

## THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2008

IN THE CHAIR: MR VIDAL-QUADRAS

*Vice-President*

### 1. Opening of the sitting

*(The sitting was opened at 8.30 a.m.)*

### 2. Documents received: see Minutes

### 3. State of the negotiations on the climate change and energy package (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the Council and Commission statements on the state of the negotiations on the climate change and energy package.

**Andris Piebalgs, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, today's debate is very important because we are close to reaching agreement on the climate and energy package. I would like to thank the Parliament and in particular Mr Turmes, Mrs Niebler, the shadow rapporteurs and the rapporteurs for opinions, for a job very well done. We have been impressed by the seriousness and the constructive approach of all involved, which have been essential in enabling us to get very close to an agreement.

The latest trialogue on the directive finished at 1.30 this morning. Very good progress was made and it looks as though very few unresolved issues remain. This means that we are close to the goal of adopting framework legislation on renewable energy sources that will make a real difference for security of supply, Europe's competitiveness and also for sustainability.

Prospects are extremely good that within the next few days we will be able to confirm our agreement to set a 20% share of renewable energy in the Community in 2020. We will be able to confirm how this target will be broken down into legally binding targets for Member States that will provide certainty for investments. We will be able to agree on flexibility and cooperation mechanisms to enable those Member States to achieve their targets by working together in cost-effective ways. We will be able to agree on a 10% target for renewable energy use in transport and on bonuses towards the targets for second-generation biofuels and for renewables used by electric cars. We will be able to agree on a world-leading set of sustainability criteria for biofuels used to achieve this target. We will be able to agree on a whole range of measures to break down administrative barriers to renewable energy penetration and ensure its access to the electricity and energy networks. Two or three years ago we could not have imagined achieving such a goal. Really big steps have been taken towards achieving European energy policy objectives.

I mentioned cooperation mechanisms. It seems that the key unresolved issue in the negotiations is whether there should be some kind of review of these mechanisms in 2014. The Commission can fully understand Parliament's concerns about such a review, taking into account the fact that one of the fundamental purposes of the directive is to create a clear and certain legal framework for investment. At the same time, we are aware that the flexibility mechanism provided for in the directive includes some untested elements. We cannot say for sure that every part of their design is quite perfect. For that reason we are not opposed as such to a review of the functioning of these mechanisms, but we do not want to question the target. However, if it is agreed that such a review should take place, I would stress the need to ensure that it should not in any way call into question the targets in the directive or its level of ambition.

I am confident that the institutions will be able to find an appropriate solution to this remaining problem. Looking at the process as a whole, I am proud – and I believe you should be proud – that the Council and Presidency are working together and have achieved a great deal. The directive will enable the whole of the Union to reach the standards that so far have been maintained only by a very limited number of Member States. This is good progress. It is an important step towards maintaining the EU's pioneering role in the critical task of tackling climate change and leading by example in Copenhagen next year.

In the context of the recently adopted energy security package, this directive also marks an important step forward in our efforts to improve the security of our energy supply. The development of the Renewable Energy Directive has been a stimulating process of work between the institutions, in which the Parliament

has played its full role. We are nearing the end and it is clear from the consensus that has been achieved that the result will be an excellent one. I look forward to this process reaching its fulfilment in the coming days.

**Stavros Dimas**, *Member of the Commission*. – (EL) I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today on this very important issue. The package of measures on climate and energy proposed by the Commission is one of the most significant initiatives undertaken by the European Union during the past years. With these measures, the European Union will not only meet its environmental goals but at the same time it will make a decisive contribution to the new international agreements to combat climate change. Adopting this package of measures on climate and energy is necessary in order for the European Union to maintain its international credibility.

Today's discussion coincides with the International Convention on Climate, taking place in Poznań, Poland. It is therefore inevitable that today's audience includes the European Union as well as the Poznań negotiators and the international community in general. The measures will facilitate the European Union's transition to a low carbon emissions economy. Furthermore, it will give European industry the opportunity to play a leading international role in clean technologies and will therefore give it a competitive advantage.

The current economic crisis cannot become a reason for apathy; on the contrary, it is a further incentive for us to take measures on climate change. It is in times such as the current financial crisis that we need to make the consumption and production of natural resources and products more cost effective and efficient. Moreover, by saving energy and improving our energy supply, we can boost the European Union's energy security by reducing oil and natural gas imports. The move to a low carbon emissions economy will encourage innovation, will provide new investment opportunities and will create new green jobs. This is the reason why the package of measures on climate change and energy is part of the solution to today's crisis. It provides the basis for a new, green deal that will enhance the competitiveness of the European industry at international level.

I would like to thank the European Parliament, the Presidency and the Council for their excellent cooperation with the Commission both on the package of measures on climate change and energy as well as on relevant proposals for cars and carbon dioxide and the directive on fuel quality. There has been significant progress on the various issues that concern us and I am sure that we will reach an agreement at first reading. The final agreements must maintain the whole architecture of the Commission proposal and our environmental goals, as well as guarantee fair effort sharing among Member States.

I would like to comment briefly on the revision of the greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme. In order to achieve our environmental goals, the ceilings in the emissions trading scheme must guarantee a 21% emission reduction by 2020 in comparison to the 2005 levels. This is a key point of the Commission's proposal.

I would like to say a few words on the issue regarding the risk of carbon dioxide leakage. The international agreement on climate change is the most effective way of tackling that danger. Any solutions to be agreed upon in the package of measures, need to support the international agreement on the one hand, and need to be workable. The discussion regarding this issue between the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the Commission is still continuing at a fast pace. I believe that a satisfactory solution will be found that will totally respect the environmental goals of the Commission proposal.

Regarding the system for effort sharing among the Member States outside the trading scheme, the Council and the European Parliament have made significant progress on a number of issues. One of the main issues in our discussion was to find an appropriate balance between the flexible and effective implementation of our goals. The Commission has set the annual limit for the clean development mechanism to 3%, because in that way it achieves a balance between flexibility and emission reduction within the European Union. This limit, in conjunction with the ability to trade emissions between Member States, will give countries the opportunity to achieve their goals. The Commission believes that the flexibility to achieve the goals of the Member States must go hand in hand with a transparent and effective compliance system. This principle has already been successfully applied in the European Union's emission trading scheme.

Finally, significant progress has also been made on the Commission's proposal to shape the legal framework on carbon capture and storage. As far as the CCS funding is concerned, an issue in which Parliament has shown particular interest, discussions are already under way on the use of reserves for companies entering the emission trading scheme. This is a positive development towards finding a solution. Thank you very much and I await your opinions with interest.

**Martin Schulz**, *on behalf of the PSE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, as you see, Mr Solana is absent. However, the main subject of today's debate is that we want a consolidated report on the trialogue. As part of the trialogue, the Commission, which has now spoken in detail, has already finished its work, at least in large part for the time being. Discussions are being held on key issues between the Council and Parliament. This morning a great many Members who are not involved in these discussions as rapporteurs or in any other role would have the opportunity, here in plenary, to hear the state of play and to exchange their views on it – that is also why the Conference of Presidents wanted this debate.

I have heard that the flight from Paris has just landed. Mr Borloo is on his way here. I am already of the opinion that we should suspend the debate until Mr Borloo is here, then hear the Council and after that continue our discussions, for I do not want this to be a show event. I want to hear the state of play from the Council this morning. The Council would like Parliament to negotiate a whole package by the end of December in an extraordinary procedure. That is fine but then he should please be here on time to submit his view to Parliament. Afterwards we can discuss it.

**President**. – Thank you very much, Mr Schulz. The order of business states that Mr Borloo and also Mr Dimas and Mr Piebalgs will be taking the floor again after the speeches by the chairmen of the political groups. They will also take the floor again at the end of the debate.

Let me tell you something else, Mr Schulz: the European Parliament does not adapt the agenda of its plenary sessions to suit the agendas of those taking part in them. Members who attend the plenary sessions must adapt their agendas to suit Parliament's. The next speaker, on behalf of the Group of the European People's Party ...

(Protests)

The matter has been settled, Mr Schulz.

(Protests)

**Hartmut Nassauer**, *on behalf of the PPE-DE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, I should like to raise a point of order, and I therefore ask to be allowed to speak.

I request that the sitting be suspended until Mr Borloo arrives, not to change the agenda but just to suspend the sitting briefly until Mr Borloo is present. This is my request.

**President**. – Ladies and gentlemen, I have just told you that Parliament does not adapt its agenda to suit the agendas of those who take part. The dignity of this House will not permit it, and mutual respect among the institutions advises against it.

I have therefore listened to your points of order and reached the decision I have just explained to you. Mr Borloo will speak after the political groups, and Mr Borloo will speak again at the end of the debate.

**Graham Watson**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, you cannot just take note of these points of order. It is the clear will of the people in this Chamber to have Mr Borloo here and to hear what he has to say before the debate, so let us wait.

(Applause)

**President**. – Ladies and gentlemen, remember that the plenary is sovereign. In view of this fact, I will put the matter to the vote. We shall vote on whether to suspend the plenary sitting of Parliament until Mr Borloo arrives.

(Parliament accepted the proposal)

(The sitting was suspended at 8.50 a.m. and resumed at 9.05 a.m.)

**Jean-Louis Borloo**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, first of all I would like to offer my apologies, which I hope you will accept, for having misjudged Brussels's traffic.

I would like to thank you, Mr Piebalgs and Mr Dimas, for allowing us to hold this debate and for your intense collaborative work on the energy and climate change package, on which you embarked after Bali under the Slovenian Presidency, then at the informal Council meeting in St Cloud, in August, and which has continued throughout the five months of this Presidency. Our common commitment is to secure an agreement at first

reading, based on a timeframe that is compatible with international obligations and the European Parliament elections.

Basically, during this debate, I want to listen to what you have to say before rejoining the European Environment Council, which is taking place at the same time, all day. I will give an account of our discussions and your comments to my colleagues. Our work could not be coordinated better, and I am grateful to you for this invitation, which demonstrates our common desire to reach a comprehensive agreement on the energy and climate change package.

Indeed, we are entering the final straight with the Poznań Conference, which is taking place at this very moment. This Conference should pave the way for Copenhagen in December 2009, at a time when the world is still hesitating at a crossroads and the Member States are claiming that they are willing to make a commitment, although not by themselves, to speed up the transformation, provided that it is financed or that they receive support, and to review their methods of production and consumption, provided that competitiveness is not jeopardised. The eyes of the world are on Europe this month, December 2008, since the events of the coming days in Europe will be a kind of rehearsal, a foretaste of what will take place during the major global talks. I hope so in any case.

The energy and climate change package is a 'how to' package, a package on a huge, but controlled, energy, economic and technological transition, with a shared *modus operandi*, range of solidarity mechanisms and method, all within a Union of 27 countries making commitments democratically.

This is probably the first time in modern history that different economies have tried to change their paradigm simultaneously and together. Economic development has never been so interlinked with these energy conditions. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the task with which history has entrusted us today. When it comes to the energy and climate change package, this is the first economy in the world – 450 million consumers and 15% of greenhouse gas emissions – to attempt to demonstrate that sustainable development is possible on a scale of 27 States, notwithstanding such varied industrial, climatic, geographical and economic backgrounds.

For the other continents, this also shows that one of their main partners is already committed; it is the proof that this is possible. You are familiar with the three objectives: the famous three times twenty objectives. This is what they are traditionally called, even though, for one of the 20% objectives, the figure in question is actually 20 or 30%. Therefore, the three times twenty are: a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990, 20% from renewable energy sources and a 20% improvement in energy efficiency. The Commission has translated these objectives into five major draft regulations: the ETS Directive or CO<sub>2</sub> emissions trading scheme for industry and energy providers, which aims for a 21% reduction in industrial emissions by 2020; the Effort Sharing Directive, which aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 10% in non-ETS sectors such as construction, transport and agriculture by 2020; the directive on renewable energy sources, whose aim is to increase the share of these energy sources from a little over 8% in 2006 to 20%, with a 10% reduction in the transport sector; the directive on carbon capture and storage, which aims to set out the conditions for storing carbon; and, lastly, the legislation on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from motor vehicles, which seeks to bring CO<sub>2</sub> emissions down from 160 to 120 grams, between 2006 and 2008.

Before looking in detail at the negotiations which are, by nature, fluid, I would like to make four general remarks.

Firstly, this package, which is complex, constitutes a consistent, independent and fair whole, where everyone can find their place and contribute according to their industrial, energy or geographical characteristics. Allow me to thank the Commission and the previous presidencies for these eminently collective efforts. Our objective is clear: a package of this size would normally have taken several years.

Owing to the global calendar – the European Parliament's electoral timetable and the meetings in Poznań and Copenhagen – all parties wanted to try to arrive at an agreement by the end of the year. This is clearly a very difficult task, but there is no escaping it. This objective, which was laid down at the European Council under the German Presidency, was reiterated in October, under Mr Sarkozy's Presidency, even though certain States, in the face of the crisis, expressed their concerns and wanted to postpone any decision. There is no question that things were tense, and Mr Sarkozy had to make a very strong commitment so that we could continue to make progress in this field.

The agreement reached in October therefore confirmed what we achieved under the German Presidency. First of all, you wished to bring forward your vote to today or yesterday. This reaction, this wish, provided

a considerable boost, a considerable push, at a time when concerns were focused on this climate, and this had a very positive effect. You – the group chairmen, rapporteurs and committee chairmen – wanted to meet us and Mr Jouyet, and we all discussed what the best possible conditions were to attempt to reach an agreement by the end of the year. I believe that we all, and I should like to thank you for this, recommended holding this in-depth debate today, and postponing until this afternoon the conclusions of these debates at the Council, the Council of 11-12 December, a trialogue during the following weekend and then a debate with, I hope, a vote on 17 December.

I must say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that this will perhaps go down in history as a turning point on the road towards the agreement, which remains our common goal. We have entered a crucial phase of talks. There is no political posturing or politicking by the Member States where this matter is concerned. We are not in a negotiation where, as sometimes happens, a stance or position is taken up in order to gain a particular advantage. We are in a kind of positive paradox. We are aware that we have to take action because this is a vital issue, but that we have to do it in such a way that each directive is socially, financially and economically acceptable to the Union as a whole and to each Member State individually.

Today, the negotiations have reached a critical stage. The trialogues are going as well as could be hoped; indeed, it is the high quality of the trialogues and the trust between the parties that has enabled the timetable to be modified slightly. We do not have long left to reach a conclusion: less than two weeks, in fact. The trialogues, some of which were still taking place late last night, should enable us to finalise 90% of the text, which can then be translated into all of the Union's languages.

Looking ahead to the Council of 11-12 December, the Council of Environment Ministers, today, and the Council of Energy Ministers, on Monday 8 December, will tackle the issues on which an agreement between the Member States still seems possible.

This afternoon the Presidency will try to make further progress on many points concerning the four texts that comprise, in the strictest sense of the word, this package.

I shall also present your agreement on the proposal for a regulation on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of light-duty vehicles and fuel quality.

I shall then propose adoption of the Council's conclusions on the Commission's communication on deforestation. Combating deforestation and forest degradation, as well as the sustainable conservation and management of forests, are key elements of a future international climate change agreement. These elements are the subject of much debate with our friends in Africa.

Moreover, we have, I hope, arrived at unanimous conclusions on genetically modified organisms.

A final trialogue will be held at the weekend, between the end of the Council of 11 December and 17 December. It will, of course, be scheduled to allow us to prepare for the debates and the vote in plenary on 16-17 December.

The previous trialogues, the last of which took place yesterday evening, have gone tremendously well from a technical point of view. To be honest, a few months ago the dossier appeared technically insurmountable. I must say that all parties, and the permanent representatives, COREPER, were equal to the challenge and did a splendid job. Obviously, I would also like to thank Parliament's representatives at the various meetings and, in particular, at the trialogues.

Good progress has been made, and the texts have come along very well where the vast majority of points are concerned. In particular, the overall architecture and the national targets assigned to each Member State have now secured broad support.

Several difficult issues are, however, still being discussed within the Council, and between the Council and Parliament. It is clear that we must find, within the framework of the ETS Directive – which is probably the most difficult directive – systems for progressivity and financial solidarity that ensure that countries whose economies rely most on carbon can make the transition to other sources of energy.

The energy performance of industry varies, across Europe, from one to three, depending on the country. Carbon emissions vary from one to four, or even five in certain sectors. This gives you an idea of the difficulty facing us, but we must reach an agreement where Europe's economic and industrial competitiveness is maintained. Moreover, we have been in constant contact with European industries.

Yes, electricity auctions must be organised, but we have to find a method of regulation that does not entail huge price increases for final consumers, be they domestic or industrial. We are currently mapping the route towards this transition without also creating a risk of unfair competition in the internal market.

With regard to the risks of carbon leakage, we are working on two alternatives, which are not mutually exclusive: progressivity of auctions; and a carbon inclusion mechanism such as the one planned by the United States within the framework of their own package.

The argument that this would jeopardise freedom of trade is not relevant, in our view. In any case, the choice of mechanisms must simply be decided on at a later stage. For the time being, we basically need to establish what is appropriate for sectors that are particularly vulnerable due to their exposure to potentially very high additional costs in terms of competitiveness and to risks of carbon leakage.

Some people, such as our German friends, want to retain only one criterion and to abandon progressivity. We need to find a solution that is acceptable to us all. In short, at this stage in negotiations, three major blocs have emerged.

The first is mainly composed of the Baltic countries, which are bound, under the terms of the Treaty – one of them, at least – to dismantle nuclear power stations, and which, owing to their particular geographical location, form a veritable energy island. These countries are legitimately highlighting a number of specific technical, practical and financial issues.

The second bloc comprises countries whose industry is much less efficient in energy terms, as it relies heavily on carbon. The most obvious example is Poland. It falls to us to find, for these countries, progressivity systems that do not, under any circumstances, alter the global targets or the final deadline, namely 2020, but that are still acceptable to the other countries. Progressivity of the system should be prioritised in these cases.

Lastly, the countries of the third bloc, although they have no major concerns or concerns of such importance within the context of this process, are paying a great deal of attention to the cost of our required solidarity and to the use of revenues arising from the various auctions and, in particular, to the choice or otherwise of post-allocation.

In two days' time – on 6 December – a meeting is scheduled to take place in Gdansk between Mr Sarkozy and the Heads of State or Government of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and the Baltic countries, as well as Romania and Bulgaria.

I am convinced that they will manage to find ways to reach an agreement on the topics that they rightly consider to be essential. At the end of the process of this first stage, before Parliament meets again, there will inevitably be a strong commitment by the Heads of State or Government.

Indeed, this package cannot work without the strong, unanimous commitment of the Member States. That much was clear from the outset. We cannot propose a change such as this to the economic and social foundations of the lives of 450 million European citizens without having an extremely powerful political process.

There is inevitably a strong temptation within all national parliaments, and perhaps even for some of you here, to balk at the challenge, to think: 'What is the point? Let us wait for Copenhagen, let us wait for the new US Administration to be formed', or even, in view of the financial, industrial and social crisis, to think 'this is not the right time'. That means, however, failing to understand that what we do not do today will cost us dearly in the future in terms of productivity and competitiveness. If we do not act today in conditions that our economies and democracies are still perfectly equipped to withstand, we will be faced with an irreversible, intolerable situation, and any progress will subsequently become impossible. We will have failed in the eyes of countries that need us to succeed for them to have faith in development. We will have failed in the eyes of countries that need us to succeed for them to have faith in their sustainable development. We will have failed in the eyes of our children. In any case, how could we meet our African counterparts, with whom we have arrived at a common Europe-Africa platform, as confirmed in Addis Ababa a few days ago, then go to Copenhagen and talk of changing the global paradigm, if Europe, which, whether we like it or not, is a white knight in this affair, as it was in Bali, does not adopt this package? I do not see how an agreement in Copenhagen would be possible without this essential prerequisite.

If, on the other hand, our 27 countries which, admittedly, still have substantial disparities in terms of wealth and *a priori* different industrial and energy backgrounds, and different climates too, manage to agree on a

public process that can be assessed, verified and financed, thereby setting in motion an historic change in trends, then I believe that this will fill us with hope for Copenhagen and for the future of our planet.

We are convinced that codecision, which is, by nature, an extraordinary opportunity – since I do not believe that one of the components of democracy on its own could make progress within this framework – remains a vital rule for such a major change.

If I may say so, this is why we shall obviously make the best possible use of all the debates and opinions that we shall hear this morning, and even early this afternoon, and I hope that this codecision procedure will enable us to take this major step, a step which, I might add, European citizens are anxious to see. It is a responsible step and a step towards hope.

(Applause)

**Joseph Daul**, *on behalf of the PPE-DE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, Mr Borloo, Mr Piebalgs, Mr Dimas, ladies and gentlemen.

This morning, our debate was devoted to what is now commonly called the ‘energy and climate change package’, a political package containing a key objective set by the leaders of the 27 countries in March 2007. There are numerous links between these five texts, which is why they must be tackled as a coherent political whole. The simultaneous consideration of these texts is a challenge and constitutes a heavy workload for each of our institutions. I should like to thank all of the parties concerned, and the Presidency and Mr Borloo’s team, in particular, for their efforts.

This work was difficult even before the financial crisis exploded. It is extremely difficult now, owing to the economic and social tensions that are causing citizens great anxiety in their everyday lives. And yet, in these difficult and serious circumstances, we must avoid failure. It is our duty to allow ourselves every chance of success. However, this is not a question of imposing our will but of being persuasive and making the necessary efforts to ensure that balanced, forward-looking decisions can be made.

We must seize this historic opportunity to reverse the climate change trend. We must take the path that will save us from heading straight for disaster. Combating climate change and promoting eco-innovations also means, in the medium term, kick-starting Europe’s economy and industry. It also means planning our investments, today, in order to safeguard jobs, tomorrow, and that is why we must secure the support of the citizens.

The Group of the European People’s Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats has been working relentlessly on the energy and climate change package, in the firm belief that it is an essential structural policy and also, above all, with the sentiment that it is an historic policy, and thus a huge responsibility towards future generations. Agreement on one of the five proposals, the regulation on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of cars, was reached this week.

For our group, for the centre-right, this sends out a strong political message and is an incentive to continue our work. Nevertheless, it is the balance of the package as a whole which is at stake and on which we shall be voting during a future plenary session. Our task is to listen to one another and to make the efforts required to create the conditions for a compromise. Above all, however, our task is to reassure the citizens about their future and to secure their support regarding Europe’s strategic options in the medium term.

I feel able to say that, with this prevailing climate of goodwill, we are giving ourselves the chance to succeed at the vital meetings in Poznań, in a few days’ time, and in Copenhagen, next year.

**Martin Schulz**, *on behalf of the PSE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, it is not my job to go into the details of the legislation we are discussing. I will try to describe a larger framework for our Group in which we must arrange this climate change package. I am pleased that the President-in-Office of the Council has arrived, enabling me to listen carefully to his speech. Climate change, as he so rightly said, is a major challenge for us all: for the Council of Heads of State or Government, for the European Parliament and for the Commission.

We have heard many great titles, 20% – 20% – 20%. Only the rigorous work on the details of the matter takes place here in this Parliament. The headings are produced by the Heads of State or Government. The rigorous work on the details takes place here in the European Parliament. Joseph Daul rightly said that we have an initial agreement in connection with the Car Emissions Directive. Praise for this success is due to Parliament. Therefore, the heading for this legislative procedure which we have brought to an initial agreement should not read Sarkozy but Sacconi.

(Applause)

I will therefore stay with this procedure which has reached an agreement. That is not the normal procedure. The European Parliament has agreed to take an unusual path together with the Council and the Commission. Concluding an informal trialogue and then voting on it is fine. However, what we are doing here is to rescind normal parliamentary procedure in the case of six different legislative procedures. This means that a great many Members of this House cannot participate in the detailed consultations but must restrict their entire parliamentary involvement to being able to say Yes or No at the end in a kind of ratification of the result obtained.

