### European Parliament

**2008-2009 SESSION**  
Sitting of 9 October 2008  
TEXTS ADOPTED  
The Minutes of this session have been published in OJ C 316 E, 11.12.2008.

### Resolutions, recommendations and opinions

#### RESOLUTIONS

**European Parliament**  
**Thursday 9 October 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice No</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2010/C 9 E/01 | Stepping up the fight against undeclared work  
European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on stepping up the fight against undeclared work (2008/2035(INI)) | 1    |
| 2010/C 9 E/02 | Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty  
European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU (2008/2034(INI)) | 11   |
| 2010/C 9 E/03 | IASCF  
European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the IASCF review of the constitution, public accountability, and composition of the IASB: proposals for change | 26   |
| 2010/C 9 E/04 | Belarus  
European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the situation in Belarus after the parliamentary elections of 28 September 2008 | 28   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notice No</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/05)</td>
<td>Suspension of the WTO Doha Round</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round and the future of the Doha Development Agenda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/06)</td>
<td>Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union (2008/2074(INI))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/07)</td>
<td>Arctic Governance</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic governance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/08)</td>
<td>Implementation of the social legislation relating to road transport</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the implementation of social legislation relating to road transport (2008/2062(INI))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/09)</td>
<td>Lamfalussy follow-up — Future Structure of Supervision</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 with recommendations to the Commission on Lamfalussy follow-up: future structure of supervision (2008/2148(INI))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANNEX TO THE RESOLUTION DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL(S) REQUESTED</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/10)</td>
<td>Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Parliament</td>
<td>Thursday 9 October 2008</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/11)</td>
<td>Communicating Europe in partnership</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Parliament decision of 9 October 2008 on the approval of the joint declaration on Communicating Europe in Partnership (2007/2222(ACI))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANNEX</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMMUNICATING EUROPE IN PARTNERSHIP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2010/C 9 E/12)</td>
<td>Use by Parliament of the symbols of the Union (new Rule 202a)</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III  Preparatory acts

European Parliament

Thursday 9 October 2008

(2010/C 9 E/13) Protocol to the EC-Switzerland Agreement on the free movement of persons (participation of Bulgaria and Romania) ***
European Parliament legislative resolution of 9 October 2008 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, of a Protocol to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons, regarding the participation, as contracting parties, of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania pursuant to their accession to the European Union (9116/2008 — C6-0209/2008 — 2008/0080(AVC)) 69

(2010/C 9 E/14) Establishment of the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) *

(2010/C 9 E/15) EC-Ukraine Agreement in relation to preservation of commitments on trade in services *
Key to symbols used

* Consultation procedure
**I Cooperation procedure: first reading
**II Cooperation procedure: second reading
*** Assent procedure
***I Codecision procedure: first reading
***II Codecision procedure: second reading
***III Codecision procedure: third reading

(The type of procedure is determined by the legal basis proposed by the Commission.)

Political amendments: new or amended text is highlighted in bold italics; deletions are indicated by the symbol ■.

Technical corrections and adaptations by the services: new or replacement text is highlighted in italics and deletions are indicated by the symbol ||.
(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Stepping up the fight against undeclared work

P6_TA(2008)0466

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on stepping up the fight against undeclared work (2008/2035(INI))

(2010/C 9 E/01)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission Communication of 24 October 2007 entitled Stepping up the fight against undeclared work (COM(2007)0628),

— having regard to its resolution of 21 September 2000 on the Commission Communication on undeclared work (1),

— having regard to the resolution of the Council and the representatives of the Member States, adopted in the Council meeting of 22 April 1999 on a Code of Conduct for improved cooperation between authorities of the Member States concerning the combating of transnational social security benefit and contribution fraud and undeclared work, and concerning the transnational hiring-out of workers (2),


— having regard to the Commission Communication of 14 January 2003 entitled ‘The future of the European Employment Strategy (EES) — A strategy for full employment and better jobs for all’ (COM(2003)0006),

— having regard to Council Decisions 2003/578/EC (4) and 2005/600/EC (5) of 22 July 2003 and 12 July 2005 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States, and in particular guidelines Nos 9 and 21,

(1) OJ C 146, 17.5.2001, p. 102.
(2) OJ C 125, 6.5.1999, p. 1.
(3) OJ L 277, 28.10.1999, p. 34.
— having regard to the Council resolution on transforming undeclared work into regular employment (1),

— having regard to the Communication of 25 January 2006 from the Commission to the Spring European Council ‘Time to move up a gear — The new partnership for growth and jobs’ (COM(2006)0030),

— having regard to Council Decision 2006/702/EC of 6 October 2006 on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion (2),


— having regard to its resolution of 23 May 2007 on promoting decent work for all (3),

— having regard to its resolution of 11 July 2007 on modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century (4),

— having regard to its resolution of 26 October 2006 on implementation of Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers (5),


— having regard to its resolution of 29 November 2007 on common principles of flexicurity (6),

— having regard to the Commission Communication of 24 October 2007 on the Outcome of the Public Consultation on the Commission’s Green Paper ‘Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century’ (COM(2007)0627),


— having regard to the Decent Work Agenda of the International Labour Organization (ILO),

— having regard to the ILO’s fundamental labour standards and to its conventions and recommendations on labour administration and labour inspection, which are an international benchmark for ensuring that legal provisions concerning working conditions and worker protection are applied,

