

THURSDAY, 6 MAY 2010

IN THE CHAIR: MR MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ

Vice-President

1. Opening of the sitting

(The sitting was opened at 09.05)

2. Kyrgyzstan (motions for resolutions tabled): see Minutes

3. European Investment Bank (EIB) - Annual Report 2008 (debate)

President. – The first item is the report (A7-0062/2010) by Mr Deutsch, on behalf of the Committee on Budgetary Control, on the European Investment Bank's annual report for 2008 (2009/2166 (INI)).

Tamás Deutsch, rapporteur. – (HU) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, President Maystadt, European Investment Bank – Annual Report 2008. This is the title of our current agenda item. This report, however, is about much more than the analysis of the European Investment Bank's activities of two years ago.

Ladies and gentlemen, we hear it day after day and I believe it should be reinforced that the Union has arrived at the end of an era and the beginning of a new one. The coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon around six months ago on the one hand, and the global financial and economic crisis, its impact and the reaction of the European Union to it on the other, definitely mean that we have arrived at the end of an era in the life of the Union and the beginning of a new one.

In other words, in the second decade of the 21st century, a new era has begun in the life of the European Union. This report was created in this new era, and I believe we in the European Parliament and the European Investment Bank will have to respond to the most important questions and challenges of this new era. The report is about the activities of a bank, of a financial institution two years ago, and, unusually, we can say that in spite of the circumstances of the global financial and economic crisis, it is possible to be appreciative of a bank's, a financial institution's activities. Two years ago, the European Investment Bank responded rapidly and efficiently to the unfolding global financial and economic crisis by strengthening its lending activities, primarily by increasing loans provided to small and medium-sized enterprises, and on the other hand by participating with all the capacity available to it in the implementation of the European Union's Economic Recovery Plan.

The Treaty of Lisbon came into force six months ago. This provides the means and opportunity to further strengthen the renewal process of the European Investment Bank's organisational, supervisory and core structure. The Bank made significant progress in this respect as early as 2008, before the Treaty of Lisbon came into force. It is equally noticeable that the European Investment Bank is preparing consciously for the European Union's post-2014 financial perspective, with the opportunity of joining in the financing of macro-regional strategies and by supporting rural development, new energy sources, green investments and infrastructure development. Another aspect we feel is important, and is therefore featured in the report, is that the European Investment Bank should participate in the financing of the EU 2020 Strategy pending ratification, which focuses on job creation. In fact, it was the consideration of supporting job creation that led the European Investment Bank in the financing of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to two issues. I consider it vital that the European Investment Bank continues to support the elimination of infrastructural inequalities within the European Union. It is important to support programmes that help balance the infrastructural standards within the EU.

Last but not least, in the past years the European Investment Bank has always received the support required for its activity from the European Parliament. Based on the preparatory work carried out over the past few months, I believe that with the constructive criticisms included in the report the Bank will continue to receive the support required for its activity from the European Parliament. Thank you for your attention and I look forward to the debate with interest.

Philippe Maystadt, *President of the European Investment Bank*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, let me first of all thank you for doing me the honour of inviting me to speak in plenary. This is the continuation of a tradition begun a few years ago.

I would like to begin by thanking the rapporteur, Mr Deutsch, for the fine quality of his report.

In particular, I appreciated the fact that Mr Deutsch, as well as other members of the committee, Mr Berman and Mr Kalfin, made the effort to come to the European Investment Bank to ask some very specific questions. I welcome this excellent cooperation with Parliament.

In reality, the European Investment Bank is the only international financial institution that answers voluntarily and that is accountable to a parliamentary institution. I believe it is an excellent thing: in my opinion, strengthening the dialogue with the European Parliament is in fact absolutely essential to allow us to fulfil our role, our specific mission, which is to be a bank, but not an ordinary bank, serving the policies of the European Union.

As Mr Deutsch has already pointed out, this is what we have been trying hard to do in response to the crisis.

As of September 2008, after the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Ecofin Council asked us to increase the volume of our loans for the real economy. We set to work, acting on this order from the Council, and I think I can say that we have in fact fulfilled our commitments, since in 2009 the volume of our loans went from 58 billion to 79 billion, that is, an increase of 37% of the volume of our loans in the European Union.

This increase mainly concerned the three sectors that the Council and Parliament had told us were priorities.

The first area was to make a special effort for the countries and the regions that were most severely affected by the crisis. This increase largely concerns what we call the convergence regions and especially certain countries that experienced particular difficulties in 2009. Thus we have never before lent so much to countries such as Hungary, Lithuania and Romania. Furthermore, this also explains why this year we are going to make a special effort for Greece: I was in Athens last week and, with the Greek Government, we agreed that we would increase considerably the volume of our loans in Greece, as a sign of support and a contribution to the general effort to get the Greek economy back on its feet.

The second area that was prioritised is support for small and medium-sized enterprises: we increased our loans to the banks so that they continue to lend to small and medium-sized enterprises, with a new product that will allow us to have better control over the actual use of the funds that we lend. Last year we lent more than EUR 12 billion to the banks for small and medium-sized enterprises.

The third area that we were asked to prioritise is the fight against climate change. Last year, we provided close to EUR 17 billion in funding for projects that contribute directly to reducing the volume of greenhouse gas emissions.

I think I can say that in 2009 we achieved what was expected of us; in other words, we made our contribution to the European Economic Recovery Plan.

Of course, we need to continue along these lines, and I would like very briefly to mention the three great challenges that we face in the coming months and years.

The first, as your rapporteur quite rightly stressed, is to continue to contribute to the European Union's priorities. That means, therefore, that we, as the EIB, must make our contribution to the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. As you know, the Commission has launched this new strategy, which is currently under discussion with the Council and Parliament. The EIB is ready to make its contribution, in particular using innovative financial instruments that would allow us to increase the leverage of some funds from the European budget. These are, therefore, joint instruments between the Commission and the Bank that we would like to put into action.

The second major challenge that we face is the renewal of the EIB's external mandates. We will have the opportunity to discuss this with Parliament. The Commission has just presented a proposal that is fully in line with the report by a committee of wise men chaired by Mr Camdessus. The key element of this proposal is to make the system even more effective. As you know, we benefit from a European Union guarantee for operations that are included in its external mandates. The aim, therefore, is to use them as best we can, and the Commission proposes a simplification, a harmonisation of our external mandates. The Commission also proposes that EUR 2 billion that was set aside be allocated to projects contributing to the fight against climate change.

That leads me to the third challenge that I would like to underline: the need for the European Investment Bank, along with other institutions, to make its contribution, in particular, to fulfilling the commitment made by the European Union in Copenhagen. As you know, the European Union made some major commitments to support what we call fast track financing. In this context we think that the EIB, which has developed unquestionable expertise in these matters, can make an important contribution. That is why we proposed to work with other national financial institutions to set up a network, a European platform that could coordinate and, therefore, optimise the funding of projects in developing countries. The French Development Agency and the German KfW have already shown interest in this initiative, and I hope that, together with the Commission, we will be able to help finalise this instrument in the coming weeks.

Those, Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, are the three major challenges for the months and years ahead that I wanted to draw your attention to.

Olli Rehn, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, on behalf of the Commission, I would like to thank Mr Deutsch for an excellent report, and also to welcome President Philip Maystadt to your plenary and congratulate him for the huge efforts the EIB has made to counter the economic crisis and to support the EU's recovery plan.

In the extraordinary circumstances we made an extraordinary call to the Bank, and it responded immediately by accelerating its lending to record highs. Due to its excellent financial standing, it was able to do so even at a time when it was difficult to raise finance from the markets.

The increased volumes targeted especially those areas which we feel – and I trust Parliament shares this view – are a priority, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, energy and climate change, as well as investments in the convergence regions of the Union which have been particularly hard hit by the economic slowdown. Furthermore, the EIB, in a joint initiative with the EBRD and the World Bank, was able to increase its support to the financial sector in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which are also experiencing an especially difficult situation.

The EIB will have a very important role to play in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy in supporting investments in infrastructure, green technologies, innovation and SMEs.

We are also laying the groundwork to enhance the combined use of EU grants with the EIB financial instruments both inside and outside the Union, including in the convergence regions, where the EIB can play an important role in improving the absorption of structural funds.

In the external field, I am very satisfied with the mid-term review of the EIB external mandate, supported by the Camdessus report, which concluded that the EU guarantee to the EIB is an efficient and forceful instrument with high financial and political leverage.

The Camdessus report also contained a number of good suggestions on increased alignment of EIB external activity with EU policies, and on how to enhance the cooperation of the EIB and the EBRD, building on Parliament's resolution on the EIB and EBRD Annual Reports for 2007.

Parliament had called for a better mutual understanding between the two banks. I have been very pleased to see that the EIB and the EBRD have reached an agreement on their cooperation in common countries of cooperation. This will form the basis for a more global tripartite agreement with the Commission replacing the existing regionally based agreements.

The main outcome of the mid-term review is the legislative proposal which the Commission has just submitted to Parliament and the Council for amendment of the EIB mandate for the remainder of the current financial perspective.

I trust that you will find it a solid and balanced proposal which takes into account Parliament's recommendations and concerns. It aims at reinforcing the focus of the external mandate on the key policy areas where the EIB has a well-proven track record, especially climate change, social and economic infrastructure and local private sector development, but also at placing more emphasis on development aspects of EIB financing.

So, in conclusion, we are looking forward to constructive and productive discussions with you and with the Council over the next months on this proposal. We hope that once again we could see an agreement at first reading, so that legal stability can continue to be ensured for an external mandate that allows us to effectively and efficiently pursue the EU's external policy objectives.

Edit Bauer, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality*. – (HU) Ladies and gentlemen, in their opinion on the report, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs stated that the European Investment Bank did well in crisis management in 2008.

What can be expected from an investment bank during a crisis? Mainly that it tries to compensate the decline in the lending activities of the commercial banks by creating liquidity. It can be stated that the EIB has been increasing the volume of loans with favourable interest terms continuously since 2008, and pledged to make available an additional annual amount of EUR 15 billion in extra funds for small and medium-sized enterprises in 2009 and 2010.

Why is this so important? Obviously because these are the largest creators of jobs, and at the moment, our greatest problems here in Europe are represented by employment issues. We have to create jobs.

The Bank also did well, in this very respect, in restructuring certain target areas. The bank turned towards small and medium-sized enterprises to a significant extent, and helped them find their footing as soon as possible. The Committee would recommend to President Maystadt three areas where the Bank's operations could become more efficient or transparent.

The first is that the Bank should focus even more on the countries most severely affected by the crisis, thus further increasing the inner cohesion of the Union. The second is that the Bank should not only enter into partnership agreements with large commercial banks for the financing of small and medium-sized enterprises, but should also include regional banks and savings banks into the partnerships, as these financial institutions know the markets best. Finally, the third point is that we believe it would be essential that financial institutions included in the partnerships are obliged to transfer to financed SMEs at least 20% of the profits resulting from the complete 50% EIB financing, in other words, a larger percentage than required by the current contracts.

On the whole, we can say that the EIB did well, and still leads the way in providing appropriate responses to the crisis, but further joint efforts will be required to be able to move forward with the European Commission and European Investment Bank, particularly in terms of job creation.

Karin Kadenbach, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Regional Development*. – (DE) Mr President, Mr Rehn, on behalf of the Committee on Regional Development, I would first of all like to express my gratitude for the report and I would also like to thank the rapporteur.

The committee welcomes the high capital adequacy ratio of the European Investment Bank (EIB). We are pleased that economic and social cohesion and convergence and the convergence pillar of the EU's cohesion policy in particular represent a core target for the EIB. We also appreciate very much the contribution which the EIB made to achieving the convergence objectives by lending EUR 21 billion, 41% of total EIB lending in the EU, for convergence projects.

Furthermore, I would like to emphasise the added value of undertaking actions in cooperation with the Commission and the EIB's strategy of providing additional support and leverage to structural fund interventions.

Jean-Pierre Audy, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, I would firstly like to welcome you, President Maystadt, and to tell you what a joy it is to see you again, since I worked on an identical report some time ago. I would also like to welcome the Commissioner and to tell the rapporteur and the rapporteurs for the other groups that they have done a tremendous job, and I would like to welcome them too.

Mr President, it is regrettable that the Council's seat is empty, because the EIB is an intergovernmental instrument. It is the Member States that are the partners of the EIB. Furthermore, I welcome, once again, the concern that President Maystadt and his colleagues show for Parliament in all these matters.

I would like to speak first of all about supervision, which is a subject close to my heart, since I think that the nature of the European Investment Bank's tasks mean that it should have prudential supervision. It does not have it because it is an international entity that is not subject to national audit authorities.

I have tabled an amendment so that our European Banking Authority, which we are hoping to set up, has a remit enabling it to perform prudential supervision tasks. Commissioner, I would like you to support this idea. I am told that the Member States are against it. The Member States will be unable to entrust tasks to the EIB on a long-term basis or to ensure that it has prudential supervision.

I would like to conclude now with investment and the role of the EIB. The European Union is not investing enough, and we know today that, whether we are talking about transport network interconnections, energy, high-speed trains, motorways, universities, water, space or health, we must invest more. However, the European Investment Bank is right: it is a bank and it must protect its triple A rating.

That is why I propose that, in the 2020 Strategy, we at least have an objective of EUR 1 trillion in investments. It is possible, but we must have an investment budget within the European Union and we must cooperate with the EIB through the use of innovative instruments. I propose that the European Union become the Bank's partner, since this would create a better synergy between the Union and this instrument, which is absolutely crucial to the future of our Europe.

Cătălin Sorin Ivan, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – (RO) I believe we all agree that the European Investment Bank features among the European projects which we can describe as successful European projects. I must also congratulate it at this point for the fact that, during a crisis, it has managed to retain its AAA rating, which is excellent.

In another respect, however, the current economic situation in Europe means that the European Investment Bank needs to carry out a wide-ranging review of its mission. I will mention here just three important points. First of all, loans which are given must support the Europe 2020 agenda. Secondly, the loans that it gives must be used to support large-scale investment projects so that Europe's economies can start to function again. Lastly, the European Investment Bank can and must support the creation of a much more stable and powerful European economic framework.

Olle Schmidt, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (SV) Mr President, Commissioner, Mr Maystadt, I should like to thank the rapporteur very much for an interesting and excellent report. On behalf of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, I should like to start by praising the bank for its excellent work. The European Investment Bank (EIB) was rapid and resolute in taking action when the financial crisis hit with full force. The bank demonstrated its ability to handle the huge challenges that it faced when the global economic crisis reached the economies in the European Union.

It increased the money supply and ensured that the lending volume increased significantly. This lessened the deepening of the financial crisis and was important for enabling any sort of recovery to occur. The important role of the EIB in supporting the small and medium-sized enterprises, which has been mentioned here, ought to be highlighted and cannot be emphasised enough. These investments were able to alleviate the crisis significantly. Small enterprises are, of course, the engine of our economy. They make up 99% of all our companies in Europe and employ 100 million people.

The fact that the EIB has a strategy for ensuring sustainable long-term growth in the European Union is, of course, extremely important, and this has been said many times; with green development, including investment in the Trans-European Network projects. A well-functioning Trans-European Transport Network is one of the most important components of the European growth initiative; the volcano in Iceland has perhaps taught us a lesson.

Evening out the differences in Europe is another important part of the EIB's work. It is beneficial to the EU to have stable and economically strong neighbours. In this context, we can view the EIB's work as particularly important from a strategic point of view.

Openness, transparency and the combating of fraud are particularly important subject areas. In the Liberal ALDE Group, we are pleased that the EIB has actually followed the recommendations that Parliament has put forward for so many years. We think that this is very good. Here the EIB can function as a beacon for openness for other EU institutions.

So, finally I come to a blot on the EIB's Protocol. It is very disappointing that equality within the EIB is still so poor. Women are still seriously under-represented, Mr Maystadt, in particular among the EIB's higher officials and directors, and make up only around 20% of the workforce. The EIB must improve in this area. This is something we can read about in its Diversity Strategy from December 2008. In summary, therefore, there are three good points and one less good, or we could even say bad, point.

Philippe Lamberts, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, Mr Maystadt, fellow countrymen, we need a bank like yours. Yes, we need it at a time when private banks, like industry, have shown that they are working against the general interest, that they are no longer doing their job of providing society with credit. We need public lending instruments, and even more so at European level. For

that reason alone, therefore, I believe – and we believe – that the EIB should assume an increasingly important role.

What role should you play in our opinion, though? That of a catalyst, of course. A public bank like yours cannot respond to all the needs of the market, but you should be a catalyst: a catalyst to help our societies and economies transform, so that they can rise to the two crucial challenges of our time, which are not only to learn to live within the physical limits of our planet – that is, of course, the climate issue and that of the exhaustion of resources – but also to rise to this growing challenge of social cohesion, both within the European Union and on the planet as a whole, since you have a significant mission in the area of development.

From that point of view, allow me to quote just one figure. When we see the energy investments that you were funding in 2009, three quarters went towards 19th- and 20th-century technologies and only one quarter towards renewable energy.

Therefore, the challenge that we are setting you, Mr Maystadt, and the EIB, is to reverse these proportions, it is to ensure that, in 2010 and beyond, three quarters of your investments – and all of them in the long term – go towards this transformation. I think that this is how you will play your role as catalyst. Mr Maystadt, you have often been top of the class; we ask you to ensure that the EIB really is top of the class at global level.

Ryszard Czarnecki, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – (PL) Mr President, most of all I would like to thank the rapporteur, Mr Deutsch, for his very good work. I think that increasing the volume of lending by the amount which the report mentions is a very ambitious objective. I think that, in fact, from the perspective of the European taxpayer and the European voter, a European investment pact is basically only important insofar as it is a financial ‘tap’ for small and medium-sized businesses. The increased financial commitment should be appreciated, here, as it is fairly significant in this area. Support for this sector is especially valuable, particularly in times of crisis.

As a representative of Central and Eastern Europe, and as a Pole, I must say that it is an extremely important matter for us that the bank should support transformation in our region of Europe and reduce the present divisions. I am glad, too, that the bank is showing significant commitment as far as relations with European funds are concerned. This, too, is of indirect significance for us.

Marta Andreasen, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – Mr President, when I look at the projects the EIB finances I am struck by how many involve large companies and how few involve the SMEs they are supposed to help. Do companies such as General Motors, Electrolux and Arcelor Mittal really need to use the EIB except for the soft terms they offer? And what have such loans done for the European economy? Have they created jobs? No, they have exported jobs, sometimes to cheaper European countries and sometimes outside the EU altogether.

Electrolux is an example of EIB success. Lent EUR 250 million for capacity enhancement, they built new factories in Poland, Romania and Hungary. As soon as these were completed they transferred production there from the UK with the loss of almost 2 000 jobs in Spennymoor, England, so I think we can all agree that the EIB plays a very important role in the economy of Europe, particularly on the balance of trade: it exports our jobs and imports unemployment.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Mr President, it is pleasing to read in the annual report that the European Investment Bank (EIB) has responded rapidly to the crisis by making a significant increase in the funds available. Lending to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular must remain one of its central priorities and, where possible, must be extended. However, it is important to ensure that the businesspeople in question actually receive the loans.

With regard to the monitoring and supervisory system, I support the proposal for the establishment of a European Banking Authority. However, in order to be able to function efficiently, this authority must be given far-reaching powers and must also have the mandate to monitor banks which operate across national borders.

As far as the objectives of the European Investment Bank are concerned, I would like to see a greater focus on its activities within Europe. This is urgently needed in the light of the ongoing financial and economic crisis and it would also allow duplication of effort and conflicts of interest with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development to be avoided.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – (GA) Mr President, I agree with the colleagues who are commending the excellent work done by the EIB.

In praising the EIB we can see in it a stark contrast to the sad murky immoral story which has unfolded regarding the private banks with their extravagant remuneration packages and grotesque bonuses and total lack of corporate governance. The EIB, partly perhaps because, as the President says, it is accountable to Parliament, has been the exact opposite, and they are to be praised for their good and proper actions and in particular their swift action in reacting to the economic crisis.

He did mention, and rightly so, that they earmarked SMEs for particular attention and support and I know that in my own country EUR 300 million was allocated for SMEs through the EIB. But the question is: is this reaching the SMEs, and, if not, can they establish why not? Is there any recourse for businesses that are refused even if they seem to have good business plans?

Certainly in Ireland every day there is evidence of companies going bust and even in the Irish Times on Tuesday the heading was 'State cuts fund to help enterprises by EUR 22 million'. So we are not out of the woods yet.

Also I want to ask the question: there is also anecdotal evidence that private banks are using money that is supposed to go to SMEs for other activities at the banks. I would like to know: is this the case? Can it be established, and, particularly, can we in Parliament do anything to help establish those facts?

Jens Geier (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, Mr Maystadt, Mr Rehn, I would first like to thank Mr Deutsch for his work. However, I would also like to take the opportunity to emphasise the importance of the European Investment Bank (EIB) for Europe and for the citizens of Europe and to highlight the fact that we must make greater use of this unique institution, in particular in times of economic crisis.

From the perspective of budgetary control, which in modern terms also covers the actual output and performance of European programmes and institutions, the EIB has definitely earned its high rating, in particular with regard to political reliability. It creates real added value for the people of Europe by means of the investments made in its six main programmes, ranging from the Trans-European Networks to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and its special programmes, such as the project to combat climate change. I am sure that this will receive broad support in the European Parliament. However, this also means that Parliament must in future extend its own supervisory procedures. I am referring here, for example, to the investment facility.

Finally, I would like to make one further point which is particularly important to my group and which is aimed directly at the EIB. We welcome the fact that the EIB has revised its policy on offshore financial centres. However, we also need the assurance that income produced from EIB funds will not make its way into tax havens of this kind, otherwise the EIB would risk damaging the reputation and the rating that it has built up.

Charles Goerens (ALDE). – (FR) Mr President, the European Investment Bank is both a bank and an institution. As a bank it cannot forget that it is an institution, and as an institution it cannot forget that it is a bank. Therefore, it must respond to the demands of the European Union, on the one hand, without neglecting its refinancing capacity, on the other.

From this point of view, we do not have the right to make it take unnecessary risks, particularly in its interventions in developing countries. That is why it is important to favour a kind of agreement between the Member States and the European Commission, on the one hand, and the European Investment Bank, on the other, whereby institutional donors have the opportunity to intervene with donations, while the European Investment Bank, by virtue of its role, can grant loans.

This precaution would protect us from the setbacks experienced by the World Bank, which a few years ago had to cancel 50 billion worth of debt that would not have been repaid in any case. I believe we can avoid such an experience with the prudence shown in the European Investment Bank's operations, and I would like to encourage it to further develop its interventions in developing countries, because there is certainly still some margin for manoeuvre there.

Malika Benarab-Attou (Verts/ALE). – (FR) Mr President, President of the European Investment Bank, in the EIB's 2008 report, Parliament insisted that the bank's external activities comply with the general objectives of the European Union.

That is why the project to finance a nuclear power station in Jordan would go against the foundations of Article 3(5) of the Treaty on European Union. I quote, 'In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall contribute to the sustainable development of the Earth'.

In February 2009, the Jordanian authorities contacted the EIB seeking support for their nuclear energy development project, which involves, in particular, the construction of a nuclear power station by 2016.

It is therefore with some satisfaction that I have received the assurance of your services that the European Investment Bank did not grant this request and that it considers that its job is to support projects in Jordan aimed at developing wind and solar power, which are energies of the future for our planet because they are renewable.

Will this position be pursued for other requests to finance nuclear power stations?

Paweł Robert Kowal (ECR). – (PL) Mr President, the stability of Ukraine is a natural objective for all EU Member States, partly because Ukraine is one of our most important and largest partners. As we look on, Ukraine is going through a crisis. The stability of Ukraine's budget will be decisive for the social and political situation as well as for the country's future. The more help and political support we give to Ukraine, the more we will be entitled to expect reforms in the Ukrainian economy in favour of a free market.

The economic crisis in Ukraine is not just a crisis for Ukraine, but is also a matter for all of us. Today, in the difficult situation of Ukraine, it is becoming apparent how much we can help. Therefore, I support macrofinancial aid for Ukraine. I think we should say, today, that it ought to be greater, and that the greater it is, the greater and more ambitious can be our expectations of Ukraine.

Nikolaos Salavrakos (EFD). – (EL) Mr President, without doubt, the European Investment Bank has been a success since it was founded 52 years ago, especially in achieving and strengthening the objectives of the European Union and financing small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the mainstay of business in the European Union and the mainstay of those businesses that need to be maintained during the course of the current economic crisis in order to maintain jobs and social calm in the Union.

As we all know, today the Union is dealing with the Greek crisis. Of course, I do not know if future historians will call it the 'Greek crisis' or the 'financial crisis' or perhaps they will call it the 'monetary crisis'. What I do know is that, if he were alive today, Galileo would not say that the world is turning, he would say that 'the world is running', because events are running away with us and, as the European Union, we must follow them and find the necessary solutions.

I think that everyone here believes that, if life is to proceed smoothly in the Union, we need to speed up the completion of political and economic union. That being so, I consider that the EIB has the expertise and the objective capability of taking more action and I propose – and I address this proposal specifically to Mr Olli Rehn, whom I respect immensely for the gravitas with which he addresses various issues – that the possibility should be examined of the EIB's paying a role in the future in assessing the credit rating of the Member States.

Hans-Peter Martin (NI). – (DE) Mr President, the previous speakers have rightly highlighted the importance of the European Investment Bank (EIB). Mrs Kadenbach, for example, has referred to its essential contribution to social convergence. I would like to put that in a political context. We are very concerned to see that parties of the extreme right are gaining popularity in more and more countries. This is because social convergence in the European Union is not working in the way in which we would all have liked.