That is a serious relinquishment of parliamentary rights. I am a little astonished that those who are otherwise always talking about transparency and participation are overlooking this circumstance with a cool smile. Nonetheless, in particular situations a decision must be taken as to whether it is justified in relation to the challenge being faced. Our Group has discussed this in depth. We have agreed that the challenge is so great that this time this path must be taken.

President-in-Office of the Council, you have rightly said, and this is our firm conviction as well, that this is a challenge of the century. We will not solve all the climatic challenges of this century now. However, if we do not solve the challenges which we now face, we will founder in the course of this century. This is the essential reason for us saying that we want to bring this procedure to a conclusion now.

I do not think it was the wisest decision of the Council to take and reserve the right to make the final decision at the level of the Heads of State or Government, for the principle of unanimity prevails in the European Council of the Heads of State or Government. You have already indicated that President Sarkozy still has to hold separate talks with eight to nine States. Good luck! We hope the outcome is successful. However, Parliament has not issued a blank cheque with the procedure that we have used here. It does not mean that this Parliament is ultimately prepared to accept any particular wish of any individual Member State, which has still to be worked out behind closed doors.

In an informal trialogue everything must accord at the end. The unified position of the Council, the unified position of Parliament and the unified position of the Commission. It must not be possible for us to go into the details here only for the European Council to say, well, I still have something to fix here and I still have something to request there, and then for Parliament finally to be told: take it or leave it! That definitely cannot be so. This is why I recommend to Mr Borloo and the President-in-Office of the Council, Mr Sarkozy: come up with a result that is acceptable to everyone.

Therefore there should be no blocking in the European Council, nor in the separate talks. We have made all the arrangements to enable us to vote the week after next. The European Parliament has agreed to give this package its blessing this year, if that is possible. That will be a major triumph for Mr Sarkozy, he believes. I therefore say here and now that if there is a successful outcome, that success is above all due to the hard work of the Members of the European Parliament. We can be proud, and if it turns out well, the Presidency of the Council can be too.

(Applause)

#### IN THE CHAIR: MR ONESTA

*Vice-President*

**Graham Watson**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (FR) Mr Borloo, we were told that you had come from Paris by plane. If this is the case, next time, take the train. This would ensure that you arrive here on time and would preserve your green reputation.

Mr President, the Union might be days away from an historic breakthrough in combating climate change. Our national leaders like to talk in shades of green, but now we are going to see the colour of their money. In March of last year they agreed to a 20% cut in carbon emissions by 2020 and now we hear the shuffling of cold feet in the Council. Our job is to turn up the heat.

As you have said, Mr President, climate change is the greatest challenge facing us. Although there are some who yelp that they cannot afford to cut carbon emissions as they agreed, it is irresponsible of Italy to claim that it would push up power bills by 17.5%. Renewable energy generation will bring down bills, and will save us not only money but lives.



There are signs of progress on the deal. We are about to embark on a real market-led cap and trade system, one that would be sensitive to the needs of Member States while still achieving its goals, but we need the Council to reaffirm the commitment to 20% renewable energy by 2020; we need the Council to map out the route to accountable and transparent effort-sharing in those areas not covered by the emissions trading scheme; and we need the Council to commit to the research that will unleash the potential of green technologies like carbon capture and storage.

We must act to make sure that a combination of industrial lobbying and national self-interest, which has cost us progress on car emissions, does not blight next week's historic opportunity. Europe has a chance to lead the world in the quest to cut carbon emissions, to bring about real change to the benefit of future generations. When has so noble a quest been right there within our grasp? The Council must keep its word.

**Claude Turmes**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, with President Obama in the US we now have a political leader who shows foresight and courage. President Obama is going to put green technologies, renewable energies and efficient cars at the centre of the reconstruction of the US economy.

It is also a question of the ethical reconstruction of this country which President Bush bankrupted in terms of its economy, peace policy and ethics. At the same time that we have this enormous historical opportunity, here in Europe we, who have always been international leaders, we, who have always set the standards for international climate policy, risk our long-term view being restrained by the dirtiest enterprises and their accomplices. It would be an historical error and we would lose all diplomatic credibility if this Parliament failed to help make a package for the future out of this package.

This is about politics, and I am proud that yesterday evening we made progress regarding renewable energies with the Liberals, Social Democrats and, albeit very hesitant, Conservatives. One Conservative still stands in my way, and that is Mr Berlusconi.

This climate package is also about the political future. I am glad that with Mr Rasmussen we have a Social Democrat leader who wants progress and green-social policy and not a return to the 1970s like other Social Democrats. I am glad that Mr Watson is on a green-Liberal course and the exciting question will be: how are we going to go about conserving nature? Where are the ethics in what is supposed to be the greatest People's Party in Europe? Do we really want to permit Conservatives like Mr Tusk, Mr Berlusconi and Mrs Merkel and their accomplices to prevent Europe from making historic progress for its citizens and the world here in this Parliament?

**Alessandro Foglietta**, *on behalf of the UEN Group*. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the new 20/20/20 formula used to sum up Europe's targets to combat climate change, is an ambitious commitment which would make Europe the undeniable leader in this global battle. To be honest, I should highlight the difference between the universal nature of this target and the unilateral approach of Europe's obligations. In my opinion, we should be bold enough to admit that this demonstration of our ability could prove to be, at the same time, of no use for the environment and crippling for our industry, if it is not considered in multilateral negotiations.

Obviously, we all support the aim of protecting the environment, but in order to do this, we have to identify the most effective instruments, which enjoy broad support. It is essential that these two conditions be combined, as having one without the other would frustrate all our efforts and could even have irreparable consequences for our industry. A cost-benefits analysis is, therefore, fundamental. I would stress that an approach of this kind in no way means gauging or questioning the importance of safeguarding the planet; I simply believe that the instruments which comprise the climate and energy package, first and foremost revision of the ETS directive, must be carefully evaluated, including in terms of the economic or bureaucratic burdens on our businesses and the public purse, as well as in terms of the competitiveness of European manufacturing, with special emphasis on small and medium-sized enterprises.

This line of reasoning is legitimate, especially at a time when the global economy is hostage to a poor economic climate, calling for a fresh analysis of the philosophy of the package: I am referring to a review of the criteria used to calculate the national targets. Above all, it is imperative to take full advantage of the so-called flexibility mechanisms and only then can we hope to remain competitive at global level. I will conclude by stressing that, at this time, it is more vital than ever to avoid attempts to exploit divisions between defenders of industry and champions of the environment.

**Umberto Guidoni**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Mr Borloo, Mr Piebalgs, Mr Dimas, some say that the European 20/20/20 directive imposes excessively high costs on

the economy of the European Union. Among these is the Italian Government, which has estimated almost doubled costs, without, however, backing up its estimates with any convincing evidence. Such positions nevertheless underestimate the future price of fossil fuels and disregard the substantial advantages resulting from the rapid diffusion of renewable energies: for example, the security of energy supply, but above all the creation of new jobs, at a time of recession when thousands of workers are being forced out of production processes.

Greater energy efficiency and the widespread use of renewables are the key to leaving the economic crisis behind. Devoting a large part of public funds to bailing out the banks means reintroducing the same economic model, based purely on finance, which led to the crisis we are trying to tackle. We cannot deal with the economic situation without changing our strategy. The EU directive focuses on innovation and in particular tries to tackle, in time, the upheaval caused by the climate change now underway. This is a problem set to weigh ever heavier on the lives of European citizens and the economies of the Member States. This is why public investment must not be used, once again, to sustain traditional sectors, but must concentrate on areas which lead to innovation in the fields of energy and the environment.

The development of distribution networks and priority access to them are key factors for the growth of the renewable energy sector. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the huge expenditure on network infrastructure for large-scale centralised systems was provided by major public investments. This should also be the case to ensure the future of the renewable energy-based system. We therefore need to run renewable energy plants using new technologies. This is why we need investment, research and development of technologies. We urgently need to adopt this package at first reading during the December plenary session, as expected by Europe's citizens. We cannot allow the short-sighted self-interest of certain states and certain economic interests to block this process.

**Johannes Blokland**, *on behalf of the IND/DEM Group*. – (NL) Mr President, in recent weeks, we have worked with might and main on the negotiations concerning the climate change and energy package. They have taken up a great deal of our time, but are, to my mind, worth every minute of it. I should, in particular, like to thank the rapporteurs for the enormous efforts they have made and encourage them to insist on an ambitious agreement in the next two weeks. I should equally like to thank the Presidency and the Commission for their relentless efforts during the negotiations.

Sometimes, I get the impression that the Presidency has great difficulty moving closer to Parliament's opinion in terms of content, which could cause detriment to the ambitions of the climate package. I am, however, fully aware of the Presidency's difficult task of reaching a consensus within the Council, certainly now a number of Member States are using the financial crisis to weaken efforts in the areas of climate change and energy. This is a lamentable state of affairs.

If we delay our ambitions, it will cost us far more. Now is the time to find solutions. I would urge the Presidency to hold onto the promising efforts that were accepted at the European Council in the spring of 2007 and 2008. In the light of the climate change conference in Poznań that kicked off this week, and which we will attend along with an EU delegation, it is of paramount importance that we stick to our ambitions.

As such, in Bali, we promised the rest of the world we would come up with a far-reaching climate change package, and we should not disappoint them. If we do, the European Union will lose their trust, which will, in turn, affect progress in the negotiations for a new climate change treaty. Man has been entrusted with Planet Earth as its steward. It is our duty, where possible, to undo the damage we have caused creation.

**Roger Helmer (NI)**. – Mr President, we are undoubtedly facing the greatest crisis that I have seen in my lifetime, but the threat is posed not by global warming but by our policy responses to global warming. It is certainly true that the earth has warmed slightly and intermittently over the last 150 years, but that change is entirely consistent with well-established, long-term natural climate cycles established over thousands of years. We have seen the Holocene Maxima, we have seen the Roman Optimum, we have seen the Medieval Warm Period. It now appears we are moving into a new 21st century climate optimum.

The fact is that the sea level is rising no faster today than it has been for centuries. The fact is that total global ice mass is broadly constant. The fact is that extreme weather events are no more frequent today than they were a hundred years ago, and that the polar bear, far from being threatened as a species, has in fact shown a dramatic increase in population over the last few decades.

It is true that carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, although a much less important greenhouse gas than water vapour, but the effect of CO<sub>2</sub> climate forcing is non-linear. It is a law of diminishing returns. From the current level of about 380 parts per million in the atmosphere, further CO<sub>2</sub> increases will have a trivial effect.

Meantime our policies will have a devastating economic effect. The damage will be vast. Our unachievable renewables targets, especially with regard to wind energy, actually threaten to cut off supplies of electricity.

The policies will fail as Kyoto has failed. Even if the West cuts emissions, clearly the emerging markets of China and India will not. CO<sub>2</sub> levels will keep rising for at least half a century. The fact is that 1998 was the hottest year in living memory and for the last ten years the world has become cooler. The measures we are debating today represent the greatest collective flight from reality that we have ever seen.

**President.** - Ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief procedural announcement to make. As you are aware, Parliament decided to wait for the Council's plane to land before commencing this important debate. This means that our timetable has been set back considerably, but we also have the courtesy to fulfil our commitments to our guests.

As you know, we are expecting the Dalai Lama in this House at 11.30 a.m. Obviously, the formal sitting will be held at 11.30 a.m.

This means that we will certainly not be able to finish the current debate at 11.30 a.m. The final speakers will therefore have to take the floor after the formal sitting, which will also put back voting time. Naturally all of this will be displayed on your screens.

I would now ask the speakers to adhere strictly to their speaking time.

**Werner Langen (PPE-DE).** - (DE) Mr President, Some of us still look tired because they were talking until 2 a.m. this morning. We want a global agreement, but that naturally requires the involvement of all the major players: China, India and above all the US. Without this involvement it will not be possible to combat climate change even if Europe makes the most strenuous efforts. Admittedly, we are behind the targets for 2020, but we are not only responsible for the climate, but also for the retention of jobs and for the competitiveness of our economy. This is the dilemma in which we find ourselves and I can only say that the proposals from the Commission were not good enough for us to be able to adopt them.

We are now debating and consulting so intensively because, contrary to public statements, the proposals from the Commission have failed to consider these aspects sufficiently. I therefore believe – Mr Schulz is right – that we must observe our participatory rights and cannot issue any blank cheques. However, the interim results with the car, for example, where we have found a responsible compromise which does not suit the industry but ensures adequate transitional periods, we can endorse, even if a few Greens protest against it or a unified lobby of different interests tries to disparage this useable compromise.

With renewable energies it is a question of opening up all the possibilities but also of not ruling out technological innovations from the outset either. And with the greatest sticking point, emissions trading, the relocation of jobs must be avoided. The regulation must be simple, it must be affordable for consumers and industry, and it must prevent competitive distortions between the Member States. That is our aim. If it is achieved then we can agree to the package.

**Linda McAvan (PSE).** - Mr President, firstly I want to thank the French Presidency because it is committed to getting a deal and so are we. But, as people have said, it cannot just be any deal.

I am the PSE Group's shadow for the emissions trading scheme and we want a number of things. We want to make sure the bulk of the effort is made in Europe, not by offsetting. Offsetting must be subject to strict quality controls; it cannot just be any old projects. We want identified funding to tackle climate change mitigation. We cannot go into international negotiations with vague promises about the funding for developing countries. I now want the Council to move on this issue of earmarking. We need some movement there. We cannot go naked into the conference chamber. We need clear criteria on carbon leakage to give certainty to our businesses and to make sure they are not disadvantaged.

Mr Borloo, you spoke about special arrangements for some countries in difficulty. I think that is acceptable, provided they are time-limited and do not undermine the overall architecture of the project. This Group will support those special arrangements if they are in that context.

A lot of people have talked about leadership this morning, about Europe leading. Yesterday some of us met some of the key players from China and the United States, who were going to be in Poznań and will be in Copenhagen. To be honest, they are pretty sceptical about Europe leading on climate change and they made it very clear that, if we do not lead, they have their own plans. So Europe has to make a choice: either we lead or we dance to other people's tunes.

You mentioned the economic crisis. It was failure to act to regulate financial institutions which has caused this crisis – failure by politicians as well as banks. Let us not make that same mistake on climate change. If we do, it will be ordinary people who will pay the price for our failure, just as they are paying the price today for failure on the banking crisis.

**Chris Davies (ALDE).** - Mr President, it is one thing to get agreement from 27 Member States on some noble words and a great deal more difficult to secure support for practical action. I think the deal we have just done on cars and CO<sub>2</sub> demonstrates that: it is really not the most ambitious measure that we could ever have imagined. But if we fail to advance significantly on every front, we can at least look to some technologies where I think more progress can be made. You will know that I am speaking here in particular of carbon capture and storage.

I think the Council really has to appreciate just how much potential this technology has to make a huge difference in abating CO<sub>2</sub> emissions into the atmosphere. If we are to secure an international agreement, if we are to lock China in – which gets 80% of its electricity from coal – we have got to deal with the problem of big power stations, big fossil-fuel, carbon dioxide-generating power stations.

The first step is to test and develop the technology. We have got to get the demonstration projects up and running. So I very much welcome the support that the Presidency and the Commission are now giving to the principle that we should be using some ETS allowances to provide the necessary support funding. But the criticism is clear. What is on the table from the Council is not enough. It will not deliver the pledge made by Heads of Government last year to have up to 12 demonstration projects in operation by 2015.

This technology can make a huge difference. In the next two weeks we have a chance to negotiate a deal to actually put this technology into practice.

**Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE).** - (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, once again this very basic question poses itself: are environmental protection, climate protection and financial and industrial policy compatible? I have the feeling that we have actually gone backwards in the debate and I am constantly presented with the argument that industry and the economy must be taken into account in difficult times and that it is not possible to make any demands of them because otherwise progress will be halted.

Mr Langen, who, in your opinion, is responsible for the fact that precisely in the car industry things are not going at all well? And this is the case all over the world. There is a sales crisis everywhere. In my opinion, it is the result of mismanagement, of the wrong industrial strategies, but definitely not the result of having established forward-looking environmental policy with regard to the car industry.

(Applause)

Where are the efficient cars which the Europeans wanted to be able to launch in bulk on the markets of the future then? Now I read that they would need European research facilities to enable them to make technological progress. But companies do have the technology for environmentally friendly cars. We must provide the framework so that these environmentally friendly cars can at last be sold too. What are we doing? We are once again delaying a regulation which we already deemed sensible in 1995. In 1995 it was discussed: 120 grams for 2012! What we are now permitting with this regulation – it beggars belief – is for the average emissions from the new European car fleet to be higher in 2012 than it is today.

(Protests)

Who is lying, Mr Langen, you alone do not decide, but it will be obvious.

(Applause)

I think that in this European Parliament we must in fact decide whether or not we can really change our manner of pursuing economic affairs, which is based on over-consumption, 'excess' and a philosophy of 'ever larger'. At the heart of the matter, the financial crisis, the climate crisis and poverty in the world can be explained by our over-consumption and the enormous greed of the industrialised countries. If we are unable

to change this, Mr Langen, then the future is bleak. In this century no one will be able to remember the phase of climate policy or crisis policy in Europe.

**Bogdan Pęk (UEN).** – (PL) Mr President, the European Union's attempt to adopt this development strategy, which assumes that a drastic reduction of carbon emissions generated by human activity will have a significant impact on cyclical climate change, and the attempt to impose such a strategy on the whole world, is the most utopian idea of our time.

I will mention several figures which will fully demonstrate the absurdity of this assumption. For instance, the International Energy Agency maintains that reducing carbon emissions by 50% will have cost the world approximately USD 45 billion by the year 2050, and that this amount of money will reduce temperatures, and I quote, 'by 0.02 degrees', that is, by less than the statistical error, which can have no effect on the progress of cyclical climate change. At the same time, it will result in a rapid decline in the development of human civilisation.

**Roberto Musacchio (GUE/NGL).** – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, in a report, a brief one this time, a few days ago, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announced that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have again started to rise faster than was forecast. Therefore, we too need to speed up our decisions and ensure they are satisfactory. Parliament, as certain fellow Members have pointed out, has worked intelligently, competently, and I would even say passionately, and has already adopted important texts in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

We expect the Commission – and I have no doubts about it as I respect Mr Dimas' work – and the Council, to acknowledge the value of this work. We are in codecision, and must therefore meet the deadlines and reach agreement prior to the next session in Strasbourg. We must not undermine our commitments, but uphold Parliament's fundamental points, such as effective cuts, the automatic switch from 20 to 30%, the creation of an adaptation fund and technology transfer to third countries. Europe must play a decisive role in Poznań, remembering, among other things, that it is in Europe's own interest to secure a post-Kyoto agreement with China and the USA.

I am deeply saddened, as an Italian, that the government of my country and Confindustria have taken such a reactionary and harmful position, first and foremost for my country. To say that the economic crisis makes taking action on the climate impossible is foolish; on the contrary, combating climate change is precisely what our point of reference for a green industrial reconversion must be, and which must lie at the heart of our action during this dramatic crisis. The environment is not a problem for the economy, but the key to its solution, along with a different social approach to a crisis resulting precisely from a sick economy that harms the environment and employment.

**Hanne Dahl (IND/DEM).** – (DA) Mr President, it is with great pleasure that I am following the renewed interest in green growth that has followed in the wake of the financial crisis. Yet, like all new political phenomena, the new green wave also requires a dose of healthy scepticism. You could very well get the idea that this is more about creating an alibi for subsidising outdated heavy industry than about actually wanting to conduct a climate-change policy. Indeed, if you were a little cheeky, you could say that it resembles an attempt to re-introduce an old-fashioned protectionist industrial policy, under which the big countries in the EU, whose economies are dependent on the car industry, are to be given permission to grant state aid. I am not that cheeky, however! I therefore welcome the new green line and would like to say that what we need is a truly visionary focus. We should concentrate on switching Europe's car production over to producing electric cars that can be powered by renewable energy. One fifth of all the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in Europe come from the transport sector. If we focus our efforts on this area then we will really be able to do something about CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and reduce emissions of noise and particulate matter.

**Philip Claeys (NI).** – (NL) Mr President, whilst I support the gist of the objectives, particularly as regards the climate change plan, to wit the objective of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and dependence on energy imports from outside the European Union, I am also convinced that more realism is called for in the specific objectives that are being put forward. The key standard for determining the share of renewable energy is the Member States' gross domestic product and not the natural potential to produce this renewable energy.

Flanders, future Member State of the European Union, is put at a disadvantage on this score. With its very limited coastline, non-existing potential for storage reservoirs, little sun, few open spaces, and so on, it is a complete mystery how the share of renewable energy could be increased from barely 2% to 13% by 2020.

As such, the way in which the climate plan is to be fleshed out will be an extremely hard nut to crack for both Flemish industry and Flemish consumers, who will also be faced with higher electricity bills, for example.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE).** – Mr President, I agree with the view that politicians everywhere are afraid of long-term decisions because of short-term effects. As David Puttnam said recently in Dublin, the political establishment is by nature conservative and afraid of sudden change at local, regional and national level – and, I would add, also at European level.

On climate legislation we have no choice. As politicians we owe it to our communities, to all communities, to future communities, to stand up and be counted.

The science is a given. We know what we have to do: it is a year since the Commission adopted the Climate and Energy Package, and much work has been done. The French Presidency has made it a priority, and together we have been working hard to deliver a good deal by the end of the year; what was a possibility is now becoming a probability.

Having witnessed first-hand many frustrating COPs in recent years, I have always believed in the need for Europe to drive this process forward, as we did in Bali, and to deliver in time for the COP 15 in Copenhagen.

But be warned: we will not just 'sign off' on any deal. I have made this very clear to the French Presidency, and there is a clear understanding that the European Parliament will not be presented with a *fait accompli*. And Parliament is not leaving it up to the Heads of State and Government to 'sign off'. Make no mistake about that. Any signing off will be done at a subsequent dialogue between the French Presidency and the European Parliament.

I would, however, just add – and I would ask Minister Borloo to deliver on this, and make it very clear to President Sarkozy – that a generous percentage of the auction revenues should be earmarked for adaptation and mitigation in developing countries, because legislation without generous financing will not result in a global agreement. Make no mistake about that.

Yes, as we discuss and debate our post-2012 package against a backdrop of serious global economic recession and financial crisis, we will need all the incisive governance, entrepreneurial flair and scientific innovation that we can muster. Investment, jobs, salaries, consumption and saving our planet are all synonymous, and we will depend on our ability to switch from carbon-spewing fossil fuels to more sustainable energy sources, and to bring all our colleagues around the world to the UN table with us.

**Robert Goebbels (PSE).** – (FR) Mr President, it is rare for the European Parliament to deal with subjects that have such a far-reaching impact on the peoples of Europe, and even of the world, as the energy and climate change package does. Instead of handling this subject with transparency, however, every effort is being made to secure support for this vitally important package by bypassing Parliament's usual democratic procedures.

Of course, the competent committees have been able to voice their opinions, but this House has never been able to take up a position, with the result that each Member's democratic right to amend the Commission's proposals is destroyed. While enhanced cooperation between the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy was decided on, negotiations took place at an informal dialogue on the basis of the vote held in just one committee. Do I really need to point out that this vote does not necessarily reflect the majority view of Parliament?

Moreover, the positions adopted by the competent committees as a rule exist only in English, thereby preventing many Members from really understanding the extent of the proposed measures. This denial of democracy was justified by Europe's desire to set the rest of the world a good example at the Poznań Conference. The fact is, this conference will have pulled down its shutters before the Heads of State or Government arrive at an agreement. Mr Borloo is right to stress the need for an agreement at Heads of State or Government level, but we must not dispense with the contribution of Members directly elected by the peoples of Europe.

Parliament will nevertheless be called upon to endorse the compromises negotiated by the Presidency at the next European Council, thereby reducing the codecision laid down in the Treaties to an exercise in style. This is unacceptable. I want an agreement, but not any old agreement. I want an agreement attained with democratic transparency. I hope to see a comprehensive agreement reached in Copenhagen in 2009, but adjustment of the European effort within the framework of this comprehensive agreement cannot take place via comitology, as the Commission proposes and as my fellow Members in the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance,

in particular, want. An ambitious climate change policy, Mr President, cannot be decided on behind closed doors and without the citizens' knowledge.

