozo. All EU Member States which have island regions have applied for similar measures and have been given the opportunity by the EU to take such special measures. The measures themselves differ from island region to island region. They have, however, one thing in common: that is, to provide economic comfort to balance the negative aspects of island regions. The island of Gozo suffers from severe handicaps including double insularity, remoteness, small size and difficult topography. Countries much larger than Malta, such as Portugal, Italy and Greece, have been able to obtain special measures so as to provide attractive incentives to island regions. The smaller islands of the Maltese archipelago are particularly vulnerable.

The island of Gozo needs the assistance through the introduction of similar special measures. It is the duty of the Maltese Government to identify which special measures would be best suited and, subsequently, to apply to the EU to adopt such measures. It is up to the Government of Malta to reduce the hardships especially prevalent on the island of Gozo.

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This is an extension of the 2002 tax derogation given to Portugal in respect of certain autonomous regions. I am in favour of such extension and have therefore voted in favour of this report.

**Edite Estrela (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the Hübner report on the proposal for a Council decision authorising Portugal to apply reduced rates of excise duty in the autonomous region of Madeira on locally produced and consumed rum and liqueurs and in the autonomous region of the Azores on locally produced and consumed liqueurs and eaux-de-vie. Bearing in mind the specific features of these outermost regions, I believe that this extension is vital for the survival of the local industry in these products and for the protection of employment in this sector.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In view of the importance to agriculture and, consequently, the economy and employment in the Portuguese Autonomous Regions of Madeira and the Azores, of the production of rum and eaux-de-vie respectively, as well as liqueurs in both regions, it is essential that the reduced rates of excise duty on these goods should continue to apply, as this will not lead to a situation of unfair competition within the internal market.

The increase in retail price brought about by elimination of these rates of excise duty would make these products even less competitive compared with similar products imported from the rest of the EU and would therefore threaten the subsistence of the traditional products. It would have a disastrous effect on local industry and the regional economy at a socio-economic level, due to the impact that it would have on the family-run farms in those regions.

**Nuno Teixeira (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The proposal approved in today's plenary sitting by an overwhelming majority allows for an extension to the concession granted in 2002 authorising Portugal to apply reduced rates of excise duty in Madeira on locally produced and consumed rum and liqueurs and in the Azores on locally produced and consumed liqueurs and eaux-de-vie. Since the beginning of this process, I have done everything possible to ensure that this measure, which had expired at the end of 2008, would be renewed as a matter of urgency. Having secured the unanimous support of the Committee on Regional Development, this result was confirmed by today's vote, which maintains the tax reduction with effect from January 2009 until 2013.

Madeira's rum and liqueur producers face permanent obstacles related to their outermost geographical position, insularity, difficult terrain and climate, and the smallness of their farms. If they ceased to benefit from this concession, they would be forced to raise their prices, which would impact on their activity and the employment that it generates, with dire consequences for the region.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0024/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This consists of a simple codification of texts without any change to their substance. I am in favour of such codification and have therefore voted in favour of this report.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0025/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This is once again a codification without any alteration of substance, of which I am in favour, and I have therefore voted in favour of this report.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0029/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This consists of a simple codification of already existing texts and I have therefore voted in favour.

**Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the broadcasting of television programmes is vital for the creation of a media space where the main theme is unity in diversity. It is just as important for us to be able to make European legislation as accessible as possible to all citizens. The report on the proposal for the Audiovisual Media Services Directive in its codified form, tabled before the plenary session, is purely a technical and legal measure whose benefits are, however, unquestionable. Codifying legislation which is constantly changing is a measure that gives Community law greater clarity and transparency, making it easier for EU citizens to understand. In this case, the codification proposal involves replacing the old 1989 directive with a new directive (without modifying the content) to which the acts that have supplemented it over the years have been added. I supported this initiative because, apart from its technical nature, we cannot overlook its value in supporting the proper operation of audiovisual media services, not to mention in terms of transparency as well.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I concur with the text of this report since pluralism of information ought to be a fundamental principle of the European Union. Diversification of mass media leads to a proliferation of points of view, which is an essential feature in a democratic society.

This argument also has an economic element. Conventional audiovisual media services (such as television) and those which have recently emerged (for example, video on demand) offer major employment opportunities in Europe, particularly through small- and medium-sized enterprises which will, in turn, boost economic growth and investment.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0033/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This concerns the codification of legislation concerning the protection of workers from exposure to asbestos. I am in favour of such codification and have hence voted in favour.

**Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Like the majority of my fellow Members, I voted in favour of making Community legislation clearer and more transparent. Indeed, by adopting this resolution, the European Parliament has supported the European Commission's desire to 'clean up' the texts by codifying the legislation on the protection of workers against asbestos. This resolution will mean that these rules, which are necessary for workers, can be applied better.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0028/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This concerns the codification of legislation concerning veterinary checks on animals entering the EU, and I have therefore voted in favour.

**Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Ladies and gentlemen, I welcome the approval of the report by Mrs Geringer de Oedenberg concerning the draft Council Directive establishing principles for the organisation of veterinary checks on animals entering the EU from third countries. The new directive will clearly contribute towards the clarification and better understanding of the extensive current legal arrangements in this area. The directive concentrates on codifying laws without amending their actual content.

From the perspective of Europe's citizens, a simplification and clarification of Community law contributes to greater legal certainty and, in my opinion, the codification carried out in the directive is therefore a step in the right direction, leading to the effective application of positive law. At the same time, I agree that a harmonisation of principles at the Community level will contribute not only towards guaranteeing security of supply, but also towards the stabilisation of an internal market where internal border controls have been removed and towards protecting animals entering the Community.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Under the current regulations, where a shipment that violates animal protection laws is discovered, the authorities must, following a 'seizure' for animal protection reasons, hand back to the owner any unvaccinated animal young that have been separated from their mothers much too early once the problem has been rectified. In practice, of course, this situation is shamelessly exploited.

This codification would be a good opportunity to amend the EU Transport Regulation so that pups could be seized on a permanent basis in the case of shipments that are not in accordance with the rules, thereby closing this back door. Unfortunately, we have allowed this opportunity to be missed. All the same, the codification overall does seem to effect an improvement of the regulations on animal protection, for which reason I voted in favour of the report.

**Franz Obermayr (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Given that nutrition is a significant factor in the health of the population and that animals are among the essential food products, it is particularly important that comprehensive protection is provided in this regard, and this should be effected, amongst other things, by means of veterinary checks. These veterinary checks are particularly important at the external borders of the Community, especially given that the standards in this regard in these third countries are often not as high as the European level.

This requires more purposeful, more uniform and clearer regulations in order to ensure that comparable import checks are carried out at all the external borders. The current Commission proposal for a codified version of the Council Directive laying down the principles governing the organisation of veterinary checks on animals entering the Community from third countries is a step in this direction and therefore has my backing.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0031/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This is a codification without any substantial changes and therefore I have voted in favour.

**Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Like the majority of my fellow Members, I voted in favour of making the legislation on a network for the collection of accountancy data on the incomes and business operations of agricultural holdings clearer and more transparent in order to improve this legislation and, above all, to make the text more readable.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0027/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This report consists of a simple codification of legislation on animal health conditions in the sphere of intra-Community trade. I am in favour of such codification and have voted in favour of this report.

**Franz Obermayr (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Rearing poultry, for one thing, forms a significant part of economic activities in the agricultural sector, where it represents a source of income for some of the agricultural workforce. For another, eggs and poultry are amongst the commonest foodstuffs. For these reasons, trade involving these goods should also be clearly and uniformly regulated, amongst other things, in order to protect the health of the citizens.



The current Commission proposal for a codified version of the Council Directive on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in, and imports from third countries of, poultry and eggs for hatching is in the interests of those working in agriculture and those trading in this field, as well as of the citizens of the EU as consumers, for which reason I support it.

**- Report: Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (A7-0032/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This is a codification without any substantial change and therefore I have voted in favour.

**- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0019/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This provides for visa-free travel between Mauritius and Member States of the EU. I am in favour of such an agreement and have therefore voted in favour of the report.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I support this agreement negotiated between the European Community and the Republic of Mauritius, establishing a visa exemption for entry and short stays in order to facilitate the movement of their citizens. EU citizens and Mauritian nationals who travel to the territory of the other contracting party for a maximum period of three months within a six-month period will be exempt from visa requirements. The exceptions are the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which are not bound by this agreement, and a territorial restriction with respect to France and the Netherlands, for which this agreement only relates to those countries' European territories.

I would point out that anyone who travels with the aim of carrying out a paid activity during a short stay cannot benefit from this agreement, and continues to be subject to the applicable rules of the Community and of each Member State in relation to the visa requirement or waiver and also access to employment. The agreement may be suspended or repealed, but that decision can only be made in relation to all the Member States. I also support the provisional implementation of the agreement pending its entry into force.

**Franz Obermayr (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) This agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Mauritius envisages visa-free travel where citizens of the Contracting Parties travel to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of three months during a six-month period.

I am voting against the conclusion of this agreement as the retention of the requirement for a visa represents a certain check on unwanted immigration, whereas a lifting of the visa requirement for stays of up to three months would provide sufficient time for those who, in reality, plan to stay for a prolonged period to build up social networks.

**- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0012/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This provides for visa-free travel between the Seychelles and Member States of the EU. I am in favour of such an agreement and have therefore voted in favour of the report.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I support this agreement negotiated between the European Community and the Republic of the Seychelles, establishing a visa exemption for entry and short stays in order to facilitate the movement of their citizens. EU citizens and Seychelles nationals who travel to the territory of the other contracting party for a maximum period of three months within a six-month period will be exempt from visa requirements. The exceptions are the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which are not bound by this agreement, and a territorial restriction with respect to France and the Netherlands, for which this agreement only relates to those countries' European territories.

I would point out that anyone who travels with the aim of carrying out a paid activity during a short stay cannot benefit from this agreement, and continues to be subject to the applicable rules of the Community and of each Member State in relation to the visa requirement or waiver and also access to employment. The agreement may be suspended or repealed, but that decision can only be made in relation to all the Member States. I also support the provisional implementation of the agreement pending its entry into force.

**- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0013/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This provides for visa-free travel between Barbados and Member States of the EU. I am in favour of such an agreement and have therefore voted in favour of the report.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) I support this agreement negotiated between the European Community and Barbados, establishing a visa exemption for entry and short stays in order to facilitate the movement of their citizens. EU citizens and nationals of Barbados who travel to the territory of the other contracting party for a maximum period of three months within a six-month period will be exempt from visa requirements. The exceptions are the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which are not bound by this agreement, and a territorial restriction with respect to France and the Netherlands, for which this agreement only relates to those countries' European territories.

I would point out that anyone who travels with the aim of carrying out a paid activity during a short stay cannot benefit from this agreement, and continues to be subject to the applicable rules of the Community and of each Member State in relation to the visa requirement or waiver and also access to employment. The agreement may be suspended or repealed, but that decision can only be made in relation to all the Member States. I also support the provisional implementation of the agreement pending its entry into force.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing.** – (DE) The reports before us in connection with the agreements between the European Community and numerous small island nations such as Mauritius and Barbados envisage a visa waiver where citizens of the Contracting Parties travel to the territory of the other Contracting Party for a maximum period of three months during a six-month period. I reject these relaxations of entry requirements and therefore voted against the conclusion of these agreements as the retention of the requirement for a visa certainly represents an obstacle to criminality and thus severely restricts unwanted immigration.

It is, furthermore, to be assumed that those who stay in the EU for three months on the basis of such visa waivers would make numerous contacts which they could then potentially use to descend into illegality. A rise in illegal criminal activity must be avoided at all costs.

**- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0014/2009)**

**Carlos Coelho (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) I support this agreement negotiated between the European Community and the Federation of St Kitts and Nevis, establishing a visa exemption for entry and short stays in order to facilitate the movement of their citizens. EU citizens and the nationals of the Federation who travel to the territory of the other contracting party for a maximum period of three months within a six-month period will be exempt from visa requirements. The exceptions are the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which are not bound by this agreement, and a territorial restriction with respect to France and the Netherlands, for which this agreement only relates to those countries' European territories.

I would point out that anyone who travels with the aim of carrying out a paid activity during a short stay cannot benefit from this agreement, and continues to be subject to the applicable rules of the Community and of each Member State in relation to the visa requirement or waiver and also access to employment. The agreement may be suspended or repealed, but that decision can only be made in relation to all the Member States. I also support the provisional implementation of the agreement pending its entry into force.

**- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0015/2009)**

**Carlos Coelho (PPE), in writing.** – (PT) I support this agreement negotiated between the European Community and Antigua and Barbuda, establishing a visa exemption for entry and short stays in order to facilitate the movement of their citizens. EU citizens and nationals of Antigua and Barbuda who travel to the territory of the other contracting party for a maximum period of three months within a six-month period will be exempt from visa requirements. The exceptions are the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which are not bound by this agreement, and a territorial restriction with respect to France and the Netherlands, for which this agreement only relates to those countries' European territories.

I would point out that anyone who travels with the aim of carrying out a paid activity during a short stay cannot benefit from this agreement, and continues to be subject to the applicable rules of the Community and of each Member State in relation to the visa requirement or waiver and also access to employment. The agreement may be suspended or repealed, but that decision can only be made in relation to all the Member States. I also support the provisional implementation of the agreement pending its entry into force.

**- Report: Simon Busuttil (A7-0016/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE), in writing.** – This provides for visa-free travel between the Bahamas and Member States of the EU. I am in favour of such an agreement and have therefore voted in favour of the report.

**Carlos Coelho (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I support this agreement negotiated between the European Community and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, establishing a visa exemption for entry and short stays in order to facilitate the movement of their citizens. EU citizens and nationals of the Bahamas who travel to the territory of the other contracting party for a maximum period of three months within a six-month period will be exempt from visa requirements. The exceptions are the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, which are not bound by this agreement, and a territorial restriction with respect to France and the Netherlands, for which this agreement only relates to those countries' European territories.

I would point out that anyone who travels with the aim of carrying out a paid activity during a short stay cannot benefit from this agreement, and continues to be subject to the applicable rules of the Community and of each Member State in relation to the visa requirement or waiver and also access to employment. The agreement may be suspended or repealed, but that decision can only be made in relation to all Member States. I also support the provisional implementation of the agreement pending its entry into force.

**- Report: Jutta Haug (A7-0023/2009)**

**Gerard Batten (EFD)**, *in writing*. – UKIP MEPs abstained because we do not believe that the European Union should be responsible for sending taxpayers' money to the victims of the Italian earthquake. We have every sympathy with those victims and believe that such donations should come from national governments or charities.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) As I pointed out earlier with regard to Reimer Böge's report (A7-0021/2009) about the earthquake in the Abruzzi, I believe that solidarity between Member States of the European Union and European support for States that are the victims of disasters provide a clear signal that the European Union, in adopting instruments of special aid like the European Union Solidarity Fund, shows itself capable of remaining united in adversity, and this is something of which we can indeed feel proud.

Thus, in view of the possibility that the Commission may submit amending budgets in the case of 'unavoidable, exceptional or unforeseen circumstances', which include the earthquake in Italy, I voted in favour of this report on the amendment to the European Union budget, so that the residents of the affected region will see the damage caused by the earthquake repaired more quickly, and a swift return to normal living conditions effected through the mobilisation of EUR 493.78 million from the EU Solidarity Fund.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Since the mobilisation of EUR 493 771 159 from the European Union Solidarity Fund has been approved in favour of Italy, and since this fund does not have its own budget, it is necessary to amend the Community budget to ensure that the amount agreed is made available. Although we agree upon the need to provide the funds as quickly as possible, we regret that the proposal presented by the European Commission implies, among other budget headings, a reduction in funding for important community programmes compared with the previous and current multiannual financial framework.

Examples of this include the projected reductions in the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance – Community programmes from the previous Community framework, 2002-2006 – or LIFE+, the Financial Instrument for the Environment. In our view, beyond the necessary adjustments to the Solidarity Fund to give it a budget heading with its own resources, it should not receive funding at the cost of the aforementioned Community programmes while, at the same time, there is an insistence on increasing expenditure for military and propaganda purposes. The funds now being allocated to the Solidarity Fund could preferably have been taken from those headings instead.

**Barry Madlener (NI)**, *in writing*. – (NL) The Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) is in favour of emergency assistance, but it is up to the individual Member States, not the European Union, to provide such assistance.

**- Report: Reimer Böge (A7-0022/2009)**

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I agree that there should be additional support for workers who suffer from the consequences of major structural changes in world trade patterns and to assist them with their reintegration into the labour market. It is essential that financial assistance to workers made redundant is made available as quickly as possible, and that European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) money, vital for the reintegration of redundant workers into the labour market, is used more effectively. I would like to underline that Member States should provide more detailed information on the implementation of important gender equality and non-discrimination objectives by means of EGF-financed measures.

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – This report is in favour of the mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. I agree that the mobilisation of this fund is necessary in this case and have therefore voted in favour of this report.

**Lena Ek, Marit Paulsen, Olle Schmidt and Cecilia Wikström (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) We are well aware of the negative effects of the economic crisis on the labour market and on society as a whole. We strongly sympathise with all those affected by the crisis and are pleased to see measures such as training that will help individuals overcome this. However, we are convinced that free trade is basically a force for good that benefits the development of Europe as a whole. We would therefore like to see the financial crisis being dealt with primarily by market-based means that promote free and fair trade.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Unemployment is one of the main problems affecting the European Economic Area. Even before the emergence of the current financial crisis, which has increased and aggravated some of the earlier symptoms, the serious impact of globalisation and the resulting relocation of businesses on many people's lives were clear to see. The particular difficulties of the times in which we are living are obvious when we add to these problems the present lack of confidence in the markets and the shrinking of investment. In that respect, although I am in favour of internal market regulation, I believe that the exceptional nature of the crisis justifies exceptional countermeasures.

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is one of the tools that the European Union has at its disposal for helping unemployed workers under these circumstances. I believe that the case of the workers from Nokia GmbH, in the German region of Bochum, justifies European aid, as was previously given in Portugal. Aside from this aid, which is undeniably useful, the European Union must also take steps to promote a more robust and creative European market that will generate investment and jobs. That is the only way to tackle this problem effectively, seriously and sustainably.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) This case was about responding to a request for assistance from Germany for redundancies in the telecommunications sector, especially among Nokia GmbH workers, which fulfilled the eligibility criteria set out in the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund regulation.

In reality, however, the mobilisation of this fund only alleviates some of the serious consequences of the economic and financial crisis. There needs to be a break with the neoliberal policies that are causing a real economic and social disaster in many countries of the European Union, particularly Portugal.

Although we voted for this report, we cannot fail to notice the insufficiency of its measures, which are mere palliatives, and the real injustice of the regulation, which is more favourable towards countries with higher incomes, particularly those with higher wages and unemployment benefits.

Therefore, we insist on policy change and the need for a real plan to support production and the creation of jobs with rights.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE)**, *in writing*. – Mr President, I voted in favour of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund's (EGF) investment of nearly EUR 5.6 million in Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia region, which has suffered from mass redundancies since the 1990's. As a result of the Finnish telecommunications company Nokia closing its production plant in Bochum in 2008 and relocating to more cost effective market areas, 2 300 more people in the region were made redundant. Being a Finn, I take a special interest in the plight of the workers who have lost their jobs due to the cessation of Nokia production in Bochum. The closure of the Nokia plant in Bochum was indeed the latest in a string of events compounding unemployment in the region. For this reason, I wholeheartedly welcome the investment from EGF in the region as a way of improving employment opportunities for the people of North Rhine-Westphalia.

**Jean-Luc Mélenchon (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (FR) It was with the Nokia employees and their unfair redundancies in mind that we voted for this text. We are anxious to stress, however, that we are not satisfied with having to vote for the best of a bad lot: help with job searches in the context of absurd mass redundancies on the part of the world's leading mobile telephone manufacturer, Nokia, redundancies described here as one of the hazards of a form of globalisation that we should just put up with.

We denounce this idea of globalisation 'adjustment', since this is how the European Union refers to social and human tragedies such as this, which see companies that post record profits relocate in order to make more profit, thus ruining the lives of hundreds of workers and an entire region. This charitable remedy (the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund) that is being proposed will not make people forget that the European Union is, in fact, directly responsible for the tragedy being suffered by the redundant employees,

because of its choice of free and fair competition. Rather than supporting these 'adjustments' to all the huge uncertainties of the globalised capitalist economy, the European Union should prohibit such practices and protect European citizens.

**Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) This report is in favour of mobilisation of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) following redundancies in Germany. I fully approve of mobilising this fund – we need it in this instance – and so, like the majority of my fellow Members, I voted in favour of this report. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund is one of the mechanisms that the European Union has available to it to help unemployed workers who have been made redundant as a result of the negative effects of globalisation. I believe that the case of the Nokia GmbH employees and of the German region of Bochum warrants mobilisation of European aid, just as it has already been mobilised previously for Portugal.

**- Report: Diana Wallis (A7-0030/2009)**

**David Casa (PPE)**, *in writing*. – Siwec was accused of insulting the religious beliefs of others during an event that took place a number of years ago. After reviewing the facts of the case, I believe that immunity should certainly not be waived. This is also the view of the rapporteur and therefore, I have voted in favour of the report.

**Ole Christensen, Dan Jørgensen and Christel Schaldemose (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (DA) In today's vote, we voted to waive Mr Siwec's immunity. That would mean that it would be possible for him to stand trial in Poland just like any other citizen. We have a great deal of sympathy for Mr Siwec and we agree, for what it is worth, that the case that has been launched against him is unfounded and politically motivated.

If, however, we believe that it should be possible for him to be tried in a court of law like everyone else, this is because we must have confidence that Poland respects the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law that are a precondition of being a Member State of the European Union. For the same reason, we always vote, as a matter of principle, to waive the immunity of Members of this House – irrespective of the actual case in question.

**- Report: Carlos Coelho (A7-0035/2009)**

**Elena Oana Antonescu (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) The creation of the Schengen area by waiving internal border controls and the introduction of free movement within the territory of the EU are among the most important achievements of the European Union. Taking into account border permeability, we need high standards when actually putting the Schengen acquis into practice in order to be able to maintain an increased level of mutual trust between Member States, which also includes in their ability to implement the measures accompanying the abolition of controls at internal borders.

We need to improve the evaluation mechanism for monitoring the application of the Schengen acquis. The need to maintain a high level of security and trust requires effective cooperation between the governments of Member States and the Commission.

Bearing in mind the importance of this legislative initiative and its relevance in terms of fundamental rights and freedoms, it is regrettable that the European Parliament is playing the role of consultant rather than colegislator, as ought to have been the case. Consequently, I voted to reject the Commission's legislative proposal.

**Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (LT) I voted for this report, as the rapporteur's position is in line with the principles of citizens' freedoms, justice and home affairs. The establishment of an evaluation mechanism is important for all Member States. Since the codecision procedure is not being considered, the European Commission's proposal limits opportunities for cooperation between the Member States. The proposal drafted recently by the European Commission will have to be amended once the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force.

**Diogo Feio (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The creation of a European area without border controls, through the Schengen Agreement, was an important step in constructing an open internal market with free movement of people and goods. However, if this area is to fulfil its potential, which I recognise, there needs to be a way of effectively evaluating its implementation by the various Member States.

I therefore agree with strengthening the powers for monitoring Schengen, particularly through assessments (questionnaires and local visits, both arranged beforehand and unannounced) and post-assessment measures,

so as to ensure adequate supervision of the way in which the various Member States operate, work together and control their external borders under the Schengen Agreement.

I am aware that any deficiency or malfunction in the system carries serious risks for the internal security of the Union and jeopardises the Schengen area itself as an area of freedom, yet also security.

I do not, however, agree with strengthening the Community-based nature of this assessment by bolstering the powers of the European Commission to the detriment of the intergovernmental system which has thus far prevailed in the Schengen Evaluation Group.

For this reason, I vote for rejection of the Commission's proposal.

**- Reports: Carlos Coelho (A7-0034/2009) and (A7-0035/2009)**

**Jacky Hénin (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (FR) We dare to speak of a Schengen acquis, but as someone who lives in Calais, I can confirm first-hand that, while the Schengen agreements have benefited the free movement of capital and goods, they still present a number of problems.

Beyond the pleasant utopia of a Europe without borders, we are faced every day with the tragic reality of Schengen: inhumane living conditions for migrants.

The Union and the Member States are doing little or nothing to deal with this tragedy. France, for its part, is disgracing itself by conducting media and police manhunts, such as the one in the 'jungle' of Calais.

Therefore, even in terms of strict humanitarian action, the European Union is totally lacking, leaving the local authorities alone to deal with the problems.

Let us stop crying crocodile tears and finally behave like responsible human beings. The situation unfolding in Calais is a major political problem for the Union. It will be resolved by neither the fortress Europe of Schengen nor by targeted humanitarian measures. We must stop free-trade policies, we must stop the free movement of capital, we must encourage food sovereignty, we must declare water and energy global public goods, and we must combat socio-economic inequalities.

## **9. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes**

*(The sitting was suspended at 12.30 and resumed at 15.05)*

**IN THE CHAIR: MR BUZEK**

*President*

## **10. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting: see Minutes**

## **11. Question Hour with the President of the Commission**

**President.** – The next item is the Question Hour with the President of the Commission.

*Free questions*

**Paulo Rangel, Vice-Chairman of the PPE Group.** – (PT) Mr President, President of the Commission, I would like to begin this first debate by congratulating you on this new instrument of political oversight and what it means for the advancement and development of parliamentary democracy in Europe. The winners in this will be Europe's citizens, through their representatives.

Bearing in mind the latest developments – the Irish referendum, ratification by Poland and the recent statements by the President of the Czech Republic – I ask what your assessment is of the process for the Treaty of Lisbon to come into force. Has the President of the Commission been taking any action? What is your projected date for the Treaty to come into force and, furthermore, with this provisional date in mind, has the Commission taken any steps as yet towards the transition of the treaties – from the Treaty of Nice to the Treaty of Lisbon – or are we still in a state of expectation, so to speak; are we waiting to see what will happen?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – (PT) Firstly, Mr Rangel, thank you for your greetings. I am very pleased to find this procedure now in the European Parliament. We also have it in Portugal, and I was involved in it both as leader of the opposition and as Prime Minister, and so I hope that this will prove to be a good opportunity for discussion with the honourable Members.

In response to the specific question asked, to me the matter is obvious: all the countries have already approved the Treaty of Lisbon in democratic terms. Ireland did it by referendum, the other countries through parliament. The process of ratification is still ongoing in the Czech Republic. We are awaiting the completion of the process in the Constitutional Court, but once that process is finished, we will have completed the ratification process definitively, because there is a general principle of law, European law and international law, and that is the principle of loyal cooperation between the Member States and the institutions, and also the principle of good faith in negotiating international agreements.

**Paulo Rangel, Vice-Chairman of the PPE Group.** – (PT) President of the Commission, having listened to your response, I would like to know the following: during this phase in which everyone is waiting for the formation of the Commission, what essentially is your own perspective on this? Will we just have an acting Commission up until the moment when the Czech Republic finally ratifies the Treaty, or will you proceed to appoint the new commissioners?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – (PT) The European Council has decided that it can only appoint new commissioners when there is legal clarity on the Treaty, and we have not yet completed this process.

Therefore, the Commission will just handle day-to-day business from November 1. Obviously, we hope that this process will be resolved as quickly as possible and we are preparing everything we possibly can for the new Commission, and will continue to do so. To be honest with you, honourable Members, the thing is that we do not have complete control over the timing; it does depend on the finalisation of the ratification process in the Czech Republic.

**Stephen Hughes, Vice-Chairman of the S&D Group.** – Unemployment could rise to 27 million in the European Union next year, turning this financial and economic crisis into a social crisis. In the light of this, would you now agree that the economic recovery plan agreed last December was not enough in itself? In particular, would you agree that there is a need for a further stimulus – the ETUC has suggested 1% of GDP – aimed at a positive entry strategy into the labour market that would be aimed at protecting viable employment and creating new jobs, in promoting intelligent work sharing?

What will you do at EU level to promote jobs in the green and youth sectors? It has been suggested, for example, that a single strategic platform should be created at a level to bring together all key actors to work together on growth, innovation and jobs in each sector and to coordinate existing instruments such as technology platforms, skills expert panels and joint technology initiatives. Would you agree that it would be a good idea for that to be implemented at European level?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – I think that without our economic recovery plan, the situation would be much, much worse. In fact, there was a real cushion effect on the measures taken. We estimated around 5% of European Union GDP was spent over 2009 and 2010, that is around EUR 550 billion. So I think something was, in fact, done. Let us be realistic about it.

I am in favour of all other efforts in terms of the combined platforms you have suggested to address the problems we face. Employment remains the most important problem. As you know, I have stated this several times and have, in fact, asked for a summit on employment. It was downgraded by some Member States. Probably you, Mr Hughes, can help us convince some Member States and governments that decided to downgrade that employment summit, because I believe employment is the most important problem that we have to face in the near future.

**Stephen Hughes, Vice-Chairman of the S&D Group.** – I will indeed work on those Member States. Just coming back to this idea of the level market entry strategy, would you agree that spending aimed at effectively reducing unemployment should not be seen as an additional burden on public finances but as a way to guarantee sustainability?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – And, in fact, that is what we have been doing. Some of the special measures that have been taken by Member States – look at *Kurzarbeit* in Germany for instance – have been to increase spending, while reducing productivity to some extent, which I think, from a social

point of view, was justified. I could say the same for the Welsh system which was approved in the United Kingdom. So there have indeed been good cases where, for social reasons, there has been more flexibility and more social spending, but that was a way of avoiding a further rise in unemployment, which remains my prime concern nowadays.

**Guy Verhofstadt**, *Chairman of the ALDE Group*. – (NL) Mr President, my question will come as no surprise to the President of the Commission. On Friday, Commissioner Kroes announced that there were significant indications that the German aid for Opel contravenes the European rules on State aid and the internal market and that it disadvantages plants in other countries. Günter Verheugen, on the other hand, could not see a problem; indeed, he said on the radio that Opel was already on the right track.

Yesterday, a fellow Member from the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) even asked that we blow the whistle on Commissioner Kroes. He spoke of her as a commissioner who was very controversial, who lacked objectivity, who was anti-German, who could not throw Europe into turmoil two weeks before the end of her term of office. In my view, Commissioner Kroes is just doing her job, and so my question to you is very simple, Commission President: will you support your commissioner Neelie Kroes, yes or no?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I have always supported my Commissioners, including Neelie Kroes. It was, of course, after having my consent that she took the decision – namely the contacts she had with the German Government asking for clarification. We are now waiting for a response from the undertakings involved.