These radical right-wingers are very often wolves in sheep's clothing, which allows them to conceal their massive and cynical contempt for humanity. My final example, Mr President – and I am aware of your political leanings – concerns what Mr Mölzer has just done. He has made a nice little speech, but in the meantime he has called one of his political opponents – in other words, me – a psychopath. That is the language of Hitler's fascism. This is the way in which these people work, by branding their political opponents as monsters. I would like to ask you to take the necessary measures and I would also like to ask the staff of the EIB to continue with their work, in particular in the area of transparency. They should make what they do even more transparent, because this approach will help to combat the new rise of fascism.

Sophie Auconie (PPE). – (FR) Mr President, with the European Investment Bank's 2008 report we are celebrating an anniversary: the EIB has now been actively contributing to the economic development of our continent for more than 50 years.

As a European Union bank providing long-term loans, it plays a decisive role in combating the crisis we are experiencing today. We should pay tribute to the responsiveness that it has shown since autumn 2008. In 2008 alone, the EIB paid out EUR 10 billion more than it anticipated.

As a member of Parliament's Committee on Regional Development and Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, I am particularly interested in the EIB's assistance for Europe's small and medium-sized enterprises. To me it seems extremely important to continue to develop initiatives such as JEREMIE. Enterprises need equity, venture capital, guarantees, loans and the technical assistance proposed by JEREMIE. A year ago, the Auvergne region – a part of my 'Euro constituency' which Mr Audy, who is here, knows well – launched this aid mechanism for SMEs. It is worth EUR 25 million, EUR 18 million of which comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and it will help small enterprises, support innovation and contribute to overcoming the crisis.

I am pleased to see this constructive cooperation between the EIB, the European Investment Fund and our local authorities. Mr Maystadt, I am convinced that we must continue along these lines.

Thijs Berman (S&D). – Mr President, within the EU in 2008 the EIB reacted swiftly and accurately to the financial crisis by increasing its capital and almost doubling investments and disbursements compared to previous years, and in particular towards SMEs. However, under the EIB's external mandate, this sense of urgency for counter-cyclical action has not been shown by the EIB in developing countries. The EIB even decreased its investment significantly in ACP countries, in Asia and in Latin America. The annual report painfully shows that, for developing countries, the EIB's response to the crisis has been far too slow.

The main task of the EIB as a public institution in developing countries should not only be to invest in heavy infrastructure; another and equally important task is providing capital in times of scarcity, supporting markets where private banks are reluctant. Under the external mandate the EIB should invest more in financial services, offering better access to loans and savings for citizens and SMEs. That leads to sustainable growth here and in developing countries.

Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D). – (EL) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, before I welcome President Maystadt to the European Parliament and before I congratulate him both on the successes of the European Investment Bank and on its ambitious business plan, I should like to express my horror about the murderous arson attack on three of my fellow citizens in Athens yesterday, at their place of work, and to express my deepest condolences to their families.

Without doubt, the current economic crisis has highlighted the important work of the European Investment Bank. Additional financial support by the EIB has allowed fast disbursements and helped to support the real economy, especially by protecting useful projects and helping viable undertakings in these exceptionally difficult times.

The EIB has also played an important pivotal role in the core programme on competitiveness in Europe under which, via the JASPERS and JEREMIE initiatives, the EIB has promoted instruments to give even more essential support to innovation.

The role of the EIB is becoming more and more important, not only within the framework of the cohesion objectives, but also in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The smart financial mechanism instruments which it is constantly developing and the more recent European Local Energy Assistance or ELENA initiative are expected to make a decisive contribution towards employment through important investments in sectors such as sustainability and security of energy supply, which have a direct impact on local economic development and on improving the quality of life of our citizens.

Zigmantas Balčytis (S&D). – (LT) President Adamkus, after Europe was struck by the financial and economic crisis, the support provided by the European Investment Bank to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) became especially necessary. I view as positive the decision adopted by the bank in 2008 to allocate 42% more loans than in the previous year to SMEs, since they make up 99% of all of the European Union's companies and employ more than 100 million people. Given that the economic crisis is not yet over and the level of unemployment is still rising, we must ensure that the European Investment Bank further increases borrowing opportunities for SMEs, improves access to capital and simplifies the complicated bureaucratic rules so that projects can be funded more quickly and more effectively, particularly in those Member States and sectors that have suffered most from the crisis. As well as support for the companies I have mentioned, the European Investment Bank should also continue devoting significant attention to funding the development of a sustainable, competitive and secure energy infrastructure and a harmonious transport sector infrastructure.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D). – Mr President, if we did not have the European Investment Bank, we would right now be desperately trying to set it up. I welcome the proposal to greatly increase the amount of loans and also support its role in helping non-EU developing countries.

We are, however – I believe – wasting this valuable resource by not drawing on its expertise in the wider financial crisis. We urgently need a European mechanism for financial stability. By setting up a trust fund, as proposed by the Party of European Socialists, we would ensure that Member States coming under attack from unscrupulous speculators could be supported without direct recourse to taxpayers and could ensure lower spreads. This would demonstrate clearly to the market – particularly the unscrupulous speculators – that we are not prepared to allow any Member State to be brought down and destroyed, as is happening at this point in time with Greece and is likely to happen to other Member States, not least my own, in Ireland.

Corina Crețu (S&D). – (RO) Against the backdrop of the crisis, the European Investment Bank has managed to change its priorities quickly in terms of granting loans, in order to provide support to small and medium-sized enterprises, which are exposed the most to the risks triggered by the crisis and the increased costs associated with lending. It is important for us to see to what extent the Bank can provide cofinancing for projects financed from Structural Funds in Member States in the East because, as you are aware, a number of SMEs and local authorities are experiencing major difficulties in accessing European funds for which no cofinancing is available on the financial and banking market.

I believe that during the forthcoming period the Bank's activities must be focused on the countries hit hard by the crisis, which are failing to kick-start their economies, in order to support cohesion and prevent the continuing economic and social decline.

The European Investment Bank has a special place in the financial mechanism available to the EU for relaunching economic growth. This is why I support the recommendation that the EU, as a legal entity, can become a shareholder of the Bank, along with the Member States, which would help strengthen cooperation.

President. – I am going to give the floor for half a minute to Mr Mölzer, who felt he was alluded to in a speech by another Member.

Andreas Mölzer (NI). – (DE) Mr President, I would like to make a personal statement under Rule 151 of the Rules of Procedure, following the serious accusations made against me by Mr Martin in his speech.

I must point out that I want nothing to do with this Member of Parliament. His political approach is to denounce his colleagues, to denounce the entire Parliament in the media and to claim that the officials in Parliament are lazy, idle and incapable. I will not talk to a man who uses secret service methods, such as keyhole cameras, miniature cameras and other secret equipment, to spy on people. I have not spoken to him today and I will not do so in future. I do not want anything to do with a person of this kind. I reject Mr Martin's assertion and, in my opinion, he should withdraw it.

President. – Mr Mölzer, your words have therefore been recorded in the verbatim record of today's sitting.

Petru Constantin Luhan (PPE). – (RO) I must begin by congratulating the European Investment Bank for the efforts it has made aimed at achieving the Community objectives. This institution has played and continues to play a crucial role during the current financial and economic crisis.

The convergence objective receives considerable support from the Structural and Cohesion Funds as it is one of the Bank's key objectives. EUR 21 billion, approximately 41% of the total sum of EIB loans in the European Union, have funded loans for projects with this objective in mind. I think that poorer regions cannot be developed until after the infrastructure providing accessibility, as well as the right social and educational infrastructure have been created, based on the common standards for all European Union citizens.

This is why I am actually encouraging the European Investment Bank to continue the measures aimed at promoting economic and social cohesion in the European Union and the measures to combat the financial crisis by increasing...

(The President cut off the speaker)

George Sabin Cutaș (S&D). – (RO) The European Investment Bank plays a major role in increasing the level of convergence across the European Union, a vital contribution during the economic recession which has hit investments hard, especially in public infrastructure.

I think that the EIB has responded very promptly to the challenges presented by the crisis, for instance, by granting funding to Romania, amounting to a total of almost EUR 1.5 billion for 2009. These loans highlight the versatile extent of the Bank's involvement in accelerating the process of bridging the development gaps during the post-accession period.

As my fellow Members have said, a significant proportion of the loans are for supporting SMEs. I believe that improving these enterprises' access to capital can play a key role in boosting the European economy and combating unemployment. In this respect, it would be useful for assessments to be carried out every year on the accessibility and effectiveness of these loans to ensure greater transparency in terms of their final destination and improve the administrative process.

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Mr President, we should applaud the important role the European Investment Bank plays in the reconstruction of our economies in the difficult times most of our countries are facing. My country, Lithuania, is a case in point. The EIB plays a role in the national stimulus package, especially when it comes to enhancing financing for small and medium-sized enterprises, but also financing renewable-energy and transport projects.

I would nevertheless urge European governments to provide the EIB with a more significant lending capacity to our neighbours, especially those in the east, that are also suffering from the effects of the crisis and are highly in need of loans and investments. Especially needed are investments in the hard sectors, such as transport, environment and, last but not least, energy. The last one is of particular importance, especially knowing the energy infrastructure problems that...

(The President cut off the speaker.)

Andrzej Grzyb (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, I, too, would like to add my voice to the propitious expressions of thanks to Mr Maystadt and the European Investment Bank, and also to Mr Deutsch, who drafted the report.

Two objectives, in fact, have been discernible during the debate: firstly, development, and secondly, stabilisation, or the other way round – the order is not important. In the European Union and its Member States we are thinking, principally, of development in the area of cohesion. Here, I want to emphasise in particular the role which can be played by financing the small and medium-sized enterprise sector. We have already said, in the Lisbon Agenda, that without the small and medium-sized enterprise sector and without regional cooperation it will not be possible to develop cohesion.

We have countries outside the Union, which are neighbours of the European Union, the Eastern Partnership countries, where without the help of the European Investment Bank – Mr Kowal also spoke about this, and so did Mrs Andrikiienė – it will not be possible...

(The President cut off the speaker)

Paul Rübzig (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, Mr Maystadt, I would be interested to know what effect the discussion on Basel III is having on the bank and, in particular, on the European Investment Fund (EIF). Do you believe that we have the necessary creditworthiness to provide effective support in an economic crisis or do you think that our creditworthiness needs to be improved? What opportunities do you see in future for making more risk capital available in crises like the one which we are currently experiencing? The support of the EIF is of great importance in particular to small and medium-sized enterprises in difficult times.

I would like to thank the European Investment Bank (EIB) for its successful collaboration with the EIF and for the fact that it has made major progress in focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises and, above all, on the Trans-European Networks.

Philippe Maystadt, President of the European Investment Bank. – (FR) Mr President, I would like to thank all the speakers for their comments. Of course, some of the issues raised deserve to be discussed in more detail. I can only give a few answers here, and I will distinguish between questions that concern our operational priorities, on the one hand, and those that are more about supervision and governance, on the other.

As far as our operational priorities are concerned, one has held the attention of a number of you, and it is the support that should be provided to small and medium-sized enterprises. Mrs Györi and Mr Schmidt, in particular, underlined this. I think that they are quite right to stress the importance of support for SMEs.

As you doubtless know, in 2008, we launched a new product for loans to banks for small and medium-sized enterprises, which allows us to monitor the use of the funds that we lend more effectively. Thus I can tell

you that, from the last quarter of 2008 until the end of 2009, we signed loans worth EUR 21 billion, of which EUR 16 billion have actually been spent. Moreover, at the end of last year, more than 90% of these funds had already actually been lent to small and medium-sized enterprises.

I therefore think that we can provide significant support in this way, going through commercial banks, and using, as Mrs Györi stressed, not just traditional commercial banks as intermediaries, but also regional banks and savings banks. We have diversified the range of our intermediaries.

We are also trying to work in close cooperation with our subsidiary, the European Investment Fund, in combined actions, since this fund is able to provide guarantees for the portfolio of loans granted to SMEs. Mrs Auconie gave a very specific example of this participation, and I am grateful for her words of support in this regard.

The second operational priority that captured your interest is, of course, convergence, and I can confirm that the European Investment Bank is striving to further increase its operations in the so-called convergence regions. Thus you will see that, in 2009, the volume of our loans grew more in the new Member States than in the old ones. This is part of our determined effort to try to help reduce the gap between the Member States, since that is indeed the spirit of convergence.

In this context, as Mrs Kadenbach and Mr Czarnecki, in particular, underlined, it is important to have good cooperation with the Commission regarding the use of the Structural Funds, and I can tell you that this is indeed the case.

Furthermore, together with the Commission we have finalised several joint programmes: JASPERS, to provide technical assistance in the preparation of projects that may be eligible for aid from the Structural Funds; JEREMIE, which is an original idea aimed at transforming the Structural Funds into financial instruments with a revolving character (we can use the same amounts several times); and, finally, JESSICA, which is the same idea of using the Structural Funds for funding in the area of urban renewal.

The third operational priority is energy and the fight against climate change. We will perhaps have the opportunity to discuss this in more detail, but I can assure you that the idea is to put more emphasis on renewable energies and energy efficiency, in accordance with the strategy adopted at European level.

Mr Lamberts quoted figures for the period 2002-2008, but if you look at the most recent figures, in particular those of 2009, you will see that the proportion is in the process of being reversed, since in 2009 we funded renewable energy projects worth more than EUR 4 billion, which represents more than 70% of our funding for electricity generation.

The intention, then, is to pursue this reversal of the proportion by providing more funding for renewable energies and energy efficiency, and here I would like to thank Mr Stavrakakis, who alluded in his speech to the ELENA programme, which once again is a joint programme with the Commission to provide technical assistance in the area of energy efficiency.

Still on energy, I would like to say to Mrs Benarab-Attou that we respect the choice of each Member State as far as policy mix is concerned. If a Member State decides to use nuclear energy, it is not for the EIB to oppose this, but I confirm that, in the case of Jordan, we are only discussing the funding of renewable energies.

I shall be brief now, and address a few issues regarding supervision and governance. As far as supervision is concerned, Mr Audy has gone over this, he knows our position; we are completely open, we are already supervised to a large extent by an independent audit committee, by the European Court of Auditors, when we use the European budget, by OLAF and by the European Ombudsman. I think we are already the most supervised international financial institution.

That said, I acknowledge that having banking supervision could be useful, and we are therefore completely open to proposals that could be made on the subject, in particular via the new European Banking Authority.

As far as Basel III is concerned, I would simply say to Mr Rübig that we are following the work closely. It is too early to give an opinion on the impact that that could have, since we are only at the stage of consultation on Basel III and the parameters have not yet been decided.

As for offshore financial centres, I would say to Mr Geier that it is something that we are very interested in. If he wishes, we could explain our new policy in more detail, but, really, the main concern is to prevent tax avoidance when offshore financial centres are used.

Finally, a specific point raised by Mr Schmidt. He is right, we still have some progress to make in terms of gender equality. The figure that he quoted concerns only managerial staff. It is true that we have too few women in the EIB's managerial staff. We have implemented an action plan and we hope to rectify this situation in the next few years, but I want to assure him of our will in this regard; we want to improve a situation which, as it stands today, is in fact unacceptable.

Olli Rehn, *Commission*. – (FI) Mr President, honourable Members, I want to thank you for a very professional and constructive debate, and Mr Deutsch for his excellent report.

I wish to say three things on the matter. Firstly, I am confident that this debate and report will provide a sound basis for the prompt adoption of the European Investment Bank's external mandate. This is important for us to be able to ensure that we effectively implement the EU's common objectives in foreign policy and development cooperation.

Secondly, the European Investment Bank is a vitally important partner for the European Commission, especially if we are to achieve the Europa 2020 goals, specifically in the areas of sustainable growth and employment. The EIB holds the keys to the development of infrastructure, innovations and small enterprises, and we are cooperating closely and seamlessly in this.

Many of you have, understandably, referred to the situation in Greece. Yesterday, on behalf of the Commission, I sent commiserations to the relatives and friends of those who lost their lives in Athens as a result of the violence. Fierce debate is a feature of democracy, but violence can never be tolerated and there has to be a very strict limit to behaviour of this sort.

The Commission has been actively involved in the construction of a stabilisation programme for the Greek economy and the adoption of a huge financial rescue package to support financial stability throughout the euro area and to ensure the stability of the Greek economy. At the end of last week we proposed to the Eurogroup a huge financial rescue package and a stabilisation programme worth EUR 110 billion in all. The finance ministers in the Eurogroup took a decision last Sunday, with reference to a proposal by the Commission, the ECB and the IMF. It was a difficult, but at the same time, necessary and responsible decision. Now it is crucially important that all the national parliaments finalise their decisions soon. I, for one, am confident of your support in achieving this objective.

This is not just about Greece, but the stability of the entire eurozone economy. It is vital to stop the bushfire in Greece before it turns into a forest fire that spreads across Europe. I am sure that we can do this, but it will mean acting responsibly. Now is not the time to score popularity points: it is a time for responsible and determined action. The euro is not just a technical arrangement: it is perhaps the European Union's most important joint political project.

Tamás Deutsch, *rapporteur*. – (HU) Mr President, President Maystadt, Commissioner Rehn, please allow me to express my thanks to my fellow Members, the President and the Commissioner for this valuable debate.

Before we vote, please allow me to make three remarks at the end of several months of thorough and in my view valuable preparatory work. As Montecuccoli said several hundred years ago, a successful war, fighting a successful war requires money, money and money. It is clear that in order to solve the economic problems that affect us all, we need job creation, job creation and job creation. It is important that the European Investment Bank has always considered this to be a vital objective, and today's debate also reassures us all that it will continue to work in partnership with the European Parliament, Commission and Council in striving towards these goals.

I feel that the remarks made by fellow Members urging the European Investment Bank to pay more attention to the Member States most affected by the crisis are important. I believe that in this respect, as well, we are knocking on open doors.

Last but not least, as regards the European Investment Bank's external mandate, I feel that the remarks made here, in the plenary debate, emphasising the importance of providing support and credit to European countries bordering the European Union, are also important. Ukraine was mentioned, as well as the Balkan regions. I myself agree. Last but not least, allow me to mention the names of two gentlemen here, at the end of the debate. On such occasions it is usually the leaders of institutions who get the praise. I would naturally like to congratulate President Maystadt on the work he has done so far, but please allow me to also thank Mr de Crayencour and Mr Brito, who have been excellent partners of the European Parliament, for their work. Last

but not least, please allow me to thank my fellow Members for their cooperation. It was a joint effort, and the success is also shared.

President. – Mr Hans-Peter Martin has asked for the floor due to personal allusions. His compatriot Mr Mölzer alluded to Mr Hans-Peter Martin, his past and his conduct, and therefore pursuant to Rule 151 he has the right to reply.

These speeches regarding personal allusions cannot turn into a ping-pong match in which one person alludes to the other and the other alludes to the first; therefore after Mr Martin's speech I shall consider this matter to be completely resolved. Mr Martin is going to have a minute to speak, and I ask him to adhere strictly to Rule 151 and advise him that after exactly one minute I shall cut him off.

Hans-Peter Martin (NI). – (DE) Mr President, it is sad that I have to bring this up in plenary. I have to tell you that what Mr Mölzer has said is untrue. On the way in here he did indeed call me a psychopath. In recent years he has often told me that I should see a psychiatrist. That is the way in which radical right-wingers work. Last year the leader of the social democratic group said, 'I believe Hein-Christian Strache is a Nazi'. This is the man whose party Mr Mölzer belongs to and whom he works closely with.

I really believe that, on the basis of what we have repeatedly experienced here, we should not only be discussing the economic crisis, the financial crisis and what can now be referred to as a money war. We should also be dealing with the dangerous rise of right-wing radicalism. If you were to sit here at the back, Mr President, with your political past, you would recognise the dangerous trends emerging once again in Hungary, in Austria and elsewhere. This must be stopped before it gets out of hand.

President. – The debate is closed.

The vote will take place today at 11.00.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Liam Aylward (ALDE). – (GA) The European Investment Bank has a vitally important role in relation to the small and medium-sized enterprises which are trying to survive the current economic crisis. Small and medium-sized enterprises provide 70% of European employment, and as a result, they have a central role in the operation of the European economy.

The greatest difficulty these businesses currently face is in accessing funding and capital. The central role of the EIB as regards providing aid to small and medium-sized enterprises must be welcomed, and the Bank should be supported in its efforts. EUR 30 billion has been earmarked for small and medium-sized enterprises for the period 2008-2011 and more than 50 000 businesses in the EU benefited from EIB funding in 2009.

I welcome the report's recommendations with regard to improving the transparency of the system whereby loans are provided through the EIB's financial intermediaries. The financial intermediaries must pass these loans on to the small businesses. The Bank's monitoring system in relation to these loans must be improved to ensure the effectiveness of these loans.

Jim Higgins (PPE). – I greatly appreciate the continued support expressed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) for Ireland during the economic crisis. The EIB has responded admirably to the serious liquidity constraints and the tight credit conditions resulting in serious problems in the financing of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the declining confidence in the financial markets. The EIB has also played an important role in the European Economic Recovery Plan, especially with regard to the enhanced financing for SMEs, energy from renewable sources and clean transport. It is crucial that the EIB applies bolder risk-taking in its lending policy towards SMEs in order to allow SMEs to access capital for risk-taking projects. Last year the EIB provided Ireland with EUR 1.02 billion for six operations, the highest level ever achieved in Ireland. I welcome the fact that banks acting as intermediaries are contractually obliged to lend to SMEs at least twice the amount of their loan from the EIB, to ensure that the benefits derived from EIB funding are passed on to SMEs. However, this regulation needs close supervision as many SMEs in Ireland struggle to borrow from Irish banks in receipt of EIB loans.

Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) In 2008, the European Investment Bank celebrated its 50th anniversary. Throughout this period, it has contributed considerably to the development of integration, balanced and lasting development and economic and social cohesion by supporting investment projects in Europe and lending to the public and private sectors using the financial markets as well as its own funds. The year 2008 also saw the beginning of the world financial and economic crisis which devastated the

European economy. Given the limited liquidity, stricter lending policy and capital restrictions of the banks, the European Investment Bank came to the rescue of many endangered investments and projects. In reacting to the crisis, the EIB significantly increased its lending volume to businesses in 2008. This was extremely important, especially for the small and medium-sized enterprise sector, which was hit exceptionally hard by the crisis. Often faced by severe restrictions on their access to capital from banks which were engulfed in problems, the EIB was the last hope. The positive role played by the EIB during the crisis is incontrovertible. However, it is worth thinking about how the resources at the bank's disposal could be put to even better use. The best way for this is to simplify the complicated bureaucracy and create clear procedures.

4. Mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria, in January and March (debate)

President. – The next item is the Commission statement on the mass atrocities in Jos (Nigeria) in January and March.

Olli Rehn, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, we learnt with great sadness that former President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua died last night. He made a great contribution to the political and democratic life of Nigeria and through his policies contributed to the stability in particular of the subregion of West Africa.

According to the Constitution, acting President Jonathan automatically becomes the substantive President. We understand that he will be sworn in shortly, possibly by tonight, by Nigeria's Chief of Justice. He in turn will be expected to swear in a Vice-President from the north of the country, which opens new speculations on the political scene in Nigeria.

The European Union has been a committed partner of Nigeria and has continued to give strong and constructive support during the recent difficult months of political uncertainty. The violent conflicts in Jos and surrounding villages in January and March this year, during which hundreds of citizens are reported to have been massacred or seriously injured, have been particularly devastating. Thousands have been left homeless and are currently in camps.

I fully share the concerns expressed by honourable Members on the mass atrocities in Jos and I would like to assure you that they triggered a resolute EU response.

As soon as news emerged about the events in January and March, the Commission was in contact with the International Red Cross in Nigeria and other local agencies, which confirmed that the humanitarian needs of most victims were being met and that hospitals were able to cope with the inflow of casualties. The EU was amongst the first of Nigeria's international partners to make public its views on the violence.

In January, High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton issued a joint statement with Hillary Clinton, David Miliband and Bernard Kouchner expressing deep regret at the violence and tragic loss of lives. All parties were urged to exercise restraint and seek peaceful means to resolve differences, and called on the Federal Government to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice. The EU issued further declarations on Nigeria in February and March; they conducted a diplomatic *démarche* with the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to convey condemnation of the most recent outbreaks of violence.

The EU requested that the Federal Government of Nigeria conduct a full investigation of the causes of the most recent violence and bring the perpetrators of violence to justice. In the last 10 years violent conflicts have caused the death of over 14 000 people in Nigeria and left over three million internally displaced people.

It is not possible to put Muslim or Christian communities in the role of either aggressor or victim, since historically they have, unfortunately, been both. It is apparent, however, that the conflict always involves extremely poor people. Conflicts presented as religiously motivated are often triggered by other causes, including conflicts between traditional rulers, land and resource struggles among communities, political in-fighting, and tensions between state and federal authorities. Religious differences often fuel and amplify existing differences, leading to larger clashes.

Measures being undertaken by the EU in Nigeria combine diplomacy with longer-term development cooperation. Under the EDF we support development cooperation in Nigeria. The two most important sectors are peace and security, and governance and human rights. We also actively promote peace and security through regular political dialogue with Nigeria under the Cotonou agreement and we engage in regular dialogue with Nigeria on human rights and democratic principles including ethnic, religious and racial discrimination.