**Lena Ek (ALDE).** - (SV) Mr President, the period for the climate negotiations – the EU's climate change package – is running out and responsibility for our being ready on time lies with the French Presidency. Parliament's position was clear as far back as September. We will not accept a watered-down proposal. Codecision applies to everybody, including Poland.

The energy package is also being discussed. The energy package is hugely important for transparency and a functioning market. However, I wish to take up certain parts of it that deal with trading in emissions rights. Firstly, the polluter must pay. Therefore we cannot compromise on an auction, and to give everything away free of charge would be absolutely crazy. Secondly, if the measures force the businesses to move out of Europe through carbon dioxide leakage, naturally they must be compensated. However, a global convention minimises this risk. Therefore we must not be too hasty and pinpoint victims before the climate conference in Copenhagen. I wish to point out that there are rules on small businesses and combined heat and power that are very important for the industry.

The money received from climate measures must also be invested in climate measures. Consequently, the revenue must be earmarked. Poor countries are worried. Money is needed for mitigation and aid in these countries; there are 27 of us and 77 of them.

Finally, I would like to remind our French Members of something General de Gaulle once said, that in politics it is not the intention that counts, but rather the result. We now have 24 hours of Parliament and the dialogue on trading in emissions rights in which to act.

**Satu Hassi (Verts/ALE).** - Mr President, I am speaking English for the first time in this plenary because I hope that the French Presidency will listen to me. Unfortunately, the present model for effort-sharing proposed by the Council would mean that the European Union would reduce emissions mainly outside the EU through CDM/JI. It would mean moving up to 70% of the emission reductions elsewhere, mainly to developing countries. This would totally undermine the credibility of our climate policy. An absolute red line for Parliament is a 50% limit for offsetting, which would ensure that the majority of our emissions reductions are domestic.

This 50% limit has always been a cornerstone of the EU climate policy, through the long years of the Kyoto negotiations. The high CDM quota proposed by the Council would mean a U-turn in EU climate policy. This would give too easy an argument for everybody who wants to diminish and blacken EU climate policy.

The IPCC says that the industrialised countries should reduce domestic emissions by 25 to 40% and developing countries by between 15 and 30% compared to business as usual. We cannot double-count emission reductions. If we want to offset the majority of our emission reductions, then de facto we demand more from developing countries than from ourselves. It is very hard to see how this would help international negotiations and I really hope that the French Presidency understands this basic point of international climate policy.

**Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański (UEN).** - (PL) Mr President, we have now said virtually everything about energy and climate change. We know that climate change is happening, but we also know that a much more significant global warming occurred in the past. We know that in the natural environment carbon emission occurs largely without human intervention. Human contribution to carbon emission is only around 4%. The main source of CO<sub>2</sub> is the ocean, which contains 50 times more carbon dioxide than the atmosphere.

Individual countries do not emit equal quantities of carbon dioxide. Large quantities are emitted by developing countries, such as China and India. Without reducing their emissions, Europe alone will not be able to solve this problem. The problem will not be solved either by imposing restrictions on countries with significant carbon emission levels. Economies such as Poland's will continue to rely on energy from coal and on biofuels for a long time to come. These sources will remain the main driving forces of their economies.

The expected 20% reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by the year 2020 on the proposed terms will destroy those economies. The plan to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 80% by the year 2050 would result in the collapse of the energy economy not only in Poland but also in many other countries, and would undoubtedly lead to a total economic disaster.

We must therefore study the problem in greater depth and take protective action. Its solution will certainly not be advanced by bilateral talks between Russia and Germany, excluding other Member States. This is an

issue which we must discuss together and find a common solution. I hope that the Poznań meeting, and the subsequent Copenhagen meeting, will result in an agreement and in a solution which will be beneficial to all.

**Dimitrios Papadimoulis (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Mr President, the discussions in Poznań, and in Copenhagen a year from now must succeed. There is no more room for wishful thinking and other delays. Just the day before yesterday, the European Parliament, with an outstanding majority, almost unanimously, voted in favour of the Florenz report, requesting ambitious goals, adequate funds and direct measures, but the corrupt alliance in the Council and the Commission is trying to slice through and undermine this effort.

It is unacceptable for the Council to undermine the role of Parliament, just to please Mr Berlusconi and a few other new members of the European Union. The interests of European citizens and the historical interests of the European Union itself must come first. The European Union must continue to lead this effort and avoid undermining the European Parliament's will to contribute.

**Urszula Krupa (IND/DEM).** – (PL) Mr President, the imposition of the drastic solutions contained in the energy and climate change package on European Union states which account for only 15% of global carbon emissions will have a destructive impact not only on Poland, but also on Europe and the world.

While the old EU states have reduced their carbon emissions by approximately 3%, in Poland, as a result of industrial transformation and the modernisation process, emissions have been reduced by approximately 30%. In spite of this, the European Union demands further reductions, which are supposed to represent implementation of solidarity and burden sharing, but which are certain to lead to the collapse of our industry and to a huge rise in costs.

In addition, we oppose the CCS Directive recently imposed. This will make it impossible for Poland to use geothermal energy and to achieve the goal of a 20% share of renewable energy. On the contrary, it could become the cause of an environmental disaster, rather than ensuring environmental protection. Releasing carbon dioxide from the earth's strata can cause the death of living beings as well as tectonic movements and earthquakes.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI).** – (DE) Mr President, Europe is warming up faster than the global average. Within one decade, as you are aware, the injuries caused by natural disasters have doubled to almost 14 billion annually. We must therefore consider our next steps carefully. This is precisely where we still have problems.

If we now consider exemptions from emissions trading, it must not be forgotten that energy enterprises have shamelessly charged the consumer for their free certificates in order to generate additional profits for themselves. This must not be allowed to happen again. We do not need any more ill-considered hasty reactions like the green fuel fiasco either. Alleged zero emissions from electric cars are useless if the power comes from coal-fired power stations.

In my view, however, it is quite ridiculous to extol nuclear energy as environmentally friendly in this situation. If the billions that go up in smoke for this on an annual basis were used for renewable energies, maybe we would not have any energy problems at all any more and we would certainly be a major step further forward in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction.

Furthermore, in this connection it must be remembered that in the long term we must encourage the subsidising of public transport and the movement of goods by rail.

**Péter Olajos (PPE-DE).** – (HU) Thank you, Mr President. We are all committed to stopping climate change, to preventing the global environmental catastrophe that threatens humanity. We know, of course, that this entails serious costs, which we citizens will sooner or later have to pay for one way or another.

We also know that the later we take action, the greater will be the damage, the more irreversible the processes, and the more we will have to pay. The question is whether, on the one hand, we are brave enough to be the first to take action and make the necessary sacrifices, and on the other hand, how we will share the burden among the various social and economic actors.

The legislative package before us shows that the European Union is committed to action, and it also demonstrates that, unfortunately, it is partisan, inconsistent and uses a double standard when it comes to implementation. It allows certain Member States to produce more emissions in 2020 than the Kyoto target set for 2010. Meanwhile others, who had already been performing well, are not given adequate incentives.



Why do we turn a blind eye to the fact that certain Member States do not care a whit about their promises, while others agree to make enormous sacrifices? It is likewise incomprehensible why the cement industry should have to reduce twice as much as the waste industry or transport. Minister, the brave government is not one that dares to mete out harsh punishment to companies, but one that is just as severe toward itself. The wise government is not one that takes citizens' money abroad under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), but one that invests at home, within the EU, reducing our energy dependency by creating new, marketable, clean technologies.

The present global economic recession is no reason for failing to take action, but on the contrary, it is an opportunity for a breakthrough. Europe's historical responsibility and opportunity also means assuming a pioneering role in this third industrial revolution. Thank you for your attention.

**Guido Sacconi (PSE).** - (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank my fellow Members, starting with my group chairman, Mr Schulz, who rightly highlighted the result attained last Monday with the agreement on the regulation laying down the requirement to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from motor vehicles.

I would like to explain why, intentionally and in agreement with the French Presidency, which has done a wonderful job – I wanted to say so informally – why, to stay on a car theme, I speeded up the securing of this agreement, putting my foot on the throttle, so to speak. This was for two reasons: the first is because I felt it important for the package to move forward, at least on one issue, to show that it really is possible – difficult, but possible – to reconcile different requirements: protection of the environment and combating climate change, on the one hand, and the economic dimension of competitiveness and social issues, as well as employment, on the other. We are aware of the extent of the current crisis in the motor industry, and doing this at this point in time sends an extremely important signal.

However, I put my foot on the throttle for another reason too. I thought that it would be much better to conclude this dossier ahead of the European Council next week so that, if I may put it bluntly, no one can put their oar in. No head of state or government will be able to get their hands on the regulation. I am addressing my fellow Members who, like Mr Davies, have criticised this agreement, but have not realised that it would also have been better if the other dossiers – such as Mr Davies's dossier, where everything is already in place to reach an agreement – had already been concluded. I would like to tell you something, Mr Borloo, if you will allow me one moment longer: we do not always manage to reach unanimity here, so take heart, and do not allow a similar situation to what happened yesterday on renewables, where one country, unfortunately my own, vetoed the proposal, thereby making an agreement impossible.

**Johannes Lebech (ALDE).** - (DA) Mr President, it has been fascinating to be involved in negotiating the climate package, first in the committee and then in the trilogue negotiations in which I am taking part in the capacity of shadow rapporteur on the effort-sharing directive. Here in Parliament we have shown a great aptitude for reaching compromises and coming up with ideas that could improve the Commission's proposals, for we are well aware that if we are to have a serious successor to the Kyoto Agreement we must be armed with an ambitious proposal when we meet up in Copenhagen.

It is now the Council we are waiting for. I would like to spell out a couple of key problems. It is important that the Council should understand that if the Member States want flexibility there must be a guarantee that the targets will be met, which must take the form of reporting coupled with consequences if the targets are not met. Empty promises will not put the brakes on global warming. It must also be made clear that we cannot just purchase our entire reduction from outside the EU. Instead, the majority of our efforts must be made in Europe. Anything else is neither serious nor credible if we actually want to obtain an international climate agreement as such behaviour can be interpreted as giving the message that we have already done our bit and there is no more we can do. Similarly, we must not lack the motivation for energy technology modernisation in Europe and we must ensure, through this package, progress towards a future where we base our energy use on forms of energy that are CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral. Last year, the EU's Heads of State or Government pledged to play a leadership role on the climate front – that represents a commitment. Parliament is ready. The Council must now demonstrate its will to produce results so that we can together take pleasure in the climate package as the best Christmas present this year.

**IN THE CHAIR: MR DOS SANTOS***Vice-President*

**Caroline Lucas (Verts/ALE).** - Mr President, I share the anger and frustration of all those who are rightly criticising people in this Parliament and Council who are trying to destroy our commitments to an ambitious climate and energy package.

The EU is now calling into question its own 30% commitment, seeking to offset most of what reduction effort it sets itself, whittling away the auctioning demands of the power sector and almost all other industries, putting in place car efficiency standards that are worse than the status quo, and criminally failing to commit funds for solidarity with developing countries. All this means that the EU's climate package is looking increasingly empty, and Europe's politicians will not be forgiven for such a monumental failure of political leadership.

I want to challenge one sentiment that has been repeated several times today. We do not have to choose between tackling the economic crisis and tackling the climate crisis. We should be using the financial crisis as an opportunity to completely reshape the focus and direction of our economy, to make it a genuinely sustainable economy which will actually deliver environmental and economic benefits. This is a critical test for the whole EU project itself, and it is not one we can afford to fail.

**Mieczysław Edmund Janowski (UEN).** - (PL) Mr President, today's discussion concerns energy and environmental protection. The impact of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change is real, although other factors are currently being underestimated.

I should like to emphasise that action on this matter must have a global dimension. Otherwise what will be the result of our drastic restriction of emissions, if other countries do not do likewise? It will simply lead to European goods becoming uncompetitive, and to our markets being dominated by those who have not introduced such restrictions.

We must also take into account the situation of countries such as Poland, whose power generation industry is largely based on coal. It would be appropriate to recognise the huge progress in reducing carbon emissions recently achieved by those countries.

The energy and climate change package must therefore be sensible and at the same time imbued with the spirit of solidarity. It should also be innovative, and supportive of the economy and the environment, whilst ensuring security and looking to the future, which is especially important at this time of major economic downturn.

**Eva-Britt Svensson (GUE/NGL).** - (SV) Mr President, in March 2007 the EU's Heads of Government promised that the EU would reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020. This commitment is not in itself sufficient to stop the warming at the magic limit of 2°C, as research tells us is required. Nonetheless, it was a promise to our citizens and a step in the right direction. It is therefore with great concern that I now see the tool for achieving this aim, the climate change package, becoming more and more impotent with each day that passes.

Last Monday an informal agreement was reached between the French Presidency and Parliament's large groups on how we will reduce carbon emissions from cars. The result is extremely easy to sum up: business as usual for the car industry. Absolutely incomprehensible! As far back as 1995 the Commission proposed that carbon emissions be limited to 120 g. Now, 13 years later, the target has been deferred again. This is a result of all the loopholes in the legislation in the form of the phase-in of both the number of cars that must meet the requirements and ineffective financial penalties.

I am also tired of hearing the financial crisis being used as an excuse for not taking responsibility for climate impact. The car industry has had more than a decade in which to switch to greener technology. This is not a result of the financial crisis; rather it is the result of ongoing overproduction and the failure of the car industry to make changes.

The negotiations on emissions trading are also in their final stages. They do not look good for the climate either. The CDM projects are a case in point. Of course we must support climate projects in developing countries, but this must be in addition to our own emissions reductions and must not replace them.

**Sylwester Chruszcz (NI).** - (PL) Mr President, under the guise of noble environmental protection objectives, the richest states and companies are forcing through a climate change package which will hit the less well-off

European Union states. In the context of a world crisis, mining and power generation in countries including Poland are being attacked, at the expense of inhibiting economic growth and causing mass redundancies. I too support reducing carbon emissions in Europe and in the world, but not at any price.

We cannot close coal-fired power stations or coal mines overnight. It is not too late to work out a wise compromise acceptable to all states. But such a compromise will become possible only if the special features of national economies are taken into account. Otherwise we will be facing a situation of *diktat* and injustice, and we should not consent to that.

**Karsten Friedrich Hoppenstedt (PPE-DE).** - (DE) Mr President, carbon capture and storage is only one small cog in the overall climate package. But little cogs and little wheels have their significance too. That is why it is so important that we and the European Union clear the way for the construction and establishment of demonstration projects, because a whole new industry, a transitional technology for storing CO<sub>2</sub> can be developed without minimising major efforts elsewhere.

There are three major demonstration projects in the world which have other targets, that is to say, to accelerate oil and gas production. However, we need our European demonstration plants because we are responsible for mines, for technology, but also for the regulatory framework for the time after the closure of mines, which we must then set in motion in Europe.

We have problems with financing, at least that is what is said. I do not believe these should be genuine problems. We put – and the figure stands – EUR 1 800 billion into the financial umbrella for companies and banks and for injection into businesses. 1 800 billion – and we do not have 10 billion or 5 billion to try out new technologies which might be of worldwide significance.

I have just come back from China. Here we talked about CCS technology, with China producing 60% of its energy from coal in future. South Africa, America, USA and Russia all need these technologies, and in Europe we fail to get these technologies off the ground. I think that we and the Council should make an effort to get funds via whichever instrument we can, be it ETS or others, so that we can blaze a global trail in precisely this technology.

**Dariusz Rosati (PSE).** – (PL) Mr President, the problem of climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. The European Union has developed an ambitious programme of reducing carbon emissions by 20% by the year 2020, improving energy efficiency and increasing the share of energy from renewable sources.

These plans demonstrate that the Union wants to lead the world in combating climate change, but the European Union is not an island, and cannot act alone. If we do not convince our partners around the world to make equally ambitious adjustments, we will not be able to deal with the problem in spite of our best efforts.

The proposed changes must be designed in the most efficient way, so as to minimise what will in any case be huge costs for the economy, and thus reduce the burden on the individual. In assessing the Commission's proposal within this framework, I wish to point out two dangers.

First, the need for facilities producing energy to buy carbon emission permits at auction will lead to a significant rise in energy prices, especially in countries where coal plays a major role in power generation. This will have an adverse impact on household finances and on business competitiveness in those countries. The problem can be partially solved by benchmarking. This method rewards the most efficient solutions in their fuel category and thus allows the goal of carbon reduction to be achieved at a considerably lower cost.

Second, the currently proposed rights allocation system for emission strongly favours industries at risk of carbon leakage at the expense of heat and power generators. In fact, it puts richer countries in a privileged position, which does not seem to be a fair solution.

The allocation system should be designed so as to ensure that less well-off countries do not lose out to the others. The fairest system would seem to be one allocating auction revenue on the basis of Gross Domestic Product.

I call on the Commission and the Council to find a wise compromise, so that striving to achieve these goals does not undermine the competitiveness of our economies and cause living standards to deteriorate.

**Fiona Hall (ALDE).** - Mr President, thanks to the determination of the rapporteur, we have made huge progress in the negotiations on renewable energy. It was disappointing not to reach complete agreement last night, but the one clause at issue is not just about keeping inviolate the 20% by 2020 target: MEPs have worked long and hard to ensure that there is legal certainty in the flexibility mechanisms which Member States can use to help them achieve their renewables targets. A review of the flexibility mechanisms in 2014 risks undoing all that good work. It risks undermining the large-scale development of renewables and green-collar jobs which promise a renaissance for European regions like mine, North-East England. That is why we cannot give in on wording which is being insisted on by just one Member State.

But much positive progress has been made on the Renewables Directive. We have achieved a strong text on biofuels and, crucially, indirect land-use change will now be factored in at the insistence of the Parliament. I am also pleased that Member States will be required to push energy efficiency in order to achieve their renewables targets more easily.

At this point we must keep our nerve on the Renewables Directive – as indeed on the entire climate package. This legislation must work well for the EU, but it must also work as a strong offer on the table of the global negotiations.

**Marie Anne Isler Béguin (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, Europe has been a pioneer before, and it wants to continue to act as a bridgehead in Copenhagen.

Of course the world is watching, observing us today, but its gaze is also focused on the Obama Administration. And we are right to wonder whether he is doing a better job, since we are still falling short in this area. We are falling short when it comes to polluters and, ultimately, leaving negotiation of the energy and climate change package to the Member States. Personally, I have lost all faith. We have been sounding the alarm to no avail for a long time. Across the Atlantic, the world's largest emitter has announced that, by 2020, it will cut emissions back to 1990 levels, in other words, a 60% reduction in its emissions. Furthermore, it wants directly to auction 100% of the allowances. I ask you: where is the fault in this? Of course, we pat ourselves on the back for our considerable efforts, even though we know for a fact that we fall far short of what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scientists are demanding.

In the US, trade unions have backed the transformation to a low-carbon economy. This really should inspire our manufacturers, who are preoccupied with using the environmental, financial and economic crises to make staff redundant, after years of making profits that were not redistributed to employees and after years of negotiating voluntary agreements on pollution, which were just as much of a failure.

**Leopold Józef Rutowicz (UEN).** – (PL) Mr President, major climate changes are influenced by heat emission from the sun, which provides our planet with approximately 96% of its heat. Excessive CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emission has an adverse impact on the environment and must therefore be reduced.

A way out of this impasse is to implement radical technical and organisational measures to accelerate the development of power generation from renewable sources, increase the generation of clean energy and speed up all actions enhancing energy efficiency and energy saving.

This will undoubtedly require restructuring expenditure and ensuring mobility of the funds allocated to such measures, but it must not result in a drastic increase of electricity prices. This would not be acceptable to European society or European industry. For this reason, the present version of the package requires major reworking.

**Martin Callanan (PPE-DE).** - Mr President, I am delighted to have the opportunity to contribute to today's debate. I was principally involved on behalf of the PPE-DE Group in Mr Sacconi's report on car CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and took part in the trialogue, and I would like to pay tribute to his work in helping to secure an agreement on this legislation. I can report that the PPE-DE Group last night agreed that we would support the draft agreement in the plenary vote.

That legislation has now been agreed and it ensures that we can encourage the vehicle manufacturers to move towards producing cleaner, greener and more efficient cars, but hopefully doing so in a sustainable way that will not cost jobs and prosperity in the industry. Like Mrs Hall, I too represent the north-east of England, and my region has very many thousands of jobs dependent on the car manufacturing industry; I hope that none of those will be affected by this legislation.

Let me say a word about the process. I have been particularly concerned that, during the progress of this legislation, it is being speeded through both the Council and Parliament with sometimes undue haste. Many times we were faced with receiving the 60-page documentation only an hour before the actual formal trialogues took place. Even before the final trialogue on Monday the Commission was still tabling technical adjustments to the wording a matter of minutes before the actual negotiations took place.

I do not believe that this is a good way to proceed. I think it is bad that there has not been proper scrutiny of this very important legislation either in the Council or in Parliament. I understand that is also the case with some of the other dossiers. I really believe that it is important that all of this legislation is scrutinised properly and that everybody has the chance to contribute to the debate. We must make sure that we get this very important legislation right and that there are no mistakes that we might discover in future.

**Hannes Swoboda (PSE).** – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I had the honour of responding to President Barroso's proposed climate package on behalf of the Group. At the time I said that I supported the environmental policy targets wholeheartedly for my Group. And I still do. We cannot change our minds on this. However, I already referred to the problem of carbon leakage at that time, and it was clear to me then, Commissioners, that the Commission has not done enough work in this field. Now there is some catching up to do.

I thank the Presidency for undoubtedly trying to find solutions together with the parliamentarians. This is not about abandoning the targets, it is about giving those industries which use the latest environmental technologies a suitable initial advantage too, and not about inducing these industries to leave the European Union along with their jobs and environmental pollution.

The benchmark system, which has already been mentioned, must also be put into an appropriate form. It is also a question of enabling reliable planning. There is little point in establishing the principle now but then postponing its implementation for years until the Commission has worked out the details. Companies need reliable planning so that they can also invest now.

A last very important point: the revenue from the increases should actually be reused for environmental targets, either in our industry itself, so that it can modernise itself to be able to meet the environmental challenges, or even outside the European Union. I do not think the Ministers of Finance should be allowed to disappear with this money. It must be used for environmental protection.

**Holger Krahmer (ALDE).** – (DE) Mr President, the environmental policy of the EU is facing a reality check. Economic performance in Europe is collapsing, and here we are considering how we can set up additional hurdles for our industry.

Emissions trading is supposed to reduce emissions, but first and foremost it will increase costs. This increases the danger that jobs will be exported. Meanwhile the rest of the world is calmly watching us. China really only has to bide its time, then steel will be produced there and no longer in Europe.

It is not for nothing that 11 000 steelworkers demonstrated in Brussels this week to keep their jobs. I welcome very much what Mr Swoboda has just said about the benchmark system, but the insight of the Social Democrats was very late in coming.

I am convinced that we enormously overestimate our importance if we believe we can significantly influence the global climate by means of political measures. In the 21st century those societies which answer two questions intelligently will be successful: Where does our energy come from and how do we employ it efficiently? A policy of particularly expensive and ideological CO<sub>2</sub> avoidance, like that we are currently operating in Europe, will not lead to success.

**Angelika Niebler (PPE-DE).** – (DE) Mr President, honourable President-in-Office of the Council, honourable Commissioners, fellow Members, I think the climate protection package is on track. Today I should just like to use my two minutes of speaking time to discuss the topic of emissions trading, because it is closest to my heart.

Permit me to take a look across the big pond at the US in this regard. What do the Americans do? Barack Obama has presented his plan 'New Energy for America'. When one reads it, one is delighted because the targets formulated in it are the same as ours. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, increasing the proportion of renewable energies, reducing energy consumption, reducing oil consumption, introducing a million plug-in hybrid vehicles by 2015. These are all projects and targets with which we are very familiar and which one can only support.