I am grateful that, thanks to good cooperation, we are making very good progress in this case. I understand that, following the doubts the Commission expressed on the rightfulness of the bidding process, there will be a reassessment by GM and Opel Trust of the offers to buy Opel, based on commercial conditions. I am confident we can reach a solution that is compatible with European internal market and State aid rules.

I have very often said that we cannot make compromises on the issues of the internal market and competition rules in Europe. If we do, we will no longer have an internal market or our common European project.

**Guy Verhofstadt**, *Chairman of the ALDE Group*. – (NL) I have no further questions. I would only note that the President of the Commission has stated very clearly here that he, too, vouches for the letter sent by Commissioner Kroes, and that it also has the approval of the Commission as a whole. That is indeed important, as it means that Commissioner Verheugen should choose his words more carefully when he says that there are no problems. There either are or there are not.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – Not only did the letter have my support but before Mrs Kroes sent the letter, I told her to send a letter, so my position on those issues is very clear.

Mr Verhofstadt, let us be clear. We have three people in the Commission who have the right to give an opinion, but the positions of the Commission are the positions expressed by the President on behalf of the college and by the relevant Commissioner.

**Rebecca Harms**, *Co-Chairman of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, with great concern for a possible failure of the climate change negotiations in Copenhagen, this Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety yesterday re-affirmed old demands of the European Council and adopted them with great urgency and very strong support. The committee proposed that the Council should once again deal with the necessity of laying down a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target of 30% for the European Union, opening up the possibility of 40% for the industrialised nations, and it proposed – and this is key to the international negotiations – that Europe should provide EUR 30 billion for the climate fund for the developing countries by 2020. What will you do, what can you do, in order to bring these important, necessary and justified demands to the attention of the Council?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – As I said publicly at the high-level event in New York, and also in Pittsburgh, I am very worried at the slow pace of negotiations for Copenhagen.

There are three potential stumbling blocks for Copenhagen, relating not just to financing: the clear lack of ambition as regards emission reduction pledges from some developed countries outside the European Union; the reluctance of major developing countries – the big emerging economies – to come forward with convincing proposals for their mitigation actions; and also the absence of a solid financial offer by the developed countries on the negotiation table. These are the three stumbling blocks.



I hope that the European Union keeps its leadership position and that the European Council comes up with a solid financial proposal at the end of this month. I hope we will have time to discuss this in more detail tomorrow, because climate change will be one of the main topics of discussion at the next European Council. The Commission will certainly fight for an ambitious programme because, as I have always said, climate change is not only an environmental matter, but also a development matter.

**Rebecca Harms**, *Co-Chairman of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) President of the Commission, in numerous discussions for information purposes, including with high-ranking UN officials, we are told that the European Union's efforts have now fallen behind those of countries such as China and, as far as its endeavours are concerned, Japan. How can you still claim that we will be playing a leadership role?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I will be extremely happy the day that happens, but unfortunately it is not true. So far, the European Union is the only block that has committed to binding targets that are now translated into legislation.

We welcome some positive developments, namely the good political announcement made by the new Prime Minister of Japan – I have personally congratulated him – but so far, it is a political announcement. We welcome some of the national plans announced by China, but so far China has not agreed to make these binding in the negotiations in Copenhagen.

We welcome other positive developments, but in fact, we are leading the world in this fight against climate change. I would like to have someone else around us when we are leading, because it is sometimes not very comfortable to be in the lead and to be alone. But the reality is that others have to match our level of ambition.

**Michał Tomasz Kamiński**, *Chairman of the ECR Group*. – (PL) Mr President, firstly, I would like to thank you for being living proof that promises made by politicians are fulfilled. When my wife asks me to do something, and wants to know if I will be sure to do it, I always say, 'Yes – after all, I am a politician.' You have shown, today, that you keep your word as a politician. You are with us, and you are answering the questions of the Chamber very well.

Mr President, in your speech to us here, you said that it is extremely important to strengthen the single market, and that strengthening the single market is a prescription for the crisis in Europe. I should like to ask you, Mr President, on behalf of my group, what you intend to do over the next few months so that the strengthening of the single European market will help to fight the serious economic crisis with which we are faced today.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – Thank you very much, Mr Kamiński. In fact, I said in my political guidelines, which I believe were endorsed by the European Parliament with the strong support you gave for my re-election, that the internal market is a priority and we should fight all kinds of economic nationalism.

I have good news for all of you. Just today, I entrusted Mario Monti with a mission to prepare a report on the future of the single market, containing options and recommendations for an initiative to relaunch the single market. I am delighted that he has accepted this mission, as it is a way of having some outside expertise, to build support, hopefully together with the European Parliament, so that we can give a new impetus to the internal market, and to see how we can make the internal market fit for the 21st century. I believe that this is particularly important for consumers and also for small and medium-sized companies, which sometimes feel the pressure and suffer from distorting behaviour in the common market.

**Michał Tomasz Kamiński**, *Chairman of the ECR Group*. – (PL) Mr President, I would like, finally, to say how very important it is for us, for our group, that in this work to strengthen the single market, in this building of our common Europe, you have not forgotten the differences which exist in Europe. You have not forgotten that we have countries which have only recently acceded to the European Union, and which are, in a sense, economically handicapped. We know that you have always acted very fairly towards these new Member States, and I hope that you will continue to do so.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I think the internal market is the best way to protect all the Member States, whether they are new or old, big or small, rich or poor. It is a policy of justice because it is the best way to protect the weaker, namely the consumers who are usually the weaker.

It is also the way to protect small and medium-sized companies with regard to the big monopolies or oligopolies. So it is this – the inspiration for the internal market – that is such an important acquis of our European Union.

**Lothar Bisky**, *Chairman of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (DE) Mr President, you are calling for us to leave behind the economic stimulus programmes soon and for the budget deficits in the Member States to be quickly reduced. Yet even your most recent forecast promises growth in EU GDP of just 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2009. For 2009 as a whole, that would represent a 4% decrease. According to your own forecasts, unemployment rates in the EU will rise to over 11% in 2010.

Do you not think that early, drastic cuts in public expenditure could stop the small beginnings of recovery in their tracks? Or do you believe that the financial sector, for the moment, has got over the problem and the ordinary people should bear the costs of the crisis? Already, you are forcing scandalous conditions for EU emergency credit on the people of Latvia, Hungary and Romania: lower wages, lower pension benefits, fewer public services and higher VAT. Is that your idea of a social Europe?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – First of all, precisely because we are concerned with the figures you have mentioned – and broadly I agree with them – they are indeed our forecasts. As I have said several times before, we are preparing the exit strategy but we are not recommending that we start implementing the exit strategy now. So we are saying that we should keep the stimulus programmes. The finance ministers have been meeting and I think that they have agreed that we should not implement the exit strategy before 2011. So we still need to keep the stimulus to our economy, precisely because of our concerns, namely on the social front and unemployment in particular.

But, as you know, this crisis was also provoked by very large imbalances, by high public spending, by financial orgies. I think that we should not keep an unsustainable model so at a certain moment, we have to come back to sustainability. This is also a question of solidarity with future generations.

**Lothar Bisky**, *Chairman of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (DE) Mr President, have I understood you correctly, namely that 2011 could be the date for this ‘exit’?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I cannot confirm that now but I can tell you that, most likely, it will not be before then. I think that is the consensus between the finance ministers and, by the way, that was also the position that the European Union brought to the G20.

Now there is also the effort towards global coordination of these policies. That does not mean that all the regions of the world will take the same decisions at the same time, but during this crisis, we have seen that we are, for better or for worse, connected, and we have to try to articulate these exit strategies globally.

So most likely, it will not be before 2011 but we should continue to monitor the economic situation very closely.

**Nigel Farage**, *Co-Chairman of the EFD Group*. – Mr Barroso, it is very good to see you here. A chance to hold the executive to account surely must be welcomed.

As you know, I have not always been one of your biggest supporters, but I have to concede you have done very well. You have managed to ignore the French referendum result, you have managed to ignore the Dutch referendum result and you have managed to bully the Irish into submission the second time around. So you have almost got your Treaty.

Now, of course, it is time to pick the President – the big global figurehead of the European Union. Tony Blair is the odds-on favourite with the bookmakers. I just wondered whether you agree with me that his continued support for Britain to join the euro, his surrender of GBP 2 billion a year of the British rebate and his whole approach towards Britain’s membership of the European Union – his refusal to give the British a referendum – all show that he has sufficient pro-European credentials to become the President? Indeed, was this the deal that I predicted back in 2005? Was this agreed all along?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – First of all, Mr Farage, do not be so sad about the result in Ireland. It was not a great result – just 67% of the people! When there is a real debate with real ownership, we have shown that there can be strong support for Europe. In fact, it was a declaration of independence by Ireland from the United Kingdom Independence Party, because you were there campaigning and the Irish said ‘no’ to you and to your party.

(Applause)

Now, regarding the future President of the Council, I am not going to comment. That is a decision for the European Council. What I would like to tell you very frankly is that there are no hidden agreements and there are no hidden agendas. If there were, I would already know. So there are no hidden agreements or secret bargaining. What I can tell you is the following: we need a President of the Council who is a committed European and who gives consistency all the time, because I do not think it proper to have a Council that changes its agenda completely every six months. I am a very strong supporter of a strong European Council presence which gives coherence and consistency to the Council and that works, of course, hand in hand with the Commission and is fully committed to the European project and to Community matters.

**Nigel Farage**, *Co-Chairman of the EFD Group*. – Mr Barroso, I am disappointed. It is Question Time, and a 'yes' or a 'no' would have been easier, but never mind. Whether it is Mr Blair or not, the fact is he will not be democratically elected; you yourself have not been democratically elected; in fact, doesn't this rather sum up the whole EU? Isn't it a rather wonderful organisation for giving retired, clapped-out ex-premiers some real executive power? You could have democratised the EU with this Treaty. You chose not to. Does national democracy matter, or is the European Union, in your opinion, a greater good?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – It is precisely because the European Union is not the kind of integrated state you appear to fear so much that the President of the Council is not directly elected by people but is chosen by the democratically elected Heads of Government of Europe. That is precisely the logic of it. I myself was not only supported unanimously by the democratically elected Heads of Government, but also by a strong majority in this Parliament. So I feel I have strong democratic legitimacy.

(Applause)

In my previous life as a national politician, I was democratically elected to my national parliament at the age of 29, and I should tell you that it is more difficult to be elected President of the Commission than Prime Minister in most of our countries!

**Krisztina Morvai (NI)**. – (HU) Tomorrow at 15.00, I am holding a press conference about the human rights crisis situation that has persisted since 2006. I cordially invite and expect to see Mr President and all my fellow Members. According to information from the National Legal Aid Service, the huge number of court rulings confirm that in autumn 2006, acts of brutal police terror took place in Hungary, especially on 23 October, during the 50th anniversary commemoration. On government orders, the police committed a number of atrocities, including shooting 14 people in the eye thereby blinding many of them, and they held as political prisoners and tortured several hundred innocent people.

Are you aware, Mr President, that Kinga Göncz, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, was a member of the government that sanctioned the shooting? I would like to hear your opinion about this and I cordially and respectfully invite you and expect to see you at tomorrow's press conference.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I am following all the developments in the Member States, but let us be clear: the Commission does not have the power to intervene in some internal matters of the Member States, and this is the kind of issue on which we cannot provide an answer here because this is an internal debate that is going on in Hungary.

We have the authority as the Commission to intervene in any issue of fundamental rights when it is the implementation of Community law. This was not the case in the events referred to by the distinguished Member of Parliament. So I would ask you not to put questions to me that you can better treat at national parliament level rather than here in the European Parliament.

**Krisztina Morvai (NI)**. – (HU) Am I right in understanding then that freedom of assembly, freedom of opinion, human rights and even the European Convention on Human Rights are not, according to what you have said, part of European Union law? Are human rights not part of the European Union's system of values and legal system? If not, I have been misinformed.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – Of course, human rights are part of the European Union but we have a system based on the rule of law and we assume that all Member States, including your country, are countries governed by the rule of law. So you have the option of putting your questions to your courts,

and there are also appeals to the European Court of Human Rights or to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. So we have a system of human rights.

What I cannot do and should not do is enter into national political debates between the different political parties.

**President.** – Thank you very much, Mr President. I should like to thank the Chairs of the political groups most sincerely for keeping to time, and for conducting the debate so well. I would also like to thank Mr Barroso. We must keep to time if we are to have a lively debate. So thank you very much, everyone.

*Consequences of the financial crisis on employment and social cohesion*

**Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE).** – (NL) Mr President, my question concerns the crisis-response measures. When it comes to emission targets in relation to climate change, Europe is ahead of the United States. The United States are ahead, however, in terms of private-sector investment in technological innovations and sustainability, which is extremely important for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and for employment.

In fact, it was also a cornerstone of your crisis and recovery plan. Yet what is your ambition in this regard? When are we going to reach the same level as the United States, and what is the Commission doing, and what can it do, to ensure this level is reached? Broadly speaking, our SMEs are still running up against a great many barriers and, as a result, are missing out on growth potential. What are you going to do to complete the internal market; which, after all, is a major source of growth for our employment?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – I have already answered a previous speaker with some ideas on the internal market but, regarding the point you are clearly making on technology, I fully agree. We are behind the United States and others in terms of investment in new technologies.

That is why, for instance, in this special package, we have approved a European economic recovery plan. We have put a lot of emphasis on investment in some issues regarding the climate agenda and energy security. We are linking those two issues. That is why we have very recently come up with the SET Plan and we are also urging Member States to devote more resources to financing green technologies, in other words, all the technology that can enable us to become a more sustainable, greener economy.

Certainly this is a matter that we should also consider for the next financial perspectives. As you know, we will put forward our budget review before the end of the year. There will also be an opportunity to have a good debate about where, in the future, we should place our emphasis in terms of investment.

**President.** – Colleagues, could I ask you not to ask supplementary questions. I have a very long list of names here, and it would be much more interesting if more Members could ask questions.

**Sylvana Rapti (S&D).** – (EL) Mr President, the Commission quite rightly issued a recommendation in 2008 about integrating more people into the labour market.

I should first of all like to ask if, other than this recommendation and the measures taken by the Member States, you intend, as the European Commission, to take additional measures in order to strengthen the open method of coordination in the social sector? I refer to measures which are compatible with viable industrial policies, in order to increase employment.

Secondly, 2010 has been declared – as we all know – to be the European year for combating poverty. Our objective is to strengthen social cohesion. The question is very simple, Mr President: will you put all your energy, will you have the courage – you personally – to fight for quantitative targets on the question of poverty? I would ask in particular that you do not refer me to the Member States, as you did when briefing the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament.

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – I have said earlier that my number one concern is unemployment, but to fight unemployment we should not only have a reactive position but a proactive position. This, I think, could be achieved through the revision of the Lisbon strategy and an integrated vision for 2020.

We have to base the European Union's long-term strategy on new sources of sustainable growth, for instance, what we call 'white' jobs, in social services, where there have been 3.3 million new jobs since 2000. That is 16% of all new jobs.

The market for green products and services is also set to double by 2020, creating huge opportunities for green jobs, so we are promoting a mapping exercise across the European Union to anticipate the jobs and the skills needed. I am therefore determined to work in this new strategy to reinforce the social priority, as I already said to you when we discussed the broader political guidelines for the next mandate.

**Elizabeth Lynne (ALDE).** – As we know, hundreds of thousands of people are losing their jobs in the current economic crisis and many of these are older people who are at a severe disadvantage when they try to get new jobs. Even though the 2000 Employment Directive should be adhered to in each Member State, many of those older workers still do not know what their rights are under this Directive, and many Member States are flouting the rules.

Even if some workers do know their rights, all too often they find it impossible to take action individually without any back-up. At present we do not yet have legislation to protect many people against discrimination in access to goods and services, but we do have the Employment Directive. Can you tell us what action is being taken against Member States who do not implement it properly, and what mechanisms could be put in place to help older and disabled workers to achieve their rights?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – Whenever there is non-compliance with our directives by Member States, we launch infringement proceedings, so when there is a specific case, we can and will act. Regarding the overall issue you mention, let me tell you that this crisis has made more than five million Europeans unemployed.

The most affected categories are young people and migrants. Unemployment now stands at 9.1% in the European Union, but that unemployment rate is more than double in young workers (19.8%) and migrants (19.1%). These are the most important concerns we now have in terms of social matters. The issue of tackling child poverty also remains a very important priority. We are also, of course, following the situation as regards older people, in accordance with the current directives.

**David Casa (PPE).** – (MT) I believe that it is a worthwhile matter to talk about how we can create more jobs in the European Union. However, I think that we should also consider how to safeguard jobs, and prevent them from being lost. My government intervened at the point where the crisis was most being felt. I believe that with the government's intervention, thousands of jobs were saved, obviously through an increase in expenditure in the social sector. Do you not think that the Commission needs to make more of an effort in order to ensure that this takes place in every European Union country? I know that you will bring up the newly amended Globalisation Fund, and the fact that it is being used to help even more workers; however, I believe that we must do our utmost to ensure that these people's jobs are safeguarded, so that they will not need to make use of the Globalisation Fund. I think this should be our actual target.

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – Not only have we revised the rules of the globalisation fund, we have also reprogrammed the European Social Fund with the fast-tracking of EUR 1.8 billion to reinforce active labour market policies.

On cohesion policy, we have also made some changes to simplify the rules and to frontload payments. This is a very important policy as well. I have already mentioned the EUR 550 billion of the stimulus plan and, of course, I may also mention the Globalisation Adjustment Fund as well as some other proposals that we have made.

Unfortunately, I have to say that there was one idea the Member States did not follow, namely to suspend cofinancing for the Social Fund. We put this on the Council table, but it was rejected. I still hope that with your support, we can have that, because there are some countries that simply do not have the financial means to complement the funding for the Social Fund out of their own money. So we are also using to the maximum all the instruments we have at Community level to back up what the Member States can do themselves to fight this unemployment.

**Alejandro Cercas (S&D).** – (ES) Mr President, thank you for this interesting debate that we are having today.

You said, regarding employment, that some Member States did not attend the Prague Summit. What is more serious, Mr President, is that the Council, in the greatest employment crisis in the history of Europe – today 10 000 Europeans will have lost their jobs, and the same tomorrow and the day after – has not taken any

serious initiative and there has not been a single summit on employment. You could also have said that the Commission has an agenda from last year, which was outdated even then and which is now failing to meet the very pressing needs of millions and millions of citizens, of a whole generation of Europeans and the whole welfare state, whose future is at stake.

Mr President I want to ask for your leadership: we need active leadership, leadership that breaks with apathy and a lack of transparency. You need to tell the Council that we cannot go on like this. We need a Commission that not only manages ordinary resources and ordinary matters but which, at this difficult time – and I know that it is difficult for you, Mr President – places itself at the head of Europe, in a great institutional agreement to give hope to a whole generation of Europeans.

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – (PT) The fact is that we are doing all we can and, as I said when I outlined the programme, we are giving social matters a higher profile because there is currently an emergency situation from a social point of view.

To give an example, that was why I declared the need to examine the social impact in all new legislation. That is why we are promoting the common active inclusion principles as Community policy. That is also why I am able to say to the Member States that we are supporting social investment. Social expenditure, which made up 28% of GDP in 2008, will rise to 31% in 2010. That represents about EUR 3 500 billion more!

We are making a real effort here, but of course, Mr Cercas, the truth is that it has to be a collective effort by the Commission, Parliament and the Member States.

**Gerald Häfner (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Mr President, Europe means freedom, democracy and solidarity or, to put it another way, social and ecological responsibility. However, you and the Commission have had an entirely one-dimensional focus on the freedom element of that for a long time – and specifically in that regard only on economic freedom, on freedom understood purely in the economic sense – and on regulating in numerous areas where no regulation is needed, yet, where what is at stake are billions, on the world financial markets, your focus has been largely on not interfering and not regulating because you believed that that would lead to the best results for everyone.

We have seen the catastrophic results that that has led to and I ask you in all clarity how and through what projects and plans you intend to make clear to this Parliament and the people of Europe in a credible way that you and the Commission have learnt from this catastrophe and will change our course radically?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – First of all, the question of credibility is a subjective question for you. I think that the response to this question was given by Parliament, which gave me a new mandate recently, so it shows that this Parliament believes I am credible to go ahead with this policy.

In fact, we are pursuing our policy in response to the economic and financial crisis. We have taken important decisions; we are leading globally on regulatory and supervisory measures we have taken recently. Based on the report I commissioned to the de Larosière Group, we have tabled some proposals which I hope will be approved by the Council and by Parliament.

Just today, at a meeting of the Commission, we approved the communication on derivatives, which will, of course, have to be followed up by concrete legislation. So indeed we are responding to the financial crisis in all its aspects, including regulatory and supervisory, and I have already taken some decisions during this Commission, and the next Commission will, of course, follow this path because I believe the situation demands it.

**Veronica Lope Fontagné (PPE).** – (ES) Mr President, I would like to talk about the aid approved under the Temporary Framework aimed at reducing the problems that have arisen as a result of the economic crisis, and specifically about Opel.

I would like to ask you whether the Commission is examining whether the aid received by Germany under the Temporary Framework was dependent on a prior agreement regarding the geographical distribution of the restructuring measures, which would not be in line with the purpose of this aid.

If this is the case, I would like to know whether you agree with the company having the freedom to revise the distribution and restructuring of Opel according to its own economic and production criteria and maintaining the greatest possible number of jobs.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – (PT) I have already responded to this question, but I will say that we did have a few doubts about the way in which this process was conducted. The Commission expressed these doubts, and General Motors and Opel Trust are now reassessing the way in which the offer to buy Opel was made, and to verify whether, in fact, this offer was made on a commercial basis or not.

We, the European Commission, will do everything we can to ensure that the solution complies with the internal market regulations and the rules on State aid, and we will, of course, be objective and strict in applying these rules.

**Vicky Ford (ECR)**. – Every single European country is united in that we all face rising unemployment, which is obviously not just a social crisis, but also puts extra burdens on Member States' public purses, with rising welfare costs, falling taxes and increased training.

Given this, would you agree, Mr Barroso, that we, as Members of this Parliament, and the Commission should be extra cautious with every penny that we add onto public sector burdens? If you do agree, firstly, how would you advise us to vote in the budget debate on Thursday?

Secondly, why do we keep meeting in Strasbourg?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I support the proposed budget for next year so my advice is to vote 'yes'.

Regarding the issue of being careful and rigorous, I agree with you. We have to be extremely careful with all taxpayers' money, and we have to see the priorities. Today, there is a clear social urgency in some Member States. There are problems of social exclusion and poverty that, I am sure, are a matter of concern to all Members of this House, so we have to see what is the best way.

As you know, the Commission has been extremely strict, under the terms of the Stability and Growth Pact, in committing ourselves and the European Union to the rules of sustainability. Of course, we do not think that problems can be solved just by throwing money at them, but in fact there are situations, like the current one, when we believe special attention has to be given to a situation of social urgency. Exceptional measures were needed for what was an unprecedented situation. It is a question, as always, of balance in judgment.

**Ádám Kósa (PPE)**. – (HU) President of the Commission, according to European Commission Regulation No 800/2008, wage subsidies for people with disabilities were reduced to 75% of the maximum amount. This is why, since 1 January 2009, employment for people with disabilities and for those whose work capacity has changed has been hit by a crisis. As a result, the sources of employment provided for people with disabilities have decreased significantly due to budgetary restraint. This is also the reason why the national support provided in many countries, for example Hungary, for setting up a job creation team, has been jeopardised. They say that the European Union is to blame. I would therefore like to ask a question. During a financial crisis, how does the European Commission want to handle the employment rights of people with disabilities, the task of preserving jobs for them and the principle of equal pay for equal work? This regulation was formulated before the crisis.

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – As the distinguished Member knows, I am sure, the European Commission has put forward a proposal – a horizontal directive – for non-discrimination that also includes disability. And now that draft proposal is in your hands and in the hands of the European Council. So I really hope that it will be approved because we are certainly against any kind of discrimination against disabled people.

Many of the problems you have mentioned have to be dealt with at national level because these are the measures in terms of concrete support that are to be taken by the national social security systems. But in the European Union, we are doing everything we can to have a binding framework that commits ourselves and all the Member States to the principle of non-discrimination and to special protection for disabled people.

**Pervenche Berès (S&D)**. – (FR) Mr Barroso, you have been appointed by this Chamber to be the next President of the Commission. Your next urgent task is to organise that Commission so that it can serve a Europe that is hauling itself out of the crisis. On that basis, how do you plan to use the inadequate Community tools that are at our disposal so as to optimise them, and how do you envisage dividing up the portfolios so that we can deal with the issues that arise? I am well aware that everything depends on your discussion with the Heads of State or Government, but as President of the Commission, you must share your vision with them. How can we link these strategies that are available to us? How can we divide up the portfolios so as to take account of the lessons learnt from this crisis?

With regard to the tools, I will cite just one example. The Globalisation Adjustment Fund is today at odds with State aid strategies that stop us from implementing industrial policies that would help us come out of the crisis. What are your proposals? What mandate are you going to ask the Heads of State or Government for, and how are you going to ask them to divide up the portfolios?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – (FR) The distribution of the portfolios is not a competence of the Heads of State or Government, but a competence of the President of the Commission, and I will certainly use that competence in the manner that I consider most appropriate.

I already made some announcements during my discussion with you about the programme of the next Commission, but in fact, I am in contact with the Heads of State or Government.

I can also tell you that, only today, I sent a letter to everyone asking them to send me female candidates for the College as well. Indeed, I am very concerned about the problem of the balance between men and women; if I do nothing, I will have practically no women, because the governments generally want only male candidates for the next Commission.

I therefore sent this letter only today.

As regards the actual distribution, there will be no major change. I already announced the main innovations during my debate with you. These included, in particular, a commissioner for justice and fundamental rights, and a commissioner for action in the field of climate change, and, of course, I now need competent men and women who are committed to Europe, who can successfully complete their respective tasks under the various portfolios, which will correspond to the priorities for European Union action.

**Graham Watson (ALDE)**. – Hitherto, the creation of wealth and the measure of well-being have been based largely on consumption, and so industry has been encouraged to pay little attention to the real value of raw materials used, even if their price is low, or to the real cost of waste produced.

How does your Commission intend to ensure that growth in future will be of a different nature and that we will not find ourselves in a situation where, after another 20 years of growth, we have a planet unable to sustain what we are doing and a society unable to afford the real costs of living in such a way?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I would like to thank Graham Watson for this very important question. In fact, that is the core of the programme for the next five years: to invest more in smart, green growth, sustainable growth. This is very important.

We have to understand that the model of the future will not be like the model of the past. I am for a strong industrial base in Europe – but a strong industrial base for the new age of sustainability, where we have to think about green development, green technologies. That is where we can create new products, new markets. This is a good example.

That is why we are organising our future programme in terms of what I called, in my political guidelines, ‘new sources of growth’ because, with the traditional sources of growth, we will not win the battle of competitiveness with big emerging economies like China and India.

So innovation has to be at the core, at the centre of our agenda for growth, new sources of growth promoting the transition to a low-carbon economy: smart green development and innovation. I think innovation will be key for the development of the European economy in the future.

**Emilie Turunen (Verts/ALE)**. – (DA) Mr Barroso, the financial crisis has given rise to an economic crisis on an historic scale and, at this moment, unemployment is rising dramatically in Europe. Unemployment amongst young people – those under 25 – in Europe is 19.8%, as you yourself said, and in Spain more than one in three of those under 25 are unemployed. Right now, we are in the process of making a mess of a whole generation and so far, Mr Barroso, you have done pretty much nothing to solve this problem. Today, I have heard that you are very concerned about this, and I am pleased to hear that – I would like to see the evidence. Even if the responsibility for employment policy lies at the national level, there is also a need for European responsibility and European initiatives.

There are three things that I would like to call for. First of all, Commissioner Špidla promised 5 million traineeships for young people in Europe. What happened to them? Secondly, we are currently adopting growth and rescue packages all over Europe. Why do these packages not include a targeted jobs scheme for



young people? Thirdly, what will you do to achieve a stronger social profile and a stronger plan for young people in the new post-Lisbon strategy?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – I repeat that we have used to the full our existing instruments. We have Community-level instruments, but there are some instruments that are national-level instruments. What we can do is to work with the Member States to make the most of these, to exchange best practice and to urge them to follow this.

Commissioner Špidla, who has done a great job in very difficult circumstances, is, in fact, together with the Commission as a whole, asking for the Member States to develop five million apprenticeships. We are making available some best practices. For instance, in France, there have been extremely good practices from private companies promoting in-house training in their companies and promoting apprenticeships with public money, but with part of it also funded by the companies themselves.

So this is indeed a priority and we are doing it with all our instruments – the European Social Fund, the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the doubling of the facility for balance of payment support to new Member States and non-euro area countries.

We have used our instruments to the full but we have to work with the Member States in a reinforced manner to address these social concerns and, as you mentioned especially, the concern of youth unemployment.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**. – (PT) Mr President, in order to reduce poverty and unemployment, we have to create jobs with rights, support production and improve universal, free public services. In other words, we have to invest in other policies. We need to do the opposite of what has been done so far.

For example, we were startled to learn, in this day and age, of a study by the Directorate General for Employment and the Eurofund which presented two scenarios for the textile industry, predicting the loss of 20 to 25% of Community jobs by 2020, while a third scenario even suggested we would lose 50% of current jobs in the sector within the European Union. How, then, can this situation be reconciled with the new proposals being drawn up aimed at the liberalisation of international trade, without taking account of the consequences in Portugal and other countries in the European Union which have very sensitive sectors, such as the textile industry, agriculture, and a plethora of micro- and small businesses which are being choked by these policies?

**José Manuel Barroso**, *President of the Commission*. – (PT) I do not think that shutting off Europe is the solution for Portugal or any other European country. Europe is the biggest exporter of goods and services in the world, and there is nothing at all to be gained by adopting protectionist policies. There are indeed some sectors, often called 'traditional sectors' in certain European countries, especially, but not exclusively, in the south of Europe, which are particularly vulnerable to the new conditions of international competition, and that is why they are making a special effort to adapt to these new conditions. As I said in an earlier response, this means that we must seek new sources of growth and competitiveness within Europe. However, we should certainly not shut ourselves in and close off Europe, which would mean running the risk that other markets would close themselves off in turn from our exports.

