

# MONDAY, 2 FEBRUARY 2009

IN THE CHAIR: MR PÖTTERING

*President*

*(The sitting was opened at 5.05 p.m.)*

## 1. Resumption of the session

**President.** – I declare resumed the session adjourned on Thursday, 15 January 2009.

## 2. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting: see Minutes

## 3. Composition of Parliament: see Minutes

## 4. Verification of credentials: see Minutes

## 5. Composition of committees and delegations: see Minutes

## 6. Interpretation of the Rules of Procedure: see Minutes

## 7. Documents received: see Minutes

## 8. Texts of agreements forwarded by the Council: see Minutes

## 9. Lapsed written declarations: see Minutes

## 10. Oral questions and written declarations (submission): see Minutes

## 11. Petitions: see Minutes

## 12. Order of business

**President.** – The final version of the draft agenda for this part-session as drawn up by the Conference of Presidents at its meeting of Thursday, 29 January 2009, pursuant to Rules 130 and 131 of the Rules of Procedure, has been distributed. The following amendments have been proposed:

*Monday:* Mrs Roure has withdrawn her request for a brief presentation of her report (A6-0024/2009) on minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees in the Member States. The report will therefore be put to the vote on Thursday.

*Thursday:* The Union for Europe of the Nations Group has requested that the item on the situation in the Philippines be replaced with an item entitled 'Refusal of the extradition from Brazil of Cesare Battisti'.

**Roberta Angelilli, on behalf of the UEN Group.** – *(IT)* Mr President, having consulted many of my fellow Members, I would ask you for an amendment to the agenda just as you have said. Specifically, I would ask if the Battisti affair can be included as an urgent matter.

As a matter of fact, a few days ago, the Brazilian Government decided to refuse to extradite the terrorist Cesare Battisti, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment for committing four murders, and granted this killer the status of political refugee. This decision, as well as being an affront to the institutions and to Italian justice, is an insult to the memory of the victims and to their families, and has outraged public opinion.

That is the reason for this request that, among other things, I believe should be heard, and because the request initially came from the highest public officials in Italy, starting with the President of the Republic, Mr Napolitano. That is therefore the reason for the request.

*(Parliament approved the request.)*

*(The order of business was adopted thus amended.)*

### 13. One-minute speeches on matters of political importance

**President.** – The next item is one-minute speeches on matters of political importance.

**Csaba Sógor (PPE-DE).** – (HU) In the Intergroup for Regional and Minority Languages we have drawn up a report for the purpose of protecting traditional national minorities. Why is this important? Many of the new Member States, among them Romania, for instance, have no legislation for minorities. Last year we witnessed uniformed policemen beating up civilians in Slovakia. Ever since the new government took office in Romania, we have noticed that the symbols of minorities are being removed, that it is seen as a problem if someone speaks more than one language, and that several hundred children were accidentally left out of school enrolment. This is why we think it important for the European Parliament to produce a report, a resolution, guaranteeing the protection of minorities, the protection of traditional ethnic minorities. Thank you very much, Mr President.

**Iliana Malinova Iotova (PSE).** – (BG) Ladies and gentlemen, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the natural gas supply cut in January resulted in heavy losses for a few European countries, especially Bulgaria.

The direct losses for the Bulgarian economy for just a few days amounted to more than EUR 230 million, which is equal to the amount needed to start the Nabucco project. This has left our economy in a precarious state and has forced us to seek cooperation in order to reopen the blocks at the Kozloduy nuclear power station.

The dialogue on this must be reasonable and calm, and based on good analysis. The solutions are difficult, however, let us not prejudge them and dismiss them outright, as the Commission has unfortunately signalled.

I consider that Bulgaria and some of the worst affected countries must have the opportunity to gain additional funding from the European Development Plan, and not just a minimal share of the EUR 20 million which has already been allocated for gas projects. It is inexplicable that the worst affected country should receive the least amount at a stage when almost EUR 3.5 million will be allocated for energy projects.

We will shortly start the discussion on energy strategy. I call upon all Members to show that we have a vision for energy independence, that on the verge of elections we can overcome our political differences, and that we can protect the solidarity and mutual assistance that has joined us together.

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE).** – (ET) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the Czech Presidency began one month ago, but it has already managed to spit in our faces and insult us with its gift: Estonia is covered with a hammer and sickle, there is a drunken man on the floor of a Finnish sauna, Germany has a swastika, Italy has football players holding balls near their genitals, Bulgaria is covered with toilets, etc. etc. This is how the artist who made the Czech Republic's gift to the European Union portrayed the nations and countries of the European Union in his work.

Art can and often must shock, but is the mocking of another country and people the most fitting way to do so? The Czech Government speaks of the artist's freedom of expression: true, but here that freedom has definitely been used in the wrong context. The government is apparently not permitted to interfere with the artist's creative freedom: this is also true but, in giving this gift, the Czech Government has accepted the message that this gift conveys, and, as the gift-giver, it, and not the artist, must now bear responsibility for the consequences. It is difficult to understand how the leadership of the Czech Republic can consider itself entitled to insult other Member States.

As a representative elected from Estonia, I expect an answer and an apology from the country that holds the presidency, so that I may relay it to the Estonian people. Unfortunately, none of the representatives of the presidency are here, but I believe that my request will reach them.

**Ewa Tomaszewska (UEN).** – (PL) Mr President, five thousand juggernauts drive through the town of Augustów every day. Every day children go to school, walking along the side of the road itself, because there is no footpath. Almost every day one of them dies under the wheels of a juggernaut. Eco-terrorists have blocked construction of a bypass, in the name of protecting birds from noise. For every week that this development is held up, one of the children of Augustów has to pay with his or her life. Neither the eco-terrorists nor the judges of the European Court of Justice send their own children under the wheels of juggernauts. The lives of the children of Augustów are, however, being accorded less importance than the well-being of birds.

I am a supporter of care for the environment and of action to protect nature. However, when human life is involved, we must not squander it so heartlessly. I will direct a question to the European Commission: how many Polish children have to pay with their lives due to construction of the bypass being blocked? In making the decision, were their lives considered at all?

**Hélène Flautre (Verts/ALE).** – (FR) Mr President, I should like to draw the European Parliament's attention to the deterioration – if such a thing were still possible – of the human rights situation in Tunisia.

Since 11 December, Sihem Bensedrine, a well-known human rights defender and editor-in-chief of *Kalima*, has been the subject of press harassment and slanderous remarks that are absolutely intolerable and incompatible with the rule of law.

On 23 January, Mr Amin, who is the coordinator of the Maghreb Coordination of Human Rights Organisations, was refused entry into Tunisia.

On 28 January, Radio Kalima, which has been broadcast via satellite since that date, was completely surrounded. Its journalists were imprisoned, and those who came to their aid were manhandled in the street. This radio station is still being surrounded by the Tunisian police, with the result that freedom of information and expression are being undermined.

Tomorrow there will be the appeal hearing of the Gafsa workers, who are fighting against corruption and against their exploitation in this Tunisian coal mining area, with a denial of justice that we saw during the first hearing.

The heads of mission in Tunis are concerned about the situation; they have discussed it, and are perhaps discussing it at this very moment. They were meeting today.

I call on you, Mr President, to take a major political initiative in order to put a stop to these systematic human rights violations in Tunisia.

**President.** – Our new and former colleague Martin Kastler has now arrived too. He tells me he was caught in a traffic jam. There are two ways to avoid being late: either by setting off earlier or by improving the trans-European networks.

**Kyriacos Triantaphyllides (GUE/NGL).** – Mr President, the murder of prisoners of war and of civilians captured during wartime constitutes one of the most severe violations of international law. The third and fourth Geneva Conventions state clearly that such acts fall far below the standards of international law and render the perpetrator liable in the eyes of the international community. It is in this same spirit that Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights declares the taking of life a flagrant violation.

The recent confession by the Turkish actor Attila Olgaç to the murder of 10 Greek Cypriot captives during the Turkish invasion in Cyprus in the summer of 1974 has brought to light once more the crimes committed by Turkey and entails an inescapable responsibility for Turkey to open its archives for the investigation of the fate of all missing persons. The international community, in which the European Union is a significant player, must put all possible pressure on Turkey to comply with international law, the related decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, and all relevant UN resolutions.

**Zita Pleštinšká (PPE-DE).** – (SK) The motto of the Czech Presidency 'Europe without barriers' should not be just a slogan, but must be a clear response to current challenges. The Presidency should deal with the issues that worry European citizens for whom the existing barriers make it impossible to exercise their rights on EU territory.

The European Union has fifty million Europeans with various health problems who in everyday life come up against various difficulties. Many of them have turned to me with requests regarding the need for mutual

recognition of ID cards for severely disabled people. Handicapped citizens cannot use these cards in all EU Member States. As an example, this makes it difficult for them to park their cars in designated parking spaces. I have submitted a question to the Council and to the Commission and I hope that measures to harmonise these cards will be adopted as soon as possible.

'Europe without barriers' must mean the removal of all barriers, including physical, social and architectural barriers, and the prevention of any discrimination against handicapped people.

**Rovana Plumb (PSE).** – (RO) The documents from the meeting on 5 February in Prague mention a debate on the topic of the Barcelona objectives concerning public childcare services, with the emphasis on home childcare. I wonder whether the Czech Presidency is aware of the European Commission report from October 2008, which indicates that more than six million women aged between 25 and 49 state that they are obliged not to work or can only work part-time because of family responsibilities.

Home childcare must not be detrimental to public childcare services. As a social-democrat, I believe that investing in public childcare services is beneficial to society as a whole. I urge the Czech Presidency to consider what assistance can be provided to Member States enabling them to improve their public childcare services from a quantitative and qualitative perspective, especially during the current crisis.

**Bilyana Ilieva Raeva (ALDE).** – (BG) This week a referendum will be held in Switzerland on the free movement of people. The Swiss people will decide whether the agreement between their country and the European Union will be extended both in terms of time and scope, and whether it will include the citizens of Bulgaria and Romania.

With this decision Switzerland will facilitate and define not only how things will develop in the future, in terms of whether we will apply visas and borders, but will also decide whether certain responsible decisions linked to economic development from the last 30 years will continue to be applied in the future as well. The policy of freedom of movement of citizens is a contributor to economic development, both in Switzerland and in the European Union, and also to the improvement of our general standard of living.

I openly hope that the result of this week's referendum in Switzerland will be a positive one, because an opposite, negative result would once again lead this beautiful partnership and cooperation to the barriers which we once had, to restrictions and to all the inconveniences resulting from a lack of agreements.

It is for this reason that I hope that our Swiss friends will support our common future and I invite both Member States of the European Union and the Commission to continue our mutual cooperation with Switzerland in good harmony and with good results for all citizens of the European Union.

**Dariusz Maciej Grabowski (UEN).** – (PL) Mr President, at the meeting in Davos German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for the building of a gas pipeline from Russia to Germany on the Baltic seabed.

Mrs Merkel has once again proven her understanding of European solidarity. Yet the countries of Scandinavia, as well as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland, have expressed reservations and opposition to the gas pipeline project. Mrs Merkel has shown what importance she attaches to the voices of ecologists, who are warning of the threat to the Baltic. For Mrs Merkel there is no significance in the fact that the construction costs will be several times higher than the costs of building an underground pipeline.

I have a question: could it be that, following the example of her predecessor Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, Mrs Merkel was looking for a job with Gazprom? Are the leaders of the German left and the German right aware that by showing this attitude they are undermining the authority, dignity and cohesion of the European Union?

**László Tóké (Verts/ALE).** – (HU) Mr President, according to the Charter of the United Nations, all peoples have the right of self-determination. This also applies to the 1.5-2 million Hungarians in Transylvania. Two years ago the Székely National Council organised an informal referendum on regional autonomy for Székely Land. In this referendum carried out using mobile ballot boxes, in spite of an artificially instigated anti-Hungarian propaganda campaign, 99% of the 210 000 voters asked voted in the affirmative. Recently, a significant number of local governments in Székely Land launched a new initiative for a comprehensive official referendum. The state bodies and their local representatives, the so-called prefects, are making every effort to hinder Székely Land's Hungarians in the peaceful, lawful and democratic expression of their will. I ask Parliament and President Hans-Gert Pötering to keep a close eye on further developments concerning the referendum in Romania, and to extend protection to the local governments that are under threat from the authorities. Thank you.

**Madeleine Jouye de Grandmaison (GUE/NGL).** – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the economic partnership agreement between the Cariforum and the European Union is inaugurating something bad for the outermost regions (ORs) of the French West Indies and Guyana.

Worse still, the agreement on which I will have to give my opinion does not respect the mandate that was set by the European Council, or the European Union's strategy for the Caribbean, or its strategy for the ORs, all three of which explicitly mention the need for the regional integration of the ORs within the Cariforum and for the creation of an interregional market between these two parties, aimed at the overall development of the region.

I am concerned. For 10 days now a terrible strike has been taking place in Guadeloupe, bringing everything to a standstill, oil included. This strike is lasting so long because the people of the French West Indies and Guyana are suffering from the cost of living, which is one and a half times higher than in metropolitan Europe. Although this has so far been a purely French problem, it has now in fact become a European one, and the Commission's refusal to negotiate a specific OR-Cariforum agreement for us is in my view a disgrace.

**Georgios Georgiou (IND/DEM).** – (EL) Mr President, recently we have heard about, we have read about and we have seen civilians being bombed and children being exterminated. Recently we saw a gentleman from Turkey who admitted in public that, during the invasion of Cyprus by Turkey in 1974, he murdered 10 handcuffed Greek Cypriot soldiers. What we have not seen, Mr President, is a willingness on the part of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, a willingness which was so evident when it came to those involved in events in Yugoslavia; the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is still chasing them. Consequently, I think that it is a legitimate demand for us to ask Parliament to tell us if there is a list of countries which come within the jurisdiction of The Hague Court or if there are countries which are indifferent to and dismissive of this Court. I think that our demand to know which countries and citizens are being brought before the Court in The Hague as defendants and which are not is a legitimate demand.

**Pál Schmitt (PPE-DE).** – (HU) Thank you for the floor, Mr President. I asked to speak because of a tragic accident that occurred three days ago in Croatia. An 18-year-old man stepped on a landmine and became one of the already numerous victims, among them Italian, Dutch and other European fellow citizens. Croatia is not party to the comprehensive mine clearance programme being financed by the Commission from 2008 to 2013, and yet the number of such mines that have been deployed is unknown. Though Croatia has never produced any mines of this sort, there are life-threatening antipersonnel mines along some 1 000 kilometres of its territory. I respectfully ask the Commission and you, Mr President, to intervene so that Croatia may also benefit from European aid – just like Bosnia, Ukraine, Kosovo and Cyprus – since this is an extremely costly and highly dangerous operation. I have been speaking in my capacity as Chairman – on the EU side – of the EU-Croatia Joint Parliamentary Committee. Thank you very much for the floor.

**Katerina Batzeli (PSE).** – (EL) Mr President, demonstrations by farmers in Greece, together with other demonstrations in Europe, are sending out important messages of change in current perceptions about farming and the food issue, by demanding the reform of European and national policies. When, at European level, economies are collapsing, all confidence has been lost in the financial system, small and medium-sized enterprises are gradually disappearing and employment is shrinking, we cannot turn a blind eye to the problems accumulating in the countryside, in farming, in the rural economy and in regional employment. It would be a good idea for the Commission and Parliament to start a dialogue and to present proposals in a bid to deal with the problems, not only so that small and medium-sized farms survive, but also to get them out of the crisis over coming years, to activate the intervention mechanism and to strengthen the crisis management mechanism – so that even loss of income can be covered – and national policies, which could be made more flexible without this necessarily meaning cofinancing of the common agricultural policy.

**Eugenijus Gentvilas (ALDE).** – (LT) European leaders recently expressed the view that they were disappointed with the leaders of Ukraine and Georgia. They are beginning to doubt whether they can democratise those states and lead them into NATO and the European Union. Such views and talk can only support Russia's policies and its special forces. Right before our very eyes we can see Russian provocations whose goal is to weaken President Yushchenko, President Saakashvili and the West-oriented policies they are implementing. There are invisible provocations as well. The best way to see how they are organised would be to examine the KGB archives. Only naive politicians in contemporary Europe can believe that Russia no longer carries out such blackmail and provocations, even though it is led by KGB officer Putin. The latest information provocation is that Georgia kidnapped a Russian soldier. It was fed to Europe all week. Later Russia admitted that the soldier himself had in fact deserted, but the black propaganda had already done its damage. One gets the impression that Russia is playing games with tanks, gas pipelines, information and misinformation

brilliantly. However, it is above all the naivety of European politicians which allows Russia to play such games.

**Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka (UEN).** – (PL) Mr President, taking advantage of the fact that the attention of world public opinion is now focused on questions related to the economic crisis, the Chinese authorities have used their extensive apparatus of oppression to increase pressure on the Tibetans. The campaign, which is to last 40 days, is directed mainly against the participants in last year's protests.

Summonses to police stations are increasing, as are disappearances, incidents of intimidation and unexplained deaths. We cannot exclude the possibility that one consequence of the repression will be expressions of unrest from the Tibetans, who will be driven to take extreme measures. The Chinese security services and army will respond by brutally pacifying these protests, and it may turn out that we are dealing with deliberate provocation from the Chinese authorities, who will be counting on the fact that even democratic governments will restrict themselves only to tentative protests during the common struggle with the economic crisis. The European Parliament should express itself clearly and decidedly on this question, and therefore today I will permit myself to submit a draft of an appeal to the Prime Minister of China. Let us together send a signal to the communist regime that we do not consent to the violation of basic rights of the people of Tibet.

**Nicolae Vlad Popa (PPE-DE).** – (RO) The European Commission has declared 2009 as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. Creative thinking is the key to success in a global economy, a fact recognised by the European Union a long time ago. Indeed, innovation is an integral part of both the Commission's climate change package and the plan for revitalising the European economy. For its part, the European Parliament must become more actively involved in promoting creativity as a driving force for innovation. Last year the energy and climate change package was adopted and the written declaration on fibromyalgia was approved for which I would like to thank you once again. These documents pave the way for innovation and creativity in areas of paramount importance such as health, by identifying new treatments for fibromyalgia, and energy, by making the new alternative energy sources more efficient.

**Alexandra Dobolyi (PSE).** – (HU) Mr President, Hungary, too, entered the Schengen area on 21 December 2007, and yet there are certain issues that have still not been settled on the Austro-Hungarian border. The Burgenland authorities are not really speaking to us. Therefore, in June 2008, my Hungarian compatriots submitted a petition to the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions, which we immediately forwarded to Commissioner Jacques Barrot. Mr Barrot eventually responded, four months later, saying that he did not have sufficient information regarding the petition and that they would try to contact the person who submitted it. Two months after this reply, I myself contacted the person who submitted the petition and asked how things stood. I was told that to date no one from the Commission had been in touch; this does indeed make it difficult for the Commission to obtain information. When I went back to the Commission staff, I was told that they would examine the matter 'within the best delay'. I would like to ask the Commission what the expression 'within the best delay' means, and I would like to express my hope that the campaign for the elections due to be held four months from now will not likewise be conducted by Mr Barroso and Mr Jacques Barrot 'within the best delay'. Thank you very much.

**Viktória Mohácsi (ALDE).** – (HU) Thank you, Mr President. Ladies and gentlemen, here is a one-minute rapid snapshot of the still rampant European racism. In Hungary, a few days ago, a police chief constable who had made a racist statement was acquitted and then reinstated after reference was made to a supposed internal investigation. The investigation did not address the question of whether or not the racist statement had in fact been made. In Romania, in the municipality of Târlungeni, near Braşov, a wall has been erected between the Roma and non-Roma families. In response to a question from a local child asking why they are being separated, the father may perhaps reply: because those living on this side of the wall are bad people, while those on the other side are good people. Ten days ago we voted to adopt the report of the delegation to Italy; since then, a week ago, Italy deployed armed forces against the Roma after two crimes committed by persons unknown. The police forces are sweeping through Roma families with helicopters, dogs and armed police officers. Thank you very much.

**Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL).** – (PT) The number of workers affected by unemployment in Portugal is growing exponentially. Every day, companies announce cutbacks in production, layoffs of workers or even complete closure.

Amongst the most serious cases is the threat hanging over around 2 000 workers at Qimonda, in Vila do Conde, following the declaration of bankruptcy of the parent company in Germany. On Wednesday, a

delegation of workers from both countries will be here in Parliament, expecting solidarity and also our support in their fight to defend their jobs.

However, the scandal of delays in payment of wages and other remuneration owed to workers is also increasing, as is happening in cork companies, some textile companies, and the ceramics and metallurgy sectors, amongst others. This situation is creating serious social problems, increasing poverty and even causing tragic situations in cases of members of the same family working in the company. I was able to ascertain this only days ago at Subercor, a company based in Santa Maria da Feira (part of the Suberus group, in the footwear sector), where workers are struggling because they are not receiving their wages and there are couples who are going hungry and already have no food for their children. These are terrible situations caused by the crisis which is devastating us, the consequences of which can be seen in human faces and people's lives. I therefore appeal not only for solidarity but for these serious problems to be solved.

**Kinga Gál (PPE-DE).** – (HU) Mr President, popular opinion in Hungary has been following with great interest the developments in the water cannon case in Hungary, and would like to have a clear view of the issue as soon as possible. We request the Commission's assistance in this matter. This issue concerns the fact that the Hungarian Government continued throughout 2006-2007-2008 to hold to the view that it had purchased new water cannons at the expense of the Schengen Fund, and that these were used in Budapest on 22 October 2007 to disperse the crowds. At the end of 2008, the Minister for Justice and Law Enforcement stated that this purchase was not paid out of the Schengen Fund, which is an EU resource. The competent European Commissioner confirmed that the cannons had not been purchased out of the Schengen Fund. A day later, a secretary of state at the same Ministry stated that the Hungarian Government had covered the purchase of the water cannons from the domestic sources of the Schengen Fund, contradicting the European Commission. My question is: has the Commission looked into whether the Schengen Fund was used in this case as intended, and has it sought to ascertain the truth with regard to the water cannon purchase? After these events, the credibility and transparency of the actions not only of the Hungarian Government, but also of the European Commission, are at stake. Thank you very much.

**Glyn Ford (PSE).** – Mr President, last Monday the British Government announced feasibility studies into five tidal-power schemes in the Severn Estuary: three would be barrages and two would be lagoons.

The EU has rightly set ambitious targets for renewable energy, but the idea that achieving these targets will be pain-free is a delusion. The Severn barrage could supply up to 5% of the UK's energy needs, yet this would challenge interpretations of the Habitats Directive.

The result of legal arguments – or public opinion – blocking the scheme would be to prove the truth of Nietzsche's dictum that madness is rare in individuals, but common in parties, groups and organisations. The EU and the British Government should ponder Jeremy Bentham's philosophy that we should look for the greatest good for the greatest number.

**Margaritis Schinas (PPE-DE).** – (EL) Mr President, it has taken a long time to release the Balkans from unproductive nationalism which is out of step with European standards of behaviour and values. It would appear, however, that some people need to hear this message again. In October 2008, the government of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia filed an application for Community financing for Corridor 10, which crosses its territory. Just two months later, in a scandalous decision which was even published in that country's official gazette, they decided to name this route 'Alexander the Great of Macedon', thereby blatantly insulting the interim agreement with Greece, which makes express provision for the avoidance of government propaganda and the use of symbols which incite hostility, hatred and violence. I call on the European Commission to link the application for Community financing with the repeal of this scandalous decision, which reminds us that there are still nationalists in the Balkans. We are building a Europe in which there is no room for nationalism.

**Evgeni Kirilov (PSE).** – (BG) Last Wednesday the European Commission announced its proposal regarding the programme for reconstruction in the field of energy security.

In line with this proposal Bulgaria is to receive only a share of the EUR 20 million earmarked for the project linking Bulgaria with Greece. Only a share of EUR 20 million earmarked from billions for projects! In my country in these instances we have a saying: 'The mountain laboured and brought forth a mouse'. All this after a big gas crisis!

As you know, Bulgaria was most seriously affected and is the only country completely reliant on Russian gas. It is officially said that ready-to-go projects are being financed, but suspicions have arisen. The crucial

project that Bulgaria has proposed for the expansion of the Chiren gas storage facility can be finalised within only a few months. If it lacks support, Bulgaria will take on this project independently, but where does that leave European solidarity and justice?

Again last week an influential European journal wrote that, as a result of this crisis, support in Bulgaria for Eurosceptics will rise to 20%. I hope that this is not an accurate calculation. However, if the Commission continues with such behaviour towards Bulgaria, it will make a decisive contribution towards this.

**Jim Higgins (PPE-DE).** - Mr President, two and a half years ago, I found out that the European Commission had initiated proceedings against Denmark in the European Court of Justice because Denmark had introduced a 2% threshold for hydrogenated fats in food. The Commission did this even though there was scientific evidence to the contrary, which showed in fact that hydrogenated acids are extremely difficult from the point of view of coronary disease etc. Two years ago, therefore, I decided – in conjunction with two of our colleagues, Dan Jørgensen and Linda McAvan – to draft a written declaration. We were supported by 254 Members of Parliament from 25 different Member States, which was huge support.

Recently, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety published a report which gave the maximum level as 2%, which is exactly what Denmark was doing. Therefore, on the basis of the medical and scientific evidence, I call on the Commission now to adopt fully the 2% threshold, which Denmark's system introduced and which is recommended in this report from the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

**Ljudmila Novak (PPE-DE).** – (SL) I once again note with regret that, whereas the status of the Italian and Hungarian minorities in Slovenia has been regulated in an exemplary manner and each minority has its own representative in the Slovenian Parliament, Slovenian minorities do not enjoy the same kind of support in the countries in which they live.

Despite the treaty signed in Budapest, there is no political will in Hungary to allow the Slovenian minority to have its own representative in parliament. Moreover, the latest reports indicate that the only Slovenian museum in Hungary is to be closed down because of funding cuts. Yet this museum is the Slovenian minority's only centre of cultural life in Hungary and has received only EUR 16 000 in funding.

While Slovenia earmarks EUR 14.5 million a year for its Hungarian minority, Hungary earmarks a mere EUR 400 000 a year for its Slovenian minority. For this reason, we justifiably expect the Hungarian Government to improve its financial and political support for the Slovenian minority. The financial crisis cannot be used as an excuse to cut funding allocated to minorities, whether in Hungary, Italy or anywhere else.

**Atanas Paparizov (PSE).** - Mr President, in spite of the agreement between the Greek authorities and farmers, the farmers are still blocking the cross-border traffic road between Bulgaria and Greece at the Kulata-Promachonas crossing. The continuing 14-day blockade of border crossing points between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic of Greece has caused considerable financial losses to the Bulgarian hauliers.

I and 14 other Bulgarian Members of the European Parliament have sent a written question to the Commission on the measures taken under Regulation (EC) No 2679/98. We acknowledge the fundamental rights and freedoms of European citizens. However, we are convinced that this Regulation should be significantly improved so as to avoid another case of continuous blockade of transport between Member States in total breach of the fundamental principles of the internal market, such as free movement of goods and persons.

#### IN THE CHAIR: Diana WALLIS

*Vice-President*

**Anne Laperrouze (ALDE).** – (FR) Madam President, nine days ago the regions of Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrénées and Languedoc-Roussillon were hit hard by Storm Klaus.

The damage is extensive, and I call for these regions to receive emergency European aid. I have in mind, in particular, the European Union's Solidarity Fund, but also the Structural Funds and the Rural Development Fund, and I am also thinking about the authorisation of state aid.

I should like to draw your attention, ladies and gentlemen, to the fact that, in May 2005, the European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Berend on the reform of the Solidarity Fund, in order to extend its



scope. The matter is currently at a standstill within the Council of Ministers. It is imperative that there be a positive outcome to it soon.

European citizens expect the European Union to protect them and to offer them practical assistance. Allowing these French regions to receive emergency aid, but also seeing through the reform of the Solidarity Fund, would represent, in the eyes of Europeans, cast-iron guarantees that the European Union's duty and purpose is to be at their side in difficult situations.

**Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Madam President, farmers with small and medium-sized holdings have been on the streets for a fortnight in a fight which has shaken the entire country. The common agricultural policy, which is jointly formulated and implemented by Greek governments, and agreements within the framework of the World Trade Organization have resulted in a reduction in agricultural output, in a drastic cut in the income of farmers with small and medium-sized holdings and in their speedier eradication. Greece's agricultural balance of trade has gone from being in the black to being in the red to the tune of approximately EUR 3 billion for 2008 alone. Instead of meeting the basic demands of small and medium-sized farms, the New Democracy government is trying to mislead them with meaningless announcements and, at the same time, is mobilising the special forces in order to suppress their fight. The Communist Party of Greece and the workers support the fight of small and medium-sized farms against the common agricultural policy and the entire anti-grassroots policy of the European Union and bourgeois governments. They also support their demand for guaranteed minimum prices for agricultural and livestock products, which will cover the production costs and improve the income of small and medium-sized farms.

**Jim Allister (NI).** – Madam President, as the economic crisis deepens, major issues leading to industrial action are emerging in the United Kingdom, flowing from the compulsion for unrestricted free movement of labour within the EU and the procurement requirements in regard to major public contracts, whereby contracts won by foreign companies are resulting in a significant influx of foreign workers, putting local workers and local unemployed at a disadvantage and depriving them of opportunities.

In this, I believe, many will come to see the price being paid by the United Kingdom for EU membership. We are being compelled to subject ourselves to labour market laws and to the supremacy of EU law and the rulings of the European Court of Justice. Procurement policy, which prohibits preferment for local contractors and workers, is stoking up more and more resentment of the EU and its inflexible regime.