However, the big question is: how are the Americans going to do that? That is also where the big difference lies in relation to what we are doing in Europe. The Americans are investing heavily in their industry. The American Government is setting up an economic recovery programme worth USD 500 to 700 billion, and says that the majority of this money will go into the development of renewable energies and green technology. When you look at the details in the Americans' election manifesto, the talk is of billions in support for industry, to really bring industry up to world market level.

What are we doing? When I look at emissions trading, we are taxing our industry EUR 70 billion per annum. EUR 70 billion in additional taxes for our industry. I believe that the question of how our domestic industry is to remain competitive, and how we are to prevent our jobs from leaving Europe is justified.

I only support a regulation in the climate protection package which guarantees that we have no carbon leakage and that our domestic industry is also retained in Europe.

*(Applause)*

**Atanas Paparizov (PSE).** – (BG) I would like to note that for me and my colleagues, it is important that an outcome is reached in the talks on climate and energy, so that Europe can be a leader in the talks for an international agreement. At the same time, however, I would like to express, with sadness, disappointment that progress has not been made in one of the most important issues for countries of Central and Eastern Europe and that is, for the just recognition of their efforts in the period from the time of the signing of the Kyoto Protocol to the present day in the reduction of emissions. I consider that a solution should be found which, within the framework of the compensatory mechanism, will also take into account the efforts made by these countries because, as well as their level of economic development, the issue of restructuring the economy in these countries has been quite topical these past years.

I'm delighted that Mr. Borloo made mention of the meeting to be held next week which could give progress to this issue. It is very important, in relation to electrical energy trade quotas, that this process takes into account the integration of this sector in various countries. In some countries there are long-term agreements and therefore the gradual implementation of these quotas, in countries where the market has not sufficiently integrated with the emissions trading system, will be a good solution. I applaud the search for a solution on carbon emissions and I consider that the up-to-date information issued by the Commission on this issue will contribute to finding solutions that will protect industry in countries which are in competition with neighbouring countries outside the European Union.

**Adina-Ioana Vălean (ALDE).** – Mr President, the EU has the potential to be a global leader in the fight against climate change and that is what our citizens are expecting from us. Therefore it is crucial to reach a first-reading agreement on the climate change package, not only to meet those expectations but to go to Copenhagen with a unified position. I would like to thank my colleagues who have been working long hours to try to achieve this.

It is important to keep our ambitious targets, but at the same time we cannot ignore the dramatic impact of the financial crisis on the competitiveness of European industry, which has been greatly affected by it. Given this new economic context, it is even more important to consider the wide variety of industrial infrastructures in Member States and it should be recognised that some of them have achieved a rapid and large-scale reorganisation and modernisation.

This is why we need to offer reasonable and appropriate flexibility to Member States and industries to achieve their CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction targets.

**Anders Wijkman (PPE-DE).** – Mr President, while we are discussing reductions for 2020 of 20%, or at best 30%, more and more scientists tell us we have to do much more. The reason is the most recent science presented after the IPCC reports, and the message is that climate change is both more rapid and more serious than experts thought only a few years ago.

The most alarming new information is about the interplay between the climate system, the oceans and the terrestrial eco-systems. Oceans and vegetation on land have camouflaged warming by absorbing more than half of man-made emissions so far. This sink capacity is now at risk because of global warming, and it is further aggravated by the over-use and destruction of major eco-systems, in particular forests. While we can control emissions, we have no control over such positive feedback on the planetary system. So our effort, in my opinion, is too small. Nevertheless we have to make a decision, hoping we can enhance our efforts step by step in cooperation with the rest of the world.

With regard to the package, I am concerned that auctioning is being questioned. We need auctioning to stimulate innovation and to raise revenues for much-needed support for adaptation and green investments in developing countries. I am also concerned about the level of offsets proposed. In my opinion we are thus postponing the necessary technology transformation in our part of the world.

I have been particularly involved in the negotiations on renewables. The most difficult area has been the sustainability criteria. Here we had a breakthrough last night with the Council on more ambitious greenhouse gas savings when using biofuels, and on including indirect land-use effects in the life-cycle analysis. I think that shows responsibility.

Let me make a final point. Climate change is different from all other issues we are discussing. We can negotiate the detailed level of budgets, for instance, but we cannot negotiate with nature.

**Libor Rouček (PSE).** – (CS) Ladies and gentlemen, the climate and energy package which we are debating today represents a compromise. It is a compromise between the interests of industry, the need to protect the environment and also of course the need for employment and for the protection of jobs in Europe, which is all the more acute in view of the current economic crisis. The climate and energy package also represents a compromise between the industrially-developed countries in the European Union and the countries in Europe where industry does not play such a significant role. Like all good compromises, this one assumes reasonable concessions from all of the parties. I firmly believe that we can reach a compromise which will suit all Member States, old and new, large and small, more industrially-developed and less industrially-developed, whether in the west, east, north, south or centre of Europe. At the end of the day, this is borne out by the deal over the proposed regulations for vehicle CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the deal over directives on energy from renewable sources.

Ladies and gentlemen, the European Union represents in many areas of life a model for other regions of the world. This applies also in the areas of energy and climate policy. It is in our vital interest to adopt the climate and energy package as quickly as possible and to play a leading role alongside the new American administration next year in Copenhagen.

**Samuli Pohjamo (ALDE).** – (FI) Mr President, better use of renewable energy and promoting sustainable development are positive moves for the regions. They will not only have a beneficial impact on climate but will create jobs there and improve access to energy. Interregional differences, however, need to be taken into greater consideration. For example, the cold climate of the north and the crucial importance of the forest industry need to have greater visibility in the final decisions. I would also like to point out that there is a lot of drained bog in the north, where the wood produced and the sustainably exploited peat are extremely important in energy production there. I hope that this will also be taken into account when the decisions are being finalised.

**Jerzy Buzek (PPE-DE).** – (PL) Mr President, I should like to congratulate the French Presidency on the serious attention it has devoted to the energy and climate change package. Above all, I should like to thank the Presidency for listening to comments which were repeatedly made in Parliament, but were not treated with sufficient seriousness.

Fellow Members, the European Union has been able to manage in the most difficult circumstances. Now is also such a difficult moment. It is vital that we listen to one another and are open to opposing arguments. We have always been able to do that.

I should also like to take this opportunity to reassure Mr Turmes. As far as my own country is concerned, we are fully ready to adopt the package as soon as possible. Parliament is well aware of the proposed amendments. They do not in any way endanger the principal goal of the package, which is to reduce emissions.

We most certainly need a climate change package, and we need it as soon as possible. No one knows this better than Poland. We are responsible for negotiations at the Climate Convention and are aware that without a package we will not be able to make progress in global negotiations. What I have in mind is a package which would achieve all the proposed goals, I repeat, all goals up to the year 2020, but which would be easier to accept by our European economy.

Only a package of this kind can serve as a model for others, and such a package we have in mind. Moreover, only a strong economy, free from threats, will be able to invest in climate protection. If we weaken the economy, where will the funds for combating climate change come from? This is why this discussion is so important, and why it is important for us to listen to each other's arguments.

**Riitta Myller (PSE).** – (FI) Mr President, I would like to stress what many here before have already said, which is that now that we are talking about the decisions which are under discussion, we have to remember that will only result in the implementation of the decisions that the Heads of State or Government took back in March, 2007. Moreover, the level of aspiration must be that we implement the decisions that have already been taken.

In that sense, what Commissioner Dimas said here about the relationship between flexibility and effective implementation is extremely important. We need action within the European Union and I wish to show my support for the rapporteur, Mrs Satu Hassi, when she says that it is our duty to take decisions within the European Union. Only in this way can we guarantee what many of us are speaking about, which is beating the economic crisis by means of eco-innovations and investing in new technology and new development. Unless we ensure that these requirements apply to us too, industry will not be motivated to start developing new technology. For this reason, I am slightly concerned if we are going to allow some countries special flexibility, as then in the worst-case scenario they will be losing out, which is to say they will not receive the technological benefits that the other EU countries will.

**Mariela Velichkova Baeva (ALDE)** – (BG) The long-term continuity of policies at a national and European level in the use of energy from renewable sources and the long-term continuity of investments are the key factors for the sustained development of the green energy market and for achieving the goals set for 2020 in an economically effective way. In order to use the diverse portfolio of green technologies, a diverse range of instruments is necessary. Whether this will be in the form of tariff schemes, investment grants and others depends on the level of development and use of alternative sources. This should be applied without this damaging competition between various market players in the energy sector. Such a complex strategy has the potential to affect upon the reduction of harmful emissions and upon the increase in energy security. This is a principle condition for the effective functioning of the economy and for ensuring peace of mind for our citizens.

**Françoise Grossetête (PPE-DE).** – (FR) Mr Borloo, Mr Piebalgs, Mr Dimas, ladies and gentlemen, first of all I would like to congratulate the French Presidency on the efforts it is making to conclude this climate change package.

But, there you have it: just as we are discussing the challenge of climate change, what should appear on the negotiating table but the financial crisis. It is precisely the economic crisis and the reduction in our raw material resources that should allow a true sustainable industrial revolution.

I therefore say 'yes' to the three times twenty objective; 'yes' to clean engines; 'yes' to renewable energies with an energy mix; but 'no' to carbon leakage, and 'no' to relocations. We therefore need to support research and innovation and to help our businesses and our economy get through this transition period as painlessly as possible.

The agreement on cars' CO<sub>2</sub> emissions was a job well done, even though I believe that the modulation of penalties is still inadequate. With regard to the capture and storage of carbon, we are waiting for the agreement on financing. On the subject of emission allowances, it is vital to find a fair and realistic way forward. The introduction of quantified thresholds is to be welcomed. We know, however, that there is still much to be done. Agreement at first reading is essential. Our businesses and industries expect to be put in the picture about future commitments. They need to plan their investments.

What would people say about the European Union if it did not secure an agreement by the end of the year? The European Union, which likes to think it sets such an example in combating climate change. The European Union, which is so ambitious regarding this fight against climate change. I dare not imagine how absurd it would be if Europe failed to reach an agreement but nevertheless wanted, in Copenhagen next year, to convince everyone that it is right.

I would therefore like to wish the French Presidency luck and congratulate it once more on the work it has accomplished.

**Edite Estrela (PSE).** – (PT) Mr President, climate change is the great problem of our time. Urgent action to slow global warming is necessary. The Copenhagen Conference is the last chance to avoid collapse at a time when there are positive signs coming from the United States. With the election of President Obama, the European Union must present a credible and ambitious proposal in order to mobilise other regions.



As far as sharing the burden is concerned, an issue which I have followed closely as shadow rapporteur for the Socialist Group in the European Parliament and on which, I hope, we will be able to reach an agreement, I think the Member States have to undertake to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions internally, and not only at the expense of external credits. The economic crisis is not, as some people here say, the result of environmental policies: it was caused by damaging management and there are probably cases for the police, not politics.

The European Parliament is doing its homework: it is to be hoped that the Council does the same, without giving in to national selfishness and false arguments. The development of new technologies brings opportunities for the economy and for creating jobs.

I close, Mr President-in-Office of the Council and my dear fellow Members, with an appeal for us to all make an effort to reach an agreement at first reading. The world needs an international agreement and the citizens expect us to take measures.

**Vladko Todorov Panayotov (ALDE).** – (BG) Climate change is occurring at ever faster rates than were envisaged. If the European Union wants to be a leader at the UN meeting in 2009 in Copenhagen on reaching a global agreement for a real fight against climate change after 2012, then there must be a reduction in greenhouse emissions within the European Union. In order for the new Member States to achieve effective reductions in harmful emissions, it would be good to consider the gradual application of a 100% Auction for the electricity production sector, as well as extending the transitional periods. The new Member States still rely, to a high degree, on coal as the main primary energy source. In these states the transition to alternative energy sources is happening at a slower rate and therefore, tough measures for the reduction of harmful emissions could have undesirable social effects. I call upon the Commission and the Council to take into account the fulfilment of the obligations of the Kyoto Protocol up to now and the true preparedness of every single Member State, so that the measures set have an impact.

**Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE-DE).** – (ES) Mr President, first of all I should like to thank all those who have spoken, including the Commission, the Presidency and my fellow Members, for the work that they have done and their willingness to address the issue.

I shall start by making four points that I believe are fundamental in relation to tackling the problem. The first one is that our consumption of coal is growing all the time, for obvious reasons, due to the development of vast areas of the planet, which had not happened before. Secondly, as a result of this greater coal consumption CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are increasing. Thirdly, we must not forget that the competitiveness of industries is now measured globally. Fourthly, and no less importantly, we must never forget that when we talk about the economy we are talking above all about people. That is because if the economy is fine, people's wellbeing will also be fine and, if not, then the opposite will be the case.

The last two points mean that the competitiveness of European industry must not be damaged unnecessarily at this time of particular difficulty, when there are no international rules and requirements applicable to the same industries elsewhere in the world. The first two points mean that we need a realistic, viable and hence effective international agreement that includes the large CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting countries, which are also therefore large coal consumers. Without such an agreement we cannot efficiently achieve the ultimate objective, which is to reduce those CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Representatives of the Presidency and Commission, ladies and gentlemen, essentially, leadership consists of proposing formulae enabling us to achieve our objectives. The rest is not much more than fantasy.

**Justas Vincas Paleckis (PSE).** – (LT) None of the European Union countries has yet faced the problems of the scale which will fall over Lithuania in one year. I am referring to power industry problems. According to the accession treaty to the EU, Lithuania will have to shut down the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, which produces about 70% of the electricity requirements of the country. The Commission's proposal to Lithuania authorised a slight increase in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2005, but the proposal does not take into account the consequences of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant decommissioning, and indeed after that the Lithuanian power plants will generate nearly double the volume of such gases. After 2009 Lithuania will be the only one of the new European Union countries to lack emission permits. All this will negatively affect industry and the entire economy, as well as private users. It is anticipated that electricity prices will rise to double their current level, or more.

The growing use of fossil fuel energy sources will increase emissions by 5 million tonnes annually. Therefore, Lithuania hopes to receive an exemption roughly corresponding in size from the emission trade system rules for annual non-saleable emission permits, until a new power plant is built. The climate change package is

extremely important and sensitive. I understand that each country has its own challenges and features. It would be very sad if requests for exceptions upset this fragile document, which is so necessary for Europe and the entire world. However, the Lithuanian situation is truly dramatic, and also unique, as we do not have a connection to the western European electric grid. I encourage the trialogue participants to take this into account.

**John Bowis (PPE-DE).** - Mr President, eyes and minds are now focused on the key issues and that is why I think we are making progress. But, Minister and Commissioner, you have not heard today the voice that I think you should be hearing and that is voice of the low-income countries. Some of us have just returned from the ACP meeting in Papua New Guinea and we know that the low-income countries are the biggest victims of our past growth and they need our support.

The Pacific islands are quite literally sinking beneath the waves. Global warming is bringing new diseases, mosquitoes carrying malaria and dengue fever into that region. We return to find letters from the peripheral maritime regions of Europe saying much the same thing. They are desperate for us to take action to support them, too.

At the ACP meeting we looked at the consequences of failing to prevent and failing to manage climate change. Even if we meet our 2<sup>0</sup> target that means a 25% reduction in water availability; it means a 10% decline in crop yields; it means 50 million more people subject to malaria; it means 10 million more subject to coastal flooding; it means dramatic increases in respiratory, cardiovascular, vector-borne diseases, skin cancer and eyesight problems.

If they fail, we fail. Their diseases are already our diseases. Their migration will become our migration. Their desperation could lead to desperation as they spill across our borders too and it is for our sakes as much as for theirs that we must help them make progress, and make it quickly.

**Britta Thomsen (PSE).** - (DA) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by thanking our rapporteur Mr Turmes for his impressive work in connection with the directive on renewable energy. Similarly, I would also like to thank Parliament's various secretariats, advisors and assistants. Unfortunately, we were unable to conclude the negotiations with the Council overnight, even if, from Parliament's side, we were aiming for an agreement and we were ready to make concessions. Yet, as you know, it takes two to tango and two willing parties to achieve an agreement. As the rapporteur for the Socialist Group in the European Parliament on this directive, I had been looking forward to standing here this morning with a fully negotiated package. A package that clearly bore our fingerprints. This directive will revolutionise Europe's energy policy. It will allow us to bring an end to more than a hundred years of dependence on oil and gas. A dependence that has damaged our environment and has caused wars, unrest and inequality all over the world. It is therefore crucial that we now cross the t's and dot the i's on this agreement.

We have already ensured that clear and robust sustainability criteria will be laid down for the production of biofuels for our cars. We have ensured that the heavy energy consumption by buildings will be restricted and we have ensured that producers of wind turbines and solar cells will have a guarantee that Europe will invest in renewable energy. The last stumbling block is that we are standing by all the binding targets for 2020. The problem is that a single Member State is blocking an agreement. All I can do, therefore, is to make a vigorous appeal to the Council to re-evaluate its position in order to allow Europe to obtain the energy agreement that we so badly need.

**Gunnar Hökmark (PPE-DE).** - (SV) Mr President, it is one of the most important tasks of Europe and the European Union now to ensure that we get an international commitment to take seriously the global targets relating to climate policy. It will also be one of the most important tasks of the Swedish Presidency to ensure that we get this international commitment at the Copenhagen conference.

I believe it may be important when discussing these issues to remember that success in Copenhagen, with a broad international commitment, means much more than the various details of the package that we are now discussing. That is why it is so important to ensure that we now get a climate change package in place that fulfils the targets we have set.

I believe it is important that we are pragmatic when it comes to the various means. If we are pragmatic about the various means and at the same time ensure that we achieve the targets, we will also guarantee that we get broad support for what needs to be done and ensure that the various Member States have an enduring will to live up to the various commitments made. That is the important thing, and this is the perspective from which we are continuing with various types of efforts.

I would emphasise that we must also be clear on one thing, and that is that we must always make room for the initiatives that produce the best results. This means that we must allow room for investments to be made in other countries where the results will be greatest. This does not mean making lesser demands of ourselves, but it is essential to realise that we must focus on what we can do to help other countries.

Finally, the resources that are now released through auctions should accrue to the Member States for different measures in the various countries.

**Dorette Corbey (PSE).** - (NL) Mr President, emotions are running high now that the finishing touches are being put on the climate change package. Some claim that the climate should wait, in any event until the crisis is over, but that is not a good idea. First of all, it is absolutely vital that we take action promptly to prevent global warming, which is said to be faster than predicted. Secondly, we are running out of oil. We really need to move towards a sustainable energy supply. Thirdly, effective climate policy is a good weapon against the recession.

Investments in sustainable energy, in infrastructure for green energy and energy efficiency in buildings create millions of jobs, and this is not to be sniffed at. Needless to say, we have to make sure that employment in the steel, paper or automotive sector does not disappear abroad. As things are looking at the moment, the package is moving in the right direction, although we have to ensure it does not become an empty shell.

We can in any event be satisfied with the agreement on the Fuels Directive. A 10% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> on the basis of a well-to-wheel analysis sends a positive and powerful message, certainly in times when oil companies are expending increasingly more energy on producing petrol and diesel. The Fuels Directive thus gives an important impulse for worldwide reductions in emissions, burning off, greater use of electricity in road transport and opting for more efficient biofuels that meet strict sustainability requirements. By doing so, Europe sets the tone. In the US too, similar initiatives have been taken, and the post-petrol era is now in sight.

**Karl-Heinz Florenz (PPE-DE).** - (DE) Mr President, many thanks to the Commission and also to the Council for having presented this climate package to us. I do not think one single figure, one target or even one percentage should be changed in this package. However, President-in-Office of the Council, I am only too aware that we are under enormous time pressure. I do not have the time to answer this today in two minutes though.

I should like to examine one point with which you are familiar: I should like to draw the attention of the European Union to the question of whether we should really begin this highly determined auctioning straight away in 2013, when we know very well that our American friends and our friends in India and in China will not have such instruments by then. I propose that these regulations be adopted in the Kyoto Protocol II or in Copenhagen and we start this auctioning in Europe on the day on which the Copenhagen or Kyoto Protocol is passed.

Please do not take away from the companies the capital that they are not getting from the banks at the moment. We need this capital to fill up the cap. We want this in particular – and by 2012. I think it is wrong for us in the EU to send European industry out onto the world market with leaden shoes while our American friends are in trainers in India. That is not fair. It must not be allowed to happen. They must all have comparable shoes. I am passionate about this, precisely so the targets are achieved.

It is quite obvious to me that we need money in order to also have compensation outside Europe in the Latin American countries. That is not in dispute at all. However, we should make the tools for the emissions trade such that industry has equal conditions. I support this, without changing even a single parameter. I wanted to repeat this because there are people in this House who imply we wanted to change the targets. That, Mr Dimas, we do not want.

**Åsa Westlund (PSE).** - (SV) Mr President, the Council and Parliament are after all negotiating at present on the climate change package. Whilst it would be a fantastic achievement for the cooperation if we could get this in place before Christmas, I must say that I am very concerned at the direction the negotiations are taking. According to the latest research, we would need to reduce emissions by *more* than the amount prescribed by the climate change package. Yet the Council of Ministers, and particularly a number of governments of the right represented therein, are moving towards a watering down of the package.

Moreover, as a Swede it is with a heavy heart that I note that the Swedish Conservative-controlled Government is one of the main players preventing the EU from making progress on the climate change package. For a number of reasons the majority of the EU's emissions reductions must take place on home soil: firstly, because

we have a moral responsibility to reduce our own emissions; secondly, because it is by taking the lead and showing that reduced emissions are compatible with high economic growth that we can get other countries to sign up to an international climate change agreement; thirdly, because we must have an incentive in place if our industry is to develop the new green technology required in order for us to be competitive in the future.

I would therefore urge Parliament to oppose the Swedish Government's position and to assert that the bulk of the emissions reduction must take place in Europe; and also that a proportion of the revenues from emissions trading should go to developing countries. Then we will be credible, and then we will be able to get an international climate agreement in place in Copenhagen in autumn 2009.

**Paul Rübzig (PPE-DE).** - (DE) Mr President, I should like to thank the President-in-Office of the Council, Mr Borloo. You will be combating unemployment and poverty in the coming months and years. We therefore require a sensible package. We do not need free allocation up to 100% in the industry affected by carbon leakage, we need 100% allocation, and we need *ex ante* benchmarks. For those businesses not at risk from carbon leakage, I believe the 20/20 solution is the best so that we can start with 20% increases and also achieve the target with 20% increases.

We also want the small and medium-sized businesses to be exempted here, that is to say, in particular, the businesses with 25 000 tonnes, which are to be increased to 50 000 tonnes. Then we would still have 80% of SMEs outside which have only 27% of the CO<sub>2</sub>. We should also make an effort to keep the money in the businesses and not to tax it and send it abroad. We urgently need the money in the businesses in order to be able to promote innovation and research. Please also ensure that decreasing depreciation is possible, so that businesses can invest in these areas quickly and in good time.

We also need a formula in the international agreement which specifies up to 30% and not 30% as an absolute figure. We also need a clear idea of what an international agreement must contain. In the case of heat pumps, I would request that we really ensure that air-air heat pumps are also included accordingly because in that way, together with solar energy, we can naturally prevent a great deal of CO<sub>2</sub>.

I also request that we make the International Atomic Energy Safety Standards mandatory for the European nuclear industry and that we have independent regulators in Europe who can also share in decision-making in the other Member States in order to ensure safety here.

**Gyula Hegyi (PSE).** - Mr President, many of the new Member States, like Hungary after the end of the 1980s and the collapse of the old industry, reduced their greenhouse gas emissions. Due to this process, every sixth Hungarian – about a million people – lost his or her job. As the basis for the reduction here in the current proposal is 2005 and not 1990, some older Member States could raise their emission values without any consequences. This is very unfair to the new Member States. After the losses in our economy we need fair compensation.

District heating is mainly a social question in many new Member States. The decision of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety that gives free allowances for district heating in the ETS is essential for us, and we must keep this achievement during the trialogue as well.

I think that the use of carbon capture and storage should be judged by the market and the competition. As this is a very new and expensive technology, we have to be more cautious before subsidising it with public money.