We need to invest in innovation, invest in training, invest in new sources of growth and aim to be more competitive, while at the same time, as you said – and we agree on this point – ensuring that this is not at the expense of the social standards that are important in Europe. We are not suggesting that our social standards should be lowered. We are also trying to help others raise their social standards, but I certainly do not advocate that Europe should shut itself off. I think that it is in Europe's best interests to maintain open global markets.

**John Bufton (EFD)**. – Mr Barroso, the financial crisis in the UK is very serious. One of the many sectors struggling is the agricultural sector. From 1 January 2010, things are set to get a lot worse with the introduction of EID, which is 'electronic identification of sheep'. The equipment used to scan the sheep is not accurate. I have been told it is only 79% accurate.

If you drive your car, Mr Barroso, down the road, and the brakes only work 79% of the time, you will no doubt at some point crash. I fear that the agricultural sheep sector is also likely to crash with the introduction of EID, with its flawed equipment. The bizarre situation is that if EID comes into force in January, we will know how many sheep we have in the UK, where they are and all their movements, yet in the UK – due to unlimited immigration – we have no idea of how many people we have in our country, or who they are or

what movements they will make. Will you, Mr Barroso, speak to the rest of the Commission and only introduce EID on a voluntary basis until the equipment used is 100% accurate?

**President.** – That is a very specific question. We prefer general questions about the crisis and how to overcome it. The President of the European Commission cannot be informed about specific issues in individual countries, so please be more general in your questions.

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – I just want to say that I do not like that comparison between sheep and people very much. I do not think it is in very good taste, really.

(Applause)

Having said that, we are committed to implementing the identification you mentioned, but of course we are being careful. If there are problems in the implementation, we are ready to look at it. However, I feel that the measures that have already been taken regarding the identification of sheep are indeed good in general. Let us see how it works in practice.

**Zoltán Balczó (NI).** – (HU) Mr Barroso, the global financial crisis triggered in the United States has spread to the real economy, resulting in the loss of millions of jobs and creating a state of social crisis. The European Union is endeavouring to take steps in the case of companies like Opel, and if any plan is implemented, it will also involve direct help. At the same time, it is small and medium-sized enterprises that create jobs, in fact, the majority of jobs.

Do you think, Mr President, that this measure to help them is sufficient? Hungary is in a particularly difficult position as it only has foreign commercial banks. In this case, could direct State aid be given, or is this economic nationalism, which you have declared war on, or else market dogmatism?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – My clear answer is no: what we have done is not sufficient. We have to do more for SMEs; I think it is a priority. We have approved the Small Business Act; that is good. We have improved the late payments issue by reducing delays in payment; that was good and was very much welcomed by SMEs. We are, of course, trying to limit all bureaucratic and administrative procedures that create administrative burdens, particularly for SMEs, and we are committed to making life easier for SMEs. They are, as you said – and I agree with you – one of the most important sectors for creating more jobs, and this is part of our policy.

Another measure that we have taken recently, which I have not yet mentioned today, was to increase to EUR 500 000 the threshold of State aid allowed in direct support by Member States to some SMEs in special difficulties. So I think SMEs should remain a priority of our action for sustainability, including sustainable employment.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – (GA) Mr President, first of all, I would like to thank President Barroso for coming here and answering questions openly, honestly and eagerly.

Unfortunately, President Barroso was accused of not being democratically elected and of bullying the Irish into submission.

I would like to tell Mr Farage that he certainly was not democratically elected to speak on behalf of the Irish, and his use of the word 'bully' was also unfortunate because, for 700 years, Ireland was known as John Bull's other island, when John Bull – namely England – tried to bully the Irish into submission. Thankfully, that day is now over so I will go on to my question.

With the new competences which the Lisbon Treaty gives to the European Union, would President Barroso consider giving one Commissioner exclusive responsibility to bring forward new proposals and new measures to enact these competences?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – I am sorry, I did not understand the question very well because, if you are suggesting having a new Commissioner for all the new competences of the Lisbon Treaty, no, I certainly do not think this is reasonable because they are in so many different areas that we cannot ask one person to have all these competences.

Now I have already announced, answering a previous question, what I think will be some of the innovations in terms of the portfolios. There may be some more; I am working on it. This is, after all, an interactive work with the Member States too. For instance, Ireland has not yet designated a possible Commissioner.

I did this five years ago, and this is an interactive process where I also need to see the people that those Member States have put forward in order to form the Commission. I will certainly do my best to find competent people – men *and* women (and I am saying this also for Ireland!) – so that we can, in the end, have a college of committed Europeans who are competent and experienced in all fields, from economy, general politics, energy, environment, justice, fundamental rights and so forth: a huge set of competences for which we need a very able group of people.

**President.** – This is the first time Parliament has had this question-and-answer session with the President of the Commission, so thank you very much once again, President Barroso. As this was a special event for us, would you care to make a few general comments about this first question-and-answer session?

**José Manuel Barroso, President of the Commission.** – Thank you very much, Mr President and all the distinguished Members of this Parliament, for this exercise. I really enjoyed it. I think it is a good exercise. I have to tell you very frankly that it is extremely difficult for me to compress all my arguments, or at least my main arguments, into one minute, especially because most of the time I am not speaking my own language. I am speaking in languages that I believe are more accessible and that requires an additional effort from me.

Anyway, you decide the format. I can discuss it with you because I believe that free, confrontational and controversial debates are a good contribution to a stronger European democratic space.

(Applause)

**President.** – That concludes the item.

## **12. Draft general budget 2010 (Sections I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX) - Draft general budget 2010 (Section III) (debate)**

**President.** – The next item is the joint debate on the following:

– the report by Mr Surján, on behalf of the Committee on Budgets, on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010, Section III - Commission (C7-0127/2009 - 2009/2002(BUD)) and on the letter of amendment No 1/2010 (SEC(2009)1133) to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010 (A7-0038/2009) and

– the report by Mr Maňka, on behalf of the Committee on Budgets, on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2010

Section I – European Parliament

Section II – Council

Section IV – Court of Justice

Section V – Court of Auditors

Section VI – European Economic and Social Committee

Section VII – Committee of the Regions

Section VIII – European Ombudsman

Section IX – European Data Protection Supervisor

(C7-0128/2009 - 2009/2002B(BUD)) (A7-0037/2009).

**László Surján, rapporteur.** – (HU) Mr President, I am going to speak in my mother tongue because, *ceterum censeo*, I am also protesting against any kind of law restricting the use of a person's mother tongue. The 2010 budget is being drafted in the shadow of the financial crisis. State Secretary, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, we all have to cope with this crisis in some manner or other. The crisis has sown uncertainty among investors, made it more difficult to obtain credit, increased unemployment and reduced production. Is the European Union able to respond to this? Does it have something to say on the dangers caused by climate change or on terrorism? Is it able to protect the EU's borders? Is it welcoming refugees with an equitable approach? Parliament would like to have a budget that responds in the affirmative to all these questions, and Parliament is fairly united in this desire.

There are no major differences dividing political groups. I would therefore, as rapporteur, like to thank all the political groups in Parliament for this. However, there is a serious difference of opinion between the Council and Parliament. Because of the crisis, the Council would like the smallest budget possible, which is understandable looking at it from the point of view of national parliaments and governments. However, we in this House believe that Parliament has a huge number of instruments available that should be made to work even more efficiently, more smoothly and with greater impact, precisely so that we can overcome the crisis. What does all this mean in actual figures? Earlier, when we were thinking about 2010, it was with a seven-year budget in mind. A decision was then made which would allow, in the current situation, a budget of EUR 134 billion in terms of payment levels. On the other hand, the Council is thinking of a figure of EUR 120 billion, while Parliament does not regard the expenditure of EUR 134 billion as being realistic, is taking into account national governments' problems and will end up proposing EUR 127 billion if the vote on Thursday is guided by the recommendation from the Committee on Budgets.

We must, of course, ask what sense is there in making promises intended for a seven-year cycle in a five-year cycle if we are never going to keep those promises. This is actually the situation we are in because every year, the annual budget is much smaller than we discussed the time before. However, there is also an even bigger concern. Annual budgets also feature commitments, many of which remain unfulfilled. We are already lagging more than one annual budget behind, with this gap increasing from one year to the next. Therefore, raising the payment levels is an absolute must. Otherwise, we will seem to have the same scenario as in every other year: the Council chips away at the Commission's draft, while Parliament suggests even larger figures.

However, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the situation is not entirely like this. These proposals have not come about from one line to the next, in a mechanical fashion, snipping indiscriminately here and there. As a result of the crisis, everyone needs to tighten the purse strings. This is why, for certain purchases, we supported the Council's more economical figures in the Committee on Budgets. Elsewhere, for instance, on the matter of staff assigned to particular tasks, we also took into account how the given task was executed. At the same time, it is very easy to make mistakes in this area. If we have made mistakes, we do not want to prevent the programmes from being implemented. If such an event occurs during the year, we will always be prepared to rectify the situation, but we advocate correct implementation and accurate planning. We must analyse whether the money that was spent yielded the benefit we were expecting and whether we achieved the objective we set ourselves.

For example, it is difficult to be satisfied with the communications policy, but there may also be, of course, many more reasons, which are also much more complicated, to explain the lost referendums and the low electoral turnout. For this reason, it would be a mistake to reduce the resources for communications. We suggested establishing some reserves for certain lines, which can easily be released at the time when, based on current analyses, a promising communication strategy is being prepared. We must also look more closely in the future at the extent to which our objectives have been achieved. The European Court of Auditors recently published a survey on the successes and struggles of the dairy sector. Parliament is expecting the Commission to outline in the imminent Amending letter how the Milk Fund is going to work. We think that it also requires a separate budget line and a reserve of an appropriate amount.

A legal basis must be created which takes into account the Court of Auditors' observations and which will successfully help resolve the sector's current problems. Therefore, it is not only about money, but also about the European Union providing better and more specific support to this sector. This is why I am calling on my fellow Members to try with the least possible disagreement to vote for a good, effective budget. It goes without saying we will have debates on this. It is only natural that each political group will also promote their views and seek to raise their profile. However, we will agree on the most important matters. In the case of the Milk Fund too, the fund itself is much more important than even how much money it will ultimately contain. The Committee on Budgets has submitted a proposal for a manageable amount. Thank you for your respectful attention.

**Vladimír Maňka**, rapporteur. – (SK) It is precisely now, in a time of crisis, that we must prove to the public and prove to ourselves as well, that when it comes to achieving our political goals, we will use all resources in the most effective way possible.

Most institutions create their budgets on the basis of previous years. After all, what could be easier than multiplying last year's budget by the rate of inflation? When we repeat such a budgeting process year after year, however, it can lead to deformations, inaccuracies and the wasteful use of resources. Our aim is therefore to ensure that budgets are created on the basis of real needs. In every institution, budget requests must correspond to a real need for tasks to be performed. Every institution and every unit of every institution must

make every effort to achieve savings. This may require better organisation of work, the redeployment of existing resources to focus on priorities or reduced levels of bureaucracy.

In my previous speeches to the committee, and also in plenary sessions, I have mentioned many examples of recent successes in uncovering reserves. We will uncover even more shortcomings and we will make the work of the individual units and institutions even more efficient if we go about it in a systematic way. The budget for 2010 establishes this systematic approach.

The honourable Members who were here in the last Parliament will remember that we always tried to improve cooperation between institutions. There have always been reserves here and many of them have even increased over recent years. We have a common pot of funding. If we all manage just our own corners and close ourselves off against others, we will not communicate and cooperate and it will be difficult to make effective use of our resources.

It is for this reason that we decided in the Committee on Budgets to implement a horizontal reserve of 5% across all institutions in respect of external translations. How else can we motivate institutions first to make use of their spare internal translation capacities and not to turn automatically to external providers? Our aim in all of these areas is to make the spare capacities of every institution available to other institutions.

Expenses for the purchase and rental of buildings form one of the main administrative expense items of the institutions. In 2005, the total floor space of the buildings used by institutions in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg exceeded 2 million m<sup>2</sup>. Buildings were not always purchased in the right place, at the right time or for the minimum cost. According to the Court of Auditors, the institutions do not cooperate in these areas and even fail to assess their own policies. If we are purchasing a new building and we do not have more than one alternative in the bag, then it is difficult for us to achieve advantageous terms. For this reason, we are expecting from the Presidency of the European Parliament by the end of the year an appropriate long-term strategy on assets and buildings which will also take account of renovation requirements and security costs.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we are to work in a responsible and efficient manner we need comprehensive information on what resources are available to us. I would therefore like to emphasise the need to create an information management system. With the help of such a system, our work will be coherent and efficient. The administration is expected to submit a presentation on this project to the Committee on Budgets in the near future. None of the draft budgets of the institutions include costs related to the Lisbon Treaty coming into effect. When the Treaty enters into effect, we will have to look very carefully at reorganising existing resources before anyone submits a request for additional resources. If staff at any of the institutions achieve financial savings through work efficiencies, the Committee on Budgets will no longer have a problem with allowing such resources to be used for the other priorities of the institution.

On the other hand, if an institution achieves savings due to unforeseen events, such savings should, as a rule, be returned to the taxpayer. I would like to thank the members of the Committee on Budgets for giving their unanimous support to the proposal. I firmly believe that the budgetary system of the EU must be developed in such a way as to give precedence to resourcefulness and innovative solutions.

**Hans Lindblad**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Mr President, honourable Members, young people – I see that the future of Europe is sitting up there in the gallery – it is a great honour to be present here today at the debate on Parliament's first reading of the budget for 2010.

Europe is going through its worst economic crisis since the Second World War. Jobs are being lost, unemployment is rising and there are record deficits in our public finances. Budgetary discipline and sound economic management can accelerate the turnaround. The right structural policy can strengthen the upturn that we hope is on the way and make it more sustainable.

In view of this, the Council unanimously agreed a well-balanced budget that invested resources in education, research, infrastructure, cohesion, responsible public finances and margins for unforeseen events; in other words, all the factors that we know to be important for growth and prosperity. Major issues remain. Financing is required for the European Economic Recovery Plan and for support for the dairy sector.

Yet at this time, when Europe's public finances are the worst in living memory, Parliament's Committee on Budgets is proposing that the payments be increased by 10% – by 10%! Can you name me a single other area, apart from the costs of unemployment, in which we would allow such an increase? Despite significant budget deficits – 8% of GDP in France, 6% of GDP in Germany, 14% in the United Kingdom and in Ireland

– the Committee on Budgets thinks that the Member States should finance greater expenditure and more administration. It wants financing for administration!

I am particularly concerned that such a high level of expenditure will make it more difficult to finance the Economic Recovery Plan. I am also particularly concerned that the Committee's proposal contains no contingency whatsoever for unforeseen events.

We must agree on a budget that the Member States can afford and that we can justify to our people. We must agree on the Economic Recovery Plan, which is of the utmost importance for Europe's development. In view of the agreement that we reached in April, I am confident that we will succeed in this. We will need to resolve the complex dairy issue. Bearing in mind the excellent cooperation that we have enjoyed to date, I am sure that we will be able to resolve even this complex issue in the difficult situation and predicament in which we find ourselves.

### IN THE CHAIR: MRS ANGELILLI

*Vice-President*

**Algirdas Šemeta**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you today before you finalise your first reading of the 2010 draft budget with Thursday's vote.

I would like, first of all, to thank Parliament for restoring the preliminary draft budget in many areas.

The Commission very much welcomes Parliament's focus on using the budget as a tool to overcome the current crisis by enhancing economic growth, competitiveness, cohesion and job protection.

The Commission also welcomes the inclusion, in Parliament's first reading, of the Amending Letter requesting increased spending, notably for Palestine, climate change and accompanying measures in favour of ACP countries.

Turning to the core issues of the present budget procedure, the Commission has fully understood that Parliament regards the financing of the second phase of the European Economic Recovery Plan as a priority. Let me tell you that this is a priority for the Commission too. From that point of view, I understand the logic behind the European Parliament's so-called 'asterisk amendment' on the Recovery Plan going beyond the current expenditure ceiling.

Next week, the Commission will present a package to address the needs related to the Recovery Plan with a view to reaching an agreed solution at the November conciliation.

At this stage, the Commission has not yet identified all the sources of financing corresponding to the full amount for the energy projects required by the recovery Plan in 2010. However, the Commission will endeavour to identify all possible availabilities with a view to closing any outstanding gap in time for the November conciliation.

The Commission is concerned about the current difficulties in the dairy sector and we have taken due note of Parliament's proposal to create a special 'Milk Fund' and of the stance taken by the ministers of agriculture. In line with the proposal made yesterday by my colleague, Marianne Fischer Boel, next week's Amending Letter to the 2010 budget will propose that EUR 280 million be dedicated to help address the immediate consequences of the crisis for milk producers.

This new proposal has an impact on the initially envisaged financing of the gap for the EERP but, as I said, the Commission will deploy all efforts to eventually find the necessary resources in time for the conciliation meeting.

Now I would like to draw your attention to a number of issues where Parliament's first reading gives rise to concerns.

The European Parliament is proposing an overall increase of nearly 10% in the level of payments compared to 2009, which is some 4% above the level proposed by the Commission. While I share the wish of the European Parliament to support economic growth through the EU programmes, we should also take into account the amount of payments that can be reasonably executed without undermining sound financial management. The Commission has no reason at this stage to depart from the estimates made in its preliminary draft budget.

Concerning the administrative support lines of spending programmes, the so-called 'BA lines', I understand the wish of the European Parliament to take a quite restrictive approach in the current circumstances. But it is also important to provide the appropriate administrative means for managing growing financial envelopes of programmes if we want this budget to be adequately executed. The Commission hopes there will be the opportunity to redress this issue in the second reading.

Parliament has also voted a number of reserves which, if maintained in the final budget, will have an adverse effect on budget execution. The reserve on salaries, if maintained in the course of the year, would have an adverse effect on recruitment of new officials in 2010 to replace personnel leaving the Commission.

Let me conclude by assuring you that, in accordance with the Interinstitutional Agreement, the Commission will give its position on the amendments adopted by Parliament in early November through the so-called 'letter on executability' and I hope Parliament can take it into account in its second reading.

The Commission will continue to act as honest broker and will do its utmost to help pave the way for a successful outcome to this budget procedure, bearing in mind that the financing of the second tranche of the EERP represents a real challenge for which all efforts should be heading in the same direction. I count on your support for achieving a satisfactory and balanced result there.

**Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*. – Madam President, I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Year after year, we see how Section IV of the budget is severely underfunded. Year after year, we also see that, as the year progresses, the Commission and the Council have to resort to a variety of specific measures which are not in tune with regular budgetary methods in order to finance the needs which we all knew were there right from the beginning. The situation in Palestine is, unfortunately, one of the best examples of this.

Having said that, I do note some positive elements. I see that the Baltic Sea Strategy got some extra money. I also see that the appropriations have been increased for a number of specific policies in favour of democracy and human rights. I want to conclude by saying that, especially for the year 2010, we will need to pay attention to the fact that probably – and hopefully – the European External Action Service will start to operate. We will need to provide the necessary funds for that.

**Gay Mitchell**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Development*. – Madam President, I do not want to ask for the budget to be bust; all I want to ask is that we meet the commitments we have given to the developing world. Eleven million children die every year in the developing world. These are people who are hit not just by the financial crisis, in the way we are, but by the fact that they do not even get the remittances – which were greater than the financial assistance we gave them – from their families living in the developed world because they, too, are suffering. These people are suffering doubly: they are also suffering from the consequences of climate change.

All I want us to do is to meet our commitment to these people. If our GNP goes down a percentage, our contribution to these people also goes down. So let us meet the percentage contribution we said we would make. Clarity in the budget line, so that we can measure here in Parliament that you are meeting those commitments, and additionality are absolutely central to this. Please, in all of this, do not ask the poorest people in the world to carry a burden they are not able to carry.

**Jean-Pierre Audy**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Budgetary Control*. – (FR) Madam President, Minister, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the Committee on Budgetary Control has delivered an opinion containing a number of suggestions. I will present three of them to you in one minute.

The first concerns research, in particular, the sixth and seventh framework programmes. For the sake of legal certainty, it is advisable, Commissioner, for the European Commission to refrain from recalculating financial statements for projects that have already been approved and settled, by applying new interpretations of the eligibility criteria.

We would again ask the Commission not to deviate from the common nationally and internationally acknowledged and certified accounting and calculation methods.

The second point is the inclusion of EU staff pensions in the budget. We propose that the claims against Member States in respect of staff pensions, estimated at EUR 37 billion at 31 December 2008, be entered in the accounts as an asset.

We also suggest that the budget include the exact amount of these pensions, and not just the amounts paid, as the latter do not take account of the amounts paid into future pensions. I would reiterate the proposal for a study on the creation of a Community pension fund, and we also support the Anti-Fraud Office, which must be strengthened so that it can carry out control activities outside the Union.

**Juan Fernando López Aguilar**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs*. – (ES) Madam President, in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, we have worked to increase the budget for the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, which has increased by 13.5% from 2009.

In particular, the chapters on External Borders, Return, Visa Policy, Free Movement of People and Fundamental Rights and Citizenship have increased. The chapter on Justice in Civil and Criminal Matters, in particular, has increased by 4.7%.

However, the chapter on Security and Safeguarding Liberties has increased by 95% as a result of the integration of Europol into the Community budget. This is therefore something new compared to the 2009 budget.

We adopted an amendment to increase the FRONTEX budget, sending a clear message of commitment to managing the phenomenon of immigration and all aspects of migratory flows in a way that respects human rights.

Finally, I think that it should also be pointed out that in committee, we adopted a budget amendment of EUR 5 million to facilitate the integration of nationals from third countries. Therefore, the section under Title 18 on the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice has increased to EUR 105 million, which will help to strengthen the administrative and financial management of the Member States.

**Jutta Haug**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*. – (DE) Ladies and gentlemen, it is no secret that the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety takes the view time and again – this year included – that the funds provided in the European budget absolutely do not suffice to provide effective environmental programmes, to maintain our biodiversity and for a fight against climate change that has a chance of succeeding. The fact that the Council makes even further cuts from these meagre funds is as incomprehensible as ever. That is why ‘back to the preliminary draft budget’ is the standard response.

There are two things that we must impress on the Commission. The first of these is that we expect it to immediately include what are known as the ‘assigned revenues’ for those agencies that are partly dependent on fees – such as the European Medicines Agency in London or the European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki – in the preliminary draft budget and not to achieve an artificial margin by omitting them. The second point is that we expect the Commission to bring forward a proposal as soon as possible for how it will fund the anti-smoking campaign *Help* in future after the tobacco fund has run out. You see, it is the same every time.

**Lena Ek**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy*. – (SV) Madam President, there is cut-throat competition in the world today. Developing countries now account for 20% of the world’s wealth. In 15 years’ time, they will account for 34%. In 2025 – in other words, in 15 years’ time – China and India will together account for 20% of global investments in research and development. While these investments are being made outside Europe, bureaucracy is stifling the research institutions, universities and industry of Europe.

We are facing three crises that must be resolved simultaneously: the climate crisis, the employment crisis and the financial crisis. The response to these crises by the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy is that we must invest in research and innovation. Both the Council and the Commission have agreed that this is a priority – in the Lisbon process, in the Seventh Framework Programme and in the European Economic Recovery Plan. In practice, however, their idea of prioritising is to implement cuts of 7%. All I can say is that I am grateful that the Council is not ‘prioritising’ these incredibly important areas still further!

This is Orwellian Newspeak and it is unacceptable. We need more resources to be allocated to research and development. We must work together to reduce bureaucracy. We would like to see the Council and the Commissioner for Science and Research focusing on this. Above all, we demand that vigorous efforts be made in respect of research and innovation. It is there that jobs will be created and it is there that the future lies for Europe and Europe’s competitiveness – not in cuts in this area.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection*. – Madam President, compared to the 2009 budget, the Commission proposal for 2010 provides for a



moderate increase in the budget lines concerning internal market and customs policy, whereas the amount of money allocated to consumer policy remains stable. In the draft 2010 budget, the Council has decreased the money, in particular, for budget lines which concern the development of the internal market. I believe that a functioning internal market in these times of economic crisis can contribute to the economic recovery.

In the area of customs policy, the budget will assure cooperation and coordination measures, thus reinforcing security and protection of external borders, supporting the fight against illicit trafficking and fraud as well as improving the efficiency of customs systems. I consider measures in the area of consumer education a priority, in particular, the strengthening of financial literacy. The crisis has shown how important consumer policy, in particular, consumer education, is, in order to help consumers take responsible economic decisions. For all these reasons, the IMCO Committee called for a separate budget line on the SOLVIT programme to be financed by an amount of EUR 1 million. SOLVIT is a very good example of how you can help businesses and citizens. Finally, for the continuation of the pilot project monitoring measures in the field of consumer policy for the consolidation of a scoreboard and related market study, as a preparatory action, the amount adopted is EUR 1 million.

**Danuta Maria Hübner**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Regional Development*. – Madam President, for 2010 we need a budget harnessing effectively all European policies to pull the European economy out of the crisis, while at the same time preserving our long-term objectives and commitments, which are sustainable growth, economic and social cohesion, and our obligations vis-à-vis the external world, including candidate countries.

In the draft budget, the Council has automatically cut 36 lines on administrative expenditure, among other lines accompanying the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA). The argument used, which is low absorption, is not justified as the necessary framework for the implementation of IPA could only be completed in July 2009. From 2010 onwards, the European Commission must appraise and approve a significant number of large projects for which it will need to employ significant numbers of people to provide external short-term technical expertise. 2010 will also be the year when the effective implementation of operations will start, requiring the performance of ex ante controls by the Commission on extensive numbers of tenders and contracts.

The budget cuts mean that the sound financial management of pre-accession assistance is put in real danger, with all its political dimensions. We should therefore remain open to reacting positively to the request from the European Commission to restore the PDB level in this respect.

**Elisabeth Jeggle**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Agriculture*. – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, as rapporteur for the budget for the Committee on Agriculture I would like to thank the overall rapporteur, Mr Surján, for his constant willingness to talk in order to find a compromise. This is necessary as European agricultural policy is, at present, the only policy area where responsibility lies fully at the Community level.

It is right that the funds for school milk, school fruit and a few other projects have been increased. Stockpiling and export refunds, however, were even being labelled as yesterday's tools two years ago. At this moment, they are indispensable tools to overcome the crisis on the markets. We are therefore calling for an increase of approximately EUR 81 million for stockpiling from 2009 to 2010 and of approximately EUR 440 million for export refunds and we will be voting in favour of these. Nonetheless, this is actually too little at this time.

As before, I would, of course, have preferred EUR 600 million when it comes to the dairy fund. The EUR 300 million that we are now calling for for 2010 is what is absolutely necessary and I ask that this money be fixed in the budget on a permanent basis as the dairy fund. That would be the right signal to send, and also an important one.

The situation on the agricultural markets is drastic. The Commission has put its hopes in self-regulation for far too long. The agricultural markets, too, need budgetary and general policy frameworks and rules.

**Carmen Fraga Estévez**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Fisheries*. – (ES) Madam President, thank you very much to the rapporteur and to the Committee on Budgets for accepting all of the amendments from the Committee on Fisheries.

What is particularly important for us is the amendment calling for greater flexibility in the funding granted to Regional Advisory Councils on fishing. As well as being scarce, the funding is so subject to interpretations

and to the discretion of the Commission that the Councils are prevented from spending even the little that they have; this request was made to us unanimously by the seven existing councils.

One amendment that we consider particularly opportune calls for a comprehensive strategy to combat piracy that genuinely considers the situation of fishing boats, which are particularly vulnerable to these acts in all the world's waters.

With regard to research and the Seventh Framework Programme, as in previous years, we have demonstrated prudence and asked that, now that fisheries research no longer has its own heading in the budget, at least the percentage of investment should not decrease, as all decisions on fisheries management hinge on knowledge of the environment and of marine species, especially given that one of our new objectives is to apply an ecosystem-based approach to all legislation in the Common Fisheries Policy.

**Helga Trüpel**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education*. – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, representatives of the Commission and the Council, why are the Council's cuts, which we have to implement every single year in different policy areas, so stupid, so wrong and so short-sighted? The answer is because they are not oriented towards the common European interest, and that is what I criticise from a political standpoint. You, as the Council, and the Member States are also encompassed by common European responsibility, and our European expenditure is expenditure for our common European interest.

It is absolutely incomprehensible that the funding for training and education could be cut at this point. One of our most successful programmes is the student exchange programme that enables our young people to study in Europe, to get out into the world. Why are you cutting back on that? We need to do more for culture, cultural exchange and town twinning because these make Europe real and generate acceptance of Europe from the bottom up. And how can we cut back on the communications policy, where we have agreed that there is a need to really let the voters and the citizens know about the European Union's positive achievements? I can only observe, regrettably, as has been said already, that this type of cuts is completely counterproductive from a political point of view.

**Pervenche Berès**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs*. – (FR) Madam President, on behalf of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, I would like to emphasise two points today.

The first is the question of implementing supervision structures at European level. In the wake of the crisis, or during this crisis, everyone understands that the Union must equip itself with structures that will enable it to supervise the banking, insurance and securities markets. At the end of the last parliamentary term, we reached an agreement with the Council that focused on certain sums for the authorities that were supposed to prefigure those that we are putting in place today. However, the draft budget as it stands does not comply with this political agreement, which was concluded under the previous Parliament. I hope that the amendments that have been tabled again are adopted so that we are in line with this political agreement, which was concluded so as to ensure that the Union finally equips itself with supervisory authorities.

Moving on, I would like to emphasise the issue of fiscal policy. Fiscal policy tools have been cut even though there is an international call for more governance in fiscal matters. If we really want to combat tax havens, the Union must also equip itself with the resources to conduct this policy consistently. We will not send out the right message by reducing the Commission's competence in this area.

**György Schöpflin**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs*. – Madam President, it has become quite evident in the last few years that the institutions of the European Union are much less familiar to the citizens of Europe than should be the case.

The European Union is a democratic body, so that contact with the citizens is in the interests of both. What the European Union does, and why, should be fully known to the citizens. The citizens are stakeholders in what is done by the EU, and clearly the European Union is a stakeholder in European public opinion.

There are various ways of ensuring that this mutual interest is given expression. Communication is one of these, and an important one, and it is for this reason that the budget should include an element devoted to the communication of its activities by the European Union to the wider public.