**Panayiotis Demetriou (PPE-DE).** – (EL) Madam President, two years ago Parliament adopted a resolution almost unanimously. In this resolution, it called for the fate of the missing persons in Cyprus to be ascertained. Two years have passed and no progress has been made. The Turkish army was asked to give the competent committee all the information in its possession, but nothing has been done in this direction. On the contrary, today we have a public confession by a Turk who was a soldier at the time and who, for reasons of conscience, because he cannot take it anymore, has confessed that he killed 10 Greek Cypriots. The Turkish army knows about both these crimes and about others and, without doubt, there is not a civilised person today, of Turkish or any other nationality, who does not condemn these war crimes. What, however, must we do? We must step up our efforts to persuade the Turkish army to supply information to the competent committee in order to put an end to the suffering of the missing persons' relatives.

**Richard Corbett (PSE).** – Madam President, as you know, there have been widespread protests in my country about an Italian company which has won a contract in an oil refinery in my constituency, and has only used Italian labour for the contract.

The outcry is understandable if indeed the company in question has reserved the right to its own nationals and not allowed British nationals to work. That would be a violation of European Union law (discrimination on grounds of nationality), as it would be if the company were undermining British legal requirements, which it must observe under the Posted Workers Directive.

If, however, the protesters are saying that only British companies should have had the right to tender for that work and only employ British labour, then, of course, the protesters would be making an argument that would not be correct. They should bear in mind that there are over two million British citizens who work in other EU countries, and only a million non-British EU citizens who work in Britain.

The slogan 'British workers for British jobs' must mean enabling British workers to compete in a well-trained way and without suffering discrimination. It cannot mean reserving things solely to the nationality of the country concerned, either in Britain or in any other Member State of the European Union.

**Marco Pannella (ALDE).** – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, in two days' time, I am delighted to say, we will welcome here the President of the Palestinian Authority, in a formal sitting. On that occasion, the President of the Authority is coming to the Chamber of the Europe of homelands that is destroying the European homeland, whereby the Mediterranean is only fit as a tomb for the poor and for those who are condemned to starvation and extermination.

We here represent – look, it is time for nationalist protests, and everyone from all sides should take part – the scourge of the Europe of homelands that is destroying the European homeland and we have a duty to tell Brussels this. In two days' time, a Palestinian will speak. The fact that 80% of Israeli citizens are in favour of Europe, unlike the Jerusalem Government, as the Adenauer Foundation has shown, also shows that even the people of Palestine, Lebanon, the southern Mediterranean and Tunisia are not entitled to move themselves to revolution ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Iosif Matula (PPE-DE).** – (RO) Given the current climate in Europe, guaranteeing energy security is becoming a priority. Diversification of energy transit routes can be guaranteed by interconnecting Europe's gas networks, which also supports solidarity between Member States, one of the European Union's fundamental principles. In addition to the financial contributions made by Romania and Hungary themselves, the European Commission proposed last week the allocation of EUR 30 million for the completion of the Arad-Szeged gas pipeline project, the financing for which has been suspended for more than five years.

This project is of paramount importance. The gas pipeline will not only link Romania and Hungary, but will also provide a connection to the European Union's gas network. Once the pipeline is completed, Romania will be able to both export and import gas on the European market, not only in normal conditions but also in situations where there is a European energy crisis. With this in mind, I am calling on your support so that the Commission's proposal is implemented as quickly as possible.

**Jörg Leichtfried (PSE).** – (DE) Madam President, the meat scandal in Ireland has made waves throughout Europe, including Austria where, as a bizarre consequence of the scandal, Irish meat was sold as Tyrolean bacon. In my view the only solution to this EU-wide problem is a compulsory declaration for fresh meat and meat products, which would contain the following information: place of origin; duration of the animal's journey to the abattoir and from there to the point of sale of the meat; if the meat comes from outside the EU, the country of origin should be specified precisely. In addition, it is high time the European Union had these things checked by inspectors. So that this can indeed be done, I call on the Council, the Commission and you, ladies and gentlemen, to take steps to ensure that European consumers can no longer be misled in this way.

**Jelko Kacin (ALDE).** – (SL) We have seen and heard reports that the long-standing civil war in Sri Lanka is coming to an end. However, it was military predominance, not political achievement or any lasting solution, that drove the Tamil Tigers out of their last major stronghold. This military solution is fraught with problems. We see winners and losers, the losers being the tens of thousands of local civilians who are withdrawing or fleeing in fear of government units.

Experience from the Western Balkans teaches us that military victories and formal cessations of military hostilities are often followed by the killing of the losers or their supposed sympathisers by the winners. Victories can leave a trail of individual, uncontrolled acts of retribution, but frequently also organised killings, which the perpetrators usually seek to conceal.

I am not trying to accuse anyone ahead of time. I am just trying to point out that the European Union must also take immediate action to ensure an international presence and international supervision during this most critical post-conflict period, a period which leaves the civilian population, who are fleeing in fear, in the greatest peril.

**James Nicholson (PPE-DE).** – Madam President, many will be aware of the recent dioxin scare in the Republic of Ireland. Beef farmers in Northern Ireland were also caught up in this problem because they imported the compound feed which caused the problem in their animals. The Northern Ireland Executive has now offered the farmers 25% compensation, which will mean ruin for them. The Executive is having problems finding the matching funds, and will not be able to draw the 37.5% that is available from the European Union. I understand that the Government of the Republic of Ireland has made it clear that it will not be accepting any responsibility, even though the feed mill was licensed by it and under its control. There is also a substantial

amount of infected pigmeat at one plant. This is a very serious and dangerous problem and must be resolved as soon as possible.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (PSE).** – (RO) The European Union is busily preparing to negotiate a post-Kyoto agreement in order to continue reducing the causes of climate change. Member States must gradually reduce their carbon dioxide emissions. European companies must urgently invest in modernising their production installations in energy-intensive industries, to be able to maintain the current level of production, save jobs and protect the environment.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that during the current economic crisis European enterprises are failing to obtain the credits which they very much need to be able to modernise. It is not a case of European enterprises having to produce less, but simply in a more intelligent and environmentally friendly manner. I call on the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and Member States to make the EU's sustainable economic development a priority and to guarantee, through the European economic recovery plan, the conditions required so that European enterprises can modernise and remain competitive in an increasingly tough market.

**Iuliu Winkler (PPE-DE).** – (HU) Thank you very much, Madam President. The European Union faces the challenges of guaranteeing stability and security, improving the prosperity of its citizens and building a common European future. The historical, national and ethnic minorities are of enduring value to a diverse Europe. Respect for the rights of these minorities has not yet been satisfactorily ensured. The existence of documents such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, as well as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, inspires confidence. It is clear that until each Member State of the European Union has ratified these documents, further efforts are needed. Parliament should make it a goal to create a binding framework agreement that will guarantee the protection of national minority communities, recognising that various forms of autonomy and self-determination, based on the principle of subsidiarity, represent reassuring solutions to the situation of minority communities. Thank you very much.

**Véronique Mathieu (PPE-DE).** – (FR) Madam President, allow me to express my full support for the citizens and families affected by Storm Klaus, which hit southern Europe, and particularly south-west France, more than a week ago.

The consequences of the storm are tragic. It caused 11 deaths, more than one and a half million homes have been left without electricity, and 300 000 hectares of forest have been hit, that is to say 40% of the forest in the Landes region. Around 30 to 40 million m<sup>3</sup> of trees have been brought down.

Since 2002 the European Union has been endowed with a Solidarity Fund that enables emergency financial assistance to be given to European regions hit by such natural disasters. The Council of Ministers must – and I shall echo the conclusions of Mrs Laperrouze here – release this Solidarity Fund, and I hope that Parliament will make sure that this happens very soon.

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE-DE).** – (PL) Madam President, we are about to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the beginning of the Round Table Talks in Poland. It was then that rulers and opposition sat down to talks, and to reflect together on the solution to Poland's problems, both problems of an economic and social nature, and also the most important problems of our political system.

The opposition was represented primarily by Solidarity, which was founded in 1980, headed by Lech Wałęsa and the organisation's advisors. On the government side the negotiators were the authorities of the crumbling socialist economic system, the creators of the state of martial law in Poland.

As a result of the Round Table Talks and settlements, elections were held in June 1989, which led to the establishment of the first government led by a non-communist: Tadeusz Mazowiecki. It was that government which showed us that the right direction for Poland to take was not only freedom and democracy, but also integration with the European Union. The changes which took place in my country then triggered the march of many countries of Central and Eastern Europe towards freedom, democracy and integration with the EU.

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

#### 14. Impact assessment of the compromises reached in the Doha negotiations on NAMA and services at the end of July 2008 (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the Commission statement on the impact assessment of the compromises reached in the Doha negotiations on NAMA and services at the end of July 2008.

**Catherine Ashton, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, we are facing the greatest economic challenge for a generation, and in that challenge both developed and developing countries face difficult and very important decisions.

We need a positive effect from globalisation to respond to the negative effects of globalisation. It is my strong belief that, wherever we begin to look at what we need to do, we will end in the conclusion that completing the multilateral trade round – the Doha Round – is of vital importance to us.

I probably do not need to remind honourable Members of what history teaches us about protectionism, the importance of keeping our markets open and the possibility for our businesses to be able to trade across the world. I probably do not need to tell all honourable Members that, simply within the rules of the World Trade Organisation, if countries moved from applying their tariffs the way that they do at the present time to applying them in the way they are allowed to do under the rules, then the cost to trade would be something of the order of EUR 260 billion. I am sure I do not need to remind honourable Members that, as the developing nations consider the future, they are deeply concerned about what will happen to some of the aid that has been available to them so far.

So, in terms of where we are: we know the value of a deal that is now 80% complete and that in July 2008 80% of what needed to be done was done. Within that agreement, the value is of the following order: the gains in the developing countries would be of the order of EUR 12-14 billion annually; there would be new access to emerging markets in emerging countries, such as China; we would have the opportunity in the European Union for new exports, diversified in new ways – for example, in chemicals and textiles – and in services there is a potential for EUR 14 billion of trade. Another fact at the present time is that the non-tariff barriers – the non-tax barriers – in China alone in 2007 cost European Union companies EUR 20 billion. This is a hugely important round.

I have just returned from Davos, where discussions between trade ministers reinforced the need to get back to the negotiating table and, of course, the technical discussions are continuing in Geneva.

We all wait for the new American Administration to review its trade policies, as it currently plans to do, and to reach the same conclusion that we have reached. We look forward to the G20 on 2 April 2009 and the opportunity it affords world leaders in terms of looking to resolve the financial and economic crisis and having the opportunity to discuss again the need to complete the round. Then there are the Indian elections in April or May, which of themselves will be the moment for an existing or a new government to return to this subject.

Of the outstanding issues that were left on the table, there is the special support mechanism, which, in the end, was the issue that prevented the talks from continuing between India and the United States. There are new proposals being considered. A decision is still to be taken on cotton, but again there are proposals on the table. For the United States there are real issues about particular sectors.

There is no doubt there is still much to do, but it is my strong belief that, with political will, all these issues can be resolved, and the alternative is not an option. For us, issues around services are very important and will follow on.

In conclusion, we are at the moment at a particular point where the need to complete this round is very obvious and very clear, and I look forward, on your behalf – as well as that of the Commission – to continuing my efforts to ensure that we do.

**Georgios Papastamkos, on behalf of the PPE-DE Group.** – (EL) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the trade in industrial goods and services is indeed of strategic importance to the European economy. The European Union is, as we all know, the biggest exporter in the world and the main source of direct foreign investment. The European Union is one of the most open markets, while eminent partners of ours maintain high trade barriers. We are seeking a substantial reduction in the tariffs applied and for unjustified, non-tariff barriers to be addressed. In addition to industrially advanced third countries, there are also emerging economies which need to make concessions in proportion to their degree of development

and their sectoral competitiveness. However, Commissioner, the problem is not only one of removing barriers: differences in regulatory systems are generating additional costs for exports, putting European products at a competitive disadvantage compared with imports from countries with more flexible standards and, in many cases, are raising the question of the safety and protection of European consumers. The prolonged failure to reach agreement is exacerbating the climate of economic uncertainty and is damaging the credibility of the multilateral trade system. Bilateral and interregional agreements can only be supplementary in nature. Furthermore, the economic crisis may trigger the erection of unilateral, restrictive or distorting trade barriers. There are already examples of this, of limited scope at present, as the relevant report by the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, Mr Lamy, testifies. The protection clause for US products adopted by the House of Representatives is a step in the same worrying direction. I would say that to return to unilateral approaches is not a solution. Today more than ever we need to manage the challenges jointly, with more positive integration and by establishing or strengthening international regulatory systems with systemic convergence. We need a new international economic architecture. We need more transparent and balanced global trade governance and, on this point, Commissioner, we await an integrated proposal for 'globalisation with a European face' which will take account of the changes already made and of the link between the commercial and economic dimension for a transparent, democratic and efficient Europe in the world at this time of crisis.

**Glyn Ford**, *on behalf of the PSE Group*. – Madam President, we in the Party of European Socialists are committed to a successful outcome of the Doha Development Round, yet the ticking of the political clock has created a situation where, if you like, progress is on hold. Commissioner Ashton made the point that in the United States we have a new, and from my point of view, very welcome, administration in that of President Obama, but we are waiting for a review of trade policy, which may take some time.

In April or May there will be elections in India. The one place Commissioner Ashton did not mention was the European Union itself, where we have our own European Parliament elections in June, and following that a new incoming Commission, in which I hope Commissioner Ashton will continue to serve as Trade Commissioner. Yet that does not mean that there is nothing to do in the interim. Europe must continue to emphasise its commitment to development and free trade within the context of ensuring an end to exploitation and meeting the need for sustainable development.

I agree with Mr Papastamkos: free trade on this basis can be a win-win situation for all participants. The current financial and economic crisis is a reason to move forward and not to retreat.

Commissioner Ashton and the Commission can try to prepare the ground for a compromise between the United States and India. It was obstinacy on both sides, in my view, that acted to scupper a successful conclusion at the last time of asking. Matters may be 80% agreed, but we need the other 20%. We have one new administration in the United States. The outcome of the Indian election may give us another.

In the mean time, we have no choice but to continue to pursue bilateral agreements. I welcome the progress made in last week's negotiations on the free trade agreement with the Republic of Korea, where I understand we are close to reaching an agreement which, again, will benefit both sides.

I am the rapporteur on the free trade agreement with ASEAN, and have to say that the negotiating basis is creating an institutional road block. We need to consider the possibility of looking at a coalition of the willing and able among ASEAN who can, if you like, sign off on an agreement. As with India, there is in my view currently no governmental will to achieve an outcome. After the election, Delhi's incoming administration, whether new or old, must put up, or we the EU must move on to those who want not just to talk, but to arrive at a conclusion.

Finally, I welcome Mr Pannella, the next speaker, who is the new ALDE spokesman on trade. Maybe a visit to the Committee on International Trade would prove appropriate. We would welcome him.

**Marco Pannella**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, I believe that to some extent we could start – given that these terms have been rather widely circulated over the last few days – what we have to do, Commissioner, with a strange kind of comparison between the man of Doha, or ex-Doha – as we hoped – and the man of Davos. I do not feel that this is an adequate distinction, clearly, but it is interesting.

We now find ourselves, as you told us Commissioner, somewhat dependent on events that are not happening in Europe: events in the United States, events in India, and Mr Ford also just reminded us of important areas such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or South Korea. The real problem, however, is to what

extent we, today, the Commission and the European Union, are capable of withstanding that outbreak of nationalism, which was mentioned a moment ago, and of autarchic ideas and new protectionist illusions, which is liable to make your work, Commissioner, and the work of our European Union too, very difficult.

I believe that, in this electoral campaign, it will be extremely important to understand how far the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, and the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe can manage, together with other participants, to find a way to develop our proposal, the proposal for which you were made spokesman, Commissioner, and to what extent we can really manage to make it a European proposal and not just a proposal, or I should say, our centre of Brussels against a series of capitals that are each already doing their own thing, as unfortunately happened many times in the last century.

**Jacky Hénin**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (FR) Madam President, there is no point in denying it: during the July negotiations, the Bush Administration and the European Union were caught in their own trap by India and China. What is more, contrary to the hypocritical assertions of liberal economists, for whom the failure of Doha would have been a disaster for poor countries, it was no such thing.

On the contrary, for these countries in difficulty it represented an historic opportunity, in a context marked by significant fluctuations in the prices of raw materials. Even the experts admit, the gains that the poorest countries could have hoped for were well below the tax losses caused by the demise of customs duties in these same countries, duties that would have reached the sum of USD 60 billion.

During these negotiations, the Commission, tangled up as it is in its liberal dogmas, displayed a total lack of responsibility towards the people of Europe, going so far as to propose damaging, even sacrificing, car manufacturing on EU territory in order to succeed in reaching an agreement.

As far as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Commission are concerned, there are only consumers and never wealth creators. It is this take on matters that is at the root of the current crisis since, by making competition the be-all and end-all of everything, it is pushing us in the direction of yet more salary deflation, and hence the absolute impoverishment of workers and the methodical destruction of all social protection.

Were the Doha Round to be concluded, it would be a disaster for all nations. Moreover, what is particularly painful in the current context is the fact that, in spite of the considerable damage recorded having been taken on board, there is a desire to continue in the wrong direction, no matter what the cost. There is an urgent need to revolutionise the WTO so that democracy may be established there.

**Corien Wortmann-Kool (PPE-DE)**. – (NL) The Doha negotiations have been ongoing for some considerable time now and it is to be applauded that Europe has made real progress towards drawing our positions closer together. Europe has put forward a far-reaching proposal on agriculture but, unfortunately, our efforts have not been reciprocated by other countries. This is another reason why it is so important to look at the package as a whole, which means including NAMA (Non-Agricultural Market Access) and services.

You can be assured of my whole-hearted support in your efforts to reach a rapid agreement. As Europeans, we need to guard against protectionist practices, which are increasingly rearing their heads, mainly due to the poor situation with the world economy, but also under the banner of protecting food safety. As Europeans, we need to reiterate our unwavering commitment to the concept of reciprocity. If we are open, then they need to be open too.

What should we be expecting in this respect from the new US President and the package of measures he has just announced? What can we expect from China? It is, in fact, primarily in this regard that we look to you to act, since, in these times of economic and financial crisis with mass redundancies and shrinking economies, it is precisely this market opening that has the potential to further our interests.

Madam President, our questions have been framed with the intention of highlighting the benefits our citizens can expect from such a package of measures and what we are able to offer in such a package. I fully understand that you cannot respond to these questions in the short time available here, but I want to challenge you, in the coming weeks and months, to be transparent when communicating with citizens about the issues on the table and what these mean for them. This is of particular importance as the European elections approach, and I hope we can count on you to keep this matter high on the agenda.

**Francisco Assis (PSE)**. – (PT) In the context of this very serious financial and economic crisis, it is absolutely essential to make progress in concluding the Doha negotiations.

At a time of crisis, there is always a tendency to give way to the temptation of protectionism. Protectionism is actually a kind of neurosis which tends to affect societies and states at times when they are faced with serious crises, such as the one we are experiencing. We must therefore clearly fight against the possible emergence of this protectionist temptation, because we know from history where that leads us. It leads to the general impoverishment of the world community and in no way contributes to solving the grave problems that confront us. One thing, however, is protectionism, which is to be criticised absolutely and should be resisted, and another, quite different thing is the need to guarantee the protection of legitimate interests in the various areas of the world into which we are divided. That is where the European Union also has an obligation to uphold the interests of Europeans, and not just the interests of Europeans as consumers, but also the interests of Europeans as producers.

That is why it is important to proceed with the multilateral Doha negotiations. Whilst we know that protectionism is in fact a mistake, we also know that uncontrolled liberalisation of international trade inevitably leads to very serious disasters from an economic and social point of view. The only way to avoid such uncontrolled liberalisation is by possibly establishing an agreement in the appropriate forum, that is, the World Trade Organization, a multilateral agreement that establishes rules to safeguard the legitimate interests of all the parties concerned. The role of the European Commission and of the European Union, in this case too, is precisely to restore Europeans' confidence.

There is also a crisis of confidence in Europe today in terms of the capacity for defence and political regulation of those who represent it, whether the Member States, the European Commission or the European Union as a whole. Therefore, the challenge we face is precisely that of helping to put an end to this crisis of representation and confidence by ensuring that we are advancing along the right path. The right path, in this case, is to guarantee a multilateral agreement which safeguards all our legitimate interests.

**Georgios Toussas (GUE/NGL).** – (EL) Madam President, a strategic choice of the European Union and of the bourgeois governments, in the middle of the deep capitalist crisis – a crisis in the accumulation of capital and overproduction which is also infesting the Member States of the European Union – is to use the World Trade Organization as an important prop with an active role in imposing the full liberalisation of trade and commerce, privatisations and takeovers and the penetration of the European monopolies into new markets. The aim of the Doha Round talks is to coordinate an all-out attack by capital, so that the multinational companies can plunder the raw materials of third countries and increase the exploitation of the workers throughout the capitalist world. The anti-grassroots common agricultural policy is the consideration for promoting the objectives of the European Union to liberalise the markets in non-agricultural goods and services in order to safeguard jobs in the imperialist pyramid. Obviously, we are interested in international trade and its development on the basis of mutual benefit. However, it is impossible, under capitalist conditions, for global trade to be equal and based on mutual benefit. That is why the fight by the workers in an anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly direction urgently needs to be stepped up, in order to bring about radical change both at international level and in each individual country.

**Nils Lundgren, on behalf of the IND/DEM Group.** – (SV) Madam President, the Doha Round broke down last year. This is an extremely serious state of affairs. Progress towards global free trade over the last few decades has lifted an incredible number of people out of poverty on a scale that has actually changed the world. Now, however, the world's economy is in a very deep crisis. This is not a result of free trade and this form of globalisation, but a result of a global financial crisis. In this way, the situation is similar to the one we experienced at the end of the 1920s.

This sort of financial crisis results in a global depression. The last time, it brought Hitler to power. It led to the horrors of the Second World War and to 50 years of communist slavery throughout half of Europe and half of Asia. These are important issues that we are talking about here. The most important cause of the global depression at that time was a resurgence of protectionism. Country after country introduced duties, quantitative restrictions, 'buy domestic' rules and competing devaluations.

There is actually a high risk of this state of affairs being repeated this time round. There are many worrying signs. President Obama actually won the election from a protectionist platform. We are seeing the first signs. There is now a large package on the table which does, in fact, include a 'buy American' clause relating to steel for the construction industry. This may be the beginning.

If the door has been opened, other countries will discover that they can do something similar, given how bad things look. Those countries that are currently badly affected around the world and within the EU will

be tempted to promise their workers and their undertakings protection against foreign competition. The trends are clear to see. If this process starts it will not be possible to stop it. This really will be disastrous.

The EU is the largest trading bloc in the world and therefore has considerable responsibility. In the area of commercial policy, the EU speaks with one voice, and, for once, that is a good thing, but what will that voice actually say now? There are grounds for pessimism.

The key to success lies in the agricultural sector. However, the campaigning by France and Germany to get the EU to buy in milk powder and butter and to start subsidising the export of dairy products does not bode well. This is the politics of small-minded self-interest instead of statesmanship.

Therefore, the Council and Parliament should immediately issue clear statements to the effect that the EU will defend free trade throughout the world and open up the way for progress in the trade in agricultural products. Nothing can be more important than that. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

**Christofer Fjellner (PPE-DE).** – (SV) I would like to begin by agreeing with the previous speaker that the Doha Round is extremely important, but I would like to add that it has probably never been more important than it is right now. I believe that, precisely in the midst of this financial crisis, we have a greater need than ever before to show that the global trade system actually works.

To put the Doha Round behind us and say that we cannot achieve global agreements on trade would, I believe, be a disaster that could undermine the whole of the global trade system. The failure of the Doha Round will probably never be more costly than it is right now.

The fact that the Doha Round is more important now than ever before is precisely due to the financial crisis. As I see it, the greatest risk that we face with this financial crisis is not the lack of capital for the lending market; the greatest risk is that it triggers protectionist trends. We have seen this throughout history. It happened during the 1930s and literally resulted in disaster for the world's economy, and it also happened in the 1970s.

I believe we can already see signs that the world thinks it can solve these fundamental problems by means of greater protectionism, despite the fact that there is a risk of the protectionism spreading and creating an even greater crisis in the world economy. This is happening in the area of services, financial services and the trade in services, in particular. In the financial services sector we are seeing protectionism increase very rapidly.

Returning to the Doha Round as it looks today, the main criticism that I had during the entire period that we were negotiating in the Doha Round is probably that it began to be about agriculture, agriculture and more agriculture. I think that this is an extremely narrow agenda, and I actually think that world trade deserves a very much broader approach, particularly in light of the fact that agriculture is a relatively small part of world trade if we compare it with industrial goods and services combined, for example. I also believe that it accounts for a relatively small part of the growth potential, particularly, perhaps, here in Europe. New opportunities for access to markets and new market openings globally, in particular for the trade in services, but also for industrial goods, are, I believe, most important for setting the wheels in motion and reviving global growth.

I would therefore like to ask the Commission a question. What does the Commission intend to do and what initiatives does it have underway to enable the broadening of the Doha Round in order to get us away from this tiresome situation in which we are all sitting around and reproaching everyone over agricultural trade, agricultural trade and only agricultural trade, when we know that what the world economy needs is a very much broader trading agenda that also includes trade in services and industrial trade. Thank you very much.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, I should like to welcome the Commissioner. Her predecessor, Mr Mandelson, was well known in Ireland, for reasons with which I am sure she is very familiar.

The issue of the Doha Round is not being talked about amongst the people of Europe. It is being discussed in places like this, but when I meet people who have lost a job, for example, they do not say, 'Let's do Doha'. So I think there is no connection between Doha and economic development, despite all of the theory that is advanced here.

On the globalisation of financial markets, I could suggest that this is a case where globalisation has failed us – although perhaps it would be fairer to say that it is the regulation of financial markets, or the lack thereof, that has failed us. I am interested in Commissioner McCreevy's recent comments to the effect that some of



the problems in this area have been caused by Member States' regulators building empires. That is perhaps for another debate, but it exemplifies how, though we talk of globalisation as being a great thing, that has not been true in the financial sector.

On agriculture – which was addressed by the other speakers just prior to me – I gathered that agriculture was not the sticking point at Doha. But it is a very serious issue and one that I have huge concerns about. Maybe it is because I am older than the last speaker – who is in my political group – that I regard agriculture as rather important, because it produces food and is therefore higher up the scale than he placed it. I think we should remember that. We voted in this House on a report that I produced about global food security. We are concerned about it, as we should be. It should be an issue that is discussed at the Doha level.

Another issue is how European producers – farmers – can be competitive when in the European Union we have different, higher, standards of animal welfare in relation to the environment, which are not addressed at the WTO. You will only bring our citizens with you on this journey if those issues are addressed at the WTO. Quite frankly, I think there was never an occasion when we needed direct discussion of these things in this Chamber, and in Geneva, more than we do now.

I would ask you if, in your concluding comments, you could address some of those very real issues, so that people realise that they are being discussed. I do not see the Doha Round developing at the speed that you are suggesting. Perhaps I am wrong.

**Paul Rübzig (PPE-DE).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, in the context of the Doha Round, it would interest me to know how the Directorate-General for Trade intends to safeguard the tariff quota that underpins the competitiveness of the European fermentation industry. The tariff quota serves a very important function, because the fermentation industry must remain internationally competitive.

Secondly, how will you respond to the steel clause that the US Congress has just adopted, which would prohibit the use of EU steel in the United States?

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE-DE).** – (PL) Madam President, the objective of the Doha Round was to help the poorest countries with their development, to lift them out of poverty. On one hand therefore, we must do everything to help, but on the other hand we must not forget our own businesses or farmers.

I would therefore like to ask a question: how can we protect our small and medium-sized enterprises from bankruptcy, and how can we protect our small farms from competition from China, India or Brazil? Let us say loudly and clearly that, in order to import any kind of product to the EU, irrespective of whether this is shoes or beef, specific standards must be met. Then we will be able to speak of equal competition.

Completing the negotiations in the coming months will be extremely difficult, because there is a lack of political will on the part of the leaders who really count in the negotiations. There is a danger that protectionism will increase because of the current world economic crisis.

**Zbigniew Zaleski (PPE-DE).** – (PL) I would like to say that, while listening to the last debate in Doha in Qatar, I had the impression that the developing countries have a grievance against us, the developed countries. Perhaps it is a kind of echo of former colonialism, or that they are accustomed to receiving direct aid, and so to receiving a kind of charity. It seems to me that wealthy countries can help through good trade, good standards, and training. Nothing is more essential than to make local enterprise independent, and build horizontal relations between the countries of Africa, Asia and also Latin America. I also think that it is precisely providing services that teaches management, cooperation and good standards. In connection with this, the accent on opening the market to services is very important for both sides.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, thank you for providing me with another minute, because it is important for my comments about agriculture. There is an impression that European farmers are the only ones with concerns. However, the truth is that at Doha the Indian negotiators are concerned about their small farmers and the dire consequences that a move to free trade would have not only for individual farmers but also for social stability in their country. So the issue of agriculture is across all of the negotiating partners and we need a little bit of honesty about that. Commissioner, perhaps, again, in your concluding comments you might address that.

**Catherine Ashton, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, I shall try to address briefly the concerns that Members have raised.

Mr Papastamkos, I agree with you on the legal and regulatory burdens. It is very important that these are addressed properly. It is important to resolve them, and I also agree on the importance of safety in that context.