My last point is that without a proper penalty system the whole package will fail. If we do not force the Member States to keep to the emission limits, all our efforts are wasted. That is why I urge this Parliament to insist that we should keep our achievements concerning the penalty system because, without a penalty system, there will be no working system at all.

**President.** – Ladies and gentlemen, your attention please. Although we are very close to the end of the debate, I am going to have to interrupt for reasons that you will understand. The next item is the formal sitting at 11.30 a.m. with His Holiness the Dalai Lama; following the formal sitting this debate will continue. There are just two speakers left on my list, plus anyone wishing to speak under the 'catch-the-eye' procedure, and the representatives of the Council and the Commission. After we have finished debating the state of the negotiations on the climate change and energy package, we will proceed with voting as normal.

*(The debate was suspended at 11.30 a.m. for the formal sitting)*

**IN THE CHAIR: MR PÖTTERING***President***4. Formal sitting - Dalai Lama**

**President.** – Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great honour and pleasure to welcome His Holiness the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama in the plenary of the European Parliament today. We eagerly await your thoughts on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the significance of this dialogue for peace and international understanding which you will share with us today in the plenary of the European Parliament.

During 2008 we already had the honour of greeting representatives of the Christian religion, the Jewish religion and of Islam here, and today we have the opportunity to hear a leading representative of Buddhism. Your Holiness, at this time our thoughts go above all to the victims of the bloody attacks in Mumbai and to the people in India, the country in which you live in exile. At precisely a time of such great challenges, religious leaders like you who advocate dialogue, peace and reconciliation have an essential contribution to make to our social life.

The European Parliament has always endeavoured to raise its voice for the rights and dignity of man. The culture and freedom of religious expression touch directly on people's identity and are therefore inseparably linked with human dignity. In this connection, the European Parliament has constantly endeavoured to draw attention to the human rights of the Tibetan people.

When you, Your Holiness, gave a speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1988, you spoke of a five-point peace plan for Tibet. You also visited us in 2001 and 2006. During this period, the European Parliament took a number of resolutions in which it asked the Chinese Government to start an immediate and meaningful dialogue and to respect the cultural and religious identity and the human rights of the Tibetan people. On behalf of the European Parliament I should like to stress again: the European Parliament recognises the territorial unity of China, to which Tibet belongs. However, we will always defend the right of the Tibetan people to live their cultural and religious identity. We will always defend this right.

*(Applause)*

What has been going on in Lhasa and other towns since 10 March is proof of the urgent need for a proper dialogue, with which an acceptable, sustainable solution for all sides will be worked towards with respect for the culture, religion and identity of Tibet.

For these reasons we are deeply concerned that the talks started in 2002 between your special envoys and the Chinese state institutions have achieved no results yet. We express our urgent expectation that future talks will bring the desired results.

China is a significant nation and an important partner of the European Union. In our dialogue with China we are under an obligation to openly and sincerely espouse our common values of democracy, law, human rights and freedom of opinion, based on the fundamental principle of human dignity.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we were to stop espousing these principles, we would give up ourselves. I also stated these principles yesterday in a conversation with the Chinese Representative to the European Union.

As you, Your Holiness, said a few years ago, each of us must learn not only to work for oneself, one's own family or one's own nation, but for the benefit of all mankind.

You are, Your Holiness, an important advocate of dialogue. Your non-violent stance provides an excellent example of involved, peaceful commitment to a worthy cause, and we are honoured that you are speaking to the European Parliament today.

It is with great pleasure that I now invite you to speak to us.

*(Applause)*

**His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.** – Your Excellency, President Pöttering, Honourable Members of Parliament, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to speak before you today and I thank you for your invitation.

On the last occasion I was here, I gave my speech in Tibetan and then read the English translation. I felt that wasted time, so today my written statement has already been circulated. I am not going to repeat what is in there. In fact there are some words I cannot pronounce properly so it is better not to read it! The main points I have already mentioned in my written statement, and I do not want to repeat these things.

I am just one human being out of 6 billion human beings. On that level, I believe that every human being wants a happy, successful life; all of us, irrespective of our colour, nationality, religious faith or social status, we all want and all have the right to have a happy life, a successful life.

As a human being I believe – and for a number of years, many of my friends have agreed with my views and feelings – that in modern times there is too much emphasis on the importance of material values. We have somehow neglected our inner values. That is why, in spite of materially being highly developed, I have noticed there are still a lot of people – even billionaires – who are very rich but are an unhappy on a personal level.

So one of the most important factors for happiness or joyfulness is very much to do with peace of mind, a calm mind. Too much stress, too much suspicion, too much ambition and greed I also think are factors which destroy our inner peace. So therefore, if we wish to achieve a happy life, there is no point in neglecting our inner values.

These inner values are not necessarily what we bring from religious teaching, but I feel they are a biological factor we are already equipped with: warm-heartedness or a sense of responsibility, a sense of community. The biological factor is there because we are social animals.

That is what I usually call 'secular ethics' and it is the basis of our happy life, our inner peace. The ways I generally emphasise to promote that are secular ways: the secular method means using our common sense and common experience and the latest scientific findings.

Even for our physical well-being, peace of mind is very essential. I should like to illustrate this by a small experience of my own. I recently underwent surgery to remove my gall bladder. So, in contrast to my previous visit here, I have the same face but one organ is now missing! But, since then I am OK, quite fit!

*(Laughter)*

Seriously, during surgery and also after surgery there were some quite serious complications. Usually gall bladder removal takes 15 to 20 minutes, but in my case it took three hours because of complications. However, after the surgery, within one week I had fully recovered. So the doctors were a little bit surprised. I told them that I had nothing special. No miracle power. No healing power. If I had miracle powers or healing power, I would not have needed surgery in the first place. The very fact that I underwent surgery means that I have no such miracle power, does it not? But I really think that peace of mind is one factor in a speedy recovery.

So this is my number one commitment, the promotion of human values.

Number two is the promotion of religious harmony. In that respect – I mean peace of mind – all the major religions have the message of how to develop inner peace. Particularly when we are passing through difficult situations or hopelessness, faith provides us with inner strength and hope.

So all the major religious traditions basically fall into two categories: one is theistic religion, the other is non-theistic religion. Buddhism belongs to the non-theistic religions. Buddhism and Jainism both form part of the Indian tradition. These different philosophies, different ways of approach, ultimately have the same message, the same practice, the practice of love, compassion, forgiveness, contentment and self-discipline.

So therefore all the major religious traditions have the same potential but they come from different locations, and different peoples with different mental dispositions. We need different ways of approach. Theistic philosophy and non-theistic philosophy have developed; that does not matter. These philosophies matter, but the important thing is the real purpose, the real message. So in that respect, all religious traditions carry the same message, the same practice and the same effect.

So harmony among the different religious traditions is quite possible. And yet now – not only in past history, but even today – there are still conflicts happening in the name of religion. So therefore we need a special effort for the promotion of religious harmony.

This may be irrelevant, but I see that here among the Parliament members there are many women. One of my beliefs (and I am not saying this just to appease the women here!) is that in human history, in the earliest

periods, there was no concept of leaders. All family members worked together, all the community members worked together, hunting or collecting fruits or things like that, and they shared equally. Eventually the population increased. Then stealing, bullying and that sort of thing happened. So then the concept of leadership arose.

At that time the brain was not very important. The important thing was physical strength, like other animals. This, I think, is why male dominance developed.

Then eventually through education, brain development took place and the brain became more important than physical strength. So then male and female had more or less equal weight. And so it is that many Members here are female. Some are rather beautiful!

*(Laughter and applause)*

So, as I mentioned earlier, in our century, in our time, we need to promote human compassion, human love, warm-heartedness. In that respect, I think because of biological factors, females have more feelings of sensitivity about others' pain. Do you agree?

*(Cries of 'Yes!')*

I think I should ask the men, not the women.

I have not much time but I will tell one short story. Once during a long, eight- or nine-hour flight from India to another country, a night flight, I noticed one couple with two young children, one I think six or seven years old, one very small. So the whole night that young one really created trouble for his parents. At the beginning the father also took care of that young boy or girl. Then after two or three hours the father just slept. But all night the mother was always paying attention to those naughty children. Always she paid them the fullest care, and then next morning I noticed the mother's eyes were red. This is one example. The female has more sensitivity to other people's pain.

So therefore at this time we need not only smart brains and ideas but also we need warm-heartedness. In such periods, I feel, women have a special role. Therefore I am very happy to see many women here. This is something I have said on many occasions, and I just wanted to share this now.

Now to the Tibetan issue.

*(Applause)*

Basically, some Chinese officials consider our approach to be that of a separatist movement, but it is not. That is totally wrong. Everybody knows that we are seeking genuine autonomy within the People's Republic of China, in our own interest. Tibet is materially backward – though of course it is spiritually advanced – so by now every Tibetan wants a modernised Tibet. Therefore, as far as material development is concerned, it is in our own interest to remain within the big nation – the People's Republic of China.

So firstly I want to make it very clear that our approach is not a separatist movement. Certain rights which we have requested from the Chinese officials are actually already guaranteed or mentioned in their constitution, as well as certain rights of minorities.

Another point I want to make clear to our supporters is that, when you are showing your support, your concern about the Tibet question, some Chinese feel this is something against China. That is totally wrong. Actually we are trying to make a contribution regarding the promotion of a harmonious society, stability, unity. Obviously it is a matter of common sense, of common experience: how can unity and harmony develop under fear, under guns? It is illogical. Genuine harmony, unity, only come through trust, through mutual respect.

Let me take one example. Since we are not seeking independence and we adhere strictly to non-violent principles, some of our friends from Xinjiang, who are also fighting for their rights, now think our approach is more effective.

Many years ago I met some Xinjiang people – I cannot remember the individual names – they really used to fight for independence and even if necessary used violence. That is their view. Then I told these people: as far as we Tibetans are concerned, we are not seeking separation and also follow a strictly non-violent way.

Eventually more Xinjiang people now agree that our approach is realistic and the best approach. Our approach actually gave more encouragement to those people who once took the violent way and therefore disapproved of us.

We are helping to build a healthy, harmonious society.

So we, and our supporters, are not against the Chinese, China or the Chinese Government. Actually we are helping them. Obviously there are many drawbacks in totalitarian regimes: it is a closed society, there is no freedom of speech, no freedom of the press. So difficulties are bound to occur.

There is a Tibetan saying: 'If you are a true close friend, then make clear the faults of your friend'. So for the European Union, naturally, it is very important to keep close relations with the People's Republic of China; but at the same time you should make clear those drawbacks, those mistakes.

Now I have not much time. Yesterday I met some Tibetan support groups to which MEPs belong. They told me they were going to fast for 24 hours. If some of those people are going to practise fasting, that is very good. I very much appreciate that. So I immediately responded, we are also going to fast. In my case, as a Buddhist monk, after lunch I have no more meals. So I thought that a better practical way would be for my fasting to start after my breakfast. So this morning I started my fasting after my breakfast. As a Buddhist monk, breakfast is something very sacred because I always eat when I wake up, as I always feel hungry. Therefore I have had my breakfast now, and until tomorrow breakfast I am fasting and sharing with your determination.

Thank you very much.

*(The House accorded the speaker a standing ovation)*

**President.** – Your Holiness, you are a personality of dialogue. I have 29 years' experience in the European Parliament, but I have never experienced a situation where the speaker taking the floor had a dialogue with the Parliament. If anybody in the world – including the Chinese Government – has any doubt that you are a personality of dialogue, your speech today was the proof that you are a personality of dialogue.

*(Loud and sustained applause)*

In the name of the European Parliament, I have the honour of thanking you for your presence today and I am thankful that you are healthy again. You have proved that you are healthy again after your operation, but we never thought that you would share all your experiences with us. This shows your confidence in the Members of the European Parliament. You gave us a clear political message and you gave us a clear human message. I want to thank you, in the name of the European Parliament for these messages, and we thank you for your excellent humour.

I think it is now our duty, dear colleagues, to help His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to ensure that his people, the Tibetan people, have a good future and can live within their culture and their religion. Your Holiness, the European Parliament is with you. Thank you for your presence and thank you for your speech.

*(Loud and sustained applause)*

#### IN THE CHAIR: MRS ROURE

*Vice-President*

### 5. State of the negotiations on the climate change and energy package (continuation of debate)

**President.** - We shall resume the debate on the state of the negotiations on the climate change and energy package.

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**Struan Stevenson (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, on a point of order, I should like to inform the Members of this House that this morning the Court of First Instance in Luxembourg ordered that the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran should be taken off the EU terror list. This is the third time this ruling has been made



and this should be a warning to the Council and the Commission that their attempts to appease the mullahs and the oppressive regime in Tehran by putting the PMOI on the EU terror list constitute an offence against freedom and liberty.

*(Applause)*

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**President.** - Ladies and gentlemen, if you do not mind, we shall therefore resume the order of speaking time.

**Herbert Reul (PPE-DE).** - *(DE)* Madam President, Presidency of the Council and Commission, ladies and gentlemen, this Parliament has in recent years always been very bold in exercising its own rights. We have not let ourselves be swayed either when we invited the Dalai Lama, or when we took a decision regarding the Sakharov prize, or with regard to participation in the Olympics.

I am therefore very concerned that we are not exercising our rights sufficiently regarding such an important matter, which evidently only generates limited interest today and which some fellow Members have described as the question of the century. I would ask the Presidency of the Council and the Parliamentary Leadership to ensure that we not only talk of better regulation, but that we actually also have the opportunity to see and examine texts. At the moment, for example, in the case of emissions trading, talks are based not on Parliament's opinion but only on the decision of a single committee. There have been four committees which have made decisions, the assumptions of which have not been brought into the dialogue. One rapporteur negotiates, and 784 Members have no opportunity to contribute their opinion.

The procedure is scheduled thus: 10/11 December Council, 15 December Trialogue, and then decisions will be made. This will mean that we as individual parliamentarians have no opportunity to look at the text, to evaluate it, to discuss and reach a sound decision on it. We already had difficulties in conducting the discussion seriously today, we had to start later, we had to suspend proceedings, now hardly anyone is listening. But that says it all. We are making decisions about taxes of EUR 70 billion for people. And we do not appear to give ourselves even a few hours, a few days to have a thorough look.

I think that is irresponsible. I ask the Presidency of the Council and I also ask the Presidency of this House to ensure that we can all give ourselves the necessary time.

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Romana Jordan Cizelj (PPE-DE).** - *(SL)* Ladies and gentlemen, it is a good thing that right in this period of time we have had a very ambitious Presidency, which has truly worked hard to find an agreement on the climate and energy package. In spite of all this, I have my doubts about the appropriateness of the agreement process in the first reading, since such extensive and challenging documents raise the question of transparency and the question of adequate representation of the majority view in Parliament, and this then naturally broaches the subject of how democratic this process is.

I would therefore like us to give things a little more thought next time before confirming that we will deal with some document by agreement in the first reading. There would be nothing wrong in us concluding a normal first reading in December, and then performing a second reading before the end of our term and coming to an appropriate agreement with the Council. It is therefore not surprising that there has not been much discussion of the details in this debate, since Members are not particularly familiar with them.

I would like to speak mainly about the use of funds from auctions. I think here we need to take into account certain principles, and specifically that we must use funds absolutely exclusively for tackling environmental and climate challenges, that we must use them for mitigation and adaptation and that we must use them to develop technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that are not yet commercial – in other words, this should include CCS pilot projects.

This is not just important for the European Union, but also for third countries such as China. In this case we must use the funds for measures within the European Union and for cooperation with third countries, and when we talk about the level of emissions, we must take into account our responsibility for global emissions, currently running at 13 to 14 per cent, and also add to this our historical responsibility for emissions. We must also use the financial resources for already existing mechanisms – in other words, we should not be setting up any new funds.

I would like to thank the entire negotiating group and inform them that this agreement will see us well on the way to the negotiations in Poznań next week.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE-DE).** - (FI) Madam President, we know very well that Parliament's position on the climate package is not united. On many issues my own group is closer to the Council's position than Parliament's. It is nevertheless important to remember that we are completely unanimous on the matter of emission reductions: emissions have to be cut. It is just a matter of how. Some want to do it the expensive way, by auction, and we want to do it the cost-effective way, through benchmarking.

The representative of the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance expressed the desire openly in the negotiations for prices to rise so that consumer habits might change. Our group has no faith in this sort of logic as long as emissions trading is unilateral. As long as it is, it is just a tax. If the emissions trading playing field were global, auctions would be a good option. The price of emission rights could easily be reflected in consumer prices, which in turn would prompt consumers to choose cleaner products. You never know but wholly carbon-intensive production sectors might move into the background. Unfortunately, the consumer environment does not work like that now. Products that are made in a less clean way outside the EU gain a competitive edge in global markets. This is crucial for jobs. I hope that the Council will be able to improve the outcome satisfactorily.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (PSE).** - (RO) The European Union made the commitment to complete the Climate Change dossier by January 2009.

The results of the negotiations will be particularly important for the United Nations Conference in Poznań where the EU's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions and assisting poorer countries will be assessed.

We need to make sure that our objectives remain ambitious so that an international agreement is signed which will motivate the developing countries sufficiently to follow our example.

If an international agreement is signed, it must remain a priority for us to raise our target from 20% to 30% after 2020, even if this transition will be achieved through new negotiations.

A more ambitious long-term objective will safeguard the European Union's credibility as a major player in the fight against global warming and will help to achieve favourable results in the future Copenhagen negotiations.

**Carl Schlyter (Verts/ALE).** - (SV) Madam President, we have promised the UN and others that we will reduce emissions by 20-45%. Now we will not even achieve 20%. Instead, the Council of Ministers is attempting in the negotiations to shift responsibility from ourselves onto the developing countries. Clean Development Mechanisms tends to mean dirty development in which poor countries are forced to shoulder our responsibility and we expect to be able to secure investments there for ourselves. When these countries then have to deliver their own climate policy, they have to pay more dearly for it. The climate policy must include both aid and measures here at home.

The car industry package, that is concerning emissions from cars, is so worthless that the emissions from the paper it is written on are greater than what it will be capable of saving in terms of the climate of Europe and the Earth. It is bad for the car industry, bad for the environment and it is bad for consumers, who want to have low-energy cars for the future.

**Bairbre de Brún (GUE/NGL).** - (GA) - Madam President, the European Union must agree ambitious targets so that Europe can lead the way in combating climate change. There is a period of economic uncertainty ahead of us, but the economic recession should give us the courage to change more quickly to the new green economy in order to deal with many of the old problems in relation to demand for oil and energy depletion.

As regards General Stationary Combustion, it is important that the new performance standard for emissions is in place, which should be implemented in every power station from 2015 on at the latest. It is also important that continuous monitoring and safety criteria will be in place as well.

**Colm Burke (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, climate change can no longer be viewed rigidly in environmental terms, but must instead be mainstreamed as a cross-cutting concept through varying policy areas, including development and human rights. It is a problem not just of the future but of the present. Climate change is attacking the natural resource base of poor communities, including their land and water reserves, and people are subsequently being forced to migrate for survival. Such migration flows can have destabilising consequences and can threaten the overall internal security of a particular country, region or border area.

I visited the Chad/Sudanese border area this year as a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. I saw the devastation caused by war and food shortages. Climate change will make situations like this worse. Unfortunately, those most at risk are the least culpable in creating this situation. Therefore I am delighted to see my colleagues in Parliament taking the lead on this matter. The EU, the US and other world powers need to act.

**Jean-Louis Borloo**, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – (FR) Madam President, Mr Piebalgs, Mr Dimas, ladies and gentlemen, firstly I would like to thank you for holding this debate, which was fundamental for those of us who are participating at the same time in the Poznań Conference and the European Environment Council, and who, next Monday, will be at the Energy Council, and then at the European Council on 11-12 December. It was important for everyone to be able to give their opinion on what is probably one of the most difficult subjects we have had to deal with, since it involves a radical change to a number of aspects of our economic and social policies, so great a factor is energy in all of this, with its moral, ethical and nature-related dimensions, this respect for nature and, obviously, climate change.

I would just like to say as an initial point, to those who cast doubt on climate change, that, in any case, the need to eventually wean ourselves off oil in itself makes this whole directive essential. Whether we do it because of climate change or in order to change the energy mix and its territorialisation, the overall package, in either case, is relevant.

The second point I should like to make, if I may, is addressed to the Commission, which has carried out extremely thorough and extremely important preliminary work. The targets proposed by the committees, and supported by the European Councils under the German Presidency, are there, are the right ones. I believe that they have everyone's support, and this significant conceptualisation effort to express things that are so seemingly different and at times seemingly incompatible is absolutely outstanding. I believe that, from this point of view, there is broad agreement among the institutions. It is in relation to the methods that questions can be asked.

For my part, I would very much like to mention again the contract of confidence entered into with Parliament within the framework of the trialogues, and I am well aware of the difficulty of the MEPs' relationship with the trialogues; the latter will not have escaped anyone's notice. Nevertheless, our international commitments, our international meetings are vitally important. Copenhagen is probably the most important meeting that humanity will hold with itself. We cannot fail to show that Europe is capable of reaching an agreement on these points.

We do, of course, have various problems concerning competitiveness. Yes, Mr Watson, Mr Hoppenstedt and Mr Davies, financing of carbon capture and storage should, of course, be included, in one form or another, now or a little later. This concerns the methods, of course. Likewise, it would be irresponsible to support carbon leakage, and I believe that we have found solutions that are basically quite reasonable.

In essence what I would really like to say is that there always comes a time in life when we focus more on the method of the method than on the objective and the way to achieve it. Methods can evolve without the objective and the guarantee of achieving it allowing them to do so. There is a copyright mentality where methods are concerned; this is true of the Commission, and also of the rapporteurs of Parliament's various committees. The only thing that is really incumbent upon us is for us to have the assessable public financial resources to achieve the objectives we have set ourselves in the short, medium and long term.

Lastly, on my final point I will scrupulously echo what was said in this crucially important Chamber. There is no denial of democracy, but a speeding-up of all the processes. I can tell you that the MEPs were working until 2 a.m. last night and again this morning, and have reached an agreement on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of cars. We could discuss the first three years, but we could also discuss the target, set at 95 grams, which is the key factor for the development of our industry.

We could debate how to deal with progressivity where all of our points are concerned. The only issue of importance for us is not to penalise, but to allow competitiveness and to guarantee that each of these targets will be met, as they work together and are all completely interdependent.

This, in brief, is what I wished to say, dealing with each speech point by point. Rest assured that I shall report them to today's Council and to the Council of 11 December. In any case, please accept my sincere thanks.

**Andris Piebalgs**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, today's debate has mostly concentrated on the challenge of climate change. It is true that it is a huge challenge, but the same is also true of the energy

challenge that we are facing. We have seen the recent volatility of prices, bringing challenges for the security of supply that is particularly important for the European Union, where energy import dependence is growing. This package also provides a basis for the solution to energy security, not only for the European Union but also for other parts of the world. If we make the technological change, it will provide for very different and secure energy sources that could be used across the world.

I believe that today's debate has been very positive and has clearly demonstrated Parliament's commitment to finding solutions very rapidly. I am very grateful for this. The Commission, from my side and that of my colleagues, will work very hard to facilitate agreement between the Parliament and the Council this December.

**Stavros Dimas**, *Member of the Commission*. – (EL) Madam President, I would also like to thank the Members of the European Parliament that took part in today's debate for their constructive opinions. Furthermore, I would like to thank the French Presidency that tirelessly worked together with the European Parliament as well as with the Commission to find solutions, which are compatible with our environmental goals, and which are compatible with other situations and problems faced by Member States or other sectors of European industry and businesses.

The Council and the European Parliament have demonstrated their will to reach an agreement at first reading, and I think by the next part-session of the European Parliament in two weeks' time, any outstanding issues will be settled. By then, we will have an agreement which will allow us to meet our environmental goals, such as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union. This is necessary for the European Union so that it can properly combat the effects of climate change, and so that it can avoid running into other problems such as, for example, the problem of businesses relocating to countries outside the European Union, where they can continue emitting carbon dioxide without any limits. Therefore, we must take all the necessary measures. This is what the Commission proposal was aiming at, as well as the cooperation between the three institutions, so that proper solutions could be found. I am sure that in two weeks, at the part-session, we will have an agreement.