**Edit Bauer**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*. – (HU) On behalf of the Equality Committee, I would like to draw your attention to just one issue during the one minute I have available. This is to do with the European Institute for Gender Equality and its funding. Based on Parliament's

codecision, we established the Institute in 2007 in Vilnius. One might think the time that has elapsed since then would have been sufficient for the Institute to have become operational. Unfortunately, the situation is much more serious than this. The Institute currently has just a director and an assistant. I would like to thank the Committee on Budgets and the rapporteur, Mr Surján, for having taken into account that the Equality Committee was making a wise suggestion when it said the budget could not be automatically slashed based on this year's income, because if we did this, the Institute would not be able to get up and running in the future. We not only need to guarantee the rising staff expenditure in the future annual budget, but we must also establish a reserve for the amount allocated to its activities so that the Institute can fulfil its role.

**Alain Lamassoure**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Madam President, as chairman of the Committee on Budgets, I should like to react to the surprising publication of a draft Commission communication on the budgetary review. The Commissioner will tell us whether this is an inadvertent error.

However, I should like to issue a warning. Although it not does include any figures, the very innovative, and at times provocative, content of this text seems inappropriate for a Commission at the very end of its term of office and for a mid-term review of the multiannual agreement signed in 2006. The President of the Commission must therefore clarify, as a matter of urgency, his timetable in relation to the financial proposals that he plans to make, under both the outgoing Commission and the new College. Changing the budgetary and therefore political priorities does not come under the management of current business. The Committee on Budgets will be ready for the debate, but on the basis of proposals coming from a Commission that is fully legitimate, that is armed with a five-year mandate, and that is ready to assume its political responsibility when it comes to initiatives with this kind of scope.

**Francesca Balzani**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, it is precisely on the budget that Parliament can and should bring to bear all of its power as an institution directly elected by the citizens, in order to ensure that this vital instrument for growth, and also for fairness and justice, is fully able to meet citizens' needs. The budget must have the ability to be tangible and dynamic, to listen and to respond.

We have worked towards making the 2010 draft budget as flexible as possible at this time of particular economic and financial crisis. However, the budget must also be credible, feasible and tangible, and in this regard, it was fundamental to avoid making financial resources for the coming years too inflexible by restricting excessive spending beyond the maximum expenditure ceiling contained in the perspectives of the multiannual financial framework just to cases that really are an absolute priority. This is the case with the Recovery Plan.

Again with the same aim, namely establishing a budget truly able to meet citizens' needs, we have formulated specific amendments regarding payments in order to free up the maximum amount of resources possible with immediate effect.

The European budget is structured on two tracks: commitments and payments. The commitments represent serious political intentions, but also real, concrete actions. Therefore, payments have been increased to EUR 127 billion in line with the draft budget tabled by the Committee on Budgets, compared with EUR 120 billion proposed by the Council and EUR 122 billion proposed by the Commission.

Still with the same aim, with the same political approach, as a group we are strongly opposed to the creation of reserves, which are not genuine resources immediately available to citizens. The policy of establishing reserves at times of crisis should be reduced to the absolute minimum, to cases in which a reserve really is technically indispensable. In times of crisis, there is no point merely writing figures in the budget, but instead we should build a useful budget, immediately ready for action.

Other matters also deserve special attention. As a group, we have taken the important responsibility of re-tabling the amendment to increase the milk fund to EUR 600 million, as decided by a unanimous vote of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, and therefore with the participation of all the Members and groups, and also re-tabling an amendment for a microcredit project amounting to EUR 37 million which, and this is extremely important, does not jeopardise the implementation of other programmes under heading 2.

There is a particular risk at times of crisis: that budget resources will not actually be increased, but transferred from one budget line to another. It is to counter this risk that Parliament, as a directly elected institution, with a role different to that of the Council and the Commission, must be especially careful in its actions, not least with regard to scrutiny.

**Anne E. Jensen**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (DA) Madam President, I would like to start by thanking Mr Surján for his sterling work in keeping the different elements of this budget process together. People are now saying that many of the Member States are having great difficulties with their public budgets, and that we should therefore rein in on spending too. That is true, but there is no public budget more controlled than the EU budget. We in the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe support the result of the vote in the Committee on Budgets. We support the draft budget put forward by Mr Surján.

For us, the funding of the investments under the recovery plan in energy and climate policy and the focus on research and innovation were the most important priorities for the 2010 budget. That is also the way we want to see the EU budget go in future – in other words, that we should concentrate on these areas. We think it is a poor state of affairs that neither the Commission nor the Council has indicated where we are to find the money for these investments in the recovery plan – investments that not only we here in Parliament, but also the Heads of State or Government of the EU, support. It is appalling that we have to see this acted out time after time when expenditure can be indicated but no decent funding can be found for it. We therefore support Mr Surján's proposal to review the Multiannual Financial Framework and look at whether the money for energy investments can be recovered from unused funds within the agricultural budget.

The Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe also supports the proposal to allocate EUR 300 million to a dairy fund to cushion the current crisis for dairy producers. We share the view that the crisis is serious and must be tackled. Personally, I am not a supporter of the new fund as the Commission does already have tools to help the industry and has also earmarked nearly EUR 0.5 billion for the purpose. The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development wanted to earmark EUR 600 million for a dairy fund over and above this half a billion. In this regard, I believe that the result of the vote in the Committee on Budgets – the EUR 300 million – is an expression of a more realistic solution.

This draft budget removes a number of the Council's savings and provides a more realistic assessment of the needs for payments in the coming year, and the multi-annual agreement has proven itself to be more a rigid and inflexible framework, in particular, in relation to category 1a, which includes research, education and transport, and category 3, which includes legal and asylum policy and culture and information policy, as well as external affairs policy, while the ceiling for category 4 is chronically far too restrictive.

I would also like to thank Mr Maňka for his work on the budget for other institutions. Parliament's budget remains within the 20% for total administrative expenditure in the EU, and that despite taking on the expenditure for Members' compensation under the new Statute for Members. Our group believes that we should be careful of excessive increases in the allocation for political parties, but we have agreed to the draft that is on the table, and I would also like to thank Mr Maňka for the fact that he has focused on the expenditure on translation and on Parliament's buildings policy. It is high time that we got collaboration between the institutions and a report into Parliament's buildings policy over a number of years. We have been calling for this for a long time. Now we may finally see it laid on the table.

**Helga Trüpel**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I, too, would like to start by thanking Mr Surján and Mr Maňka for their cooperative efforts, and I would then like to move on to Mr Surján's statement, in which he said that the Council wants, above all, to pass a small budget. In our view, that is precisely the wrong direction to take in times of crisis. In times of crisis, you have to have the political courage to act and you have to spend more money on the right, sustainable investments for the future. We have, after all, an environmental and an economic crisis, and we have a crisis of hunger and poverty in the world.

If we Europeans want to act correctly, we need to change our political goals. We need a transformation to a sustainable society, we need a Green New Deal, and specifically in relation to the Lisbon strategy, we need more sustainable technologies, efficient green technologies, new propulsion systems and, of course, also new materials that are truly environmentally friendly. That also means that we need to invest more money in research and development. As I have already emphasised on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Education, we in the European Union need to invest more money in training and education and to educate our young people, our talents, well and better, because we could then be sure that that money would not be misspent but would pay off in the future, both for the individuals in question and also in terms of the success of our economy.

We must also, however – and this is what makes the Green New Deal a truly all-round challenge – change structural funds policy and make it an environmental tool when it comes to retrofitting buildings and to new and sustainable concepts of mobility. We need to change our agricultural policy, which must become more environmental in nature. Yet energy generation, too, can play a major role in the rural economy and

can take place in an environmentally friendly and ecological way. At the moment, I see far too few plans here – but we must push forward with this.

I will now turn to the arguments about the dairy farmers. We Greens take the view that the dairy farmers must be helped at this point. It is not enough, however, to just spend the cash – the money must be spent on the right policy in this field. We need quotas, and we need good rules, frameworks and regulation. If we are to spend this money now – the EUR 280 million that we are debating – it must go direct to the producers and their organisations.

We also want to redistribute money. We do not believe that we should spend EUR 449 million on export subsidies in the dairy sector because what this does is to ruin markets elsewhere, primarily in Africa. We propose that the EUR 300 million plus that we are spending on tobacco production should be reallocated and then truly made available to small dairy farmers. That would be more ecological and would be much more beneficial to the dairy farmers than what we are doing at present.

My final comment is on the recovery plan. Ultimately, we will only support it at second reading if it is clear that a green and sustainable approach really is being pursued here. We want an ecological energy policy, we want broadband in rural areas and we want pan-European electricity networks. These things would really be a step towards a future-oriented policy. That is what we expect from the negotiations over the coming weeks.

**James Elles**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, I will be focusing my comments on the Commission budget and I would like to congratulate Mr Surján for everything he has done as the general rapporteur but, in the absence of the coordinator of our group, Mr Bokros, who happens to be in Hungary for a long-term engagement that he was committed to, I am asked to present the group's position today. I understand that this is the third different group that I have presented views for in this House since I have been a Member – not that I have changed, just the groups have.

So the three points I would like to make in the debate today are as follows. Firstly, the general situation is a serious one, which has already been indicated in a financial and economic manner. Our deficit levels are at historic highs in several Member States, as the President of the Council has indicated. Indeed, in some Member States, the debate is not about where the money is going to be contributed but about the levels of cuts which will be needed to bring the expenditure back into line, as it is in my own country. Therefore this is a very mixed debate on how we are going to make sure we can make the European Union run effectively.

Here, however, we will be looking at the budget. In terms of the budget that we will be preparing for 2010, it is a budget which obviously is at the beginning. We are in our opening gambits, but in our group, we will be looking very clearly at the quality of expenditure – as the Commissioner has said, on expenditure where monies can be reasonably executed and not being in any way excessive in this regard because of the general situation we find ourselves in.

My last comment relates to the comments made by our Chair in the Committee on Budgets, Alain Lamassoure. We must use this occasion – it is the first year of a five-year Parliament – to look ahead. We must discover, if we can, from the Commission when we are going to get the mid-term review, how it will be shaped, how we are going to be able to look ahead, not just to the mid-term review, but how we are going to approach future financial perspectives, as Mr Böge laid out in his report in the last Parliament. Not least, how we begin to set in train an interinstitutional process that will look at long-term trends and that will enable us to get the right budgetary analysis, because without that, it is really difficult to plan ahead.

**Miguel Portas**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (PT) I would like to open with the most positive aspect: on Thursday, we will vote for more than EUR 3 billion in payment authorisations to go to Structural Funds and programmes of a social nature.

The Council does indeed dispute this policy, believing that we should not ask the Member States for more money. I hope the Swedish Minister will forgive me if I say that this point of view shows a shopping list mentality. We are living in exceptional times, and I believe that, on the contrary, the Commission, the Council and Parliament should have had the courage to tackle the problem of funding this budget head-on and made it an exceptional budget.

Even with the expenditure that we are going to approve on Thursday, this will continue to be a budget that skirts around the crisis. It is a business-as-usual budget. We do not need drops of water in seas of milk. What

we need is another policy for rural areas. We do not just need Structural Funds for our territories, but a European social policy that complements the policies of each of our States. What we really need is courage!

Today, there are as many people living in poverty – 79 million – as there were at the beginning of the century. There is a great deal of uncertainty about the standards necessary to tackle climate change. The key issue that we need to discuss is financing the European budget and future Financial Perspectives. That is the question, and do not tell us that there is no money, because there is; we can go and look for it among the tax evaders, in the taxation of capital gains in the financial markets and in tax havens.

Mr President, rapporteurs, this problem with the budget is so vital that we, the MEPs, should set an example by making cutbacks. I have made proposals about travelling expenses. These days, when travelling, an MEP receives his/her salary, expenses for the cost of the journey, the distance travelled and the time wasted. This is ridiculous and incomprehensible. I hope that on Thursday, we will at least have the decency to review this state of affairs.

**Marta Andreasen, on behalf of the EFD Group.** – Madam President, it is unbelievable that in these times of financial and economic crisis, the European Commission proposes an increase of almost 5% for the 2010 budget.

But what is worse is that, while the Council, at its first reading in July, put forward a reduction of almost 2% on the preliminary draft budget, this Parliament is now proposing an increase of 5% on it.

The 2010 budget would then end up being over EUR 127 billion in payment appropriations which equates to 1.08% of the EU's gross national income.

Is this the way this Parliament wants to bring the budget closer to the citizens? It is all very nice to want to subsidise the Special Olympics in Poland and Greece and the European Youth Olympic Winter Festival in the Czech Republic, or even Xacobeo 2010, but our constituents have other priorities in their lives, such as paying their mortgages and giving a reasonable education to their children.

The daily cost of the European Union for the United Kingdom currently amounts to GBP 45 million per day and the proposed increase will bring it to GBP 50 million or more with the reduction of the rebate.

Believe me, there are many other priorities in the UK to invest this money in, and now that the European Commission has warned that Britain is in danger of going bust due to its high level of national debt, this country would be happy to have a significant reduction in its EU contributions, and I am sure that other countries would also be happy with a similar reduction.

Year after year, the Court of Auditors has been unable to give us satisfaction that the EU budget has been legally and regularly spent, and I was really concerned at the lack of control over taxpayers' money when I was the chief accountant of the European Commission back in 2002.

But still, Parliament wants to put more money into the EU coffers. Do not count on me ever to vote in favour of any increase in the budget. If you want to subsidise projects to fight the crisis, you should find areas where the budget can be reduced.

**Angelika Werthmann (NI).** – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, it is not only in the figures that the crisis shows up, in the falling markets and in the billions of euros spent on propping up the banks and re-initiating our economy. It can also be seen in the exploding unemployment figures. This crisis can be seen most of all in the very real fears and anxieties of the citizens of the European Union. They fear for their jobs and they fear for their pensions. Our citizens are worried about climate change, about energy supplies and about the curtailing of their individual rights in the fight against terrorism.

The EU can make a positive contribution to calming the thoroughly justified fears of its citizens, even if, at present, there is a need for the relevant processes to be made more effective and efficient. In this regard, I am primarily thinking of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, for example, in the case of Nokia, and of the Solidarity Fund to support the Italian earthquake victims. In order for the money from these funds to actually reach those affected, I think it is important both to redesign these processes to be more efficient and to ensure crystal clear oversight, as the Globalisation Adjustment Fund must in no way be confused with an EU back-up for the multinationals.

Europe was a guarantee for peace and prosperity for a long time. Let us work together to make sure that it continues to be just that.

(FR) We are Europe.

**Hans Lindblad**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Madam President, honourable Members, Commissioner, due to some slight delays, I will have to leave Parliament very shortly, as my flight leaves in 45 minutes. I will ensure that everything that is said is passed on to me. It has been a good debate. Many good suggestions have been made. It is difficult to set priorities, but set them we must. As regards research, I can tell Mrs Ek that we are investing 7.3% more in research than in the 2009 budget, which I think is a lot.

In its proposal, Parliament invests and increases expenditure substantially compared with 2009. At the same time, we must bear in mind that the EU is in recession. Public finances in the European Union are declining by around 7%. That is not something we can ignore.

The Council is also investing more, but it is also investing more selectively. We are investing in measures that will stimulate growth and we are being more restrained when it comes to areas such as administrative expenditure. At the same time, we are pleased to see that Parliament is also taking important steps in this area.

Following today's debate and the discussions that I have had previously with representatives of Parliament, I believe that – together with the Commission – we will be able to reach agreement on a genuinely good budget in the time to come.

**José Manuel Fernandes (PPE)**. – (PT) Ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced that the European Union's budget for 2010 will help us to overcome the economic crisis that we are undergoing at present. One of the results of the crisis is unemployment. I therefore wish to emphasise and outline the importance of the amendment we have made to reinforce the ERASMUS programme, in order to promote and facilitate the creation of first jobs for young people.

With regard to Parliament's budget, I am overjoyed that our main proposals have been taken into account, both in the budget itself and in the draft resolution. Our goal is excellence in lawmaking. We recognise the importance of multilingualism, of course, but we feel that our prime objective is excellence in lawmaking, and to that end, we need to have the necessary resources so that Members can achieve this objective.

So as to bring about greater transparency and stringency, we have proposed a baseline budget, which should be implemented at the beginning of each legislative cycle. We have also proposed reserves for this objective, the transparency objective and the stringency objective, and therefore reserves in the case of the communication policy, for example, where we would like there to be a cost and benefit analysis. There should also be reserves to seek to reduce the existing bureaucracy, for example, in contracting assistants, and we want to 'oblige' the Administration to help reduce this bureaucracy. We also agree on the property policy, and concur that it should be a long-term policy.

Finally, my congratulations to the rapporteurs László Surján and Vladimír Maňka. Special congratulations are due to the rapporteur, László Surján, for resisting the temptation to be demagogic about the milk fund, for example, and for doing his utmost and not attempting the impossible in order to sell abroad.

**Göran Färm (S&D)**. – (SV) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the Swedish Presidency has criticised the Committee on Budgets for wanting to increase payment appropriations in the current circumstances. In practice, this refers to the execution of the EU budget. I consider the criticism absurd for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Council's finance ministers have always withheld payments to such an extent that large parts of the EU's budget are never executed. Instead, large sums are repaid to the Member States as rebates. That is absurd, because the commitments in the budget are there to be executed – not to be repaid to the Members. We are prepared to fight for this. The question therefore arises as to whether the Presidency's policy is actually to make great promises in the form of commitments that are then never executed.

Secondly, this year, the arguments for this are even stronger than usual. We should be increasing the execution of Social Fund measures that concern job creation, skills development and other such measures, for example.

The Presidency's criticism is directed not just at the European Parliament, but also at the Commission, because most of what we are doing concerns restoring the cuts in the Commission's budgetary proposal that the Council wants to force through and, in addition, focusing on measures for job creation. I also note that the Presidency has criticised the fact that the Committee on Budgets is increasing certain administrative appropriations – while the Commission is criticising us for doing the opposite, namely for having accepted some of the Council's cuts. Our abiding principle has been to increase those administrative appropriations

that are needed to guarantee the execution of important policies – but not otherwise. This year's budget debate looks set to become something of a battle between the Council and the Commission.

As regards the European Economic Recovery Plan, the EU's budget is not of such magnitude as to be able to be used for Keynesian stimulus policy, but it can be used for certain small but strategic matters, such as the Recovery Plan. As we now have a high level of unemployment, it can only be a good thing to bring forward investments that were going to be made anyway and that help to bring Europe together into a genuine internal market – such as those relating to energy infrastructure. Nonetheless, almost a year after the Plan was launched, we still have no tangible proposals from the Council or the Swedish Presidency concerning where the money is to come from. We are open to discussion, but obviously it is pointless to take the money from other priority areas that also contribute to employment, lifelong learning or energy and climate development, for example.

It is a pity that the minister had to leave as I had a question for him. I will ask it anyway and perhaps he will respond by another means. The Swedish Presidency has stated that the strategy for the Baltic Sea area is one of its priority issues. At the same time, it has not proposed any financing for this strategy. I find that surprising, because it means that everything that needs to be done must be financed from other sources that have already been earmarked for other important objectives. There will be no net contribution to the Baltic Sea Strategy. In view of this, I wonder how the Swedish Presidency can claim that it sees the Baltic Sea Strategy as a priority. We want an allocation of EUR 20 million, equivalent to SEK 200 million. It is an important contribution.

**Jacek Włosowicz (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, as we all know, the most important budget items in the financial year 2010, and an evaluation of the budget, were set out in a resolution of 10 March this year. In its resolution, Parliament was highly critical of the tight margins available in most of the headings of the Multiannual Financial Framework. It is alarming that in this draft, the Council reduced the initial draft still further. The resultant disproportions between the levels of commitments and payments were so great that they contradicted the fundamental principle of prudence.

I had expected that closer attention, if not the closest attention, would be paid to the economic crisis which we still face, but as can be seen, Parliament is having to fight on its own for the interests of citizens, and to persuade them that Europe is not the source of the problems, but that it might find an effective remedy for them. This is why I fully endorse the draft, which includes funds for the implementation of an economic recovery plan, and I think that it should be one of Parliament's priorities. However, the cuts introduced by the Council would limit growth and job creation, or simply render them impossible. They would also put an end to work on solving our citizens' energy problem. In the context of the crisis in agriculture, for example, in the dairy sector, there are no possibilities of extending programmes which would support a growth in consumption of agricultural products, such as by popularising the consumption of milk and fruit in educational establishments.

Therefore, I think that the draft budget, in its present form, is not capable of achieving the objectives set by the European Union. From the few issues which I have mentioned, it can already be seen that there are areas of the EU budget which can overcome the problems we should be solving, but in many places, budget entries are planned historically, as if the present situation and current problems did not exist. They do not foresee future challenges, and where they do, they make little attempt to influence them. I think that as a Parliament, it is incumbent on us to strive for more dynamic decisions in reacting to problems which appear in Europe, remembering at the same time to be transparent in our management of funds. This is what our electors charged us with six months ago.

#### IN THE CHAIR: MRS ROTH-BEHRENDT

*Vice-President*

**Jürgen Klute (GUE/NGL).** – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, the effects of the world economic crisis in which we currently find ourselves cannot yet be foreseen. We have to be aware that the crisis still has not hit the labour market with its full force. What does the European Union do in this situation, where more and more people are threatened by poverty and unemployment and fear for their existence? The European Union decides on new focal areas in its budget. Or, to be more precise, it adjusts its finances in favour of a sealing off of its borders, in favour of hi-tech military projects and in favour of a more and more sophisticated monitoring of Europe's citizens.



Believe it or not, there is to be an increase of 16% for the area of freedom, security and justice. The fund to secure the external borders is to receive 12% more funding next year. The expenditure on strategic military security research is being almost doubled and will now rise to a total of EUR 215 million.

From the point of view of the Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left, this means that the EU is taking leave of its founding idea of being a peace project for Europe. This draft budget instead follows the logic of the Treaty of Lisbon, with its obligation on the part of the Member States to constantly modernise their military apparatus and to secure the external borders.

Europe's Left instead demands that the European Union implement a consistent peace policy. Instead of an agency for armament, we call for a disarmament agency. Europe must concentrate its resources on civilian conflict resolution strategies such as a Europe-wide civilian peace corps and promoting independent research into peace and conflicts. In our view, this budget sets our sights increasingly on war instead of on crisis management and the Left in the European Parliament will not, therefore, support this budget.

**Bastiaan Belder (EFD).** – (NL) Madam President, the 2010 budget has been drawn up under particular economic and financial circumstances. Rapporteur Mr Surján wants to set budgetary priorities, and I very much appreciate that. I support him where these concern core tasks of the European Union and lines that are of particular importance to economic recovery. However, the overall result too often comes down to spending more money, even though the Council had already made less rigorous cutbacks in the draft budget than in other years.

I should like to thank Mr Surján explicitly for his open and constructive attitude, which was evident with regard to my amendment seeking improvements in childcare, and particularly deinstitutionalisation. This amendment, which concerns the European Social Fund, was adopted with broad support in the committee. The European Union and the Member States must help ensure that children from homes can grow up in families as far as possible. At a time when we are focusing on economic measures, we must not forget expenditure of great social importance such as this. Otherwise, it will be these children who suffer at this economically difficult time, and that is unworthy of the EU.

**Daniël van der Stoep (NI).** – (NL) Madam President, the Members of this House often talk of solidarity among Member States; naturally, as it is easy to show solidarity if it is paid for out of other people's pockets.

The figures for 2008 came out on 23 September. Again, the Dutch, more than any other Europeans, feel the extent to which the infamous Europhile dream is eating up their pay slips. The Dutch public – the class dunce – is of course the largest net contributor once again. Each Dutch citizen pays a staggering EUR 267 to Europe every year.

The Party for Freedom (PVV), the biggest Dutch party according to the opinion polls, will continue to fight against this. It is also a disgrace that the Netherlands is the third largest payer, after Germany and Italy, when it comes to the net contribution for 2008. The Party for Freedom wants to ensure that the Dutch public is no longer treated as Europe's cash machine.

Let there be an end to money for corrupt countries, to the Globalisation Fund and the Cohesion Fund, to the travelling circus and to the left-wing projects, and let us give Dutch bakers, butchers and greengrocers their hard-earned money back. After all, it will probably be the case with the 2010 budget, too, that Dutch citizens are left holding the baby and have to dig deep into their pockets, whilst MEPs from 19 out of the 27 countries present here play Santa Claus with other people's money.

This is termed 'solidarity', but it is theft, pure and simple. The PVV would never even dream of adopting a budget for the European Union that would so extremely and disproportionately disadvantage the Dutch public.

**Salvador Garriga Polledo (PPE).** – (ES) Madam President, if the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, as we all hope, from January we will have new powers of joint decision regarding the whole budget that will also naturally apply to agriculture. Perhaps we will be happier in the Committee on Budgets when the Lisbon Treaty enters into force.

However, the new powers will also mean new responsibilities. These new responsibilities affect all of us, whether we are MEPs, members of the Council or members of the Commission. The first of the obligations is to fulfil interinstitutional responsibilities and commitments. I am going to mention two of them.

Firstly, the funding of the European Economic Recovery Plan. This is a disgrace. We have been negotiating for a year and we have still not been able to secure EUR 5 billion out of an overall European Union budget which this year amounts to more than EUR 1 30 billion.

We have not yet been able to find a solution. Firstly, we lost a budget surplus from 2008 and now we do not have the funding guaranteed. If the Council tries to save on other items, we will find ourselves negotiating at a serious disadvantage, because the previous commitment involved funding the activities of the Recovery Plan with new money.

The second matter is the Dairy Fund. We need to comply with the principles, with the needs for budgetary discipline, which require that a margin be left in Category 2. The Council and the Commission have just accepted EUR 280 million.

I would like to put a question to the Commission, because it is very important that we are sure about what we are going to be voting on in two days' time. Do these EUR 280 million that we have accepted, that you have accepted, come from what was not spent in 2009 or can it be assumed that you are making commitments in relation to the money for 2010 that this House has not yet voted on? We believe that this is a question that requires an immediate response from the Commissioner.

In any case, these EUR 280 million are not part of the Dairy Fund, but rather we are talking about a one-off intervention. The Dairy Fund is another long-term intervention that involves restructuring and a financial commitment from the Commission and the Council.

**Ingeborg Gräßle (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, the congratulations of my group to our rapporteur are all the warmer for the fact that, through the 2010 budget, we have brought about a state of ongoing works. It is a snapshot missing significant elements that we will be accruing as a result of the Treaty of Lisbon, including obligations that we enter into under the Treaty, so that we work on the basis that we can and must re-visit this budget relatively speedily, even if, at that point, the focus may be more on the argument about Parliament's rights and less on the contents of the budget.

The President-in-Office of the Council said that there would be a 7.3% increase in funding for research. We played our part in attaining that. We support it because we need this extra money for innovations and because this is how we will have to earn our money in future. At the same time, however, we must also consider the rules according to which we will provide this money and ensure that we do not provide it in such a way that the researchers for whom it is actually intended will no longer be able to access it because they fail to navigate through complicated rules. I would therefore like to call, at this point, for greater collaboration between the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control.

The Committee on Budgetary Control will be discussing two reserves on Thursday that failed to pass in the Committee on Budgets and I would like to ask, as the spokesperson for our group in the Committee on Budgetary Control, that these reserves be approved. One of the reserves relates to Commission staffing, specifically in connection with an idea from the Committee on Budgets known as 'staff screening'. By this point we are very well informed about 30% of the staff at the Commission, but we know nothing about the other 70%, who are still not covered. This reserve is designed to obtain information about the 70% about whom we currently know nothing.

The second reserve relates to the Financial Regulation. At the end of this year, the scheduled revision of the Financial Regulation will take place, and our aim with this reserve is to help the Commission out a little, as we believe that we need simplifications and that we must implement certain proposals in the Financial Regulation. I am very grateful to Commissioner Šemeta for the fact that the Commission, under his leadership, has now, for the first time, carried out a consultation amongst subsidy recipients on the subject of 'Obstacles and difficulties in the application procedure'. I also want to argue in favour of this reserve as it relates to OLAF, the European Anti-Fraud Office. The Commission has been refusing to provide us with a working paper since November last year and in so doing, has obstructed the progress of the consultations about OLAF and its legal basis. It is important, therefore, to obtain a majority for these two reserves.

**President.** – Thank you very much, Mrs Gräßle. As you are addressing the Commission directly, I would encourage the Commissioner to listen closely to what you have to say. That makes it much easier to answer afterwards.

**Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE).** – (NL) Madam President, I should very much like to contribute from the perspective of the Committee on Regional Development. It is this committee that makes the citizen-focused policy that is needed, particularly in the context of the crisis we are seeing at the moment.

I should like to start by thanking Mr Surján, who has cooperated on responding to good signals. In a time of crisis, it is unacceptable for financial arrangements – particularly in regional policy – to be violated and amounts to be reduced. It is excellent, in my view, that this is now being set to rights.

It is necessary to be alert in a time of crisis, and the European Parliament and the Commission have done so in the proposals that were adopted just before the recess. We have more flexibility, we can provide our budgets earlier, and we can invest more in energy-efficient buildings and housing, for example.

I also welcome the additional budgets that have been provided for three pilot projects. In recent weeks, representatives of the regions have been meeting at the Open Days in Brussels, and have said that they can put these resources to very good use in enabling better participation in policy in all kinds of fields. This is the citizen-focused policy I referred to.

I have just heard Mr van der Stoep, another Dutch representative, say he rejects these resources. Take cross-border language projects, for example: these promote participation by the people, something we are happy to endorse. There was one small sticking point, but Mr Surján found a good solution to that, too. It has been said in the course of the debate that the Green New Deal should be paid for out of these resources: the regional resources.

Sustainability policy is an excellent thing, of course, but adopting such a proposal in its entirety would give rise to a great many unrealistic expectations in the regions and also among our fellow Members. We have specified in the Structural Funds regulations what can be done in the way of innovation, of sustainability policy and of ecology, and so it is good to include that just by way of example rather than declaring we are going to adapt the regulation to this.

**Giovanni La Via (PPE).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, allow me, Madam President, to thank the Committee on Budgets for its work which, with regard to the needs of the farming world, has sought to provide a global framework of resources to resolve the issue of dairy farmers and milk, which is certainly of concern to many European countries today.