Finally, I believe it is essential that we remain attentive to the issue of recurring intercommunal violence in Nigeria. I propose that it should be addressed as a priority for dialogue in the next EU-Nigeria ministerial meeting in the autumn of this year.

Gay Mitchell, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, may I join with the Commissioner in expressing my sympathy to the people of Nigeria on the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua.

The recent outbreaks of violence in Nigeria are emblematic of a wider problem that faces the country. The incidents that have taken place in Jos, a city that has a history of violence, are very alarming. The city lies at a crossroads between the Muslim north and the Christian south, a fact that has led many to believe that the incidents are solely based on religious hatred.

In our joint motion for a resolution we have called for a wider examination of the root causes of the conflict. Coming from Ireland I know that for far too long people spoke of the Northern Ireland conflict as a conflict between Catholics and Protestants, whereas in fact it was a much more nuanced thing than that and there were much more serious issues, including civil rights issues, at the heart of the problem.

It is imperative that we should avoid simplistic assertions that these atrocious killings are the results of religious hatred alone. There are social, political and economic factors that must be considered before we reach conclusions. The ethnic rivalry between the Hausa and the Berom people must also be recognised as a factor in the violence. The killings are similar in method and consequence to previous clashes in 2001, 2004 and 2008. Violence has been used in the past to settle differences and has once again triumphed over dialogue.

It is extremely disappointing that a country like Nigeria, which is the eighth-largest producer of oil in the world, has such a large proportion of the population living below the poverty line. It is only by ensuring peace and security, democracy and political stability, that Nigeria can haul itself out of poverty and create a wealth and social justice which will in turn lead people away from violence as a method of conflict resolution.

I urge the Commission to continue dialogue with Nigeria under the Cotonou Agreement, to examine the root causes of this conflict and to give every assistance necessary to ensure that these atrocities are not repeated.

Thijs Berman, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, our S&D Group joins Commissioner Rehn in expressing our condolences after the death of the Nigerian President, Umaru Yar'Adua.

The violence between the Muslim and Christian population in Jos, Nigeria, in January and March this year, shows the tense and explosive state of this region. Although the obvious reason seems to lie in the religious dimension, we must also focus on other underlying causes, as my colleague Gay Mitchell rightly pointed out as well. Most importantly, the region suffers from scarce resources and the unequal access of different groups to these resources. Also, the struggle for fertile farmland is an important root cause for the violent conflicts between Christians and Muslim settlers. Indigenous farmers feel threatened by settlers looking for pasture for their livestock.

We therefore call for a wider examination of the causes of this conflict. If nothing is done about the poverty and discrimination, these clashes will continue. This means that the whole population needs equal opportunities and equal access to essential goods such as proper education or access to political power. A long-term and lasting solution can only be found if all these factors are taken into account. We call for a fair and transparent prosecution of the perpetrators of the violence, but we are shocked to hear that local governors are now threatening to execute death row inmates only in order to ease the overcrowding in Nigerian prisons, where people have to wait for years before they even see a judge. The Nigerian state governors should do better by addressing the many underlying problems in the criminal justice system. Only then can the perpetrators of the violent clashes have a fair and transparent trial.

Charles Goerens, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – (FR) Mr President, we have only just learnt of the death of Umaru Yar'Adua. On behalf of my group, I too would like to express our condolences following the untimely death of the President of Nigeria.

His death comes at a time when the division between Muslims and Christians is taking a particularly dreadful turn. The 200 Christians killed in the Jos region are the reason for this current resolution. We could go over and over this barbarism to note, yet again, that it clearly stems from a religious divide. We might also note, yet again, that poverty does not help at all. That it is the result, among others, of the political authorities' inability to overcome corruption. We might also mention, yet again, the disputes over some scarce natural

resources, in particular the fertile land situated in that region, as well as climate change, which also exacerbates the factors that I have just mentioned.

What can the European Union do in such circumstances?

Of course, it can cite Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement to strengthen the dialogue with the political authorities of that country. We will do this.

We can also condemn the atrocities. We will do that in the present resolution.

We can, of course, deplore the fact that this rich country – the leading oil-exporting country in Africa – is unable to invest this wealth to combat poverty.

In fact, we can do everything it takes; we can condemn all this time and again. I think there is a glimmer of hope, and it is Nigeria itself that must lead a movement to get the country back on track. The interim President, Goodluck Jonathan, has all the qualities needed to fight the problems that I have just mentioned in a courageous way.

It is up to the country itself to recover, and I think that people of his calibre are rare. We should wish him luck and lucidity and give our support to this extraordinary figure who is the interim president in that country.

Nicole Kiil-Nielsen, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group.* – (FR) Mr President, the Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance would also like to echo the condolences that were just expressed by our fellow Members.

We support wholeheartedly the resolution on the mass atrocities in Nigeria, which unfortunately represent only one aspect of the bleak human rights picture in that country.

I would like, in the time I have been allotted, to speak about Nigeria's prisons, which are full of prisoners whose rights are systematically violated. As a 2008 report by Amnesty International revealed, 65% of the prisoners in that country have never been found guilty of any crime. Some have been waiting to be tried for 10 years.

The problems are such that Nigeria has no choice but to recognise them and to promise to reform the system. We are still waiting for this reform.

I am focusing my speech on the prisons because the current situation has once again reminded us of just how little value is put on the life of a human being in Nigeria, and even more so in the prisons.

The National Economic Council of Nigeria has announced its plan to execute hundreds of death-row inmates to ease overcrowding in the prisons: killing to reduce prison overpopulation. There is nothing more shocking, especially when it is certain that many of these death-row inmates are innocent and the majority of them did not have the right to a fair trial, and particularly as in February 2009 the Nigerian Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs declared before the UN that his country was applying a de facto moratorium on the death penalty.

This is why, during the vote, I will table an oral amendment to denounce this recent move by several Nigerian governors.

Peter van Dalen, *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – (NL) Mr President, I too wish to extend my group's sympathy to the Nigerian people on the death of their president.

Mr President, the atrocities committed in and around Jos defy description and, sadly, are not isolated incidents. They will be repeated in the future unless something is done. Violence still erupts almost daily and Christians, in particular, are at the receiving end.

Nigeria needs to do four things. Firstly, without delay, it must open an independent investigation and look into the role of the army, which has patently failed to afford citizens effective protection. Secondly, it must bring the perpetrators to justice. Dreadful occurrences of this kind cannot be tolerated. Thirdly, it must encourage dialogue between the ethnic and religious groups. Fourthly, it must seek a solution to the tensions between the various population groups laying claim to the same areas of land.

Europe must assist Nigeria with these measures, of course, but it must also put pressure on the country, as the spiral of violence absolutely has to be stopped.

Marie-Christine Vergiat, *on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group*. – (FR) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would clearly also like to add my condolences to those that have just been expressed to the Nigerian people following the death of their president.

The Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left will not vote in favour of the proposal for a joint resolution that has been put to us today, and it refuses to be associated with it.

Indeed, we believe that the resolution, contrary to some of the things that I have just heard said, does not really tackle the causes of the recurring violence in that country and addresses them only in part, even though we denounce this violence and in fact demand that its perpetrators be brought to trial.

Nigeria is a great African country, with a rich secular history, and with its 140 million inhabitants it is by far the most highly populated country in the continent. One might even say that it should be a rich country, since oilfields have been discovered there. The value of its GDP puts it in second place in Africa, after South Africa and before Algeria. However, the majority of its population live below the poverty line, and it is the only oil-rich country in the world with a budget deficit.

The most ironic thing of all is that Nigeria imports almost all of the oil products its economy needs because of its inadequate refining capacities. It should be pointed out that its three main refineries are out of action and, worse still, its oil production has decreased considerably in recent years due to the constant attacks on its oil installations.

Why is Nigeria in this situation?

Because this country is a clear example of the seizure of Africa's resources by some international companies, in this case oil companies, and by one in particular, which exploits 40% of Nigeria's oil, in complicity with some of our governments.

These companies make and break governments according to their own needs and to the detriment of the needs of the country's population. The Niger Delta, the flora and fauna of which were once among the most beautiful in the world, has become a veritable dump. This is not just because of oil exploitation, it is also because, each month, 500 containers filled with the most varied toxic waste enter the port and are left in huge open tips.

Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The sponsors of the successive juntas have pocketed more than USD 325 billion of the USD 400 billion that oil has brought the country. Where are these dollars? In bank accounts in Switzerland, the United Kingdom and France.

Personally, I find this situation intolerable and I feel that the resolution that we are adopting is unequal to the challenges that an expression of international solidarity by the European Union towards Africa involves.

Fiorello Provera, *on behalf of the EFD Group*. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we know how difficult peaceful coexistence is between the various religious groups in Nigeria, particularly in the relationships between Christians of various faiths and Muslims. As the resolution we will be voting on reminds us, the situation is extremely critical: more than 14 000 people have been killed in religious or ethnic conflicts since the end of the military rule in 1999. There is talk of over 500 deaths in the past three months.

Unfortunately, Nigeria is not the only country where there are conflicts and tensions between religious groups. It would therefore be desirable to draw up a yearly European Parliament report on religious freedom in the world which responds in a structured way to a problem that is crucial to the stability of many countries. I would like to make reference to a statement by Commissioner Rehn, whom I personally esteem, who said that Nigeria is a very poor country: that is not true, Nigeria is a very rich country but it is afflicted by a corrupt and inept ruling class that has plundered the country's resources leaving millions of citizens impoverished.

Hence this is the true problem, and social and economic renewal in this country, as in many other African countries, depends on having a new ruling class that is conscientious towards the citizens' needs.

Hans-Peter Martin (NI). – (DE) Mr President, after the forthcoming Football World Cup in South Africa the spotlight of our African policy will once again fall on Nigeria. It is a large, wealthy country with huge social inequalities. Of course, it also finds itself caught up in the conflict between the Chinese route and the European route towards globalisation. I am firmly convinced that we must stay on the European route, which means opposing abuses and violations of human rights and making those people who have been imprisoned into our partners, rather than the corrupt leaders of certain cliques and groups in government which offer

us short-term benefits. In this case we must support the resolution and also what Mrs Vergiat has said. It does go far enough, but it is important that the EU stands for human rights. We must not tolerate what China is intending to do in Nigeria and its disregard for human rights.

Mario Mauro (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, violence does not resolve conflicts; it only increases their tragic consequences. Beyond being wrong, immoral, unjust and inhumane, violence is not worthwhile: it is not advantageous. It is the least effective manner for finding a solution to the problems that affect an entire region because, if the element that provokes the violence between the Christian minority and the Muslims is not only religious fundamentalism, but a lack of economic development, which gives rise to resentment and tension between the various ethnic groups, then what the European Union, together with the African Union and the entire international community must make the federal government in Nigeria (which is responsible for many facets of this situation) understand, is that favouring the civilised and peaceful coexistence between the various ethnicities and groups in the country is an advantageous factor for everyone and for the entire population.

Beyond the implementation of a suitable investigation system, as many have requested, and the repression of those responsible for the appalling bloodshed of the past months – I would dare say of the past years – it requires that every possible initiative is made to support interethnic and interfaith dialogue on one side, and on the other, as many have suggested, to form a new ruling class.

With this resolution we hope to definitively make it understood that the solution to conflicts, especially for a country as rich in raw materials – especially oil – as Nigeria, would mean improving access to the resources and distributing them better, and I believe that the agreement signed on 12 December 2009 between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the European Commission can give a good push in this direction.

Today, therefore, security lies at the heart of the uncountable problems in this country, and the primary threat is not the conflict itself but the reasons that created and generated the conflict: that is where action is needed in order to help Nigeria on its way towards true economic and democratic development.

Corina Crețu (S&D). – (RO) I too wish to join those who have expressed their condolences to the Nigerian people whose president died last night.

Unfortunately, as a result of this, we have a new risk factor added to the already existing tensions: the loss of a centre of authority in a country severely affected by violence. As you are aware, at the beginning of this year, more than 300 Muslims were massacred. Not even two months later, a similar number of Christians were murdered in just two hours. At the moment, only the army's presence in the streets is delaying the plans of some Christians and Muslims for taking revenge.

In my view, the main problem just now is how to maintain order so as to prevent any new atrocities. With this in mind, I think that an international presence is needed. Secondly, we have the problem of impunity, which also applies in general in Africa's conflict zones. As soon as an ever-increasing number of mass criminals are arrested and convicted, we will see a drop in the level of violence. The international community needs to be specifically involved once again. It has proved to be sensitive to the problems in the Balkans and Middle East, but turns a blind eye to the sufferings of Africa.

Charles Tannock (ECR). – Mr President, as a boy I remember vividly seeing on television the pictures of the horrific civil war in the Nigerian region of Biafra. Forty years on, sadly, little seems to have changed. The sickening images from Jos, where hundreds of innocent people were hacked to death in an act of savagery, remind us that Nigeria is a chronically unstable country.

Ethnic, religious, particularly Christian versus Muslim, tribal, cultural and economic tensions appear to be endemic in Nigeria. The current uncertainty following the death yesterday of the President – I send my condolences to the Nigerian people – will inevitably result in a power struggle and this will follow on to compound the instability in that large Africa country. I am therefore worried about the long-term sustainability of Nigeria as a unitary state. Some, including the maverick President Gaddafi of Libya, have controversially suggested that Nigeria should be split into two. Certainly Sudan, another country divided between a Muslim north and a Christian South, looks probably set to separate into two parts next year. That likely division will set a precedent that colonial boundaries in Africa are no longer sacrosanct, which raises many interesting questions for the future of Africa.

Joe Higgins (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, the horrific massacre in Plateau State in Nigeria in January and March has left hundreds of innocent victims and especially very many women and children. Although

sectarian and tribal divisions are factors in this and other horrific massacres, we have to look deeper for the real causes.

Past colonial interference and brutal conquest in Africa, often exploiting communal and tribal divisions, have left a lasting legacy. The BBC's news analysis recently declared that, although the violence is between Muslim and Christian, analysts say underlying causes are political and economic, referring to the dire poverty of the masses of the Nigerian people and the outright corruption of the ruling elites.

Nigeria is one of the most gifted countries on earth in terms of natural and mineral resources, including oil. Unfortunately the corrupt local elites and foreign multinationals, including Shell Oil, take the lion's share of this wealth, leaving a huge swathe of the Nigerian people living in abject poverty. I stand with my colleagues from the Democratic Socialist movement in Nigeria who demand that the wealth of Nigeria is taken into public ownership and democratic control of the majority of the population, workers and poor. On the basis of this wealth it is entirely possible to build a decent life for all the people of Nigeria and on that basis also overcome the communal divisions. The alternative is indeed a break-up of Nigeria and further barbaric horrors inflicted on the people.

Filip Kaczmarek (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, Nigeria is an important country – a very important country. This is why we are taking an interest in what happened on 7 March near the city of Jos.

The problem in Central Nigeria is not only that the people who are being killed there are Christians, because in January this year it was Muslims who were killed. In Nigeria's case, religious divisions are compounded by a number of other divisions, and some of these have already been mentioned: economic, ethnic and social. However, there are also two other kinds of division: historical – because in that part of the country Christians are considered as locals, and Muslims as outsiders, despite the fact that they have lived there for two or three generations – and even political differences. As a rule, Christians support the ruling People's Democratic Party, and Muslims usually support the opposition All Nigeria People's Party. So there are very many differences and we must not treat these events as clear examples of religious persecution.

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion: freedom of confession, freedom of worship and the right to change one's religion. You may think my reference to the Nigerian Constitution is a naive approach, but I would like to remind everyone that the values stemming from the oldest written constitution – the American Constitution – and from the oldest written constitution in Europe – the Polish Constitution – are values which are still relevant and of lasting value. Therefore, we call upon the Federal Government of Nigeria, as well as governors and local authorities, to solve this problem, not only in the name of our values, but in the name of the values and principles written in their own constitution. I think it is important to refer to their own documents.

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to express my deep regret at the violence that broke out in the area of Jos and caused the deaths of several hundred people. This has been just another example of the importance of the reconciliation process that has to be enacted to enable peaceful coexistence between the northern Muslim population and the southern Christian population.

I would like to let you know that, in large part, the atrocities take place because of the hardships and the oppression of those inhabitants that live in the oil-rich areas and do not benefit from the overall development of the country. We urge the Nigerian authorities to make sure that more equitable and democratic development of all social groups in the country is ensured and that basic human rights are protected and enforced. Finally, especially today, my sympathy goes to the Nigerian people on the death of their President.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (RO) I too wish to join those who have expressed their condolences to the Nigerian people following the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua.

I would like to raise two points in my speech. First of all, I would like to start with a point made by an inhabitant of Nigeria who was asked what the cause of the evil in this country was. He said quite clearly: 'we see people guilty of atrocities and crimes being charged and then,' he continued, 'they disappear to the capital and we never see them again'. In other words, there is never any sign of public accountability for the crimes committed.

Secondly, I would like to stress that we must bear in mind the religious aspect to the conflict. Several speakers so far have seemed to say that there is a religious aspect, but that everything is basically to do with social and economic matters. In fact, Acting President Jonathan Goodluck has taken this aspect into consideration and invited religious leaders to a dialogue. We must support him on this.

Andrzej Grzyb (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, the images which we saw not very long ago in different television broadcasts were shocking. The scenes of what looked like a victorious display of people who had been murdered in and around Jos were shocking. As Mr Mauro has said, no justification can be found for violence, because violence is, of itself, an evil. As European society and as Members of the European Parliament, we must not ignore what has happened. This is why I wholeheartedly support the resolution.

Irrespective of the causes which lie at the root of the conflict and which are being seen as the background of the violence, we want to react so that human rights and civic freedoms will be respected in Nigeria, a country which is, after all, dear to us. I would also like to take the opportunity to express my condolences to the Nigerian people in connection with the death of the president.

Olli Rehn, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, thank you for a very serious and responsible debate today. Many of you have highlighted the complexity of societal problems in Nigeria. I agree with you, and the Commission is aware of the complexity of these problems. We continue our committed partnership with Nigeria, and I can only agree with you on how important it is to fight corruption and impunity, because corruption is unfortunately deeply rooted and hinders societal progress and the democratic process in this resource-rich country, and thus damages the lives of ordinary people.

We actively give strong and constructive support to Nigeria. We use a wide array of instruments from diplomacy to development and the Commission remains attentive and committed to containing the violence in Nigeria with the diplomatic means we have at our disposal.

The next forum to address this very important issue at a high level is the EU-Nigeria ministerial meeting in the autumn, and we shall certainly discuss this matter on that occasion.

President. – To conclude the debate, I have received seven motions for resolutions⁽¹⁾ pursuant to Rule 110(2).

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place today at 11.00.

Written statements (Rule 149)

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) For too many years now this land, which has so many natural resources, has been the scene of just as many humanitarian tragedies, mass killings and inter-ethnic clashes occurring for economic and social reasons. I would just like to recall, however, the words of a Catholic missionary who has lived and worked in Nigeria: Father Piero Gheddo recently pointed out that, only 20 years ago, relations between Muslims and Christians in the central and northern areas of Nigeria were undoubtedly difficult and characterised by forms of anti-Christian discrimination, but that it never reached the stage where there was the mass violence that we have seen over the last decade. However, the priest made it clear that, although the situation has worsened in recent years, it is also because the influence of Islamic extremism as expressed by the ideology of Al-Qaida has spread to Nigeria, and in particular to 12 states in the north that have adopted sharia as the law of the land. We therefore agree that the various ethnic groups in Nigeria find in their different religious faiths the ideal pretext for perpetrating acts of mass violence against one another. Let us remember, however, that the densely populated African state, which for years has also been the victim of ongoing political instability, has played host over the years to a wave of Islamic extremism that we must not ignore.

Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE), in writing. – (PL) If the supreme value of the European Union is to be the right to self-determination, in other words the right to respect the principles and values of one's own conscience, then all manifestations of intolerance and hatred, which lead directly to murders and massacres motivated by race, ethnic origin or religion, should be met with our immediate and unequivocal condemnation. However, this condemnation should not be limited just to words. It should include action which will guarantee peaceful coexistence in the future.

Zbigniew Ziobro (ECR), in writing. – (PL) Mr President, at the outset I would like to express my profound sadness at the information about the disturbances in Jos, in Nigeria, in January and March, in which hundreds of Christians and Muslims died. It should be remembered that this is not the first time such terrible events have taken place in Jos. The fighting between adherents of these two religions has been going on since 2001. The fact that the tension, which from time to time turns into open clashes, has lasted for a decade now is confirmation of the important role to be played by the state in promoting reconciliation processes. The

⁽¹⁾ See Minutes.

complicated background to the conflict shows the depth of the divisions involved. Nigerian Christians and Nigerian Muslims differ not only with respect to religion. On top of this basic division lies a historical division, because in the region where the disturbances are taking place the Christians are considered to be local people and the Muslims are thought of as strangers. These two divisions translate into support by Christians and Muslims for different political groups, which is, as it were, an extension of the conflict. However, to cut a long story short, the sources of the conflict are religious differences and the incompetence of the authorities or their inability to bring about peaceful existence between the two groups. This autumn an EU-Nigeria ministerial forum is to be held, and I think this problem should be on the agenda of the meeting. In addition, the Commission should make every effort to use the diplomatic instruments at its disposal to improve the situation in Nigeria.

(The sitting was suspended for a few minutes while awaiting the start of the vote.)

IN THE CHAIR: MR ROUČEK.

Vice-President

5. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting : see Minutes

6. The Union's efforts in combating corruption (written declaration): see Minutes

President. – Written declaration 0002/2010 on the Union's efforts in combating corruption, submitted by Monica Luisa Macovei, Simon Busuttil, Luigi de Magistris, Ana Gomes and Bart Staes, has been signed by a majority of Parliament's component Members. In accordance with Rule 123, it will be forwarded to its addressees and published, together with the names of the signatories, in the Texts Adopted of the sitting of 18 May 2010.

Monica Luisa Macovei (PPE). – Mr President, I want to thank those colleagues who supported and signed this declaration, and I would like to take this opportunity to call upon the Commission and Council to establish a solid and strong anti-corruption monitoring mechanism in the European Union. I appeal to the Member States to show political will and strengthen their fight against corruption before it is too late.

President. - The next item is the vote.

(For results and other information regarding the vote: see Minutes)

7. Voting time

7.1. Decision not to convene a Convention for the revision of the Treaties with regard to transitional measures concerning the composition of the European Parliament (A7-0116/2010, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo)

7.2. Revision of the Treaties – Transitional measures concerning the composition of the European Parliament (A7-0115/2010, Íñigo Méndez de Vigo)

7.3. Kyrgyzstan (B7-0246/2010)

– *Before the vote:*

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra (PPE). – (ES) Mr President, this is an oral amendment tabled by my colleague Mr Brok, who unfortunately cannot be with us this morning.

It would be an amendment to paragraph 5 and would consist of adding, after the reference to the elections on 10 October: 'to strengthen democracy and political accountability'.

(Parliament accepted the oral amendment)

– *After the vote on Amendment 1*

Paolo Bartolozzi (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, this concerns an oral amendment to item 13, calling on the Commission to verify the current situation: the possibility of providing humanitarian aid once the situation has been verified.

(Parliament accepted the oral amendment)

7.4. Electric cars (B7-0261/2010)

7.5. Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation

7.6. Commission communication on Action against Cancer: European Partnership (A7-0121/2010, Alojz Peterle)

7.7. Mobilising Information and Communication Technologies to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy (A7-0120/2010, Patrizia Toia)

7.8. Commission White Paper: "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action" (A7-0057/2010, Vittorio Prodi)

– Before the vote:

Vittorio Prodi, rapporteur. – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, climate change is a real threat that we must be ready to face despite the varying impact it will have on our countries. The degradation of ecosystems will cause a severe blow to the health of our economies and of European citizens. We have already in the past called for climate diplomacy and justice: now we have to build it, speaking with a single voice.

I am convinced that the European Union must maintain the lead in the battle against climate change and that any delay in implementing that action will increase environmental, social and economic costs out of all proportion. We must first of all recognise the central role of local and regional authorities and the need to work with them to coordinate environmental and economic innovation facilitated by technological progress.

By adopting the White Paper, we call on the Commission and Member States to promote public-private partnerships to help finance all of the initiatives tied to the adaptation policies. Each square metre of our territory has to be cared for to preserve the soil and retain water so as to prevent erosion and to supply the aquifers, including through direct reinjection of surface waters. In order for adaptation to be possible, a systemic approach which includes renewable energies will be necessary.

I would like to warmly thank all of my colleagues who contributed to the success of this report.

(Applause)

7.9. Protection of the Communities' financial interests - Fight against fraud - Annual Report 2008 (A7-0100/2010, Andrea Cozzolino)

7.10. European Investment Bank (EIB) - Annual Report 2008 (A7-0062/2010, Tamás Deutsch)

7.11. Mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria, in January and March (B7-0247/2010)

– Before the vote:

Nicole Kiil-Nielsen (Verts/ALE). – (FR) Mr President, as I indicated during the debate, I propose adding the following oral amendment to paragraph 6: 'Calls on the Nigerian authorities to reverse the recent move by some Nigerian state governors to execute death-row inmates to ease overcrowding in prisons, which would constitute a gross violation of human rights; calls on the state governors to exercise restraint and continue

the de facto moratorium; recalls that the use of the death penalty is contrary to Nigeria's commitments at international level'.

(Parliament accepted the oral amendment)

– *Before the vote on Item 7*

Filip Kaczmarek (PPE). – (PL) Mr President, the amendment is about making questions of freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief the subject of dialogue between the European Union and Nigeria, in the context – and these are the additional words – of political dialogue based on the Cotonou Agreement.