A number of Members, notably Mr Lundgren and Mr Rübig, as well as Mr Papastamkos, talked about the 'Buy American' provision that is currently going through Congress. Members will know that this is based on the 1979 Trade Act. We already have that provision, but through the Government Procurement Agreement we have reciprocal arrangements whereby nations which sign up to it can bid for those projects. What we are hoping – and we have been talking to the Americans about this – is that we end up where we were before. I have read the legislation. I too am very concerned about it.

I am going to America at the end of February to meet the new United States Trade Representative, who, we hope, will have been through his confirmation by then, and Members can rest assured that these are very important issues to be raised.

Mr Ford raised some of the issues about bilateral relations. Korea is progressing, and on ASEAN I am looking for the flexibility which Mr Ford and I have discussed before, in order to try and move forward on that, but I agree too that there is no substitute in terms of value and importance for the multilateral arrangements.

On what we said about India, Prime Minister Singh has made it clear he is very committed. I agree with Mrs McGuinness that the question of agriculture for India, which I shall also return to, is very important. I was with Kamal Nath in London last week, debating Doha, and he as Trade Minister for India raised exactly same the point as Mrs McGuinness about the incredible importance of low-level subsistence farmers. I fully agree with her comments and indeed with what the Minister was saying.

Mr Pannella, I do not think that we are quite at the mercy of events. I think we as Europe have to push forward, use our influence and make it absolutely clear that we agree with what you said about the critical importance of battling against protectionism. It is a big challenge and one of the challenges contained within it is communication, making sure people understand.

Mr Hénin has not stayed for my response, unfortunately, but it is not a matter of sacrificing industry for consumers. This is about industrial growth and development. It is about protecting workers' jobs, because we know the importance of trade and export to doing precisely that. As for institutional change at the WTO, we could spend our time on that, but I want to spend my time on finding practical ways through this difficult economic period.

Mrs Wortmann-Kool talked about services. I agree this is very important. It is very important too to be transparent. I could not agree more with that.

Mr Assis, protecting our interests, not protectionism, is absolutely right. There is a fundamental difference that we have to be clear about, and we have to make sure of protecting the work force in all of this.

On agriculture, as I said, it is critically important to make sure that we are able to develop our industries. This is about food production, and it is very important in the Doha round. My colleague Mariann Fischer Boel has worked very hard to make sure that the European position on agriculture is secure. It forms a fundamental basis for all the work that I do in our bilateral, regional and multilateral talks to make sure that the best opportunities are provided to protect all of our agriculture in the future.

As for the fermentation industry, Mr Rübig, I understand these issues are currently being discussed, but I will be more than happy to come back to you with specifics.

Finally, on small and medium-sized enterprises, Mr Siekierski, it is very important that we are protecting our small businesses. I am working closely with Günter Verheugen to get enterprise and trade collaborating effectively to make sure that we provide opportunities for small businesses to tell us where they need markets to open, to support them in helping those markets to open, and to support them in trade.

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

## 15. Production and employment in the textile and clothing sector in various EU Member States (debate)

**President.** – The next item is the debate on the oral question to the Commission on production and employment in the textile and clothing sector in various EU Member States.

**Corien Wortmann-Kool, *author suppleant.*** – Madam President, on behalf of the Committee on International Trade, I would like to set out what is at stake here.

It is about production and employment in the textile and clothing sector in various European Member States. The European Union and China have agreed to a joint surveillance system relating to exports of certain categories of textile and clothing products from China to European Member States, but this system expired on 31 December 2008.

During the last two years, 350 000 jobs have been lost, and the number of companies was reduced by 5% during the same period. In the light of the growing number of enterprises that are ceasing to operate, or relocating production, leading to an increase of unemployment in several regions, I would like to put the following questions on behalf of the International Trade Committee:

Has the Commission or any Member State proposed or requested the extension of the dual surveillance mechanism beyond 31 December 2008 or any other measures in that framework?

What measures does the Commission intend to adopt to protect production and employment in the textile and clothing sector?

Will the Commission continue to monitor real-time market developments, import statistics and customs monitoring and keep the sector informed of the latest developments?

What is the current situation regarding the proposed regulation on 'made in' labels?

What measures have been taken by the Commission to address the proposals adopted by Parliament in its resolution of 13 December 2007?

**Catherine Ashton, *Member of the Commission.*** – Madam President, it is understandable in this climate that there is concern about the success of manufacturing in the face of competition, and of course textiles are very important. Employment has continued to drop and production has fallen again – and that is after a couple of years of relative stability. Of course the sector is at the cutting edge of globalisation. Small and medium-sized enterprises play a huge part in this.

Following the end of the Memorandum of Understanding in 2005, we did have the agreement on the joint surveillance system – to which Mrs Wortmann-Kool drew our attention – and it has given us early information about trade flows. We are therefore better able to react in the event of being faced with a sudden surge in our industry. It is also a further step in the transition to open markets designed and developed – as I am sure Members know – with the economic players concerned and in discussion with Member States and with Parliament. By promoting a process of gradual change, we have helped the sector adapt. That has been supported by the social partners. They did not ask for an extension of the voluntary growth levels under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) when it ended in 2008, nor have they been asking for a continuation of the surveillance system into 2009 – though I appreciate that some Member States would have preferred us to do so. Imports from China have increased overall, but within reasonable limits. Significant increases in some categories – such as for example dresses, trousers and pullovers – have been balanced by drops in textile imports from suppliers in other countries. So, overall in 2008, only a slight overall increase was realised and markets have absorbed that reasonably well.

The right political responses are not to close our markets or monitoring of the imports. We need to ensure that all businesses can change, adapt, trade and innovate out of current conditions. It is precisely to help businesses like this that the economic recovery plan was endorsed. That, of course, represents a huge boost of 1.5% of EU GDP, which should help the textile and clothing sector. The challenges for the sector predate the current slowdown. Eight of the fifteen applications under the Globalisation Adjustment Fund have been to support textile workers.

The Commission is ready to support initiatives to set up partnerships in the textile and clothing sector designed to anticipate restructuring with the aim of protecting employment and, overall, the sector benefits from the fact that there is a long-standing framework for social dialogue. We welcome Parliament's resolution

on the future of the textile sector. We move forward in market access, in funds from the Lead Market Initiative, and in every free trade agreement, as causes dedicated to environmental and social standards. Of course currency devaluation remains on our agenda.

**Georgios Papastamkos**, *on behalf of the PPE-DE Group*. – (EL) Madam President, textiles and clothing are a globalised sector of the economy *par excellence*, a sector which is characterised by continual change in terms of the place of production and constant restructurings and adjustments to new situations, such as the liberalisation of international trade. For many Member States of the European Union, including Greece, this sector is an important source of exports and employment. However, the considerable number of production units relocating and the constant reduction in employment have taken on worrying dimensions. In addition to structural problems, the acute discrepancy between the import tariffs of the European Union, on the one hand, and of its most important competitors, on the other hand, is playing a negative role. Commissioner, we are talking about a sector which represents an extremely high percentage of overall seizures of pirated products on the borders of the European Union, a percentage which is constantly rising. In this instance, I consider the proposal to set up a European observatory on pirated products to be a good idea, so that we can achieve better coordination between the competent authorities, Member States and Commission services and also conditions of effective cooperation with the private sector. I think we need to adopt regulations on the 'made in' label, which will help to safeguard conditions of fair competition and consumer protection. The establishment of more effective rules of origin is important in terms of the application of tariff quotas within the framework of the generalised tariff preferences and regional agreements. We are being called upon to shape a new framework of cooperative relations between the agencies that implement industrial and regional policy and commitments and to effectively support European undertakings, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, so that they can maintain and further improve their competitive specialisation. I refer to the production of high added value products in terms of quality and design, innovation and the use of new technologies.

**Rovana Plumb**, *on behalf of the PSE Group*. – (RO) We would like to thank you for your replies to the oral questions. I would like to stress that, as is well-known, the textile sector makes a particularly important contribution to the GDP of all the Member States, including Romania. We are well aware that this sector creates new jobs, especially for the female workforce. I agree with and support the measures which you are proposing because, being aware of how important trade is in the current economic crisis, we need to realise how important the measures are which we need to take to protect jobs.

Bearing in mind that the joint surveillance system for textile imports from China was stopped at the end of last year, which I understand was an important tool for monitoring the market, I would like to suggest to the Commission that it attaches greater importance not only to the textile sector but also to other vulnerable industrial sectors such as steel, chemicals and machines. I would also like to suggest that the European Commission presents on a regular basis impact studies, statistical data or other elements and relevant instruments for these sectors. I would like to congratulate you once again on the measures you have proposed for access, free trade, funds and the environment.

#### IN THE CHAIR: MRS ROURE

*Vice-President*

**Gianluca Susta**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (IT) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, there is no doubt that we are facing an extremely serious industrial crisis, and the European textile industry cannot escape this crisis, which is also a product of the financial crisis.

It is clear that delayed consumer spending is affecting European high-end products, including those from my country, Italy, in a sector that has seen, as the Chairman of the Committee on International Trade pointed out, the loss of 3 50 000 jobs and 5% of businesses.

At this point, however, I believe that more than financial support, this sector, like other industrial sectors, requires rules, and requires, as has already been pointed out, genuine reciprocity. While we can understand that, with regard to emerging countries, there are leanings towards really opening up the market to promote the development of those countries and thus new markets, much less understandable is a lack of reciprocity in terms of legislative barriers and tariff barriers with regard to the most developed countries: the United States, Canada, Australia and Japan.

It is for that reason that certain fundamental issues – on which commitment has, I believe, existed more on paper than in practice – such as the issue of origin marking, must once again become the main focus of

attention within the Commission and the Council. Europe needs new rules, but it also needs reciprocity and increased efforts to fight counterfeiting and piracy, to take real action on anti-dumping measures and, specifically, to approve the regulation on origin marking.

You see, Commissioner, if we take part in a boxing match with one hand tied behind our back, we cannot win. I would also like to reiterate that it is a problem that concerns the United States together with us, and does not just concern China or India. They have rules on traceability, which they impose on our products as well, but which we do not have. This, then, is a fundamental issue, with regard to which I believe the Commission's initiative needs to be stepped up much more than in the past, because we have seen that when it wants to, it can manage even to convince those who would argue, as was the case on the issue of the environment.

To conclude, I feel that there are some measures that are costly and others that are less costly, but the costly ones are part of a package to tackle the crisis, which is about to be launched. They include the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, more credit made available to promote investments and strengthen the capitalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises, more funds for research for the textile technology platform, and more support for exports by small and medium-sized enterprises. The less costly measures are specifically the regulation on origin marking, the protection of intellectual property, anti-dumping and the fight against counterfeiting. If we can put forward all these costly and non-costly measures, I believe that we will help Europe's economy without changing the rules on competition and without falling into neoprotectionism.

**Pedro Guerreiro, on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group. – (PT)** In the wake of other initiatives, we proposed to the Committee on International Trade of the European Parliament that an oral question should be raised with a debate in plenary on production and employment in the textile and clothing sector in different Member States of the European Union, because we consider this urgent and indispensable.

We also proposed that this debate should include the participation of the Council and be concluded with a resolution by this Parliament; however, these proposals did not have the support of other parliamentary groups.

More than a year has passed since the debate held in this Parliament on 12 December 2007. We raised the alarm at the time that, if measures were not taken in defence of production and employment in the textile and clothing sector, we would continue to be faced with the slow agony and destruction of a large part of this strategic sector. Since then, and as had happened previously, thousands of jobs have been lost and innumerable companies closed, with 350 000 jobs and 5% of companies having vanished in the last two years alone.

Is that what the European Commission claims to be competing through restructuring, we would ask. Since then, and as was the case previously, workers have continued to be faced with unemployment – all too often without payment of the compensation or back pay due to them – with intensified exploitation, with more insecurity, with late payment of wages and with deregulated working hours.

Certain causes and people are responsible for this situation, such as those who promote the liberalisation of the textile and clothing trade and the relocation of production with a view to maximum profits, thus pitting a large part of the sector against competition based on double standards defined from the start.

Faced with this situation, the European Union has either turned a deaf ear or taken mitigated measures which far from provide an answer to the problems and needs of the sector. The European Commission does not consider the textile and clothing industry to be special, as it claims to, unlike other sectors. Together with urgent measures which need to be implemented by each Member State, the European Union also has a duty to provide a response to the grave problems with which the sector is contending.

Commissioner, when will binding rules on attaching labels of origin be applied, with the adoption, for example, of the 'made in' regulation? When will the same consumer safety and protection requirements be applied to imported products as are demanded for products made in the European Union? How will the European Union continue to monitor in real time import trends and customs inspection and control, keeping the sector fully informed and invoking safeguard clauses wherever necessary? How will it use the 2007-2013 financial framework, including the so-called Globalisation Adjustment Fund, to uphold production and employment in the textile and clothing sector, in particular in the small and medium-sized enterprises affected by liberalisation? When will there be a monetary and foreign exchange policy that does not penalise the exports of certain Member States? When will the Community programme, proposed by this Parliament, be

created, and the financial resources to modernise and promote the sector and the diversification of industrial activity be unblocked, particularly those directed at the least favoured regions which are dependent on it?

**Tokia Saïfi (PPE-DE).** – (FR) Madam President, the European textile and clothing sector is a sector that has been hard hit over the last few years by the damaging effects of globalisation.

Today, in spite of some still painful wounds in certain European regions, this sector has been able to change direction, not least through the development of technical and innovative textiles.

However, let us not undermine this industry's capacity for recovery by being lax and negligent. Indeed the European Union must maintain the political will to create a consistent competitive framework for its businesses, by remaining vigilant and by taking practical and effective action when this proves necessary.

For the Union to do this, Commissioner, you must continue to monitor the customs statistics of imports arriving from China and you must keep this sector informed of the most recent developments. We must keep a close eye on matters and we must be responsive. The European Union has the means to do this: the trade protection instruments are a perfect example of such means. Therefore, I will continue to hammer home the point that a Europe that protects is not a protectionist Europe.

However, my concern today, Commissioner, is based on the unprecedented increase in seizures of counterfeit textile and leather articles, articles that are impregnated with azo dyes or nickel, which put the security and the health of European consumers increasingly at risk. This is a phenomenon that, as you can well imagine, is not about to go away with the economic crisis that we are going through.

That is why I call on you to work with the Member States to implement as quickly as possible the four-year action plan on combating counterfeiting and piracy, with the creation of a European counterfeiting observatory and the strengthening of the European customs system.

Making it mandatory to indicate the origin of goods sourced from third countries, harmonising the customs control procedures, and punishing violations of intellectual property rights by criminal prosecution are the battles that we have to fight on behalf of our businesses, our jobs and the citizens of Europe.

**Francisco Assis (PSE).** – (PT) Madam President, Commissioner, this case is a very concrete one in which the distinction we made a short time ago, in the previous debate, between protection and protectionism, applies very well.

We must say 'No' to protectionism which impoverishes, but protection to safeguard fundamental rights of Europeans is absolutely necessary. This is a very important sector in various European regions and countries, as is the case of the region that I come from, the region of Northern Portugal. It is of crucial importance to the regional economy. It is a sector that has been particularly exposed to the globalisation process. In a serious financial crisis like the one we are undergoing, this sector is experiencing absolutely tragic times.

The European Union and the Member States should pay more attention to the textile industry, opting for defensive measures and offensive measures. The defensive measures entail the use of all the mechanisms and instruments of commercial defence that are at our disposal. It also involves maintaining a political dialogue with our main partners to combat situations of real monetary protectionism and situations that threaten the legitimate interests of European producers. To defend European producers, employers and workers is to defend European citizens and also to defend European consumers. That is what we must be aware of, once and for all.

At the same time we have to use these defensive measures in compliance with principles as simple as those that have already been set out here: the principle of reciprocity and the principle of the permanent fight against unfair competition. We are not asking for any special treatment for the European Union or for the most affected regions of the European Union. We are simply demanding that there be rules and that those rules be based on fundamental principles of reciprocity. However, while the European Union and its Member States must not hesitate to fight for the instruments of commercial defence which prove most appropriate at any time to be applied, we must also develop offensive policies and measures. This, in fact, has already been happening, in terms of modernising the sector and also in the areas of human resources development, investment in vocational training, technological modernisation and development of the regions.

There are regions, and I know one of them well, which, as I have just said, is the region of Northern Portugal, that are faced with truly tragic situations and it is necessary to confront them head-on.

**Danutė Budreikaitė (ALDE).** – (LT) This year up to 50% of the jobs in Lithuania's textile and clothing sector may be lost. Almost 20 000 workers may become unemployed. This would not simply be a consequence of the economic and financial crisis. The textile industry has to withstand unequal competition conditions and apply higher manufacturing, work, hygiene and ecological standards. It is very difficult to compete with China's subsidised production due to the imbalanced exchange rate, bank lending policies, absence of depreciation deductions and tax policy. Moreover, China and other countries are constantly increasing market access barriers affecting EU products. What does the Commission think of a situation in which the price of a Chinese product is less than the raw materials used to manufacture it? What actions does the Commission plan to take to restore equal competition conditions, the so-called level playing field? Moreover, I would like to ask for concrete facts to be produced showing how the Helpdesk department, established by the Commission to aid small and medium-sized businesses, is helping the textile industry to initiate investigations into the application of market protection measures in obvious cases of unfair competition? For your information, linen textile manufacturers have now been trying for two years to initiate an anti-dumping case against linen fabrics of Chinese origin, but so far have been unable to do so because the Commission does not provide any assistance. What does the Commission suggest textile manufacturers do?

**Ivo Belet (PPE-DE).** – (NL) Commissioner, you said a moment ago that, in overall terms, the situation with textile imports from China in 2008 turned out better than expected. I feel duty bound to vigorously contradict your statement, as the figures paint a completely different picture.

In fact, last year textile imports from China went through the roof. There is no doubt that if we look at T-shirts, trousers, dresses and pullovers, in other words the vulnerable product categories, there has been a near doubling of imports in the space of just one year, and that is clearly a cause for great concern. It means that the surveillance system we have had in place all this time is not working. As we all know, the double-checking system is no longer in operation. This situation, Lady Ashton, is untenable because there are no real sanctions we can apply; we have no clout.

As the previous speaker said, the figures also show that there is something fundamentally wrong with the prices of these massive imports of Chinese textiles. Prices have dropped by nearly a third and this drop cannot be attributed to exchange rate differences alone. Moreover, Commissioner, the production costs in China have risen sharply again over the past year, which suggests that these prices are practically dumping prices. We are counting on you not to let this simply pass unchallenged. As stated by Mrs Wortmann-Kool earlier, 350 000 jobs have been lost over the past two years. To a large extent, this is the result of unfair competition and we need to formulate a response to this situation.

That is not the only matter of concern, Commissioner. As you know, credit insurance is much harder to obtain in the current climate, and this is having a direct, pernicious effect on exports. The French Government has already developed a system of additional credit insurance for the clothing and textile sector. It would be worth considering whether we could recommend this system and streamline it further at European level. I am not suggesting harmonisation, but that we attempt to put initiatives in place at European level to promote the French system to some degree. Can you give us a commitment that, using the powers at your disposal, you will implement initiatives in this respect? These initiatives do not have to cost anything. It is simply a matter of political will and coordination.

**Martí Grau i Segú (PSE).** – (ES) Madam President, Commissioner, as we have recently witnessed, the textile sector is suffering a major crisis that has led to many closures, relocations and redundancies, particularly in regions that specialise in this industry.

In view of the current economic crisis, the European Commission should act as quickly as possible in conjunction with the Member States to alleviate the socioeconomic effects of this restructuring. These changes have been particularly dramatic for the regions and families affected.

I think that workers in the textile and clothing sector should be given assistance and that social measures should be drawn up in the form of plans to help companies that are undergoing restructuring and currently find themselves in very difficult circumstances. It would be desirable to direct a substantial part of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to restructuring and retraining in the textile sector, in particular for the small and medium-sized enterprises that make up the majority of the sector in the European Union. The SMEs have suffered significantly from the effects of the liberalisation of the market.

Furthermore, the import control system should be re-established, in particular with reference to Chinese imports, due to their volume. This is not at all a matter of promoting trade barriers. It is more a matter of compensating for the negative effects of this significant change. We should not forget that the European

Union is the second-largest exporter in the world of textile products and clothing, which makes it necessary to guarantee optimum access to the markets of third countries. This is essential to the future of the textile and clothing industry in the European Union and in particular for SMEs.

All of this, of course, must be carried out while guaranteeing fair competition on the basis of the promotion of social and environmental standards in these countries. In this regard, the provision of accurate information for consumers, for example the regulation imposing 'made in' labelling, which we know has not been implemented, would be of great use given that it would mean that imported products would be subject to the same consumer safety and protection requirements as those manufactured within the European Union.

**Elisa Ferreira (PSE).** – (PT) Madam President, Commissioner, I am going to try to put the questions very succinctly. My first point is the question of the European Union's special monitoring mechanism for textiles, which ended, as mentioned, on 31 December 2008. What is lacking, Commissioner, is the punctual and routine publication of statistical data on imports, exports and prices, as happens in the United States. Without these data, the European Union is prevented from reacting to any unfair practices and the Commission itself is incapable of defining its strategy. I would ask you to attend to this, as other Members have already done.

Secondly, producing within the European Union increasingly entails complying with safety regulations, social regulations and environmental standards. REACH, for example, is a recent initiative that creates even more requirements for us.

It is important that the Commission has a clear strategy that can be seen and monitored for imported products to be subject to the same requirements. In what way, in the current free trade agreements, are these aspects being duly safeguarded? As for 'made in' labelling, can it really help to solve this problem?

Thirdly, the European Union has launched an economic recovery plan to combat the current crisis. What role will commercial policy play in this context? What is the Commission preparing to do at this time, when a series of other countries, such as China, are starting to launch an increasing number of non-tariff barriers so that our European imports cannot access Chinese markets? What proposal does it have with regard to updating or adapting the Globalisation Adjustment Fund, as well as the aid available within the framework of the Structural Funds to improve the immediate situation of the European textile industry?

Lastly, could it be that the crisis we are going through will finally make the Commission aware of the devastating impact of an over-valued euro on the European economy? How can the Commissioner raise awareness – I am about to finish – among her fellow Commissioners and the entities which deal with European monetary policy in terms of rebalancing ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Paul Rübiger (PPE-DE).** – (DE) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, what would you do, Commissioner, to speed up the opening of the Chinese and Indian markets? The main thing, of course, is that we should be able to export our products to those countries. Very many European companies have invested in China, building or acquiring factories there. That is why a more open market is really the top priority. What scope is there for you – in cooperation with Commissioner Kovács, where appropriate – to provide the textile industry with tax incentives, such as shorter depreciation periods, with a view to enhancing companies' creditworthiness? That would naturally help to safeguard jobs as well. When the Basel II Accord is implemented in the future, there will therefore be a need to have structures in place that serve to make firms more creditworthy.

**Zbigniew Zaleski (PPE-DE).** – (PL) Commissioner, I do of course want to express strong support for the views of our fellow Members who say that our small enterprises should be protected from the marketing of low-quality goods and counterfeit and pirated goods. I remember that the representatives of the Association of Producers of Tuscany asked us during their visit for recognition of the fact that they do not need protection, but clear confirmation that the 'Made in Italy' mark will be visible only on their Italian products.

Now I want to add something and inform the Commissioner that in fact she has the rather difficult task of resolving a certain dilemma. On one hand consumers of course want to buy cheaper products, in other words at a low price, irrespective of whether the goods come from China or from some other country, and on the other hand they must know that the cost of this may be that their own fellow citizens lose their jobs. Perhaps a campaign informing people of this will help you, as someone who supports finding a resolution to this dilemma, by asking questions and making proposals which will meet with the support of society. For this is about the consumer, and not only about the Commission.



**Miloslav Ransdorf (GUE/NGL).** – (CS) Thank you, Madam President, I have just one brief remark on the whole complex subject of the textile industry and the impact of globalisation on it. I believe that it is probably wrong just to apply protective measures. The most important aspect is to raise the level of technology and the quality of production in Europe and to move the European textile industry forward by switching its structure into the field of speciality products and towards a level of quality which cannot be achieved by the Asian competition. This is a feasible option and some companies in Europe are already going down this route and creating new market segments, where they feel comfortable on the whole. I believe that such efforts should be Europe-wide in nature and require a well-considered concept.

**President.** – Commissioner, may I say first of all that I am pleased to see you here again in this Chamber.

**Catherine Ashton, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, let me respond to a few of the points that have been made. A number of honourable Members – Mr Papastamkos, Mr Susta, Ms Ferreira, Mr Grau i Segú and Mr Zaleski – talked about the ‘made in’ proposition. I think the proposal the Commission has put forward is sound and should be adopted and that it is in the interests of business. However, as honourable Members know, I do not yet have a majority in the Council, and any support that honourable Members can give in getting that majority would be most welcome.

A number of Members – Mr Susta, Ms Saïfi, Mr Assis in particular – and Ms Budreikaitė talked about the Trade Defence Instruments and the importance of making sure that we operate the mechanisms we have effectively. I committed in my hearing to ensure that I would do that, and I am continuing to do so.

Concerning intellectual property, it is important that we have an action plan, and I intend to deal with that. I also want to address the particular point about the helpdesk and small businesses. It is specifically designed to help small businesses address issues of defence. I am very grateful. If honourable Members would like more information or are concerned about that, they are very welcome to contact me.

‘Protect not protectionism’ is a very big theme of the discussions. I would just like to say – perhaps particularly to Ms Plumb and Mr Ransdorf – that these are important differences. It is very important to fight protectionism; it is important to make sure we are supporting our industries to be able to compete and trade in the future.

A number of interesting ideas were raised, such as impact assessments for industry, and I will feed those to my colleague Günter Verheugen. He well understands the importance of collecting data and statistics, but I will make sure that he hears of the concerns you have raised. We must look at all the initiatives on the table and how we deal with access to markets, as has been said. I would say to Mr Guerreiro that I accept absolutely the strategic importance of textiles and clothing and its value to the discussion we have had about accelerating markets.

My final comment is addressed to Mr Rübig: I cannot tell you in one second about how we need to accelerate the opening of markets in India and China, but I am more than happy to discuss that at your convenience.

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

#### **Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (PL) The import of cheap textiles from China to Europe is a problem which has grown recently as a result of the gradual liberalisation in world trade. The Chinese textile industry, which has a cheap labour force of many millions at its disposal, has an obvious advantage over European producers, which specialise mainly in branded products. In relation to the progressive displacement of domestic production by more competitively priced imports from China, we can see negative social effects, which especially concern those regions that have for centuries specialised in the manufacture of clothes. As we are currently struggling with one of the most serious economic crises in history, the threat of impoverishment of large areas of the Community is even greater.

The uncontrolled influx of cheap clothing from Asia also means the problem of counterfeit branded products, which further weakens the position of European producers and exposes consumers to serious risks associated with the low quality of imported products.

There can be no doubt that, as a result of the expiry of the agreement on bilateral monitoring at the end of 2008, immediate action is necessary to extend this system. It is also advisable to establish a high-level group within the EU, whose function would be to monitor the influx of Chinese textiles and inspect their quality. Bearing in mind that in the face of economic recession the protection of jobs should receive special attention

from the governments of the Member States and the Commission, I appeal for the matter of the protection of the European textile market to be given priority status.

## **16. Consequences of the recent gas crisis - Second Strategic Energy Review - Challenge of energy efficiency through information and communication technologies (debate)**

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

- the Commission statement on the consequences of the recent gas crisis;
- the report (A6-0013/2009) by Mrs Laperrouze, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, on the Second Strategic Energy Review (2008/2239(INI));
- the oral question to the Commission (B6-0003/2009) by Mr Remek, on behalf of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, on the challenge of energy efficiency through information and communication technologies (O-0115/2008).

**Andris Piebalgs, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, I would like to start by congratulating the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the rapporteur Mrs Laperrouze. They worked very hard to prepare this report on security of supply as early as this February plenary in 2009. When she started work, no one could have expected that we would have full gas supply from Russia via Ukraine, and this definitely draws more attention to the issues of security of supply.

Concerning the gas crisis, what is the current state of play? All the volumes nominated are reaching their destinations, so this means that most of the consumers have full supply of gas. There is still one stream missing in Poland; we are working on it. It is exceptional in that it was supplied by RosUkrEnergo, which is now out of the deal, but we are also working towards full restoration of gas supplies to all parts of the European Union that have been affected by the crisis.

As the supply agreement is for 10 years, we can expect this agreement to provide a good basis so that we do not see this type of situation in the future. I would also emphasise, though, that all the EU monitors are still in place following the flows of gas and we expect that there will be no need for them in the future. I have written to my colleagues in Russia and Ukraine asking how we should proceed with monitoring in the future, because in my opinion, if we trust the deal and if it is stable, then no monitoring is needed now; however, the monitors are currently there.

I believe that we should not remain idle on this transit issue. We should continue to work with both sides – with the supply side, Russia, and with Ukraine as a transit country – and we should really ensure that there is separation between the gas supply to Ukraine and transit flows going to the European Union, and that these transit flows are financially beneficial for Ukraine too, bringing profit to the country and giving it much-needed economic benefits. We will continue to work on this issue, but basically we can say that the gas crisis is over.

What are the lessons to be learnt? I mentioned this the previous time, but the lessons are that the EU is more robust than we expected. It is true that in this difficult situation EU countries worked with one voice through the Presidency and support from the Commission. We have seen much evidence of solidarity when member countries helped other member countries. We also have the strong realisation that the internal market worked where it could work. I was also very pleased about the strong and coordinated response from the European gas industry, first of all demonstrating a common position vis-à-vis Gazprom, but secondly also in creating a common proposal that could be useful in case there is no permanent agreement between Russia and Ukraine.