Nevertheless, the need for a minimum margin has prevented us from exceeding EUR 300 million for the milk fund. This is nonetheless a robust intervention if these resources, as the Commissioner was asked, are additional resources and envisage, naturally, a package of appropriate measures. On the other hand, we have heard some other groups proposing, probably playing in part to public opinion, a far higher figure, albeit in the knowledge that there is no way that these resources can be found, and merely so they can send a certain message to the outside world.

Allow me also to highlight another budget area which needs adequate attention: long-term buildings policy. Under the Treaty of Lisbon, with the new powers that will be conferred on Parliament, the clear need to strengthen relations with regional parliaments and the new thematic areas, we will need more room in the Brussels offices and so, given that 97% of the current buildings are already occupied, I think that we have to put in place a serious policy for the construction of an even larger European quarter which gives a clear sense of unity to Europe, through an appropriate buildings policy.

**Damien Abad (PPE).** – (FR) Madam President, first of all, I wish to thank the rapporteur, Mr Surján, for the balanced budget that he is proposing to us and which responds to the twin challenge of financing the recovery plan and setting up a milk fund.

As regards the creation of this EUR 300 million milk fund, which was the figure proposed by we in the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and in the Committee on Budgets, I should like to make two comments.

Firstly, I wish to denounce the demagoguery of a number of MEPs, who are calling for this fund to be given more than EUR 600 million, which is quite simply impractical and, above all, irresponsible, since that kind of sum would lead to drastic cuts in appropriations for other agricultural sectors or would compromise the financing of our recovery plan.

Consequently, the financing of the milk fund would be detrimental to our farmers and to the unemployed, which is, of course, economically ineffective and socially unjust.

I also wish to highlight my surprise, not to say my disappointment, at seeing Commissioner Fischer Boel take sole credit for this fund in the media, as if the Committee on Budgets had not worked on it, or its work were useless.

Lastly, as the youngest of the French MEPs, I wished to share with you my disappointment concerning the financing of the Youth in Action programme, since it is paradoxically in the midst of an economic crisis that we are preparing, for the first time in 10 years, to reduce the resources for this programme.

**Paul Rübig (PPE).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, I think that, with this budget, we have succeeded once again in developing new strategies. I am pleased that the House has decided to support the Small Business Act, at least with EUR 1 million for obligations and EUR 500 000 for payments. Commissioner Verheugen has promised that he will use these funds accordingly.

We have also increased the allocation for the programme of research for small and medium-sized businesses. Doing so is especially important in a crisis situation, and the SOLVIT programme is also to be significantly reinforced. This relates to getting across borders within the internal market, which often represents a very particular challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises.

I am pleased that the 'ERASMUS for journalists' programme is finally on the agenda and that 'ERASMUS for young entrepreneurs' is successfully operating.

**Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D).** – (EL) Madam President, although it is commonly accepted that the Structural Funds and the cohesion funds are the spearhead in combating the economic crisis, the Council unfortunately is being contradictory by making cuts to the relevant payment appropriations.

Unlike the Council and the Commission, we are endeavouring to safeguard adequate financing for the European Economic Recovery Plan by strengthening energy infrastructures and research and innovation.

At the same time, we need to safeguard the viability of existing Community infrastructures and tools in the civil protection sector, especially by further strengthening the rapid response capacity of the European Union in the event of natural disasters, thereby paving the way for the future creation of a European civil protection force.

Finally, we need to point out that green development and strengthening research and innovation must be the basic component of the Community budget for a clean and viable environment in all sectors.

**Riikka Manner (ALDE).** – (FI) Madam President, Commissioner, first of all I would like to thank the rapporteur for an excellent report. The financial crisis Recovery Plan and the milk crisis have made the budgetary procedure for the coming year very challenging. We still face challenges and we await with great interest the Commission's proposal next week for financing the Recovery Plan.

Important questions have been raised here, some of which relate to the milk crisis. For my part, I want to mention just one special matter. The economic situation has meant that the Member States are keeping their purse strings tight where it concerns the forthcoming budget. Budgetary discipline on the part of the Member States may well be partly understandable in an economic whirlwind, but it is inexcusable that over these past few years, Member States have had to be refunded sums of money out of the Structural Funds budget in the form of unused appropriations. The reason for this passivity is the Administration and Control System, which needs simplifying urgently. In view of the economic situation, it is extremely important that the Structural Funds are exploited effectively in the outermost regions in order to support recovery measures.

**Derek Vaughan (S&D).** – Madam President, during the economic and financial crisis, Wales benefited from cohesion policy and structural funds under Headings 1a and 1b. So, although the recovery plan was welcome and indeed necessary, we must not now cut important lines under Heading 1 to fund the GBP 1.98 billion required. I fear that may happen and I also fear that the proposals to do so are part of a wider attack on cohesion policy. I refer to the budget review paper produced by the Budget DG, which was referred to by Mr Lamassoure earlier.

I understand this includes the possibility of renationalising convergence funding, watering down competitiveness and saying 'no' to transitional status for regions coming out of convergence. I think Members should resist all this. Indeed, I would welcome the views of the Commission on these proposals, because these proposals would damage cohesion policy and damage places like Wales and similar regions.

**Sidonia Elżbieta Jędrzejewska (PPE).** – (PL) Madam President, we are all aware of the difficult situation we find ourselves in regarding the economic and financial crisis. I am therefore particularly glad that the Committee on Budgets and the rapporteur himself have taken a positive view of the amendment on holding the Special Olympics. The Special Olympics are, if I may explain, sports competitions for people with intellectual disabilities, enabling them to play a full part in society and giving them the opportunity for self-expression. I am very glad it has been made possible to hold the Special Olympics European Summer Games in Warsaw in 2010 and the Special Olympics World Summer Games in Athens in 2011. I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to appeal to the Council to look favourably on this financial commitment, and to ask the European Commission for help in practical matters relating to the organisation of this annual event.

**Marek Józef Gróbarczyk (ECR).** – (PL) Madam President, the proposed budget has to be a direct measure in the fight against the crisis. One branch of industry which has been affected especially badly as a result of the world crisis is shipbuilding and maritime transport. In addition, the European Commission, by its restrictive policy, has contributed to the destruction of the shipbuilding industry in Europe. Where Poland is concerned, the European Commission's actions have destroyed its shipbuilding industry and made thousands of people unemployed. This way of strengthening the economy strengthens the economies of countries in the Far East. Therefore, I would like to make an appeal, and to point out that it is important for next year's budget to provide funds to rescue this industry, that is to say, the shipbuilding industry, throughout Europe.

**Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D).** – (PL) Madam President, the budget for next year also foresees an increase of funds for security and defence. This has evoked remarks and reservations from some politicians. Such remarks have also been heard during the debate. I would therefore like to ask the Commissioner a specific question – what will the increased funds for defence be used for? Does this concern a joint mission of some kind, or are these additional funds related to the promotion of new technologies or the promotion of joint military programmes? For if this were so, I think it would certainly be a move in the right direction. This is because the Army also generates new technologies, and can create new, modern jobs. I would therefore ask for more information on the subject.

**Seán Kelly (PPE).** – Madam President, recently, the Irish Government decided to scrap the REPS scheme for farmers: that is the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme. That scheme, like many more, was cofunded by the European Union. I want to know: what happens to the money when it is not utilised by the particular government; whether the same happens in other countries; where this money goes and how is it utilised when it is not used within the country for which it is designated.

**Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D).** – (LT) Firstly, I would like to congratulate my colleague, Commissioner Algirdas Šemeta, who today, with Parliament's approval, participated probably for the first time in such a debate.

However, on the matter of the 2010 budget, today we can surely all accept that the situation has changed somewhat since we debated the 2009 budget. There really was a lot of talk about solidarity, about solving those problems linked to the current financial crisis. To my understanding, the 2010 budget should have been slightly different. Whether we want to or not, we still have to consider the real situation which brings us new challenges every day. I would like to congratulate Parliament, which very recently in Brussels, a few days ago, unanimously agreed on support for certain states that have suffered from various natural problems. I believe that the same sort of problems also exist in some of the other small Member States of the European Union which today lack funding. Therefore, I really believe that in future, specific measures should be designed that would allow those states to come out of the financial crisis.

**Algirdas Šemeta, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, I will be very brief. First of all, I would like to thank all the Members of the Parliament for their proposals regarding the budget for 2010, and hope that in the further budgetary procedure, we will find proper solutions in order to establish a good budget for 2010.

I just wanted to respond concretely to this very important issue of milk funds and say that what Mrs Fischer Boel stated yesterday was the commitment by the Commission to come up with a proposal on certain amounts of money, namely EUR 280 million. The Commission will discuss this issue next week and we will come up with a concrete proposal on this issue according to the Rules of Procedure. These are my brief remarks regarding the discussion.

**President.** – Thank you very much, Commissioner Šemeta. There were a few more questions from the Members, but it is my understanding that you do not want to answer Mr Garriga and the other Members

directly. Perhaps you would like to get your answers to the Members in question in writing. They would certainly appreciate that enormously. Mrs Gräßle, Mr Garriga and numerous other Members have asked additional questions.

**László Surján**, *rapporteur*. – (HU) I would first of all like to address the Council, even though the State Secretary has had to leave. I totally agree with his statement that there is a problem. I also entirely agree that everything he considers important Parliament also considers important, such as education and research. There is also a great deal of consensus on the objectives. However, there is a large gap when it comes to the means to be used. We somehow have to reach a consensus on this by the middle of November. The Commissioner mentioned that he welcomed steps Parliament was taking to restore lines featuring in the Commission's preliminary budget. I would ask him to realise that this does not happen in a few lines. In fact, I mentioned that we tried to adopt a position using a nuanced approach.

However, I must mention a few ideas expressed during the debate which I do not agree with. I cannot accept the attitude that we describe as theft the amounts being transferred from one contributing country to another beneficiary country as a gesture of solidarity. I do not think that this is what the issue is about here. The European Union has been built on the basis that members show solidarity to each other. In fact, I know of a contributing country whose leaders say that their revenue has substantially increased thanks to enlargement which has granted them access to a huge market.

The European Union cannot be measured in terms of the ratio of payments to contributions. This is spurious and misleading, and it will ruin our whole common future. At the same time, I would like to draw my fellow Members' attention to the fact that some people here very enthusiastically referred to each proposal in the past tense: we raised and arranged it, and this is the way it will be. What we will vote on now on Thursday is a draft and a political message. The political message is about how this Parliament would like to lead the European Union to greener pastures.

I also ask the Council to realise that what the rapporteur represents is not an individual's opinion, nor is it the opinion of a party, or only the opinion of the Committee on Budgets. So many people have spoken here from different committees and different political groups, but all with the same message: we need a better, more practical and more powerful budget. My time has run out. Thank you for your respectful attention.

**Vladimír Maňka**, *rapporteur*. – (SK) I would like to express my thanks for the debate in the Chamber and also for the cooperation in the Committee on Budgets, in the political groups and in the arbitration proceedings.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the European Parliament and all of the representatives of the Directorates-General of the European Parliament; we have been working together since January looking for the best solutions to help us make effective use of the financial resources of Europe's citizens. I would like to thank the shadow rapporteurs and coordinators. I had the feeling in our discussions that we really were looking for positive solutions. It is thanks to you also that we found these solutions and many of them form part of my report. I would like to thank my advisers and the staff of the Committee on Budgets. The numerous discussions that we had with representatives of all institutions helped us to develop a more objective view of the matter and, more importantly, we discovered where to look for solutions.

I highly appreciate the agreement from the arbitration proceedings concerning the implementation of an organisational audit of the INFO Directorate-General and of the security services. The aim is to assess whether resources are being used in the best possible way. In the past, only the Court of Auditors agreed to external inspections of their work – and it paid off. Following the audit, the Court of Auditors reduced its administrative costs and achieved higher productivity levels.

The Committee on Budgets has also worked constructively with other institutions in the past. On this occasion, too, we worked together to find the best solutions when creating the budgets of European institutions. Where the requests of the institutions were justifiable, we reinstated some of the original requests which the Council had reduced. I would like to applaud the method of creating budgets at these institutions, which are already creating their budgets not only on the basis of the inflation rate, but also on the basis of real needs.

**President**. – That brings the joint debate to a close. The vote will take place on Thursday at 11.00.

**Written statements (Rule 149)**

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) The draft Community budget for 2010 is much too low given that we are in the midst of an economic and social crisis, with a dramatic effect on employment and the living conditions of many people. The fact that it even falls about EUR 6 billion short of what was agreed in the multiannual financial framework for 2010 is unacceptable. In view of the serious social reality in many Member States, particularly the so-called ‘cohesion countries’ like Portugal, we think that the budget should be revised and increased as a matter of urgency, and we have put forward proposals to that effect, including:

- Greater financial support for structural and cohesion policies;
- The re-evaluation of the N+2 and N+3 rules which, to date, have meant a loss of around EUR 106 million for Portugal within the previous financial framework;
- An increase in the rate of Community cofinancing in the structural and cohesion funds.

It is unfortunate that other proposals with a significant social and environmental impact were not accepted during the budget discussions, including, for example:

- A development programme for Portuguese industry;
- A programme for supporting the textile and clothing industry;
- A programme for supporting small-scale, artisanal coastal fisheries;
- An increase in funding for the LIFE+ programme.

**Louis Grech (S&D)**, *in writing*. – Following the adoption of Budget 2010 and in light of the positive developments in Ireland concerning the Lisbon Treaty, I believe that there is a need for a comprehensive review of the budgetary procedure aiming to improve the process as a whole and make it more efficient, relevant and visible to European citizens. In this regard, I believe that a key goal of the revision must be to enhance transparency in decision making and during the implementation phase. For that purpose, we should consider the introduction of uniform control standards and statistical mechanisms across Member States to get higher quality feedback on the budget delivery results. Furthermore, the budgetary procedure should incorporate a better balance between long-term stability and flexibility to respond to changing needs, while preserving the principle of subsidiarity by providing clear advantages and added value in comparison to national budgets. There are also certain policy areas that need to be developed further. Europe is facing today significant challenges due to the financial crisis, climate change, energy supply, security and immigration. I appreciate the efforts of the Commission in addressing them, but I think we need a stronger, more coordinated and holistic approach in order to be effective.

**Cătălin Sorin Ivan (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Preparing a budget is never an easy process, even less so during an economic crisis. However, this is all the more reason why this task is even more important. Managing a crisis of the magnitude of the current one also depends at EU level on the balance that exists in the negotiations between the authorised European institutions. The European Parliament has undoubtedly a crucial role to play in this debate. The main issues at the heart of the discussions on the 2010 budget have been the Economic Recovery Plan and the European Milk Fund. These issues have, in a sense, highlighted how rigid the 2007-2013 financial framework is, as they are new financial projects and therefore new money. The EU budget needs to make full use of the financial margins to respond to the economic crisis. However, this budget is likely to have a limited impact if Member States are not going to adopt an active approach to accessing the available resources. We must send out a strong message to the capitals of Europe, and especially to Bucharest, in my case. Our efforts here to obtain as much money as possible for the European funds are in vain if, in our home countries, the powers that be do not take the measures required to access and use the funds efficiently.

**Livia Járóka (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the fact that the pilot programme for Roma social integration proposed by the European Parliament in 2009 is still included in the 2010 Community budget. The European Commission’s Directorate-General for regional policy issued an invitation to tender for the programme at the end of July. Its aim was to devise original and complex solutions for dealing with the wide-ranging problems affecting Roma communities. The explicit objective of the draft is to devise such measures which, based on existing experience, can promote Roma integration through education, social and economic measures, with cross-border cooperation and the sharing of best practices.

According to the original proposal from the Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats), the cornerstone of the programme is, on the one hand, the development of early years education and, on

the other, the promotion of self-employment and granting of micro-credits. In addition, information and awareness-raising campaigns will also be run in connection with the pilot programme. This project will hopefully provide the opportunity to draft the guidelines for a Community action plan, aimed at Roma social integration, and contribute, through the expansion of the ideas that prove to be effective, to the drafting of a regulatory Community action plan, extending beyond the instruments currently available.

**Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), in writing.** – (PL) I should like to raise a question which is significant for the economy and employment, and not only in my own country. We expect to receive a proposal from the Commission in the near future on the possible extension of current antidumping duties imposed on the importing of footwear with leather uppers from China and Vietnam. The positions of individual Member States on this matter are very different. In view of the significant levels of employment in the industry, maintaining the current duties is extremely important. Extension of existing legislation does not give rise to any objections from a technical point of view. I would, therefore, like to ask for an assurance from the Commission that it will base its proposal on the substantive findings of an investigation, while at the same time taking note of the fact that this is an opportunity to verify promises made not long ago by the President of the Commission about protecting jobs.

**Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE), in writing.** – I welcome the proposal of the draft budget for 2010 as it is a balanced report, taking into consideration in a realistic manner the EU's priorities.

Two matters are to be highlighted – the increases to payments on the main lines (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund) for regional development, and the creation of a 'milk fund'. The increases to payments are important as they will boost the implementation of structural policy in the Member States for the benefit of all European citizens, while the setting-up of a special 'milk fund' would represent a strong signal sent out by the European institutions to European farmers.

A third key point in the budget is represented by energy policy, an essential area for 2010, as it will be the year of the adoption of a new energy plan for the period 2010-2014 aimed at boosting the EU's energy security and competitiveness.

In the coming years, the Commission should also consider as a priority investments in infrastructure, especially in the new Member States, as they have a positive effect on economic and territorial cohesion.

**Rareș-Lucian Niculescu (PPE), in writing.** – (RO) Establishing the Milk Fund would send an important signal to European farmers, highlighting the genuine concern that the EU's institutions show for the crisis the dairy product sector has endured. The dairy market is one of the most volatile markets and has been hit hard by the economic crisis we are currently experiencing.

Such a basic solution as establishing a fund to support the sector's modernisation is patently preferable to a palliative solution, such as a return to the traditional ways of controlling production via milk quotas. We would all like to see a larger financial allocation. However, the sum being proposed for setting up this fund, which is EUR 300 million, is the maximum amount compatible with the budgetary ceiling. If this ceiling were to be exceeded, it would make it impossible for the Council of Ministers to approve the establishment of the fund.

At the same time, new steps must be taken to boost the use of rural development funds by livestock farmers. I believe that the most useful measures would be those linked to information access, the exchange of good practices and providing instruction on how to apply for these funds, which are currently underused in certain Member States.

### 13. Democracy building in external relations (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the oral question (O-0093/2009) by Gabriele Albertini and Heidi Hautala, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Eva Joly, on behalf of the Committee on Development, to the Council on democracy building in external relations (B7-0213/2009).

**Heidi Hautala, author.** – (FI) Madam President, I am delighted that, during its presidency, Sweden has made support for democracy in external relations an important issue. From the viewpoint of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, I would like to stress that democracy and human rights belong inseparably together. This is patently obvious from the different definitions of democracy that exist, and I would like to draw your attention to the fact, for example, that the United Nations attempted to define democracy in 2005. The



definition contains a long list of items, from a pluralist political system to the rule of law, transparency of government, freedom of the media, and so on. This clearly shows us that human rights cannot be divorced from democracy.

If it wants to use them, the European Union has a very wide range of resources at its disposal to promote democracy in the world. The entire development policy and the Common Foreign and Security Policy cover this whole spectrum. The resources available to us are dialogue with other countries, various financial instruments, involvement in international forums and election observation, which are obviously very important to us.

There are also situations where we have to think about various negative measures. I would like to bring to Minister Malmström's attention the fact that next week, the General Affairs and External Relations Council is preparing to discuss the revocation of the ban on the exporting of weapons to Uzbekistan. I think that everything indicates that this is quite the wrong signal to send, as Uzbekistan has not really listened to the demands of the international community. The international community, including the European Union, requested it to conduct an independent, international investigation into the tragic and shocking events in the spring of 2005 in Andizhan, when democracy was well and truly suppressed. I would also like to hear what Minister Malmström thinks about this situation. How can we promote democracy when some Member States now want to end this ban on the exporting of weapons?

I would also like to say that democracy cannot be exported. It is no product for export. It does not really work as something brought in from the outside, and that is why I would like to emphasise the importance of including civil society in the process, because that way, democracy grows organically, as it were: from the grassroots of society.

I would like to mention that Russia is a cooperation partner that systematically refuses to agree to the involvement of NGOs in dialogues on human rights between it and the Union. In my view, we cannot accept this situation in the future.

Finally, I would like to say that support for democracy should be higher up the agenda in the Union's foreign and security policy and development policy. It also needs more resources. For example, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights is very modestly resourced and we should increase its funding.

**Eva Joly, author.** – (FR) Madam President, Mrs Malmström, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, democracy and human rights are inextricably linked. It is through respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms that a democratic regime can ultimately be recognised.

We must therefore welcome the fact that, on 19 May, the Council indicated that the European Union had to adopt a more consistent approach to democratic governance.

The efforts made up to that point had been largely inadequate. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a striking example of this. Although the mission sent to observe the 2006 Palestinian elections recognised the legitimacy of their result, the European Union and its Member States chose to boycott the elected government, just as they boycotted the government of national unity formed thereafter to break that deadlock.

Where is the European Union's consistency and credibility when its own decisions contrast so sharply with its much-vaunted principles? And what can be said of the Member States that refuse to endorse the Goldstone report? Its conclusions are fair and balanced, and universal support for them would represent a step towards peace.

It is this hope that the major powers are destroying, and they are destroying it through their lack of courage and their lack of loyalty to their own values.

Organising election observation missions is therefore not enough, especially when one refuses afterwards to acknowledge the result. We must be true to ourselves and take a global approach to these issues.

The Council should swiftly adopt a programme of action along these lines, with the creation of a genuine strategy for human rights, which would be imperative at all levels of the EU. We need to outline our priorities clearly and integrate them formally into all of our instruments: foreign policy, human rights policy and development policy.

What kind of monitoring will we carry out in those third countries in which the European Union observes the elections in order to ensure respect for political pluralism and the involvement of civil society in the long term?

What are our demands as regards the establishment of an independent judiciary and of institutions that are transparent and accountable to their citizens?

The persistent vagueness concerning the place accorded to human rights in our policies is reprehensible and counterproductive. It is time to clear this up if we want the European Union and its most fundamental values to be taken more seriously at international level.

**Cecilia Malmström**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (SV) Madam President, honourable Members, in the EU consensus on development, the term ‘poverty’ is defined with a number of dimensions. Poverty means an absence of power, opportunities and security. Development is impeded if there is no freedom, and freedom is restricted without democracy. It is difficult to have peace without democracy. Consequently, there can be no development without peace. Both require full respect for human rights. These concepts are intertwined and we need a coherent overall framework for better use of existing policies and instruments in support of democracy building.

I would like to thank the European Parliament for its great interest in and support for this work. After seven years as a Member, including on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I am only too aware of Parliament’s wholehearted commitment and real contributions to democracy building within the context of the EU’s external relations.

This initiative, which was launched by the Czech and Swedish Presidencies, has been discussed here previously on a number of occasions, including with my colleague, Mrs Carlsson.

The starting point of the initiative is that democracy building is a key factor not only in the EU’s development cooperation, but also in the Common Foreign and Security Policy. That is undisputed. However, the intention is for the initiative to go one step further. As a global player, with 27 Member States and the European Parliament, and as the world’s largest contributor of aid, the EU has a key role to play in terms of supporting democracy building in its external relations. There is a symbolic dimension to this, since we hope that our successes at home will serve to inspire our partner countries around the world. However, it is also intended that the initiative will work at a pragmatic and operational level. The aim is to ensure that we fully utilise the instruments at our disposal within the EU’s legal and political frameworks and our institutions in a coordinated, effective way.

We are not starting from scratch. We have already achieved a great deal. We are experienced in supporting democracy building in our external relations. This is a priority area in our relationships with ACP countries – written into the Cotonou Agreement – and with other regions such as Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. We have strong rules on human rights that include dialogue with third countries and seven common EU strategies.

Certainly, there is substantial room for improvement, however. We can do more. We can do better. The essence of democracy demands a new political framework, and the current distribution of labour between the various pillars does not necessarily correspond to the needs that exist. Various instruments are used in parallel, and sometimes not very consistently. This is undermining the impact of what we are doing. It may also affect our visibility and credibility and limit our opportunities for effective cooperation. Without therefore inventing new tools or models, we quite simply want to bring about greater coordination and coherence in the way we work on supporting democracy.

How can we do this? Well, by identifying specific ways of using the EU’s instruments more effectively within a uniform framework.

We can draw inspiration from some of our success stories. Our involvement in the Western Balkans is one such example. It combines first and third pillar instruments and is, at the same time, oriented towards supporting political reforms, including institution building. That is why it is becoming a stable environment for democracy. The ‘two hats’ that the EU’s special representative has helped to bring about better coordination and coherence between the EU’s various instruments. We must be humble, however. We face substantial challenges in the region.

I want to make myself clear. Some people – perhaps not those of you here – are concerned that this initiative will introduce new conditionality into development aid. Naturally, this is a sensitive issue. However, talking about human rights and democracy with our partner countries can never embody conditionality.

Where are we now? The relevant working groups have initiated discussions on proposals for the Council's conclusions, based on various contributions. We are building on the work started by the Czech Presidency, which held a special conference on the EU and democracy building.

I have also seen a very interesting report from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance that compares our intentions when carrying out democracy building with how they are perceived by our partners.

It is too early to assess the initiative, but I want to emphasise that the process is already providing added value. Those responsible for development and human rights issues are working together more closely. Discussions in the Council working groups on development and human rights are taking place in parallel or at joint meetings. That alone is an added value and an important point of the whole initiative. We are working towards the Council's conclusions being adopted at the General Affairs and External Relations Council in November.

One of the proposals being discussed is the need for country-specific approaches that are based on an in-depth analysis of a country's situation and that feed into democracy building at EU level, affecting the choice of appropriate instrument.

Another proposal is the need for real partnership, based on dialogue and consultations, in which support for democracy is treated as a separate topic and in which various dialogues are more coherent and coordinated.

The EU's support for election processes around the world is important. The Council and the European Parliament are largely of the same view concerning this. We share the concern that Parliament sometimes feels as regards the need to 'go beyond the elections'. Election support needs to be made part of a continual process that involves following political developments over a long period of time. This means we must focus on what is happening in the lead-up to elections, during elections and between elections in order to ensure there are functioning mechanisms for demanding responsibility.

I cannot emphasise enough the role of our various parliaments – in other words, the role of the European Parliament and the national parliaments – in the democracy building process. They must be fully involved in the EU's activities.

I hope that the Treaty of Lisbon will enter into force in the near future. These new 'rules of the game' for the Union will bring about a more democratic and effective EU. The Treaty will also help make Europe a stronger player on the global stage by establishing the European External Action Service. The idea behind this is, after all, to make the EU's external policies more concordant and to bridge the gap between the Commission's and the Council's work so that the policies are moving in the same direction. Along with the European External Action Service, the political framework for supporting democracy building will improve so that the EU can provide even better support for developments in various places in the world.

EU support for democracy building is incredibly important. If a democratic state cannot meet its citizens' basic needs and stimulate economic and social development, this will result in dissatisfaction with how democracy works. The government then risks losing both legitimacy and political support.

I would like to thank the Members of the European Parliament for pushing this issue. You contribute through your commitment, through legislation, through your relations and contacts with parliaments around the world and through your participation in the EU's election observation missions. For this reason, you are a key force in democracy building, and I hope that the European Parliament will continue to perform this role for a long time to come.

**Véronique De Keyser**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (FR) Madam President, how can one bring democracy to a nation? Well, by relying on and strengthening its civil society, by combating poverty and exclusion, and by liberating its women.

Europe has not been naive enough to believe that it can bring democracy with tanks and bombs, even if certain Member States may have laboured under this misapprehension. Europe must therefore assume its role as a soft power. This is a thankless, difficult role. It has equipped itself with a European instrument for democracy and human rights, which today resembles a newborn child. It is fragile but promising, if taken great care of. The NGOs can submit projects to it without the support of their government, and that is important.

However, it is also out of the very limited budget for this instrument that the election observation missions are financed. These are crucial missions which, in the space of around 10 years, have succeeded in proving their worth, but for which Parliament has already requested more resources and certainly more follow-up action – thank you, Mrs Malmström – but also more political consistency in terms of the way in which we monitor their legitimacy, and here I fully support what Mrs Joly said regarding some of our missions. It is not normal for a country that embarks on the democratic electoral process not to be supported in its consolidation.

Those who take a short-term view no doubt think that democracy is costly. It is less costly than war, that is for sure, and this is data that the External Action Service will most certainly take into account in its operations.

### IN THE CHAIR: MR ROUČEK

*Vice-President*

**Charles Goerens**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, can there be democracy without freedom? No. Can there be freedom without rights? Of course not. This brings us back to the notion of human rights in this debate.

Joseph Ki-Zerbo, a great Burkinabe scholar, gave the following answer to that question: 'He who lives in absolute poverty has no freedom because he cannot choose between several options.' Poverty is therefore synonymous with a lack of freedom. There is therefore a close relationship between freedom, democracy and human rights.

It is no surprise, then, to see many references to this in the basic texts that govern relations between the European Union and third countries, starting with the Cotonou Agreement, which includes, in particular, a clause on human rights and democracy in the context of the political dialogue with the ACP countries. Promoting democracy therefore raises fundamental issues linked to the intelligent stipulation of conditions.

On the basis of these few observations, we come to the conclusion that democracy is not at the origin of development, but is very often the result of it. The partnerships between the European Union and third countries cannot ignore this fact. We will not make progress without determination, but we will not make progress without patience, either. Today there are a significant number of countries that are embarking on the democratic process. Europe can be credited with having supported these processes thanks to a strategy that incorporates the imperatives of the fight against poverty, the codification of human rights, and the promotion of democratic principles and the rule of law. In spite of all the criticisms that have just been directed at the policy and which I share, I nevertheless remain convinced that what has been proven to work in the past should also guide us in our future action.

**Richard Howitt (S&D)**. – Mr President, democratisation assists the peaceful pursuit of politics, political change and the management of power in society, as well as respect for human rights. Supporting democracy underpins our foreign policy goals of preventing conflict and reducing poverty. That is why I was pleased to put the parliamentary amendment calling for European consensus on democratisation, and I would like to congratulate the Swedish Presidency for its initiative in this respect.

I strongly believe that democratisation should inform all of the European Union's policies vis-à-vis third countries. I have to say that I condemn the European Conservative and Reform Group when they oppose paragraph 10 in our text and seem to suggest that Europe can say one thing about democracy and do another about undemocratic countries when it suits us. No.