(Parliament accepted the oral amendment)

8. Explanations of vote

President. – Let us proceed to the explanations of votes.

Report: Jörg Leichtfried (A7-0035/2010)

Siiri Oviir (ALDE). – (ET) Following repeated demands from Parliament, the Commission has submitted a regulation on the financing of security fees. I supported the adoption of this legal act because it is important for all passengers that firm, transparent principles are followed in determining security fees. The consumer needs to be sure that revenue obtained from security fees is used exclusively for covering security expenses.

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) In my opinion, it is right for the European Commission and the European Parliament to be involved in regulating charges for passenger safety and protection in air transport.

However, I have to say that I consider the current approach of establishing bodies to perform such controls to be nonsensical and incorrect. At a time when Europe needs money to help Greece, and at a time when Europe needs money for economic development, establishing new bodies that will do practically nothing beyond some kind of supervision is playing fast and loose with EU citizens' money, and I believe that it will not produce a successful result.

Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D). – (PL) Mr President, I would like to express my satisfaction at being able to vote in favour of extending the force of the regulation as it concerns spare parts for cars, in terms of access of car users both to certified and uncertified parts. We have done this at the last minute, but we have responded to the needs of our citizens. We are guaranteeing good quality parts at reasonable prices.

Report: Brian Simpson (A7-0030/2010)

Antonio Cancian (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, yesterday we did well to finish the first reading of the recast dossier for the TEN-T networks. However, there is a very important aspect of this recast, this codification, that relates to all of the restructuring of TEN-T networks over the next decade.

This restructuring must be completely rethought, simplified and rationalised within Europe in such a way that interoperability is truly implemented. Then, considering the current unfavourable economic situation we are living in, we have to think about the development of this network, or part of it, and not only with the budget resources that we have available. We must come up with a new path and work to pick the economy back up through these networks.

Hence it is more urgent than ever that over and above the step taken yesterday, we try to work in this direction.

Report: Evgeni Kirilov (A7-0055/2010)

Siiri Oviir (ALDE). – (ET) I voted in favour of the amendment to this legal act, because it will help us meet the objectives agreed upon in the context of the European Economic Recovery Plan adopted in 2008. I think that the simplification of financing will speed up cofinancing investments in the Member States and the regions, and will increase the effect that the measures have on the economy as a whole, though mainly on medium-sized entrepreneurs and employers. The simplification of the rules for the Cohesion Policy, arising from practical needs, and their clarification, will certainly have a positive effect on the speed of implementation of the plan and on our handling of new problems.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). – (LT) Many countries have been badly shaken by this economic downturn and the decline of the economies of many of the European Union Member States has exceeded 10%. Therefore, the European Union's attention is very important not only for the old European Union Member States, but also for those that have recently joined the European Union and that are benefiting from support from the Structural Funds and the European Social Fund. The Structural Funds are an important instrument that can help those Member States that have experienced a severe economic downturn recover. Therefore, once the requirements for obtaining Structural Funds have been simplified, I believe it will be possible to do this more effectively.

Alfredo Antoniazzi (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund have demonstrated that they are valid instruments and are very useful in territorial development and for responding to the consequences of the economic crisis that has been raging in Europe and the world for some time.

In relation to that, I welcome the proposal to simplify the procedures for decommitment of funding and to facilitate payments to the beneficiaries of the various programmes implemented with the funds I mentioned. I am, furthermore, in favour of the provision for an additional pre-financing instalment for 2010 for those Member States that have been worst hit by the economic crisis.

Report: József Szájer (A7-0110/2010)

Alfredo Antoniazzi (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, I voted in favour of Mr Szájer's report and I would like to thank him for the excellent analytical work he performed in light of the innovations introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon.

Considering the extensive and multiple implications that delegated acts will have in the legislative procedure, I particularly agree with Parliament's desire to make those delegated acts subject to well specified and clear conditions, in order to guarantee effective democratic control by this House. I believe that, above all, it will also be necessary to verify in practice how that new system will function, in order to make any necessary adjustments.

Report: Marit Paulsen (A7-0053/2010)

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Mr President, I should just like to say that I fully support this report, which is about animal welfare. However, I have some reservations about how this Parliament and the EU legislate on this matter.

I would prefer that we had a science-based approach to animal welfare rather than one driven by emotion. We have brought in legislation which, in many cases, is not scientifically based, and we are placing European producers, European farmers, at a huge disadvantage.

Can I add my distress and disgust at the fact that this week the Commission has decided to reopen talks with the Mercosur countries. By that decision they are placing at risk the future of Europe's farmers, specifically beef, poultry-meat and pig producers. I would ask the Commission whether it is going to apply the same animal-welfare standards and production standards to imported products from third countries as it enforces within the European Union. If they do not, we are a disgrace.

Peter Jahr (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, animal welfare is indivisible. It must be standardised and we need a global definition of it.

On the subject of standardisation, we should take a break from introducing new regulations and standards and, first of all, make sure that we are applying the existing regulations in a uniform way within the European Union.

As far as globalisation is concerned, we must make a greater effort to ensure that the same standards and guidelines apply to imports to the European Union from third countries as apply within the European Union itself.

Consumers have a right to buy not only healthy food, but also food which has been produced healthily.

Report: Stéphane Le Foll (A7-0060/2010)

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Mr President, lest I forget, I do have a visitors' group in the gallery, and I would like to welcome them from the Ireland-East constituency. I think it is very important that our visitors and citizens see how this Parliament works and, as you can see, they are awake and interested this morning!

On this particular report, the Le Foll report, this Chamber hosted one of the Beatles recently telling us that we should eat less meat. Well, I think that what we need to do in relation to agriculture and climate change is to use the best available technologies to reduce the emissions which come from agriculture, because we all know that we need to produce more food globally rather than less. We will need to do that with fewer resources, less soil, less water and with the pressures of climate change, and what we need is the best possible research; I believe it needs to be publicly funded and with private partnerships, so that our farmers and food industry can produce food in a climate-friendly way.

President. – Mrs McGuinness, thank you, and many greetings to your visitors' group.

Peter Jahr (PPE). – (DE) Mr President, I would like to make three brief remarks about the report.

Firstly, agriculture is not the problem in the case of climate change, it is the solution.

Secondly, we are in the early stages of our research into climate change, despite the fact that the media sometimes give the opposite impression. In the course of our climate research we should also take into consideration and follow up theories and results which are not part of mainstream thinking.

Thirdly, we should take all the necessary and appropriate measures that do not involve additional red tape and we should make sure that these measures are effective in economic terms. For example, against this background a European framework directive on the protection of soil is counterproductive and will not bring the desired results.

Report: Herbert Dorfmann (A7-0056/2010)

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Mr President, I hope everybody in the visitors' gallery is impressed! I have to say it is unusual for us to get so much speaking time but these reports are of particular concern to me in the agriculture and food production area.

This report is about how we manage to keep farmers in areas where land and conditions are extremely difficult because we know that farmers are the best managers of the landscape, but they do need money to survive in these areas. The concern I would have is that the eight biophysical criteria proposed by the Commission might be too restrictive when they are adopted. We need to take account of different soil conditions across the European Union. In my own Member State, Ireland, there are concerns that, if we apply these criteria in the Atlantic region, there could be problems for farmers who live in that area.

I want to ask the Commission to take into account these concerns when they prepare their legislative text. The Commission has said that farmers manage the landscape better and more cheaply than any other option we have, so let us make sure they are allowed to survive in these regions.

Report: Pilar del Castillo Vera (A7-0066/2010)

Sonia Alfano (ALDE). – (IT) Mr President, I voted in favour of Parliament's resolution on the new Digital Agenda for Europe because I believe that guaranteeing easy and affordable broadband access to the entire population is a strategic priority for the European Union.

Extending Internet use means broadening and developing citizens' freedom of expression, favouring their participation in democratic life and permitting the dissemination of knowledge and innovations. What I would like to highlight is that the spread of broadband in Europe would guarantee broader freedom of information. As noted by Eurostat, we must not forget that Europe also has two or possibly three speeds as regards the spread of the Internet. Italy, especially in some regions, as well as Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Portugal, are the least developed States in this sense.

It is no accident that in the Freedom of the Press index for 2009 drawn up by Freedom House, Italy was listed among the partially free states, in last place in western Europe together with Turkey, and 72nd in the world together with Benin and India and preceded by Tonga. I also hope that thanks to these resolutions and the principles that have been mentioned, the Italian Government will decide to release the investment of EUR 800 million as soon as possible which was intended to break down the digital divide in Italy and which,

according to a statement by Gianni Letta, the Deputy Secretary to the Italian Council of Ministers, is not a priority at the moment.

I would like to emphasise that the quality of the service in Italy is inadequate for current needs and that for years consumer associations have been complaining that the access costs are among the least competitive in Europe.

President. – For your information for next time, we have only one minute for the explanations of vote.

I give the floor to our best speaker today, and that is Mrs McGuinness.

Report: Jose Ignacio Salafranca Sanchez-Neyra (A7-0111/2010)

Mairead McGuinness (PPE). – Mr President, thank you for the endorsement. I should say to our visitors that we normally ask for silence but I think we are being lenient today, and I thank Mr Higgins for giving me the opportunity to speak.

I have spoken about this already and I feel that this Parliament did not realise yesterday, in the Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra report, the implications of supporting that, which I did not do. I am most concerned about the decision to reopen bilateral talks with the Mercosur countries on two different levels.

First of all, it is in advance of the potential reopening of world trade talks, and the bilateral deal may be worse than that at WTO level. But secondly – and they are linked – there are real concerns about the selling-out on agriculture in the European Union. These are not just my own concerns driven from an emotional basis: the Commission itself has said that there are severe implications for European agriculture if we do a deal in these talks with Mercosur. Again, the beef sector, the poultry sector and the pigmeat sector will be most affected. I could not support this report on that basis, and I warn colleagues about its implications.

Motions for resolutions: EU-Canada Summit (RC-B7-0233/2010)

Giommaria Uggias (ALDE). – (IT) Commissioner, water is an asset for everyone and it cannot be an asset for only a select few. That is what we, the Italian IDV (Italy of Values) delegation of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, wanted to affirm in relation to Amendment 10, which opposed any attempt to privatise the water distribution systems, as this is part of the overall economic and trade agreement, and conversely we declared our support for the Canadian communities which are committed to stopping the privatisation of water.

The Italian IDV delegation felt the need to vote in favour of the text because it represents our values, the values that lead us to affirm the necessary indissoluble public nature of water usage. That is why I would like to repeat that in recent days we have proposed a signed petition for a public referendum against the privatisation of water and we are receiving a great deal of support in our country.

9. Welcome

President. – Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to inform you that, within the framework of the inter-parliamentary sessions, a delegation from the Moroccan Parliament, led by the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr Abdel Wahid Al-Radi, and the President of the Chamber of Councillors, Mr Mohamed Sheikh Biadillah, is currently on a working visit to the European Parliament, the aim of which is the inaugural meeting of the EU-Morocco Joint Parliamentary Committee. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all members of this delegation. The co-presidents of this first joint body between our assembly and one of the Maghreb countries are Mrs Mbarka Bouaida, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, National Defence and Islamic Affairs, and Mr Panzeri, Member of the European Parliament.

The European Parliament is delighted to state that relations between the EU and Morocco are excellent, as evidenced by the adoption of the joint document establishing the advanced status of Morocco. This new framework for dialogue further strengthens relations with the delegations of the European Parliament for relations with the Maghreb countries, and makes it possible to broaden talks between the EU and Morocco on matters of common interest. I hope and trust that the meeting which took place in the European Parliament was fruitful and that it will actively contribute towards bringing the two parliaments closer together.

10. Explanations of vote (continuation)

Motions for resolutions: A ban on the use of cyanide mining technologies in the EU (RC-B7-0238/2010)

Alajos Mészáros (PPE). – (HU) I would like to see the ban on the use of cyanide in mining extended throughout the European Union. I would like us to be able to eliminate these technologies altogether in the future, in order to prevent further serious natural disasters, where various toxic materials enter our water sources. There has been such a case in Hungary, where almost all life in the river Tisza died out 10 years ago. Slovakia is also affected in this issue as the accident occurred near the border, and it intends to open mines in the near future where the same technology would be used for gold mining. This and similar issues are not disputes between two EU countries; it is our common interest to have a more sustainable environmental policy. This is why I voted in favour, this is why I would like to join the supporters of this measure.

Giommaria Uggias (ALDE). – (IT) Mr President, we are about to proceed with the ban on the use of cyanide mining technologies, because – as my fellow Members mentioned a short time ago – they have caused and continue to cause severe environmental effects and they pose critical dangers to human and animal health.

Our vote was intended to express the clear desire of the Italian IDV (Italy of Values) delegation of the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe not to negotiate fundamental rights like the health of citizens and the natural environment by subjecting them to the economic interests of a few system manufacturers. On this point, let me say that since this deals with systems for mining gold and certainly not potatoes, the proprietor companies could easily allocate adequate economic and financial resources to researching technologies that are compatible with the environment and health safety.

Corneliu Vadim Tudor (NI). – (RO) I wish to thank almost 500 of our fellow Members who voted overwhelmingly yesterday against the use of cyanide technologies in mining. The word 'cyanide' is synonymous with 'death'. This outright vote will do us Romanians, in particular, a big favour. One of the largest natural fields in the world is located in Transylvania. Experts estimate that it contains 300 tonnes of high purity uranium, 800 tonnes of gold and 2 000 tonnes of silver, not to mention huge quantities of other precious metals and elements. Greedy mafia gangs, both local and cross-border, are prowling around these treasures, continually increasing the aggressive tone of their propaganda, full of the most ridiculous lies.

The use of cyanide technologies would have caused a huge disaster by poisoning the environment, resulting in four mountains being blown up, nine cemeteries being destroyed and eight Christian churches being demolished. This is without mentioning the disappearance of 1 700 km of Roman galleries, with the ruins of the Roman citadel Alburnus Maior being wiped off the face of the earth, an archaeological gem described by UNESCO as a unique cultural heritage site in the world. Europe has had enough of one Chernobyl and does not need another one.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – (RO) I voted against the motion for a resolution yesterday because I was asked to do so by the local communities which regard this ban as a threat to the area's development.

In fact, I believe that the amendment suggested by me and more than 40 of my fellow Members, which called for a study to be carried out to clarify the impact issue, would have been an honourable and reasonable gesture. Otherwise, the passions expressed here have only served to destroy certain communities' chance of development.

Motion for a resolution: Kyrgyzstan (RC-B7-0246/2010)

Joe Higgins (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, may I ask you why so many Members are allowed to speak loudly and rudely in private conversations when other Members are trying to express themselves?

(Applause)

I abstained on the resolution on Kyrgyzstan. Five years ago the people of Kyrgyzstan mobilised for the Tulip Revolution against the corrupt regime and for a better life for themselves. The Bakiyev government that came to power unfortunately dismally betrayed the hopes of a better life for the masses, instituting a corrupt and authoritarian regime. The new government is made up, unfortunately, of cronies of Bakiyev and has no credence in terms of a new life for the people of the region.

I support my fellow socialists from the Committee for Workers International in the region who call for elections to a new parliament but make clear that nothing will change unless workers and the rural masses have their own candidates and independent working class party to reverse the disastrous privatisations of the last 20 years, to tackle neoliberal capitalism and to institute real democratic change and new institutions controlled by working people and with genuine planning of the economy and a Socialist Federation of Central Asia.

Report: Alojz Peterle (A7-0121/2010)

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė (PPE). – (LT) I am very pleased that this document was adopted by a large majority, that is to say there was hardly any opposition to it. This in itself is quite understandable since health affects all of us and those closest to us. I also congratulate the European Parliament and all citizens of the European Union as well as the rapporteur for taking such decisions today that should advance more specific and targeted actions not only to cure those suffering from cancer, but also to ensure the prevention of cancer. Unfortunately, the prognosis in terms of cancer is really terrifying, and we must concentrate our efforts to overcome it.

I voted for the adoption of this document, because I believe that an integrated view of cancer cases and fighting them should be regarded as particularly important as part of the health strategy of both the European Community and Member States. Collective and coordinated work by Member States is required to reduce the risk in the area of cancer cases.

Jaroslav Paška (EFD). – (SK) The report on measures to combat cancer talks about the importance of prevention in the fight against this disease.

We know that early diagnosis of this disease will increase the chances of a successful cure. The incidence of some kinds of cancer can be predicted by genetic predisposition, lifestyle and so on. In my opinion, therefore, more extensive screening could be the first effective and rapid step towards preventing many deaths. A further important step would be the transfer and dissemination of successful methods of treatment to all countries of the European Union, including centres with less experience in the treatment of cancer, in order to improve the provision of effective treatment.

In any case, however, we must applaud the work of Mr Peterle in the hope that the EU will take more extensive measures in the fight against this disease.

Vito Bonsignore (PPE). – (IT) Mr President I would like to express my appreciation of the work carried out by the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and in particular the rapporteur, Mr Peterle. This development of a partnership in the battle against cancer, on a subject as sensitive as that which we faced, honours Parliament as a whole.

According to data from the World Health Organisation, around 2 million European citizens die every year from a tumour and in around 10% of the cases it was caused by being exposed to carcinogenic substances at work. I am convinced that the goal of reducing new cases by 15% by 2020 should also be pursued through joint action with the Member States. Europe must demonstrate that it is united in this area as well. In my opinion Article 66, which can guarantee the availability of medicines to everyone in every country, responds to this fundamental principle.

Mr President, that is why I voted in favour of the report.

Report: Patrizia Toia (A7-0120/2010)

Alajos Mészáros (PPE). – (HU) Ladies and gentlemen, in the past years we have seen an explosive development of information and communication technologies. The significant development and results seen in the ICT sector contributed to the development of other, previously stagnating sectors, such as mechatronics, nanotechnology, control and measurement technology. Therefore the initiative of the Commission to use ICT to meet EU 2020 goals should be applauded. I welcome the fact that we accepted this programme and I am glad that I, too, was able to vote for it. It is vital that we meet our planned targets by 2020, that is, we decrease carbon dioxide emissions and increase energy efficiency. The information and communication technology sector may be of strategic importance in the energy saving programme of the European Union and in increasing the competitiveness of European industry. However, in order to achieve it, support is needed for the standardisation of measuring devices as soon as possible, for starting research

projects, and for passing a package of measures aimed at decreasing consumption and improving production and service supply management.

Report: Vittorio Prodi (A7-0057/2010)

Barbara Matera (PPE). – (IT) Mr President, I voted for and support the valuable work presented by Mr Prodi, in conclusion of the significant work carried out by the European Commission.

I represent southern Italy, which is located in the south of Europe in the Mediterranean basin. Our people have put their faith in us and deserve not to find themselves unprepared for the effects of climate change in our regions and our countryside, which depends primarily on agriculture, fishing and tourism and is largely made up of more vulnerable communities and social groups.

Hence I believe that solidarity among the different States and areas is fundamental, not least in the response to this new strategy that we are putting into action. Obviously it is very difficult to speak with all this confusion; in any case I am finishing. I applaud the implementation of the Solidarity Fund instrument, for which I am the rapporteur for the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), as additional support for a prompt and effective answer to the effects of climate change. It really is impossible to speak.

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Mr President, I support the Commission's white paper and the report by Mr Prodi. I think that such a white paper is especially needed in the aftermath of the Copenhagen climate change talks. The results that we saw in Copenhagen are definitely not enough. The non-binding document that was agreed in Copenhagen to halt global warming at +2°C would still mean a warming scenario for Europe, something that would be marked by extreme regional climate changes.

We need to pay special attention to the way we produce our energy. We need to make stronger efforts to set up a tangible common energy policy. We must support research into environmentally friendly technologies, but also set up clear policy frameworks on how renewable-energy technologies can be introduced and mainstreamed in our economies.

I hope this white paper will push the EU in the right direction and will result in some tangible policy action.

Karin Kadenbach (S&D). – (DE) Mr President, I support the motion which Mr Prodi has tabled today. However, the amendment to this report tabled by the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and, in particular, by Mr Seeber, which has unfortunately been adopted by plenary, seems to me to be more questionable. I am concerned that the conservatives are using this method to reintroduce nuclear power by the back door. Promoting low-carbon energy sources is a well-known argument used by the nuclear lobby. I would like to emphasise the fact that the Prodi report is definitely going in a different direction. As an Austrian, I do not regard nuclear power as renewable energy. It is very important for me to make it clear that I have not voted in favour of this paragraph today.

IN THE CHAIR: MR BUZEK

President

11. Formal sitting

President. – Mr Vice President, Excellencies, dear colleagues, dear friends, it is a great privilege for me to welcome to the European Parliament Mr Joseph Biden, the 47th Vice President of the United States.

(Applause)

Vice President Biden has been a key figure in American politics and a friend to colleagues in this Chamber for many years. He was first elected to the US Senate in 1972, serving as one of the youngest senators in his country's history. He was elected six times before becoming Vice President of the United States in November 2008.

A former Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee, he is known to speak his mind, sometimes to defend causes which are far from popular at the time. He leads opinion; he does not follow opinion. This is one reason why your speech at the European Parliament today, Mr Vice President, is so important, so crucial, for all of us. Let me thank you once again for the very warm invitation and the very constructive and fruitful discussions last Wednesday in Washington.

Dear colleagues, in today's multilateral, multipolar world, Europe and America can and should work together in a partnership for global stability and the enlightened values in which we believe. Vice President Biden's visit to the European Union today demonstrates this commitment.

Without a strong and effective transatlantic partnership as equal partners – the United States and the European Union – we cannot find lasting solutions to the many challenges we face: climate change, energy security, the economic crisis still hitting all of us, terrorism, or promoting human rights, defending free trade and improving global governance.

Colleagues, 25 years ago, almost to the day, President Ronald Reagan addressed this Parliament, on 8 May 1985. This was the last and so far the only time that a US President has spoken to the democratically elected representatives of the people of Europe. Your presence in this Chamber today, Mr Vice President, is a symbol of the renewal of that dialogue at the highest level between our two continents.

Here in Europe we have a new Treaty, which gives us in the European Parliament new strength and the possibility to act and which is so important for the whole of the European Union. In America, after one year under President Obama's leadership, there is new hope for the world. Mr Vice President, the timing of your address could not be better.

Mr Vice President, it is a great pleasure to welcome you here this afternoon to Europe's Parliament. The floor is yours.

(Applause)

Joe Biden, *Vice President of the United States of America*. – Mr President, thank you for that welcome. It was a delight to have you in Washington and at the White House, and it is a great honour – and, I might add, a privilege – to be able to address such an esteemed body.

I served in a parliament that only had 435 members total; this is even a greater honour. I remember President Reagan's speech here in 1985, and to quote an Irish poet – William Butler Yeats – speaking of his Ireland, in a poem called *Easter Sunday 1916* he said: 'All's changed, changed utterly; a terrible beauty has been born'. Much has changed since 1985, much has changed, and a terrible beauty has been born.

As you already know, ladies and gentlemen, not only am I pleased to be back here in Brussels for the second time as Vice President, as you probably know, some American politicians and American journalists refer to Washington DC as the capital of the free world. But it seems to me that in this great city, which boasts one thousand years of history and which serves as the capital of Belgium, the home of the European Union and the headquarters for NATO, this city has its own legitimate claim to that title. As a lawmaker for more than 36 years in our parliament, I feel particularly honoured to address the European Parliament.

President Obama and I were the first running mates in the last 50 years in America to make it to the White House from our legislative bodies, so we both come to our executive jobs with a deep appreciation for the work you do here in the bastion of European democracy. Together with my former colleagues in the United States Congress, you and I represent more than 800 million people. Stop and think about that for a moment.

Two elected bodies that shape the laws for almost one eighth of the planet's population: that is truly remarkable. Now, under the Lisbon Treaty, you have taken on more powers and a broader responsibility that comes with that increased influence, and we welcome it. We welcome that because we, the United States, need strong allies and alliances to help us tackle the problems of the 21st century, many which are the same – but so many are different – than the last century.

Let me state it as plainly as I can. The Obama/Biden administration has no doubt about the need for, and strongly supports, a vibrant European Union. We believe it is absolutely essential to American prosperity and long-term security. So have no doubt about that.

When I chaired the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee for all those years, I had the opportunity to meet many European lawmakers from the national legislative bodies, including some of you who are in this room today. So I appreciate, after all those years, what a consequential step it has been to build the only multinational parliament in the world elected by universal suffrage. So much has changed.

I am pleased that, through the Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue, you are building a strong relationship with the United States Congress, and I hope that the office you opened in Washington last month is going to enhance those ties.

Folks, 65 years ago this week, less than 200 km south of here, Nazi leaders signed an unconditional surrender that brought an end to the Second World War in Europe. The next day, celebrations erupted in Times Square and Piccadilly Circus; cheering crowds danced along the Champs-Élysées and the town squares throughout the allied world. Here in Brussels, at a thanksgiving service, churchgoers sang the national anthems of Britain, Belgium and the United States. On that joyous day, 8 May 1945, this continent lay in ruins, ravaged twice by total wars in less than 30 years. At that moment, a peaceful United Europe, a European Parliament, must have seemed like a fantasy to anyone alive. Yet, through the will of your fellow citizens and statesmen like Paul-Henri Spaak, for whom this great hall is named, and Robert Schuman and Jean Monnet, and the visions that gave birth to a parliament and earned him the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Lyndon Johnson, here we are: assembled in this hall. Here *you* are.