What were the weaknesses we discovered? The first was the lack of infrastructure. That was quite obvious, and that was also partly why the market could not work. The gas price and the spot market have not increased particularly but this is just because in some parts of the European Union where the gas supply was needed most there was no additional possibility to deliver gas.

There were some cases where solidarity could have been greater. We have also seen other cases where there was not sufficient transparency, and we definitely need a stronger coordination mechanism to address the crisis.

The Strategic Energy Review that was proposed by the Commission back in November addressed five areas where Mrs Laperrouze and the ITRE Committee go into more detail and streamline these. They are: energy efficiency; use of local resources (and I would like to mention that, for 2008, 43% of installed capacity comes from wind energy; it is the biggest capacity installed, and wind is a local energy); external relations, i.e. that we are working with our colleagues; crisis mechanisms; and infrastructure.

I believe that one important point where the Commission will make a lot of further effort is on the call in this report for the consolidation of activities in different areas, because we have really developed a lot of activities on the energy and climate change package implementation, on the technology, on external relations, on the internal market. But it is very important to see how to consolidate these, and what additional steps if necessary we should take.

I shall end with one particular proposal that the Commission elaborated, very much related to this issue, but also to the general economic crisis that we face. It is the part of the recovery package related to energy.

There are three issues on which we are proposing that the funding be used. EUR 3.5 billion is for infrastructure – it is not to support each and every project but to increase the diversification of gas flow from south, west, and east, and to try to get a balanced and sustainable gas supply mix.

On electricity, looking at the weakest points, these are the isolation of Baltic countries and the Iberian Peninsula.

Then there are two issues that are sometimes seen as a luxury, but in my opinion they are extremely important issues: offshore wind – it is crucial that we have public support for the projects that are ongoing – and carbon capture and storage. These are absolutely necessary in achieving our climate change objectives globally, but will also give a much-needed boost for European industry to develop the technology that could be used in the future.

So we are looking at combined security of supply, technology objectives and also European recovery objectives. I believe this is the right proposal. The volume of funds is not huge, but I believe they are going in the right direction and the public should be involved to strengthen security of supply in the European Union.

**Anne Laperrouze, rapporteur.** – (FR) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, our debates on this Second Strategic Energy Review have of course been marked by this new gas-supply crisis between Russia and Ukraine. This crisis has brought to light shortcomings, the fragility of the interconnections and the European Union's difficulty in reacting and in speaking with one voice.

It has revealed, for the third time, the need for a common energy policy. However, I must say – and our Commissioner has just pointed this out – that we are now seeing progress and more cooperation and solidarity among Member States, and thus hopes of a solution with which to manage these crises.

I should like to thank the Members who have done a great deal to enrich this report, which we drafted quickly, since we were informed of the communication in November. I am not going to explain in detail everything that we set out in this resolution, but I shall perhaps instead point out what messages the Committee on Industry, Research and Innovation wished to put across with it.

The context is as follows: the climate constraint is going to get tougher, the European Union's security of supply is being threatened by ever more serious and frequent crises, and its competitiveness may be harmed. This implies the need to think differently about energy consumption and use within the European Union, to think differently about our energy resources, and to allow ourselves to exploit this considerable source of jobs that exists in the energy sector, jobs that are so crucial in the context of the economic crisis that we are going through.

What are we proposing? There is the short term: promoting the 3x20 by 2020 vision of the energy and climate change package so as to turn it into European energy policy. This is a joint action at several levels – global, European, national and local – which means that the main priorities that we have indicated are of course energy saving, energy efficiency and the development of renewable energies, since the European Union's potential in this area is great. In particular, the objective of 20% energy efficiency will have to be made binding.

Secondly, the European Union's security of supply will have to be improved through investment in the networks and, in particular, in the interconnections. Solidarity among the Member States means that the networks must supply regions that are isolated and highly dependent on a single supplier. This also means

that the Directive on the security of the gas supply will have to be revised in order to make it a European crisis management tool. Improving the security of supply also means strengthening and structuring the dialogue with transit countries and producer countries. These energy interdependence relations need to be developed, particularly those with Russia and the Mediterranean area.

Thirdly, having an internal market is a crucial factor in terms of the security of supply. How, though, can a Member State be supplied via another Member State if the interconnections are weak or non-existent?

Fourthly, we need to identify the best practices at international level. In this regard, let us strengthen our exchanges of information with Japan and the United States – California, in particular – but let us not delude ourselves: our relations with these energy-consuming countries are founded on both cooperation and competition, especially in terms of energy technologies.

Then there is the long term, which is very important. The task is to predict the future of the European Union's energy supply. We should be able by, say, 2010-2020, to write road maps on a scenario basis for the European Union's supply in 2050. To do this, ambitious objectives must be set with regard to the fight against climate change. Our committee is proposing a reduction of 60-80%, but perhaps in future of at least 80%, in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, a 35% increase in energy efficiency and a 60% share of renewable energies, to be achieved by 2050.

Our Parliament is calling for this road map to envisage developing the share of the different energy sources so that investments can be planned in means of production, interconnections, and research and development.

In the energy mix for 2050 the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy has confirmed the share of nuclear energy alongside the other energy sources, such as renewable energies, as well as the desire to develop means of energy storage and to use solar energy, which is an infinite resource.

**Vladimír Remek, author.** – (CS) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, you already have the text of the question put to the Commission on the solution of energy efficiency problems through the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), so please allow me to add a couple of remarks. I should like to thank all the shadow rapporteurs and other members for their efforts, which have contributed a whole range of ideas to the final version of the resolution embodying the question put to the Commission. A compromise solution was eventually found for almost 90 proposed amendments and the document was unanimously adopted by the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

We are just at the very beginning in our efforts to improve energy efficiency using ICT. Perhaps it seemed to us in the autumn of last year that we were in fact preparing a review and a strategy for the future. The events of recent weeks have confronted us with a new set of realities. Both the financial crisis and the interruption in the supply of gas to some EU Member States, as already mentioned, have established the need to take all available steps in order to meet the energy challenges as quickly as possible. The same applies to the need for a pronounced improvement in energy efficiency (the efficient use of energy) with the broadest possible application of ICT. It is more than obvious that, without the sensible and, I should like to emphasise, considered and most wide-ranging application of these technologies, we shall succeed neither in reducing energy consumption nor in limiting the adverse effects of climate change.

With the help of specialised centres, research institutes, representatives of important industrial sectors and state authorities in Member States of the Union, we have attempted to chart the situation regarding the use of ICT for enhanced energy assessment. Any attempt to reduce energy demand should not be allowed to run counter to the ambitions of the EU to maintain competitiveness and sustainable economic development. We can definitely not go down the extreme path of 'making savings, whatever the cost'.

It is true that reducing energy demand is one of the most effective means of limiting emissions of greenhouse gases. However, we are also involved in concepts such as intelligent grids, intelligent buildings and more efficient measurement of energy consumption. We are talking about the application of ICT in transportation and construction, limiting the movement of goods, more efficient lighting systems and solutions such as nanotechnology etc. In short, it is hard to find a sector in which energy efficiency cannot be improved with the aid of ICT developments. In preparing the document, we simply confirmed that all our attempts to deal with energy demands in the EU are closely interlinked and interdependent. As a result, the support we, as the EP, have given to the Galileo Project will be reflected in efficient transportation, movement of goods and people and so on.

I am pleased to mention here that in the EU we already have more than one example of the successful application of ICT in the more efficient use of energy. It is good that there is talk of the need to publicise these examples as a positive motivator for the public at large. We basically know what must be done. It is just a matter of translating words into action. Otherwise citizens in the Member States will lose confidence. For many, unfortunately, we are more a bureaucratic debating club than an institution which is able to help them overcome obstacles and improve their lives.

Without exception these words also apply to the overall energy policy, as dealt with in her report by our fellow Member Mrs Laperrouze. I was the shadow rapporteur for the document on the second strategic review of this policy and I should like to thank Mrs Laperrouze for her excellent work in eventually achieving a compromise solution for her report. The result is more realistic and persuasive than the original text. As was to be expected, the approaching EP elections have seen the onset of a certain degree of populism directed towards the voters. Great ambitions have appeared and people like to hear them. However, their fulfilment lies often beyond the borders of reality. Yes, we should all like to meet energy demands exclusively by means of renewable sources. That would be ideal. However, I personally would urge realism. The same applies to the attempt to force into the document a staggering 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 rather than a more realistic 50-80%.

Opponents of nuclear energy are again attempting to exclude this emission-free source, which is vitally important for Europe, from the overall energy mix. It must be perfectly clear to anyone who does not simply wish to follow the fashionable line and exploit the fear of nuclear energy that we simply cannot manage without it. We shall have to invest in a new generation of nuclear power plants, safe storage and reuse of fuel and nuclear fusion. I consider it sensible that the report in essence supports the inclusion of nuclear power in the mix. Finally, it is important, in my view, to attempt a better integration of energy grids, for example with the Baltic States. These states were left in the lurch for years by simply making promises. I also appreciate that we have here again an idea of better coordination in the use of transmission networks, using perhaps, if we so wish, some kind of central control system.

**Viviane Reding**, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, let me first thank Mr Remek and the ITRE Committee for having worked so much on a topic which is of utmost importance, because it is true that through ICT we can make a major contribution towards combating climate issues and achieving a 20% reduction in both consumption and carbon emissions.

It is a huge challenge, we know, but it is not insurmountable and can only be achieved if we know how to use ICT. That is why the Commission is not talking but acting in the following way.

Firstly, we have been working on a communication on a comprehensive strategy for ICT to address our energy and climate problems. This strategy will be accompanied by a recommendation in which we set the tasks, the targets and the timeline for actions in the ICT sector, actions by stakeholders and by Member States. These actions aim to accelerate the adoption of ICT as an enabler so that we can master the energy demands of our homes, of our businesses, and of our society at large.

Now, at what level? Firstly, of course, at the level of ICT products themselves. Their carbon footprint is of absolute importance and I know that the industry is working on this. We hope this work will be achieved by investing in research.

The second level is ICT as an enabler across the board and in all sectors of economic activity. We need incentives here in order to change behaviour – as the rapporteur said, '*penser autrement*' – but this will only happen in governments, in administrations, in businesses, and for citizens, if they understand what potential there is for making savings. That means we have to measure what we have now and what we do better. If we do not measure, we will not have results, and that is why we need a baseline against which improvements can be measured.

The challenge of measurement and of quantification will be at the heart of our proposal.

Also at the heart of this proposal is how we proceed from research results to innovation and practical achievements. Of course, we started with research. The Commission's R&TD funding programmes aim to exploit this potential in the systems and infrastructures for services too.

The most significant results are expected in areas such as electricity distribution, buildings, transport logistics and lighting. The rapporteur is right: you need to have cross-sectoral participation in those projects. That is also why we established cross-sectoral research projects and worked very closely together with the industry to reduce the time between research and development and innovation. That is also the reason why, in our

innovation programmes, we supported the demonstration and validation of new solutions and technologies in real world settings in order to maximise their set-up.

Reducing the footprint of ICT products also forms part of this research. As regards funding, we have so far invested more than EUR 4 000 million in this initiative. In the recovery plan proposed by the Commission, public/private partnerships for R&D are high on the agenda, with one of the three initiatives we propose being energy efficient buildings, a domain where ICT will of course play a predominant role.

One of the pilot projects being put into action now is the intelligent transport system. We have already invested a lot in in-car intelligent systems and we are now moving to the next step, which is the relationship between the car and the road and traffic signs. I agree with the rapporteur here that it will be very important to have our own satellite programme to become more efficient in that respect.

**Giorgos Dimitrakopoulos**, *draftsman of the opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*. – (EL) Madam President, I wish to congratulate Mrs Laperrouze and to thank her for the cooperation which we enjoyed over this entire period. On behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I shall give you the headlines of some of the basic proposals which we put to Mrs Laperrouze.

Firstly, there should be a common European foreign policy on energy, with the emphasis on security of energy sources and energy routes. At a time when battles are centred on energy sources, we all understand the importance of this proposal.

Secondly, we must deepen our relations with other countries, primarily with countries which produce energy, but also with countries via which energy routes run, in other words transit countries.

Thirdly, we need a new generation of binding energy interdependence clauses. These clauses are extremely important, especially in the negotiations which we conduct with other countries and in particular, for example, as this is a topical issue, in the negotiations which we are conducting with Russia on a new agreement to replace the 1997 agreement.

We referred to the fight over energy sources, an important issue which led us to differentiate between energy sources and the routes via which energy reaches us. There are many important projects at the moment. I should like to mention the South Stream pipeline, the TGI (Turkey-Greece-Italy) pipeline, the Nabucco pipeline and I must, of course, mention the Caspian region, as we debate it on many occasions. I have here a map of the Caspian Sea and I believe that, when we look at the Caspian Sea, we must look at all sides, including the Azerbaijani side and the Turkmenistan side; we shall be debating this issue in the European Parliament tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, but I would remind you of the importance of Turkmenistan and, lastly of course, Iran.

**Romana Jordan Cizelj**, *on behalf of the PPE-DE Group*. – (SL) Energy is one of life's basic necessities. However, mankind ceased some time ago to be satisfied with merely basic living conditions; we have also been striving to attain the kind of social development which makes our lives easier. This is why energy follows the economic trends of any given society.

However, we have only recently started looking at the prosperity of the individual from a more holistic perspective and we no longer measure it solely in terms of his or her purchasing power. Hence, as far as energy is concerned, we need to strike the right balance between the safety and reliability of supplies, environmental protection and action on climate change, and competitiveness. Our political group promotes all three of these objectives as the cornerstone of the common European energy policy and, in that respect, we welcome the Laperrouze report.

Climate change and the problems we experienced in January with the transmission of Russian gas to Europe testify to the importance of diversity when it comes to the common energy policy. The European Union must introduce projects that will strengthen our energy infrastructure as soon as possible, in order to facilitate the importation of supplies along different routes. In this regard, we need to ensure that we are able to import gas both from different transit countries and from different energy exporting countries. The implementation of the Nabucco project is exceptionally important in this regard.

In addition, we need to enrich our energy mix. Essentially, it needs to include a higher proportion of energy sources that do not result in greenhouse gas emissions, hence both renewable energy sources and nuclear energy. We cannot totally turn our backs on coal, either, but we have to ensure that we use the best possible technologies, such as those enabling carbon capture and storage.

I would like to stress that efficient energy use is our priority task. However, numerous studies have shown that we need to invest our financial, intellectual and creative powers in generation and transmission capacities. Even with all the measures I have mentioned, we will not be able to reduce import dependency to zero for some time yet. In order to minimise the problems involved in energy importation, we need to formulate an effective foreign energy policy. For this reason, I would like the Lisbon Treaty to be adopted, so that any institutional obstacles preventing the formulation of foreign policies can be removed.

I allude here to Ireland, and we expect the Irish people to solve this problem. However, our expectations of a common foreign energy policy will be more realistic if we take concrete action in the fields that we have already defined as part of the common energy policy. I am of the opinion that we should adopt the third gas and electricity liberalisation package as soon as this parliamentary term, together with uniform market rules for the entire Union.

In conclusion, let me present my opinion on the amendments tabled. I think that this Laperrouze report is of sufficient quality as to eliminate the need for any substantial amendments. The long-term objectives, which we will fulfil through the 20-20-20 package and which have been supported by both the European Council and the European Parliament, should remain unchanged. Our political group will not support any amendments which seek to reduce the diversification of energy sources. However, we will support those amendments which seek to increase the number of supply routes and improve energy safety in the Union.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the rapporteur on an excellent report and thank her for her cooperation.

**Mechtild Rothe**, *on behalf of the PSE Group*. – (DE) Madam President, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, may I express my thanks to the rapporteur, Anne Laperrouze, for the truly cooperative manner in which our deliberations were conducted? Let me also extend my thanks to the staff of the secretariats for their invaluable contribution.

Against the backdrop of the latest gas crisis, the Second Strategic Energy Review is extremely well-timed. Security of supply and solidarity among the Member States must be at the heart of the European energy policy. I firmly believe that it would make a distinct improvement if the call contained in this report for greater diversification of the gas corridors were answered. Moreover, before the end of this year the Commission must also present a proposal for the revision of the Gas Directive of 2004 in order to incorporate a requirement for binding and effective national and EU emergency plans.

However, as members of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament, we attach fundamental importance to the duty of EU Member States to keep a special eye, even in normal times, on the most vulnerable consumers in society, namely those who are victims of fuel poverty. There is still a lack of national strategies for tackling this problem. That is why my group has tabled an additional amendment calling on Member States to make real efforts to address this problem.

The report emphasises the particular importance of energy saving and energy efficiency. The most efficient and cost-effective ways to improve security of supply are quite clearly to increase energy efficiency and to make energy savings. At the same time we must have ambitious and realistic aims for Europe's future energy supply. I am pleased to see that we are moving in this direction, for example by calling for the target of a 60% share of renewables in our energy mix by 2050. The report also emphasises the special significance attaching to local initiatives in the quest for a successful climate and energy policy. The Covenant of Mayors has a key role to play in this respect, but it is also important to support other, similar approaches, like the idea of a Covenant of Islands. The bottom line, however, is that our objectives will be difficult to achieve without investments in the infrastructure of energy networks and further liberalisation of the internal market. We need a functioning single energy market with fair competition and with guaranteed free network access and equal distribution rights for all producers. The coming weeks will be crucial in this respect. What we need are the creation and development of a smart electricity network comprising ICT-based combined power stations and decentralised energy production. That is the only way in which energy resources can be efficiently channelled into the areas where they are really needed. We need a European 'supergrid' that taps into and links the enormous potentials in the North Sea, the Baltic and the Mediterranean region.

Where the report is untenable, however, is in its call to the Commission to draw up a specific road map for nuclear investments. For this reason my group has tabled an amendment that clearly underlines our common interest in nuclear safety while emphasising that whether Member States invest in nuclear energy must remain their own sovereign decision. My own personal opinion is that we do not need nuclear energy.

**IN THE CHAIR: MR SIWIEC***Vice-President*

**Graham Watson**, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Mr President, last year's energy review was a timely update, and I congratulate Anne Laperrouze for her rigorous report on it.

The issues raised are highly complex, but we can boil them down to this: Europe needs an energy policy that gives us sustainable, affordable and secure resources of energy. Sustainable by breaking our umbilical dependence on the fossil fuels that are choking our planet; affordable by guaranteeing a stable and realistic cost to consumers; and secure by freeing European citizens from dependence on unreliable or monopolistic suppliers.

This Friday, a group of Commissioners will meet Prime Minister Putin and his team of ministers. Energy is on the agenda, and our side should make clear that we cannot tolerate a dispute between Russia and Georgia evolving into a European gas crisis in the depths of winter. Assurances should be sought, but notice should also be served. This has happened before, and it must not happen again.

The time has come fundamentally to reassess Europe's energy supplies. This view is shared by members of all groups in this House, who should unite in leading the charge to make it happen. That is why this week a small group of us, including Mr Hammerstein, who will speak later, will launch a cross-party pamphlet, *Making the Green Energy Switch at a Time of Crisis*.

I am grateful to all Members who contributed their ideas, and I am startled by the degree of consensus that exists. There is an appetite in this Chamber to work fast, to work together, in search of a lasting solution to Europe's energy crisis, and we must harness that.

Of all the potential plans to open up a new energy era, one stands out: it is called the supergrid, or DESERTEC. The French Presidency cited it as a possible operation project for our new European Union for the Mediterranean. A number of Members, including Ms Harms, recently visited southern Spain to see the technology in action: solar thermal power from North Africa and sun-rich land in southern Europe harvesting energy from the sun, generating the equivalent of one and a half million barrels of oil per square kilometre per year. Transported through energy-efficient, high-voltage direct current cables, that power could be fed into a European supergrid, taking renewable energy from across the EU – tidal power from coastal regions, wind and wave power from windswept north-western Europe, and biomass and geothermal power from wherever they flourish.

Upfront, there are costs. The German Aerospace Centre estimates it would cost EUR 45 billion to build, but it also says that it would save consumers many times that amount in reduced energy bills over the next 35 years, and the investment would create thousands of jobs.

This is a bold project for an energy future that is sustainable, affordable and secure. That is the energy future that Europe must champion.

**Antonio Mussa**, *on behalf of the UEN Group*. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Mrs Laperrouze for her work, with which I agree to a large extent. I am, however, confused with regard to certain aspects, perhaps due to excessive reliance on the Commission's assessments.

Firstly, I feel that the predicted trend in gas demand is restrictive. If that is the case, I fear it will have a negative impact on sources of financing for projects. With regard to infrastructure, the relevant projects are at different stages of development. Rather than redefining their order of priority in an abstract way, while seriously overlooking the Mediterranean area, it would be advisable, instead, to reassess them in terms of development times, financial structure, available supplies and the link between public support and private commitment.

Mrs Laperrouze next recommended diversifying the sources and routes of supply. One example is the Southern Corridor. With regard to these issues, I feel a programmed approach is required, divided into phases. Indeed, in the case of the Caspian, only gas from Azerbaijan will be available in the first phase. Access to other countries will occur in the second phase, therefore making the market more complicated in political, regulatory and infrastructure terms. The Commission's proposal for a Caspian Development Cooperation can overcome these problems, if it will be tasked with, among other things, facilitating the development of missing infrastructure.



The penultimate aspect is that solidarity mechanisms are undoubtedly fundamental for the Union's energy policies, as well as in relation to the Treaty of Lisbon. It would be advisable, however, for the feasibility of these measures to avoid, in addition to potential distortions, excessively cumbersome procedures.

Finally, I would like to turn to external relations. Apart from the role of the Energy Charter, enlarging the Energy Committee, particularly to include transit countries as well as the field of renewable energy, is an important objective

**Rebecca Harms**, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (DE) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, in spite of the good atmosphere in which we worked on the Second Strategic Energy Review, I regret to say that we did not manage to obtain the corrections to the Commission's proposal that I believed necessary.

To my mind, the title 'Strategic Energy Review' has strong connotations of building for the future. If we take a look at this review, however, we have to conclude that it is all very much rooted in the past. At the heart of this strategic energy plan – and I am afraid the Laperrouze report does not put this right either – is the old energy mix of coal and nuclear power, and indeed there is an extremely sharp focus on the nuclear pillar once again.

I do wonder, Commissioner Piebalgs, what has happened to the proposals you presented to us at the start of this legislative term, when you told us that the great risks associated with nuclear energy had to be brought under control, that the problem of nuclear waste, the funding of decommissioning and all these issues had to be resolved before the Commission made any positive moves towards the development of nuclear energy. Not one of these issues has been resolved, and yet the Commission is now launching this pro-nuclear offensive. The fact that one of the greatest debacles in the history of the Western European nuclear industry is taking place right now in Finland, that the amount in dispute between the Finnish electricity company and Areva has now reached EUR 2.4 billion, because so many extra costs have arisen at the Olkiluoto site, does not seem to worry you in the least. What, I wonder, is the sense of this new investment drive in a sector which, despite receiving decades of public investment – far exceeding the volume staked in all the other sectors – is once again producing this kind of mess. I would very much like to know whether you actually mean all of this seriously or whether other hands are pulling the strings.

In my view, this mix of coal and nuclear power is precisely the strategy that has driven the energy policy of the European Union up a blind alley. I have said enough about nuclear power, but the wasteful use of fossil fuels – something else that the review does not really address at all – has also contributed to the present climate disaster, and the essential adjustments to this outdated strategy of yesteryear are not being made in this review.

In the deliberations on Mrs Laperrouze's report, my group established clear priorities. It goes without saying that nuclear power was not one of them, but we tried to bring about real changes in other areas too. We wanted the target of a 20% reduction in the consumption of primary energy to be made binding at long last. That did not happen. We expect a realistic proposal for the development of the 'supergrid', in other words a network that must be able to incorporate really large capacities for the generation of energy from renewable sources by the North Sea, in other coastal areas or in southern desert regions. There was no real sign of any of these things at all in either the report or the Commission's proposal.

We also believe that it was a big mistake to leave the whole realm of transport out of this strategic planning process on energy, because we – like you – want to get away from dependence on oil. You have decided that transport matters should be discussed separately, but in our opinion this issue should be one of the key focal points of strategic energy planning.

Diversifying gas supplies is all very well, and it is certainly something we should do, but at the same time every effort should be made to ensure once and for all that gas is used efficiently, otherwise diversification will get us nowhere at the end of the day.

I was appalled last week to learn that the European Commission's Recovery Plan is revisiting all of these strategic distortions and adopting the same backward-looking approach as this Strategic Energy Review. I must announce on behalf of my group that we shall be supporting neither the Laperrouze report nor the Strategic Energy Review and that we shall also endeavour in the context of the Recovery Plan to argue the case for sustainability and common sense.

**Esko Seppänen**, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (FI) Mr President, Commissioners, solidarity is a lovely word. It generally belongs to the vocabulary of the left. Solidarity should not just be called for in the name

of anti-Gazprom and anti-Russia policy, but also to prevent general energy poverty. Energy is also needed in the form of electricity and heat for poor people.

The major problem with the European energy strategy is that it was not built from scratch, but is rooted in each country's own geography, history and energy economics. If there is a common strategy and its structures are harmonised, it will mean that there will be winners and losers. There are countries which are being forced to abandon their tried and tested structures in the name of solidarity. That cannot be solidarity.

Harmonisation of the electricity networks also means harmonising the price of electricity. In practice it will not be done with reference to the lowest prices, but some average prices. In that case there will be losers: those countries with cheap electricity. In the same way, the money used in the EU budget to finance gas pipelines will have to be found by countries that do not use them.

Mrs Laperrouze is right when she says that network investments are for the Member States or the companies in them to make, not the EU. The EU cannot be an oil, gas or electricity network operator, and large sums in EU budget funds should not be used to support investments in networks.

Furthermore, our group would like to remind everyone, as Mrs Harms has, of the problems that are known to be associated with the use of nuclear power. While, on the one hand, carbon dioxide emissions are cut, on the other, the volume of plutonium increases.

**Bastiaan Belder**, *on behalf of the IND/DEM Group.* – (NL) The Laperrouze report has addressed the important issues relating to energy supplies that are currently facing the European Union. The recent gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine by no means left the European Union unscathed. The report details a number of lines of policy for the European energy market that could limit the vulnerability of the European Union in the event of another conflict. I am in favour of pursuing greater diversity in the energy sources and partner countries from which the EU imports energy, in other words diversifying the energy supply. The gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine has underlined the urgency of this issue once again and I sincerely hope that the Nabucco project – to give one example – will come to fruition in the near future.

In specific terms, this aspiration means that the European Union and the Member States need to focus to a greater extent on regional integration. At present, the networks of a number of Member States are still too isolated and, consequently, they are too dependent on imports from third countries. The creation of new connections between the energy networks of the Member States will also allow the internal market to operate more effectively.

To further improve the operation of the internal market, there also needs to be complete separation of ownership of the production companies and the network companies. This is the best way to counteract asymmetric market opening.

Meanwhile, several Member States have been looking at restarting nuclear power stations closed under agreements with the European Union. This would not appear to be the best way forward. Rather, investing in a greater number of cross-border connections would more effectively reduce dependence on one or more third countries in the long term.

Other important lines of policy in the report with which I am in full agreement are increasing energy efficiency and increasing the share of sustainable energy. However, the Member States have differing opinions on the question of whether nuclear energy has a role to play in reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This is pre-eminently a matter for the Member States to decide, rather than the EU. More clarity on this in the report would have been welcome. It is to be hoped that this will be rectified through the amendment process.

**Desislav Chukolov** (NI). – (BG) Ladies and gentlemen, so far I have noticed how very putatively and abstractly what is best for Europe is decided in this Chamber, but it was the Bulgarian voters who sent me here and therefore I am more interested in what is best for my motherland Bulgaria.

For us, the patriots of 'Ataka', energy independence for Bulgaria is a number one priority. During the 'talks', which we call 'EU dictates', we were required to close down reactors 1, 2, 3 and 4 at the Kozloduy nuclear power station.

I want to remind you – and if you do not know, then you can keep this in mind – that these units had fully passed all checks and were declared to be totally safe. At the beginning of 2007 my colleague Dimitar Stoyanov posed a question to the European Commission asking whether there was such a requirement for all these units to be closed down in order for Bulgaria to be accepted into the EU. As it turned out, such a

requirement from the European Commission did not exist. However, Mr Günter Verheugen lied to the Bulgarian Parliament and said that there was such a requirement.

A few days ago Bulgaria was facing an extremely serious energy crisis. Under Article 36 of our Accession Treaty we have the right to start reactivating this nuclear power station. That is our right, and because of that my colleagues in the Bulgarian Parliament introduced a bill for the reactivation of units 1 to 4 of the Kozloduy nuclear power station, which are currently closed.

With my colleagues in the European Parliament, Dimitar Stoyanov and Slavi Binev, I have submitted written declaration 0005/2009 asking for these reactors to be reactivated, with the aim of gaining Bulgaria's energy independence.

In conclusion, I want to say to you that Europe will be strong when every separate Member State is strong and has its own energy independence. This is the only way, if we want to work for our electors and for our citizens.

**Gunnar Hökmark (PPE-DE).** - Mr President, when we are discussing the Strategic Energy Review, I think it is important to stress some of the risks we are running – not only the risk of an insecure energy supply, with all the problems that brings, but also the fact that we are exposed to political pressure from regimes which use energy supplies as a lever to influence other governments. As a result, there is also a risk of fragmentation of the European Union, with Member States divided according to their different interests, thereby undermining the common foreign and security policy.