Finally, as Mrs Malmström has said, democracy building is much more than about elections: it is about building pluralist civil society. That is why Europe should fund NGOs that increase citizen participation, support the inclusion of marginalised groups, provide training for legal professionals, promote freedom of expression and of association, and strengthen political parties in parliament. It means supporting a civilian surge.

**Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE)**. – Mr President, I would like to address the issue of democracy building with regard to our eastern neighbours. In recent years there has been a stagnation and, in some cases, a backsliding in terms of democratic standards in these countries. Developments in Georgia and Moldova raise most concerns.

The backbone of any democratic polity: a well-functioning – and I stress well-functioning – civil society is essentially absent in all of our eastern neighbours. I would like to congratulate Sweden, the current presiding

country, for being one of the initiators of the Eastern Partnership policy. This policy has the potential to draw our eastern neighbours closer to the EU. However, in many respects, the Eastern Partnership stops short of providing really significant incentives for these countries to embark on painful and lengthy reforms.

My additional question is: what is the position of the Council in this regard? In other words, what is in the pipeline? Do we intend to act more robustly in order to ensure that democracy in this and many other troubled and fragile areas will be strengthened?

**Heidi Hautala (Verts/ALE).** – (FI) Mr President, I would finally like to say to Minister Malmström that, in my opinion, we as a Union have two weaknesses when it comes to attempts to promote democracy and human rights throughout the world. Member States often have very conflicting and differing aspirations. The ban on the export of weapons to Uzbekistan would appear to be just such a case: not all Member States are of the same view. How can we pursue a common policy like this?

Secondly, I want to say that Uzbekistan is also a good example of a country that says to us that the European Union has nothing to teach them about democracy and human rights because the Union has its own defects and problems. How can we rid ourselves of these double standards? We are in the habit of lecturing to others, but we do not necessarily practise what we preach. I also think that the idea you mentioned of an account of an organisation's democracy focused attention on these double standards.

**Cecilia Malmström, President-in-Office of the Council.** – (SV) Mr President, I would like to express my thanks to the Members for being committed to this issue. We are entirely in agreement on the need to strengthen democracy in the EU's foreign policy. Today, during a period of economic crisis, it is particularly important that this dimension is not overlooked. We know that many developing countries are being hit very hard by the crisis. Recession results in dissatisfaction and social unrest. If there are not well functioning democratic institutions in such a situation, things can go seriously wrong. That is why it is important that there are secure democratic institutions and a strong civil society capable of dealing with such crises.

The eastern partnership is a very important instrument, not least for strengthening democracy. We are working intensively on this. We will have a meeting of foreign ministers in December and we hope to be able to launch a great many specific measures at the start of 2010. The eastern partnership is an important instrument for strengthening democracy among our immediate neighbours.

Mrs Hautala brought up the issue of Uzbekistan. This is, of course, a very serious matter. The human rights situation there is far from satisfactory. As Mrs Hautala is aware, extending sanctions requires unanimity in the Council. At present, the Council is not unanimous. We agree on the objective, however, which is to strengthen democracy and human rights in Uzbekistan. We hope that the means of achieving this is through stronger commitment. We hope to be able to find alternative ways of strengthening democracy by continually assessing the human rights situation and considering what sort of relations we should have with Uzbekistan. There are other ways of having an influence which may be more effective than an arms embargo. Very few countries trade in arms with Uzbekistan, so an arms embargo might be more of a symbolic gesture than anything else. Perhaps we can find other ways. As I mentioned, however, we first require unanimity in the Council and we do not have that at present.

If the EU is to be credible in its relations with the outside world in the area of human rights and democracy, we must also be strong within the EU. Shortcomings exist. Perhaps they are not comparable with the terrible injustices committed in other countries, but there are shortcomings internally within the EU. We must be vigilant of this at all times if we are to be credible in our dealings with the outside world.

Finally, I would like to thank you for this debate and also for the excellent resolution that I have seen that has been tabled by Parliament. I have not yet managed to look at all the amendments, but I think the resolution tabled is very good. It accords entirely with the ambitions of the Swedish Presidency. As mentioned, we hope to be able to adopt the Council's conclusions at the meeting with the General Affairs and External Relations Council in November. We then look forward to continued discussions with Parliament on this issue.

**President.** – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place at 11.00 on Thursday, 22 October.

**Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), in writing.** – I fully support this call for a more coherent and effective framework for EU support for democracy-building, the promotion of democratic values and respect for human rights in the world. The European Union itself is founded on the very values of democracy and human rights. Indeed, the Copenhagen Criteria governing conditions of EU accession demand of candidate members

"stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities". Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty enhances Union's commitment to continue its external action according to its founding principles. Indeed, a key objective of the Common Foreign and Security Policy is to consolidate democracy, rule of law, and, respect for human rights. I urge that the European External Action Service (EEAS) be established speedily not only an aid to democracy building but also be established as a democratically accountable service to European Parliament. Democracy is a universal value. Democratisation and good governance are not only ends in themselves but are vital for poverty reduction, sustainable development, peace and stability. Indeed, democracy, development and respect for human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

#### 14. Question Time (Commission)

**President.** – The next item is Question Time (B7-0212/2009).

The following questions are addressed to the Commission.

*Part one*

Question No 21 by **Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou** (H-0311/09)

Subject: Women's participation in positions of responsibility in the job market

Recent data have recorded the continuing under-representation of women in positions of responsibility in the European job market: in the larger European enterprises, there is, on average, only one woman in every 10 board members.

What is the Commission's opinion of the Member States' initiatives to promote more women to positions of economic responsibility? What good practices have been identified, particularly through the work of the European Network of Women in Decision Making in Politics and the Economy? Is the Commission in favour of the proposals on quotas for women on the boards of major enterprises? What proposals and initiatives does it intend to put forward with a view to the final evaluation of the Roadmap for equality between women and men and the revision of the Lisbon Strategy guidelines in 2010?

**Vladimír Špidla**, *Member of the Commission.* – (CS) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the number of women taking part in decision making may have been rising over recent years but power in the political and economic areas still lies firmly in male hands. Stereotypical preconceptions about the role of women and men and the difficulties of establishing a work-life balance, along with other forms of overt or hidden discrimination, constitute obstacles that prevent women from gaining access to responsible, leading positions.

Over recent decades, women have become more involved in political decision making in most EU countries. The speed of these changes is slow and, unfortunately, the overall proportion of women in powerful positions remains low. In the economic sphere, the proportion of women with decision-making powers is very unsatisfactory. In the private sector, men account for nine out of ten directors of top European companies. Only 3% of these companies have boards headed by a woman.

The Commission cares very much about supporting the better representation of women in senior roles and it backs the activities of Member States in this regard by collecting, analysing and disseminating comparable data for this area, supporting networks of interested parties and encouraging the sharing of experience and proven approaches at a European level. The European network for supporting women in managerial positions, which the Commission set up in June 2008, has stressed the importance of measures aimed at supporting mentoring, developing networks for supporting women, raising the profile of women who take on important roles and encouraging women to apply for senior positions. During 2010 the Commission will arrange information activities and the sharing of proven approaches.

The Commission reports with satisfaction that many Member States have launched initiatives to support the access of women to leading roles, particularly through cultural events in the private sector, educational programmes for women who are interested in careers at the most senior levels, the development of a charter or mark for companies that support gender equality, the introduction of codes of good practice in companies and events in support of the work-life balance and the fight against gender-based prejudice.

The question of quotas for women on the boards of large companies is under discussion. In my opinion, there is a need in this context to study the experience of Scandinavia, where this radical approach has been

adopted. It is, however, entirely up to the Member States which strategy to choose, based on their specific circumstances. I would like to point out that Article 141 Paragraph 4 of the Treaty allows Member States to adopt 'positive action measures'. The European Court of Justice, however, has interpreted this option narrowly and has prohibited the automatic adoption of such measures, requiring that each case be examined individually according to objective criteria.

The Commission intends to submit a new strategic framework for gender equality in mid-2010 which will be accompanied by a detailed impact analysis and will take account of the results of implementing the existing plan for the period 2006-2010. It should be a Commission priority to support the greater participation of women in senior roles. Last but not least, the Commission will submit a proposal at the beginning of next year for a new post-2010 growth and employment strategy. The issue of gender equality should be a central element in the new strategy.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to stress that the equal representation of women and men is an issue not only of political principle, democracy and ethics, but is, in essence, a fundamental economic issue, since there can be no hope for future development unless our society makes use of all of its talents in the best possible way. I must therefore state clearly that gender equality and an appropriate representation of women in leading roles in itself constitutes an active component of European competitiveness.

**Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (PPE).** – (EL) Commissioner, thank you once again for your commitment to the promotion of women to positions of responsibility. May I say that my question was more specific. In light of the review of the Lisbon objectives and the evaluation of the roadmap, will the European Commission propose specific measures to combat the lack of women in positions of responsibility in the labour market.

Will the models, the Norwegian model to which you referred, be an inspiration in terms of a guideline? How does the case law of the European Court of Justice, to which you referred, link in with this? Is it encouraging or discouraging you, as the European Commission, to take a position in favour of one direction?

**Vladimír Špidla, Member of the Commission.** – (CS) Thank you for the supplementary question. In my opinion, I expressed myself clearly on this matter, but nonetheless I think there is a need to be clearer still. The Commission generally considers equal opportunities to be a major component of European competitiveness, regardless of the moral obligations that are associated with it. This form of equality will therefore be a very high priority component of future strategies and we are proposing appropriate measures that may advance this issue in all of the relevant documents. I would like to state that we must always remain within the framework of the Treaty, of course, but we are prepared to use this framework to the full.

**Jörg Leichtfried (S&D).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, what you have just had to say did sound very good, but politicians must always have an eye on whether their actions live up to their words. I have a question for you, namely how can it be that, over the last five years, it has only been male high-ranking members of the Commission that I have had the opportunity of working with? How can it be that the Commission does not have gender parity in its composition? It also appears that it will not be possible for the Commission to have a balanced gender make-up in future, either. Would it not be a good thing to set an example for once, in order to be much more credible when taking further steps?

**Vladimír Špidla, Member of the Commission.** – (CS) I think it would be appropriate to emphasise that the Commission currently has a greater representation of women than ever before. It would also be appropriate to point out that my female colleagues have held, and are holding, the most important portfolios. There is no doubt at all about this. I could mention Neelie Kroes, Dalia Grybauskaitė and so on, as simply all of my female colleagues hold very significant portfolios. The Commission is therefore setting an example from this perspective, but it is clear that the appointment of commissioners is in the hands of Member States and if the Member States do not put forward female candidates, then that will naturally be reflected in the make-up of the Commission. As far as the structure of the European administration is concerned, you are well aware that the Commission has plans to improve the situation and to carry on improving it, as we are still far from having an appropriate representation of men and women and I am delighted to say that, thanks to the efforts of my colleague Siim Kallas, we have made some very clear progress if you compare the numbers at the outset with the situation today. However, you are right to say that the situation is still far from satisfactory.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE).** – Mr President, we have this conversation every year, and it strikes me that the politics needs to change if we want to have more people – and specifically more women – involved in the Commission, Council and Parliament, which does not seem to want that. The way we function as a parliament does not suit parents with children – be they men or women – and one has to make a choice. I

chose this career but I have somebody who has chosen to be at home. I think we need to be realistic in our discussions about what is practical.

**Vladimír Špidla**, *Member of the Commission*. – (CS) I pointed out in my introduction that there were many situations that were either negative or positive. It is obvious that we all take our own fundamental decisions in the end, although some institutions, some policies and some arrangements clearly give people much more freedom of choice than others. I am therefore quite clear in my mind that, apart from anything else, we need to take a constitutional approach to equal opportunity and to the elimination of all types of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, because at the moment, it is not true that men and women are afforded the same choices. Women are still in a disadvantaged position unfortunately which, apart from anything else, manifests itself overtly in their lack of access to roles in which political or economic decisions are taken.

**President**. – As the questioners are not present, Questions 22 and 23 lapse.

*Part two*

Question No 24 by **Bernd Posselt** (H-0304/09)

Subject: Language learning in border regions

Does the Commission consider that enough is being done in the Member States and at EU level to ensure that young people living in the border regions between Member States learn the language of the neighbouring country? Can national minorities and cross-border Euroregions make a specific and positive contribution to this?

**Leonard Orban**, *Member of the Commission*. – (RO) In accordance with Article 149 of the EC Treaty, educational content and the organisation of education systems are the sole responsibility of Member States. As is mentioned in the relevant article, the EU will contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting their actions. On the other hand, the Commission believes that the selection of languages taught in Member State schools must take into account geographical location and the presence of national minorities.

This point was emphasised in the September 2008 Communication entitled 'Multilingualism: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment', where it is stated that efforts are still required to increase the number of languages being taught, particularly with regard to choosing the second foreign language, while taking account of local conditions. As part of the procedures for extending the options in terms of the languages taught, the European Commission suggests that dialogue is established between the education bodies and education providers, supported, for instance, through the Comenius Regio programme, partnerships with the interested local parties, and through twinning with institutions in other countries.

The EU's programmes for education, training and young people support the learning of all the languages spoken in the European Union, including those spoken by minorities, by also supporting young people travelling abroad in order to learn these languages.

The programmes promoting European cross-border territorial cooperation can also support actions relating to training and social inclusion, including the study of languages. For example, the project *Avenir éducatif commun*, supported by the France-UK cross-border programme for the 2007-2013 period, is intended to set up a cross-border network of schools, especially for the study of languages and getting started in business. The total cost is EUR 2.2 million, with partners involved on both sides of the Channel.

Another example from another part of Europe is highlighted by a project being run as three cross-border programmes involving Vienna: Austria-Czech Republic, Austria-Slovakia and Austria-Hungary. The project entails preparing young people for life in the cross-border region within Central Europe, particularly through offering an education aimed at acquiring a range of skills: linguistic, intercultural, communication and knowledge. The total cost of this project is EUR 791 000.

**President**. – I would like to ask Mr Posselt whether he has an additional question.

**Bernd Posselt (PPE)**. – (DE) Mr President, you are an impressive example of multilingualism. First of all, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether a similar project to the one he mentioned, namely between Austria and Hungary and between Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, could not be put in place between Hungary and Slovakia? That would certainly be very beneficial and useful from a political point of view. My second point is that I believe that there should be more real-life learning of the languages of the



neighbouring countries in border regions, such as Czech in eastern Bavaria, but that this should not be restricted to schools. In Schirnding, for example, we have a German-Czech nursery school. Could you also support nurseries? I am also interested in adult learning – lifelong learning – whereby older generations in border regions, too, have an opportunity to learn the neighbouring language.

**Leonard Orban**, *Member of the Commission*. – (RO) Thank you for the additional questions. As regards the first issue concerning a possible project between Hungary and Slovakia, if such a project is submitted to the European Commission, we will certainly give it our utmost attention. We want to contribute in this way to finding solutions of mutual interest to both countries.

As regards the second issue, I would first of all like to emphasise that in September, we launched an initiative linked to the early learning of foreign languages. This initiative will last a number of years and is already enjoying a particular degree of success. There is also a campaign in Member States as part of this initiative to encourage the parents of children aged between 2 and 6 to motivate their children to learn foreign languages.

With regard to the second part of the question about lifelong learning, this is the main objective of the policy we are promoting. We have a large number of projects aimed at learning foreign languages and also acquiring intercultural skills for people who are outside the education system, including for those attending vocational colleges, those who have, so to speak, fewer opportunities, as well as for retired people and the unemployed. This situation is not only reflected in the way in which we finance different projects, but it is also very clearly highlighted in the strategy the European Commission adopted in 2008.

We want all of the European Union's citizens, not only young people, to be able to have the means and opportunity to learn at least two foreign languages.

**Janusz Władysław Zemke (S&D)**. – (PL) Commissioner, I would like to thank you for that interesting information, but in your answer, you concentrated on schools, whereas attempts have also been made in several border cities to set up universities. This type of university has been established, for example, on the border of Poland and Germany in Frankfurt – European University Viadrina. I would like to ask this: within the framework of the various schools which you spoke about, is support also being considered for this type of institution of higher education, namely universities which have come into being in various cities situated on national borders inside the European Union?

**Leonard Orban**, *Member of the Commission*. – (RO) If universities are able to submit projects to meet the requirements of the lifelong learning programme during the 2007-2013 period, the European Commission is prepared to finance these projects as well. In fact, I want to mention to you that a whole series of projects already being financed by the European Commission also include a large number of universities as partners throughout the whole European Union. Therefore, my answer is a definite 'yes'. What matters is the quality of the project submitted by the various representatives.

**Paul Rübig (PPE)**. – (DE) Mr President, we have numerous Erasmus programmes for students, young entrepreneurs and now for journalists. Do you think that it would also be possible to use Erasmus programmes in order to improve communication in border regions, and where would you put the emphasis in that regard?

**Leonard Orban**, *Member of the Commission*. – (RO) My answer to this question is a definite 'yes'. On the subject of the Erasmus Programme, what started around 20 years ago as a programme that was not viewed in a very positive light by various agencies in the EU is currently one of the most successful programmes in the European Union.

During the frequent visits that I have made, not only to the capitals of Member States but also to very many regions in the European Union, I have been able to witness the extremely positive impact of this programme. The subject of universities in Poland and Germany has already been mentioned earlier. I remember with pleasure that when I visited the University of Warsaw, I had the opportunity to see a large number of German students in Poland who had the chance, through the Erasmus Programme, to acquire some knowledge of Polish and of Polish culture as well, in other words, what we would term as intercultural knowledge.

They demonstrate very clearly how efficient and effective this knowledge is. In conclusion to my response, I wish to remind you that the President of the Commission, Mr Barroso, mentioned his intention to promote during his future mandate in the period ahead those initiatives which relate to strengthening and accelerating the movement of young people, precisely so that they can acquire these skills which are increasingly necessary.

**President.** – Question No 25 by **Nikolaos Chountis** (H-0320/09)

Subject: Commission negligence in investigation of Siemens scandal

The biggest case of corruption to hit the European Union in the last five years is the Siemens scandal. It emerges from the judicial investigation, court judgments, the confessions of those involved and public statements by the company itself that political parties and individuals in positions of responsibility in various countries, including Greece, were bribed so that the company would gain an advantage in obtaining contracts for projects and procurement on behalf of government and public enterprises, many of which were co-financed from Community funds.

Since the Siemens scandal came to light, the Commissioner responsible for combating fraud, Mr Siim Kallas, has stated, in response to parliamentary scrutiny of the case, that the investigation is not within the competence of the European Union and that the Member States have not requested the assistance of the Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). In the light of that statement, will the Commission say in what way the Commission and OLAF, which is competent to investigate cases of fraud against the Community budget, have protected European citizens' money? In what way have the Commission and OLAF intervened in this important case to demand transparency? What are the Commission's and OLAF's conclusions in relation to this case?

**Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the Commission.** – The Commission pays great attention to all corruption cases all over Europe, but I must say that the number of current matters directly and indirectly involving Siemens in which EU funds are involved is quite limited. The following is an overview of four of the matters concerned.

A case currently investigated by OLAF and closed in the last quarter of 2003, involving external aid, is in judicial follow-up in Germany. OLAF is following closely the judicial proceedings in that country.

A second OLAF case relating to projects funded by the EIB is currently being investigated. It involves public procurement procedures.

Thirdly, another matter relating to projects funded by the European Investment Bank and involving public procurement procedures is currently being evaluated by OLAF in order to determine whether there are sufficiently serious suspicions of fraud or irregularity detrimental to the financial interests of the EU. Based on the outcome of this evaluation, OLAF will decide if a case needs to be opened in this matter.

Finally, fourthly, the Spanish Supreme Court issued a ruling on 4 November 2008 in a case involving Structural Funds and in which Siemens was originally implicated. It was investigated by the national authorities in the mid-1990s, and the resulting judicial proceedings have been closely followed by OLAF and subsequently OLAF. This ruling, inter alia, sentenced several persons to terms of imprisonment, and imposed fines for forgery. However, it should also be noted that in this instance, Siemens was acquitted in the case in the first ruling of the Criminal Court of Madrid issued on 22 June 2006.

As with all these kinds of cases, the general point is that OLAF is not a law enforcement agency. OLAF cooperates closely with Member States; the latter have an obligation to inform OLAF, and OLAF naturally follows up and gives serious attention to all the cases where EU funds are somehow involved or have been under investigation.

This is the general picture. OLAF also participates closely in international cooperation with all other international institutions in combating misuse of money made available for humanitarian aid and other projects.

In relation to possible specific case elements, if the honourable Member is in possession of material which could be relevant to such matters, the Commission would encourage him to transmit it to OLAF, which will assess it and take appropriate decisions on it in accordance with its mandate.

**Nikolaos Chountis (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Mr President, Commissioner, the feeling in Greece about the Siemens scandal is basically as reported in the press. In other words, the feeling is that the scandal – the biggest in post-war Greece – is heading definitively towards limitation following the second ruling by the Supreme Constitutional Court in Germany, which states that Mr Christoforakos, the former CEO of Siemens Hellas and high priest of the corruption, cannot be extradited from Germany to Greece.

That is the feeling. This is how the scandal is developing in Greece, the scandal in which, further to confessions and convictions by German courts, state officials have been involved and included, officials who, for years, were bribed with its dirty money to award an unknown number of procurement and works contracts to Siemens.

I ask again, Commissioner; while everyone knows that most of these procurements were cofinanced works, only your services – and unfortunately your reply confirms as much – pretend that they do not know this, taking refuge in my view in arbitrary terms of Community provisions. Questions are being asked and the answers are: give us information, we are investigating the matter, we are monitoring it. I want a specific answer. Commissioner, you have an obligation to save European taxpayers' money. What will the Commission do in order to bring persons who it has been confirmed are infringing Community procurement legislation to justice?

**Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the Commission.** – In my area of responsibility for budget discharge, I will soon appear before Parliament and the Committee on Budgetary Control to explain what should be done to protect and to ensure the proper use of European money; these are very large topics.

Again, if you have any information concerning the misuse of money in cofinanced projects, we would be very happy – as would DG REGIO and other departments – to receive such information. I can assure you that this information will be handled very seriously.

However, as regards the extradition of an individual from one Member State to another, this is purely a matter in the hands of Member States, and none of the directorates-general in my area of responsibility can do anything to facilitate the extradition of a person for whom this is requested.

**President.** – Question No 26 by **Gay Mitchell** (H-0336/09)

Subject: Cigarette smuggling and revenue

A European Anti-Fraud Office press release in August told of the conviction of a major cigarette smuggler in the US. While this is to be welcomed, the fact remains that the illicit cigarette trade costs the EU as much as €9.5 billion in lost revenue each year and that this money goes to criminals and has been used to fund terrorist organisations such as the Real IRA.

What is the Commission's strategy to deal with the fact that 97% of illegal cigarettes are evading the legitimate tax net at the European taxpayer's expense and, subsequently, to the detriment of European security?

**Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the Commission.** – I should like to thank the honourable Member for this question, which allows me once again to pay attention to this huge issue which is damaging to the budgets of the Member States. This is again a matter where Member States act, but where cooperation between Member States is vital and also where our service, OLAF, is very active and plays an important role in fighting international cigarette smuggling.

OLAF has a clear strategy. Firstly, OLAF assists and supports law enforcement authorities throughout the European Union with their cases, and organises and coordinates Europe-wide operations: Operation Diabolo in 2007 aimed at counterfeit from China which is smuggled in shipping containers to the EU; Operation Mudan in 2008, to address the growing problem of smuggling of cigarettes by post; and Diabolo II, which had the same objective as the first Operation Diabolo, which took place in September 2009.

OLAF provides intelligence to its partners about the emerging threats and cooperates with Member States, so this is really an area of international cooperation. OLAF's work demonstrates that this cooperation should be enforced, but I must also say that there have been two very important events during the five-year tenure of this Commission in which OLAF has been extremely instrumental.

These are the Philip Morris agreement, and subsequently the Japan Tobacco agreement in December 2007, where the biggest tobacco corporations admitted that they had some shortcomings in dealing with fair trade in cigarettes, and paid substantial amounts of money to the EU budget; they are also cooperating very closely to fight cigarette smuggling, which is not in their interests either.

These were very important achievements, and all Member States are signatories to the latest Japan Tobacco agreement.

We continue to cooperate in this difficult field, but I think that with these two big agreements, the landscape has changed a little and we notice modest progress.

The case referred to by the honourable Member, of the prosecution and jailing of a third country national, is a very important case, and this is one of the many international investigations coordinated by the Office on the basis of such an agreement. There have been many prosecutions in the EU based on OLAF's work.

This is the first prosecution in a third country of a non-EU national directly related to the smuggling of cigarettes into the EU, so it also shows worldwide cooperation. I can produce several other details from liaison officers in China and other places. We all have an interest in enhancing this cooperation and combating cigarette smuggling.

**Gay Mitchell (PPE).** – Leaving aside the jobs which have been undermined in registered businesses, the health implications of this are extraordinary. Half of all the patients admitted to the largest hospital in Ireland, St James's Hospital, are admitted with smoke-related illnesses. If you care to check in all the other Member States, you will find a similar situation. These cigarettes are contributing to that problem but not making any contribution to the cost of treating it.

I understand that the figure that has been put on the amount of illicit trade coming into the European Union by way of cigarettes is EUR 9.5 billion, and 97% of it goes undetected. Is it not time for a comprehensive approach by the Commission, including, for example, looking at the possibility of a coastguard to deal with this problem?

**Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the Commission.** – I recently visited a country outside the European Union where smoking is not prohibited, and I really noticed how big a difference there is in the European Union where you cannot smell the odour of cigarettes in public places at least. I suppose that this is the most important step to take in order to avoid all health risks.

As regards the fight against cigarette smuggling, we must use all our law enforcement agencies. This is clearly the most important priority, but it is again the duty of border guards in the Member States to seize illegal cigarettes.

I myself have visited a port which has very sophisticated equipment for discovering shipments of illegal cigarettes, but this is the province of each individual Member State. We can only facilitate, we can only provide intelligence, and do everything we can to help the Member States. It is up to their border services to seize such shipments and stop them at the border.

**Paul Rübig (PPE).** – (DE) Commissioner, cigarette smuggling can be divided into three streams: the funds, the goods and, finally, the accompanying documentation. Can you envisage the introduction of dedicated taxation or duties for the funding streams which, after all, are known and do flow here?

We are, of course, already familiar with this kind of financial transactions tax, where it is not the product, not the paperwork, but the financial transactions that are heavily taxed. It is an attractive challenge to consider this with countries such as Switzerland.

**Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the Commission.** – I agree that this is a very important issue for the tax authorities. We in Europe have quite a substantial excise tax on tobacco products, but as I know from the experience of dealing with the Philip Morris agreement and the Japan Tobacco agreement, this involves largely the same corporations, which are our main producers of tobacco. This is also the outcome: that they are cooperating. I do not know about Switzerland; we do not have any indications that Switzerland is behaving problematically in this field in Europe in general. All states recognise the threats from the illegal cigarette trade, so if we have some indications, we will definitely be in contact with the Swiss authorities.

**President.** – As the questioner is not present, Question No 27 lapses.

Question No 28 by **Maria Badia i Cutchet** (H-0321/09)

Subject: Education under the new European political strategy

In the current context of economic recession, there have been many calls for a new European strategy for employment and sustainable and intelligent growth. In this regard, a number of recommendations have been made in a wide variety of fields but no indication has been given as to what should be done for education, nor have any actual initiatives been taken by either the Commission or the Member States.

In view of the need to complete the implementation of the Bologna Process, itself fraught with difficulties, to modernise universities and other higher education institutions, to foster the education/innovation/research triangle and to encourage the accreditation of professional training across Europe, does the Commission intend to take measures or initiatives in this field under the new European strategy to create a fully integrated, globally competitive, socially inclusive, high-quality European Higher Education Area by 2010?

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – Thank you for that question because it is very relevant these days. I would like to highlight that, under the umbrella of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, the Commission has, for several years, been pursuing its modernisation agenda for European higher education.

This agenda is particularly focused on the three specific areas of curricula, governance and funding. Reforms in the area of curricula are largely pursued within the framework of the Bologna Process, which seeks to create a European higher education area by 2010.

As you know, the Bologna Process is not a Commission initiative, but an intergovernmental process of 46 European countries. The Commission, however, recognises its utmost importance and has joined the process, and is fully supporting it because of its relevance to its own modernisation agenda for higher education.

Just to highlight some of the related initiatives over the past year, I would mention the fostering of the knowledge triangle by creating the European Institute for Innovation and Technology, encouragement for recognition of education and training across Europe, the introduction of the European qualification framework for lifelong learning, the European credit transfer and accumulation system, diploma supplements and European credits for vocational education and training.

One of the goals is also to make European higher education more transparent and comparable, and therefore the projects for classification and ranking of higher education institutions are under way.

The Commission also recognises the high importance of today's and tomorrow's labour markets and the challenges which this brings, especially for the young generation, and we have therefore come up with the 'new skills for new jobs' initiative, and the establishment of a university business forum where very important exchanges of views, opinions and experience are taking place both in academia and businesses.

Regarding the European higher education area, there is consensus among the participating countries that, although a lot has been achieved up to now and since 1999, the project will not come to an end in 2010 but will continue at least until 2020.

From the Commission perspective, the Bologna Process should, in the coming years, focus on how to further promote mobility in higher education, strengthen the social dimension through equitable access to higher education, and develop the global dimension of the process, meaning cooperation between European higher education institutions and their partners worldwide.

**Maria Badia i Cutchet (S&D)**. – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, for the second time today, I have the pleasure of putting questions to you and hearing your answers. Thank you for your words. Obviously we agree on the assessment of everything that is happening in the Bologna Process.

My question was more in relation to the immediate future and the not so immediate future, because the economic crisis that we are suffering means that there is an entire series of sectors, some mature sectors, that are not going to generate new jobs. And we are talking about new jobs in a new economy that we are calling 'green', among many other things.

Therefore my question is: how does this new situation, this new economy that we are trying to start up, translate into the plans and studies, both in universities and in professional training, particularly now that, as you are perfectly aware, we have already begun to implement the Copenhagen Process on professional training?

I would like to hear more about your views on this.

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – I think that again you have pointed to a very important problem. We already discussed this morning that we now have 78 million people in the European Union with basic or lower skills, and it is very clear that, by the deadline which we have set for ourselves of 2020, we will definitely not have the same number of jobs for those people with basic or lower skills.