What began as a simple pact among a half a dozen nations to create a common market for coal and steel grew into an economic and political powerhouse. A Community dedicated to free thought, free movement and free enterprise. A Europe that one historian has called 'Not so much a place but an idea'. I am here to reaffirm that President Obama and I believe in this idea, and in a better world and a better Europe it has already helped to bring about. A Europe where all Member States benefit by negotiating trade agreements and fighting environmental degradation with one unified voice; a Europe that bolsters the cultural and political values that my country shares with all of you. A Europe that is whole, a Europe that is free and a Europe that is at peace.

(Applause)

As President Obama said in Prague a little more than a year ago, a strong Europe makes a stronger partner for the United States – and we need strong partners. That is why we will do everything we can to support this great endeavour of yours. Because the past 65 years have shown that, when Americans and Europeans devote their energies to common purpose, there is almost nothing we are unable to accomplish. Together, through the Marshall Plan, we rebuilt Europe and made perhaps the greatest investment in human history. Together we built the world's most enduring security alliance, NATO, and a military and political force that tied America and Europe and brought us even closer in the ensuing decades. Together we established the greatest commercial relationship in the world's history, comprising about 40% of global trade and helping usher in an era of unprecedented prosperity and technological innovation. Together we have provided relief and hope for those suffering humanitarian catastrophes in more places than I can mention, from the Western Balkans to the Congo, to our ongoing work in Haiti today.

To those sceptics who, in spite of all these accomplishments, continue to question the state of transatlantic relationships or my country's attitude toward a United Europe, my answer is this: even if the United States and the nations all of you represent were not united by shared values and common heritage of many millions of our citizens, myself included, our global interests alone would inexorably bind us together.

The relationship between my country and Europe is today as strong and as important to all of us as it has ever been. This century has unleashed new challenges, no less dangerous than those that came before, in the 20th century, and together – together – we are taking them on, one by one. They are difficult; there will be disagreement, but we are taking them on jointly. Climate change: one of the greatest threats our planet faces. The United States and Europe are working to ensure that all countries, and especially the major economies, are contributing to a global solution. We all looked to, and we did take, a major step forward in Copenhagen. Now we have to carry out those emission cuts, the financing and the transparency called for in that accord, and we must help the most vulnerable nations, from the Arctic north to the Pacific islands, that are the harbingers of this looming crisis.

Across the troubled landscape of Afghanistan and Pakistan, we are working together to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qa'ida and the Taliban fighters and to train an Afghan army and police force so that their government can eventually protect its own people and not be a threat to its neighbours. In order to build Afghanistan's governing capacity, the United States, the European Union and its member nations are deploying significant financial resources and civilian resources as well. While sustaining these important missions has not always been popular, you all know – as I do – it is required. As leaders we have an obligation to make the case to our populations that this is necessary for our collective security – although, believe me, as a politician who has stood for office for the last 38 years, I understand it is not easy. I assure you it is no more popular in my country than it is in any of yours.

That is also why the United States and Europe are standing side by side to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons: a development that would endanger the citizens and menace its neighbours, including some of

our closest allies. Together we embarked on an unprecedented path of engagement with the Iranian leaders and, ladies and gentlemen,

(Applause)

despite what some sceptics thought, the President meant what he said: that we will reach out our hand to any party that will unclench their fist. At the outset of this administration, President Obama stated that we are prepared to deal with Iran on the basis of mutual interest and mutual respect. With our allies we have made clear to Iran's leaders how they can begin to rebuild confidence within the international community, including by granting access to their previously undeclared enrichment facilities and exchanging low-enriched uranium for fuel to power a research reactor. But, as the world has now watched and seen, Iranian leaders spurned our collective good faith efforts and continue to take actions that threaten regional stability. Let me state it flatly: Iran's nuclear programme violates its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and risks sparking a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. Wouldn't it be ironic – wouldn't it be ironic – as the Iron Curtain fell and the mutual threats of mutually assured destruction diminished among the superpowers, that a new arms race would emerge in some of the most unstable parts of the world. That would be an irony that our children, our grandchildren and great-grandchildren would not forgive us, in my view, for allowing to come to pass.

In addition, the Iranian leadership supports terrorism organisations, and that support continues unabated, and it continues unconscionably to persecute those of its citizens who peacefully take to the streets in a quest for justice: a betrayal of the duty of all governments in terms of what they owe their citizens. Tehran faces a stark choice: abide by international rules and rejoin the community of responsible nations – which we hope for – or face further consequences and increasing isolation.

In the face of the threat Iran poses, we are committed to the security of our allies. That is why we deployed the phased adaptive missile defence programme: to deter and defend against missile attacks on this continent.

(Applause)

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are also working together inside NATO to prepare for a range of future security threats, including energy security and cyber-security, and we continue to support close security cooperation between NATO and the EU.

Last year the United States and Europe acted quickly and decisively when the world was reeling from a financial crisis more dire than any since the Great Depression. In doing so, collectively we helped prevent what people were predicting: the total collapse of the world economy. Today President Obama and I are closely following the economic and financial crisis in Greece and the European Union's efforts to deal with it. We welcome the support package that Europe is considering in conjunction with the International Monetary Fund, and we will be supportive – both directly and through the IMF – of your efforts as you rescue Greece.

These examples, and many others I could have mentioned, show why Europe continues not just to be America's largest trading partner but our most important ally.

Ladies and Gentlemen, our predecessors came together more than six decades ago this week to begin to build institutions designed to ensure that the 20th century's darkest chapters would not be repeated in the remainder of that century or in the 21st century. Those institutions – this institution – have been a great success, but now we have to set our sights on the challenges of this new century I referenced in the beginning.

The world has changed. It has changed utterly. A terrible beauty has been born. Perhaps the most complex threat we face today is that posed to our own citizens by non-state actors and violent extremists, particularly if – God forbid – those violent extremists were able to get their hands on any weapons of mass destruction. The scourge has no respect for borders – none. No single nation, no matter how strong or how wealthy, how organised or how capable, can meet this threat alone. It can only be successfully contained if we make common cause, and that is precisely what we must do.

The new powers granted this Parliament in the Lisbon Treaty gave you a greater role in that struggle and a greater imperative to govern responsibly. The U.S. Government and this Parliament have struggled over how best to protect citizens without yielding the foundational rights on which all of our societies are built. I am absolutely confident that we must – and can – both protect our citizens and preserve our liberties.

Since taking office last year, President Obama and I have been guided by our Constitution's imperative to seek more perfect union. Toward that end, one of our first official actions was to end the interrogation practices that produced few results and that we could not, in good conscience, continue.

(Applause)

We ordered the closure of the detention centre at Guantánamo Bay, which had become a symbol of injustice and a rallying cry for terrorists.

(Applause)

And we appreciate the support – difficult as it has been for you to take – that so many of you have provided in this effort.

We did these things because, like you, President Obama and I reject the false choice between safety and our ideals. We believe that upholding our principles only makes us stronger and that compromising them actually undermines our effort in the broader struggle against violent extremism. For what is their purpose? Their purpose is to change what we value – change how we conduct ourselves. Eight days after the September 11 attack, I told a group of thousands of university students in my country that they cannot allow the tragedy of 9/11 to end our way of life, because that is exactly what the terrorists sought. I also told them that America cannot prevail in this new struggle by acting alone.

Those words not only fit the tenor of that time, but I think they have proven to be true – and they are no less true today. I do not need to tell this audience about Europe's proud tradition of protecting citizens from government invasion of their privacy – a commitment grounded in respect for the inherent dignity of all people. We call them inalienable rights. We wrote them into our Constitution, and America's commitment to privacy is also profound – as profound as yours. Our Constitution's Fourth Amendment protects individuals against unreasonable search and seizures by the State, which one of our most famous jurists once dubbed 'the right to be let alone'. The Supreme Court of the United States has made clear that privacy is a constitutionally protected and fundamental right. Like the EU, the Supreme Court has characterised this right as a matter of personal dignity.

On a personal level, I have, for 36 years of my career, defended privacy rights. In the United States Senate every year, organisations rate those most committed to civil liberties, and every year I – and later, President Obama – characterise one of those four people picked. The reason I bother to tell you this is not about me but about the commitment of our Administration to individual rights. To change now would make a lie of everything I have said I stood for in my country for the past 37 years. When I led the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is responsible for confirming the President's judicial nominees, as I said, I was consistently ranked among the staunchest advocates of civil liberties, and I made it a priority to determine prospective judges' views on privacy before deciding whether or not they could go on the Court.

President Obama and I also believe that government's primary, most fundamental and most solemn duty is to protect its citizens – the citizens it serves – as well as the rights they hold. President Obama has said that keeping our country safe is the first thing he thinks about when he wakes up in the morning and the last thing he thinks about before he goes to bed at night. I suspect that is how every world leader looks at their role. Indeed, no less than privacy, physical safety is also an inalienable right. A government that abdicates its duty to ensure the safety of its citizens violates their rights no less than a government that silences dissidents or imprisons accused criminals without trial.

So folks, even as we gather today, our enemies are employing every tool they can muster to conduct new and devastating attacks like the ones that struck New York, London, Madrid and many other places around the globe. To stop them we must use every legitimate tool available – law enforcement, military intelligence technology – that is consistent with our laws and our values. We are fighting on many fronts, from the brave men and women serving abroad in our militaries to the patient and tireless law enforcement professionals investigating complex and suspicious financial networks.

Just this week, our customs and border protection, using passenger information data, apprehended a suspect in the attempted bombing of New York's Times Square as he sought to flee the country. It is vital that we maintain every capacity we have under the law to stop such attacks. For that reason, we believe that the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme is essential to our security as well as to Europe's – it is presumptive of me to say. It has provided critical leads to counterterrorism investigations on both sides of the Atlantic, disrupting plots and ultimately saving lives. It has built-in redundancies that ensure personal information is respected and used only for counterterrorism purposes. But I do not blame you for questioning it. We

understand your concerns. As a consequence, we are working together to address them, and I am absolutely confident that we can succeed to both use the tool and guarantee privacy. It is important that we do so, and it is important that we do so as quickly as possible.

As a former United States Senator, I also know how hard it can be to make the hard choices required by global challenges while staying true to local values. All of you are going through that every time you vote in this Parliament, I suspect. The longer we are without an agreement on the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme, the greater the risk of a terrorist attack that could have been prevented. As leaders, we share responsibility to do everything we can within the law to protect the 800 million people we collectively serve. We have disagreed before, we will surely disagree again, but I am equally convinced that the United States and Europe can meet the challenges of the 21st century – as we did in the 20th century – if we talk and listen to one another; if we are honest with one another.

(Applause)

Ladies and Gentlemen, courage, Winston Churchill taught us, is what it takes to stand up and to speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen. This afternoon I have done all the speaking. Be assured that I, my Government and my President are back in the business of listening to our allies. Ladies and Gentlemen, it is no accident that Europe was my first overseas destination as Vice President, and also the President's. It is no accident that we have already returned several times since then. The United States needs Europe, and I respectfully submit that Europe needs the United States. We need each other more now than we ever have.

(Applause)

So I view this week's anniversary as providing a welcome opportunity to reaffirm the bond our peoples forged long ago in the fires of adversity. Now, as then, in the pursuit of ideals and in the search for partners, Europeans and Americans look to each other before they look to anyone else. Now, as then, we are honoured and grateful to be by your side in the struggles yet to come. So again, I am here to state unequivocally: President Obama and Joe Biden strongly support a united, a free, an open Europe. We strongly support what you are about here. We wish you God-speed, and may God bless you all and may God protect all of our troops. Thank you very, very much.

(Applause)

President. – Mr Vice President, thank you very much. It was a great basis for future cooperation and our future talks. As you said, listen and talk to each other. That is very important.

I would like to thank you for repeating the most important words from last week: Europe needs America. We remember the 20th century – the First World War, the Second World War, the Iron Curtain – we were fighting side by side, achieving victory together, as democracies. As you added today, America needs Europe. We will remember that. It is a good beginning to our partnership and cooperation.

Mr Vice President, once again, thank you very much.

(Applause)

IN THE CHAIR: MR ROUČEK.

Vice-President

12. Explanations of vote (continuation)

President. – We still have three explanations of votes remaining.

Report: Andrea Cozzolino (A7-0100/2010)

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Mr President, I welcome the fact that the total amount of irregularities in the way European funds are being used is declining. The fact that the amount of irregularities in the agricultural sector fell so dramatically by 34% is especially encouraging. A strong and competitive role for OLAF is among the factors that helped to improve the situation. I welcome the proposal enshrined in our resolution to increase cooperation among EU Member States in the area of taxation.

However, I want to express my deep concern about the fact that fraudulent activities increased in the new Member States, especially Romania and Bulgaria. In EU-10 they grew by 8% while debt for the EU-2 increased by 152%. I want to express my strong support for the calls on Romania and Bulgaria to build up their administrative capacity to manage EU funding and improve the supervision and transparency of public procurement procedures at all levels.

Report: Tamás Deutsch (A7-0062/2010)

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Mr President, first of all I would like to thank Mr Deutsch for his excellent report. Today's substantive discussion and our resolution, which I supported, is an excellent starting point for the future activities of the European Investment Bank, especially taking into account the EU 2020 Strategy.

In addition, I would like once again to urge the European governments to provide the EIB with a more significant lending capacity to our neighbours, especially those in the east, who are highly in need of loans and investments, and who are also suffering from the effects of the crisis. Compatibility between the policy goals of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the lending directions of the EIB should be ensured in the future even more than before.

Motion for a resolution: The mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria (RC-B7-0247/2010)

Laima Liucija Andrikiienė (PPE). – Mr President, in January and March we witnessed mass atrocities in Nigeria which caused the deaths of several hundred people, including women and children. What is necessary for Nigeria is first of all a reconciliation process and the peaceful coexistence between Muslims living in the north and Christians living in the south.

Secondly, taking into account that, despite Nigeria being one of the biggest oil producers in the world, most of its people still live in poverty. They do not benefit from the overall development of the country so corruption, which is widespread, has to be challenged and fought effectively and seriously.

Thirdly, European Union assistance to Nigeria should address the most important problems, the most sensitive issues in order to achieve at least some visible progress in this country.

Bastiaan Belder (EFD). – (NL) Mr President, the latest news I received this week about Christians in Jos sounds extremely worrying. In recent weeks, too, our co-religionists – Christians, that is – have been found murdered in various places in this Nigerian city. For example, on Saturday 24 April, members of a gang of Muslim youths stabbed to death two journalists working for a Christian monthly. The perpetrators used the mobile phones of their victims to call the latter's unsuspecting friends and relatives and say, 'We have killed them all, come and see.'

Mr President, this is typical of an atmosphere of violence with impunity in Nigeria of which Christians are the main victims, and which has resulted in hundreds of deaths in and around Jos since the start of this year. Significantly, one observer has spoken of systematic religious persecution. Hence his appeal to the international community – and thus also to the European institutions – to recognise Islamic extremism as a key explanation for the explosive situation in Nigeria, particularly in the case of Jos, which lies at the crossroads between the Muslim north and the Christian south.

Unfortunately – and this is also my criticism today – this is what the joint motion for a resolution explicitly does not do (see paragraph 5). The motion for a resolution fails to take a firm line on the Islamic extremism prevailing in Nigeria; worse still, it opposes – and I quote – 'simplistic explanations based only on religion'. I too oppose single-cause explanations, but this oversimplification on the part of the EU, of this House, does not help the Nigerian Christians, whose lives are poised between hope and fear these days, in the slightest. That is my criticism, and that is why I abstained.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, I think it is appalling that a country with such massive oil reserves as Nigeria should be involved in such mass atrocities, but at the same time, taking our cue from the Vice President of the United States, the solution has to be in dialogue, dialogue, dialogue, allied with education, education, education, so that peace can be brought to the country.

I appreciated Joe Biden referring to the line by the Irish poet William Butler Yeats: 'a terrible beauty is born'. We hope that terrible beauty may be turned into a wonderful beauty in Nigeria, where peace and prosperity will prevail. The European Union has an important role to play in that – and, indeed, in the discussion today – and in the vote we have set out a marker. I appreciate that very much.

President. – The Minutes from this sitting will be presented to Parliament for approval at the start of the next part-session. If there are no objections, the resolutions adopted at today's sitting will be handed over to the recipients and bodies named in them immediately.

Written explanations of vote

Report: Íñigo Méndez de Vigo (A7-0116-2010)

Sophie Auconie (PPE), in writing. – (FR) I voted for this recommendation since it highlights the innovative, constructive and democratic character of the convening of Conventions for the revision of the Treaties (for example, the Convention held from 1999-2000, which drafted the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the Convention held from 2002-2003, which prepared the draft treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe), while recognising the altogether exceptional character of the revision of the Treaties currently made necessary by the implementation of transitional measures concerning the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

In summary, the Convention system must be used since we are talking about revisions of the Treaties that go beyond simple provisional, technical adjustments. Therefore, following the example of the rapporteur, Mr Méndez de Vigo, I think it is good that the European Parliament 'approved the European Council's proposal to amend Protocol No 36 by means of an Intergovernmental Conference, without convening a Convention'.

Liam Aylward and Pat the Cope Gallagher (ALDE), in writing. – (GA) Pat the Cope Gallagher MEP and Liam Aylward MEP have drawn attention to the fact that only Ireland and Malta use the system of proportional representation to elect Members of the European Parliament. Northern Ireland also uses the system of proportional representation for European elections. We are completely against the implementation of uniform or identical electoral systems for the election of Members of the European Parliament. Since the founding of the Irish State, it has been demonstrated that the proportional representation system is a fair and equal system.

David Casa (PPE), in writing. – This vote concerned the possibility of convening a Convention for the revision of the Treaties in view of transitional measures to do with the composition of the European Parliament. When taking into consideration various factors such as the Convention held from 22 February 2002 to 18 June 2003, as well as that which drafted the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, I am in agreement with the view of the rapporteur to support the Council's proposal to amend Protocol No 36 through holding an intergovernmental conference rather than convening a convention.

Carlos Coelho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon has changed the composition of the European Parliament, which is going from having 736 Members to having 751. There will be 18 new Members from 12 Member States. Since the Treaty of Lisbon sets an upper limit on the number of MEPs from each Member State, Germany has three fewer seats. As it is not possible to curtail an MEP's mandate during a term, this means that Parliament will temporarily have 754 Members, making it necessary to change the Treaty so as to temporarily lift the limit of 751 Members. I believe that it would have been preferable to apply this new composition in the 2014 elections and not in the current parliamentary term, but I recognise that there is a broad consensus on putting these changes into effect immediately. For this reason, I agree that the Intergovernmental Conference, which will be convened just to adopt the transitional provisions relating to the remainder of this parliamentary term, should not be preceded by a Convention; this must not, however, constitute a precedent for the future.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The sin of Europe's system of Conventions, recalling the French and US experiences, was presuming to have a legitimacy that it still did not, in fact, have at that time. I therefore think that the Convention that adopted the draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe ended up extrapolating the powers that had been conferred on it. I wish wholeheartedly that the results had been otherwise, but the circumstances at the time did not permit it. I therefore think that the return to the formula of intergovernmental conferences is the most realistic way of ensuring dialogue among Member States' governments, and it should focus on the specific problems that it is being called on to solve, such as that on which we voted.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I voted for the decision not to convene a Convention for the revision of the Treaties with regard to the transitional measures concerning the composition of the European Parliament. I voted that way because I believe that it seems unnecessary to convene a Convention to approve an amendment of the provisions of the Treaty on European Union. I agree that the Council should

amend Protocol No 36 within the framework of an Intergovernmental Conference, without convening a Convention.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) I agree completely with the author of the report, and would like once again to recall that in the decided majority of Member States new Members of Parliament have already been appointed in accordance with current regulations. We await, therefore, introduction of the Council proposal on modification of protocol No 36. This will enable the additional Members to come to Parliament as observers immediately after approval of the amendment to the protocol, and with its entry into force our new fellow Members will be able to start work as full Members of the European Parliament.

Franz Obermayr (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) The rapporteur is opposed to a Convention, because the treaty changes are only transitional measures. I do not see the situation in the same way, as it also concerns democratic problems. France has a different electoral system and therefore does not have the option of 'moving up' democratically and directly elected members from a list. It is for that reason that I have voted against this report.

Siiri Oviir (ALDE), *in writing*. – (ET) If we look at this precisely and from a legal point of view, the decision we are taking will amend the Treaty of Lisbon, which envisages the convening of a Convention. However, as the action is limited in scope and restricted to the transitional amendment, I relied on the principle of proportionality and supported the transitional solution nominated by 479 colleagues: that is, to give the right of decision to an Intergovernmental Conference rather than convening a Convention.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I voted against this report because I am against not convening a Convention for the revision of Treaties.

Rafał Trzaskowski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) The decision not to convene a Convention was one of the most difficult decisions related to the introduction of the 18 new Members to Parliament. We have made this decision precisely out of respect for this instrument, whose objective is to increase the legitimacy of decisions concerning fundamental EU law. It is not a precedent for the future. All important matters concerning changes to the Treaties, such as electoral procedure, will still require a Convention to be convened. I would like to thank the rapporteur, Mr Méndez de Vigo, and the coordinators for making this decision, because it was not easy. We have a problem with the appointment of the 18 new Members, because some Member States have not used the appropriate procedure. However, we have decided that the most important principle is representativeness. This House should have, above all, a balanced representation as quickly as possible. Therefore, we call on Member States to complete this process as quickly as possible, assuming at the same time that all Members will be chosen in direct elections.

Report: Íñigo Méndez de Vigo (A7-0115-2010)

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for the excellent report by my colleague, Mr Méndez de Vigo. A transitional measure must in fact be found to reconcile respect for the Treaty of Lisbon with Article 5 of the 1976 Act concerning the election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage. It is therefore necessary to increase the number of MEPs to 754 for the rest of the 2009-2014 parliamentary term.

Furthermore, I am pleased with the wording of paragraph 6 of this report, which calls for a uniform system for electing MEPs: 'Notifies the European Council that it intends shortly to draw up proposals to lay down the provisions necessary for the election of its Members by direct universal suffrage in accordance with a uniform procedure in all Member States and in accordance with principles common to all Member States, and that Parliament will initiate such electoral reform under Article 48(2) of the Treaty on European Union and Article 223 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; insists, further, that a Convention devoted to the reform of the European Parliament will be called to prepare the revision of the Treaties'.

Jean-Luc Bennahmias (ALDE), *in writing*. – (FR) The European Parliament has agreed to 18 MEPs joining the Chamber during the parliamentary term. This agreement means that Parliament, elected in June 2009 under the procedure of the Treaty of Nice, is in conformity with the Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December 2009.

I voted against, and did so for one reason which in my opinion is crucially important: during the European elections of June 2009, most of the Member States believed it very probable that the Treaty of Lisbon would be ratified imminently. Consequently, they adapted the way in which the elections were held. This is not the case with France, which did not make any arrangements to ensure a smooth transition from 72 to 74 MEPs.

The solution found in the end – the appointment of two members of the National Assembly – is unacceptable. Since 1979, MEPs have been elected by direct universal suffrage by European citizens, and not appointed by national assemblies. It is thanks to direct universal suffrage that we can rightfully speak on behalf of all Europeans. The fact that Parliament has accepted the French compromise sets a worrying precedent in terms of its failure to comply with the Treaties.

Philip Bradbourn (ECR), in writing. – We welcome measures to allow the 18 additional Members to take up their seats in the European Parliament. However, they should not enjoy observer status until the transitional measures enter into force and they can take their seats as full Members of Parliament. As observers, the incoming Members would be entitled to their salaries and expenses before they are entitled to vote. That is wrong, and it is why our delegation has voted against this report.

Françoise Castex (S&D), in writing. – (FR) I must express the strongest criticism of France's decision as regards the appointment of the two additional MEPs called to take their seats in the European Parliament, by virtue of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

Unlike the 11 other European countries affected by this reform, which anticipated the election and which have of course relied on the results of the European elections of June 2009, the French Government, for its part, has decided to simply appoint members from its national parliament: this is a disgrace to democracy.

Furthermore, we French socialists did not think that the other 16 MEPs should have to pay the price for this complete lack of preparation on the part of France, and in the end we therefore advocated the launch of an IGC (Intergovernmental Conference) that will enable these elected MEPs – firstly as observers – to come and play their role as representatives of the European citizens who elected them with this sole aim in mind.

Carlos Coelho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The last European elections (2009) took place before the Treaty of Lisbon had entered into force, so Parliament's composition was still the same as that established by the Treaty of Nice (736 Members). The European Council agreed with the draft composition proposed by Parliament in 2007, increasing the number from 750 to 751. I considered it preferable for the new composition of the European Parliament to be applied only in the next European elections in 2014. Nonetheless, there is a broad consensus that it should be done now. It will, therefore, be necessary to regulate how the 18 new Members (shared between 12 Member States) will be elected. The new Treaty sets an upper limit on the number of MEPs from each Member State, meaning that Germany will lose three seats. As it is not possible to curtail an MEP's mandate during a term, this means that Parliament will temporarily have 754 Members. I agree with the rapporteur, Mr Mendez de Vigo, when he recommends that the new Members take up their posts on the same day, to avoid regional distortions to representation in Parliament. I do not agree with the possibility that the new Members be appointed by their national authorities. I believe that Members only acquire legitimacy through election.