I think it is a good thing to see that the policies we need to tackle climate change are very much the same as the policies we need in order to strengthen our energy security. Decreasing the use of fossil fuels means less dependence on unreliable suppliers. Increased supply from other energy sources means a decreasing demand for fossil fuels, lower prices for European citizens and – not least – a reduced cash flow to the oil regimes of the world.

This has huge security implications which we need to consider when we discuss the European Union's future energy strategy. I think some of the pieces will easily fall into place when we have this perspective. We need more of an internal market in the European Union because, in reality, that is the only guarantee for solidarity between the Member States. This means that we need to do more about cross-border connections and have a better grid, binding Member States together and thereby binding the market together.

We need to develop more biofuels. I do not agree with those who say that there is a risk; it is possible for us – in Europe as well as in other parts of the world – to increase the area we are using. Even small contributions from biofuels result in less dependence on fossil fuels and a change in prices.

I must also emphasise the issue of nuclear power. Sometimes I feel it is the elephant in the room, because it is one of the greatest potential contributors to the European Union's ability to reduce carbon dioxide emissions today and in the future. I would like to conclude on that note. If we try to bring all these elements together, we will have the opportunity not only for a stronger energy policy, but also for a stronger security policy.

**Silvia-Adriana Țicău (PSE).** – (RO) Energy policy is and will continue to be a priority for the EU. The gas crisis this winter, when extremely low temperatures were recorded, has highlighted again the dependency of the European Union and its Member States on its traditional gas suppliers. United in diversity is the motto of the European Union. I hope that this gas crisis will bring us together to devise a common energy policy.

The development of the Nabucco project and construction of an LPG terminal in Constanța, a major Black Sea port, along with the interconnection of national electrical energy infrastructures are all measures which can help increase the security of the energy supply and enhance the EU's ability to offer solidarity to Member States affected by an energy crisis.

I call on the Commission and Member States to invest in modernising the European energy network, boosting energy efficiency and generating power from renewable sources. I also urge the Commission and Member States to provide financing for the measures aimed at cutting the pollution produced by coal-powered installations. The current crisis situation is making Member States focus greater attention on setting their priorities and strategic guidelines for development.

With regard to energy efficiency, the EU can achieve rapid results at an affordable cost in the battle against climate change. Boosting existing buildings' energy performance and promoting passive buildings, as well as using information and communication technologies to reduce energy consumption and increasing energy

efficiency through the large-scale implementation of intelligent meters and automated systems are strategic guidelines for development in which Europe must invest.

I also urge the Commission and Member States to provide financing for the measures aimed at cutting the pollution produced by coal-powered installations. The current economic crisis is making Member States focus greater attention on setting their priorities and strategic guidelines for development. By 2020, the EU must increase its energy efficiency by 35% and reduce its consumption of primary energy by 20%. I call on the Commission and Member States to promote and finance research projects aimed at improving energy efficiency.

Commissioner, I urge the European Commission, the European Investment Bank and Member States to set up a European fund for energy efficiency and renewable energies to ensure that the necessary public and private capital is raised to implement the energy efficiency projects currently being worked on across the European Union. Last but not least, I want to mention the transport sector, which is the main sector that uses oil. I think that we now need to adopt at European level some highly ambitious medium- and even long-term objectives by 2020 concerning the energy efficiency of vehicles. I also encourage Member States to devise, in an intelligent manner, transport policies for goods and for the movement of persons, especially in urban areas. Last but not least, intelligent transport is one of the strategic guidelines for developing transport.

**Lena Ek (ALDE).** – (SV) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, we all know that the European energy market has problems. We currently import almost 50% and in 10 years' time, if we do nothing, it will be 70%. The energy we produce is often generated in a way that damages our environment and creates the greenhouse effect, which will damage our health, economy and stability, not only in our part of the world, but also in many other parts of the world.

The energy that we have in Europe has to be distributed via a distribution network that is out of date and has not been renovated or well-maintained. We also have close neighbours and conflicts concerning energy issues that are extremely worrying. We have talked about our relations with Russia in this House on several occasions over the last year and it is totally unacceptable to make the energy crisis into a New Year's tradition and put ordinary people in a situation where old people freeze to death, hospitals have to be closed and industries close down. This is totally unacceptable.

Something else that is totally unacceptable is what Russia and Gazprom are trying to do with Nord Stream, namely to ride roughshod over Swedish environmental legislation and European legislation relating to the safety of the Baltic Sea, despite the fact that this inland sea already has incredibly large areas of dead bottoms. This is totally unacceptable.

We are going to need all the energy sources, all the new technologies, all the innovations, all the research and all the computer power we have to cope with all of these different problems. The regulations tabled by the Commission, including the financing package, are very good, but our citizens are still waiting for the governments to dare to take a decision on energy solidarity and on breaking up the large state monopolies. These monopolies are not only concerned with the production of energy, but also the distribution of energy, and citizens and undertakings, both small businesses and large industries, are therefore locked into an unacceptable situation.

I think that the rapporteur, Mrs Laperrouze, has produced an extremely good report. I also think that the Commission's proposal in these areas is very good and I hope that we can reach a decision on this matter as quickly as possible. Thank you.

**Eugenijus Maldeikis (UEN).** – (LT) The main lesson of the gas crisis is the great vulnerability of Europe's energy system and the very significant risk to supply delivery. This risk remains as the agreement between Ukraine and Russia is a one-time agreement and the situation will undoubtedly be repeated. Bilateral energy questions remain fundamentally unresolved, not just between Russia and Ukraine, but between Ukraine and the European Union and between the European Union and Russia, all the more so because there is no common EU-Ukraine-Russia energy operating system. There have so far been neither safeguards nor guarantees and these have yet to appear. I would like to stress that dependence on the supply of gas and on the use of gas is increasing dramatically and will grow even more once the power stations in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia have been closed. This shows that the risk remains and is perhaps increasing.

We have a very clear long-term energy strategy for the whole of the European Union. We have had very heated debates about it. There is talk of long-term measures. In my view, the weakest link is our short- to

medium-term energy policy. It has not passed the reality test and this was demonstrated by the gas crisis. I would invite the Commission to investigate such a scenario which, unfortunately, was not investigated for various other legal and political reasons. What would be the cost, benefit and consequences of temporarily prolonging nuclear power operations in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Lithuania, thereby fundamentally strengthening the energy security of both these countries and the whole of Europe in this situation? In addition, faced with the conditions of a long-term and undefined economic crisis, this would allow resources to be used more efficiently and would greatly reduce the burden of the crisis on our residents and the business sector.

**Claude Turmes (Verts/ALE).** – (DE) Mr President, on the subject of the energy security strategy and Mrs Laperrouze's report, one thing that I believe the Commission's proposal and the Laperrouze report have in common is that they do not set any priorities. They are a hotchpotch of everything for which pressure groups all over the place have been lobbying the Commission or Parliament. As long as we do not set priorities, we shall never allocate money wisely.

In point of fact, the priority is plain for all to see. We must begin with the efficiency of buildings, vehicles, fridges and so on. There is nothing cheaper and nothing that will create more jobs. Secondly, there is renewable energy. When we say that 60% of the whole energy mix should come from renewable sources by 2050, this means at least 90% of our electricity being generated from renewables. This figure of 90% electricity generation from renewable energy sources will surely be reached long before 2050, because we have already adopted a directive that sets a target of 35% for 2020. If we can achieve 35% green electricity by 2020 from today's starting point of 15%, we shall be able to reach 60% or more as early as 2030.

Thirdly, there is gas to tide us over. How is that supposed to happen? We invest billions in gas pipelines now, and then gas consumption in Europe is meant to be reduced. That is what you write in your document, Mr Piebalgs, and it can also be read between the lines in Mrs Laperrouze's report.

So we have efficiency, renewables and gas, and then you want to invest EUR 1.3 billion in carbon capture and storage (CCS). Where is there room in all of this for blind loyalty to nuclear power?

I have to say, Commissioner, that you cannot even get your sums right. If we go for efficiency and renewables and pursue even a half-decent gas policy and, if we really have to, invest a little more in CCS, we shall have no need of nuclear energy, and we do not need to run that risk. Just look at the facts!

As far as the Economic Recovery Plan is concerned, I must say that I am really annoyed with the Commission. Not a penny for energy efficiency! Not a penny for town-twinning! On 10 February, Commissioner, representatives of 300 local authorities in Europe will be gathering in Brussels at your invitation. What are we going to tell them: that Mr Barroso's cabinet cut EUR 500 million from the town-twinning budget between Monday and Wednesday of last week? I find that so contradictory and so utterly wrong. The fact is that we need towns and cities as partners in a new energy policy. Not a penny for solar energy, and not a penny for biomass! In other words, we are devising an Economic Recovery Plan in which we give three and a half billion to the oligarchy of energy giants and not a single euro to the partners whose help we need to enlist for the change to green energy.

**Miloslav Ransdorf (GUE/NGL).** – (CS) Thank you, I shall be brief. I should like to look at two aspects which I believe have not yet been discussed, namely the fact that we need an integrated energy system in Europe, which will interconnect the different types of energy and which will interconnect the different grids in such a way that it would be possible to make up for any outages. The recent gas crisis has shown that this is an extremely important task. The second thing is that we need to link these energy networks to similar networks in other fields, such as transport and communications networks, in order to achieve between them a certain degree of symmetry. As yet this is not the case and I think that a closer look will show that there are linkages here. I should like to say that the position of networks in the future structures of Europe is very important and that these networks are far more important for a cohesive Europe than the ever-growing bureaucracy both in Brussels and in the Member States. I believe that the European Union will in the future become a kind of necklace threaded on these networks.

**Sergej Kozlík (NI).** – (SK) The current financial crisis is being projected into an economic crisis. Furthermore, in view of the shortage of available credit, there is a threat of energy and food crises. In order to maintain at least the current level of energy production, there will be a need by 2030 for worldwide investment of about USD 26 billion in reconstruction and the development of new oil and gas fields and also in the production and distribution of all types of energy.

At the same time it will be necessary to integrate the flows of oil, gas and electricity so as to create an efficient and highly diversified system. This system must help to overcome consequences of local political disputes and also consequences of any natural disasters and to provide for a functioning energy supply in a Europe-wide context. The Slovak Republic itself has had the opportunity in recent weeks to experience the complexity of such a situation when, as a result of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia, not a single cubic metre of gas reached Slovakia for several days. The experience of Slovakia and also of other European countries has shown that vigorous support is needed for the European Union's priority of interconnecting and integrating the separate energy markets in Europe.

However, I must mention that the enforced and premature decommissioning of two reactors at the Jaslovské Bohunice nuclear power plant has been found to be an imprudent mistake in the current situation. The reactors met all the criteria for safe operation. Their decommissioning was required by the European Commission in the Accession Treaty as the price for Slovakia's accession to the European Union. This decision undoubtedly weakened the energy self-sufficiency not only of Slovakia, but also of the European Union.

**Nikolaos Vakalis (PPE-DE).** – (EL) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the battle against climate change and the need for energy security and to strengthen the competitiveness of our economy are taking us down the road of the third industrial revolution, towards an era in which we wean ourselves off mineral fuels.

It is a real revolution which will bring about huge structural changes to the model of production and consumption and, ultimately, to our very way of life. I trust that, as the European Union, we shall maintain global leadership in this revolution. In order for that to happen, we shall need to make every possible effort to limit the energy intensity of the economy in all sectors. One of the tools for improving energy efficiency is to make use of the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT). Considerable incentives are needed in order for us to make use of these technologies, so that we increase the energy efficiency of the European Union by 20% by 2020, within the framework of the 20-20-20 target.

The motion which we are being called on to adopt in a couple of days' time and which relates to the strengthening of energy efficiency through ICT places particular emphasis on research and development of pioneering technologies, such as nano-technologies and photonic technology, which have high potential to improve energy efficiency, and on designing policies to strengthen the take-up of these technologies.

Similarly, it also gives considerable impetus to more green innovation and entrepreneurship, with a series of measures and actions. I would refer in particular to green public procurements, which will allow public sector agencies to play a leading role in saving energy by making use of the new technological applications of ICT.

Finally, the motion provides for incentives for smart and integrated energy management systems in our cities and for smart traffic management systems with more rational road behaviour and transport systems.

It is clear from what I have said that, although it is not legislative, this motion which we shall vote on in a couple of days' time is highly important, because it essentially makes ICT one of the main indicators of sustainable development in the European Union. I therefore call on you to support it in the vote in a couple of days' time.

**Hannes Swoboda (PSE).** – (DE) Mr President, we are, I hope, all clear on what the priorities are here: energy efficiency, energy saving and renewable energy. Nevertheless, we cannot get round the fact that we will need to worry about our gas supplies for many more years yet. So, what lessons can we learn from the dispute between Ukraine and Russia, and from the crisis that arose from that dispute? In my view – and I am sorry to have to say this, Commissioner – it seems to me that we will be no better, or at least not much better, prepared the next time this happens. Neither can it be said that the crisis is over, and I have seen little sign that a strategy is really being developed, or that any conclusions have been drawn from this dispute between Ukraine and Russia.

Certain Members of this House believe that we should conclude bilateral agreements with Ukraine, but it should be pointed out that Ukraine has to bear at least some of the blame for the situation that arose recently, and I would really rather not make myself dependent on arguments between Mr Yushchenko and Mrs Tymoshenko, or Mr Yanukovich, or whoever. Ukraine would, quite naturally, clearly much rather buy the gas from Russia and then sell it on to us, naturally for an additional charge, as would Turkey in relation to Nabucco, but I will return to that later. If, then, we want our gas to be just as insecure, but more expensive, we should make a bilateral agreement but, if we want to find a real solution, we need to make a trilateral agreement encompassing Russia as the supplier, Ukraine as the transit country and ourselves, and come to

an agreement in this connection, particularly with regard to transit and infrastructure. I have heard nothing from the Commission on this or on what alternative suggestions it has.

With regard to investments in infrastructure, if we look to the east, there are basically three pipelines up for discussion: Nord Stream, South Stream and Nabucco. Nord Stream is a supply pipeline in the north; it solves the transit problem, but will not reduce our dependency on Russia. South Stream may also solve a transit problem, but again will not reduce our dependency on Russia. On top of that, if one looks at the costs involved, South Stream is actually somewhat more expensive than Nabucco, at least according to a number of studies, which suggests that we need to invest massively in Nabucco. When I consider – and I have mentioned this on a few previous occasions as well, Commissioner – how quickly the United States constructed the PTCP oil pipeline and how long we are taking over the Nabucco gas pipeline, I really do think it is scandalous how little Europe has achieved: it is a sign of our weakness.

We need to act quickly, not just with regard to Azerbaijan or Turkmenistan – which we will be discussing shortly – but also in relation to Iraq. The fact that gas there is simply being released into the air as exhaust, with no consideration being given to how it could be transported to the Nabucco pipeline, really is a big mistake. I would ask you, Commissioner, to negotiate quickly and clearly with Turkey, in order to ensure that we also get their agreement to this. We will, of course, also need to convince Cyprus to stop blocking the energy chapter: their insistence that we cannot even negotiate on this chapter shows a lack of solidarity, because it quite naturally causes difficulties with Turkey. You are nodding, Commissioner; I see that we are in full agreement here.

Turning finally to nuclear energy, there are some very different opinions on this subject in this House. Unfortunately, I too cannot vote in favour of the Laperrouze report, for example because it is too one-sided in this respect.

The thing that disturbs me about this whole debate is that we now have a new development in France, namely a reduction in atomic waste, but, when you look more closely, you find that this atomic waste is more radioactive. That is not the way to solve the problem, particularly with regard to waste. We will need to apply a lot more energy and brainpower to solving the problem of waste and disposal.

**Konrad Szymański (UEN).** – (PL) Mr President, the energy crisis has revealed a weakness in the European Union. We are still having problems correctly reading the political challenges resulting from this situation. A glaring illustration of this mistake is the proposal of Angela Merkel who, after a third energy crisis, is proposing to us today still stronger ties with Russian energy resources by building the northern and southern gas pipelines. In fact the opposite is true. This crisis shows that we should stake everything on the building of an independent infrastructure which will take us to independent sources of the raw materials for energy in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The crisis shows that we should strike the northern gas pipeline off the list of European Commission priorities in order to avoid a Russian monopoly in Europe. Solving the energy problem will be a critical moment in the entire integration process. The EU has the chance to show its effectiveness and to gain new strength. It may also show its passivity and risk marginalisation.

**David Hammerstein (Verts/ALE).** – (ES) Mr President, I would like to talk about the need to fuse the information technology revolution of the information society with the energy revolution, which has been the subject of an excellent resolution of the House.

We need smart electricity grids; currently these are wasteful and anachronistic. We need consumption that is managed in accordance with production.

We must have smart grids and smart houses. This smart consumption can only be provided by the Internet and only by the fusion of all electrical networks with the information coming from houses, factories, buildings and so on.

In this way we could be much more autonomous, much more independent, and Europe could take a leading role in this essential global issue so that there would not have to be dozens of unnecessary power stations as is the case today. The majority of countries produce three times more energy than is consumed because production is oriented to peak consumption. This would not be the case with smart grids. Smart grids would allow us to adjust consumption to sustainable production and to existing production levels.

In this way we could also cooperate with neighbouring countries in the Mediterranean. An extensive, clean, smart grid is needed to connect to our neighbours in the south who have the potential to generate solar

energy using high technology and large-scale plants. This would be an excellent opportunity for cooperation on technology transparency. We could promote a clean future for us all.

**Jerzy Buzek (PPE-DE).** - Mr President, I should like to thank the rapporteur for her work.

Let me make a few points on the Strategic Energy Review and the last energy crisis problem, which are closely linked.

My first point: in our report, which calls on the Member States to speak with a single European voice on energy issues, we have explicitly stated what all Europeans have seen in the past weeks to be the reality, namely that damaging energy supply in the Member States afflicts the European Union as a whole. It is very important. This is the basis of European solidarity and a basis for developing emergency response measures.

My second point is that the report mentions CCS technology as having the potential to meet our environmental targets while exploiting a source of energy – coal – that is largely available in Europe. By developing CCS, Europe can become a world leader in advanced technologies, which will contribute to our global competitiveness and strengthen our economies. The same is true for coal gasification technology, which is very important as an additional source of gas supply – it means diversification of gas supply.

My third point is that this strategic document specifically underlines the need for investment in the energy supply infrastructure. Infrastructure projects that receive support at EU level should first and foremost contribute to the real diversification of sources and routes of supplies to the Member States and to the EU as a whole.

Investment in Ukraine seems to be of special importance for us. Together with our Ukrainian partners, we could, in the future, take the joint responsibility for gas deliveries on the Russian-Ukrainian border. The reason for such a step on our part is very simple. In terms of energy relations, Ukraine identifies with international standards. It has ratified the Energy Charter Treaty and, therefore, plays by transparent rules.

My fourth point is that our strategic document greatly complements our efforts towards implementing the Third Energy Package. What does it mean? It means a working internal market in energy for the European Union; it means solidarity and support on many sides. Let us finish the legislative procedure during the next three months. It is very important for us.

**Reino Paasilinna (PSE).** – (FI) Mr President, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, we have history behind us. After all, our energy networks were built to meet the needs of the Cold War and for those political circumstances. Now they have improved and have been patched up here and there, but this has caused us a problem that we will have to return to again later on.

As the need for energy has grown dramatically while the economy has developed at a huge rate, so the price, supply and environmental problems have also changed. They have become the greatest challenge for us. As the problems are global, obviously global solutions are what are needed. It is therefore important that we involve the United States and the developing countries in a common energy process. We will show the way, but the United States has to follow Europe's example and must work alongside us.

As energy solutions are global, we need European energy diplomacy, and I understand that the Commissioner for Energy has done quite a lot of work in that regard and in connection with this latest energy crisis. We need energy diplomacy for the simple reason that these are such big issues that there have been wars over them before and there will be again in the future. This is thus a very serious issue.

It is also quite obvious that we need an energy mix comprising various energy sources that is as broadly based as possible, because that will stabilise the energy situation and as a result each nation's diversity, and Europe's too, will come into its own.

Of course, saving energy is an important solution to the problem: it is the cheapest and the most effective method. For this we need something that I regard today as the most important single thing that should be done: making energy intelligent. If we do not greatly increase the use of intelligent technology we will not achieve our targets. Luckily, smart technology has developed at just the same time. People and companies do not know about the energy they are consuming without smart technology. Consequently, information and communication technologies (ITC) are the solution that will help us reach targets and keep us in order. They are a reminder of our extravagance. They are therefore like a good teacher, but also a good hired hand because intelligence is not just needed for the network, but also for equipment, homes and cars. Everywhere there is human activity, intelligence is needed to control energy consumption. In this connection, I would



stress in particular the importance of the small and medium-sized enterprise sector and the innovations that come from this, as it can be truly inventive. Then there is the social dimension: energy poverty and, simultaneously, employment are linked to what has just been said.

We find it odd that Ukraine is a transit country. Obviously, as Mr Swoboda said, the pipeline should be under alternative management, for example under tripartite management that would include the EU, and that way the problem would go away.

#### IN THE CHAIR: MRS MORGANTINI

*Vice-President*

**Fiona Hall (ALDE).** - Madam President, in all the discussions on the energy crisis, there is one aspect which my colleague, Anne Laperrouze, does mention, but which generally receives insufficient attention. We talk about energy efficiency in the context of climate change and of fuel poverty, but energy efficiency is also of huge strategic importance. Controlling demand takes pressure off the supply side and is crucial to reaching energy independence in Europe. I want to make two specific points in the context of the oral question on the use of information and communication technologies.

First, I am concerned that the roll-out of smart meters is not going ahead with the degree of commitment required by the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive and called for in the Morgan report. In some countries, digital displays are available to show consumers how much energy they are using – which is helpful – but a proper smart meter does much more than that. It allows two-way communication, detailed analysis of consumer demand and proper measurement and payment of electricity supplied by micro-renewables. We need smart meters now. They are crucial to the task of transforming buildings from being energy consumers into being net energy producers.

Secondly, with regard to lighting, I trust we are about to go ahead with taking the most inefficient domestic lighting off the market, and the same needs to happen for office and street lighting. We should, however, already be looking forward to the next technological steps, such as wider use of smart lighting systems using sensors, which measure movement and the degree of natural light so that lighting can be reduced – or indeed switched off when necessary. There is a lot more to energy-efficient lighting than compact fluorescents, and it is time for the public sector – and that includes the European institutions – to take the lead on using ICT for energy efficiency.

**Roberts Zīle (UEN).** – (LV) Madam President, Commissioners, I would firstly like to thank Mrs Laperrouze for her extremely comprehensive report. Crises always provide the opportunity to take important decisions that may crucially change our values and policies. I have reason to believe that the recent gas crisis has opened the eyes of politicians in relation to the vulnerability of many parts of Europe with regard to energy supply. Not only the recovery plan and the Second Strategic Energy Review prepared by the Commission but also this report all give us hope that there will be a unified European energy policy, and that includes the hope that the isolated energy islands of Europe will at last be eliminated, including that of the Baltic States. Another aspect relates to the development of liquefied natural gas terminals. These could indeed become an alternative to supplies of Russian gas in many locations, but only on condition that national governments are able to withstand the pressure, and not create them as extra capacity for the export of Russian gas, but solely as import terminals. Thank you.

**Paul Rübzig (PPE-DE).** – (DE) Madam President, Mr Piebalgs, Mrs Reding, ladies and gentlemen, we need investment now. We are on the verge of an energy crisis and a financial crisis. We need to make an effort to invest as quickly and as well as possible, and therefore we cannot but say 'yes' to the construction not only of pipelines but also of LNG ships. We should build them as quickly as possible, as this would create jobs and thus contribute to full employment in Europe.

The pipelines should not compete with each other; rather, the construction of each new pipeline is a win-win situation, as is the construction of LNG terminals. This is an important issue for the future.

Above all, we need to invest in energy efficiency, not via state funding, but rather by means of tax breaks. If we could give every citizen an allowance of EUR 10 000 a year that they could offset against tax, we could make an immediate start on investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy; with regard to the latter, progressive depreciation, in other words the immediate inclusion of costs on the balance sheet, would be a particularly valuable tool. If we could set a three-year limit for this, it would be a great success for all of us.

We could get a better handle on employment and energy. In this connection, it is up to Commissioner Kovács to launch an initiative.

One point which particularly exercises us in this programme is, quite naturally, the nuclear industry: it is vital to ensure the safety and security of nuclear power stations, and to do so to the very best of our ability. It is not possible to set the bar too high here: quite simply, we need people to trust in the European Union that the appropriate steps will be taken, that further security research will be conducted and that there will be legally binding requirements allowing dangerous nuclear power stations to be removed from the grid immediately following a ruling by a court or regulator. The people of Europe have a right to safety in this field, so that we can go forward into a future in which energy generation does not put us in danger and we can sleep soundly. The Commission can make a significant contribution to this.

Ultimately, however, it will also be up to the Council, in the group responsible for nuclear safety, to live up to their responsibilities and not to go down a path that the citizens will not appreciate, by blocking proposals from the European Parliament and the Commission.

**Teresa Riera Madurell (PSE).** – (ES) Madam President, Commissioners, the recent situation concerning Russia and Ukraine and the gas supply has clearly shown that more than ever before we need to diversify our supply and improve connections between Member States and with producer countries.

The Commission's proposals are heading in this direction, but in the interests of greater efficacy these proposals should also include, and I was glad to hear the Commissioner mention it today, the potential in the south of our continent and in particular in my country, Spain.

Spain is the Member State with the greatest diversification of supply, both in terms of the number of countries – our gas is imported from 10 different countries – as well as in the range of formats. For this reason, my country is an excellent supply platform for the European Union. The supply is achieved both through the gas pipeline from Algeria as well as by liquefied natural gas in similar volumes to that of Nabucco, but at a lower cost and with better delivery times. However this platform cannot currently be used by the European Union due to the lack of a connection to France. Medgas, Mr Piebalgs, must be a priority for the European Union, as must the specific problems of our island territories.

If the Iberian peninsular clearly suffers from isolation in energy terms, islands such as the Balearic Islands, where I am from, suffer a double isolation. This is very unfair for the inhabitants of these islands because we, as Europeans, have equal rights.

I sincerely request, Mr Piebalgs, that you consider the particular situation of island territories when taking decisions and establishing priorities.

Finally, I would like to thank the rapporteur for her work.

**Olle Schmidt (ALDE).** – (SV) Madam President, Commissioner, the EU has had to learn the hard way what it means to be far too dependent on a single energy supplier. The citizens of several Member States have been affected by Russia's capriciousness in a totally unacceptable way. We know that Russia is ruthless when dealing with its neighbours, but when freezing Slovaks and Bulgarians were taken hostage in the quarrel between Russia and Ukraine it was, hopefully, a wake-up call for all of us, including us here in this Parliament.

Ukraine needs the support of the EU, and the construction of Nabucco with gas from Azerbaijan, among others, must now get underway. The EU must now demonstrate an ability to take action, precisely as called for by Mr Swoboda.

We know that Russia is pressing for Nord Stream, the gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea. These proposals should be rejected. The Baltic Sea is one of our most sensitive inland seas. Out of consideration for the environment and the economy, this pipeline should not be laid in the Baltic Sea, added to which are the security policy aspects. A land-based alternative must be thoroughly investigated instead. The European Parliament has also expressed its doubts about this on a previous occasion.

I am pleased to see that the report maintains that nuclear energy needs to be an important part of Europe's future energy mix. If we are to meet the emissions reduction requirements of the energy package we need modern European nuclear energy. It is good that we are able to discuss this in the European Parliament over the next few days.

**Dariusz Maciej Grabowski (UEN).** – (PL) Madam President, Commissioners, it is time to speak plainly. Firstly, the European Union does not have an energy strategy. This fact encourages Russia, for example, which treats energy resources as a political weapon, to make attempts at pressure and blackmail, which makes the EU's situation worse.

Secondly, the EU has succumbed to collective manipulation in the form of intimidation with global climate warming due to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Increasing numbers of experts and facts confirm that this is not true. With regard to those who are spreading this theory and intimidating us with global warming, it would be worth investigating in whose interests they are acting.

Thirdly, the EU requires an energy strategy based on the principle of the weakest link, in other words help in the form of financial aid and investment in those countries which are most dependent on one supplier, like the Baltic States and Poland.

Fourthly, the EU needs to apologise and restore hard coal and brown coal to favour, because it has plentiful supplies of these and they are cheap. Fifthly, the EU needs a tax and credit policy to support new technologies and savings in energy emissions, and this it does not have.

**Herbert Reul (PPE-DE).** – (DE) Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, first of all I would very much like to thank Mrs Laperrouze and Mr Piebalgs for all the documents they have presented.

I do not agree with all of the details, but the proposals go in the right strategic direction: it is right and necessary to focus once again on the fact that security of supply is one of the central issues. We have perhaps devoted too much of our attention to other energy policy issues over the last year, and I am grateful that security of supply has now returned more to centre stage.

Secondly, I am also grateful that the proposed position is so nuanced. As has been said, one might not agree with every single point, but the report is generally correct, contrary to what Mr Turmes just suggested. Mr Turmes, it is wrong to believe that there is a simple answer, a single answer to this enormous, complicated problem.

Politicians always try to give a quick, simple answer that satisfies everybody, but that is just not possible. It is, unfortunately, damned hard, which is why the answer is so varied. We cannot make people promises and act as if we have a solution and everything is magically going to be fine; quite apart from anything else, the people would one day be bitterly disappointed when they realised that it does not work that way.

This nuance means that there is not just a single energy source, but rather that we will continue for a long time to work with several sources. It is immoral to just discard a source of energy: in my view, it is irresponsible to simply dismiss nuclear energy. It is part of the solution: not the whole solution, of course, but it should be realised that it has a contribution to make. I would also caution against staking too much on gas: we have just heard a great deal about the dependency that entails.