**President**. – The debate is closed.

#### **Written Statements (Rule 142)**

**Alessandro Battilocchio (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) Protecting the environment and combating climate change are essential priorities for the whole international community. As I have always maintained in recent years, progress in research enables us to develop objective reasoning, including with regard to energy sources that are too often demonised. In the light of current technological advances, in order to foster a process of geopolitical stabilisation and to ensure greater security at international level, energy sources must be differentiated, reducing dependency on supplies. From this perspective, by improving certain underdeveloped situations such as that in Italy, a serious debate on nuclear energy, with specific reference to third generation plants, is to be welcomed.

**Ivo Belet (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (NL) We in Europe are standing at a crossroads in history. We have resolved to take the lead worldwide in the fight against global warming. The time has now come to make good on this promise.

We understand that, *inter alia*, our friends in Poland want guarantees that they will not be faced with the highest bill of a climate agreement. This is why the EU has to invest more in new clean coal technology and in carbon capture and storage (CCS).

The agreement that was concluded this week on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from new cars has met with criticism, because it does not go far enough. Whilst this criticism is partly justified, we should also acknowledge the positive aspects. We will certainly start from 2012, albeit gradually, and we have also held onto the objective of a maximum of 95 g CO<sub>2</sub>/km by 2020.

Fortunately, it also contains powerful incentives for electrical or hybrid cars. The manufacturers should realise that they have nothing to lose by openly plumping for these environmentally-friendly cars. The governments should encourage this U-turn much more forcefully with tax incentives. As for the consumer, us included therefore, what is stopping us from buying these environmentally-friendly cars now? Today, there are already middle-of-the-range cars available that are below the European standard of 2012. So, ...

**Richard Corbett (PSE)**, *in writing*. – I welcome the progress that has been made in the talks between Parliament and Council over the last few days and late into the night last night. There is still some way to go,

and I urge both sides to make the last effort to reach an agreement capable of being approved by the Parliament before Christmas. To be acceptable to Parliament, the package of measures must be sufficiently vigorous for us to achieve the agreed EU targets of a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and a 20% increase in renewables by the year 2020 – but also to enable us to go further and raise this up to 30% in the event of an international agreement. I am also pleased that there seems to be agreement that the biofuels target should be subject to strict sustainability criteria.

Some have qualified the package of measures as being extreme. If so, then I am an extremist – but I would point out that moderation in the face of a threat to the very future of this planet would be no virtue and vigorous action no vice.

**András Gyürk (PPE-DE), in writing. – (HU)** When discussing the developments relating to the European Union's climate package, we cannot ignore the possible consequences of the financial crisis. That is to say, if governments spend their accumulated financial reserves primarily on bank rescue packages, then crucial energy investments may suffer delays.

In spite of the crisis, Europe needs investments as soon as possible in expanding renewable energy sources and making significant improvements in energy efficiency. We need to invest today in order that renewable energy sources may become competitive in the near future.

For the above reasons, creating an EU energy fund is an urgent task. The monetary instrument in question would serve primarily to help improve energy efficiency and expand the use of renewable energy sources. Moreover, if we really want to strengthen the European Union's common energy and climate policy, this intention must also be reflected in the next seven-year budget. In addition to strengthening EU support, the Member States must be guaranteed sufficient freedom not only to take into account the various regional differences, but also to determine their own climate policy instruments.

The temporary moderation of the prices of traditional energy carriers ought not to induce complacency on the part of decision-makers, nor put to one side the commitments made in relation to renewable energy sources. If, in the shadow of the crisis, the European Union loses sight of the goals it has set for itself, this can have a harmful effect on its own credibility and its leadership role in the area of climate change.

**Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva (PSE), in writing. – (BG)** We have been discussing one problem for far too long, however ever less time remains for it to be resolved. The global processes regarding climate change must be solved within a long-term plan, as well as with concrete measures taken by all players in the world economy.

There are a few key actions around which talks need to be organised:

- Investments in new technologies – industry creates problems but with the help of new technologies these can be solved. This is why it is necessary for us to give industry a chance at intelligent development that responds to our goals;
- Mandatory implementation of an alternative option, however without negative effects on the environment; ensuring safeguards in the use of atomic energy which also needs to be given a chance; I state this as well, in my capacity as a representative of Bulgaria, which has its own contribution in this process;
- Investments in education and science for sustained development – without which there cannot be talk of an effective fight against climate change, as they ensure adequate individual and organisational preparation;

**Rovana Plumb (PSE), in writing. – (RO)** The European Commission adopted the 'Renewable Energy and Climate Change' package on 23 January 2008.

This package shares among the Member States, based on criteria and targets, the EU objectives adopted by the European Council in spring 2007. These are a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of at least 20% at EU level by 2020, along with, during the same period, a 20% increase in the share of renewable energy resources in overall energy consumption, and a 20% increase in energy efficiency.

We can negotiate in every area, but we cannot negotiate with nature. For this reason, to be able to meet these commitments in terms of reducing GHG emissions and increasing the share of renewable energy sources, major structural reforms are required in every area of the economy.

Romania will adopt the national obligations arising from this legislative package, which will have a significant impact at economic and social level.

The completion of the negotiations on the 'Renewable Energy and Climate Change' package provides an opportunity to strike a balance between combating climate change, increasing suppliers' security and promoting competitiveness and economic growth, as well as creating jobs.

**Nicolae Vlad Popa (PPE-DE), in writing. – (RO)** We are pleased that at the moment, the negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council on the 'Renewable Energy and Climate Change' package are progressing towards reaching agreement.

The European Council to be held 11-12 December 2008 will decide on all the elements linked to this package.

In preparation for the discussions to take place 11-12 December, Romania along with Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Latvia submitted on 28 November a proposal for redistributing the income obtained from auctioning CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, based on the following formula:  $(90 - x)\% + 10\% + x\%$ , where  $x$  is distributed to those Member States which successfully achieved reductions of more than 20% in the Kyoto emissions ceiling in 2005.

Romania also feels that a review clause is absolutely essential in 2014, without however raising a question mark over the 20% (or 10%) reduction targets, simply in order to facilitate possible adjustments to the mechanisms, based on the specific conditions during the relevant period (which cannot be predicted just now).

**Esko Seppänen (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (FI)** The emissions trading scheme presents a choice of two options. On the one hand, we have the brokers' model, and, on the other, the industrial model. The brokers' model is an opportunity to speculate three times over for those who do not need emission rights for production but who buy them to sell them to manufacturing companies at a high price. They can buy the rights at auctions and on the secondary market at emission rights exchanges, and still speculate in them on the power exchanges. While there are emission rights, people can even speculate in them with over-the-counter deals, avoiding the exchanges entirely. That is why we need to go for the speculation-free industrial model, where targets for cutting emissions are achieved through benchmarking, with Best Available Technology (BAT) establishing standards for reductions.

**Søren Bo Søndergaard (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (DA)** On Monday evening the large political groups in the European Parliament agreed a compromise with the Council of Ministers in respect of the requirements for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for passenger cars under which the automotive industry will be able to continue unchanged in its dirty ways all the way to 2019.

The EU has signed up to the UN's climate targets, under which industrialised countries are supposed to cut CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by between 25 and 40 per cent by 2020. The agreement on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from cars is a bow to the car industry and it only serves to confirm that the EU's promises in relation to climate change are not worth the paper they are written on.

Each time the EU is supposed to take a tangible step towards living up to its own promises and targets we hear all the bad excuses in the world for why it does not happen.

It is unbelievable that the majority in the European Parliament is prepared to endorse the continuation of this disgrace.

**María Sornosa Martínez (PSE), in writing. – (ES)** Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, our adoption of this climate change and energy package should serve as a letter of intent, enabling us to send out a crystal-clear signal to the whole world to reach an ambitious agreement in Copenhagen next year.

I fully endorse Commissioner Dimas's statement that the financial crisis has shown how foolhardy it is not to take obvious warning signs seriously.

In the case of climate change, we cannot allow ourselves to repeat this mistake if we want to prevent dangerous and possibly catastrophic economic and social consequences in the coming decades.

We must show a sense of responsibility and make bold decisions to adopt a clean, efficient energy model, and also to provide the tools needed for our citizens to become aware of climate change and act accordingly. The time has come.

I therefore make a public appeal for the Chamber and the Member States to support this legislative package during the forthcoming plenary, as it will certainly enable us to tackle the major challenge that faces us.

**Andrzej Jan Szejna (PSE), in writing.** – (PL) Tax fraud strikes against the principle of fair and transparent taxation and simply damages the foundations of Community operation. Lower budget revenues prevent us from implementing our policies to their full extent.

Combating tax fraud falls largely within the competence of Member States, but they should not act individually. There is a clear need to coordinate actions at Community level and to strengthen cooperation between the governments of Member States and the European Commission.

Since a radical VAT reform is both a long term and a time-consuming project, the report proposes using conventional means. They include changes in legislation governing taxpayer liability for the failure to submit the required documents on time or for submitting incorrect documents, reducing the period for data collection and rapid correction of inaccurate data as well as speeding up the exchange of information on intra-Community transactions.

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

## **7. Voting time**

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

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

### **7.1. Agreement between Korea and the EC concerning cooperation on anti-competitive activities (A6-0452/2008, David Martin) (vote)**

### **7.2. Herring stocks in the West of Scotland (A6-0433/2008, Struan Stevenson) (vote)**

### **7.3. Maintenance obligations (A6-0456/2008, Genowefa Grabowska) (vote)**

### **7.4. Measuring instruments and methods of metrological control (Recast) (A6-0429/2008, József Szájer) (vote)**

### **7.5. Facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries (A6-0396/2008, Gay Mitchell) (vote)**

### **7.6. Combating tax evasion: common system of VAT (A6-0448/2008, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil) (vote)**

### **7.7. Combating tax evasion (A6-0449/2008, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil) (vote)**

### **7.8. Steps towards improving the environment for SMEs in Europe - Small Business Act (vote)**

### **7.9. Arms exports (Code of Conduct) (vote)**

- On paragraph 5:

**Tobias Pflüger (GUE/NGL).** - (DE) Madam President, the French Presidency of the Council is discussing making the Code of Conduct legally binding at last. There are still two countries which have a few more steps to take, namely Germany and Great Britain. We need a clear signal from the European Parliament.

The amendment reads as follows. The following is to be added at the end of Point 5. I will say it in English: 'and an efficient control of arms exports;'

*(The oral amendment was accepted)*

**7.10. European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 8/2007 concerning administrative cooperation in the field of value added tax (A6-0427/2008, Bart Staes) (vote)**

**7.11. The situation of women in the Balkans (A6-0435/2008, Zita Gurmai) (vote)**

**7.12. Towards a 'European Cormorant Management Plan' (A6-0434/2008, Heinz Kindermann) (vote)**

**8. Explanations of vote**

**Oral explanations of vote**

**– Report: Gay Mitchell (A6-0396/2008)**

**David Sumberg (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, I am very pleased indeed to be able to make a contribution to this debate very briefly because it is important in the times in which we live, when the Third World is suffering greatly from lack of food, to realise that we in the European Union, although facing an economic crisis, are nevertheless extremely wealthy compared with the Third World. Therefore I am very pleased by the fact that we in Parliament are recognising that we have a moral and political duty to those who are in dire danger. We only have to see the pictures sometimes on our television sets to realise that the matter is extremely urgent.

So I congratulate Mr Mitchell on this report. It is a welcome development that is worthy of our support and I am very pleased that I was able to give it mine.

**Nirj Deva (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, like Mr Sumberg, I would like to say why we voted for this report. It was quite a difficult decision because we are paying for the transfer with taxpayers' money.

But what we are doing is actually feeding a hundred million people, who would otherwise have died by the end of next year. The World Food Programme is feeding 20 to 25 million people who are at risk from malnutrition and death by the end of 2009 if we do not do this. One billion people are now living on one meal every two days. If we spend this money wisely, we will give them one meal every day.

Twenty-five million people is half the population of my country, the United Kingdom. I do not wish to stand in this Parliament next year and say that I stood aside and watched half the population of my country dying of starvation because we did not do this. I am very pleased indeed that we have voted to put this emergency facility in place.

**– Report: José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (A6-0448/2008)**

**David Sumberg (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, the García-Margallo report is a report which I can approve because we are all engaged in trying to prevent tax evasion, which is important, and particularly tax evasion in relation to VAT. The black economy, which exists in all our countries, is something which is disadvantageous to the taxpayer and something which we should all be concerned about, because it means that the taxpayer loses out.

But I would like to add a rider to that by saying that it is absolutely essential that individual nation states should have the right to determine their own rate of VAT. That is not a matter for the European Union. In Britain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has recently reduced the VAT rate in an endeavour to combat the recession. I do not think it is a very effective measure and I do not think it will make any difference, but his right to do so for an individual country is important. That is the rider I wish to make in relation to this report.

**– Joint motion for a resolution: EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (RC B6-0619/2008)**

**David Sumberg (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, I am glad to be able to comment on this. I am concerned about the European Union's involvement in this matter simply because this is a matter for international agreement and one-sided action by the European Union would make really no difference.



Furthermore, I think the reference in the report to the European security arrangements is unfortunate. The basis of European security is NATO. It always has been and it always will be and that is so because NATO includes our friend and ally, the United States of America. Certain parts of this Parliament are very anti-American. I am not. I remember the debt that this continent owes to the United States for our freedom and our membership of NATO. Our alliance with the United States through NATO is the basis of our defence and security and will be in the years to come.

– **Report: Zita Gurmai (A6-0435/2008)**

**Marusya Ivanova Lyubcheva (PSE).** – (BG) I want to express my own motives for my support for the report, 'Women in the Balkans' prepared by my colleague Mrs Gurmai and to congratulate her for it. This report reflects the real position of women in the Balkans region without differentiating countries, depending on their different status. Here gender policies have been imposed consistently, and gradually stereotypes are being overcome. The report describes the change in the situation through change in legislation, the granting of more rights to women, the growth in governance and the participation of women in politics and management. An important aspect of the report is the assessment on the role of women from the Balkans in the development of democratic processes for maintaining stability in the region and for overcoming all military conflicts.

– **Report: Heinz Kindermann (A6-0434/2008)**

**Albert Deß (PPE-DE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Kindermann has submitted a constructive resolution for the cormorant problem, for which I have gladly voted. I am pleased that this resolution has received 558 votes. The cormorant was put under protection a long time ago, when there were only a few breeding colonies left in Europe. In the meantime, it has become so prevalent that whole ponds and rivers are being eaten bare. It therefore needs to be included in Annex II of the Birds Directive. The damage it causes is jeopardising the existence of many fish farmers and fishermen. The minimum level required for preservation of the species in the Member States must be examined. Anything over and above this must be regulated. If the Commission does not act, stocks of fish species will be endangered.

I therefore ask the Commission to take this resolution seriously and to act as quickly as possible.

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**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE).** – (FR) Madam President, with reference to Rule 202a of our Rules of Procedure, during a plenary session we voted in favour of the European anthem being played at formal sittings. I would like to know, Madam President, why the anthem was not played when we welcomed His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

**President.** – I shall enquire and provide you with an answer, Mr Audy.

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**Written explanations of vote**

– **Report: David Martin (A6-0452/2008)**

**Glyn Ford (PSE), in writing.** – I congratulate my colleague on this Agreement with the Republic of Korea on co-operation on anti-competitive activities. As Members will be aware, we are currently negotiating a Free Trade Agreement with Korea. It is supported by both government and opposition in Seoul and this House, in endorsing an earlier report by Mr Martin, signalled its agreement in principle. Both sides seem keen to finalise an Agreement before next June's European elections. Today's Agreement can only help that process, even accepting that there are some tricky issues remaining, such as automobiles and rules of origin regarding the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

**Genowefa Grabowska (PSE), in writing.** – (PL) World economies are becoming increasingly interlinked, international trade is growing very rapidly, and direct foreign investment is becoming more frequent. I therefore fully support David Martin's report recommending acceptance of the Cooperation agreement between the EU and South Korea in the matter of anti-competitive activity. The agreement accords with the EU's previous actions in this matter and complements agreements signed as early as at the start of the nineties

with the United States (1991), with Canada (1999) and with Japan (2003). The agreement with Korea will contribute to the effective implementation of competition regulations by promoting cooperation between competition protection agencies and reducing the likelihood of conflicts.

Its provisions include the obligation to provide information about implementation measures carried out by competition protection agencies which could affect the other party's material interests. It is good that the agreement introduces provisions concerning mutual assistance, coordination of implementation actions, exchange of information and guarantee of confidentiality. Korea is the EU's fourth largest non-European trading partner, while the EU is Korea's largest foreign investor. Bearing in mind the growing importance of the partnership between the two countries, the addition of Korea to the other three partners with which the EU has agreements in the range of anti-competitive activity seems fully justified.

**Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (PT) The Republic of Korea is the fourth largest non-European trade partner of the EU and the EU is the main foreign investor in the Republic of Korea.

This agreement seeks to ensure 'mutual recognition of competition law between the European Community and South Korea' as 'the most efficient way to tackle anticompetitive behaviour', seeking to minimise 'the use of trade defence instruments between the two parties', like those already adopted with the United States (1991), Canada (1999) and Japan (2003).

However, the European Parliament is putting its focus on the consideration that the present agreement should be written 'in the context of the overall framework of existing agreements between the European Community and the Republic of Korea and those currently under negotiation, in particular the negotiations concerning a potential free trade agreement', namely, and as the rapporteur underlines, taking into account 'the problems that have been encountered by other bilateral and interregional trade negotiations'.

In other words, the European Parliament is advocating 'increased market access', with catastrophic consequences for industry and jobs in, for example, the naval construction and repair sector in Portugal and its almost total destruction.

That is why we are voting against.

**David Martin (PSE), in writing.** – I hope my report and the Commission proposal will provide significant benefits to both Korea and the EU. Korea is the fourth largest non-European trading partner, so it is important that we have anti-competitive safeguards.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing.** – (DE) The fourth largest economy in Asia is being battered by the international financial crisis. Memories of the Asian currency crisis of 1997 are reawakening. While on the one hand the South Korean Government is more confident today because rapid action was taken, now there is also a crisis in Europe and USA, which makes the situation that bit more serious. Nevertheless the OECD is of the opinion that Korea will recover in the foreseeable future, the weakening Won will encourage exports and the reflationary measures will boost domestic demand.

Economic relations between the EU and Korea ought therefore to remain intact, as a result of which it makes perfect sense to set certain ground rules despite the difficult nature of the current situation. All too often only the interests of the investors are protected in economic agreements, therefore the EU must take care that employment regulations and social and environmental standards are also given sufficient consideration. This is not stated clearly enough in the report forming the basis for the vote, for which reason I have withheld my vote.

**Rovana Plumb (PSE), in writing.** – (RO) I voted for this report because the Agreement will contribute to the effective application of competition legislation by promoting cooperation between competent authorities and by reducing the likelihood of conflicts breaking out.

Korea is the EU's fourth largest non-European trading partner and the EU is Korea's largest foreign investor.

Given the growing importance of this partnership it seems appropriate that Korea should be added to the three other partners with which the EU has agreements concerning cooperation on anti-competitive action.

The agreement provides for notification of action taken by a competition authority to enforce the legislation which could affect important interests of the other party, mutual assistance, including the possibility for one side to ask the other to undertake enforcement action, and coordination of enforcement activities as well as exchange of information. There are also measures concerning confidentiality.

In a wider perspective, we need to underline the importance of multilateral trade and competition rules for achieving free and open cross-border markets

**Luca Romagnoli (NI)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of Mr Martin's report on the conclusion of the agreement between Korea and the European Community concerning cooperation on anti-competitive activities. I endorse the reasoning underlying the report and believe that this competition agreement is a more vital instrument than ever in today's climate, where trade, in particular with Asian countries, is increasing in quantity and importance. In view of the differences between the European economic system and that of Europe's trading partners, including Korea, and, in particular, the differences between production costs and between domestic consumer protection regulations in these countries, an agreement between the competition authorities represents a step towards safeguarding our businesses and goods from the dangers they encounter in today's global environment.

**Marian Zlotea (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I voted for this report because I believe that it is vitally important for us to establish trade links which comply with competition principles not only with Korea, but also with the other countries outside the EU. We need to promote cooperation between competent authorities, thereby avoiding the likelihood of conflicts breaking out.

As I have maintained, which was also reiterated in the opinion received from the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection and voted on this week, we need to offer Europe's citizens a much more varied range of business opportunities and ensure that all bilateral agreements with third countries respect consumers' rights and the principles of competition.

– **Report: Struan Stevenson (A6-0433/2008)**

**Šarūnas Birutis**, *in writing*. – (LT) The multi-year herring stock management plan in the west of Scotland is welcomed.

I believe that the monitoring of licensed fishing vessels authorised to fish in the area in question should be conducted using electronic logbooks, and that flag Member States transfer catch reports to the Fisheries Monitoring Centre on a daily basis. Vessels licensed to fish in one area should not be allowed to fish in any other area than in the west of Scotland during the same fishing trip.

It is important that data are developed to serve as a basis for the scientific assessment of herring stock in the west of Scotland. Therefore, in addition to the existing acoustic surveys which are carried out to determine the adult herring surplus indices, I support the pilot (MIP) network investigation in 2008 and 2009, allowing us to determine the appropriateness and effectiveness of this method, and to provide a second, independent herring surplus index in the area west of Scotland; I welcome this initiative. I also agree with the Commission on the fact that the management plan should be revised every four years, taking into account the recommendation of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF). However, if any changes are proposed after this review, they need to be discussed with the Pelagic Regional Advisory Council and the European Parliament.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – MEP Stevenson's report on the management of the herring stock on the West coast of Scotland presents a multi-annual plan. This is based on existing North Sea herring agreements currently agreed with Norway, to preserve a sustainable fisheries industry by placing upper and lower limits depending on the total stock size.

STECF and ICES have advised that a sustainable fishery can be maintained by managing annual mortality (measure of catches) at 0.25 when the stock size is above 75,000 tonnes and at 0.20 when the stock size falls below 75,000 tonnes, but remains above 50,000 tonnes. According to the Commission's proposal, should the size of the spawning stock fall below 50,000 tonnes, a complete restriction on herring catches becomes effective, enabling the repopulation and regeneration and maintenance of the stock, ensuring the livelihood and future of the fishing industry which depends on a maintained fish stock.

Ireland is directly involved in this proposal, with Irish territorial waters in the North West area of Donegal falling into the zone in question. In order to preserve the fisheries industry, it is imperative that implementation of this report should begin as soon as possible to minimise disruption for fisheries.

**Dumitru Oprea (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) This report requires particular attention against the backdrop of a global crisis which is demanding responsible and moderate levels of consumption.

As a result of the reform to the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002, multi-annual plans were implemented gradually, along with the recovery plans for fisheries resources of interest to the Community.

As a matter of fact, the precedent was created by the multi-annual management agreement signed with Norway in 1997 concerning North Sea herring stock, which has produced satisfactory results.

If the measures being proposed were applied, they would result in better planning of fisheries and fishing activities. Consequently, there would be several elements for guaranteeing the Fisheries Fund, TACs and special fishing permits.

One particularly important aspect is the ecosystem-based approach of this activity, which therefore guarantees that exploitation will be carried out in a responsible manner with regard to all species, many of which are on the verge of disappearing completely. Moreover, this needs to be transformed into an activity which is carried out in sustainable environmental, economic and social conditions.

**– Report: Genowefa Grabowska (A4-0456/2008)**

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) On the basis of Mrs Grabowska's report, I have voted in favour of the proposal for a Council regulation on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of decisions and cooperation in matters relating to maintenance obligations within the framework of renewed consultation. I support the rapporteur, who has done everything in her power to make the final text available before the end of the year so that European citizens may benefit from it as soon as possible, and I share her view that the Commission should continue to work on enforcement procedures.

**Adam Bielan (UEN)**, *in writing*. – (PL) Mrs Grabowska's report proposes simplification of the child support system, across the entire European Union, which is why I support it. In Poland, many women are bringing up children on their own, while often the fathers are living and working in other EU countries, frequently avoiding the payment of child support. Enforcing payment in such circumstances is virtually impossible.