Marielle De Sarnez (ALDE), in writing. – (FR) The Treaty of Lisbon increases the number of MEPs from 736 to 751. However, as the 2009 elections took place before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, only 736 MEPs were elected. Our Parliament therefore had to adopt new provisions concerning its composition for the rest of the parliamentary term. The Democratic Movement delegation did not vote in favour of this text for two reasons. It cannot agree to the Council's proposal to convene an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) without having a Convention composed of representatives of the national parliaments, Heads of State or Government, Parliament and the Commission. This accelerated procedure 'violates' not only the spirit, but also the letter, of the Treaties. It also sets an unfortunate precedent. The appointment of two members of the French national parliament among the 18 additional MEPs constitutes a serious attack on the primary legislation, which stipulates that MEPs must be elected by direct universal suffrage and not appointed by their national parliaments. This only positive result of this episode will be that it has drawn attention to the need to reform Parliament's electoral procedure in the long term and, more specifically, to the demand that we have long been making for a proportion of MEPs to be elected to a European constituency.

Edite Estrela (S&D), in writing. – (PT) I voted for this report because it argues that the 18 additional MEPs, from 12 Member States, can take their seats after being elected. It is regrettable that the Council did not adopt the necessary measures in time to allow these Members to take their seats immediately after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The fact that the Treaty of Lisbon did not enter into force in time to be immediately applicable to the elections for the 2009-2014 term of the European Parliament led to a problem that has ended up, I believe, being resolved sensibly and in a way that reflects the inevitable difficulties of

transition periods. Therefore, while it would not make sense or be legitimate to strip elected Members of their mandates, it would also not be reasonable to prevent the Member States that are benefiting from an increase in the number of their representatives from appointing them in accordance with the legislation governing their respective electoral systems. The exceptional circumstances fully justify the exceptional solutions adopted.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) An increase in the total number of MEPs by 15 (from the 736 stipulated in the Treaty of Nice to 751), with 18 additional seats to be distributed among 12 Member States, has been adopted. Germany has been allocated three fewer seats in view of the maximum number laid down in the EU Treaty. The Treaty of Lisbon had not entered into force before the 2009 European elections, so the latter were held in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Nice, meaning that the European Parliament currently has 736 Members rather than 751. On the other hand, the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon means that the 18 additional MEPs from the 12 Member States concerned can legitimately take their seats. It is not possible to curtail an MEP's mandate during a parliamentary term or, therefore, to reduce the current number of MEPs in the German delegation by three. I therefore take the view that the amendment of Protocol No 36 requested by the European Council stems directly from the new provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon, and is a valid solution that will enable all those Member States entitled to additional seats to designate the MEPs concerned. These 18 MEPs must take up their seats in Parliament at the same time in order not to upset the balance of nationalities in the House.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) As we have been asserting and as can be seen from this report, the Treaty of Lisbon not only implements neoliberal, militarist and federalist policies but is an instrument full of ambiguities and contradictions, such as those expressed in Protocol (No 36) on provisions concerning the composition of the European Parliament. The arrogance of those promoting the Treaty was so great that it prevented them from making these provisions flexible, because they had done everything to avoid referendums from being held in order to escape a vote by the peoples of the EU's countries and a repeat of the No by the French and Dutch peoples to the so-called 'Constitutional Treaty'. The Irish people also said no to this travesty of a text, and it was only after much pressure and blackmail that their vote was obtained, but already after the European elections.

This report has shown the attempt by some MEPs to entrench the EU's federalist trajectory by invoking a democratic legitimacy that the Treaty does not have. These Members are also attempting to further subordinate national legislations to the EU's interests with proposals that seek a uniform electoral procedure in all Member States, which is a sovereign competency of each Member State, and are demanding that a Convention be convened charged with the reform of the European Parliament to prepare for the revision of the Treaties.

Bruno Gollnisch (NI), *in writing*. – (FR) Whether the Treaties are revised by way of an Intergovernmental Conference or by way of a Convention changes absolutely nothing as far as the crux of the problem is concerned. Whether through incompetence, negligence or political miscalculation, one single country, France, refused to anticipate the consequences of the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon for its representation in the European Parliament, in spite of the repeated demands of several political groups, including my own. Consequently, today, France is the only one of the 27 that intends to appoint two new MEPs by the indirect means of a decision by a national parliament of which the voting system is thoroughly unjust. All of this is in violation of the Treaties themselves, and in violation of the Act of 1976, which provides for the election of MEPs by direct universal suffrage. Moreover, complicit in this is the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, which, despite having been dealt a severe blow in the 2009 elections, will inherit one of the two extra seats. This is scheming between friends, with the support of this Parliament. Unfortunately, in order to pass off this anomaly, the rapporteur is hiding behind the temporary nature of the measure. Temporary? The new French MEPs will sit for four years, which is more than 80% of the parliamentary term. I would have expected our fellow Member to have been firmer in terms of both the value of words and the defence of democratic principles.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for several amendments aimed at underlining the unacceptable nature of the choice made by France, which is appointing members of its national parliament to sit in the European Parliament alongside 16 others, who for their part stood in the election of 7 June 2009. In my opinion, this choice, which was clearly made amid a total lack of preparation, runs counter to fundamental democratic principles and raises important questions about the democratic legitimacy of the European Parliament. On the other hand, we must not block the arrival of the other MEPs, whose appointment is perfectly in accordance with the spirit of the Treaties. This issue demonstrates just how necessary it is for us to provide ourselves in future with a uniform method of appointing MEPs by direct universal suffrage, with this reform to be carried out by means of a convention.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I voted against this report because of our main amendment, in which we claimed that Members of the European Parliament should be elected by direct universal suffrage.

Report: Íñigo Méndez de Vigo (A7-0115/2010 – A7-0116-2010)

Carlo Casini (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I have cast my vote, which is categorically in favour of the two reports drafted by Mr Méndez de Vigo. I am satisfied for two reasons: the committee that I chair acted promptly, reaching a provisional agreement, and that agreement paved the way for the one reached today in plenary by a very large majority.

From this perspective, I have endorsed the idea of voting against paragraph 5, introduced by an amendment of mine tabled in committee, to emphasise that the appointment of the 18 new Members will have to comply as far as possible with the provisions of the 1976 Electoral Act, which requires that Members be elected directly by the European citizens. Therefore, the preference will have to be for an automatic method that allows the candidates who received the most votes of those who were not elected during the last European elections to join Parliament. If, however, the national electoral system does not allow for such a calculation, we can resort to appointment by the national parliaments.

Motions for resolutions: Kyrgyzstan (RC-B7-0246/2010)

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), *in writing*. – (IT) The political crisis in Kyrgyzstan is yet another episode in the destabilisation of the Central Asia region, a region that we know is crucial to Europe given the importance of the issue of where we source our energy and raw materials from, and to the United States and Russia, in view of the country's strategic position. This, unfortunately, is the disappointing outcome of the 2005 revolution, which had raised hopes of a real change in the political dynamics of the small, former Soviet republic and which seemed to herald, together with the events of the same years in Ukraine and Georgia, a calmer geopolitical future in the region as a whole. Unfortunately, today, Kyrgyzstan is reaping the bitter fruits of a change that did not happen, and the resolution on which we are voting contains the necessary and appropriate guidelines that this House should give to the European bodies that will be directly involved in the Kyrgyz issue in international and diplomatic forums. The hope is that the Commission and the Council will work consistently with one another on these guidelines, and, above all, will do so with a sense of urgency which, unfortunately, has been inexcusably lacking in other, even recent, cases. It was with the sincere hope that European action will have a positive impact on the stabilisation of Kyrgyzstan that I voted in favour of the joint motion for a resolution.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) A product of the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan is being disputed by the great powers and it seems to have declined into a process of political agitation and disintegration of the political and social fabric, which needs to be better monitored by European institutions and the governments of Member States. Europe's relative lack of knowledge of the Central Asian republics must be remedied, and channels for relations and communication sought that enable better access to more information and more detailed monitoring of their respective situations. I welcome the European Union's firmness in making the issues of freedom, democracy and human rights central to its agenda for Kyrgyzstan. I also hope that the provisional government shows itself to be as good as its word and undertakes reforms that do not fail to take these issues into account. The announcement of the calling of elections and of a constitutional referendum constitute an encouraging sign for the near future.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) According to independent observers, last year's presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan in which Kurmanbek Bakiyev was re-elected were tainted by massive fraud. Furthermore, after his initial democratic undertakings Bakiyev's rule turned authoritarian. Following mass demonstrations, President Bakiyev was forced to flee the capital and his place was taken by a provisional government led by the opposition leader Roza Otunbayeva, who issued a decree on power succession and an order of compliance with the Kyrgyz Constitution. Meanwhile, Bakiyev fled the country to seek refuge in Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan attracts special interest from the United States and Russia because of its strategic location in the middle of Central Asia. The EU and Central Asia have common challenges in terms of energy, the fight against climate change, drug trafficking control and the fight against terrorism. For this reason, the EU must engage actively with the provisional government, with a view to exploring and exploiting possibilities to promote good governance, the independence of the judiciary and other EU policy objectives laid down in the Central Asia Strategy.

Jacek Olgierd Kurski (ECR), *in writing*. – (PL) As co-author of the European Parliament motion for a resolution on Kyrgyzstan, I want to express my thanks to fellow Members who voted in favour of this

document, today. Worthy of particular note is the intention announced by the interim Kyrgyzstani Government to begin work on constitutional reform and the rapid creation of the foundations for conducting democratic parliamentary elections. This explains the appeal to the interim government to meet Kyrgyzstan's international obligations and to ensure that the electoral process will be free and fair. We follow events in Kyrgyzstan with anxiety, and this includes the maintenance of an uninterrupted supply corridor for NATO and other international forces which are part of the mission in Afghanistan. It is essential that the European Union and the European Parliament monitor the situation in Kyrgyzstan very carefully, that essential assistance is given and that dialogue between all groups of Kyrgyzstani society is supported.

Bogdan Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) I voted in favour of the motion for a resolution on Kyrgyzstan, because I think that as a member of the delegation to Central Asia I am obliged to give at least this support to a nation which in recent weeks has found itself in such a difficult situation. The resolution calls for an end to violence, for dialogue between the parties to the conflict and for respect for the right to freedom, human rights and the principles of a state of law, and stresses the importance of a coherent and stable constitutional framework for ensuring democracy. I think, therefore, that the international aid programme should be brought into being as quickly as possible, and that the EU should assume the role of leader in the programme.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The situation that is currently being experienced in Kyrgyzstan is concerning, all the more so because it is a country situated in a very important part of Central Asia, with a geostrategic location near Afghanistan and adjacent to the Ferghana Valley. A United Nations-led international investigation into the events is needed, in order to identify responsibilities. It is important that the Special Representative for Central Asia follows the situation very closely, working closely with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission.

Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D), *in writing*. – (PL) European Parliament motion for a resolution No RC-B7-0246/2010 of 6 May 2010 on the situation in Kyrgyzstan is the common voice of Europe directed to Kyrgyzstan and its authorities. The motion for a resolution on Kyrgyzstan is an important signal from the European Union and the whole of Europe. We should show both the citizens and the Kyrgyzstani authorities, and not just by resolutions like this one, that we support the strengthening of democracy and the development of society, the security of the population and sustainable growth.

The European Parliament must be an institution which supports all prospects for democracy and does not accept any deviations from that route. The changes in Kyrgyzstan are a consequence of the last few years and the transitory nature of the hopes associated with the Tulip Revolution. Electoral fraud and the mild form of authoritarianism which has begun to operate in Kyrgyzstan cannot and will not be a matter of indifference. The only measures which we can and will support are democratic measures, because they are the foundation of the European Union. There can be no consent, on our part, to other measures. I hope the resolution on Kyrgyzstan is one of many steps we will take. The whole of Europe expects this of us.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this resolution, together with the big majority, including the two oral amendments made during the vote.

Vilja Savisaar (ALDE), *in writing*. – (ET) The events that took place in Kyrgyzstan at the start of April, already a month ago, have had a serious impact both upon the country's internal governmental situation and upon international relations. Thanks to this, Russia has increased its influence in Kyrgyzstan, both militarily and also economically, which was to be expected given the previous economic ties between these two countries. At the same time, Russia has promised to give economic aid both through direct financial support and also by selling gas and oil products at a favourable price. Today's report largely draws attention to the fact that the European Union and the UN must help ensure that a democratic government is elected and that human rights violations come to an end in this country.

It is certainly true that there is a desire to reduce corruption both in the public sector and in the justice system, which will perhaps make it necessary to reform the public sector and guarantee the independence of the justice system. Yet this is all directly connected with the country's economic situation, and therefore cooperation is necessary between the EU, the UN and Russia, because otherwise Kyrgyzstan will not be given priority; instead, all the 'great powers' will attempt to use this situation to their own ends. Therefore, I support this resolution, which calls on all parties to cooperate to ensure the observance of human rights and the development of democracy, as well as the reform of the public sector and the independence of the justice system. I believe, however, that it will be some time before this country reaches the desired level of democracy,

since in order for that to happen, appointments will have to be made through open competitions rather than being allocated to relatives.

Motion for a resolution: Electric vehicles (B7-0261/2010)

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I welcome the recent communication on clean and efficient vehicles. Putting electric cars on the market could represent a competitive advantage for European industry. We must not, however, forget that Europe is currently the world leader in the automotive sector, and we cannot put this competitive advantage at risk. I therefore call on the Commission and the Member States to develop the conditions necessary to create an internal market in electric vehicles. I would also warn of the need to harmonise the standards for batteries and compatible charge points in the various Member States. It is also important to create tax incentives, with appropriate electricity prices for consumers. Another essential factor will be the modernisation of electricity grids. I call for greater investment in research and development into smart grids and battery technology, in order to make more efficient use of primary materials. I ask, therefore, that all efforts be made to maintain Europe's world leadership in the automotive industry.

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for the motion for a resolution because I believe that electric vehicles can contribute to achieving the priorities for the Europe 2020 Strategy, which consist of developing an economy that is based on knowledge and innovation, and promoting an economy that is more efficient in terms of use of resources; in other words, one that is more environmentally friendly and competitive.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) At a time when debate about CO₂ emissions has become unavoidable because it is central to discussion of climate change, and when the volatility of fuel prices has made the continuation of the current dependence on petroleum and its derivatives unsustainable, at least in the long term, it is important to find alternatives. For that reason, innovation put at the service of economic and social needs must seek solutions that are scientifically and economically viable. Electric vehicles are a significant innovation with high market potential, particularly in the long term, as they are responsible for reduced emissions of CO₂ and other pollutants, and for improved energy efficiency and the promotion of innovation based on technological leadership. Given the above, there must be a European strategy for electric vehicles, supporting industry in developing clean and viable technology and supporting the creation of a single market in electric vehicles. Nevertheless, I must once again warn that the setting of a European strategy must not mean the creation of a complex mass of regulations weighing heavily on the industry, putting its development and viability at risk.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The challenges posed by climate change, CO₂ emissions and other pollutants, and the volatility of fuel prices have created a positive climate for the worldwide development of electric vehicles. Electric vehicles contribute to achieving the 'Europe 2020' priorities of fostering innovation and knowledge (smart growth), promoting a more resource-efficient and greener economy (sustainable growth), and allowing the economy to grow by creating jobs (inclusive growth). It is important that the high cost of electric vehicles – caused mostly by the cost of batteries – decreases, which requires research and innovation. I therefore welcome the priority given to the development of electric vehicles by the Spanish Presidency in the context of the fight against climate change, and the Commission's Communication on a European strategy on clean and energy-efficient vehicles of 27 April 2010. I believe that the necessary conditions for the existence of a single electric vehicle market must be created, while at the same time guaranteeing efficient coordination of policies at EU level, in order to avoid negative impacts, particularly on employment. This coordination also encourages compatibility and interoperability.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) We believe the development of electric cars to be necessary as an alternative to vehicles that use fossil fuels. Faced with the atmospheric pollution associated with such vehicles, and the inexorable exhaustion of fossil-fuel reserves, particularly oil, within a few decades in the unfortunately likely event that the current energy paradigm persists, the development of electric vehicles stands out as an important option to consider. Nevertheless, the limitations and problems that are still associated with these vehicles, and which we mentioned during the debate, must not be ignored. These problems and limitations, as we said, make it inadvisable to take commercial or advertising risks. Instead, they warn of the 'the need for further R&D to improve the characteristics, and reduce the costs, of electric vehicles'. Above all, the 'goal of a largely decarbonised transportation system by 2050' that is mentioned in the report, must involve significantly increasing development of various types of mass and public transport and promoting their use to make them accessible to all; electric vehicles must be strongly represented in this process.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted in favour of this motion for a resolution, which makes it possible, among other things, to standardise chargers for electric cars, since the European Union and our fellow citizens have everything to gain from the development of a European electric vehicle market, and even from the creation of a global market. Therefore, these measures strengthen the EU's position within the framework of combating pollution and protecting the environment, by facilitating the use of clean vehicles, whatever the vehicle type. They also facilitate support for research and innovation, thus having positive consequences for the competitiveness of the European Union in the field of technology. The adoption of this motion for a resolution is likely to herald the beginning of a new model of society that takes the various challenges (environmental, social, technological, demographic, and so on) into account. I am relying on the other European institutions to support us in this undertaking.

Iosif Matula (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) I support the promotion of electric vehicles as a medium- and long-term priority. We must identify ways of encouraging Member States to implement a common strategy on standardising electric vehicles. The success of this strategy will definitely reduce costs for users, thereby making electric vehicles more attractive. A lack of coordination at European level means that not only users have to pay high costs. Industrial manufacturers will need to standardise their various industrial specifications, which will have a direct impact on costs. This is why, if we want to move in the desired direction, I believe that we must focus on standardisation procedures. We must find ways of encouraging European consumers towards using electric cars. I think that local authorities have an important role to play in this. They will be able to encourage European consumers through their example, as well as through providing infrastructure facilities and benefits associated with the various charges, such as for parking or pollution. I believe that the use of electric cars by Europe's institutions would set an example and send out a very positive signal. By way of an experiment, a mini fleet of electric cars should be created as soon as possible as an alternative to the current modes of transport.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The growing concern for CO₂ emissions and climate change has created an urgent need for rapid development to make it possible for electric vehicles to be a valid alternative to those currently in use. Increased use of this mode of transport makes a very positive contribution to achieving the objectives set out in the 'Europe 2020' Strategy. The EU must, therefore, invest significantly in creating a supply network that effectively covers Europe's territory. Decisive steps must also be taken to remove a series of obstacles that currently make this mode of transport unattractive.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) In the context of our shrinking resources, electric vehicles definitely have the potential to become a genuinely climate-friendly alternative, provided that we continue to develop them. However, this will only be the case if both the manufacturing processes and the operation of the cars are genuinely non-resource-intensive and environmentally friendly. Electric and hybrid drive systems are currently still in their infancy and we need to put in place a standardised framework without giving this technology priority over other alternative drive systems. In the current proposal too little attention is paid to other alternative drive systems, which is why I have abstained.

Georgios Papanikolaou (PPE), *in writing*. – (EL) Support for the development of electric vehicles may have numerous benefits. Promoting electric cars will help significantly in combating climate change, by switching to cleaner and more advanced technologies, in promoting innovation and in limiting our energy dependency. The development of this technology also includes certain aspects to which due consideration will need to be given, such as the removal of administrative and other obstacles which might have a negative effect on the circulation of green cars and the provision of incentives for retraining people working in the automotive industry, so that they can acquire the necessary skills. I think that the motion for a resolution is a very balanced text, because it addresses all the above issues, which is why I voted for it.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) In order to assess the impact of the measures discussed, we need to analyse the statistics quoted by the Commission. In fact, in 2007, 72% of the European population lived in urban areas, which are the key to growth and employment. Cities need efficient transport systems in order to support the economy and to ensure the well-being of their residents.

Approximately 85% of the EU's GDP is generated in cities. Urban areas have the task, today, of making transport sustainable in environmental (CO₂, air pollution, noise), competition (congestion) and social (demographic changes, inclusion, health) terms. Our rising to this challenge is also crucial to the success of the EU's overall strategy to combat climate change, to achieve the 20/20/20 target and to promote cohesion.

Nine out of 10 EU citizens believe that the traffic situation in their area should be improved. I am convinced that coordinated action at EU level can help to strengthen the markets in new technologies for clean vehicles

and in alternative fuels. In this way, we can encourage users to opt, in the long term, for cleaner vehicles or modes of transport, to use less congested infrastructure or to travel at different times. I wholeheartedly support these initiatives, which aim, in the medium to long term, to improve our habits in line with the economic and industrial development of the Union as a whole.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I followed my group in voting in favour of this resolution, although our amendment on speeding up a review of type-approval legislation was not adopted.

Motions for resolutions: Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation (B7-0245/2010)

Sophie Auconie (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) In Europe 380 000 businesses are involved in motor vehicle distribution and services. Almost all of these are small and medium-sized enterprises, employing 2.8 million people. Since 1985, the motor vehicle sector has been governed by a block exemption regulation in the context of European competition law, in order to take into account its specific characteristics: the oligopolistic situation, and the highly technical nature and long life span of products. Today, however, the Commission is proposing to abolish the existing exemption for the sale of new vehicles. Only the secondary market (repair and maintenance services and supply of spare parts) would remain subject to a specific exemption regime. This motion for a resolution, which I already supported in the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and which I voted for again today in plenary, carries a clear message on the part of the European Parliament. It follows detailed consultations with the motor vehicle sector. It calls on the Commission to take into account several elements that are likely to destabilise the balance of power between motor vehicle manufacturers and distributors, to the detriment of consumers.

George Sabin Cutaş (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) I decided to vote for this motion for a resolution as it highlights the problems inherent in the European Commission's proposal on the Motor Vehicle Block Exemption Regulation.

The recommendation from the European executive to amend certain clauses in the current regulation in this field, by specifically imposing the obligation on car intermediaries to make up to 80% of their sales from a single car make, could increase the latter's dependency on manufacturers, with the risk of restricting competition in the sector and having a detrimental impact on the options available to consumers.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) As the European Commission has started the process of reviewing the legislation applicable to motor vehicles, in particular Regulation (EC) No 1400/2002 ('MVER') and Regulation (EC) No 2790/1999 ('GBER'), it is important to note that the Union and its Member States are currently facing an unprecedented economic and financial crisis that has had a real and profound impact on the automotive industry. This industry continues to be fundamental to the European economy, contributing to employment, technological innovation and competitiveness. With this in mind, the new regulations must take into account the need, in the medium and long terms, to create conditions for the sustainability of the European automotive industry, allowing it to remain at the forefront of technology and innovation, and economically sustainable. In view of what we have just voted on regarding electric vehicles, the new regulatory framework must incentivise the manufacture and use of this type of vehicle, as well as environmental research and the development of automobiles with less environmental impact and lower emissions.

Bruno Gollnisch (NI), *in writing*. – (FR) We voted against this motion for a resolution, which welcomes, in principle, the current revision of the competition rules applicable to distribution and repairs in the motor vehicle sector. In fact, it welcomes the abolition of the exemption and the application of the general law of competition. As usual, under the cover of a preliminary consultation, it will be those lobbies that are the most influential or effective, but not necessarily representative of the industry, that will prevail, to say nothing of the dogma of beneficial competition for all. On the other hand, the efforts made by professionals to adapt to the legislation in force today will be undone. Admittedly, whether doing or undoing, one is still taking action. The question is whether the objective of the Commission, and in particular of the Directorate-General for Competition, is to justify its existence by producing laws, rather than implementing regulations that satisfy demands for quality and safety of services and products, demands that are necessary everywhere, but particularly in the motor vehicle sector.

Franz Obermayr (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) The Commission's proposed changes are contrary to the interests in particular of small and medium-sized businesses in the motor vehicle sector. In addition, this sector is governed by a large number of complex regulations (relating to safety and the environment, for example) and therefore competition law must be based on the specific features of this market. For this reason, I have voted against the Commission proposal.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) In July 2002 the Commission adopted a block exemption regulation on motor vehicle distribution agreements, to replace Regulation (EC) No 1475/95.

The main objective of the Commission's competition policy is to enable the companies involved to benefit from a safety zone through the adoption of block exemption regulations designed to guarantee proper supervision of the markets. Block exemptions contribute, therefore, to legal certainty and to the consistent application of European rules. I must point out that the importance of this debate consists, in fact, in outlining the guidelines underpinning the future legal framework which, following the expiry of the regulation, should govern the agreements on the distribution of motor vehicles and on the associated after-sales services.

Therefore, in order to decide on an appropriate scope for the block exemption applicable to the car industry, I urge the Commission to take account of the conditions of competition on the major markets and of the need to make a fundamental distinction between the markets for the sale of new motor vehicles and those for repair and maintenance services and/or for the distribution of spare parts. I would reiterate the importance of supporting such proposals. They discourage individual initiatives in favour of competition among dealers and repairers and encourage the development of the sector.

Robert Rochefort (ALDE), *in writing*. – (FR) The so-called 'block exemption' regulation, introduced at European level in 2002 to increase competition in the motor vehicle sector and bring tangible benefits to consumers, is reaching its expiry date. In its proposal for revision, the Commission is introducing changes that will have worrying consequences for consumers, in terms of variety of choice, quality and price. This is why we are using this motion for a resolution, which I supported, to clearly state our reservations about some of the proposals on the table. In particular I am thinking of the 'single branding' obligation, which will have a negative impact on consumer choice and the independence of dealers with regard to manufacturers. I would also like to express my concern as regards the absence of a guarantee of appropriate access for all stakeholders to technical information and spare parts, which will in fact limit the freedom of choice of the dealer or the garage owner to whom the consumer might turn. Finally, let us recall that the Commission must urgently tackle new forms of anti-competitive customer tying measures, such as after-sales services being contingent upon the exclusive repair or maintenance of a vehicle within the brand-specific network.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this resolution, together with the big majority of the Chamber.