I also think that we need to realise that we cannot just carelessly give up on coal – an energy source that we have in our country and in many other places in Europe – and say 'coal produces CO<sub>2</sub>, so it is not an option'. That would be irresponsible. We also need a nuanced response to the issue of the various routes and paths. As Mr Rübig just said, there is not one single answer for a pipeline: it would be a mistake to just opt for one; instead, we need to open up a variety of routes and options. Nobody today can predict with certainty what will happen in 10, 20 or 30 years' time.

In that respect, the path we need to take is to say 'yes' to intelligent solutions. By intelligent, I mean varied, and being open to new things and not standing still. The answer is technology. The answer is investing in research and being open to solutions that we currently cannot see at all, and not casually ruling out one option or another. It is also agreeing to investment.

It would be a fatal mistake – and it is one made in some energy policy decisions – to give those who actually have to invest the money, namely companies, too little room for manoeuvre and too little support. Does anybody really believe that we, the Member States, the State or the Community will be able to solve the problem of investment? No, it is the private sector that will have to do that.

**Atanas Papanizov (PSE).** – (BG) Madam President, Commissioners, first of all I would like to highlight the constructive debate in the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy on the report by Mrs Laperrouze, and especially point out her role in preparing an objective and all-encompassing report.

I want to especially concentrate on the proposals included in the report which have been made with the aim of reflecting the problems faced by those countries which are most deeply affected by external energy source suppliers, in particular gas.

First of all, the importance of the European Parliament actively participating in allocating projects for new energy links, in particular between Member States' gas and energy supply networks, has been noted. However, it is with regret that I point out that only EUR 20 million has been set aside for the Commission's project for the Republic of Bulgaria and its links with Greece, despite Bulgaria being one of the most seriously affected countries. The gas field in Chiren, for example, which will solve the problems of the crisis with minimum supplies, has not been mentioned at all.

Secondly, all possibilities for constructing the southern gas corridor have been included, in other words, in addition to the Nabucco project, the South Stream and TGI projects are also noted. Also noted is the long-term plan for the possibility of gas being supplied by other countries in the region such as Uzbekistan and Iran.

Thirdly, the importance of liquefied gas terminals being constructed in the European Union is emphasised, and also that they should be accessible to all Member States on the basis of the principle of solidarity. This is once again particularly important for the joint use of such terminals by Bulgaria and Greece.

Fourthly, I call upon the Commission to look into expanding the energy community in South East Europe and other neighbouring countries with the aim of forming a single market for the whole region. As rapporteur on the regulations and conditions for access to gas supply networks, I want to once again underline the significance of the Third Energy Package for the formation of a single European energy market and to urge its quickest possible implementation.

Finally, I want to point out that the report objectively expresses the role of nuclear energy too. I consider that the current framework directive for nuclear safety will become a good basis for analysing the state of all reactors in the European Union, and not just of newly-constructed ones, and will be an objective base for the evaluation of their safety.

It is clear that politically based decisions like those taken in relation to Kozloduy cannot be long-term ones in the current development of energy diversity in the European Union. I hope that Member States will be in the position, based on objective criteria, to reconsider the issue about the closed reactors.

**Andrzej Wielowieyski (ALDE).** – (FR) Madam President, Mrs Laperrouze's report on energy policy concerns a subject of huge importance for all the countries of the Union.

I greatly respect her for the work she has done, but the situation remains very serious. The excruciating and disastrous experience of our countries in the South in January, like the forecasts that threaten us with a significant energy shortage over the next two decades, all point towards the need for energy policy to be a key part of our foreign policy.

However, the future is gloomy, Commissioner, because we lack unanimity, solidarity and resources. In terms of solidarity, this does not perhaps apply to the Commission, but rather to certain large European countries. We are not speaking with one voice.

I entirely agree with Mr Swoboda that Nabucco is a big embarrassment for the European Union. For example, the Russian South Stream pipeline supported by the State and by certain EU countries is in danger of ousting Nabucco, which is twice as cheap and which, for its part, acts in accordance with the rules of the market. Its sources of supply in Azerbaijan risk being seized by its rival, which makes it a precarious and dubious investment. In this way the Union is probably going to lose the unique opportunity of diversity and greater security ...

*(The President cut off the speaker)*

**Péter Olajos (PPE-DE).** – (HU) Madam President, the Second Strategic Energy Review could not be more timely. The security of supply to the eastern half of the European Union has certainly been challenged by the events of the beginning of the year. After a three-week crisis, since 20 January natural gas has once again been flowing to Europe, but the question is, for how long? In order to be able truly to guarantee security of supply, we need to learn the lessons of the gas dispute. By this I mean first of all the diversification of the energy types used, the sources of supply and delivery routes. According to calculations, Europe uses 500 billion m<sup>3</sup> of gas per year, and this demand may grow, according to certain analyses, by as much as 30% in the next 20 years.

Ideas have already emerged regarding potential alternatives. The Nord Stream pipeline transporting Russian gas to Europe is already under construction, and the Blue Stream in Turkey is ready; agreement has been reached by the interested parties on the building of South Stream, Ukraine has undertaken the creation of White Stream, and then there is the much talked-about Nabucco, albeit with uncertain sources or financial backing. In any case, dependency on Russia will for the most part remain. Although Nabucco would transport Asian gas, so far – unlike Gazprom – Europe has not even made an offer to Baku. What can be done now? Many may say that, for the moment, we can trust that the negotiations of the European Commissioners and the Russian delegation at the Moscow summit will bring substantive results and lead to significant progress as regards the gas pipelines, and that in future it will not be the Russian gas monopoly alone that dictates prices.

This is possible, but for my part, in addition to all this – and indeed before all else – I believe that the way forward is to use less and cleaner energy. This is precisely why I maintain that there is a need for a European green 'New Deal', in other words, one that aims at sustainable growth while stimulating and utilising innovation in environmental industry. As a result of the current global financial crisis, more and more people are waking up to the fact that a new logic of economic organisation is necessary. Increasing numbers of people are recognising that, in order to emerge from the global crisis, a fresh driving force is necessary, with an engine running on new organisational principles. More and more people are recognising the need for a paradigm shift. The green 'New Deal', in other words a new logic for economic organisation based on innovations in environmental technology and supported by international capital markets, will become the cornerstone of increasing numbers of economic rescue and stimulus programmes, including among the European Union Member States. We need this stimulus because last year the number of the unemployed in Europe grew by 1.7 million. The European green 'New Deal', should it receive the green light, will have a fundamental effect on Europe's future energy policy. Thank you very much.

**Libor Rouček (PSE).** – (CS) Ladies and gentlemen, the European Union at present imports 50% of the energy it consumes and this proportion is constantly growing. The Union's dependence on imports of conventional sources of energy and on a limited number of suppliers represents a serious threat to our security, stability and prosperity. This strategic review of the European Union's energy policy has therefore, in my opinion, come at the right time. I am of the view that the 'three times 20' objective for 2020 is correct from the security, economic and ecological standpoints. However, attainment of this objective requires a common approach throughout the entire European Union, unified both within the Union and towards the outside. The creation of a common energy policy requires the completion of ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the submission of a proposal for such a common energy policy. In the internal market there is a need for a clear and stable legal framework and, above all, a need to complete the integration of our energy systems throughout the territory of the European Union.

The clause on mutual solidarity will remain just an empty phrase if we do not connect these energy systems. There is also a need to strengthen the use of all domestic energy sources, from conservation by increasing the proportion of renewable sources to greater use of safe nuclear energy. There is no need to emphasise that financial investment in our domestic energy industry will also provide a return in the form of a resumption of economic growth. As far as external relations in the field of energy are concerned, this aspect too requires far greater diversification than before. There is a need for a more intensive dialogue with producer countries, transit countries and other consumer countries. Cooperation should be increased with the countries of the Middle East, the Mediterranean region and North Africa. This should be done within the framework of the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean. The dialogue should also include the candidate country Turkey and, in my view, it is also essential to look for a far more effective approach to countries like Iran. In conclusion I should like to congratulate our rapporteur Mrs Laperrouze on, I believe, a first-rate and balanced report.

**Danutė Budreikaitė (ALDE).** – (LT) Although we started talking about the need for a common energy policy as far back as 2006, each individual EU State is responsible for ensuring a secure energy supply. However, solidarity among the Member States is essential for the survival of the EU itself. The EU must immediately adopt effective legislation to help overcome energy supply crises or avoid them altogether. The Commission proposes an EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan, the most important aspects of which are the creation of infrastructure and the diversification of energy sources. I am delighted that among the infrastructure projects set to become EU energy security priorities is an interconnection plan for the countries around the Baltic Sea, which would eliminate the insecure energy islands still existing in the EU.

I would like to ask the Commission for all kinds of support in the construction of the energy link between Lithuania and Sweden and the Lithuanian-Polish energy bridge. Here, unfortunately, we also need political

will. Meanwhile, returning to the European Union's fundamental principle – solidarity – and its application in the field of energy, many doubts arise as to the future of this principle. We are debating the Third Energy Package, involving the creation of an EU internal electricity and gas market with an Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators. At the same time, Germany and Russia are establishing a Russian-German energy agency. How is this consistent with EU Member State solidarity, the common energy policy and energy security?

**Zbigniew Krzysztof Kuźmiuk (UEN).** – (PL) Madam President, Commissioners, in this debate I would like to draw attention to three questions.

Firstly, Russia is increasingly clearly using supplies of energy resources, and mainly gas, to exert a strong political influence. Not only did the last gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine cause huge economic losses in many EU countries, but with a kind of permission from the EU it once again pushed Ukraine into a clear economic dependence on Russia. For it is difficult to imagine that the Ukrainian economy will be able to function if the price of gas is over USD 400 per 1 000 cubic metres.

Secondly, a new partnership agreement between the EU and Russia needs to be negotiated, which will contain details of the energy question but will also contain a clear stipulation that Russia will not use the supply of energy resources to exert political influence, and that Russian suppliers will be liable for damages arising from a break in supply.

Thirdly and finally, the European Union, by using its own financial means and also the European Investment Bank, should support first and foremost gas investments which really diversify the supply of gas to the EU, and so which create a real capability to import gas from countries other than Russia, such as the Nabucco gas pipeline.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE).** – Madam President, we will never achieve either energy security or the 80% reduction in our carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 if we continue to effectively ignore both the issue of energy security and the critical importance of pan-European high-voltage direct current (HVDC) interconnection. That includes an HVDC line to North Africa: smart electrical networks over Europe and North Africa.

Having had the opportunity last week to experience first hand the exciting solar thermal operations in Grenada and Seville, and having read over the weekend Harvard professor Michael McElroy's views on freeing the United States from its USD 750 billion annual bill for importing oil, winning the energy security battle in the US and at the same time saving the planet, I ask myself: what are we still debating? We know the answers.

The smart grid will allow solar, wind and hydro-generated electricity to level the security graph. If the wind is not blowing off the Irish west coast, the sun will be shining in Spain, or the wind will be blowing off the west coast of North Africa as well as the sun shining there.

In short, what the sun is to Spain, wind is to the west coast of Ireland. Our national regulators will breathe easy as their only job as of now is to keep the lights on and our homes and offices heated at peak demand.

We can no longer allow our citizens to be hostage to either energy politics or volatile oil prices. Wind energy is competitive with coal, oil and gas, and the fuel is free. Yes, our challenge is to build a new energy economy – an energy economy built on renewable electricity.

I conclude: the glib expression 'to cost the earth' which we – English-language speakers anyway – use figuratively with gay abandon now needs to be taken literally. If we do not rapidly change from our almost total dependence on fossil fuels, it will, as our peer review climate scientists repeatedly and with increasing urgency point out, do just that: cost the earth through global warming.

**Evgeni Kirilov (PSE).** – (BG) Madam President, as shadow rapporteur for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, I would like to congratulate Mrs Laperrouze on this report, which gives a wide perspective on the European Union's problems in the field of energy, including the need for a common energy policy.

The report also very clearly indicates the actions which need to be implemented so that we can face the challenges of energy security. I also welcome the fact that nuclear energy has found the place it deserves in such a report, and is presented as a necessary energy source.

In particular now, following the gas crisis, it is also clear and well pointed out that we have a need to diversify energy sources. On the other hand, for the future we need to continue working towards more alternative

corridors, energy corridors, and not just one corridor at the expense of another. We all would then gain from competition.

I want to draw attention to two issues. In October last year I noticed here, in this House, that the Nabucco energy project was still 'smoke without fire'. I called upon the European Commission then to take firm action. We can now say that noticeable action is being taken by the Commission in this direction. An understanding of its importance is evident, particularly now following the gas crisis.

However it needs to be clear that, despite the actions and measures taken on the road to achieving ever greater energy security, much more effort is needed, including serious political activity, so that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The second issue is the capacity for energy storage. I would like to tell you that Bulgaria would have been doomed had it not had capacity for at least 20 days' reserve supplies at the gas storage facility in Chiren, which last year, as if the government knew what was coming, was expanded by one-third of its capacity.

Therefore, for the second time today, I would stress my utter lack of understanding why the Commission has completely ignored the project proposed by Bulgaria for further expansion of this storage facility. This was our only saviour and I think that we need to support similar projects in all other countries.

**Leopold Józef Rutowicz (UEN).** – (PL) Madam President, the gas crisis and the financial crisis are forcing us to take rapid and pragmatic action which is above individual interests and ideas that are economically unjustified, such as the Nord Stream pipeline.

The Second Strategic Energy Review does not give the desired added value. A series of issues mentioned in the review face significant difficulties in their realisation. The citizens and the economy of the EU require rapid and specific decisions and action which will ensure relatively low and stable energy costs over the next 15 years: decisions which will lead to the most significant savings possible in industry, transport and homes; decisions which will in large measure reduce the dependence of the EU economy on the import of hydrocarbons and ensure their correct supply; decisions which will lead as quickly as possible to the development of a programme and plan of specific research-based measures and how to finance and implement them. As a result of these economic measures CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be reduced, and the bureaucratic trading of emissions — so good for the traders, but not for the economy — will not be necessary.

**Mairead McGuinness (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, I am touched by the words 'smart' and 'intelligent', which are very much part of this debate, because the solutions we try and use in our house to reduce energy consumption are certainly not working and they are neither smart nor very intelligent. Telling children to turn things off is just not the solution. I wish it were, as it would mean that I was in control. So we do need all of the things that others have spoken about: sensors and other technological advancements that will make everybody's life easier in terms of achieving our energy efficiency objectives.

Tonight's debate is a massive one: it is about our climate change agenda, security of supply, solidarity between Member States and also economic growth – and that is an issue for us at the moment – and how we can achieve a better use of our energy resources.

The country I come from, Ireland, relies on oil for almost 60% of our energy needs and it is all imported. So, clearly, we have a particular problem. We need to reduce that dependency, we need to develop our indigenous resources and, as I have already mentioned, improve our efficiency. Clearly, the issue of interconnection between Member States is crucial particularly for countries on the periphery.

Ireland's dependency is extremely high: 91% of our needs are imported. That is quite a staggering percentage, and while we have not experienced the gas problems that other colleagues have spoken about, or the cold and the horror that caused for other Member States, we did learn, from watching that, how critical it is that we do something about our energy mix and our energy insecurity.

So, all of the issues that are part of this report and the oral question are extremely important for us.

In particular the issue of land use needs to be addressed. The Swedish experience of forestries is interesting from the perspective of Ireland, where we have not developed our forestry sector.

But this is a key issue: getting the balance right between food production and fuel production.

**Emanuel Jardim Fernandes (PSE).** – (PT) Madam President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, developing a coherent and all-encompassing Community policy in the energy field is a logical step and a necessary intervention. The Commission's proposal and Mrs Laperrouze's report point in this direction.

The European Union will give added value to the initiatives developed by the Member States. Oil is finite and the production of the European Union and Norway in 2007 contributed a mere 30% to internal demand. The European Union's dependence on oil imports indirectly increases our dependence on politically unstable countries or those which as possible energy partners generate major geostrategic tensions, as we have seen recently with Russia.

For these reasons, it is strategically important to redirect the demand for alternative energy sources to oil, but it is also geographically important to look more carefully at the South American and African markets, which are currently expanding and to which the development of the European Union-Brazil and European Union-Africa partnerships could contribute greatly. This should be done through the use of the Iberian region – Spain and Portugal, where I come from – as a fundamental platform in terms of logistics and distribution in the European area.

As for the basic need to enhance energy efficiency, it is important to guarantee appropriate synergies among sectors able to contribute to greater energy efficiency. Only through the adoption of a global and coordinated approach between Community policies and national policies, namely in the areas of cohesion, agriculture and transport, will we be able to outline a strategy that conveys a long-term vision.

The link between energy and territorial cohesion is indisputable in that it affects possible long-term solutions for all the regions of the European Union, including the most isolated and outermost regions.

**Iliana Malinova Iotova (PSE).** – (BG) Mrs Laperrouze, I would like to congratulate you in particular for the good work you have done with your topical and timely report.

We are hardly in a position yet to say how much European countries and citizens lost from the gas crisis. The direct losses to the Bulgarian economy alone, which was most severely affected by the dispute between Ukraine and Russia, amount to over EUR 230 million, without any compensation.

The ensuing emergency raised many questions. Unfortunately, the big issue of energy dependence comes to a head whenever a political crisis and political antagonism between Russia and Ukraine occur. Many people remember the situation three years ago, when the two countries again disagreed on prices. Then we had a pledge of a common European energy policy, but three years on it seems like nothing has changed.

Now we ask ourselves: are we ready for a single energy market or will individual interests prevail in bilateral agreements? Have we done enough to interconnect the European gas supply networks among Member States or are we becoming less and less inclined to set aside reserves for crisis situations? How are we working on Nord and South Stream, and on Nabucco?

I am pleased to hear that nuclear energy is being treated on the same level as other energy sources. Without compromising on safety, it is time to reconsider our attitude towards nuclear facilities in Europe, and without any further politically motivated decisions.

We need nuclear energy and it would act as a serious barrier to other crises that may arise. It is not coincidental that at the height of the crisis the Bulgarian Parliament asked its European partners to revive the debate on reactivating the closed reactors at Kozloduy, which have been proved safe by the competent authorities. We hope for your understanding.

The decisions are difficult, but let us not prejudge them or write them off prematurely. I would like to address the following words to you, Mr Commissioner. Only a few days ago, when the European Commission allocated resources from the European Development Plan, the country which was worst affected received the least amount of resources. This evening I have not heard any mention from you about Bulgaria being in the list of 100%-dependent countries in need of special assistance.

What are the criteria and mechanisms for allocating these resources? I would find them difficult to explain to Bulgarian and to European citizens. Evidently we also need to put more effort into the Third Energy Package and speed it up. As a member of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, I have worked a great deal on protecting energy supplies for consumers, but please understand, it is more important to secure the energy in the first place.



**Călin Cătălin Chiriță (PPE-DE).** – (RO) I want to stress the European Union's need for an external energy policy so that the 27 Member States can speak with a single voice during negotiations with major producers. This is the only way in which the European Union can obtain affordable prices for importing gas and oil, along with guaranteeing energy security. Diversification of energy supply sources must be one of the European Union's major goals. However, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the Russian gas pipeline project, South Stream, is not making any contribution at all to this diversification as the supply source remains exactly the same, Russia. Furthermore, the huge costs involved in building this gas pipeline would end up increasing the price of gas, a price which European consumers would be obliged to pay.

This is why, in my view, the European Union needs to urgently take action to include in future agreements with Russia and Ukraine some comprehensive clauses on energy interdependency, which will set out clear obligations and effective mechanisms for rapidly resolving any problems. The strategic partnership between the European Union and Russia and the new Eastern Partnership should aim to implement ...

**Colm Burke (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, energy policy and foreign policy are inextricably interlinked now more than ever. We see the need for a common EU energy policy in the light of the recent developments regarding gas supplies in central and eastern Europe but, whilst it is one of the key innovations of the Lisbon Treaty, I regret to point out that this point was not highlighted sufficiently in the debates surrounding the Treaty's ratification.

In Ireland we have 12 days of gas supply at any one time. Sixty per cent of our electricity is generated from imported gas, whereas the EU average is around 40%. On 28 January last, the Commission published a proposal to accelerate work on addressing deficits in the EU energy infrastructure while contributing to economic recovery as part of a EUR 5 billion package.

The inclusion by the Commission of the electricity interconnection between Ireland and the UK as a priority area for funding under the European economic recovery package is a very welcome development in this regard. It further emphasises that when all 27 Member States work together we can bring about the change that is required to ensure security of energy supply.

*(The President cut off the speaker.)*

**Ioan Mircea Pașcu (PSE).** - Madam President, the two important documents we are discussing today – the Commission's plan of action and the report on it – are separated in time by the recent interruption of gas due to the usual winter quarrel between Russia and Ukraine. Consequently, the report is more attuned to reality, trying to increase our internal solidarity and expedite the implementation of the plan in front of us, thus capitalising on the lessons of the last crisis.

Personally, apart from support for the diversification of transport routes for the import of gas, I consider the appeal to expedite the achievement of internal market energy in the current legislature and the necessity to revisit the entire problem of gas storage as major contributions of the report. However, the recommendation to fully open the Nabucco project to Russia is questionable since everyone knows that Nabucco was conceived as an alternative to Russian gas and that, consequently, Russia is already doing everything possible to kill it.

**Zita Plešinská (PPE-DE).** – (SK) Ladies and gentlemen, the recent gas crisis has shown the importance of a common EU energy policy. In addition, Slovakia has found out what 100% dependence on Russian gas means. Hundreds of companies had to cease production and pay their employees just 60% of their wages.

I appreciate that solidarity plays a leading role in relations between EU Member States. If we had not received an emergency transfer of gas from Germany through the Czech Republic to Slovakia, households would also have been at risk. I am convinced that the need to ensure a constant supply of energy is a fundamental universal priority. Meeting the need predominantly from non-renewable sources of energy is beginning to outweigh environmental acceptability.

We must build safe nuclear power plants and at the same time, using structural funds, encourage rural communities to focus strategically on the link between energy, water and biotechnology, thus strengthening the diversification of the energy base.

**Janusz Onyszkiewicz (ALDE).** – (PL) Madam President, the last but of course not the only gas supply crisis means that we keep coming back to the matter of security of supply of this very important resource.

In Europe we are not in a bad situation as far as location is concerned. We are almost surrounded by sources of gas: North Africa, the Near East, Central Asia and Russia. The problem is that Europe does not have a

unified market for gas. In connection with this Europe does not have a more or less unified price. I would like to point out that in the United States they do have a unified market, and the price there for 1 000 cubic metres of gas is below USD 200. In Europe we pay around USD 400. This is a result of the fact that we do not have an infrastructure which would enable the transfer of gas from one country to another.

Finally there is the matter of the Nabucco pipeline. It is high time that we gave this the right priority and engaged our financial means so that it finally materialises.

**Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PPE-DE).** - Madam President, I have three questions to Commissioner Piebalgs.

Firstly, Nabucco may become a hostage to the Turkey's accession negotiations, as we have learned from Prime Minister Erdoğan. Are we also considering, within the southern corridor, the White Stream (Caspian-Georgia-Black Sea-Ukraine-Romania) project?

Secondly, in the revised Gas Directive, would you consider a mandatory 90 days of reserves for gas storage for all the Member States?

Thirdly, you have presented an impressive package of EUR 3.5 billion for energy infrastructure. Do you foresee any obstacles to that in the Council? Because it has still to be accepted in the Council: I have heard about four Member States objecting. And how can the European Parliament, which has also to accept it, help to pass it as quickly as possible?

**Flaviu Călin Rus (PPE-DE).** – (RO) The gas crisis which we recently faced was between Ukraine and Russia, but unfortunately it affected some of the European Union Member States. This crisis has highlighted once again that the European Union is dependent to a large extent on a single gas supply source. As a result, I feel that developing partnerships with Russia is beneficial to the whole of the European Union, but at the same time, I believe that the European Union must immediately initiate projects which can allow alternative solutions to be found, with the precise aim of averting the consequences of crises which could occur either in the near or more distant future.

In the same train of thought, I believe that the two projects, Nabucco and South Stream, must be taken into consideration, along with other solutions. In this case, I am referring to the fields in the North Sea and those which are supposed to be on the Black Sea continental shelf. Given that, over time, all kinds of deposits are going to run out, I believe that we need to invest in scientific projects capable of discovering alternative sources of energy, thereby also guaranteeing the development of future generations.

**Nicolae Vlad Popa (PPE-DE).** – (RO) The recent gas crisis refocuses attention even more sharply on the importance of developing alternative routes and sources of energy by developing transport infrastructures and establishing interconnections. In the current climate, the Nabucco project needs to be speeded up as it has the potential to help achieve the European Union's objectives of diversifying not only routes, but especially supply sources from third countries. Transit routes through neighbouring countries must be encouraged by completing the projects which involve connecting the network in Romania with those in Hungary and Bulgaria.

At the same time, I feel that the South Stream project cannot be regarded as being of any benefit to Europe, precisely due to the fact that it does not use an alternative source, as requested in the report's strategic review. We do, however, also have our own energy sources. One micro-hydroelectric plant is not viable or effective, but hundreds of thousands of hydroelectric plants from the Alps right to the Carpathians or from the Balkans right to the Tatras or Pyrenees mean energy independence.

**Andris Piebalgs, Member of the Commission.** – Madam President, this has been a really fascinating debate and has reflected all the diversity of views on energy and the importance that this issue deserves. But I believe that the debate definitely shows that the rapporteur has struck the right balance. It is true that each of us sees the detail differently. There are no simple solutions, no silver bullets to solve this.

Again I would like to congratulate the rapporteur for really going through the process of ensuring that all opinions are reflected in the report, while at the same time clearly supporting the Commission's second strategic energy review.

A lot of you spoke about the supergrid. Supergrid is the tool that was seen as a magical solution. Well, it is true that it has a lot of potential, but with a grid we have a challenge. Somebody needs to pay for the grid, and, as you know, we are looking for a balance between affordability, security of supply and sustainability.

So, if we really want to move towards this supergrid, the recovery plan is the first small step in the right direction.

The recovery plan can lead to a vicious circle where we say: 'Well, we need this, we need that, but it should be done by industry'. Yes, we do also encourage industry with different types of incentives, but if the public funds and European funds will not follow in accordance with our political priorities, then the plan will not be successful.

Then there are other issues that I would also emphasise, echoing what Mr Paparizov said. On the third internal market package, I would just say what it does for Europe. First of all there is the agency for cooperation of European regulators. That will solve a lot of issues. Second, a European body for transmission system operators. These two issues are crucially related to security of supply, while at the same time not taking away national sovereignty over energy.

So if this package is adopted now, we will achieve a lot of momentum. If it is postponed, we will lose a lot of momentum for security of supply. So, in my opinion, the recovery plan and the third energy package is something that needs to be done.

The last questions are usually the ones I remember the best, so I will briefly respond to them, because they relate very clearly to the issues that we discussed. What is the Council discussing? I think there are basically two issues.

One is whether we should give public funds to energy at all. Well, a minority of countries still believes that it is good that the funding should come from industry, but this brings the problem that it is hard for industry to move on very costly projects where returns are uncertain.

The second issue is 'a fair return for my country'. Well, I could point out that my country is not specifically covered by this recovery plan, so it is good that there were a lot of questions on this. I explained that any interconnection with the Baltic as a whole helps my country as well. So this issue is still looked at very much from a national perspective: 'my fair return'.

I believe we are here taking the first step towards European public funds supporting this type of development. This could be the biggest difficulty, but I believe the Council will work hard really to approve of our proposal because I believe it is balanced, if not ideal for every Member State.

On Nabucco, our preferred option is definitely transit via Turkey. We are working now, we have started the intergovernmental conference with a view to concluding it in March with an intergovernmental agreement and a project support agreement. That should give enough legal and regulatory clarity for investing in the Nabucco pipeline. If it fails, we will look for alternatives. So there are alternatives, but Turkey is our priority route and I think it is beneficial for Turkey as well.

As for gas storage, we are considering this, but 90 days should not be necessary for everyone, because it very much depends on imports. If a country produces gas it does not need the same level of storage, so there should be a more fine-tuned proportion that gives enough security of supply and is realistic enough in case of crisis. So we are still looking at what the fine-tuning of the gas storage proposal could look like.

Again I would like to thank you for this debate. It was a very tough debate, but I believe that all elements are there and we just need to continue to work very vigorously to implement the ones that we have agreed on and the proposals that have been agreed in this House. Again I would like to thank Parliament for its strong support for developing a European energy policy.

#### IN THE CHAIR: MR ONESTA

*Vice-President*

**Viviane Reding**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, we have had a very fascinating debate. I agree that much, if not the majority, of the responsibility falls to our colleague who is responsible for energy.

However, everything that you have been calling for – energy security, more efficiency, intelligent networks, decentralised networks, the supergrid, the micro grid, the virtual power plants – needs ICT to be run. So it is essential that we make every effort to get this intelligent means, in order to put into practice the policy proposed by the committee on energy efficiency. We are economically and technologically on the right path and it is also – and I must stress this – a unique business opportunity. If we get the ICT to allow energy efficiency to go in the right direction, then we are creating many industries, a lot of growth and many jobs.

That is also the reason why we have to go ahead with smart building, smart lighting and smart transport. Only if we apply, in practical terms, the possibilities shown to us by research, will we not only be less dependent because we will be more efficient, but we will also build a new industrial capacity.