Therefore, it is absolutely imperative to prepare for that time: we have to upgrade and modernise our educational system, and we have to progress with analysing and searching to ascertain what these new skills and jobs might be. We have to prepare the younger generation, in particular, but also the middle generation, for this.

Therefore we would like to continue with the ongoing research under the strategic framework 'Education and Training 2020' for policy cooperation and mutual learning. This is just one of the frameworks in which

we would like to continue and to cooperate with educational institutions and with businesses on future requirements for the most wide-ranging and most relevant mix of skills that our citizens will need by 2020.

**Gay Mitchell (PPE).** – Clearly, education is largely a matter for Member State governments, but one issue that the Commissioner could help to coordinate is putting an end to what I would call apartheid in the educational system. In whole sections of our community, people just do not have access to third-level education.

If you take Dublin, for example, I could identify five areas which make up 75% of the prisoner population at Mountjoy Jail, which is our biggest prison. Needless to say, access to third-level education in those same communities in the 21st century is still at an all-time low. I presume that is the case right across Europe. Could you not promote standards to end apartheid and open up third-level education to everybody?

**Maroš Šefčovič, Member of the Commission.** – You started your question with a very clear analysis that there is a division of labour and division of competences, but it is very clear that the Commission is strongly behind all efforts to increase the proportion of the population with the highest possible level of education. It is very clear that only by improving the level of education, by enlarging access to high-quality tertiary education, as you mentioned, that we can preserve the cutting edge of the European economy and preserve the prosperity and high living standards we enjoy in Europe.

I think therefore that the Commission and the Member States have to work very closely in this respect to create the conditions whereby students or pupils from difficult socio-economic backgrounds can also get a fair chance and fair access to higher and university education.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – Nowadays, 19% of young people in Europe drop out of school. The European Union cannot achieve sustainable economic development if it is going to fail to invest in education and research. So far, only five Member States have invested more than 2% of GDP in research and innovation.

Both Member States' GDP and the Community budget are decreasing due to the economic crisis. There is therefore a risk that the budgets assigned to education and research will be reduced in the coming years. However, we need to invest in education and innovation so that the European Union can maintain its economic competitiveness and create new jobs.

What measures can the Commission, along with Member States, adopt to ensure that a minimum level of investment in research and education will be guaranteed in the coming years?

**Maroš Šefčovič, Member of the Commission.** – You are absolutely right that the percentage of early school leavers in Europe is very high. We set ourselves the level of 10%, to be achieved by 2010. It is quite obvious that this benchmark will not be reached because currently, there are around 15% of early school leavers, and you are absolutely right that this does not reflect well on the need for quality in our educational systems around Europe.

You are also right that, under current circumstances – where national governments are under different constraints regarding public finances and the financing of stimulus packages, and are very often implementing exit strategies aimed at restoring public finances to a sound footing in the coming years – there is much debate over the budget.

What should be the priorities? Where should we place our emphasis? I think you have already noticed that there is always a strong voice from the Commission side highlighting the need to keep an adequate level of financing for research and innovation in the educational sectors, because we believe this is how we will preserve and improve our competitive edge and prepare our future researchers, our future workers in highly competitive areas for better performance in the future.

You will certainly hear voices from the Commission appealing clearly to keep financing for education-related activities and for research and innovatory aid at the highest possible level, even under these very difficult economic constraints.

**President.** – Question No 29 by **Silvia-Adriana Țicău (H-0327/09)**

Subject: Measures to guarantee young people access to quality education, to encourage and assist them to continue their studies and to ease their entry onto the job market

There are 96 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in the EU, which represents around 20% of the total population. 20% of young people under the age of 25 are exposed to the risk of poverty, according

to Eurostat statistics for 2007, while stable jobs are increasingly hard to find owing to the economic and financial crisis. Approximately 15% of young Europeans abandon their schooling. In February 2009, some 17.5% of Europeans under the age of 25 did not have a job, with this being more than twice the overall unemployment rate for the EU, which stood at 7.9% for the same period. Similarly, many young Europeans are being forced to accept temporary jobs because they cannot find permanent ones.

Since the future of Europe depends on the younger generation, could the Commission state what measures it is contemplating to guarantee young people access to quality education, to encourage and assist them to continue their studies and to ease their entry onto the job market, thereby ensuring their fuller integration into society?

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I already used some of the arguments in my previous answer, but it is clear that this is a very important area and I will try to highlight some other additional information in responding to this question.

As you know, in accordance with Articles 149 and 150 of the EC Treaty, responsibility for the content and organisation of education and training systems rests with the Member States. It is really up to them to decide the content of their educational programmes for all levels of education and training.

The Commission recognises, however, the importance of the issue raised by the honourable Member and supports Member States in implementing their reforms through the open method of coordination.

The 2006 recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning defines the key competences young people should develop during their initial education and training to a level that equips them for adult life and which would allow them to develop very good job skills for the future. We should also look at the aforementioned strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') from this perspective. I would underline that among the priority areas for the first cycle of this programme, the Commission aims to develop cooperation among Member States on improving basic skills in reading, mathematics and science, and to intensify work on reducing the number of early leavers from education and training.

Through the Copenhagen Process, European Union Member States are increasingly cooperating to share experience and improve links between vocational education and training and the labour market to help youngsters access the labour market on better terms. Boosting the attractiveness and quality of vocational educational training is a main priority, as is fostering the notion of lifelong learning and related policies so that the European workforce is flexible and able to adapt to changes in labour market conditions.

Just to highlight some other programmes, the Leonardo da Vinci programme's mobility action is also a highly effective tool to help youngsters access the labour market. This mostly concerns apprentices and other youngsters on the job market. Thanks to this programme, they can undertake part of their training in another country. So far, the results have been very positive because these placements abroad have improved skills that are useful for employers. They have improved their language abilities and intercultural skills.

I should also mention the Erasmus Programme, but in a slightly different light because, up to now, we have been speaking mostly about exchanges for students among universities. Since 2007, however, the Erasmus Programme has also been supporting student placements in enterprises. This programme has been very successful since the start, as in its first year of operation alone, over 20 000 students carried out a work placement abroad and over 15 000 enterprises have participated in this effort. This is one example of how we can enhance the employability of graduates and foster better cooperation between academia and business.

We have already discussed the positive impact of the Bologna Process on student mobility and on cooperation among universities and higher education institutions, so I will not repeat what I already said a few minutes ago.

To conclude, I would like to underline that the Commission acknowledges the particular difficulties that young people face when they are entering the labour market. In the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and more and better jobs, both the Commission and the European Council have put a particular focus on improving the employment situation of young people. Member States have committed themselves through the adoption of the European Youth Pact in 2005 to devote more attention to the integration of young people into education, employment and society overall, but the initial very promising progress has been stalled because of the current economic crisis. It is true that young people have been hit particularly hard as they have been the first to lose their jobs under the current circumstances. In its Communication 'A shared commitment for employment' of June 2009, the Commission has encouraged Member States and

social partners to ensure that young people, despite the difficult economic environment, have access to quality education and training and, in particular, to high-quality apprenticeships and traineeships.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (S&D).** – (RO) There is a risk due to the economic crisis that it will be harder for young people to find a job, that they will have to accept a job that is beneath their level of qualifications or that they will be forced to spend longer periods in unemployment. The Commission should ensure that these young people have the opportunity to receive training during this period of unemployment and are not put at a disadvantage by employment terms requiring a minimum period of experience, sometimes of 5-10 years. What measures does the Commission envisage adopting with this in mind?

**Maroš Šefčovič, Member of the Commission.** – You are absolutely right that, under the current circumstances, the Commission and the Member States must be very creative in improving conditions for young people to enable them either to keep their jobs or, if they have lost them, to retrain them and better prepare them for the next opportunity, the next possible employment. The Commission is working very closely with the Member States and experts, and in the current situation, they are focusing on three areas: how to use this period to ensure that they achieve the right basic skills and key competences, how to make high-quality education more equitable and how to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in schools. I believe that these are basic preconditions for preparing young people to overcome this very difficult period and better prepare them for the next wave of jobs which, hopefully, will be created once the crisis has subsided.

**President.** – Question No 30 by **Liam Aylward (H-0332/09)**

Subject: Volunteerism in Sport

Can the Commission outline the initiatives that it intends to pursue to promote volunteerism in sport in Europe to a greater extent?

**Maroš Šefčovič, Member of the Commission.** – Volunteering in third sector activities plays an important role in EU policy making, given the benefits for society in terms of cohesion, inclusion, democracy, citizenship and also bringing us very clear, inherent, economic value. Volunteering provides many occasions for non-formal education and deserves to be adequately recognised. While volunteering takes place in many sectors, there are structural specificities regarding the field of sport.

Voluntary activity in sport forms the basis for the organisation, administration and implementation of sport activities in new Member States and plays a fundamental role in supporting the entire sport structure. This importance of voluntary activity in sport has repeatedly been acknowledged at the EU political level: in its 2007 White Paper on Sport, the Commission explicitly recognises the role of voluntary activity as one of the common elements of the European approach to sport. In its 'Pierre de Coubertin' action plan, the White Paper therefore seeks to promote volunteering in sport and non-profit sport organisations through specific actions, including a study on volunteering and exchange of good practices within the informal EU 'non-profit sport organisation' working group.

In addition, projects relating to volunteering in sport have been financed through the 'Europe for Citizens' and 'Youth in Action' programmes. A new study on volunteering was launched in spring 2009 and it described volunteering and it will describe the volunteering in all 27 Member States. This will bring deep analyses of the main opportunities and challenges, and it will be followed by the recommendation to the European Union Member States, civil society and sport organisations. The study results are expected before the end of 2009, so we will definitely be receiving them in the coming weeks.

We believe that this study should contribute to an increased understanding of volunteering in sports, in both societal and economic terms, as a basis for responding to the political demand to promote voluntary activities in sport and its underlying structure in an EU context.

As stipulated in its proposal, which is still subject to the legislative procedure, the Commission also intends to promote voluntary activity in sport under the framework of European Year on Volunteering 2011. Provided that the Lisbon Treaty enters into force, the implementation of new provisions on sport, which include the specific reference to the promotion of sports structures based on voluntary activities at EU level, will require due reflection. In that event, the Commission will hold consultations with all concerned stakeholders to develop policy and suitable initiatives with a clear EU added value.

**Liam Aylward (ALDE).** – I would like to thank the Commissioner, particularly for his references to the White Paper on Sport, which I welcome.



I want to refer to obesity, which is one of the most serious public health problems in Europe at the present time. It is estimated that there are 22 million overweight children in the European Union, of which 5.1 million are considered obese. The increase in child obesity is extremely worrying. As childhood obesity is also strongly linked to obesity in adulthood, the best time to address the problem is early in life.

How does the Commission intend to link volunteerism in sport and the 'sport for all' concept with the battle against rising obesity levels amongst children within the European Union and within Member States? Is there any possibility that an education programme could be run by your department to ensure that message is got across throughout Europe and in each Member State?

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – Thank you for raising this very important topic, which is a little bit related to the subsequent question. I agree with you 100% that obesity in children and, later on, among adults, is one of the urgent problems we are facing in the European Union. I will speak later about the studies which we have completed and evaluated on this subject, and it is very clear that there are two sides to the coin. On the one hand, we have to work very hard on improving sports activities in schools and on encouraging sports activities among adults; on the other hand we have to be very careful about nutritional guidelines.

As I am sure you are fully aware, the latest studies have clearly established that we probably had a higher intake of calories in the 1950s. At that time, we consumed more fat, but we did not have the problem with obesity. The answer is very clear that people then moved about much more and had much more physical activity. One of the conclusions is therefore that we cannot win the battle against obesity through dietary recommendations alone, but that these must be combined with adequate physical activity.

In this respect, the European Union is still waiting for real competences in sport. We are waiting for the completion of the Lisbon Treaty ratification process, and then the Commission will engage in wide consultations with all stakeholders so that we can prepare very good, widely accepted and positive initiatives. This will be one of the topics on which we should concentrate, as one way to positively improve the situation among children is to increase the number of hours in school devoted to physical activity. This will not be so difficult to introduce and I am sure it would bring very important and positive results.

**Marian Harkin (ALDE)**. – You said in your response to Mr Aylward that volunteering brings clear economic value. Indeed it does, and social value as well. Given that you also mention 2011 as the European Year on Volunteering in your response, I would like to ask why the Commission has only proposed a budget of EUR 6 million for this year; the year 2010 will have a budget of EUR 18 million.

Volunteering is free in the sense that it is freely given, but that is not a good reason for the European Commission not to invest in the 100 million volunteers across the EU. I would therefore like your views on the amount of funding that has been allocated to this year, because I genuinely believe it is not sufficient.

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – I was just consulting my *chef de cabinet* to give you as precise an answer as possible. As far as my information goes, EUR 8 million was allocated for the whole Year of Volunteering. I believe that with appropriate planning – which I hope we could start very soon once the decision is taken – and this amount of money, we can really highlight the importance of volunteering, the benefits it brings to social life and the savings it brings to the organisation of societal, cultural and other activities. I hope that we can definitely achieve the goals you mentioned in your question with this amount of money.

**President**. – Question No 31 by **Brian Crowley** (H-0338/09)

Subject: White Paper on sport

In accordance with the policy objectives of the EU White Paper on sport, what programmes is the European Commission implementing to highlight the benefits of better dietary practices in Europe?

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – This question is still related to a certain extent to my previous answer as to how we can combine better dietary practices, how we can promote a healthier lifestyle, and how we can bring European value added to the national policies in these areas.

I should first of all mention that the Commission's White Paper 'A strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues' highlighted the importance of taking proactive steps to reverse the decline in physical activity, and the actions suggested in the area of physical activity in this White Paper and in the White Paper on Sport mutually reinforce and complement each other.

The Commission has created a High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity where officials from all Member States can exchange policy ideas and best practices and gain an overview of all government policies in this area. As you probably know, this High Level Group meets at least three times a year.

Through the Public Health Programme, the Commission has been giving support to initiatives, among others, to network local partnerships targeting nutrition and physical activity in young people.

Coming back to the White Paper on Nutrition, I have to underline that this paper highlights that the private sector and NGOs have very important roles to play in helping us to ensure that there will be an actual decline in obesity levels.

The work of the European Platform on diet, physical activity and health is ongoing, and Platform members commit themselves to actions in their area to try to reverse the trend.

In the area of sport, the White Paper remains the single most important reference point. It foresees several actions in the area of sport and health, known under the concept of 'Health-Enhancing Physical Activity' (HEPA), which include the support of the HEPA network. It also proposed more funding opportunities for projects in this area, namely in the context of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, the EU Public Health Programme, the Youth and Citizenship programmes and the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The EU Physical Activity Guidelines adopted in 2008 can also be regarded as a contribution to informing citizens about the benefits of physical activity and maintaining an appropriate balance between nutrition and physical activity.

The Commission is currently implementing a preparatory action in the field of sport in order to prepare future EU actions in accordance with the budgetary decisions taken by Parliament, and the 2009 preparatory action has already provided a clear indication about the high interest in the area of HEPA, with 64% of the applications for the action being in this area.

**Brian Crowley (ALDE).** – Mr President, I would like to thank the Commissioner for his response. In fact, it was not related to the previous question; I was taking a different angle.

The Commissioner touched on two points that I wanted to bring up: first of all, with regard to the Nutrition and Health Group that is meeting with regard to types of food and dietary conditions, but also with regard to false advertising by many people involved in saying that sport is linked to certain types of products and additives, which can be very harmful to health. Instead of using natural products to create a better, healthy environment for those people who want to train in sports, they are using supplements such as growth hormones condensed into certain drinks and high-performance drinks, which are sold on the basis that they give you extra pep or extra zip but, in reality, cause huge health problems. This is why I wanted to link the very finest of sport and what sportsmen and women do to get to the condition they are in, while also encouraging those at lesser levels of sport to understand that taking a quick drink is not going to make you the best sportsperson in the world.

**Maroš Šefčovič, Member of the Commission.** – I think your angle is absolutely right because, if you go to a fitness centre today, even before you actually get to the machine you see the shelves full of different kinds of products, dietary supplements, energy drinks and so on. You are absolutely right that this area is very big business and that we should think very carefully about how to approach it and how to find an appropriate balance in offering the possibility for sports people to have good products but, at the same time, ensuring that they have proper information about what kind of products they are using.

I think an information campaign on the negative consequences of this type of product would be very important. At consumer protection level, these products must be very clearly described and it must be very clearly marked what kind of harmful consequences the consumption of these products could bring upon sportsmen. I think that you are absolutely right in saying that we have to think how we can avoid the negative consequences of taking part in sport and then totally wiping out the benefits by using products which are actually harmful to health.

**President.** – Question No 32 by **Jelko Kacin** (H-0343/09)

Subject: Difficulties of the Slovene theatre in Trieste

The EU urgently needs a Commissioner for Human Rights. The rights of minorities are being flagrantly violated in the EU. Here is an example from Italy. One of the pillars of the national identity and culture of

the Slovene minority in Italy is the Slovene theatre (*Slovensko stalno gledališče*) in Trieste, which was established as long ago as 1945 by the municipal, provincial and regional authorities of Italy.

The theatre has always faced financial difficulties because the Italian authorities do not provide regular funding. The theatre had to stop performing its programme in September because of financial difficulties. The Italian state has an important internal and international obligation to provide for those Italian citizens who are members of the Slovene minority. The Italian state is not respecting the rights of its own citizens, and by preventing the theatre from operating, it is carrying out a policy of active assimilation of a minority. In Slovenia, this behaviour is viewed as a flagrant violation of Italy's obligations towards a minority, in this case the Slovene minority.

What can you as European Commissioners do to preserve the Slovene theatre in Trieste, and with it the Slovene language?

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – I would also like to thank the honourable Member for this question. It is clear he is trying to explore all possible avenues of how to help and improve the situation in this theatre. I have to start by underlining that Community action in the field of culture is based on Article 151, which provides that Community action shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action.

However, the decision on the allocation of national funds to cultural institutions belongs to Member States, and no Community competence allows the Commission to influence such choices. Nevertheless, intercultural dialogue and the promotion of cultural diversity are key objectives of the European cultural agenda, and transnational projects in this field may therefore be eligible for Community support under the culture programme.

It aims, more specifically, at encouraging creativity and mobility of artists, public access to culture, the dissemination of art and culture, intercultural dialogue and knowledge of the history and cultural heritage of the peoples of Europe. Only projects with a European dimension can be financed, meaning at least three – or, in the case of multiannual projects, six – organisations from different Member States must participate in the project.

Operating grants for a single cultural institution are only possible if the activities are carried out at European level in at least seven countries participating in the cultural programme. It should also be mentioned that the Commission has developed a strategy to promote multilingualism in the European Union which covers official, national, regional, minority and migrant languages.

The communication of September 2008, 'Multilingualism: an Asset for Europe and a Shared Commitment', confirms Commission support for all languages spoken in the Community, including the languages spoken by minorities. This strategy is implemented in close cooperation with the Member States, who remain, however, the decision makers with respect to internal language policy. The promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity is also one of the general objectives of the lifelong learning programme. Under this programme, the European Union supports projects and networks to promote all languages present in the EU, including minority languages.

In addition to that, it must be stressed that the protection of persons belonging to minorities is one of the principles on which the Union is founded. Therefore, the Commission considers that Member States must use all available legal instruments in order to guarantee the rights of individuals – including those belonging to national minorities – and act proactively against all sources of discrimination. The European Commission reaffirms its commitment to the protection of fundamental rights and non-discrimination.

**Jelko Kacin (ALDE)**. – (SL) Thank you for your answer, Commissioner. It answers my question in principle, but this is not a problem of principle. This is a very specific problem and one that concerns people's lives. The Commission is, indeed, of the opinion that this is a matter which ought to fall within the competence of the Member States, but this House is of the view that not everything in Italy is working as well as it should. For precisely that reason, we shall be voting here tomorrow on a resolution which is a product of the debate on media freedom in Italy. Although, admittedly, the Commission believes that it has no authority in this regard, the majority of us here are of the view that the Commission actually is in a position to deal with such issues as well.

The minorities issue is not merely one of citizens' rights. It is also an issue of the State itself being responsible for, and obliged to respect, the rights of its minorities. Commissioner, I am pleased that you have spoken

about discrimination and countering it, but the fact is that no minority can survive unless it is granted positive discrimination. A minority needs extra understanding and help and extra moral, political and financial support if it is to survive. That is positive discrimination. And in this particular case, Commissioner, we are talking about an institution which was established by the aforementioned State. This theatre has been up and running for more than forty, fifty, years, but every year, we hear the same old story. Refusing to grant funding until the very end of the year is a form of political pressure, and as you yourself know, all the Slavic peoples have a similar saying: an empty bag cannot stand upright. What we need is concrete financial action.

**Maroš Šefčovič**, *Member of the Commission*. – I fully understand your preoccupation, but we in the Commission have to operate under the very clear rules established, especially for the field of budget allocations and budget disbursement.

Therefore, I was trying in my answer to provide you with possibilities of how we, from the European level, can help Slovenian theatre.

The only way in which the Commission can financially assist in this respect would be if the administration of the theatre could establish cooperation with their neighbours and become active in the cultural programme under the current conditions. This, I think, would be achievable and possible, and I believe it would also be for the benefit not only of the theatres but also for other reviewers and other partners with whom the Slovenian theatre would cooperate in the future, because only under these conditions can the Commission have a positive look at the financing of these concrete actions, which very clearly describe the element of European value added and European cooperation in this respect.

As you know, if we do not have a special budget line for this type of project, we cannot finance them. I fully understand that the debate on this issue is very often very intense, because it really concerns nations, nationality and languages. Therefore, I think the European Parliament is very well placed to debate this issue, as you highlighted in your supplementary question.

**President**. – That concludes Question Time.

Questions which have not been answered for lack of time will be answered in writing (see Annex).

#### IN THE CHAIR: MR VIDAL-QUADRAS

*Vice-President*

### 15. Modification of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 (the ‘Single CMO Regulation’) (debate)

**President**. – The next item is the debate on the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) (COM(2009)0152 – C7-0223/2009 – 2009/0152(CNS)).

**Mariann Fischer Boel**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, let me start by thanking you for allowing the urgent procedure to be applied to the two proposals that I hope will help the situation in the dairy market – one proposing that milk be included in the scope of Article 186, and one regarding the management of the buy-out scheme for quotas.

These proposals are the latest in a long series of dairy-oriented measures that we have adopted. I have taken note of your resolution of 17 September, and I hope you have noted that many of your recommendations are already covered in practice, covered by ongoing studies or will be covered by today’s proposals.

As regards the long-term measures mentioned in your resolution, we have set up a high level group. The first meeting has taken place and we expect that the final paper will be delivered before the end of June next year.

I am very happy to be able to say that the reality today in the dairy market is that prices are increasing and we are no longer seeing any buy-up into intervention because the market prices are better than the intervention prices.

Regarding my proposal, Article 186 is an existing provision for a large number of products, but milk is not included. The recent price volatility that we saw, starting in 2007, has shown that it is, or it will be, necessary to include milk under this article, because this would then allow the Commission to take faster action.

Yesterday, in the Council of Agricultural Ministers and in COMAGRI, I also announced this EUR 280 million for dairy farmers. In order to be able to pay out this money quickly, I simply need the legal basis in Article 186. The idea will be to allocate the money in national envelopes, according to production in the year 2008-9 and, of course, within the ceiling of the national quotas, distributed in a non-discriminatory manner to those dairy farmers most affected by the crisis. Again, to use this possibility, we need to include milk in Article 186.

When I say I announced the possibility of proposing EUR 280 million, you have to be aware that the budget authority, which is the European Parliament and the Council of Finance Ministers, will have to decide on this amount at the ECOFIN meeting on 19 November. I also said yesterday that this is the last money that I have in my pockets, with the exception of the EUR 300 million which is necessary as a buffer to avoid financial discipline. It is important for me to say clearly to you that Article 186 is not a *carte blanche* to propose whatever ideas the Commission might get. At this stage, I can only say that private storage for different products – and this could include cheese – is a candidate, provided that the market situation is such that we can justify it.

The second part of the proposal is the management of the quota system. The possibility already exists today for Member States to buy up quotas. What we are introducing here is the possibility that the Member States simply reduce the overall national ceiling of the quota with the amount of quotas they have been buying out of the market. This is a voluntary scheme because it has been obvious in our discussions that compulsory schemes simply would not work politically.

I look forward to hearing your comments.

**Albert Deß**, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I very much welcome the fact that this request to use the urgent procedure was passed here in Parliament today by a large majority. In this way, we have sent a signal to our dairy farmers and have not shied away from the responsibility. In contrast to a minority of my fellow Members from other groups, we see, in this request to use the urgent procedure, an additional tool to get help to dairy farmers at a difficult time.

It is certainly true that this request from the Commission did come very late in the day and that it is less than what is possible. That said, it is always better than doing nothing at all.

The views within my own group about the proposed buy-back programme also diverge widely. The programme would have to be obligatory for it to have any impact at all. Yet I see no majority for that in this Parliament or in the Council. Furthermore, such a programme would not be acceptable to some of the Member States as it would be tantamount to a cutting back of the balancing out arrangement and also of the quotas. The indication that quotas are to be raised for priority groups is a decision that is already the law in force.

The inclusion of milk and milk products in Article 186 for immediate measures in the event of market disturbances is to be welcomed. Nonetheless, I will be tabling an amendment to the effect that this measure should be restricted to two years. If it proves its worth, we will then agree to an extension.

Finally, I would like to say thank you for the EUR 280 million. Commissioner, you have indeed largely accommodated Parliament. I know that you do not have any more money available to you. I ask that the – possibly amended – motion for a resolution be approved on Thursday.

**Paolo De Castro**, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (IT) Mr President, Mrs Fischer Boel, ladies and gentlemen, firstly I would like to take the opportunity to say how pleased I am at the responsibility shown this morning by the House when it adopted the urgent procedure to include the dairy sector under Article 186 of the single CMO Regulation, along with many other agricultural products.

The rapid extension to this sector of the rules governing intervention in the event of market crisis enables us to provide a significant response at an extremely difficult time for farming as a whole and the dairy sector in particular. At this point, we expect the European Commission to take onboard, as Mrs Fischer Boel just said, Parliament's requests, which have pointed out several times that the measures taken until now have proved to be inadequate given the seriousness of the current crisis.

Parliament's openness towards the Commission today should not be interpreted as full delegation with unrestricted powers, but as a gesture of responsibility in a dramatic and wholly exceptional situation.

I am keen to stress that in this regard, Parliament considers it essential to be involved at every stage of the decision-making process in order to guarantee democratic scrutiny, and this is why we believe that the Commission should notify Parliament in advance of how it will actually use these new powers conferred under Article 186 for the milk sector as well.

**George Lyon**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, could I, too, thank the Commissioner for coming here tonight to further explain the powers she seeks. Commissioner, could I first of all thank you for responding positively to the resolution agreed with this House on 27 September. I welcome the moves you have taken to try and stabilise what is a very serious situation for dairy farmers. I also welcome the EUR 280 million that you have announced for restructuring.

In terms of the first part of your proposal, the question we all have to ask today is: why are we being asked to approve urgency measures at this late stage, and will they assist market recovery? Because clearly, as you said in your speech, the green shoots of recovery are already starting to show. I am not convinced that the proposed quota changes will make a great deal of difference but, as they are voluntary on Member States, this group will certainly not oppose them being granted.

Turning to the proposal on widening the scope of Article 186 to include milk and milk products, in my experience, ministers – or in this case commissioners – usually come to parliaments asking for powers so they can take action to solve a problem. Tonight, we seem to be being asked to grant the powers to the Commission without first being told exactly what action they will be used to address.

As I understand from your contribution early on, you did mention that you needed this extra power as a legal basis to pay out the EUR 280 million. I would be grateful if you could clarify whether that is the case. Is that why you require the powers? Because the great concern we all have is that we may well be handing over a blank cheque to the Commission.

Commissioner, you said you had been financially plucked of your last feather, so, if you have other ideas for action you might take, clearly there is not much financial scope to do anything at all significant. Our group will only grant these powers if they are time limited and they are constrained to extreme circumstances.

**Martin Häusling**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, finally there is movement in this debate. The Commission must now bear the overall responsibility again. This morning, we saw something different, although we would have liked Parliament to have been more involved. Let me say quite clearly that we are not against financial support. We must be clear, however, that such support is just a drop in the ocean, in the truest sense of the expression.

The decisions made in Luxembourg unfortunately also did not help us bring about a rebalancing of supply and demand – which is, of course, the crucial element here. The voluntary buying up of quotas is all well and good, but it will not have a major impact as it does not contribute significantly to a reduction in volume.

I already mentioned yesterday that we must give proper consideration to the Court of Auditors' report and set about implementing a policy aimed at the long term and that we need to look at what the Court of Auditors has said. The Court said that we need supplies to be managed in future or else the whole system will be incapable of being financed, and we need a dairy policy based on quality products in the European market.

We must move away from export refunds as quickly as possible – this is an old demand on our part and we have often pointed out the disastrous consequences of these measures.

We really need a policy that goes beyond this current crisis and we also expect longer-term answers from the Commission. Regrettably, the Commission has not given us such answers so far, specifically as regards how we need to strengthen the producer organisations in order to give them more market power and restrain the supermarket chains.

**James Nicholson**, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, first of all I would like to say that I certainly welcome this decision, and I think the debate last night in the committee and tonight in plenary allows us to bring more clarity to the situation. The reality, and I think the cause of the frustration that many dairy farmers feel, is that while they have seen to some extent what Mr Lyon referred to as the green shoots emerging, this money has not passed through into their bank accounts yet. So this does create a degree of frustration for the dairy farmers. Many have been under financial pressure for a long time. It is a good and useful thing

that we can talk, because I do now accept the need for Article 186 to be brought into place so that we can get this money direct to the producers as fast as we possibly can. I think that is the challenge.

I like Mr Deß's idea of an amendment, and if he puts it forward I think I would like to support that amendment for a limit of two or even three years to get this job done. However, I remain unconvinced by the buy-out scheme. We must do this to protect the industry.

**Patrick Le Hyaric**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (FR) Mr President, Commissioner, I am obliged to tell you again, this evening, that the financial provisions that you are proposing are a mere drop in the ocean when it comes to the crisis and the despair in which farmers are living today.