Report: Alojz Peterle (A7-0121/2010)

Regina Bastos (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Cancer is one of the biggest health challenges faced by Europe: it is the second most important cause of death in the EU, with 3 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths every year. According to the World Health Organisation, at least one third of all cases of cancer are preventable. It is therefore essential that relevant stakeholders across the European Union engage in a collective effort to address cancer. One of the purposes of the proposal presented by the Commission for a 'European Partnership for Action Against Cancer – 2009-2013' is to support the Member States in their efforts to tackle cancer by providing a framework for identifying and sharing information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control and by engaging relevant stakeholders across the EU in a collective effort. I welcome the objective of reducing the cancer burden by introducing 100% population screening for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers by 2013, urging the Member States implement the aforementioned guidelines. For the above reasons, I voted in favour of the report 'Action Against Cancer: European Partnership'.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), *in writing*. – (LT) I voted for this report, since the European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013 proposed by the European Commission is an excellent initiative to combat this terrible disease more effectively. Cancer is one of the main areas of Community action in the field of public health, since every year 3.2 million Europeans are diagnosed with cancer, which represents the second most frequent cause of death after heart disease. The Partnership proposed by the Commission aims to support the Member States in their efforts to tackle cancer by providing a framework for identifying and sharing information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control. I would like to stress that only by engaging all the relevant stakeholders across the European Union in a collective effort to address cancer, can we remarkably reduce the number of cancer cases in Europe. I agree with the European Parliament's call for the Commission and Member States to further develop and consolidate initiatives that provide cancer sufferers with support either directly or indirectly. I also agree that the Commission and the Member States must ensure that in all Member States there is equal access to cancer drugs for all patients who need them. Therefore, this partnership to combat cancer initiated by the Commission

is a very important step towards a common social and political partnership for all of Europe that aims to reduce the European burden of cancer.

Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE), in writing. – (RO) The predictions about an exponential rise in the number of cancer cases diagnosed are intended to sound a loud alarm bell for the international community. One European in three will be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime. In fact, this cruel disease is the second most common cause of death in Europe. The European Parliament is using the motion for a resolution it has adopted to draw attention to the fact that there are still unacceptable disparities across Europe in terms of cancer screening and treatment. One third of the cancers diagnosed have a fatal outcome for the patient because they were diagnosed too late. This is a reality which Europe must change through information programmes, educating the public and facilitating access to high-quality medical services. Last but not least, the EU is doing too little at the moment in terms of research into this disease about which too little is still known. Research and prevention are the main lines of attack against this disease. This will yield results in the medium term. The incidence of cancer cases must start to decrease so that Europe can achieve the ambitious target set by the European Commission. This is to cut the number of new cancer cases by 2020 by 15%, taking into account the rising trend caused by population growth and the ageing population.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I welcome the Commission's proposal to set up a European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013 because I believe that the fight against cancer is an essential part of the Health Strategy. Nevertheless, as a form of primary prevention, I call for the implementation of measures to encourage healthy lifestyles as an essential factor in improving health. Environmental factors also affect health, so it is necessary to tackle environmental problems that are responsible for the development of specific types of cancer. This is why it is important that there be a cross-cutting and integrated approach in fields of action such as education, the environment, research, and social issues, as well as greater coordination between the various cancer-research centres in the EU. I would draw attention to the need to make better use of the finance aimed at combating cancer under the Seventh Framework Programme as well as the need for large-scale research programmes. It would also be important to include funding to promote cancer prevention in the financial perspective.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) A new comprehensive cancer approach is essential, because the disease is growing at almost epidemic rates at global level and is one of the main causes of death in the world, responsible for almost 13% of the total number of deaths in 2004 (nearly 1.7 million deaths every year); because it was the second-largest cause of death in 2006, with the majority of deaths resulting from lung cancer, colorectal cancer and breast cancer; and because one in three Europeans is still confronted with a diagnosis of cancer during their lifetime, and one in four Europeans ends up dying from it. A clear commitment to prevention and national screening plans is necessary, since we know that adequate prevention and early treatment will allow almost 30% of cases to be avoided. It is also essential to reduce inequalities in treatment. I would draw attention to the unacceptable situation in Portugal, where innovative and effective cancer-treatment drugs, specifically for lung cancer and breast cancer, are being refused to patients for purely financial reasons.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) Cancer is one of the biggest health challenges we are facing worldwide. It is currently the second most important cause of death in Europe, with 3 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths every year. The European Commission proposes a European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013. As a social and political problem, cancer requires joint actions at European, national, regional and local level. The Treaty of Lisbon defines precisely that the Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. One of the areas of such action, at European level, is protection and improvement of human health (Article 2E). The European Union has already agreed two important evidence-based instruments for prevention: the European Code Against Cancer and the Council Recommendations on screening for breast, cervical and colon cancer. I therefore welcome this motion for a resolution's recommendation to mobilise the public sector in general to invest in a robust and consistent effort for cancer prevention.

João Ferreira (GUE/NGL), in writing. – (PT) Cancer is one of the main causes of death in the world and cases have been increasing at an alarming rate. We therefore consider the EU's support for the Member States' efforts at fighting cancer, as mentioned in the report, as well as the promotion of a collective effort in the sharing of information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control, to be important. The reduced number of cases of cancer in some countries resulting from the adoption of policies to improve prevention and treatment shows that this is a good path to follow. The report refers to various significant issues, including: the need for primary prevention and control of diseases that can develop into cancer; the importance of screening; the insufficiency of the funding that is currently available to the fight against cancer in the EU,

particularly public funding; the need to reduce occupational and environmental exposure to carcinogens; the need to update the lists of carcinogenic substances; and the protection of cancer patients and chronically sick people in the workplace. It could have gone further on other issues, such as the elimination – rather than reduction – of inequalities in access to cancer treatments and associated care.

Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg (S&D), *in writing*. – (PL) As the author of written declaration no 71/2009 on the fight against breast cancer in the European Union, which has been adopted by Parliament, I am exceedingly pleased by the Commission communication on Action Against Cancer: European Partnership.

In this document, the problem of cancer in the EU has been diagnosed and objectives set in the fight against cancer. Despite the fact that the health service is *de facto* managed by the Member States, the EU can, nevertheless, act to extend health care and be, for example, an excellent platform for the exchange of good practices. It will be up to the Member States if they make use of this additional tool prepared by the Commission.

The proposal contains a very specific goal, namely reducing the burden of cancer in the EU by 15% by 2020. To put this programme into effect, it is necessary to achieve integration of all Member States' plans in the fight against cancer by 2013. The next step is to reduce by 70% the disproportion in mortality from cancer among Europeans being treated for these conditions. The differences between the Member States with the best and the worst results in the EU are still too great.

The communication also contains an emphasis on prophylaxis and includes the introduction of 100% population screening for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers. I am pleased that our recent appeal, contained in written declaration no 71/2009, came at a favourable moment in the Commission's work, which – I hope – augurs well for its rapid and reliable implementation.

Françoise Grossetête (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) I voted for this report concerning the setting up of a European Partnership for Action against Cancer for the period 2009-2013.

The aim of this partnership is to establish a framework for identifying and sharing information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control. The Member States must act together, particularly in the area of screening. In Europe, one in three people will develop cancer during their lifetime. However, one third of all cancers are preventable, and prevention offers the most cost-effective, long-term strategy for reducing the burden of cancer.

I am pleased that the majority of this House voted in favour of the proposals that I made as rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, such as the need to give greater encouragement to public-private partnerships to stimulate research and screening, particularly in the field of medical imaging.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) Even though health is the responsibility of each Member State, we have everything to gain from adopting a global approach to cancer prevention and treatment, and that is what I am supporting here. In this way, Europe will be able to enable closer cooperation with the stakeholders involved (civil society, various organisations and others) in order to disseminate as effectively as possible best practice in the area, and in particular to improve the effectiveness of patient care by taking patients' psychosocial and mental well-being into consideration. This partnership would also help ensure that associated problems, such as the inequalities faced by patients with the disease, are taken into account. This is fundamental to improving patients' everyday life. I also welcome the adoption, on 19 April, of a written statement, which I supported, calling on all EU Member States to introduce breast cancer screening nationwide and the Commission to draw up a follow-up report every two years. Breast cancer remains the main cause of death among women aged 35 to 59.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) According to the World Health Organization, cancer is the main cause of death worldwide. Currently, one in three Europeans is diagnosed with cancer, and one in four Europeans dies from this disease. Unfortunately, the aging of society will also contribute to an increase in the incidence of cancer in the next few decades. I think that in order to tackle this growth we must improve national plans for the fight against cancer and run an even more effective information campaign for people in the EU. Children should be taught a healthy lifestyle from their earliest years, which in the future will result in a reduced number of cases. According to the experts, one third of cases can be prevented, but for this to happen, the EU must increase funding for the fight against cancer. This would make it possible to carry out scientific research and a wide-ranging programme of anti-cancer prophylactic measures in all the countries of the Union.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Public health is one of the EU's priorities. The fight against all forms of cancer is part of this, as this disease is responsible for the deaths of millions of European citizens every year. We all know that prevention and early diagnosis are essential to effectively fighting cancer, so the vast majority of efforts must be focused on these areas. It is very important to develop efforts in the fight against the three types of cancer that cause the most deaths – lung cancer, colon cancer and breast cancer – without neglecting the others.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) Throughout Europe cancer is the greatest threat to health and the death rates from cancer are high. Out of 3 million new sufferers, 1.7 million will not survive. Early diagnosis and treatment could reduce this figure significantly. We must not only invest in treatment across Europe, but also provide support for preventive measures. We must make transnational cooperation our priority, so that we can permanently stop the spread of cancer. This report should be seen as a positive step in the right direction and that is why I have voted in favour of it.

Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D), *in writing*. – (PL) I voted in favour of the European Parliament resolution on Action Against Cancer: European Partnership. All measures intended to fight cancer and minimise its effects should be supported. Medical science is still unable to stop cancer, which is becoming one of the greatest plagues of humanity. The knowledge that, in 2006, cancer was the second most common cause of death is horrifying. There are many causes of cancer, or often the causes cannot be defined and diagnosed. However, it is possible to prevent cancer and limit its effects in about 30% of cases. To achieve this, suitable national testing programmes are needed. The European Union, acting in the interests of its citizens and because of the need to ensure their safety, must provide for the development of appropriate methods of early diagnosis of disease, preventative measures and advanced therapy. In many Member States it has been possible to achieve progress in the fight against cancer in different ways, including use of anti-smoking strategies and specific methods of prevention. Similar measures should be put in place throughout the Union, but with greater intensity and effectiveness. The forecasts for the coming years, in terms of cancer incidence and mortality, are not optimistic. The knowledge that in spite of various methods of diagnosis and treatment, very many people are going to die of cancer, is always bitter and sad. However, let us take care that our citizens are aware that in this matter they have full support.

Frédérique Ries (ALDE), *in writing*. – (FR) Reducing cancer cases in the European Union by 15% between now and 2020: that is the ambitious objective of the European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013. It is an objective that is supported today by the European Parliament vote on the Peterle report. It is a response that is up to the challenge, even though, according to the World Health Organisation, in 2010 cancer will become the main cause of death in the world, ahead of cardiovascular diseases.

In 2010 alone, 3 million Europeans will develop cancer, and nearly 2 million people will die of the disease. We urgently need to do more in the area of systematic screening of the most common cancers: lung cancer, colorectal cancer and breast cancer. Encouraging a revolution in oncology also means promoting research into the carcinostatic properties of some foods, and encouraging early screening of tumours through the state-of-the-art biomarker technique: complex urinary or blood tests. These are all measures resolutely aimed at diversifying the provision of patient care so that 2010 is the year of reaction and so that the European Union not only supports, but also inspires national programmes for action against cancer.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I voted in favour, of course, of this important report, crucial for preventing cancer.

Joanna Senyszyn (S&D), *in writing*. – (PL) I strongly support the European Parliament report on the Commission communication on Action Against Cancer: European Partnership. According to estimates by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, one in three Europeans is diagnosed with cancer, and one in four Europeans dies from this disease. This year, 3 million Europeans will develop cancer and nearly 2 million are expected to die of cancer. In Poland, about 100 000 people fall victim to cancer every year, and 70 000 die. The fight against cancer is one of the permanent areas of EU action in the field of public health. The Treaty of Lisbon stressed the competence of the Union to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States for the protection and improvement of health. Specific action on these intentions is found in the Commission initiative entitled European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013. The objectives of the partnership, and in particular its prophylactic measures, are essential to limit the incidence of cancer. The restrictions placed on the financial resources for these objectives are disturbing. In the communication, goals have been set for a 10-year period, whereas the Community budget ensures only short-term financial support. Therefore, I appeal for: increased subsidies, especially for

prophylactic programmes in the area of regional policy and the European Social Fund; more effective use of resources available in the Seventh Framework Programme, for example for better coordination of scientific research; and increased resources to be planned in the new Financial Perspective.

Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE), in writing. – (LT) Cancer is the biggest health problem in Europe and indeed worldwide. Sadly, today cancer is still epidemically increasing. With more than 3 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths in the EU each year, cancer represents the second most important cause of death and morbidity. Currently one in three people in the EU will be diagnosed with cancer during their life-time and experts predict that the cancer burden will increase sharply due to the ageing population. Urgent action must be taken to improve cancer control and prevention in the EU. The situation is particularly serious in Lithuania. Statistical indicators for the various types of cancer are among the worst in the whole of the EU. Therefore, I particularly welcome the European Parliament Resolution on combating cancer in the enlarged EU and the European Commission's European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013, a new attempt to join all the stakeholders to work together in the spirit of fruitful partnership. Cancer is a social and political problem, not just a health problem. To solve it there need to be joint actions at European, national, regional and local level. I would like to stress that the Treaty of Lisbon clearly defines the Union's competence to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. The objective we all share is to help Member States combat cancer and provide a framework for identifying and sharing information, capacity and expertise in cancer prevention and control.

Jarosław Leszek Wałęsa (PPE), in writing. – (PL) Today, we voted on the motion for a resolution drafted by my Slovenian colleague Mr Peterle, of the Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats), on the fight against cancer. Of course, I endorsed adoption of the motion of the European Commission to set up a European Partnership for Action Against Cancer for the period 2009-2013. This new form of cooperation is intended to support the efforts of Member States in the fight against cancer. Medical statistics show that over 3 million new cases and 1.7 million deaths are recorded every year in Europe. This means that every year cancer holds second place among the most serious diseases and causes of death. As part of the European Partnership, Member States should prepare, as quickly as possible, integrated plans for fighting this cruel disease, so that it will be possible to reduce incidence by 15% by 2020. However, it must not be forgotten that in this uneven fight the most important factor is prevention. This is the most cost-effective measure, because one third of cancer cases can be avoided. Therefore, preventative measures should be supported both as part of medical practice and in the context of ever more healthy lifestyles.

Report: Patrizia Toia (A7-0120/2010)

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) The importance of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) can be attributed to their crucial role in starting a veritable revolution in the world of science, not only by proclaiming the birth of the knowledge-based society, but also by making a sustainable approach to the use of natural resources possible.

In the light of these considerations, it is impossible, in the specific case of new technologies dedicated to energy efficiency, to ignore the fact that ICTs are an important resource for ensuring that progress goes hand in hand with respect for the planet, guaranteeing as they do that households and industry can both benefit economically from savings. The policy of energy saving will characterise the sustainability of the European social model, which is why I decided to vote in favour of the report.

Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE), in writing. – (RO) Switching to smart metering may reduce energy consumption by up to 10% at European level because it would facilitate the two-way transfer of information between network operators, energy suppliers and consumers. The analyses show that the smart use of information and communications technology (ICT) can reduce energy consumption in buildings, which currently account for 40% of the total energy consumption in Europe, by up to 17%. All these figures amount to the reduction of carbon emissions by up to 27% in the transport sector alone.

All these forecasts only serve to encourage us towards making full use of state-of-the-art technologies. Even though it will not be possible to implement these technologies in the short term throughout the European Union in a uniform manner, it is important that all Member States are aware of the option of using state-of-the-art technologies to cut carbon emissions, bearing in mind the extremely ambitious targets for the Europe 2020 agenda.

The construction and transport sectors feature among the large consumers of energy and may accelerate the implementation of state-of-the-art technological systems. In the same way, the use of natural resources may be less harmful to the environment and produce less carbon with the help of the new technologies.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) play an essential role in promoting European economic growth. Their influence on the energy sector also involves a profound change in our society, making it more decentralised and flexible, with distribution as a byword for greater wealth. The use of ICT and grid technologies allows us to improve the efficiency of our energy consumption by, for example, developing electricity distribution grids, smart buildings, smart homes and smart metering as well as eco-efficient transport. It is, however, important to continue to make use of the opportunities for innovation that ICT offer us. The development of an innovative European smart grid is essential, with instruments to measure and monitor the efficiency of energy consumption, implementing smart metering in accordance with the timetable set out in the third energy market package. In this way, consumers will be able to manage their energy consumption, evening out the demand curve. ICT can also play an important role in measuring and quantifying the global effects of climate change and evaluating climate protection measures, thereby contributing to the fine-tuning of climate policy.

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for the report on mobilising Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy. ICT could acquire an important role in alleviating the effects of climate change by reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency and integrating renewable energies.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) At a time when reducing emissions of CO₂ and greenhouse gases along with investment in renewable energy and 'green' technology are priorities, this report is extremely timely. It is therefore essential to consider the presentation of measures for the mobilisation of information and communications technologies, in order to make the transition to a more efficient energy economy possible at the least possible cost to the public and to companies. It is truly crucial to promote sustainable growth that is reflected in the well-being of the current population and economy, and also in solidarity towards future generations.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Information and communication technologies can make a significant contribution to the EU economy's energy efficiency, notably in the buildings and transport sector. In this context, I welcome the Commission's efforts to promote smart metering and smart grids in energy production, distribution and use. I would stress, in particular, the call on the Member States to facilitate the availability of broadband internet to all EU citizens in order to ensure equal access to online services.

Ilda Figueiredo (GUE/NGL), *in writing*. – (PT) There can be no doubt that mobilising information and communication technologies (ICT) can facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient economy, since this is also a way of reducing energy consumption, increasing energy security and helping to curb environmental damage, particularly greenhouse-gas emissions.

Nonetheless, we know that progress is slow in harnessing the potential of energy efficiency and energy savings, not only because existing economic interest groups are looking after their own interests, but also because of the low level of aid for the necessary changes.

We therefore support various proposals included in the report, specifically those that incentivise the harnessing of ICT in the planning of a new transport policy and increase intermodality in the transport sector, or those that call on the Commission to develop a different vision for aid priorities, taking into account these issues of mobilisation of ICT to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient economy in various areas beyond transport and mobility, such as industry, health and housing.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) For some years now, the European Union has been setting itself important objectives in relation to energy saving and the reduction of carbon emissions. The information and communication technologies (ICT) sector is without doubt one means of improving the energy efficiency of the individual Member States. ICTs can, in fact, help to monitor and manage energy consumption, and to provide new applications and technologies to improve the use of natural resources and foster the use of cleaner production and industrial processes. The broad public consultation process launched by the European Commission clarified the manner in which ICTs can help to improve energy efficiency. The European Commission has calculated that ICT-based systems can cut energy consumption in buildings – currently put at some 40% of overall energy consumption in Europe – by up to 17%, and transport carbon emissions by up to 27%. Urban organisation achieved through the use of ICTs can substantially reduce the energy impact

of urban areas. Therefore, action should be taken to disseminate good practice and raise awareness among local decision makers of the benefits that ICTs have to offer.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) The European Union has reaffirmed its commitment to a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2020. It will be difficult to maintain this commitment without fully exploiting the potential offered by ICTs. ICTs can, in actual fact, significantly reduce CO₂ emissions.

ICTs are responsible for 1.75% of the carbon emissions in the services sector in Europe and produce 0.25% of the emissions associated with the production of ICT-based equipment and of electronic consumer goods. The remaining 98% of emissions come from other sectors of the economy and of society. It is therefore a good idea to harmonise the methods for measuring and quantifying energy performance so as to have data that enable us to develop innovative energy-saving strategies and to prevent the phenomenon of 'green disinformation'.

I should like to point out, in this context, that ICTs can play a vital role in the achievement of fundamental objectives, insofar as they are present in nearly every sector of the economy and help to increase productivity by more than 40%. For these reasons I reaffirm my full support for this strategy, which combines appropriate economic and industrial development with an environmentally sustainable strategy.

Rovana Plumb (S&D), *in writing*. – (RO) Information and communications technologies (ICT) offer in every Member State a means of increasing energy efficiency and provide new applications and technologies for improving the use of natural resources and for transforming industrial production and processes into an eco-efficient economy. ICT-based systems can reduce energy consumption in buildings, which currently account for 40% of the total energy consumed in Europe, by up to 17%, as well as carbon emissions in the transport sector by up to 27%. The ICT sector employs 6.6 million people in the 27 EU Member States, stimulates the innovative capacity of every sector and contributes more than 40% of the global increase in productivity. The European Commission and Committee of the Regions must urgently produce the 'practical guide for local and regional authorities' on how to improve energy performance through the innovative use of ICT. This will set out the way in which the authorities can use ICT as part of their plans for climate change. It will also describe how the cohesion funds can support business partnerships for creating innovative ICT applications in order to encourage and support cities and municipalities in the use of ICT for reducing emissions.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – We, Greens, voted in favour of this report. All the original parts of the text that some groups wanted to delete remained in.

Daciana Octavia Sârbu (S&D), *in writing*. – I was rapporteur for the Environment Committee's opinion for this report, and I am acutely aware of the potential for the ICT sector to deliver considerable energy savings in the European Union, particularly in buildings and the transport sector. But we must also bear in mind the effects of the so-called 'digital divide', which can be seen both within and between Member States. It perpetuates social and economic inequality and it reduces the capacity of ICT to deliver wide-reaching benefits in terms of energy efficiency. The importance of access to high-speed internet for everyone is paramount. Member States, with the assistance of the Commission, should make more efforts to roll out the necessary infrastructure to ensure that all European citizens and businesses can benefit from the available technologies. This would directly address the inequality and injustice created by the digital divide, and is the only way to ensure that the energy-efficient potential of ICT is fully realised.

Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) Taking into account the fact that the measures put in place to achieve the objective of 20% energy savings by 2020 are working too slowly, there is a need to increase and accelerate innovativeness in information and communication technologies and to achieve a significant increase in the proportion of energy obtained from renewable sources. It should be noted that when the transport sector grows, carbon dioxide emissions also rise rapidly. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on applying information and communication technologies in this very sector, in order not only to reduce the level of emissions, but also to prevent it from rising. ICT solutions must be included when planning the new European transport policy. This can bring about a reduction in traffic density in transport, which will have beneficial effects on the natural environment. All of these measures will not only bring measurable benefits for the climate, but will also reduce the costs associated with energy use and will lead to the creation of environment-friendly jobs. However, it should be borne in mind that the new Member States are not able to adapt so quickly to the requirements introduced by the European Union. We should also take account of the interests of these countries, because they constitute a significant group which still uses traditional sources of energy. Time and financial resources are needed to change this.

Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE), *in writing*. – (LT) I support the European Commission's initiative to use information and communications technologies (ICT) in order to improve the Union's energy efficiency and increase the competitiveness of European industry. According to the calculations presented by the European Commission, the use of ICT is an excellent measure allowing us to reduce energy consumption and at the same time reduce the amount of carbon dioxide emissions by as much as 27%, something which is very important. This would also reduce damage to the environment. I completely agree with and support the position expressed by the rapporteur that the application of ICT will stimulate European industry and the new technologies market, and this would contribute to market resuscitation or the creation of new jobs. I believe that it is necessary to take all measures to both begin applying ICT in those Member States, where it has not yet been applied, and improve it where it is already being applied. In particular I would like to stress the importance of ICT in the planning of a new European transport policy. Logistics are an important factor in the rationalisation of transport and reduction of carbon emissions. It is important to recognise the need to increase public and private investment in ICT tools in order to develop smart energy infrastructures for transport. The use of intelligent transport systems (ITS) applied to road transport and interfaced with other transport modes can help reduce congestion and its harmful effects on the environment. As a member of the Committee on Regional Development (REGI), I would like to stress that we must encourage Member States to disseminate good practice and raise awareness among local decision makers of the benefits that ICTs have to offer.

Report: Vittorio Prodi (A7-0057/2010)

Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) The European Commission White Paper on adapting to climate change contains many ideas on which we must focus, now and in the future, in order to curb this threat linked to global warming.

I particularly welcome, therefore, the passage in the report that emphasises the importance of integrating the adaptation dimension into all EU policies, whether in relation to agriculture or fisheries, or linked to forest management, with a horizontal and cross-sector approach that can guarantee the consistency of the measures that will be implemented from time to time.

Sebastian Valentin Bodu (PPE), *in writing*. – (RO) Europe is going through a period when it needs to recognise the pressing urgency to take measures to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate. The White Paper on climate change is a step forward towards standardising the actions aimed at cutting carbon emissions at European level.

In view of its ambitious target of a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, the European Union needs to move much faster than it is at the moment. Member States, whether new or old, are duty bound to make increased, equal efforts and realise that preventing or treating a disease in its initial stage has a higher rate of success than treating a chronic condition.