I will just give you one example in order to show you how this could work. As you know, we will be adopting the high-efficiency light-emitting diodes – the famous LEDs – which, already today, will cut 30% of energy consumption in lighting and up to 50% by 2025. We have already, thanks to European research, gone one step forward. In 2007, due to our European Framework Programme on Research, we delivered the OLEDs – the organic LEDs – with a supplementary efficiency of 50% on the LEDs. European research has brought about results and it is now both national and regional policy to put these results into practice.

I have heard some criticism that the euro recovery plan is not about efficiency. Well, if I am reading this plan correctly, I see that EUR 1 billion is allocated to energy efficiency in buildings. You have all pledged in this House that this is the right way to proceed. EUR 5 billion goes to clean cars, so that cars will no longer be dependent on petrol as they are today, and there is EUR 1 billion for smart manufacturing in order to use less time and less energy in our industries.

We are on the right path and I think that, with the help of Parliament and with a lot of pushing in the national Member States, we will manage not only to secure these means but also to apply them in practice. Then energy efficiency will not only be about speeches but also about facts.

**Anne Laperrouze, rapporteur.** – (FR) Mr President, Mrs Reding, Mr Piebalgs, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your exceptionally valuable contributions; they show how vast this energy field is and that energy really is a basic need.

In our debate and in the report, which moreover reflect the discussions that we have had among ourselves in the various political groups, I have noted a broad consensus on the need to strengthen the networks and the interconnections, to use information and communication technologies to make the networks intelligent – as Mrs Reding just explained – to strengthen relations with producer countries and transit countries – that was in particular the aim of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, with our rapporteur, Mr Dimitrakopoulos – and also to reach an agreement on energy efficiency, energy savings, and the development of renewable energies.

In conclusion, improving energy efficiency, developing renewable energies, diversifying our sources and lines of supply, consolidating the dialogue with producer countries, but also ensuring that the 27 Member States speak with one voice and, above all, that we effect a change in our lives is the consensus that we have achieved. All these dimensions are vital ways to guarantee this common energy security that we all want.

The differences of course relate to the composition of the energy mix. What are the energy sources? I should like to respond to my fellow Members from the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance and then also to other Members who have spoken out against nuclear energy. I wish to say that we do need to be careful.

There has been a great deal of exaggeration in what has been said. I believe that we have set some very ambitious targets for 2050. Mention has been made of an 80% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and of a 60% share of renewable energies. It is quite clear that a large share has been allocated to all renewable energy sources. In terms of nuclear energy, it is acknowledged in this report that it is part of the energy mix.

In this regard, I should like to conclude by simply reminding you of the objectives: a CO<sub>2</sub> concentration of 450 ppm, which has been set in order to guarantee this limit of a 2°C rise. I should like to remind you that, in these efforts that have been announced, we are talking about a 9% share of nuclear energy, 54% energy efficiency, 35% renewables and 14% geological carbon capture and storage.

All that is for 2030. Thus, nuclear energy is part of the mix, and coal too. I for my part am not a fan of coal, I am not a fan of nuclear, but we need to have the broadest possible range of energy sources. I would not like to have to choose between coal and nuclear for 2050.

**President.** – Thank you, Mrs Laperrouze. Rest assured, in any case, that your energy is precious to Parliament.

The joint debate is closed.

The vote on Mrs Laperrouze's report will take place tomorrow.

In accordance with Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure, I have received one motion for a resolution at the end of the debate on the oral question by Mr Remek<sup>(1)</sup>. The vote will take place on Wednesday.

#### **Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Alin Lucian Emanuel Antochi (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Solidarity between the European Union's Member States in the energy sector must become a primary objective at European, regional and bilateral level. Indeed, the strategies adopted by each Member State at national level must not affect the energy interests of other Member States and must be in the European Union's general interest in terms of energy security.

In this context, the task of improving the Community legislative framework aimed at energy interdependency within the EU and drafting a new generation of regulatory acts intended to govern the European Union's relations both with energy suppliers outside the EU and the transit states must act as an effective instrument in the process of drawing up a European security policy. The new laws will have to provide for legal constraint mechanisms intended to consolidate cooperation in the energy sector and develop viable competition on the European energy markets.

It is essential to encourage the efforts aimed at increasing EU investments with regard to diversification of cross-border structures, incentives for generating alternative, non-conventional forms of energy at local level and improvements in the infrastructure's ability to facilitate connection to new energy sources. The European Union must also seriously factor in the need to stimulate the private energy sector in Member States, which is already feeling the consequences of the global economic crisis.

**Adam Bielan (UEN)**, *in writing*. – (PL) It could be said that the January energy crisis is slowly starting to turn into an annual ritual. The more severe the winter the greater the certainty that the Russian Federation will turn off the gas supply to European countries. It is therefore all the more surprising, in the face of another gas conflict whose victims were citizens of European Union countries, that Chancellor Angela Merkel is still pushing the proposal of building the Nord Stream gas pipeline with Community funds.

What the European Commission should be doing now is preparing a plan for diversification of energy sources. Investment should be made in building new transmission networks which would bypass unreliable exporters of energy resources such as the Russian Federation. In one of the amendments which I tabled to the Laperrouze report we stress the significance of supporting 'the Nabucco gas pipeline, which is the only existing undertaking which will diversify energy sources and transit routes for gas' without the involvement of Russia. It should also be a priority to create gas interconnectors enabling connections between systems and rapid transmission of gas reserves in the event of further crises.

However, our trade agreements should be based on the special 'energy security clause', which would be the business ethics of the sector.

For Europe and the rest of the world, which conduct business in a civilised manner, it is important that the Russian Federation ratifies the Energy Charter Treaty. I think that only the cohesive and uncompromising position of a united Europe will be able to persuade the Kremlin to make such a decision.

**Šarūnas Birutis (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (LT) Energy matters are the greatest challenge of our times. The gas crisis which the EU was confronted with in January is not the first in the history of the EU. In Europe there are countries which are 100% dependent on gas from Russia and these include Lithuania, which in December 2009 will shut down its nuclear power station. The EU must take additional steps so that the crisis is not repeated. The missing energy link must be created, and we must also strengthen the Directive on the security of gas supply and establish an EU coordinating mechanism designed to react to similar crises. It is essential that there are sufficient reserves of energy supplies in those Member States which are most dependent on energy supplies.

The crisis between Russia and Ukraine is not just a crisis of mutual trust, but a geopolitical crisis too. Both countries must take responsibility for the fact that Member States did not receive gas. Europe, for its part, must diversify energy sources and improve supply security. Europe must act decisively, as the solution of this energy crisis over the supply of gas from Russia is only temporary.

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<sup>(1)</sup> See Minutes.

**Cristian Silviu Buşoi (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) I would like to thank Mrs Laperrouze for this report and say that I support the majority of its conclusions. The EU must be ambitious in the battle against climate change, which means that the role of nuclear power and renewable energy sources cannot be discounted.

The process of creating a single market for electricity and natural gas must be accelerated. This requires interconnections. I therefore welcome the European Commission's proposal to allocate EUR 1.5 billion to interconnection projects. In addition, the criteria established in Barcelona for interconnection must be met by all Member States.

It is also necessary to improve energy efficiency, especially in the new Member States. In Romania, for example, there is huge potential for making savings and I would like this opportunity to be utilised.

The Russia-Ukraine crisis has highlighted once again the need for a common EU approach. I support the report's conclusion, including the point about signing an agreement between the EU, Russia and Ukraine.

However, I do not agree with the statement about the South Stream project being a vital project for the EU's energy security to the same degree as Nabucco. South Stream is a rival project to Nabucco and does not meet all the needs to diversify energy supply sources in order to guarantee the EU's energy security. This is why I am suggesting that in the future we need to pay more attention to the position given to this project in the various EP documents.

**Dragoş Florin David (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Ladies and gentlemen.

Today we are discussing in the European Parliament one of the most important reports being debated during this plenary session. We can see in this report key elements of the energy policy which we want to implement across the European Union, such as national emergency action plans, the energy security clause, the diversification of supply sources and keeping nuclear power in the energy mix.

All this indicates how flexible our policies and actions are and how rapidly they can be adapted to the current situations. I feel that the regulation of commercial, association, partnership and cooperation agreements signed with producer and transit countries in order to establish a code of conduct and consequences for non-compliance is one of the EU's priorities in the wake of the gas crisis at the beginning of the year.

Furthermore, diversification of energy supply sources by establishing interconnections between Member States, implementing new supply routes like Nabucco and constructing LNG terminals must become current projects financed by the Commission. Finally, I would like to congratulate Mrs Laperrouze for her report and I hope that it will be supported by the vast majority of our fellow Members. Thank you.

**Alexandra Dobolyi (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) In the first few weeks of 2009, EU Member States were treated as hostages by Ukraine, whose leaders initiated a supply settlement dispute with Moscow over the price of gas deliveries. Kiev based its action on the hope that, as a result of the traditional anti-Russian sentiment in Western and Eastern Europe, it would be able to gain the support of most EU Member States. Obviously this was a political shot in the foot.

The EU needs to break out of its own vicious circle at last. Just one part of this is the energy phobia according to which we need to put up with the Russians, or they will turn off the gas tap. This mistaken standpoint can only lead to erroneous consequences! This issue involves more than just energy!

If the European Union's long-term goal is partnership with a Russia built on democracy, providing an enormous market which is developing and capable of further development, then it also has to anticipate that the economic and political centres of gravity could legitimately shift to Russia.

The EU must actively and credibly convey the message that it is interested in seeing a modern Russia come into existence. The EU's behaviour, consisting of encouraging words but stifling, reticent and condemnatory actions is doomed to failure.

The lack of a common energy and foreign policy, squeezing the diversification of energy use into the background and prioritising certain historical injuries and commercial advantages renders our Union vulnerable.

A united EU would give Moscow pause for thought, for it has never before seen such a thing. In the face of countries engaging in capricious politics, however, an enormous country like Russia can easily assert its will.

This is about much, much more than energy!

**András Gyürk (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (HU) The Strategic Energy Review provides a good summary of all the steps that are indispensable for the European Union to reduce its dependence on external energy sources. The disruptions in gas supply in recent weeks have made certain points of the proposal particularly timely.

We can only agree with the need to place the Community regulation of gas reserves on new foundations. In addition to imposing obligatory minimum stocks, it is important, in our view, to strengthen the mechanisms of solidarity with Community regulations, in harmony with the Lisbon Treaty.

It is commendable that the energy review carried out by the Commission names the infrastructures whose creation would be in the common interest of all Member States. It is a welcome development that the proposal considers the interconnections of the Central and South-East European gas pipelines an important goal in addition to the Southern Gas Corridor. The significance of the initiative that was initially linked to MOL lies in the fact that the states involved will find it easier to assist one another rapidly in the event of disruptions to supply. Linking the networks will also stimulate competition in the region.

We consider the European Commission's decision to redirect a portion of unused EU funds to energy infrastructures a good one. What is less positive, however, is that the most vulnerable Member States are to receive a smaller portion of the financing for their infrastructure than they had wished. However, the emphatic commitments can only be honoured by a more spectacular financial contribution and solidarity on the part of Community.

**Janusz Lewandowski (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (PL) 'A Pole is wise after the event!' This old saying, none too complimentary to my compatriots, can be extended to cover the entire European Union. The unpleasant experience of the Russo-Ukrainian gas conflict in January 2009 was necessary for the question of energy security to become a matter of primary importance for the entire European Community.

We cannot hide behind the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon, which does include statements about energy solidarity, has not been ratified. All that is needed is the political will, supported by a cold analysis of the last crisis, in order to describe future scenarios and to deliver the European Union from problems similar to those which were caused by the gas supply blockade via Ukraine. Both the Commission communication and the Laperrouze report draw attention to ways of coping with emergency situations, such as increasing reserves and creating a transmission network which will ensure technical availability. These are matters about which there is no disagreement. It will be more difficult to agree a long-term strategy, which will have to include a realistic position on Russia, because it is – currently – the main supplier of crude oil and gas to Europe.

Mutual dependence, as we have learned, does not guarantee continuity of supply and relations based on rational economic premises. The interference of political motives is too visible to overcome naivety. The most difficult thing in relations with our eastern neighbours will be to root out the tendency to make bilateral agreements, and that is the real measure of success or failure of Community energy security and energy solidarity policy!

**Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (FI) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to thank those who drafted the report for their versatile efforts, and for bringing what is an important issue to the heart of the debate. Like the rapporteur, I think it is very important for the Union in its energy strategy to commit to common, long-term targets. Measures to save energy are the absolute key to a radical reduction in energy consumption.

There are no national solutions to Europe-wide problems. To guarantee energy security in Europe, the Union needs to invest in the establishment of a common main grid and a common energy market, and better coordination.

The report places too much emphasis on nuclear power as one of Europe's major areas of investment in the future. Considering the risks and disadvantages of nuclear power, this is a short-sighted and harmful policy. The report is not ambitious enough as regards renewable energy sources. A competitive Europe built on sustainable use must aim to increase the renewable energy share to 80% by the year 2050. Many studies, including the German Aerospace Centre and the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung ERENE studies, show that the effective introduction of new and clean forms of energy would be technically and economically possible. Now only the political will is missing.

**Marian Złotea (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Mrs Laperrouze's report refers to an issue that is particularly important to every European citizen, especially during the gas crisis which we faced recently. We all need to

make our contribution to successfully attaining the ambitious objectives which this Second Strategic Energy Review is proposing, namely energy supply sustainability, competitiveness and security.

I want to emphasise the importance of improving the security of our energy resources. We must take measures to diversify our energy sources and supply routes. We need to support investments in infrastructure and in new technologies with reduced energy consumption, so that we can successfully achieve the '20-20-20' objectives.

Now more than ever, Member States must demonstrate their solidarity and cooperate in order to ensure the security of their energy reserves. At the same time, this new strategy needs to lay the foundations for economic growth in the EU.

I would like to remind you of the geopolitical importance of Romania and the Black Sea region for energy security and diversification of energy supply resources.

## 17. Development impact of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) (short presentation)

**President.** – The next item is a short presentation of the report (A6-0513/2008) by Mr Schröder, on behalf of the Committee on Development, on the development impact of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) (2008/2170(INI)).

**Jürgen Schröder, rapporteur.** – (DE) Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, we are talking about the impact of economic partnership agreements on development. 'Economic partnership agreements' really is quite a mouthful, particularly in German. It is a horrible phrase, and no doubt very few people in Germany will concern themselves with this topic, despite the fact that it will be one of the most important topics in coming years. What is it all about?

The Cotonou Agreement states that economic partnership agreements should be concluded between the European Union and the ACP (African, Caribbean Pacific) States by the end of 2007. The background to this was that developing countries that were not, and are not, in the ACP Group of States complained to the World Trade Organization (WTO) that the European Union was according the ACP States special privileges.

We have now managed to set up, at least in part of the Caribbean, an economic partnership agreement of this type, which we hope will be a success. My report states that this agreement will form a new basis for development cooperation: we are helping them to help themselves. We are trying to link together trade and development, by which I mean trade policy and development policy. There has, of course, been a certain amount of friction, in particular here in Parliament between our committee, the Committee on Regional Development, and the Committee on International Trade, relating primarily to the compatibility of this agreement with the rules of the WTO and especially the issue of parliamentary scrutiny.

My report originally included two paragraphs – numbers 5 and 17 – relating to parliamentary scrutiny. At the request and on the advice of the chairman of the Committee on International Trade, I deleted both of those paragraphs completely and submitted an alternative draft report with these paragraphs deleted, on which we will be voting on Thursday. Apart from the two deletions, my draft report is identical to the first draft. It sets out both the opportunities and the risks of the economic partnership agreements, but it particularly emphasises the potential positive effects of these agreements on the people in those countries.

Before I finish, Mr President, I would just like to say one more thing: some of our fellow Members have repeatedly claimed that people in the ACP States had too little time to conclude these agreements. That is not true: they had from 2000 to 2007; then they had another year until 2008; and we still have time. We are not, however, saying to people in these countries that they can do it whenever they like: time is running out. It is in the interests of the people in the ACP States, and I therefore call on all Members of this House to vote in favour of my report on Thursday, including those who originally intended to vote against it. This is not an argument between the left and the right; it is about helping people in the ACP States to become more self-confident and, in the foreseeable future, to become equal partners in international trade.

**Viviane Reding, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, the Commission welcomes the report by Mr Schroeder, which represents a balanced overview of the diversity of opinions surrounding the development impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).



The dossier continues to evolve. We have signed a full Economic Partnership Agreement with the Caribbean region, whilst we have negotiated interim agreements with countries and regions in Africa and the Pacific. These interim EPAs provide for a trade regime compatible with WTO rules and preserve important trade preferences for these countries. The interim agreements are only transitory in nature, as they will be replaced by full regional EPAs. The pace of these negotiations will be set by the regions concerned to ensure those objectives and coverage match their own integration processes, capacity, needs and political priorities.

In parallel, the programming of the 10th European Development Fund has moved on. Most of the regional and national programmes are signed. In anticipation of the EPAs, these programmes include considerable support to help our African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners make the most of the agreements: direct support for the implementation of the agreements and indirect support to build up infrastructure and productive capacity.

The Commission recognises the essential role of development finance. At the same time we welcome the fact that the report acknowledges that the development objectives and outcomes of the agreements are a much wider issue than just financial support. We also recognise the essential role of reform in the ACP regions in reaching the development objectives, as set out in paragraph 14 of the report. This includes fiscal reform and changes to revenue systems. The reforms offset shifts in the tax base due to liberalisation and are in themselves valuable steps to ensuring sustainable public financing in the ACP.

Another essential objective is to support regional economic integration in the ACP. The interim agreements do not yet include all ACP countries. This is exactly why these agreements are only temporary pending full agreement. The full agreements will be flexible and comprehensive.

Building up supply-side capacity to trade and engage in goods and service sectors underpins the economic value of a trade agreement. The Commission's view is that protectionism is never a valid policy option. However, we do acknowledge that protection – the legitimate use of measures to protect sensitive sectors and emerging industry – is a valid and essential policy tool. This is why the EPAs contain all sorts of flexibilities, and in particular exclusions and asymmetrical commitments for the ACP side, as called for in the report. On the EU side, our markets are completely open for ACP products, with increased cooperation to meet technical and health standards and facilitate trade. ACP countries will only open their markets gradually, with the possibility to maintain exceptions.

The Commission does not see our commitment to the EPA process ending on signature. This is the start of a process of enhanced dialogue, careful implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the effect, especially as regards the development impact. All of this will use the institutions established to implement the agreement to ensure transparency and the participation of parliamentarians and civil society.

The Commission therefore welcomes the report by Mr Schröder and will provide a detailed reaction to the points raised in due course.

**President.** – The item is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow.

#### **Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Kader Arif (PSE), in writing.** – (FR) On Thursday Parliament will give its verdict on Mr Schröder's report on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). I would be extremely disappointed if our institution's first vote on this both very technical and highly political subject (since the whole future of our relations with the ACP States is at stake) were to result in the adoption of Mr Schröder's report. The Socialist Group in the European Parliament will not vote in favour of this text, since it in no way reflects the concerns both of Europeans and of our ACP partners about the EPAs and the way in which they are negotiated.

In contrast to the rapporteur's position, the PSE Group has tabled and will vote in favour of a motion for a resolution which puts development back at the heart of the EPAs' priorities, which rejects the liberalisation of public services and any negotiation on the Singapore issues or on services against the ACP States' wishes, which promotes regional integration, which calls for huge financial support to bring the ACP States' economies up to standard, and which takes account of the specific characteristics and fragilities of these countries, be they least developed countries or otherwise.

These are the conditions that would make the EPAs acceptable agreements. Unfortunately we are still a long way away from them.

## 18. Wilderness in Europe (short presentation)

**President.** – The next item is a short presentation of the report (A6-0478/2008) by Mr Hegyi, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, on wilderness in Europe (2008/2210(INI)).

**Gyula Hegyi, rapporteur.** – (HU) Around 46% of the world's land mass can be considered a natural environment, a wilderness untouched by human civilisation. In Europe, however, wilderness makes up only 1% of the entire territory. We must do everything we can to ensure that at least the remaining wilderness, this 1%, is preserved for the sake of future generations. This is the aim of my report, and I hope that increased protection of wilderness zones will sooner or later be integrated into EU legislation. There is a dual perception of wilderness in European culture. On the one hand, it is viewed as a place to fear and avoid, where monsters and unknown dangers lie in wait for us, as is evoked in many folk tales. On the other hand, it is seen as an attractive, pleasant place that gives us temporary refuge from the stress of urban and industrial civilisation.

English-language literature on the topic makes a distinction between the concept of conservation, that is, the proper use of nature, and of preservation, in other words the protection of nature from all human use. These philosophical debates lie beyond the scope of my report, but for the record I would like to point out that I consider sustainable development to be the ideal solution. The wilderness cannot be locked up in a bank safety deposit box, like a necklace or a package of share certificates. We have a right to discover its values. Thus we must protect nature, but by means of human use.

The territory of Europe is too small to have zones that are off-limits to its citizens. Discovering nature and encountering conditions experienced by humanity before civilisation teaches respect for nature and can serve as the basis for high-quality tourism. At the same time, these areas are extremely vulnerable to environmental changes caused by human beings – for instance as a result of motorisation, chemicals and climate change – and to the appearance of alien plant and animal species. We need to be careful that visitors do not endanger the wilderness, and therefore all forms of tourism should be placed under the oversight of conservation experts. The development of sustainable tourism should be combined with the protection of these areas, and all proceeds should be devoted to wilderness protection.

The wilderness is a refuge for many species, such as the brown bear, the wolf and the lynx, which are unable to survive under even slightly altered conditions. There are still many species in Europe that are waiting to be discovered and described. Most of these live in the soil or in rotting timber and are highly sensitive to changes. These undisturbed areas are well-suited to the study of evolution, of natural changes occurring in nature. Wilderness zones are generally part of the Natura 2000 network, but they require stricter protection. My report therefore calls upon the European Commission to work with the Member States to map the remaining wilderness regions in Europe and develop a strategy for their increased protection. The natural values of the still-untouched areas and the characteristics of the habitats should be determined, and their further protection should be ensured. Experts have advised me that we should not think in terms of new legislation, but rather introduce more specific and stricter protection for wilderness zones within the Natura 2000 regulations. Since the financing of Natura 2000 is at any rate contradictory, and the source of much legitimate criticism, we will in any case have to make changes to the relevant regulations in the next parliamentary cycle but at the latest in the new budget. This could also be a good opportunity for the legal definition and enhanced protection of wilderness.

An area of my own country, the dripstone cave of Aggtelek, is also classified as wilderness. A part of this site is located within the territory of neighbouring Slovakia. I would be very happy if Hungarian and Slovak conservationists could successfully collaborate to develop a Protected Area Network (PAN) Park, since the network of PAN Parks has developed a successful European-wide system of wilderness protection.

**Viviane Reding, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, halting the loss of biodiversity is a priority for the Union and for the Commission. It is quite literally a question about the future of life on Earth. But, despite the fundamental importance of preserving biodiversity, progress to date has been limited.

In December 2008, the Commission adopted the first comprehensive assessment of progress made at both European Community and Member State levels. Despite the positive developments that have been made in recent years – for instance the Natura 2000 network – the EU's biodiversity is still under continuous pressure due to habitat destruction, pollution, climate change and the impact of invasive species. The Commission's conclusion was that we are highly unlikely to meet our 2010 target of halting biodiversity decline – and that further intensive efforts will be required, both at Member State and EU levels.

Against this background, the Commission welcomes the consistent support that Parliament has given to efforts to protect Europe's rich and varied natural heritage. We greatly welcome the initiative of Mr Hegyi for producing this important resolution on wilderness in Europe.

I would like to start by making the general observation that many of the issues highlighted in the report are already being followed up by the Commission.

For example, in December 2008, the Commission adopted a communication, 'Towards an EU Strategy on Invasive Species'. We are also launching an overall reflection on the future of EU biodiversity policy and look forward to the input of the European Parliament on these questions. Issues such as improving implementation and the relationship between biodiversity and climate change must be explicitly considered.

It is also important to add one clarification to the report. There is an ongoing assessment of the effectiveness of our nature legislation – the so-called Article 17 reports – but there are currently no plans to amend our legislation, and the main focus is on more effective implementation.

Turning to the subject of wilderness, Europe is densely populated and only 1-2% of the territory has not been affected by human intervention. But while these wilderness areas are small in area, they are of high value in both scientific and cultural terms. They can even, as is the case in the common trans-border National Park of the German Bavarian and Czech Bohemian forests, be a symbol for European cooperation and integration.

Most of these areas are already a part of the Natura 2000 network. However, this report provides the inspiration to look again at the wild and nearly wild areas in the EU and to see if there are instances where additional European actions can help protect these special places. The Commission has commissioned a number of studies and is cooperating with the Czech EU Presidency. A conference will take place in Prague in May 2009. This Conference will offer a platform to consider the issues related to wilderness areas in Europe and identify measures needed to ensure their conservation.

Let me conclude by confirming that the Commission recognises that Europe's landscape is the result of a long process of human intervention. The concept of a living landscape that balances the needs of nature with the needs of man is the basis of the thinking that underpins Natura 2000. We certainly do not intend to re-convert our existing landscapes into wild nature, but we need to publicly commit ourselves to preserving the last remaining wild areas of Europe.

For this reason, the Commission considers the European Parliament resolution timely. It represents a very welcome input into the Prague conference. Thank you very much to the rapporteur.

**Avril Doyle (PPE-DE).** - Mr President, on a point of order, I would like to protest at the overuse and the increasingly liberal use of Rule 45(2) under which these most important debates are taken.

I rise at this point because I particularly would have liked to have spoken on the excellent work of Mr Hegyi's report and indeed I have colleagues coming on on subjects which are not discussed in my main committee and other colleagues' main committees, and I am being denied the right to contribute toward them in plenary.

In the PPE-DE Group we had a very vexed and heated argument both at working group and group level last week on the number of Rule 45(2) items on our agenda this week. I really do feel we need to urgently revisit this rule. I know it is a rule that was set by Parliament and the Members themselves signed off on, but our good will, I feel, is being abused by the number of points on our agenda – the most important points on our agenda – that we are being increasingly disallowed to debate.

**President.** – Mrs Doyle, we will obviously gladly take note of your statement, but I would remind you that the use of Rule 45 is in the hands of the Conference of Presidents and that, within the latter, votes are weighted, that is to say that the large groups, and your own in particular, have a huge amount of power to decide on what should be allowed in plenary under such-and-such a rule.

I am a bit like you; I must say that we have perhaps gone from a phase of being too tolerant to one of being too strict and that the truth is definitely somewhere in between.

Do not worry, however, we will have those concerned follow up this matter.

You should also refer to your group chairmen, ladies and gentlemen. I think that it is in this context that your message will be understood best.

The item is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow.

**Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Nicodim Bulzesc (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. I was shadow rapporteur on this report on 'Wilderness in Europe' and I would like to congratulate my colleague, Mr Gyula Hegyi, on his work.

I wish to outline two things here:

First of all, we really need to proceed with the mapping of the last wilderness areas in Europe. Of course, this cannot be done without defining 'wilderness', therefore I urge the European Commission to take action in this field.

Secondly, I wish to speak on the key issue of this report, namely human presence and tourism. Human presence should not be excluded; on the contrary, people have to be introduced to the natural beauties of their country in order to preserve them better.

We need to support sustainable tourism in these areas and teach the site managers how to preserve and protect the wilderness.

Therefore I join the request of the main NGOs in the field and ask the European Commission to give some guidelines for wilderness preservation in Europe.

**Magor Imre Csibi (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – Wilderness can mean different things to different people. I personally perceive wilderness as areas undisturbed by human activities, where natural processes are dominant. So for me, promoting wilderness tourism is a mere contradiction of the term 'wilderness'. On the other hand, I agree that sustainable tourism, if done properly, can provide an economic incentive for local communities to conserve the natural and cultural heritage.

But the increase in demand for wilderness tourism puts pressure on the very same values that the tourists are seeking and can speed up the destruction of fragile ecosystems. A solution would be to open a limited part of wilderness areas to high-quality sustainable tourism, which does not adversely affect the conservation objectives of the sites. Tourism activities should be allowed under strict conditions, such as a limited number of tourists per day, and on the basis of a solid sustainable tourism plan that supports conservation initiatives and promotes a responsible experience of wilderness. The tourism plans and the activities of the operators should be evaluated by means of thorough assessment mechanisms, especially designed for wilderness areas. The aim is to make tourists and operators aware that wilderness entails not only freedom but also responsibility.

**Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Natural wealth must be preserved for future generations. In this respect, Romania is one of the countries which possess a significant amount and variety of flora and fauna. To achieve this goal, however, the Europe Union must extend the use of Community funds earmarked for financing wilderness conservation activities. Consequently, the Commission should allocate larger sums through the Fund for Rural Development to environmental protection projects in the European agricultural sector, with a clear aim of financing wilderness conservation activities.

On the other hand, the European Commission should introduce a set of clear rules for providing financial support to local community projects in the vicinity of these areas, which allow controlled forms of tourism in the areas intended for conservation and generate economic benefits which can be enjoyed by the relevant local communities.

In addition, the Commission must encourage cross-border cooperation between Member States for conservation projects targeting wilderness areas situated in the territory of two or more countries.

**Daniel Petru Funeriu (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) Europe's biodiversity is the most precious legacy which we can leave future generations. I welcome and support this report on Europe's wilderness areas. I would like to draw attention to the alarming state of the area with the richest biodiversity in Europe, the Danube Delta. The Delta is being constantly subjected to acts of aggression from poaching, illegal economic interests and, last but not least, uncontrolled tourism. One of the biggest sources of aggression affecting the Delta is rooted in the lack of awareness of the Delta's populations and of rural populations living along the Danube's tributaries flowing through Romania.