Closer cooperation between EU Member States in this matter will help creditors in the effective recovery of the money due to them.

**Šarūnas Birutis**, *in writing*. – (LT) If this regulation is adopted, it will be easier for citizens to live. Primarily, it aims to simplify the procedure of identifying maintenance obligations. In addition, the Regulation provides that when Member States pass a decision on maintenance obligations, such a decision will be binding in all Member States. According to the Regulation, an operational system of cooperation between the central authorities of Member States shall also be established to help creditors recover debts.

**Gérard Deprez (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I should like to express my satisfaction that Mrs Grabowska's report is being put to the vote today, first and foremost because we have been waiting for the revised version of the regulation in question for a long time, and secondly, because this vote should enable the text to be adopted while the French Presidency – a Presidency that has spared no effort to bring the text to a successful conclusion – is still in office.

As you will be aware, currently within the European Union, when there is a divorce and children are involved, it is often difficult and tedious to ensure that maintenance allowances are actually paid if one spouse has gone to another country.

The proposed text, which I endorse, should make European citizens' lives much easier when it comes to maintenance obligations, and should help creditors recover their debts. By abolishing the exequatur, it makes any decision on maintenance obligations for the absent spouse that is delivered by a court in one Member State immediately applicable in all the others. It will also enable the citizens concerned to carry out, from their place of habitual residence, the formalities needed to obtain attachment on wages or on a bank account, to activate the cooperation mechanisms, and to have access to information making it possible to locate debtors and to evaluate their assets.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – I welcome my colleague's report on Maintenance obligations which aims to assist the recovery of maintenance payments within the European Union. This Regulation seeks to enable a creditor to obtain an enforcement order for payment - which is capable of circulation without obstacles in the European Union area of justice - more easily, quickly and free of charge in most instances. This will consequently enable regular payments of the amount due and make maintenance obligations from one member state applicable in another. Doing so will simplify the lives of EU citizens and provide additional support through increased Member States cooperation.

**Dumitru Oprea (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (RO) I feel that this report is vitally important at a time when the need to harmonise legislation in European Union Member States is being felt in several areas, including with regard to maintenance obligations.

The revised version of the regulation on jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of decisions and cooperation in matters relating to maintenance obligations clearly stipulates the criteria and situations where this type of duty is enforced by law.

Maintenance obligations are personal and continuous, not to mention unilateral.

This regulation makes life easier for citizens of European Union Member States in terms of the procedure required for establishing maintenance obligations. More specifically, as soon as the decision is announced in one Member State, this will have the same binding effect in all Member States. This is a vital aspect if we remember that many citizens reside in a different Member State to the one in which they were born or the decision on maintenance obligations was made.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (PSE), in writing.** – (RO) This regulation will make life easier for citizens. Simplification was one of the results we wanted to achieve, especially with regard to the procedure required for establishing maintenance obligations.

Consequently, the regulation stipulates that as soon as the decision on maintenance obligations is announced in Member States, this will have the same binding effect in all Member States.

In addition, the regulation provides for organising an operational system supporting cooperation between central authorities in Member States, which will help creditors recover the sums of money they are owed.

The end result we have before us is a compromise which we are happy to support. This means that EU citizens could benefit from this as soon as possible.

As regards the implementation procedures, the European Commission needs to continue working on these.

We cannot help but be pleased with the news that it is intending to do so and hope that this will enable citizens to reap the benefits as soon as possible.

Effective implementation, however, is the fundamental aspect which would ensure that there is a common, harmonised system of recognition and enforcement of decisions in matters relating to maintenance obligations in the European Union.

**Andrzej Jan Szejna (PSE), in writing.** – (PL) The report on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of court decisions and cooperation in matters relating to maintenance obligations analyses and assesses the amended version of the relevant Council regulation.

The main objective of the Regulation is simplifying the principles concerning the determination of maintenance obligations (key to efficient recovery of claims) and organising an efficient system of cooperation between EU Member States in matters relating to such obligations.

I fully support the report. It represents a compromise between the European Commission's proposals and the expectations of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.

Prompt adoption of the Regulation – before the end of 2008 – will enable individuals to quickly benefit from it, which is a priority in this particular case.

**– Report: József Szájer (A6-0429/2008)**

**Šarūnas Birutis, in writing.** – (LT) Metrological rules of Member States are applied to many categories of measuring instruments and products. This Directive contains a set of general provisions for EC model approval, initial verification procedures and metrological control methods. While implementing directives applicable to the various categories of measurement instruments and products, the technical design, performance and accuracy requirements, and control procedure are set. Approval of the EC model of measurement means at the EU level that Member States are allowed to carry out initial screening, or, where it is not mandatory, instruments can be released to the market and used. This new version of the Directive includes amendments related to the regulatory procedure and verification; therefore the codified version of Directive 71/316/EEC should be replaced with the new version.

– **Report: Gay Mitchell (A6-0396/2008)**

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (FR) On the basis of Mr Mitchell's report, I have voted in favour of the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a facility for rapid response to soaring food prices in developing countries.

I support this initiative providing the European Union with a new development policy instrument to tackle the key problems linked to the rise in food prices that has sparked riots, unrest and instability in several countries, threatening the results of many years of investment in politics, development and peace keeping. Hundreds of millions of people have seen their poverty exacerbated and the recent progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals has been undermined. Faced with the EUR 18 billion needed, the Union plans to fund 10%, that is to say EUR 1.8 billion and, given the funding already available, it is a question of an additional package of EUR 1 billion. I do not agree with the Commission's plans to draw the finance from funds reserved for agriculture.

**Alessandro Battilocchio (PSE), in writing.** – (IT) I naturally voted in favour of the report. As also pointed out in the report, the Commission made a bold decision with its proposal to allocate EUR 1 billion to the food crisis, and I believe that both the Commission and the Council should receive our full collaboration in order to adopt this important legislation. Combating the food crisis calls for tangible efforts at various levels and all the Community institutions need to work together to attain appreciable results.

**Nigel Farage, Trevor Colman and Jeffrey Titford (IND/DEM), in writing.** – We of course sympathise with the plight of poor countries. However, we feel that the EU policies, such as the common fisheries policy, common agricultural policy and protectionism in trade, are at the root of many of these problems in the first place. We believe nation states are best placed to help developing nations on an intergovernmental basis, not top-down supranational agencies whose policies are to blame in the first place.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE), in writing.** – MEP Mitchell presented a plan which articulates a collective Community response to the rising and volatile costs of food in developing countries by providing guidelines for rapid responses and safety net procedures for forthcoming harvests. The facility also seeks to provide structural long term support, which is graduated and differentiated according to the needs and requirements of each situation. It provides for 1 billion Euros to be allocated until 2010, according to strictly regulated criteria. Food security provides a basis for Development of all kinds, and combating hunger worldwide is a complex but essential question for which we urgently need to find a solution for. I am delighted to support MEP Mitchell's report.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI), in writing.** – (FR) In his explanatory statement, the rapporteur, with emotion in his words, urges the European Union to give the rest of the world the spare resources from its budget! This is a peculiar and dangerous perspective on the management of public money, one that is accompanied by threats and apportionment of blame.

There was no need to go to these lengths to persuade us to help the countries most in need.

I would, however, like to make the following three points:

- The explosion in global food prices certainly affects the populations of the developing world in particular, but it also affects millions of EU citizens. What is the Commission doing for them?

- Is it really necessary to entrust management of this emergency aid to the Commission, when the latter is largely responsible for this situation? It is behind the agricultural Malthusianism in Europe, which contributes to the rise in prices. Its trade policies promote export cultures in the poorest countries. In the same circumstances, and with priority given, as it is, to the market and free trade, the proposed measures to support local agriculture appear doomed to failure.

- Lastly, what is being done to combat the absurd and immoral speculation that reigns over the food commodities markets?

**Hélène Goudin and Nils Lundgren (IND/DEM), in writing.** – (SV) High food prices mainly impact those who are worst placed in the world. Together with the crises on the financial and energy markets, there is now a risk of substantial deterioration in the circumstances of large groups of the population.

We realise that the situation that has arisen calls for action. However, we do not share the rapporteur's ambition to set up a further EU mechanism for distributing financial assistance. Development aid, its extent,

orientation and content are a good example of something that the June List believes must be determined primarily at national level and secondarily via cooperation through UN bodies. The June List questions the role of the EU, since it ought to be possible to find solutions to the current food shortage through international forums instead. For the reasons given above, we have chosen to vote against the report in its entirety.

**Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT)** We believe that amendments have been made that improve the initial proposal of the European Commission, namely: the need to favour production and local products and small-scale farmers in particular, to the detriment of production for export; the necessary involvement of producers' organisations in defining programmes and for these to give priority to small-scale agricultural holdings; that aid not be granted to the production of raw materials for luxury goods or biofuels (we regret that on this point genetically modified organisms (GMO) were not excluded).

However, it is essential to emphasise that this initiative should be seen within the context of the policies of the EU, which may reduce it to a bargaining chip or condition for imposing its economic interests. We are referring to pressure on the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP States) to conclude an agreement within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements; the EU is seeking to use the impact of the economic crisis to impose these.

It is also worth noting that this initiative does not conceal the reduction in so-called development assistance by the EU, nor the swollen sums of the relaunched arms race and the militarisation of international relations, in which the EU is playing a central role.

It is clear that the EU is giving with one hand only to, later on or straightaway, go begging with both ... hypocrisy.

**Gyula Hegyi (PSE), in writing. – (HU)** I agree with the rapporteur that the financial crisis is no reason for us to reduce our assistance to the starving people in the developing world. I would note, of course, that within the European Union as well there are people who find themselves in a difficult situation because of soaring food prices. And this is true not only in the new Member States but in the old ones as well.

One of the causes of the rise in food prices is undoubtedly the rapid increase in production of biofuels. If fuel can be sold at a higher price, then it either squeezes cheaper foodstuffs out of production, or drives the price of the latter up as well. Therefore the EU must not import biofuel from countries or larger regions where doing so threatens the affordable food supply of the local population.

Biofuel plays an important role in renewable energy, but if we use it unthinkingly, this can give rise to serious tragedies. The European Union must therefore base its use of biofuel essentially on production within the EU. Because such fuels drive up local food prices and endanger rainforests, importing them from the developing world is not to be recommended.

**Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Jules Maaten, Toine Manders and Jan Mulder (ALDE), in writing. – (NL)** The Dutch People's Party for Freedom and Democracy delegation has abstained from the final vote on the Mitchell report on a rapid-response facility for measures against the sharp increase in food prices in the developing world, because it has serious doubts as to whether the proposed measures will have the desired outcome. Improving agricultural production in the developing world requires a more structural approach than a sum of 1 billion that has to be spent within three years. In addition, the Dutch People's Party for Freedom and Democracy delegation is of the opinion that too much emphasis is still being placed on channelling funds to UN organisations and the World Bank. The Member States could also do this directly. Instead, the European Union and related organisations, including the European Investment Bank (EIB), should take the lead in this.

**Filip Kaczmarek (PPE-DE), in writing. – (PL)** I voted for the adoption of Gay Mitchell's report. The European Union must be able to react quickly to food crises. The world crisis has shown just how fragile the economic situation of rich countries can be. We should remember that poor and developing countries are exposed to much greater problems. One of them is the rapid increase in the number of people at risk of hunger.

In dramatic famine disaster situations, we should not waste valuable time on implementing the appropriate financial procedures. I feel certain that the new instrument will enable us to perform what is one of our fundamental duties – the effective saving of human life.

**Mikel Irujo Amezaga (Verts/ALE), in writing. – (ES)** As the President of the World Bank pointed out, the problems of malnutrition could be deemed the forgotten Millennium Development Goal. The EU should take a number of areas into greater consideration. These include financing World Food Programme needs,

work involving various organisations to assess countries' needs, aid for small farmers (in the short term, and also an analysis of food price volatility in the long term); long-term challenges in the area of production and productivity, neglected research plans, and the need to find risk management solutions (such as drought-related financial derivatives).

**David Martin (PSE)**, *in writing*. – I support this report because in the current global financial crisis it is more important than ever to meet our commitments with developing countries. The additional EUR 1 billion will make sure that developing countries are not left behind.

**Luca Romagnoli (NI)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I intend to vote in favour of Mr Mitchell's report on establishing a facility for rapid response to the alarming soaring food prices in developing countries. In particular, I agree with the rapporteur's opinion when he says that the soaring food prices cannot and must not just be the stuff of newspaper headlines. The fact that the much talked about globalisation of the markets has led to more people living beneath the poverty line throughout the world is worrying. It is more worrying still, however, to have many fine words spoken but few tangible, effective measures put in place at international level. I therefore welcome the fact that the rapporteur stresses the need for a rapid response and that reference is made to a system where emergency social safety-net measures are accompanied by a desire for funding which can provide greater and improved access to agricultural inputs and services, taking into account the need to act at local level in a differentiated manner.

**Glenis Willmott (PSE)**, *in writing*. – This is a time of deep financial and food crisis. Rising food prices have had extreme negative effects in developing countries. Poverty has increased and achievement of some millennium development goals is threatened. High prices have resulted in riots and instability. Therefore I voted to support this proposal to take EUR 1 billion of unspent support for EU farmers and use it to assist struggling farmers in developing countries to buy essential items such as seeds and fertilisers. I am pleased that we in the European Parliament have been able to reach a consensus with national governments on the details of how this will work.

– **Report: José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (A6-0448/2008)**

**Jan Andersson, Göran Färm, Anna Hedh, Inger Segelström and Åsa Westlund (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) We Swedish Social Democrats believe that these reports are a step along the way towards combating improper tax evasion more effectively. With regard to the new Swedish VAT rules that entered into force on 1 January 2008, these reports will unfortunately involve a certain amount of additional administration for certain businesses, but we believe that the changes are justified and proportionate to the aim and have therefore decided to vote in favour.

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) On the basis of the report by my esteemed Spanish colleague, Mr García-Margallo y Marfil, I voted in favour of the proposal for a Council directive amending the 2006 Directive on the common system of value added tax to combat tax evasion connected with intra-Community transactions.

Currently the system for exchanging data on intra-Community goods supplies, which was implemented within the context of the VAT transitional arrangements adopted at the time of the changeover to the internal market, is no longer an adequate means of effectively tackling tax fraud connected with intra-Community transactions. It should be noted that the measure forms part of a range of measures, some of which are explicitly designed to increase the legal certainty of businesses and to reduce their administrative burdens, as well as to significantly improve the exchange of information and the cooperation between tax authorities. I endorsed the amendments in which it is laid down that, two years after the entry into force of the directive, the Commission will have to draft a report assessing the effects of the directive, with special emphasis on the administrative costs that the new obligations entail for the taxpayers concerned and on the degree of effectiveness of these obligations in the context of the fight against tax fraud.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In general we agree with the proposals of the rapporteur which aim to improve the document of the European Commission on the fight against tax evasion connected with intra-Community transactions.

It is true that VAT evasion affects not only the financing of Member States' budgets but also the overall balance of the European Union's own resources in so far as reductions in VAT own resources have to be compensated for by an increase in the gross national income of own resources.



Also, it does not seem negative to me that there should be an evaluation report on the impact of the present directive, in particular on the administrative costs of the new formal obligations for individuals affected, and of the effectiveness of those formal obligations in combating tax evasion.

However, we have serious reservations about relative justice in the rules of the existing system and their application. That is why we abstained from the vote on this report.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) We voted against the two reports by Mr García-Margallo y Marfil on combating tax evasion connected with intra-Community transactions, or, to put it plainly, VAT fraud in trade between Member States.

Naturally we condemn this fraud and endorse intergovernmental cooperation between the relevant national agencies. What the rapporteur proposes, however, goes far beyond this, with the creation of a single 'EU tax record' available to national administrations, for the purposes of gathering data about persons who are alleged to have been involved, in one way or another, in fraud, and of preventing them from creating or managing a company anywhere in Europe. On whose behalf? In accordance with a judicial, administrative or purely arbitrary decision? Taken at what level? On the basis of which powers enshrined – or not, as the case may be – in the Treaties?

The supremacy of decisions at European level, the self-conferral of quasi-penal powers, the European Commission's overblown executive role and more red tape for companies at a time when we are crowing about the Small Business Act for Europe – we find all of this unacceptable.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI)**, *in writing*. – (DE) Every tax system is accompanied by tax evasion. The question is only how best this can be checked. With all measures, it must at any rate be ensured that small and medium-sized enterprises are not swamped by bureaucratic expense. In the first instance, tax evasion must be dealt with in a big way.

Any kind of improved cooperation is undoubtedly of benefit, as long as it does not degenerate to the effect that the EU usurps the decision-making powers of the Member States for itself. An agreed procedure between the EU Member States in which there is no fundamental change to the existing systems must be at the forefront. For this reason, I have voted against this report.

**Luca Romagnoli (NI)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report by Mr García-Margallo y Marfil on combating tax evasion connected with intra-Community transactions, with particular reference to the common system of VAT. I agree with the need to combat tax evasion connected with intra-Community transactions and believe that, in the context of the single European market, administrative cooperation between the Member States should be strengthened in this regard. For transactions not concluded within national boundaries, it is necessary for measures that fall mainly within national competence to be accompanied by measures of joint accountability at European level, exchanges of good practices and formal tax obligations.

– **Report: José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil (A6-0449/2008)**

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) On the basis of the report by my esteemed Spanish colleague, Mr García-Margallo y Marfil, I voted in favour of the proposal for a Council regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1798/2003 to combat tax evasion connected with intra-Community transactions.

The Commission must centralise the information relating to actions taken by Member States to combat tax evasion, show which of these were most successful and recommend what measures it deems most appropriate for correcting fraudulent behaviour. The Commission will put together a set of indicators identifying the areas in which the risk of failure to meet tax obligations is greatest. National tax administrations must be motivated by the need to remedy fraud and help honest tax payers to fulfil their obligations. On the basis of the data collected when assessing the application of the regulation, the Commission must draw up a set of indicators to determine to what extent each Member State will collaborate with the Commission and with the other Member States, by providing them with the available information and the help required to correct fraud. The Member States and the Commission must periodically assess the application of the regulation.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) In this case as well we generally agree with the proposals of the rapporteur that aim to improve the document of the European Commission. That is the case with the proposal that insists on the need for the European Commission to fully inform the European Parliament of

the measures envisaged, in accordance with the Agreement between the European Parliament and the Commission on procedures for implementing Council Decision 1999/468/EC.

I also agree that the Member States and the Commission should periodically evaluate the application of this Regulation. However, the proposal that the Commission should draw up a set of indicators with a view to ascertaining to what extent each Member State will cooperate with the Commission and the other Member States does not seem sufficiently clear to me, even though it is apparent that there are criticisms of the Court of Auditors relating to the lack of effective administrative cooperation in combating tax evasion in the area of VAT. The possible exchange of good practices and preparation of analyses cannot justify a greater levy in areas that call into question the principle of subsidiarity.

That is why we abstained from this vote.

**– Motion for a resolution: The step towards improving the environment for SMEs in Europe - Small Business Act (B6-0617/2008)**

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) Having voted in favour of the joint resolution tabled by four political groups, including the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, on the step towards improving the environment for SMEs in Europe – Small Business Act, I should like to pay tribute to the tremendous work accomplished by my French fellow Member, Mrs Fontaine, and by the French Presidency, with Minister Lagarde. There is an urgent need for the Member States to confirm their intention formally to accept the SBA during the European Council of December 2008, to be held in Brussels. This is to ensure that the SBA has the high profile it requires at the same time as its provisions are made legally binding, thereby creating a really positive impact on the environment for SMEs. The latter form the basis of a very substantial part of the economic fabric and unquestionably have a social role to play as human-sized enterprises. However, they are fragile and merit special attention. As part of the interest it must show in its wealth creation system, it is vital that the European Union give its support to SMEs.

**Alessandro Battilocchio (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the report. Small and medium-sized enterprises are the vital heart of Europe's economy, both in terms of growth and innovation, and in terms of employment. A policy supporting them, therefore, means guaranteeing the stability of the whole system, which is all the more important at this time of global crisis, which can only be tackled by remembering the real economy. We should therefore support every effort but must not forget that we still have a long way to go and we must honour our commitment.

**Bruno Gollnisch (NI)**, *in writing*. – (FR) We voted in favour of the resolution on improving the environment for SMEs within the framework of the Small Business Act, because we are aware, as we have been saying for years, of the key economic role played by SMEs as the main generators of wealth and jobs.

The problem is that, today, this is all still in the realm of the theoretical. It is the same institution, the Commission, which calls on the Member States to 'think about small businesses first', but which then introduces more opaque, incomprehensible legislation and administrative and regulatory restrictions. It is the Commission which, despite the obligation incumbent upon it, botches the impact studies that have to accompany its legislative proposals. It was the Commission which implemented a policy on access to public procurement contracts, with the result that local SMEs are being systematically ousted in favour of large European-wide businesses, in the name of sacrosanct competition. It was the Commission which, obsessed with fiscal harmonisation, imposed the current restrictions on VAT rates.

Yes, the time has come to finally give priority to all these small businesses, and to their directors and employees, and to do so, first and foremost, in European regulations.

**Adam Bielan (UEN)**, *in writing*. – (PL) Improvement of the situation of small and medium-sized enterprises in Europe and support for the European Charter for Small Enterprises is of tremendous importance for the efficient development of the European Union's economy and entrepreneurship, and I have therefore decided to support the resolution.

Any administrative simplification in starting a business, simplification of regulations and elimination of unnecessary laws cannot but speed up the procedure of creating small and medium-sized enterprises, which offer employment to millions of people.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) We know how the banking sector and other financial companies are being supported, under the pretext of avoiding a crisis in the financial sector and its possible

repercussions. However, the crisis of capitalism is far more widespread and already includes serious repercussions, specifically in the economic sphere in which micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises predominate.

That is why, although it is clear that only by breaking with current policies of economic liberalisation is it possible to find lasting alternative solutions, we support any individual measures that could ease the severity of the situation of thousands of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.

However, we insist that the creation of an atmosphere favourable to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises necessitates, first and foremost, increased purchasing power for populations, increased salaries for workers and improved pensions and retirement funds.

Therefore, with our vote on this resolution we should just like to underline our desire that it should not be another mirage from the propaganda that is customary at these times. This support must actually reach the micro-enterprises and SMEs and not get swallowed up by bureaucracy.

**Mieczysław Edmund Janowski (UEN), in writing.** – (PL) I wish to express my support for the adoption of the Charter for Small Enterprises, intended to improve the situation of such enterprises in the EU. It is well known that SMEs play an important role in the European economy, providing approximately 100 million jobs, and representing a major source of income for Member States and the regions. Many of these companies are actively involved in conduct innovation.

In this context, it is important to recognise that there is no justification for the many barriers still encountered by small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. We must also remember that such enterprises are very sensitive to intensified competition and to all financial and administrative problems. Simple and clear legal provisions are essential to their proper operation.

Hence the unavoidable need for intervention by the European Parliament which, having the appropriate legislative instruments at its disposal, can respond to the perceived needs and contribute to the removal of the remaining barriers. What is extremely important, especially at a time of continuing economic collapse, is to provide access to sources of finance.

I welcome the European Investment Bank's proposal for a new package, which allocates EUR 30 billion in loans to SMEs. Nonetheless, we need to consider increasing this amount, since the failure of a large number of small enterprises would have dramatic consequences for many individuals.

I feel certain that in the circumstances the Council will approve the Charter for Small Enterprises and will require Member States to implement its provisions.

**Andreas Mölzer (NI), in writing.** – (DE) For many years now the EU has advocated – at least on paper – the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). However, you can say what you like on paper, but actions speak louder than words. SMEs continue to face bureaucratic hurdles, large enterprises continue to access subsidies with ease, while medium-sized enterprises are reduced practically to the status of supplicants. Regulatory frenzy frequently stifles small enterprises, while groups of enterprises can afford experts to take advantage of any loophole.