It would be sad if Europe realises too late that climate change can affect the chance of agriculture being viable as a main source of food for both Europe's and the world's population. We are already facing extreme weather conditions, drought and flooding every year. It is difficult to imagine at present how it could be worse than this. However, the experts are not very optimistic. This is why actions aimed at mitigating the impact of human activity on the climate are key to continuing normality.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I welcome the European Commission's initiative to present a broad policy framework for European action on climate adaptation policy. However, mitigation and adaptation measures must not be separate. I would stress the importance of the Emission Trading System (ETS) Directive, under which Member States should earmark at least 50% of ETS revenues for both mitigation and adaptation measures. I also believe that additional measures must be prioritised to promote the EU's strategy aimed at achieving a 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020, with a view to making this objective legally binding at Union level. Of the adaptation measures presented, I would stress solidarity among EU Member States towards disadvantaged regions and those most affected by climate change. To achieve this solidarity, it is important for the Commission to consider the reinforcement of public funds devoted to international cooperation in the forthcoming 8th Framework Programme for R&D to support its fight against climate change. I would also stress the importance of the role of research and technology in developing a low-carbon society, in view of the Commission's recent communication on the Strategic Energy Technology Plan, and the logic of intervention between the public and private sectors as well as between Union, national and regional financing.

Proinsias De Rossa (S&D), *in writing*. – I voted in favour of this resolution which welcomes the Commission White Paper on an EU strategy for climate change adaptation and proposes a range of measures across several policy fields. Even if we succeed in keeping global warming at safe levels, climate change entails unavoidable consequences which require adaptation efforts. Climate-proofing and adaptation need to be mainstreamed across policy areas, especially those concerning water, soil, agriculture and fisheries, and coastal areas. Biodiversity is at risk, but there is also a need to ensure that urban, transport and infrastructure planning does take climate change into account. Civil protection structures have to prioritise preparedness for floods and droughts. It is important to keep the social and public health implications of this challenge in mind. It may gravely impact on respiratory health and increase the incidence of vector-borne diseases. Deprived communities, poor children and elderly people are amongst the most vulnerable to climate change health risks. Revenue generated by the Emissions Trading Scheme must contribute to the adaptation effort and the EU budget needs to reflect the urgency of coping with such challenges.

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for the report on the Commission White Paper: 'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action'. Adaptation measures are necessary in order to meet the challenges posed by climate change. I believe that adaptation to climate change is necessary and will allow us to improve current emergency management systems, management that could be more efficient by combining satellite and ground-based observations.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) As I said yesterday regarding the vote on the Le Foll report on EU agriculture and climate change, 'environmental concerns, whilst legitimate and necessary, must be duly weighed against the impact of the proposals in terms of agricultural sustainability and productivity'. The same is true in all sectors of activity, so it is essential that the EU create a strategy for addressing climate change, making a serious commitment to sustainable development and seeking to reduce its carbon emissions, without thereby putting its productive activities – especially industry – at risk. Any climate change policy must – particularly against a backdrop of economic and financial crisis – seek economic efficiency and sustainability, putting innovation and research at the service of new techniques and solutions that are more environmentally friendly and equally efficient and competitive. The focus must be on clean sources of energy, on the more efficient use of natural resources, and on strong investment in research and technologies that are more environmentally friendly; this will make it possible to maintain European competitiveness and will allow the creation of more jobs within a framework of sustainable development.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The EU must retain and reinforce its leadership role in the international fight against climate change. Scientific research in this area is essential if we are to take a path that is right and safe, whether for combating climate change or for adapting to it. The issue of adaptation is cross-cutting and affects several sectoral policies. There must be greater political coordination by Member States in these areas. In fact, I advocate making national adaptation plans based on a common European framework obligatory. I believe that we must have common European policies in areas such as, for example, water, energy and forests; for example, I would reiterate the need for a European charter of risks for the coastal borders. Analysis of the risks represented by climate change to Europe's most vulnerable regions is urgently required. I also believe that there must be European targets for the efficiency of public water-supply systems. I would also highlight that natural ecosystems are the Earth's most important carbon sinks, sequestering 50% of global annual greenhouse gas emissions and contributing to both mitigation and adaptation.

Bruno Gollnisch (NI), *in writing*. – (FR) This report is in keeping with the belief that climate change is global, disastrous and inevitably human in origin. However, just like this belief, which is now almost religious and no longer subject to dispute, it is excessive. Like everything excessive, it is ridiculous. Thus, without even waiting for any scientific assessment, an absolute precautionary principle should be applied to cope with the worst possible scenarios in terms of the possible impact of so-called global warming on ecosystems, but also on habitable areas, industrial facilities, and so on. I note in passing that such prudence is rarely applied to other measures linked to the environment and human health, such as GMOs for example. On the basis of real or imaginary risks, ranging from diseases possibly linked to global warming to forest fires reputed to be solely due to this same phenomenon, via floods and the overheating of central power stations, we are being urged to accept the interference of the Commission and of European policies in absolutely all areas, up to and including the use of the smallest plot of land. It is a shame that so many trees, recognised carbon reservoirs that they are, were sacrificed to print this text. As the poet said: hey lumberjack, stop a moment.

Jarosław Kalinowski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) Unavoidable climate change is forcing society and the European Union economy to accommodate to a new reality. I think there is a need for an adaptation policy which should be appropriate to the character and type of changes which are taking place, and should also include

a strategy for the protection of areas which are most at risk. I fully agree with the rapporteur and think that in order to coordinate these measures better it is extremely important to implement a system of information exchange and monitoring at international level, but also at regional and local levels. I am pleased, above all, by the emphasis on the significant role of the common agricultural policy, which in the process of adaptation to climate change plays a key role as a guardian of ecosystems and biological diversity. Therefore, I think projects which prevent or alleviate the effects of droughts and floods, supporting farmers who work in difficult conditions, are very important.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I voted in favour of the entire motion for a resolution on the Commission White Paper entitled 'Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action' because I believe that it is of special interest to Europe, in general, and to Italy, in particular, due to its geoclimatic characteristics. There are, in fact, obvious difficulties in managing Italy's hydrologic resources, as is clear not only from the frequent droughts in the south during the summer months, but also from certain episodes of flooding, such as the one that occurred in December with the River Serchio in Tuscany. In Italy we also have the terrible problem of summer fires, and that is why it is absolutely crucial to improve safety conditions. Although the draft White Paper is at present only an initial framework of reference, I believe that it certainly makes a significant contribution, especially where the management of emergencies is concerned. At the same time it outlines a general strategic approach on increasing the resilience of the EU to the impacts of climate change.

Andres Perello Rodriguez (S&D), *in writing*. – (ES) A large proportion of Parliament, like the Spanish delegation of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, has formally opposed paragraph 41 of this resolution, which asks for the principle of subsidiarity to be applied to land policy. We all recognise the diversity that exists between the different regions of the Union, but it is precisely for this reason that, as the resolution states, Southern Europe suffers much more from the pressure of climate change, and needs Europe and its common policies. This is a question of solidarity that the whole of the EU would benefit from. We therefore deeply regret the disappearance of the first proposal from the text, in which Mr Prodi asked for the Directive on land to be unblocked in the Council. It is crucial that we launch this legislative instrument, which is essential for adaptation and, in particular, for tackling the risk of deterioration and desertification. It is true that the risk is more present in Southern Europe, but let us not forget that climate change affects all of Europe's environmental assets. Those to whom this resolution is addressed should know that a large proportion of Parliament is still calling for a supportive and common policy.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – We, as Greens, voted in favour of this report. The good news is that the amendment to delete the focus on nuclear safety was defeated.

Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE), *in writing*. – (PL) The results of work conducted by scientists show that the effects of climate change are going to have an increasing influence on the natural environment and the economy as well as on our daily lives. Therefore, taking action intended to adapt to the present and future effects of climate change is a serious challenge for society throughout the world. Decisions concerning the best ways of adapting to climate change must be made based on reliable scientific and economic analyses, but not all regions have access to information of the right quality. Therefore, the idea to create a climate change monitoring platform would seem to be a good one. The platform would be useful for the exchange of information, experience and best practices at European, regional and local levels. However, I am not certain if in assuming the role of leader in the international fight against global climate warming, as is recommended in the document, the EU is not trying to take on too much responsibility for global affairs. It seems to me that when we are having to deal with challenges such as the economic crisis and the need to create growth, we should not be treating expenditure on the fight against global climate warming as a priority. Irrespective of the measures which will be put in place for adapting to climate change, it should also be borne in mind that some countries will be exposed to exceptionally high costs of implementation of the adaptation policy, and leaving these countries without any financial support may lead to an increase in the differences in development of different Member States.

Dominique Vlasto (PPE), *in writing*. – (FR) In my report in the Committee on Transport and Tourism, I regretted the lack of consideration given to the transport sector in the European strategy for adapting to climate change, when it is of considerable economic importance and one of the principal sources of CO₂ emissions. I therefore welcome the fact that this report places transport once again at the heart of this problem. We must make substantial efforts to successfully help enterprises and users adapt to climate change. The success of our policy depends on adequate and innovative methods of funding being mobilised to limit as

much as possible the impact on people, ecological balance and economic activities. Furthermore, our strategy must take into account sensitive geographical areas, such as coastal, marine and mountain areas, which are particularly vulnerable and will bear the brunt of climate change if we fail to take suitable protection measures. Our Parliament must urgently adopt effective adaptation mechanisms for the transport sector, which must no longer simply be the cause of the problem but must become a solution in the fight against climate change.

Report: Andrea Cozzolino (A7-0100/2010)

Ryszard Czarnecki (ECR), *in writing*. – Securing value for money, effective management, and the elimination of fraud are key priorities of the ECR Group for the EU budget. We therefore support the thrust of the Cozzolino report and most of its conclusions.

The ECR group cannot, however, endorse the concept of a European Public Prosecutor. This office risks being a dangerous first step towards European competence for aspects of criminal law and the focus on its creation is a distraction from making existing systems and bodies work effectively.

As the ECR amendment to remove the paragraph supporting progress towards a European Public Prosecutor was rejected, the ECR abstained on the final vote.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) Although I, like the rapporteur, consider it positive that the number of financial irregularities reported to the Commission by the Member States fell from EUR 1 024 million in 2007 to EUR 783.2 million in 2008, I believe that the goal will be to achieve a level of EUR 0 million of financial irregularities per annum. In order to achieve that, I consider it essential to adopt measures that establish greater transparency in the fight against tax fraud – especially in VAT – and all financial crimes; greater cooperation between governments in the case of cross-border fraud; improvements in the quality of data and constant updating of national databases; and rapid responses by governments to requests for information. There must also be better administration and monitoring of applications for cohesion funds, and there must be provision for applying sanctions to Member States that do not make good use of these funds. I would also stress the essential contribution of the European Anti-Fraud Office to reducing these figures.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) The annual report on the protection of the Communities' financial interests for 2008 records that the financial impact of irregularities, as far as they have been identified, fell from EUR 1 024 million in 2007 to EUR 783.2 million in 2008, with reductions being recorded in all spending areas except direct expenditure and pre-accession funds. I would stress, in particular, the need to include information on irregularities that will clarify the proportion of the total resources affected by errors and suspected cases of fraud. Combating fraud and corruption is an important duty of the European institutions and all Member States, which must provide all necessary resources to combat these scourges effectively so as to protect the financial interests of the Union and its taxpayers.

Nuno Melo (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) At this time of economic and financial crisis, not a single euro of the EU budget can be wasted, and this is even truer when such waste is a result of fraud that leads to Union funds being paid out inappropriately. Over the years we have seen irregularities decrease significantly. Nevertheless, we cannot be satisfied with reducing these irregularities to marginal amounts or to almost zero. The EU has to adopt budgetary control mechanisms that are effective at early prevention and detection of fraud, so that public funds are only made available when they are actually going to be used correctly, notwithstanding effective punishment for those who break the rules by attempting to illegitimately appropriate such funds, which are scarce by nature.

Franz Obermayr (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) For me the fight against fraud is a very important concern, in particular with regard to the regional funds and the pre-accession funds. However, the proposed measures for combating fraud have too much of a centralist focus. I have therefore abstained from voting.

Aldo Patriciello (PPE), *in writing*. – (IT) I am pleased that the financial impact of irregularities, as far as they have been identified, fell from EUR 1 024 million in 2007 to EUR 783.2 million in 2008 (the fall affected all spending areas, except direct expenditure and pre-accession funds). I fully support the work done by the Commission, and I would point out that the fight against fraud and corruption is a clear duty of the European institutions and of all the Member States.

Given the particular economic situation plaguing the whole of Europe, I agree on the need to safeguard the Union's financial interests and to combat organised crime which, according to national indicators, is increasing its capacity for collusion within institutions, precisely by means of fraud against the EU budget.

I therefore think it crucial to enact effective legislation to improve administrative cooperation in tackling harmful tax practices and to ensure the smooth functioning of the internal market. In this sense, I support the proposal for a Council directive on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation, while stressing the importance of increasing the responsibility of the Member States, starting with the quality of the information entered into databases.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – In the final vote, I said in favour. The amendment by the ECR Group, which I voted against, was defeated.

Czesław Adam Siekierski (PPE), in writing. – (PL) It is worth noting that in 2008 there was a significant fall in irregularities in comparison with the previous year. The greatest improvement occurred in the area of spending on agriculture. The report shows that the estimated amount of irregularities fell by 34%. However, the greatest growth was recorded in the area of pre-accession funds, where the wrong spending of resources rose by as much as 90.6%, but it should be remembered that they are not Member States and they lack experience. Despite this improvement in the situation in 2008, a certain part of EU budgetary resources is still being badly spent. To a certain extent, this results from a lack of effective mechanisms of control and supervision. The European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), which has existed since 1999, has had many successes in the fight against embezzlement. However, it is essential to guarantee its full operational independence. I support the rapporteur's proposal to enable OLAF to draw more extensively on internal audits carried out by the Commission, rather than relying only on information provided by officials or Member States. What role should be played by Member States and their systems of supervision and auditing? Combating fraud in European projects should be a priority for us. Honesty and responsibility in spending the limited means of the EU budget will allow us to save funds, which can then be used in fighting the consequences of the recession. We must not forget that the resources in the EU budget belong to all of us – to the taxpayers. Therefore, we should guarantee that they are spent in the most effective way.

Viktor Uspaskich (ALDE), in writing. – (LT) I would like to stress that combating fraud and corruption is an important duty of the European institutions and all Member States. However, I would like to draw particular attention to the fact that in some countries corruption in the distribution of European Union funds is directly linked to the discrediting of policies conducted within these countries. Separate political and financial clans are forming in these countries that aim to control the distribution of European Union funds. Therefore, the European Parliament, the European Commission and other important European Union institutions should draw attention to discrimination against and discrediting of policies, political organisations, political opponents and opposition leaders at national level. The European Union that fosters democracy must firstly ensure that the opposition parties of its Member States have the opportunity to work and express themselves freely and control actions for corruption prevention. I would also like to draw attention to the fact that European Union money should be used to improve the infrastructure of Member States, to educate people and such things. Investing European money purely in infrastructure would benefit both the country and its trade. There would no longer be 'poor' business people who ask for but do not receive support. Furthermore, in this way we would not need to control the distribution of European Union funds to thousands of stakeholders, that is aid recipients, which would mean that thousands of racketed subjects would also disappear. Therefore, all the attention should be directed at the public use of that money.

Report: Tamás Deutsch (A7-0062/2010)

Alfredo Antoniozzi (PPE), in writing. – (IT) I wish to take this important opportunity to comment on the vote on the Luxembourg-based European Investment Bank's annual report in order to insist, as I have already done in some questions, on the importance of increasing the budget for the EIB's financial instruments in support of the city centre development and regeneration plans.

The instruments that currently exist, such as the JESSICA Fund, are one of the few financial engineering instruments that a region or municipality can use to finance urban development projects. The interventions also extend to council housing, but only in relation to areas that complement the project and to the energy renovation and improvement of buildings. I therefore take this opportunity to stress that, in my opinion, the JESSICA Fund should be extended to the financing of new (obviously environmentally friendly) buildings too, since in this way it would help local authorities to address the housing problem in our cities as well.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), in writing. – (PT) I welcome the 2008 annual report of the European Investment Bank (EIB), and encourage it to continue its activities to promote the development of the European economy and foster growth, stimulate employment, and promote interregional and social cohesion. I also welcome the importance given by the EIB to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to sustainable

energy and the mitigation of climate change, and to the investments in the convergence regions of the EU particularly hard hit by the recent economic slowdown. The EIB responded quickly to the global economic crisis, in particular through the Economic Recovery Plan, and for those Member States which have been most severely hit by the crisis. I call, however, for future reports to detail major loans supplementing European Regional Development Fund grants to regions implementing technologically advanced programmes or programmes related to renewable or clean energy supplies. In the same way, the reports on the investment facility should include information on the results of programmes financed. By making adequate funding available, the EIB should play a greater role in supporting infrastructure investment, green technologies, innovation and SMEs, as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Diogo Feio (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Investment Bank (EIB) plays an essential role in helping Member States face up to the serious economic, financial and social crisis. With this in mind, I believe that the increased funds allocated, in particular, to the European Union's cohesion policy have been crucial in reducing the impact on the least-favoured and worst-hit regions. The increased funding for small and medium-sized enterprises, which represent the majority of Europe's enterprise, and the extra funding for research and development would help to further alleviate the effects of this crisis. Therefore, bearing in mind that the Treaty of Lisbon has entered into force and the current and future challenges that are emerging for a European Union that is in a difficult economic and social situation, it is essential to reinforce the activities of the European Investment Bank, make its activities more transparent and set the right priorities for it.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Investment Bank (EIB) was established in 1958 by the Treaty of Rome. The EIB, as the long-term lending bank of the European Union, lends money to the public and private sectors for projects of European interest, using the financial markets and its own funds. Its main target is to contribute to the integration, a balanced and sustainable development as well as an economic and social cohesion of the EU Member States. In 2008, the EIB had to face unprecedented challenges, as the global economic crisis has reached the European Union's economies as well. In terms of crisis management, I am pleased to highlight the EIB's quick response to the global economic crisis by self-financing an increase of its capital and hence raising its volume of lending in support of the European Economic Recovery Plan. I therefore welcome the EIB's annual report for 2008 and the adoption of this report, which encourages it to continue its activities to promote the development of the European economy and foster growth, stimulate employment, and promote interregional and social cohesion.

Nuno Melo (PPE), in writing. – (PT) The European Investment Bank (EIB) plays a very important role in the EU's economy, because it is the guarantor of funding for operations inside Europe that are connected to the following: ensuring economic and social cohesion; preparing for the knowledge economy; developing trans-European transport and access networks; supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); protecting and improving the environment; and ensuring sustainable, competitive and secure energy. It will not be possible to implement the 'Europe 2020' Strategy without the support of the EIB, which will have to make available the funds necessary to carry out projects in the areas of infrastructure, green technology, innovation and SMEs.

Alfredo Pallone (PPE), in writing. – (IT) The EIB has seen its role expand in 2008 as a result of the financial crisis. Against the backdrop of a liquidity crisis, the EIB has continued to grant loans to the public and private sectors for projects of European interest, using the financial markets and own resources. In addition to stimulating the national economies, the EU also took a decision concerning the European Economic Recovery Plan, assigning an important role to the EIB, especially with regard to the enhanced financing for SMEs, energy from renewable sources and clean transport. As a response to the crisis, the EIB has significantly revised upwards its targets: in order to help businesses and to encourage economic recovery, the EIB has substantially increased the volume of its lending, disbursing EUR 10 billion more than expected. In particular, loans to SMEs have increased by 42%. Furthermore, the Bank has developed new risk-sharing financial instruments, simplified lending procedures and accelerated the implementation of projects in the Member States and in the sectors that are most severely affected by the crisis. The report stresses the positive effects of these measures, while at the same time calls for a thorough follow-up of the real effects of the support programmes provided for SMEs.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), in writing. – That was an easy one. I voted in favour in the final vote.

Motions for resolutions: The mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria (RC-B7-0247/2010)

Mara Bizzotto (EFD), in writing. – (IT) The joint motion for a resolution on the recent inter-ethnic atrocities in Nigeria, on which we are voting, seems satisfactory from the point of view of the principles and the

guidelines that our House wishes to pass on to the other European institutions that are responsible for the EU's external action. We have to take action to ensure the political stabilisation of Nigeria and to create solid foundations for its economic and social development: we are fully aware of the general considerations; there is no shortage of them, given the wealth of natural resources in Nigeria. Solving the political, economic and social issues can make the environment peaceful, less subject to inter-ethnic tension and able to reject the acts of violence that, tragically, we have seen become more frequent over the last decade. As well as recognising the fact that the responsibility for the mass violence between Christians and Muslims should be ascribed to both ethnic groups, we ought perhaps to have made it clear that another worrying factor, which also relates to the episodes of violence that have occurred, is the gradual penetration in Nigeria of radical Islam, a very clear expression of which is the adoption by 12 of the 36 states of sharia as the law of the land. However, for the general reasons stated, I voted in favour of the joint motion for a resolution.

Maria Da Graça Carvalho (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) I deeply regret the recent events that took place this January and March in Jos, where hundreds of people were the victims of religious and ethnic confrontations. The conflict in Nigeria has roots in religious, economic, ethnic, social, historical and political reasons. Given that Nigeria is the eighth-largest oil producer in the world, it is regrettable that the majority of the country's inhabitants live below the poverty line. The adverse effects of climate change have also been contributing to the worsening of the situation in Nigeria. I believe that, in a country as oil-rich as Nigeria, equal access to resources and income redistribution are necessary for the peaceful resolution of these conflicts. I call on the Federal Government of Nigeria to ensure equal rights for all citizens, to fight the problems of control of fertile land, access to resources, unemployment, poverty, and to mitigate climate change. I call on the Commission to pursue dialogue with Nigeria under the Cotonou Agreement, to examine the deeper causes of the conflict, whilst giving consideration to issues that are fundamental to sustainable development, such as climate change, energy security, capacity building and education.

Edite Estrela (S&D), *in writing*. – (PT) I voted for the European Parliament motion for a resolution on the mass atrocities in Jos, Nigeria. I strongly condemn the recent violence in and around Jos, when many hundreds of people were killed in ethnic and religious clashes. The EU must pursue political dialogue with Nigeria, under Article 8 of the revised Cotonou Agreement, and urgently tackle issues relating to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, as enshrined in universal, regional and national human rights instruments.

Diogo Feio (PPE), *in writing*. – (PT) This is not the first time that Nigeria has suffered a conflict that has threatened to split the country. In this respect, I would point out the civil war that ravaged the country for three years, between 1967 and 1970, and almost led to the independence of the south-east of the country. Although the Igbo revolt was crushed because the military power of the central government prevented Biafran independence, the truth is that the ethnic, cultural and religious differences persist and are on the increase there, making the country a classic case of a state that is under permanent threat of disintegration. Nigeria's borders were drawn up by the colonial powers, which paid no attention to the aforementioned differences. That does not, however, mean that responsibility for the country's conflicts lies essentially with Europeans. It is time for African leaders to abandon this tired old excuse and try to serve their own citizens lucidly and capably in both projects and proposals. Africa will be able to be what Africans yearn for it to be as soon as they have leaders that are up to the challenge. The massacres in Jos are another profoundly sad, regrettable and bloody page in the history of a country that is accumulating them at too quick a pace.

Sylvie Guillaume (S&D), *in writing*. – (FR) I think that there was an urgent need for the European Parliament to condemn the ongoing massacres in Nigeria and to call for a return to peace. Given the instability and the fragility of the most highly populated country in Africa, where the majority of the population suffer from poverty, this motion for a resolution may act as a foundation for strengthening the political dialogue between the European Union and Nigeria, and for a more detailed study aimed at finding viable short- and long-term solutions to end this violence and to re-establish a lasting peace. As MEPs, I believe we have a role to play in the defence and promotion of human rights, which are violated on a daily basis in Nigeria. Therefore, in my opinion, the clause demanding that those guilty of violence be tried in a fair manner is fundamental. In the light of all these measures, which of course will not all be easy to apply, I was eager to vote in favour of this joint motion for a resolution.

Andreas Mölzer (NI), *in writing*. – (DE) In Nigeria there have been repeated outbreaks of violence between Christians and Muslims and each of these two groups represent around half of the population. These disturbances are now taking place even more frequently. Trivial matters are causing violent clashes. Even the curfew which has been in force since January and the stationing of troops in the area did not prevent new massacres from occurring. The fact that the long absence of President Yar'Adua plunged western Nigeria into a political crisis, that there were serious clashes between Christians and Muslims in the central Nigerian

town of Jos and that the ceasefire in the oil-rich Niger delta has come to an end does not bode well for the future, following the death of the president. When Muslim nomads attacked Christian villages at the beginning of the year and at least 500 people were murdered, it is said that the army only responded hours after receiving the first report. What was lacking was an outcry from the EU. When the Swiss people voted against the building of minarets in a referendum, Muslim states threatened Switzerland with economic sanctions and jihad. However, when Christians are murdered because of their religion, the EU takes months to react. The European Union must act as an honest broker in this respect and respond more quickly. This is made clear in the motion for a resolution, which is why I have voted in favour of it.

Raül Romeva i Rueda (Verts/ALE), *in writing*. – I voted, of course, in favour of such an important resolution, and I supported very much the oral amendment proposed by my colleague Kiil-Nielsen to call on the Nigerian authorities to repeal the recent move by some Nigerian state governors to execute death row inmates.

13. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes

14. Documents received: see Minutes

15. Implementing measures (Rule 88): see Minutes

16. Decisions concerning certain documents: see Minutes

17. Forwarding of texts adopted during the sitting : see Minutes

18. Written declarations included in the register (Rule 123): see Minutes

19. Dates of forthcoming sittings: see Minutes

20. Adjournment of the session

(The sitting closed at 13.05)