I would like to take this opportunity to call on the Commission and the Council, based on this report, to consider as soon as possible specific measures aimed at: setting up a working party to examine the situation of the Danube Delta, devising effective educational programmes about the environment targeted at the populations with a direct impact on the area's biodiversity, and establishing biodiversity protection standards.

At the same time, wilderness conservation in the European Union, especially in the Danube Delta area, cannot be achieved without applying similar measures in the countries neighbouring the EU. Therefore, I urge the Commission and the Council to step up their dialogue and the implementation of specific measures as part of their relations with these countries.

**Daciana Octavia Sârbu (PSE), in writing.** – (RO) Bearing in mind that it will not be possible to meet the commitments made in 2007 by adopting the resolution on halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010, the protection of wilderness areas through promotion, development and financing activities is becoming a priority in the light of climate change and the negative impact of tourism.

The proposal to create a system for mapping Europe's wilderness would help identify biodiversity and unspoilt areas which will require more attention and a significant effort on the part of Member States in order to protect them. Information campaigns aimed at raising the general public's awareness of wilderness areas, the implementation of high-quality sustainable tourism and the enforcement of the Birds and Habitats Directives are just some of the instruments which will help us protect these areas.

There are already eight national parks in Europe, including Retezat National Park in Romania. These parks are part of the Protected Area Network (PAN). This network is responsible for administering wilderness areas and brings together all the national authorities and local tourism agencies involved in ensuring the sustainable development of tourism. The European Commission should support this initiative and cooperate with this network with a view to exchanging information and good practice.

## 19. General and business aviation (short presentation)

**President.** – The next item is a short presentation of the report (A6-0501/2008) by Mr Queiró, on behalf of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, on an agenda for sustainable future in general and business aviation (2008/2134(INI)).

**Luís Queiró, rapporteur.** – (PT) Mr President, Commissioner, until now the general and business aviation sector has not been addressed specifically at European level. The political significance of this report therefore derives from the fact that this is the first time that the Commission and Parliament have examined this activity, at a time when it is recording accelerated growth both in volume and in economic importance.

The numbers speak for themselves: in business aviation alone, small and medium-sized enterprises working in this field are multiplying, the number of aircraft is expected to double to 3 500 in the next decade and annual turnover amounts to more than EUR 25 billion. Directly or indirectly, it generates 154 000 jobs across Europe. Together with general aviation, where it is calculated that there are between 30 000 and 50 000 aircraft, the sector represents around 9% of all recorded air traffic and boasts the fastest growth in Europe, twice as high as that of all other traffic.

The business aviation segment offers important social and economic benefits: by providing flexible point-to-point transportation it increases citizens' mobility, companies' productivity and regional cohesion.

The general aviation sector provides essential services in very diverse areas, from search-and-rescue aviation to firefighting, traffic regulation, cartography and leisure and sports aviation. It is also an important source of professional skills for the entire aviation sector.

I must also mention European industry in this sector, which has been showing continuous growth in its world market share, which currently hovers around 16% and which it is therefore necessary to support.

Looking at the report itself, I agree, as rapporteur, with the need emphasised by the Commission in its communication to examine the specific needs of the sector and identify its central themes. The former relate to data collection and are based on the necessity of providing political decision-makers with sufficient data and statistical information to give them a better understanding of the sector so that they can regulate it adequately. The second point relates to the application of the principle of proportionality in regulating the sector. The key question is whether the rules designed to govern the operation of commercial aircraft will be adequate for operating simpler and smaller, often single-engine aircraft.

We support the Commission in its intention to apply the principle of proportionality both in drafting the rules and in their implementation, always bearing in mind the necessity of not compromising safety in general. This is the case, for example, with the adaptation of certain airworthiness rules, already adopted by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), to operations with non-commercial aircraft, or the possible application of specific rules with regard to simplified security and passenger screening procedures in business aviation.

The third point concerns the problem of access to airports and airspace. The diagnosis has been made: these aircraft generally have difficulty in accessing large airports and are starting to have the same problems in regional and secondary airports. The solutions range from optimising the use of existing capacity to perhaps revising the regulations on slots. It is also necessary to stimulate investment in small and medium-sized airports to provide increasing interconnections between the different European regions and cities.

As regards the question of airspace capacity, we stress the importance of reforms within the framework of the Single European Sky and the SESAR (Single European Sky ATM Research) Joint Undertaking and, once again, we come back to the need not to impose disproportionate demands on small aircraft in terms of navigation equipment, while always complying with safety limits.

The fourth and last point refers to the environmental sustainability of this area of activity. Although the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of small aircraft are lower, it is still necessary to promote research, development and innovation, not only within the framework of the Clean Sky and CESAR (Cost Effective Small Aircraft) initiatives, but also in the use of less polluting engines and cleaner fuels.

I would like to end, Mr President and Commissioner, by expressing the hope that this report represents a real framework for future legislative and regulatory measures which may be drawn up for the sector. That is the wish of the Committee on Transport and Tourism when it calls on the Commission to report by the end of 2009 on the progress achieved on the issues raised in the report. With tomorrow's vote, my expectation is that this wish will be shared by a large majority of the Members of this House.

**Viviane Reding**, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, the Commission welcomes the report and thanks the rapporteur and the committee for their excellent work.

In January 2008 the Commission for the first time published a communication on general and business aviation. This was followed by a very positive Council conclusion in April 2008, and now by this important report of Parliament.

General and business aviation is an important sector of the EU aeronautical industry, worth about EUR 2.3 billion annually. It invests substantially in research and development, and is growing fast. Over two thirds of all aircraft certified in the EU are in this sector.

General and business aviation mainly comprises small and medium-sized enterprises. It is also a very diversified sector. The regulations need to be adapted to this specific nature, without, however, compromising safety or security. We are happy to see that this notion of proportionality is encouraged by Parliament in its report.

There are three main areas on which we will have to focus our efforts in the nearest future: development of common EU safety standards for general aviation; integration of non-commercial aviation into the next generation of air traffic management (ATM) systems for Europe; and reducing the negative environmental footprint of the sector.

The Commission intends in the coming year to propose a number of EU implementing rules ensuring a uniform level of safety of non-commercial aviation. As highlighted in your report, we have to make sure that they are not only providing for an adequate level of safety, but are also proportionate and do not impose unnecessary burden on operators.

We will also continue the development of the future ATM system for Europe with a clear understanding that airspace is a common good that should be accessible for all its users in a safe way. From the perspective of general aviation, the Single European Sky and SESAR will be of the utmost importance for enhancing, in a safe way, access to airspace and aerodromes. These technologies will open the way to new services, as yet unseen in Europe.

Last but not least, general and business aviation, despite the ongoing technological advances, are also impacting on the environment and, like the wider airline industry, they need to contribute to reducing these impacts. Here as well, proportionality will be an important principle to follow.

The Commission is looking forward to working with Parliament along the lines of the report, and will report back on the progress made.

**President.** – The item is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow.

**Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Bogdan Golik (PSE), in writing.** – (PL) At the outset I would like to thank Luís Queiró for his report on a subject so important to the future of transport in Europe.

I would like to emphasise the significance of the issue of developing general and business aviation and the aircraft manufacturing industry in this sector. Although the solutions proposed by the Commission do not bring any radical legislative changes and may seem of little significance today, their influence on the future of aviation in the light of deregulation of the market and development of the air carriage sector in Poland cannot be overestimated.

The Commission's objective is to facilitate development of this aviation sector by simplifying existing regulatory procedures, adapting provisions to new forms of air traffic management and revising them to ensure proportionality.

It is obvious that this initiative is worthy of full support. However, care should be taken that, in the processes of formulating and implementing policy, the needs of all categories of users of airspace and aviation infrastructure are given consideration in the planning and optimisation of capacity. In order to facilitate further reform a basic European data collection system should, however, be created for general and business aviation. Ultimately it will also be necessary to facilitate the access of this sector to foreign markets, supporting the development of new, competitive technologies, but at the same time taking care that respect is maintained for the principles of natural environment protection.

**Louis Grech (PSE), in writing.** – I welcome this report for it seeks to harmonize and bring more clarity to the rules on General and Business Aviation on a community level. This is the fastest growing segment of civil aviation in Europe and it provides numerous social and economic benefits to Member States. However, to make the most of it, we need to establish the proper regulation. For example, currently there is a lack of reliable data on this sector and this deficiency must be quickly addressed for management, safety and security reasons.

The Commission should make a clear distinction between large-scale commercial aircraft operations and privately owned airplanes. The legislation should be proportional to the risks incurred by the different types of aviation and mindful in terms of the cost burden it places on them.

The future regulation should be stimulating and enhancing the industry instead of limiting it.

A cause for concern may be that most of the General and Business Aviation falls outside of the scope of the Commission Directive to include aviation activities in the scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading. Considering the fast growth rate of the sector, I think there is a need to offset its environmental impact in one form or another.

**Mieczysław Edmund Janowski (UEN), in writing.** – (PL) At a time when we keep hearing the word 'crisis', it is not easy to talk about the stable future of general and business aviation. I therefore thank Luís Queiró for taking the trouble to prepare the report on this subject. Congratulations. I am certain that it is air transport which can be a driving force, setting the world and European economy in motion. We remember that barely 106 years ago the Wright brothers made the world's first powered, controlled flight (although it was for barely 40 metres) in an aircraft. It was the beginning of true aviation.

Today aviation is a highly-developed industry, making 'flying machines' which are increasingly better equipped with an array of instruments. Aviation also includes the whole complicated field of navigation and flight control, building a ground-based airport infrastructure, a system of security, and so on. We should be aware that in Europe about 50 000 aircraft are in use in general and business aviation, and almost four times as many small aircraft and gliders are used for sport and recreation. These numbers speak for themselves.

In this context, ensuring proper capacity for the European airspace and for airports themselves is an extremely important issue. I would like here to draw attention to the significance of regional airports for ensuring

cohesion of communication in the EU. Naturally, when speaking of the development of air transport, we must not forget problems related to the natural environment.

**Eija-Riitta Korhola (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (FI) Mr President, the debate on the aviation industry is frequently distorted: there is a biased focus on the problems of emissions from air traffic but people are not prepared to see its potential. Obviously, aviation and air traffic cause emissions, but it is just as obvious that they represent the future. This is true of commercial air transport and business and general aviation.

Although EU internal market legislation has mainly addressed commercial air transport, it is worth noting that issues to do with general and business aviation are tending to crop up more and more in areas such as climate policy, protection of the environment and aviation safety. When we take into account the growing importance of business aviation in particular, we definitely need to pay attention to these sectors and guarantee their competitiveness.

I wish to express a concern I have with regard to business conditions for aviation. Small and medium-sized airports are crucial for both general and business aviation. Their establishment and modernisation should be promoted and Member States encouraged to invest. The continuing growth in business aviation, however, is clogging up the airports in use more and more.

From the perspective of climate protection, we can say that, although smaller aircraft are not included in the future Emission Trading System, a voluntary carbon-offset mechanism is being developed by the sector. This is a sign of the development potential of air traffic as a whole. The Community should do all it can to encourage research into more innovative and more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly aircraft. The aim must be nothing less than emission-free air traffic.

## **20. Non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity (short presentation)**

**President.** – The next item is a short presentation of the report (A6-0492/2008) by Mrs Záborská, on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, on non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity (2008/2118(INI)).

**Anna Záborská, rapporteur.** – (SK) May I first of all sincerely thank all fellow Members for their help with my own-initiative report. The voting in the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality was the result of much wide-ranging discussion and accommodation.

The men and women who are today involved in establishing inter-generational solidarity networks deserve recognition. Their determination is an important contribution to national and European wealth and to the common good. Unfortunately, this contribution is not included in national statistics and accounts. This is the reason why men and women are being exposed to hidden forms of discrimination. Women and men are entitled to a free choice of suitable and comfortable activities. The obligation on society is to guarantee this freedom of choice and not to discriminate against any activity simply because it does not fall within the usual scope of the formal labour market.

This is a brief summary of my own-initiative report on non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity. The subject of this report is at the heart of discussions on the future of Europe and employment in its Member States. Although it is a rather technical report, it also has a human dimension. There is something in it for all of us as each of us lives within networks of broader or narrower family and social relationships, in which we are personally involved. Restricting the concept of inter-generational solidarity to just childcare is a mistaken interpretation. Inter-generational solidarity also involves responsibility with respect to our parents and elders and care for dependents.

Inter-generational solidarity also involves education of citizens with regard to respect for life, human dignity and environmental protection. It is predominantly a question of social justice. It is the basis for the future of Europe and the common good of its inhabitants. Human resources managers agree that human capabilities are comparable to university degrees. It is therefore necessary to assess this value in an explicit and positive manner.

The European Union must create a political framework in order to achieve this target. Women are the first to contribute to inter-generational solidarity, thus participating in the creation of social relations. This is why this report is devoted mainly to them. Economists use mathematical models to highlight the value of



housework. Longstanding research by economists and demographers suggests that women's contribution to gross domestic product could be even higher if their unpaid work were factored in. Ignoring this fact means maintaining the ideas of the past. We must look forward in order to create the conditions for all women and men to become involved in inter-generational solidarity regardless of their social standing.

The European Union must act if it is serious about non-discrimination and equality of opportunity. My political group, the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats, is proud of its support for a policy of non-discrimination which pursues the general good and respects the distinct characteristics and complementary nature of men and women. Ladies and gentlemen, I should also like to point out that this report is the result of extensive consultations with numerous women's non-governmental organisations. In my report, I have also taken account of the opinions of three of our Parliament's Intergroups: ATD Quart Monde, the Intergroup on Family and Protection of Childhood and the Intergroup on Carers. The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality has adopted this report unanimously. Ladies and gentlemen, I should like to invite you to allow us to continue with this cooperation and to vote tomorrow for the FEMM Committee's motion for a resolution.

**Viviane Reding, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, I think Ms Záborská's work is very important because the subject she is tackling is one which is of the utmost importance in our society.

The question of dependence will become more and more important in the future because of demographic ageing, but also because of equality between men and women as the care of children and dependants is still carried out mostly by women.

Therefore, we have to put into practice measures that help women enter or stay in the labour market by improving family life conditions, especially those that facilitate a balance between professional and private life.

As specifically concerns the situation regarding the care of dependants, the Commission has already put the following actions on the table. Filial leave to care for dependent family members was included in the consultation of the European social partners on the reconciliation of work, private and family life. The Commission is also studying the quality of services for elderly dependent people and protection against ill treatment, as well as measures which could be taken at European level in cooperation with the Member States to speed up the development and modernisation of infrastructure and services.

The EU cohesion policy, through the European Social Fund, will continue to cofinance initiatives at national and local level. The open method of coordination in the field of social protection and social inclusion pays particular attention to the modernisation of pension schemes to take greater account of new forms of work, career breaks and long-term care for dependent people.

We are working on this, and really look forward to collaborating very closely with parliamentarians. We would like to congratulate Parliament on the very important work done.

**Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou (PPE-DE).** – (EL) Mr President, I should like to comment that, in this report which was adopted with an absolute majority in the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, there is also an alternative motion tabled by certain Members. We shall be called on tomorrow to vote by choosing between this motion and the motion tabled by a parliamentary committee. One demolishes the other. We cannot talk about this alternative motion in plenary, nor can we hear the Members who tabled it and nor can we express an opinion on it. It is a defect in the new rules which you need to bear in mind.

**President.** – Yes, Mrs Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, what I said earlier to Mrs Doyle also applies here. We are applying Rule 45 which, in fact, provides a very strict framework for our speaking time, since only the rapporteur can take the floor.

We take our lead from the Conference of Presidents, which decided that this subject came under that particular Rule. Our Rules of Procedure certainly ought to be developed to allow for greater flexibility and richer debates, but, as you will understand, it is not up to me to amend these Rules of Procedure this evening. That being said, your comment is obviously noted.

The item is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow.

**Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Corina Crețu (PSE), in writing.** – (RO) Discrimination based on gender is still a reality, unfortunately, even in the European Union Member States. This fact is not only valid in the private sector, where men account for nine-tenths of the members of boards of directors in large companies, but also in the public sector where women are also underrepresented.

However, the Lisbon Strategy aims to ensure that 60% of women able to work are in employment. Apart from this, we must not forget that one of the biggest challenges in Europe in the medium- and long-term is the demographic situation. The European Union is facing a bigger rise in the average age of its population than other regions of the world, along with a population growth of just 0.4%, which means that the European Union will need, at the same time, to face up to a fall in the population able to work and an ageing population.

Consequently, the choice between having a career and raising a family must not be definitive or mandatory and it must be possible to balance these two aspects of life.

**Daniel Petru Funeriu (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (RO) One of the European Union's key values is to eliminate any form of discrimination. Apart from eliminating discrimination, which also means between men and women, we have the responsibility to implement proactive measures to encourage professional careers for women. One of the fields in which women are hugely underrepresented is scientific research. In addition, they are not only underrepresented in numerical terms, but also within the management hierarchy: the higher the level in the hierarchy, the lower the proportion of women.

In this way, society is depriving itself of the creative potential of an important section of the population. The highly competitive nature of research, the inherent geographical mobility associated with scientific work, along with establishing a career at a relatively late age all make this activity difficult to combine with family life.

I am taking advantage of the discussion of this topic to highlight the need to introduce specific policies aimed at achieving equality between men and women in the academic profession. These policies must take into account a set of good practices at European level, such as facilitating dual careers, encouraging universities and research institutes to invest in childcare centres, as well as fast-track access to academic posts for women.

**Zita Gurmai (PSE), in writing.** – (HU) The Member States of the European Union must support demographic renewal, incorporating their action into the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs, in line with the policy of equality between men and women. A balance in European societies depends on the sum total of solidarity relations between the generations, which are more complex than ever before: young people continue to live in their parents' home for longer periods, while it is increasingly common for those parents to have to look after their aging relatives as well. The burden that this represents rests primarily on the young and middle-aged generation, and especially on women. For this reason, equality between women and men, that is to say, equal opportunities in the broader sense, would seem to be a fundamental condition for bringing about new forms of inter-generational solidarity.

With regard to family obligations, that is, the reconciliation of family life and work, the question of equality between men and women is clearly very important if European families are to gain new impetus. It is also of critical importance to guarantee the opportunity for childcare of appropriate quality and quantity for those who would like to take up paid employment alongside childrearing. The Socialist Group in the European Parliament is doing everything it can to ensure that the goals of Barcelona Process are met, and notes with disappointment that this objective is visibly absent from the Czech Presidency's programme.

**Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE), in writing.** – Thank you Chairman!

This report is important to showcase and reverse the discrimination based on gender and intergenerational solidarity!

It has been pretty clear that women who chose to take time off from work to take care of their newborn child have been discriminated against. They often have trouble returning to their jobs with the same opportunities, miss out on job promotions, and lose both income and social security benefits.

Furthermore, men and women who stay home for long periods of time to take care of the elderly or young children often lose out economically because they don't have an income and their work is not factored into the GDP even though it is important work. This work often goes ignored by policy makers and society as a whole. People look down upon people who chose to stay home instead of work because they feel as if they are not contributing to society.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The EU should promote policies that eliminate this discriminatory mindset and give people who chose to stay home to take care of a family member more leave arrangements and more support. These policies should be funded by the public purse as to lessen the likelihood that employers' will discriminate against their employees!

Thank you!

**Siiri Oviir (ALDE)**, *in writing*. – (ET) Today's Europe is faced with unprecedented demographic changes. If Europe wishes to change the trend towards population reduction, we must, through the policy of the EU and the Member States, support families in all possible ways, and permit women and men to combine family life and work, but such that obligations connected with home and family are equally divided between men and women.

I wholeheartedly support the alternative motion for a European Parliament resolution on non-discrimination based on gender and inter-generational solidarity, which is more realistic than the preceding report.

I must particularly emphasise the objective of creating a care policy that is balanced between the genders. Inequality in the performance of caring is often caused by the absence of affordable, available and high-quality services in Member States, and women are faced with the inevitability of sacrificing their opportunities to participate in social, economic and political life.

All of this preserves the inequality in the distribution of obligations connected with home and family between men and women, which generally forces women to choose a more flexible organisation of labour or give up working, which in turn influences their career, the continuing disparity between the wages earned by women and men, and pension rights.

I am cautious of the recommendation of the Czech Presidency to make childcare 'a fully valid alternative to a professional career'. I am convinced that the implementation of this recommendation would perpetuate the traditional division of labour between men and women.

The measures planned in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy play an important role in establishing equality in the division of labour between women and men; their objective, in addition to increasing employment, promoting innovation and raising productivity, must also be to eliminate in the EU the gender discrimination that has developed over time.

**Zita Pleštinšká (PPE-DE)**, *in writing*. – (SK) Caring has been the domain of women for centuries. Ideal mothers who spent their youth caring for their children represent today the majority of the elderly female population and it is this childcare and home care that is not reflected in their pensions. Many of them do not receive an appropriate pension for this socially valuable work during their active life and this exposes them to a greater risk of poverty. This is also a reason why young women are postponing motherhood and giving priority to a professional career.

During my many speeches in the House, I have constantly emphasised that mothers and fathers who freely choose to bring up their children or to care for elderly or dependent family members must not suffer discrimination. I know many families who have disabled relatives and carry out this demanding work with great courage despite the obstacles they constantly have to overcome.

In this speech, I should like to praise the proposals made by the rapporteur Mrs Anna Záborská, which recommend recognition not only of traditional forms of gainful employment but also of the manifold forms of non-gainful employment carried out in families as part of inter-generational solidarity. This work is reflected in the GDP if a family employs someone. However, it is not the case if one of the parents carries out this work.

I believe that the report will inspire Member States to adopt measures to improve family policy within the EU.

**Rovana Plumb (PSE)**, *in writing*. – (RO) At a time when Europe is facing a deep economic crisis whose final magnitude may be difficult to estimate, it is only to be expected that the birth rate will feel the negative repercussions of the turmoil on the labour market, as many women will tend not to have children because they are terrified of the possibility of losing their job and of the reduction in the material resources required to care for and bring up their children.

Against this background, it is the duty of every Member State to promote multigenerational activities, such as 'bridge-between-generation' centres, where older adults are paid to take care of and bring up children. These 'bridge-between-generation' centres, which operate successfully in some Member States, would allow women who have had a child to return to work quite soon, while also making it easier for elderly retired people to return to employment.

**Dushana Zdravkova (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (BG) In the last few decades the population in the Member States of the European Union has increasingly aged. Successfully balancing professional and personal life is starting to become a strenuous task for women. It is therefore now even more important for Member States to promote the birth rate and to pay proper attention to families. In this area the EU could indirectly contribute and help Member States to modernise their policies. I consider that recognition of 'unseen labour' is one of the important steps which could be taken in this field.

We also cannot ignore the fact that ever more people of active age are looking after children and close elderly relatives at the same time, leaving them in a precarious position. This is why it is particularly important for the Commission to introduce practical initiatives for the official recognition of skills gained from activities connected with looking after children and dependent people, and household management, so that these skills are taken into account when rejoining the labour market.

Today we need to think about the future of all these mothers who look after children, who are the future of Europe, and protect them from the risk of one day receiving small pensions and being in an unequal position compared with other members of society.

## **21. Pre-commercial Procurement: Driving innovation to ensure sustainable high quality public services in Europe (short presentation)**

**President.** – The next item is a short presentation of the report (A6-0018/2009) by Mr Harbour, on behalf of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, on pre-commercial procurement: driving innovation to ensure sustainable high quality public services in Europe (2008/2139(INI)).

**Malcolm Harbour, rapporteur.** – Mr President, it is particularly appropriate that Mrs Reding is responding for the Commission tonight because my report is focused on a proposal that has been developed over a number of years with her services. It is an extremely important proposal, which has wide-ranging possibilities for the whole of the European economy. My first message to the Commissioner tonight is to thank her services for their leadership on this, but to say that I think this initiative needs to be much better known. It needs to spread out widely from DG Information Society – as I think it is now starting to do – because it is of such importance, particularly in the economic times we are in at the moment.

So, what am I talking about? Well, the core of the issue is that public authorities in the European Union spend huge amounts of public money on buying products and services. It is estimated that EUR 1 800 billion is spent on public procurement every year. How much of that procurement is actually spent on investigating, researching and encouraging the development of new solutions to the big challenges that public authorities and indeed society face every day: a better health service, a better transport solution, dealing with climate change, more energy efficient buildings? EU procurement spending linked to research and development is less than 1% of that total procurement budget.

Bearing in mind that we have an explicit objective in the Lisbon Strategy to move our R&D spending up towards the 3% target, there is huge potential here.

That is where the whole mission of pre-commercial procurement comes in. Essentially, what we are looking for are intelligent, research-focused public authorities to generate a demand for innovative solutions and then work with innovative companies large and small – but particularly small enterprises who really can benefit from this – to fulfil those requirements. We want those intelligent customers to really think ahead, to be demanding, to think about the solutions for which no commercial solution yet exists, but where there are basically a range of solutions which can then be developed with the financial contribution from the public authority to do just that – to fund research and development, perhaps through a first competing stage of ideas, and then take those development solutions to a next stage towards the viability of a product or service that can then be launched.

The benefits of having that backing, for a small enterprise in particular, and giving that commercial support will be really important to that business. Indeed, where this has been already rolled out, we see the experience

where businesses, even if they do not produce the winning solution, have had an element of their research and development funded that they can then go on and use to develop other revenue-generating products.

This also ties in with the second initiative from the Commission covered in my report, the 'lead market initiative', where we are looking for public authorities to lead in a number of key technology areas around health and climate change in transport. There are signs of an integrated policy emerging, but my report says that we need more training, we need more best practice, and we need more dispersion and dissemination of this proposal. I hope that the Commissioner, and indeed the College, will pick up on this and that this Parliament will show it is right behind this solution.

In conclusion – and if you will allow me a short amount of extra time because this is, in a sense a point of order – I want to point out first of all to this empty House that I had two opinions for my report from Mr Sakalas from the Committee on Legal Affairs and Mrs Podimata from the Committee on Industry. They are of course not allowed to present those opinions here, which seems rather a shame since they made valuable contributions which I have added to my amendments. I also want to thank my shadow, Mr Hasse Ferreira, for working with me, and he has also contributed extensively.

Just to wind up, this is a solution where everyone will be winners: society, citizens, public authorities, business, innovators and the European economy. That is why it is so important and why, when we are looking to public authorities to continue investment in this time of economic crisis, this proposal is even more important than it was when I started this report a few month ago.

**Viviane Reding, Member of the Commission.** – Mr President, I could not agree more, because pre-commercial procurement serves a twofold goal. It improves the quality of public services, but most of all it opens up opportunities for industry to take the lead in international markets. So it is money very well spent, above all in a time of crisis when we need to help our industry to put into practice the results of research and to make the best use of technological solutions and innovations.

I am very glad that the rapporteur, Mr Harbour, together with the Commission, has supported what has been in the pipeline for quite a long time. But there is a difference between being in the pipeline and being put into practice. I really hope that Parliament's report will become a trigger and an important element to add to our research and innovation policy. Indeed, triggering a strong public-sector demand for the development of new innovative products and services in Europe can make a difference, especially for our SMEs, and that is why I welcome the initiative. I congratulate Mr Harbour on his work.

What are the next concrete steps we will have to take? As an immediate response to the concrete recommendations in the report, I can confirm that the Commission will support actions to promote the sharing of experience and awareness-raising, and will explore the means to provide incentives for procurers across a number of Member States in order to implement pre-commercial procurement projects jointly.

The Commission has already opened calls for proposals – in the INTERREG, CIP and FP7 programmes – to support the establishment of networks of public authorities on pre-commercial procurement.

In the medium to long term, I believe that governments in Europe should incorporate pre-commercial procurement in their strategic planning for public investments. I think that the recovery packages would be a good place to start. On the Commission side, I will emphasise this in a communication planned for early March this year, in which I will propose a strengthened strategy for ICT Research, Development and Innovation for Europe, so pre-commercial procurement will be included in this report.

As you know, some Member States have already started experimenting with pre-commercial procurement pilot projects. In the coming months we hope to see more of those, and I invite the members of the committee, and also the Members of this House, to go back to their countries and to talk to the ministers and the municipalities about pre-commercial procurement. We can only make a difference if we work together. Thank you very much for giving a helping hand here.

**President.** – The item is closed.

The vote will take place tomorrow.

#### **Written statements (Rule 142)**

**Zita Pleštinšká (PPE-DE), in writing.** – (SK) Driving innovation and developing the knowledge economy are key in ensuring sustainable high quality public services. The US public sector spends USD 50 billion per

year on research and development procurement, which is twenty times higher than in the EU, and therefore Member States must honour their commitment to invest 3% of GDP in research and development. Public procurement is a strategic instrument to achieve this goal.

There are today numerous European research programmes, the results of which have not yet been exploited by public authorities through public procurement. The current practice in the EU is based on exclusive development, which means that each company retains the ownership rights in respect of the new ideas it generates.

Despite the fact that pre-commercial procurement provides some simplification, the whole process is very exacting. Public authorities may be considerably assisted by the participation of universities and research institutes. Member States should be inspired by the experiences of the European innovation agencies taking part in research and development.

I believe that, on the basis of the suggestions in Malcolm Harbour's report, the Commission will produce a comprehensive, easy-to-understand handbook to provide in particular small and medium-sized enterprises and appropriate authorities in the field of public procurement with assistance in implementation.

It is only through close cooperation between EU Member States in the field of public procurement that we shall be able to drive innovation and ensure sustainable high quality public services.

## **22. Agenda of the next sitting: see Minutes**

## **23. Closure of the sitting**

*(The sitting was closed at 11 p.m.)*