You are going to release EUR 280 million, when only a few weeks ago it was going to be EUR 600 million. You are therefore going to give a one-off payment of EUR 1 000 to farmers who are now losing EUR 100 to 200 per day. We are therefore calling for a real emergency financial plan, not a plaster to treat a life-threatening illness.

On the other hand, you want to use public money for a huge plan to slaughter dairy cattle and to shut farms. In so doing, you are going to destroy the future of our farmers, as it is the young farmers who will be the hardest hit, the smallest farmers, those who develop the land, who produce milk products and quality cheese, and who preserve the environment.

How dare you propose that, when so many families, in Europe and elsewhere, do not have access to food, starting with milk! I would add that, with your plan, we will have a milk shortage in the future.

The fact is, at a time when the Treaty of Lisbon is being pitched so strongly to us, we can only be surprised that you should want to enforce this Article 186 of the regulation, which will give you full powers. You had these full powers, though, and it was these that led you to opt for the liberalisation of quotas that is plunging us into the crisis that we are in today, for the sole benefit of manufacturers and distributors, because, even today, the European Court of Auditors points out that, between 2000 and 2007, the consumer prices of milk products increased by 17% while the producer prices fell by 6%.

Commissioner, I say to you once again that there is an urgent, a very urgent, need to provide a huge amount of help to the agricultural sector by means of a major European emergency fund, to return to a policy of minimum agricultural prices, and not to let the capitalist market destroy our farmers.

**Krisztina Morvai (NI)**. – (HU) Commissioner, I will, of course, vote in favour of the proposal, even though I am aware that this handout will not resolve the situation for farmers. However, I have three questions to ask. The first one is as follows. What do you see as the lesson from this crisis? Have we learnt any lesson from it? Commissioner, this crisis has not been caused by any kind of natural disaster, tsunami or other similar event, but by a series of bad decisions and a basically failed agricultural policy. Looking at the future, what can you promise farmers? How will they avoid a similar crisis in the future? I would like to hear a clear-cut, detailed answer from you.

Now for my next question. You said yesterday at the Committee hearing that Member States can freely use this sum of money. What does this mean exactly? Will Member States be able to distribute this money fairly so that it is not given to farming's big business and large farms, but to smallholders, family farmers who are most in need and whose livelihood depends on it? These farmers have ended up in the direst situation. The other large group that should be considered are farmers in the new Member States, especially smallholders. How do you want to get rid of this intolerable discrimination which derives from the fact that we Hungarians, for instance, had to hand over our markets lock, stock and barrel to the European Union, but we have received only a fraction of the subsidies? How and when will this injustice and inequity be eliminated?

**Giovanni La Via (PPE)**. – (IT) Mr President, Mrs Fischer Boel, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome the Commissioner's approach in deciding to come before Parliament to set out the package of measures in the dairy sector.

With reference to the content of the proposed measures, despite a lack of adequate operational details for them, I think that things are moving in the right direction towards solving the problems which our farmers are currently experiencing. I do not believe, however, that the proposed measures alone can solve the problems we are facing. Nevertheless, I think it is vital to vote in favour of the proposal to amend Articles 78 and 79 of Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007.

With regard to Article 186 of the same CMO Regulation, I would point out first of all that paragraphs a) and b) of this article lay down different levels of protection for different goods, intervening for some when prices rise and fall significantly, whereas for others – pigmeat, olive oil and other products – only when prices rise significantly. I think this is an unacceptable discrepancy.

I would like to put forward, also on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), an amendment with the aim of ensuring that the Commission informs Parliament prior to undertaking the measures set out in Article 186, and I think that this amendment is compatible with what the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament just proposed.

Lastly, I call on the Commissioner to increase, as requested in Parliament's resolution of 17 September, the amount of *de minimis* aid for all productive sectors regardless of the national ceilings currently in place.

**Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos (S&D).** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, we are all unfortunately aware of the grave state of the dairy sector in Europe. My political group has been calling for months for the adoption of urgent measures to try to save thousands of farmers threatened with ruin. We have adopted our own initiatives and backed initiatives by other political groups in order to achieve this.

That leaves us with little choice but to welcome the Commission's initiatives, however inadequate they may seem to us. That was also why the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament voted this morning in favour of the urgent procedure that was put before us. We will, however, propose and demand that the European Parliament be kept permanently informed of the measures which will be adopted over the coming days, under the powers which we now transfer to the Commission. We will continue to do our utmost to restore the balance of the market, so that it can guarantee adequate returns to the producers, as reaffirmed in the Treaty of Lisbon.

**Marit Paulsen (ALDE).** – (SV) Mr President, obviously it is necessary to take action promptly when crises occur in certain sectors, such as has happened with banking, with the car industry and with dairy farmers. However, such crises recur again and again. Perhaps it will not be dairy next time. Perhaps it will be cereals, or something else.

If I may take the discussion slightly beyond the actual scope of this debate, we cannot keep addressing only the immediate problems. We also need to find the time and the energy and the political planning to bring about a Common Agricultural Policy for Europe which is strong, sustainable, flexible and which removes the worst consequences of the price instability that we can expect. I want the countryside to be viable in Europe, and the countryside cannot survive without farmers and animals!

**Martin Häusling (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Mr President, unfortunately, Mr Bové cannot be here tonight, so I am speaking again. I have more questions for the Commissioner. Does she really, seriously believe that paying out this money will end the protests? As I said earlier, I believe that Parliament's decision this morning equated to granting the Commission a blank cheque because we do not know what it will do with it. I will say it again: the Commission is not part of the solution to the problem, but is actually part of the problem. I stand by that view.

Yet I also simply accept the decision – as you have to see the facts as they are and this is what has been decided – and I would say to the other Members that we must limit these measures. We should limit them to a manageable period, so that we in Parliament can also get our hand back on the tiller.

I have another question for you, Commissioner, as it is repeatedly said for all the programmes that we need to continue to promote restructuring. So what do you mean by restructuring? Do you really think it is right that we continue to give out money in order basically to encourage smaller-scale farmers to give up so that we can give money to the bigger farms? This policy is no longer an effective means to an end. We must ensure that we employ the money in a targeted way, specifically in the disadvantaged regions, in order to maintain the structures in those regions that are in greatest jeopardy.

**João Ferreira (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, the proposal presented by the Commission acknowledges the failure of its policy for the dairy sector, but leaves its disastrous basic policy guidelines for the sector untouched. The millions mentioned here are far below the amount needed to compensate producers for the falling prices that they have been suffering.

Contrary to what is claimed, it is necessary to reverse the route that the CAP has been heading down, where successive reforms have dismantled the instruments to regulate the market, quotas and production rights, leading many thousands of producers to gradually abandon the sector. Thousands of jobs are in the balance:



whole families who depend on farming, and the dairy sector in particular. Vast regions are at stake, where the land will be increasingly abandoned, with drastic social and environmental consequences.

All this cries out for immediate intervention to restore fair prices for producers, but this will require more resources than those now being made available. Above all, and we repeat, the situation demands measures with a greater scope that are not merely palliative, such as the cancellation of the annual increase in milk quotas, returning them to the levels in place prior to the decision to increase them, and the repeal of the decision to abolish the quota system in 2015.

**Diane Dodds (NI).** – Mr President, like the majority of Members of this House, I voted today to support the urgent procedure in relation to Article 186. Any financial aid to the dairy sector is imperative to its survival, especially the survival of small family farms as we find in Northern Ireland.

If, as you say, Commissioner, you need the changes to Article 186 to trigger the EUR 280 million fund, then it will have my broad support. We can only hope that the money is paid and distributed quickly. Many farmers have waited too long to have the aid that is required.

I am, however, underwhelmed by the proposals concerning Articles 65 to 84. It is almost certain that these will not impact on the UK, and I have a number of questions surrounding them, particularly in that I feel it will create an uneven playing field between the regions of Europe and it seems contradictory in the light of the Commission's current policy.

**Christophe Béchu (PPE).** – (FR) Mr President, there has to be consistency in politics. Over the last few weeks, many of us in this House have demanded measures from the Commission. When solutions are proposed to us, we will vote in favour of those solutions, even if – I agree with what has been said – they are slow in coming and even if they have had to be extracted by means of the positions adopted both within the European Parliament and among ministers.

This amount, which will be useful in the very short term, does not resolve, as many have already said, the long-term issues concerning the way in which the planned end of quotas is dealt with. If we want to be in a position to cope with and to prevent repeated crises within the agricultural produce sector, there is no way that we can do so without production regulation and control tools or without a combination of the two.

That is not the issue at stake this evening, however. The issue at stake this evening, the only issue that counts at the moment, is that of Article 186. Commissioner, I have one simple question: in concrete terms, what is Article 186 meant to do, and from when and in what way?

**Iratxe García Pérez (S&D).** – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, a month ago, we debated a Parliament resolution here and the proposals for the intervention in the dairy sector. Today we are dealing with two new measures: the change in the management of the quotas and the measure on Article 186, measures which we agree to process urgently, as you have requested.

However, Commissioner, the sector needs to be considered as a whole, and it is not good to have this trickle of proposals on a matter that we have been dealing with for several months now.

We demand common, European solutions. In this respect, the reported increase in minimum aid for all sectors will cause distortions between Member States and make it difficult to apply the CAP in a uniform way.

To conclude, one final thought: aid of EUR 280 million is being considered, which we do of course welcome, but I would like to remind you, Commissioner, that this Parliament adopted a resolution raising the need for an additional fund of EUR 600 million to deal with the crisis in the dairy sector.

**Britta Reimers (ALDE).** – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, as a farmer, I see the tabled amendment of Articles 78 and 79 as a deviation by the Commission from its hitherto sound route through agricultural reform at the expense of efficient and forward-looking farms.

It is dangerous to tamper, simply because of a desire to do something, so close to the final phasing out of the milk quota system, a system that has really been to the disadvantage of dairy farmers hitherto. It has also been left behind by developments on the ground, as the market is currently finally beginning to recover. I therefore reject this amendment.

It is easy to see how the Commission is seeking to exploit Parliament's call for urgent measures for its own ends. It is doing this by attempting, shortly before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, to ensure for

itself permanent scope to act without Parliament's consent through this amendment of Article 186. I therefore reject this amendment.

However, I could live with Parliament granting the Commission scope to act for a limited period in cases of crisis. This ability would also be available to Parliament in future times of crisis, with very rapid effect, through Rule 142 of its Rules of Procedure.

**Richard Ashworth (ECR).** – Mr President, the dairy industry is in crisis, and I want to record my thanks here and compliment the Commissioner on her very timely actions, which I think were precisely right. I think EUR 280 million is a realistic sum and will be welcome within the industry. I am persuaded that it will be necessary to grant powers under Article 186 in order to deliver this benefit in a timely manner to the producers, so it has my support. It has my support, although I prefer that we limit this concession until 2013 at the latest.

With regard to the national quota buy-back scheme, which I note will include powers to raise super levies from producers exceeding quotas, I have reservations. I think it is penalising the efficient and progressive producers – often the young men, the young people who are the very future lifeblood of our industry – and I think it is sending all the wrong messages.

We live in a very volatile marketplace, and what this industry needs is not short-term reactions but long-term strategy. I have been a long-time supporter of the Commissioner for her long-term vision for the future of the industry, and I would encourage her to go down that path, which is long-term strategy, not short-term reaction.

**Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE).** – (PL) Mr President, I hope that the milk producers now have the worst behind them. This hope is strengthened by the decision to support milk producers with a sum of EUR 280 million next year. A fundamental question, however, remains: what should be done about milk production and milk producers in the long term? The most important question in this matter is the future of milk production quotas.

At present, there are two approaches. The first, which is the effect of the review of the common agricultural policy, increases production quotas gradually, and aims to lift them in 2015. The second approach, which is contained in the present proposal of the European Commission, aims to limit milk supply by a new method of calculating the charge for exceeding the national quota. These two approaches contradict each other.

Personally, I am in favour of maintaining the quotas, but only when the breakdown of quotas among EU countries and producers is based on objective and fair criteria. The development and adoption of such fair and objective criteria would be very difficult, but perhaps it is worth making the attempt. If we are talking about extension – I fully support the extension of Article 186, but I think this should be accompanied by a definition of the role of the Commission and the instruments it will be able to use.

**Alan Kelly (S&D).** – Mr President, I would say this to the Commissioner: If you will forgive the pun, the milk crisis is something the Commission has made a pig's ear of, a saying we have in Ireland when somebody has made a complete hash of something.

Only 18 months ago, you were saying that milk prices would increase substantially, only to see them fall by half in some countries. This is why the Commission must be able to intervene more quickly in the market, and this motion is positive in that respect.

In my constituency of Munster in Ireland, many in the dairy industry, both big and small farmers, and particularly family farms, are just subsisting or are just teetering close to bankruptcy. They are looking at their difficulties and the paltry amounts being offered while others, like banks and bankers, are being bailed out to the tune of huge sums.

*(The President asked the speaker to speak more slowly)*

The EUR 280 million milk fund announced yesterday is welcome but is merely a sticking plaster over a much wider problem. The House voted last September that EUR 600 million should be made available. In the interests of showing solidarity with small farmers in particular, this figure should be maintained. The next priority for the Commission must be to address the whole issue of milk supply. I firmly believe this. Until this is addressed, we will be facing more problems and we are quickly going to run out of sticking plasters.

**Elisabeth Jeggle (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, yes, we should agree to milk being incorporated into Article 186, and I hope that we will do so tomorrow. We cannot always criticise the Commission for acting too slowly, for lagging behind, for saying that there is still a silver lining that is not there in reality.

The Commission now has the chance to act quickly and we should grant it this chance and in so doing, we should always demonstrate our own willingness to hold it to account. Mr Deß's amendment on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) will enable us to do that together. The EUR 280 million that many have spoken about is just a drop in the ocean. We must also recognise, though, that it is the end of the financial year. We have to understand that there simply is no more money available.

How should we handle the overall situation? We would like to see those dairy farmers who have been hardest hit by the crisis receive the EUR 280 million. We talk about the milk market, but these are real people and the rural areas that we discuss and that we are always saying we want to protect when we are debating other subjects. Commissioner, support the dairy fund! This afternoon, the Commissioner speaking in the budget debate spoke out in favour of the fund, I want to make that quite clear. I was very pleased about it. We also need this signal urgently, and this money, too, is within the 2010 budget.

**Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (PPE).** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, I too am delighted at the approval of the urgent procedure in this Chamber, as I think that the inclusion of the milk issue in Article 186 is both timely and important.

I have argued that a situation as serious as the one faced by the dairy sector requires urgent measures to defend the sector, for both economic and social reasons. I actually come from a country, Portugal, and a region, the Azores, where the dairy sector is very important and embedded in regions that are socially rather fragile and where, in fact, it would be vital to maintain the quota system beyond 2015.

The measures proposed here are somewhat flimsy, but they are nonetheless necessary and imperative. I am also worried about how the Commission will use the new powers it is to be given, especially since it has acted in quite an insensitive way in this crisis, putting forward weak measures, too late, and only under intense pressure. In view of this, I would like the Commission to submit an annex to Article 186, setting out measures which can be used for a radical intervention in the dairy sector so as to ensure its sustainability.

**Peter Jahr (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, I very much welcome your motion. There is one point that I feel the need to criticise, however, which is the voluntary buy-up programme for milk quotas.

A programme of this kind, if it is to succeed, must be obligatory, not voluntary. I find this voluntary arrangement to buy back milk quotas counterproductive. I believe this not only because this arrangement will initially mean that we retain a quota increase which it will then be very difficult to rein back in. By buying back the milk quotas, we will be giving them a financial value again, and the main effect of that will be that it hampers the ability to do the balancing out. I feel I must reject any measure that restricts balancing out. Particularly in the phasing out period for the milk quotas, balancing out is a necessary tool in order for individual farms to be able to orient themselves better in the market.

For the reasons I have mentioned, I will be forced to reject this part of the motion, although I will vote in favour of the motion as a whole.

**Ricardo Cortés Lastra (S&D).** – (ES) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, it is true that we are going to adopt measures aimed at a partial solution for the crisis in the dairy sector.

Everyone here is aware of the livestock rearing situation for our farmers and we know what these measures mean for them and their families.

Our farmers do not want to be constantly subsidised. They are asking us to be able to do the work in a dignified way, selling their products at respectable, fair prices that are in line with the effort and investment they have put in.

Commissioner, apart from the boost and the confidence that we can give our farmers with these new measures, we are on the way to future reforms, major reforms that will be discussed further in Parliament.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE).** – Mr President, the most important words that came from the Commissioner are that market prices are beginning to rise. We should acknowledge that in this House and push to ensure that they are passed on to farmers. We are saying there is EUR 280 million available to them, but every

additional cent they receive is worth much more than the doling out of payments to them. That is most important.

I think it is important that some have criticised the Commission hugely. Let us acknowledge that intervention and export refunds have been used to maintain prices, even with that horribly low price for producers, so I think some of the criticism is unnecessary and harsh. I support the extension of Article 186 if you needed to pay out this EUR 280 million, which I regard as symbolic rather than significant.

Let us look at the lessons. We need to look at what is going to happen to CAP reform post-2013; the high-level group is focusing on it. I would say to those political groups who tonight support funding for dairying: make sure that you also support a properly funded common agricultural policy after 2013; otherwise your words are empty.

**José Bové (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, please excuse me, I was supposed to come earlier, but I was tied up. I was explaining to French listeners what took place yesterday in Luxembourg.

I believe that the Council's decision is a bad one, since the only word to appear in the text is 'restructuring'. In France, we have gone from having 480 000 milk producers in 1984 to having fewer than 88 000 today.

Today, we are told that yet more producers must be forced out and that the money that will be recouped – this appears in the text – will be used for producers who have exceeded their quota. Production will therefore have to be concentrated still further and milk producers in the most difficult areas forced out. This is the wrong approach.

The money that has been given, the EUR 280 million – the figure has already been quoted – equates to EUR 50 per month and per farm, for one year. That is peanuts; it is almost a show of contempt for the crisis that the producers are going through.

Lastly, on the subject of Article 186, I should like to say that, at a time when we are moving towards codecision in agricultural matters, it is unacceptable for power, for a blank cheque, to be handed back to the Commission.

**Rareș-Lucian Niculescu (PPE).** – (RO) I would like to ask the Commissioner a question, as well as thank her for appearing before the House. You said that the resources promised for the funds to support the dairy sector will be allocated to Member States according to an historical factor, in other words, based on the negotiated quotas. However, many Member States claim that these quotas are unfair. In fact, this is the reason why many Member States insist that the market should be deregulated. For example, some states cannot even produce enough to cover their own consumption. Do you not think that using an historical factor will maintain these injustices...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

I will have to summarise my question so as not to exceed the time allotted to me by too much. The Commissioner said that the resources will be allocated to Member States according to an historical factor. However, many Member States claim that the quotas currently allocated are unfair. In fact, this is also the reason why many Member States insist that the market should be deregulated. Do you not think that using an historical factor would maintain these injustices?

**Mariya Nedelcheva (PPE).** – (BG) I would like to welcome the decision made by the Council and Commission to allocate an additional package of EUR 280 million in subsidies for dairy production in 2010. This sends out a clear signal to all those who are suffering the adverse consequences of the crisis every day. I urge that this adequate response will not be a one-off economic solution, but part of a targeted, long-term strategy for restoring, stabilising and developing this sector in Europe. This is why it is important to take into consideration the measures which each Member State is going to adopt. I would like to draw attention to the fact that Bulgaria can only partially accept the proposals to amend Regulation 1234. We insist that it is explicitly recorded in the draft that the opportunities to manage national milk quotas will be exercised at Member States' discretion. It is important that the option is retained to choose the existing scheme for buying up and redistributing milk quotas through the national reserve. We can ill afford either to hold back or collect payment from producers as the Bulgarian sector is in the process of being modernised. Otherwise, Bulgarian producers will not be competitive even after 2015.

**Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D).** – (PL) Mr President, we are, of course, pleased to accept these new solutions, which are intended to help farmers, including farmers in Poland. However, it should also be remembered that when we are talking about money – and it is money which we are talking about – the way

in which the money is actually distributed is important. It should reach those who are feeling the effects of the crisis the most, because I will not agree to a policy under which we give everyone an equal amount, which means a small amount, so that, in fact, quite literally, we do not help anyone.

Secondly, I would like, if I may, to refer to history before turning to the future in a moment. I am sure we remember the wonderful years, over a year ago now, when the farmers were getting a very good price for milk. At the same time, they were benefiting from large EU subsidies for modernisation of the dairy sector. Therefore, it is important that we plan the future based on this experience, and that we draw conclusions from our mistakes, because mistakes were certainly made. It is equally important for us to think about how to plan the development of this sector, since money is available both as direct subsidies and also for the development of rural areas. In addition, we have the instrument of milk quotas at our disposal.

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE).** – (PL) Commissioner, I would like to ask you this question: What does the Commission want to spend the EUR 280 million on? On further restructuring, or better, perhaps, as 21 Member States wanted, on an injection for the market, on market mechanisms? In fact, the farmers want the money to be used for support mechanisms. Currently, they are not able to take out further loans or to improve productivity. They are not able, at the moment, to continue with modernisation, because they have lost liquidity. They do not want to buy refrigerators or milking machines now, this is not the time for further investment. The EUR 280 million works out at not quite EUR 2 per tonne of milk produced in the European Union.

When the European Commission proposes what it calls a ‘mechanism for management of the quota system’, it really wants to limit production. We should consider whether we will not see a repeat of the situation which followed reform of the sugar market, and which has meant that we now have problems with the supply of that resource. Is now the time for restrictions on the production of milk or cereals? I am sure that is not what we want.

**Herbert Dorfmann (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, I am pleased, Commissioner, that, just a few weeks after this House adopted a resolution on milk, you are here bringing forward measures to meet our demands. I agree with your proposal, in respect of Article 186, including with the time limit, which seems reasonable to me. I am also in favour of the differentiated granting of quotas that you propose.

I have to say that the proposal concerning the buying back of quotas leaves me more perplexed. You yourself said over weeks and months that the current crisis was not caused by the quota system and, with that in mind, personally I do not think that this buy-back proposal is completely coherent. Finally, I would also like to say that this cannot be the end of the line just yet. We must continue to take steps, and specifically as regards the dairy sector in difficult areas, in mountain areas, where there are simply no alternatives to dairy farming.

**Elisabeth Köstinger (PPE).** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, I, too, would like to offer my sincere thanks for the EUR 280 million. I really hope, above all, that the full extent of this money reaches our 40 000 Austrian dairy farmers, as they really need it. You are surely aware of the situation in mountain regions and the situation in small-scale family farms.

Commissioner, Austria was always against the phasing out of the quotas. OK, you have chosen your path and followed it consistently. We will, of course, attempt to prepare our farmers for it and to help them with it as much as possible. With the best will in the world, I cannot understand your proposal for a voluntary quota buy-up programme. If we apply this, it will result in an appreciation in value and price of exactly the quotas that you are phasing out. How are we supposed to explain that to the farmers of Austria?

**Mariann Fischer Boel, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, having listened carefully to the discussion here tonight, I think you might get the impression from some speeches that this is the first step we are taking to help the dairy sector within the European Union. Nothing could be more wrong. I am quite sure that at least some of you know what has been going on since January this year when we started on the public and private storage, we started intervention, and we started export refunds. We have been taking lots of different measures over the summer so I think we should devise a special study to tell the new Members of this Parliament exactly what has been going on since last January.

On the specific points on the two proposals here today, I have to repeat again that the buy-up scheme is not a new scheme. It is already there for Member States to use if they want to help specific dairy farmers out of business. It is an offer, and that is why I do not want to make it compulsory; it is a possibility for helping

farmers out of business. The quota they buy out can be kept in the national reserve and distributed at a later stage if Member States so wish. This was one part of the discussion.

The other part, which has aroused by far the most interest today, is Article 186. The reason for introducing dairy farming into Article 186 is the fact that we need to be able to react fast. By the way, I do not see any reason why dairy farming should not be part of Article 186, as areas specifically within the meat sector are already there. And, in general, those who fear that the Commission will get a blank cheque and do whatever they want should keep in mind that Article 186 is normally by nature a very positive scheme where it is possible to try to help people who are in difficulties by reacting very fast. So it is not a blank cheque. It will be discussed, as you probably know, in the Management Committee.

I have listened to your ideas concerning a more limited period of three or four years. I think it would disqualify dairy farmers – but of course I have listened to what you say.

Then I think there are lots of mistaken ideas going round. This EUR 280 million is not for restructuring. It simply offers a possibility of paying out very quickly as soon as we have the formalities in place, with the acceptance from the Ecofin meeting in November and the signing of the budget for 2010. This means we can act immediately, which would not be the case if we do not have Article 186 in place. So it is not restructuring. As I said before, it gives Member States the possibility of paying the most needy from this national budget.

How should it be distributed? I have clearly said it has to be on the basis of production. I can hear that there may be other ideas but if we start discussing internally how to distribute, then I think it would take at least to the end of next year because there would be so many great ideas we would never be able to find a common line on this issue.

I will reply to some of the specific questions. I would like to say that producer organisations are an excellent option. It is actually necessary. I have said that clearly in plenary before, specifically when discussing the fruit and vegetable scheme. If farmers spend their time and efforts competing against each other instead of competing with the strong retail sector, I know who the winners and the losers will be. Therefore I say: do work together to be a much stronger body in the whole food chain.

I completely agree with you that we have a global problem, that we have one billion people starving, not being able to get what they need to eat every day. That is why I was hurt to see European farmers spreading milk all over the fields in a situation where we are facing starvation problems globally. That is not the best image for European agriculture.

I have to say that I am very impressed at the way in which two Members, Mr Bové and Mr Häusling, managed to gear their speaking time. I noticed very carefully how it was done. I do not know if it is a new procedure of the House that one speaker can substitute for another who then goes in to speak under catch-the-eye. It was quite smart, I would say.

*(Applause)*

**President.** – That concludes this item.

The vote will take place on Thursday.

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

**Luís Paulo Alves (S&D), in writing.** – *(PT)* Commissioner, having long struggled to have these measures put forward by the Commission, we are in no position to reject any contribution you may bring us at this very difficult time for dairy farmers and their families. Unfortunately, the Commission has taken a long time to act. It has only done so when faced with intense pressure from dairy producers, the European Parliament and 21 Member States. I would make the following points on the measures that you have presented here:

1: The fund of EUR 280 million is too little compared with the amount of EUR 600 million unanimously deemed necessary by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, which is the committee with both technical and political expertise in this matter. This policy statement was approved by the European Parliament itself. We cannot, therefore, consider less than half the sum that Parliament deemed essential only a month ago to be sufficient.

2: The inclusion of milk in Article 186 gives the Commission an operational tool that can be deployed instantly, but that does not mean that Parliament will no longer monitor the issue. We still need instruments

to regulate the market. We should maintain the quota system and introduce transparency into the milk marketing chain. Without these two instruments, it will be impossible to restore and guarantee stability in Europe's rural areas.

**Béla Glattfelder (PPE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) I welcome the measures proposed by the European Commission to help Europe's dairy producers. However, these measures can only alleviate the crisis, but cannot end it altogether. In order to do this, the decisions regarding the milk quota increases should be dropped. However, neither the European Commission, nor Mariann Fischer Boel personally, is inclined to acknowledge that wrong decisions have been made. I agree with the European farmers' demand to drop the quota increase.

I also oppose the permanent abolition of the quota system scheduled for 2015. I concur with the point of view of the largest European farmers organisation COPA-COGECA, which is that the dairy market requires regulation after 2015 as well. The important lesson to be learned from the current crisis is that the dairy market needs to be regulated. Without this, prices will become unpredictable. European dairy producers cannot endure the losses caused by large-scale price volatility.

On the subject of the current emergency measures, I would like to draw attention to the fact that the increase in the minimum subsidies from EUR 7 500 to EUR 15 000 may cause problems for Member States in a more difficult budgetary situation. What I am afraid of is that in these countries, such as Hungary, the governments will not provide the maximum support. As a result, farmers in these countries may end up at an even bigger competitive disadvantage.

I am confident that during the vote on the 2010 budget taking place on Thursday, the European Parliament will support the proposed amendment, submitted by a number of Members including myself, which would increase support for the school milk programme.

**Marine Le Pen (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) The rallies that milk producers have been carrying out for weeks in a bid to save their crisis-hit sector have been answered by the European Commission with the creation of a EUR 280 million 'milk fund'. Mrs Fischer Boel has therefore succumbed to the pressure after turning a deaf ear, for weeks on end, to the distress of farmers on the brink of bankruptcy. However, this financial measure is derisory and is intended merely to calm the producers down for a while. It will do nothing to solve the problem of a sector that is on its way out with the planned end of milk quotas. Milk producers do not want charity or handouts, they want the market to be regulated so that they can sell their milk at prices that will allow them to live a dignified life from their efforts and to guarantee their children's future. Through its stubborn desire to impose the dogma of free and fair competition, the European Union is going to leave thousands of farmers at the mercy of the law of the market, and that alone. This is the same ultraliberalism that each month makes thousands of industrial workers unemployed. The carnage must be stopped now as a matter of urgency.

**Csaba Sándor Tabajdi (S&D)**, *in writing*. – (HU) I welcome the agreement in principle reached by agricultural ministers at their council meeting in Luxembourg on providing specific aid to the dairy sector of EUR 280 million. At EU level, this amounts to an additional one cent in aid per litre of milk, which is absolutely negligible. After putting up bold resistance for several months, the European Commission gave in slightly to the pressure exerted by farmers, 21 Member States, including Hungary, and the European Parliament, which already demanded additional resources for the sector during their informal meeting held in Brussels last Monday. In spite of the tardy measures from the EU, the Hungarian Government has acted quickly to support dairy farmers and has done everything to help them, taking into account the budget resources available. Hungary has helped the dairy sector by using all the sums that can be reallocated as part of rural development resources and the European Economic Development Programme. Apart from us, only Latvia and Malta have such outstanding indicators. Hungarian dairy farmers will receive directly around EUR 3.3 million from the EUR 280 million envelope, roughly equivalent to HUF 890 million. The Hungarian government can freely decide how to use this money. The Commission only made the suggestion that the most needy producers should receive this special aid, which coincides with Hungarian objectives. Following approval of the 2010 budget, this sum will be paid out at the start of next year.

**16. Documents received: see Minutes**

**17. Implementing measures (Rule 88): see Minutes**

**18. Agenda of the next sitting: see Minutes**

## **19. Closure of the sitting**

*(The sitting was closed at 21.10)*