Therefore, following the example of the US, EU laws must be subjected to a cost-benefit analysis for small and medium-sized enterprises and the dismantling of bureaucracy must be promoted in order to remove expensive multiple charges where there is an obligation to inform and notify. The proposal under consideration appears to be a further step in the right direction at any rate, which is why I also voted in favour of it.

**James Nicholson (PPE-DE), in writing.** – If ever there was a time that support was needed for small businesses and SMEs, it is now. The current economic climate is acutely affecting them, whether it is difficulties with maintaining cash flow or the impact of reduced consumer spending.

We must ensure that, in the context of the current economic crisis, SMEs are still able to access adequate financing, especially at this time when banks are not lending to small businesses. More generally, unnecessary administrative and bureaucratic burdens should be removed. SMEs are the backbone of small economies in Europe, such as Northern Ireland. We should be encouraging innovative entrepreneurs rather than placing obstacles in their way such as excessive red tape.

The Small Business Act is a step forward, but it must be swiftly adopted by the Council and fully implemented by Member States so that it has a really positive impact.

**Rareș-Lucian Niculescu (PPE-DE), in writing. – (RO)** During the current difficult economic climate, small and medium-sized enterprises could be, in many cases, the first to be affected, with the most severe consequences.

Bearing in mind that in some Member States, such as Romania, SMEs account for more than 60% of GDP, support measures need to be taken, will be welcomed and, most of all, are urgent.

Another measure which is welcomed is the new package from the European Investment Bank amounting to EUR 30 billion, earmarked for loans to SMEs. I sincerely hope that these loans will also be easily accessible to small businesses in new Member States, such as Romania or Bulgaria.

**Seán Ó Neachtain (UEN), in writing. – (GA)** We certainly have to address and direct our attention to the major challenge involved in stabilising and reforming the financial system. However, as representatives of the ordinary people of our countries, it is also our urgent duty to focus on what is known as the 'real economy'.

The people of Europe are suffering at present as we are in the middle of an economic crisis. It would be easy to adhere completely to conservative policies at this time, policies that would be aimed only at stabilising the financial system. However, instead of doing that we must focus on rebuilding the economy from the bottom up.

In the west of Ireland, around 70% of the work force are employed by small businesses. These small businesses are the economic pulse of the west of Ireland. Not only do we have to protect these businesses, we must also encourage entrepreneurship, growth and development in this sector. To this end, I sincerely welcome the initiatives being launched by Irish and European institutions lately to support the small business sector. I ask the private and financial sectors and the policy-makers to continue and add to these initiatives.

**Athanasios Pafilis (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (EL)** The European Small Business Act comes within the anti-grassroots, anti-labour Lisbon Strategy and efforts by the EU to complete the single internal market to the detriment of workers and their rights.

Using the bait of reduced VAT rates for services provided locally and services which employ a large number of workers, the EU is trying to wring the consent of small and medium-sized enterprises to the choices of big business, which is promoting these plans in order to serve its own interests, not those of small businesses or the self-employed.

The President of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, set out the real scales of the businesses to which the act relates, which he defined as those which benefit fully from the single market and expand on to international markets in order to develop into global competitive undertakings, and Commissioner Günter Verheugen highlighted the reactionary ideological tenor of the act by emphasising that what is important in it is the social recognition of businessmen and the attraction of starting a business career, in order to change the negative perception of the role of businessmen and the assumption of entrepreneurial risk.

However, the substance of the proposal lies in the new dispensation for private European companies, which will allow a 'private European undertaking' to trade in all the Member States of the EU and circumvent the current obstacles of any social control.

**Nicolae Vlad Popa (PPE-DE), in writing. – (RO)** I voted in favour of this resolution on the steps towards improving the environment for SMEs in Europe as they are fundamentally important to the European Union's economy, including Romania's.

Small and medium-sized enterprises provide more than 100 million jobs and are a key factor in economic growth.

Particularly during this period of economic crisis, we need to use every means available to us to support this sector, which may provide the platform for economic recovery.

I support the implementation of the new European Investment Bank package which will provide EUR 30 billion, earmarked for loans to SMEs. I am also asking for this fund to be developed and increased in the future.

I think that it is vitally important that Member States too devise and implement measures to support SMEs nationally, to supplement the measures taken at European level.

**Luca Romagnoli (NI)**, *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution on improving the environment for SMEs in Europe – Small Business Act. I am firmly convinced that SMEs, accounting for more than 90% of businesses in Europe, make a decisive contribution to the economic growth of the European Union. This is why we need a European law on small businesses: the Small Business Act, which can only be effective if there is a practical commitment at national and European level to implement it. Furthermore, I agree that we should call on the Council to confirm its intention to officially adopt this law at the forthcoming European Council, in order to ensure a fair, adequate level of visibility for such an important initiative.

**Andrzej Jan Szejna (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) In today's vote, I supported the adoption of a resolution intended to improve the situation of Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Charter for Small Enterprises will contribute to the development of the Polish economy, as well as the European economy as a whole.

Currently, over 100 million European jobs are provided by small and medium-sized enterprises. They are the drivers of their economies. It is my view that especially today, at a time of economic crisis, the resolution emphasises the need to support the regulations introduced in the Charter.

Restoring the EU's financial situation will require more than assistance to large financial institutions. We need above all to take specific action to support small and medium-sized enterprises; action which will enable them to deal with imperfect markets and will make it easier for them to do business.

Obviously, the Charter for Small Enterprises will not solve their problems. But it will formulate the principles ensuring equal treatment of SMEs, and bring in the initial framework of a policy aimed at enterprises.

#### – Joint motion for a resolution: EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports (RC B6-0619/2008)

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of the joint resolution tabled by six political groups on the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. I agree with the principles according to which it is necessary to prevent irresponsible arms transfers by the strict application of the Code's criteria to both companies and national armed forces, and to prevent illegal arms trafficking by calling on all Member States that have not yet done so to transpose into their national legislation the 2003 EU common position on the control of arms brokering. We must encourage the conducting of investigations into violations of arms embargoes and improve the quality of the data submitted by the Member States in the context of the Annual Report on the Code of Conduct. That said, let us not be naïve – in this complex and dangerous world in which we live, these subjects are sensitive, and that is why I rose up to oppose the oral amendment tabled by Mr Pflüger. In my eyes it is too quick to make a link between the Code of Conduct, the implementation of the future Directive on intra-Community transfers of defence-related goods, and the control of arms exports.

**Glyn Ford (PSE)**, *in writing*. – I strongly support this resolution. The adoption of a common position on the Code of Conduct on Arms Exports to third countries is vital for the orderly implementation of the future Directive on intra-Community transfers of defence-related goods and for an official control of arms exports.

It is true that we need a solid legal base for this Code of Conduct that will allow us to look again at the current arms embargo against China. There are still difficulties with Beijing, but they should not be bracketed on this issue between Burma and Zimbabwe.

**Pedro Guerreiro (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Within the framework of the current arms race and militarisation of international relations, in which the US, NATO and EU are playing a central role, any initiative that – even if in a limited and insufficient way – contributes to restricting arms exports will be a step in the right direction.

However, what characterises the EU is its option of giving new impetus to the 'Europe of Defence' (a euphemism for intervention and aggression), reaffirming its 'goal of strengthening the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO' and adapting it to current needs, in a spirit of complementing and strengthening each other.

You only have to look at the draft conclusions of the European Council of 11 and 12 December regarding the strengthening of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – which prepares the position of the great powers of the EU for the NATO Summit of April next year – which offers the prospect of a qualitative leap in the so-called 'European Security Strategy' (of 2003) and the establishment of new goals for 'strengthening and optimising European capabilities' over the next 10 years, 'to enable the EU, in the coming

years, to conduct simultaneously, outside its territory, a series of civilian missions and military operations of varying scope, corresponding to the most likely scenarios'.

**Athanasios Pafilis (GUE/NGL), in writing.** – (EL) At a time when EU workers pay extravagant amounts to fund defence programmes and to develop military research, at a time when the EU arms industry is growing and the 'legal' sales of all types of weapons that are produced return huge profits to the companies, at a time when the EU as a whole is continually being militarised, at a time when the people are suffering under the new order in which the EU is actively participating with the USA and NATO, we can only consider ironic the discussion and the request tabled for the approval of a common EU position and the adoption of measures for the implementation of the so called EU Code of Conduct on arms exports.

The increase in imperialistic aggression and competition, which will be fed even more by the capitalistic financial crisis, has led to an increase in military spending which has even surpassed that of the cold war era. From this point of view, the effort to enforce regulations regarding arms export is an attempt to mock and deceive the people.

The response of the workers of the EU should be to fight against EU militarisation, the European Union army and the defence programmes, to stand united and fight a warmongering EU.

– **Report: Bart Staes (A6-0427/2008)**

**Jean-Pierre Audy (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (FR) I voted in favour of the own-initiative report by my Belgian fellow Member, Mr Staes, on the European Court of Auditors' special report No 8/2007 concerning administrative cooperation in the field of value added tax (VAT). While we should welcome this Court of Auditors' special report, its conclusions are worrying in many respects, particularly in the light of the observations that Regulation (EC) No 1798/2003 on administrative cooperation in the field of value added tax is not an effective administrative cooperation tool, given that several Member States are standing in the way of its implementation and that the Commission's role is limited. It is vital, however, that the Commission starts infringement proceedings against Member States that delay the transfer of information. The Commission's proposals to amend the VAT Directive and the Regulation on administrative cooperation in the field of VAT are a good thing. I support the creation of a task force made up of the competent Commission services, the Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union, and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

**David Martin (PSE), in writing.** – I welcome this report, which paves the way for collective action from Europe as regards obtaining accurate figures relating to VAT fraud, and what it costs Britain each year.

– **Report: Zita Gurmai (A6-0435/2008)**

**Robert Atkins (PPE-DE), in writing.** – I and my British Conservative colleagues are fully supportive of improving the position of women in all aspects of society. We believe that women should have equal opportunities in many of the areas identified in the report. We also believe in women playing a full role in politics. We understand there are specific issues to be resolved in the context of the Balkans and urge the national authorities to take steps to improve opportunities for women.

However, we are concerned at the call for quotas, which we believe is not the way forward for women or men. Also, we do not support the establishment of the European Institute for Gender Equality.

**Alessandro Battilocchio (PSE), in writing.** – (IT) I voted in favour of the report. Achieving gender equality is an essential condition for all of the countries that are candidates for accession to the Union. The Balkans' turbulent history makes taking action, as well as monitoring the situation, more difficult. Although the democratisation process is making progress, much still remains to be done. In the Eastern Balkans, many women still suffer from discrimination and live in physically unsafe and economically and socially insecure conditions. The regulatory framework should therefore be further improved.

In this respect, ratification of UN Convention 1979 on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) can no longer be delayed. By eliminating all forms of violence and inequality, our goal must be to guarantee women their right, not only to be equal to men, but also to express, with no restriction whatsoever, all the complexity and richness of womanhood, in every aspect of their life.

**Adam Bielan (UEN)**, *in writing*. – (PL) I have supported Mrs Gurmai's report describing the situation of women in the Balkans, because it raises vital issues which, regrettably, do not concern that region alone, and are not isolated cases.

The most urgent issue is to stop the wave of crimes against women. Domestic violence, sexual exploitation and above all trafficking in women and children are common occurrences today.

**Charlotte Cederschiöld, Christofer Fjellner and Gunnar Hökmark (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (SV) We have chosen to vote in favour of the report, as it deals with several very important issues relating to the situation of women in the Balkans. However, we would like to make it clear that we are opposed to demands to introduce quotas. How political parties and national parliaments choose to organise themselves is not something that should be decided by the EU, but by the parties and parliaments themselves.

**Edite Estrela (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (PT) I voted in favour of the Gurmai report on the situation of women in the Balkans, because it calls attention to the fact that, in spite of economic growth, the women of this part of Europe continue to face countless forms of discrimination.

I think that the various recommendations of this report, if put into practice, are a model for changing the current situation, promoting greater social protection and stimulating greater participation by the women of these countries. This is the case with those measures aimed at combating the scourge of domestic violence and unequal pay; positive discrimination measures, such as the quota system, and infrastructure for caring for children and the elderly, with a view towards helping to eliminate restrictions on access to the labour market for these women, and so on.

I should also like to underline the importance that the report gives to investment in education as a means of drastically reducing stereotyping and helping to prepare future generations for a more fair and equitable society.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – I warmly welcome Ms. Gurmai's report which does much to document the progress of women's rights in the Western Balkans. The ideal of gender equality is one to which we, as Parliamentarians, must be fully committed and do all in our power to support. The establishment of equal relations between men and women is essential to securing full human rights and I trust that this will advance further in the context of meeting the acquis.

I note with concern the disproportionate dangers to which women are exposed with regard to domestic violence, trafficking and forced prostitution. I fully support issues related to combating trafficking in human beings and discrimination against Roma women, and would look most favourably on the aggressive tackling by each of the countries of the Western Balkans.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL)**, *in writing*. – (PT) Although there are aspects of the general political view of the region to which we do not fully subscribe, we are in agreement with the importance given to the role of women and the need to guarantee equal rights and equal possibilities of participating in the labour market. These are indispensable for women's economic independence, for national economic growth and for the fight against poverty, to which women are more vulnerable than men.

As is established in the report, women were disproportionately affected by cuts in social services and public spending such as health care, child and family care because, as it points out, these non-wage benefits and services which were previously provided enabled women to participate in paid employment and consequently to reconcile work and family life.

However, special measures are necessary now, aimed at preventing the feminisation of 'lower paid' sectors, including rural areas, the existence of the 'gender pay gap' and the need to create good quality, accessible and reasonably priced infrastructure for caring for children and the elderly. The importance of physically and psychologically rehabilitating women victims of the war stands out.

**David Martin (PSE)**, *in writing*. – I welcome this report, which reveals current problems relating to the situation of women in the Balkans, such as the lack of up-to-date statistics about gender equality. The report highlights the fact that these countries are often source countries for human trafficking, poverty and the domestic pay gap.

**Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – The situation of women in the Balkan states needs to be addressed as accession talks continue to progress. As my party, the EPP-ED, was founded on the ideals of equality and justice for all people, I believe that it is the role of the European Parliament to act as a defender of the basic

fundamental rights that we believe should be guaranteed to all human beings, especially in the various candidate countries. It is obvious that true democracy can only exist when all citizens of a nation are given equal rights and equal opportunities. The political, economic, and social context of the situation of women in the Balkan states is lagging. As a doctor, I see this as especially important in the realm of women's health, as gender discrimination creates a severe lack of progress in medical areas like cervical cancer, breast cancer, and psychological rehabilitation for sexual violence. I urge the European Parliament to act responsibly, in order to assure the women of the Balkan states that their voices will be heard.

**Hélène Goudin and Nils Lundgren (IND/DEM), in writing.** – (SV) We share the rapporteur's concern regarding the vulnerability of women in the Balkans. There is clearly a great need to take action to deal with a number of problem areas. We are in favour of several of the wordings that aim to improve equality in the region, access to child care and care for the elderly, the importance of combating stereotypes and discrimination as well as the necessity of those countries that are working towards EU membership fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria.

At the same time, we are critical of how the European Parliament tirelessly seeks to gain influence and political power at the expense of the national parliaments. Clear wordings in the present report also recommend far-reaching interference in the internal affairs of the Balkan States, a development to which the June List is highly opposed.

We are in favour of a number of the intentions both in the Committee's report and in the proposed alternative resolution. After careful consideration, the June List has therefore chosen to vote for the alternative proposed resolution.

**Zita Pleštinšká (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (SK) The EU is endeavouring to improve the situation in the Balkans because establishing a permanent peace in this part of Europe is a matter of great importance to it. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, fratricidal wars, ethnic conflicts, political and economic transformation and the creation of new states caused the Balkan countries to suffer from many traumas. Over the past two decades, they have undergone dramatic changes with the clear objective of becoming members of the EU. Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have become candidate countries. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 are potential candidate countries. The prospect of accession to the EU is a huge motivation for creating policies and plays an important role in the implementation of objectives. For this reason, ensuring women's rights is a key requirement that these countries also need to meet.

Women who have been war victims are active participants in stabilisation and conflict resolution. Women must have equal access to the labour market and quality job opportunities. It is important that they are given a chance to engage in the political process. The same approach should be applied in the media and on the Internet.

I voted for Zita Gurmai's report, which examines gender issues and the situation of women living in the Balkans. I believe that the Commission will provide, among other things, on the basis of the recommendations in this report, pre-accession financial assistance to strengthen women's rights in the Balkans, in particular through NGOs and women's organisations.

**Anna Záborská (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (SK) I have voted for this proposal, despite having reservations over the establishment of quotas. Even though some MEPs firmly believe that this is the best way to ensure the participation of women in political and public life, in my view it constitutes positive discrimination and an undervaluing of women to a certain extent. The participation of women in the democratisation of the Balkan region is essential. Resolving the situation in the Balkans requires a comprehensive vision, involving the contribution of both men and women. Women must have equal access to the labour market, including access to senior positions, and they must be adequately rewarded for their work, at a comparable level to men. If there are legislative obstacles to an equivalent status for men and women they must be removed. We must also seek to amend the negative image of women that has arisen through cultural differences and racial and ethnic discrimination.

In view of the prolonged period of military conflict in the region there is a need to devote special attention to the psychological and physical rehabilitation of women, who have often been the victims of sexual exploitation and violence. Respect for the human rights of both men and women should be the main criterion for any future acceptance of Balkan candidate states into the structures of the EU.



**Bernard Wojciechowski (IND/DEM), in writing.** – (PL) Balkan women have suffered a great deal in recent years. They have experienced war and lost those nearest and dearest to them. Many women have been physically and emotionally scarred. When the war was over, new dangers emerged. I refer to people trafficking, prostitution and pornography, all of which have to be combated.

The difficult situation prevailing in the Balkan states has meant that women, despite accounting for more than half of the population, are still bearing the enormous costs of the crisis. With the exception of Slovenia, women are paid far less than men in those countries. Women have suffered too as a result of budget cuts, mainly in relation to reduced funding for the health and family support services. The European Community should support those countries. It should provide those women with the opportunity to live in dignity, pursuant to the local traditions, religion and culture.

**– Report: Heinz Kindermann (A6-0434/2008)**

**Šarūnas Birutis, in writing.** – (LT) Due to the Council Directive on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC) of 1979 and related protection measures for breeding sites, there has been a disproportionate increase in the cormorant population, which has now spread far beyond the normal breeding sites into areas where these birds were not previously found.

This surplus in many regions of the European Union has had a direct impact on local fish populations and fisheries, so cormorants have become a European-scale problem. Cormorants consume 400–600 grams of fish daily, and they catch more than 300 000 tonnes of fish in European waters in one year. In many Member States, this equals several times the quantity of food-grade fish supplied by the professional inland and fisheries sector. Taken together, the aquaculture fish production of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic will be less than 300 000 tonnes.

Given the great mobility of cormorants, as migratory birds, it appears that European-wide coordinated action or a management plan is the only way to achieve the objective, and this should in no way be seen as opposing the Directive of 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE), in writing.** – The report presented by MEP Kinderman has an EU wide cormorant Management Plan as its main subject. The cormorant feeds exclusively on fish and because of its large population (estimated at 1.8 million in Europe) its impact on local fish stocks, both wild and in aquaculture developments, is considerable. The cormorant is covered by the Birds Directive and there has been much discussion in recent years on how to resolve the conflict of considerable impact on fisheries. Some member states have adopted individual plans, but I am of the opinion, like the rapporteur, that the only effective solution is an EU wide cormorant Management Plan, for example, research into immuno contraception?

**Duarte Freitas (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (PT) The adoption of a European Cormorant Management Plan appears to be the most viable solution for reducing the damaging effect that these animals have on fishery resources in some regions of the EU. Cormorants, with a daily consumption of 400-600 g of fish, take more than 300 000 t of fish from European waters every year, representing a total of fish greater than the combined aquaculture production of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Although primary responsibility in this field rests with Member States and their regional or local authorities, it has already been demonstrated that purely local and/or national measures are not capable of reducing for any length of time the negative impact of cormorants on European fish stocks and fishing. A common, legally binding approach which is accepted and applied throughout Europe is therefore seen as the ideal solution for guaranteeing the central aims of this directive, particularly the 'good conservation status' of the species of bird in question, as well as a diverse group of species of fish. The defence of the legitimate interest of fishermen and fish farmers in the economic use of fish stocks is another factor, no less important, which could be safeguarded by an approach of this sort ...

*(Explanation cut short under Rule 163 of the Rules of Procedure)*

**Mikel Irujo Amezaga (Verts/ALE), in writing.** – (ES) There is very reliable data showing that between 1970 and 1995 the European population of great cormorants overwintering on inland waters grew from less than 10 000 birds to roughly 400 000. Some people are now saying that there are over a million cormorants overwintering on European inland waters, although other researchers consider this a rather inflated figure. In a reply to a written question, Commissioner Dimas announced the preparation of an Action Plan for the related Mediterranean shag, although in my view not enough detail is given about methods for scaring the birds, including carbide cannons. These are among the various measures being taken in this field.

**David Martin (PSE), in writing.** – I support this report, which suggests a coordinated action plan for the whole of Europe to abide by the directive on the conservation of wild birds whilst preserving fish species as well as the interests of fishermen.

**Zita Pleštinšá (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (SK) The population of cormorants in Europe has grown twenty-fold over the past 25 years and is now estimated to comprise almost 1.8 million birds. The impact of cormorants on fish populations has been confirmed in several cases by ichthyological studies, as well as by catch statistics within the EU.

I voted for Heinz Kindermann's report. I made my decision based on a petition by the members and supporters of the Slovak Fishing Union addressed to the EP. In view of the evidence of sustained damage suffered by aquaculture undertakings as a result of the rapidly growing number of cormorants on the territory of the EU, the petition requests a revision of Council Directive 79/409/EEC.

The possibility of granting exceptions for shooting cormorants provided by the current legislation does not provide an adequate instrument for dealing with this issue effectively, since these are very difficult to obtain in practice. Equally, experience shows that non-lethal methods for disturbing cormorants on rivers are inefficient.

The EP calls on the Commission to submit a cormorant population management plan in several stages to be coordinated at the European level, with the aim of reducing the increasing damage to fish populations, fisheries and aquaculture caused by cormorants.

I believe that the EP will help find a solution which, in the interest of preserving fish populations and with a view to the socio-economic importance of fishing, will satisfy fishermen all over Europe, including 1 20 000 active fishermen in Slovakia.

**Luca Romagnoli (NI), in writing.** – (IT) I voted in favour of the proposal to establish a European Cormorant Management Plan to minimise the increasing impact of cormorants on fish stocks, fishing and aquaculture. Indeed, it is of capital importance to reduce the population of these birds, which take more than 300 000 tonnes of fish from European waters each year (equal to the consumption of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic combined). The current situation derives from Directive 79/409/EEC, which has led to a disproportionate growth in the cormorant population. This law has therefore had a direct impact on local fish populations and fishing, with cormorants therefore becoming a problem for Europe. This is why I agree with the rapporteur on the proposal for a coordinated action plan or management plan at European level, also bearing in mind the very considerable mobility of the cormorant as a migratory bird, provided that it by no means runs counter to the aims of the Wild Birds Directive of 1979.

**Catherine Stihler (PSE), in writing.** – I raised some initial reservations about the Kindermann report, in particular whether or not an EU-wide plan was necessary given that cormorants do not present problems EU-wide, and the reference to listing the cormorant as a huntable species in Annex II of the Birds Directive. The reference to listing cormorants as a huntable species was removed in committee and the final report pushes for the development of guidelines, better data and monitoring, and more debate.

On this basis, I support Mr Kindermann's report.

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

## **10. Action taken on Parliament's positions and resolutions: see Minutes**

## **11. Decisions concerning certain documents: see Minutes**

## **12. Forwarding of texts adopted during the sitting: see Minutes**

## **13. Dates of forthcoming sittings: see Minutes**

## **14. Adjournment of the session**

**President.** – I declare the session of the European Parliament adjourned.

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*(The sitting was closed at 12.50 p.m.)*