— having regard to Convention 143 on migrant workers (1975) and the ILO’s supplementary provisions on migrant workers, which provide for the adoption of all necessary and appropriate measures to suppress clandestine movements of migrants for employment and the illegal employment of migrants; having regard also to the provisions regarding the application of administrative, civil and penal sanctions in respect of the illegal employment of migrant workers,

— having regard to the Council Recommendation of 22 December 1995 on harmonizing means of combating illegal immigration and illegal employment (7),

— having regard to the Council Recommendation of 27 September 1996 on combating the illegal employment of third-country nationals (8),

— having regard to the conclusions of the informal Meeting of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs in Berlin, 18-20 January 2007, on ‘good work’;

— having regard to the report by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EUROFOUND) on tackling undeclared work in the European Union (1),

— having regard to Articles 136 and 145 of the EC Treaty,

— having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0365/2008),

A. whereas undeclared work is a complex phenomenon, which is still on the rise in several Member States, since it is influenced by numerous economic, social, institutional, regulatory and cultural factors,

B. whereas undeclared work is a particularly worrying and persistent feature of European labour markets which risks affecting the Member States’ economies and the financial sustainability of the European social model by constraining economic growth and budgetary and social policies; whereas, equally, it is responsible for distortions of competition in the internal market because it creates unfair competition with regard to other States and undertakings;

C. whereas undeclared work is the main factor behind social dumping and is therefore one of the key issues as far as modernising Community labour law is concerned,

D. whereas uninsured labour leads to unfair competition between insured and uninsured workers, resulting in the further erosion of workers’ rights,

E. whereas the sectors most affected by undeclared work are labour-intensive ones such as farming, construction and domestic, accommodation and catering services, typical features of which are the precariousness of employment and harsh pay conditions,

F. whereas undeclared work is also fostered by industrial reorganisation whereby subcontracting chains are set up, resulting in an increase in the number of self-employed workers, who are sometimes undeclared,

G. whereas undeclared work is further encouraged by high levels of unemployment, poverty and temporary and precarious employment, given that in such a climate workers are forced to relinquish any insurance or other entitlements,

H. whereas there is a link between illegal immigration and undeclared work and this is another reason why Member States and the Commission must continue to consider a common approach to immigration and the possibility of opening up more legal migration routes into the Union for third-country nationals who want to work,

I. whereas immigrants, or at least those who find themselves in an illegal situation, are more likely to become undeclared workers and to work in bad conditions,

J. whereas illegally employed third-country nationals are all the more vulnerable as they are likely to be returned to their country of origin if caught,

K. whereas many Member States face chronic shortages of workers able and willing to do particular, often unskilled work, for example in the agriculture and horticulture sectors,

L. whereas people who perform domestic services often work undeclared and a large number of them are migrant workers, many of whom are in an illegal situation and some of whom are victims of exploitative trafficking and bonded labour;

M. whereas undeclared work is not included in the fiscal base and undermines the funding and distribution of social welfare and public services, also limiting the Member States’ capacity to offer social services,

N. whereas undeclared work deprives insurance funds of valuable sources of revenue,

O. whereas workers engaged in undeclared activity have no welfare, sickness or accident insurance, and are thus exposed to significant risks and financial losses,

P. whereas undeclared work makes it impossible to check compliance with safety and health at work provisions, exposing workers to high health risks and allowing employers to escape liability,

Q. whereas, in order to combat clandestine and illegal employment effectively, it is vital to strengthen supervisory and sanctionary mechanisms by providing for the coordinated intervention of labour inspectorate services, tax authorities and the social partners,

R. whereas undeclared work has negative repercussions on all the pillars of the Lisbon Strategy: full employment, quality and productivity at work and social cohesion,

1. Welcomes the approach taken by the Commission and also calls for a renewed fight against undeclared work and the underground economy, which — albeit to a varying extent among the Member States — damage the economy, leave workers unprotected, are detrimental to consumers, reduce tax revenue and lead to unfair competition between undertakings;

2. Expresses deep concern over the extent of undeclared work, which accounts for as much as 20 % or more of GDP in some Member States;

3. Calls on the Member States to consider improving incentives for regular work, which may include increasing the tax-free income band and, for employers, reducing the non-wage costs associated with legal employment;

4. Welcomes the Commission’s initiative to include undeclared work among the Union’s political priorities as one which calls for significant action at Community and national levels;

5. Encourages the Member States to continue with tax and social security system reforms, and thus reduce the burden of taxation on the workforce;

6. Notes, nonetheless, that there is some difficulty in converting Community policy guidelines on undeclared work into well-defined legal and institutional instruments that result in specific measures in individual Member States;

7. Notes the strong asymmetry between the instruments that the Community can use to implement quality work policies and those to implement policies to safeguard market freedoms;

8. Considers that action to combat undeclared work requires a comprehensive approach which covers matters relating to monitoring and control, the economic and institutional framework and sectoral and territorial development, and involves concerted action at several levels and the participation of all stakeholders (public authorities, social partners, undertakings and workers);
9. Notes the link between delayed economic and productive development and the spread of undeclared work; considers that action to combat undeclared work should be incorporated into the economic and employment policies pursued under the Lisbon Strategy; considers, moreover, that, in order to ensure that the strategy to tackle undeclared work is effective and delivers positive results, precise studies should be carried out to analyse the decisive macroeconomic factors and the relationship between markets, production models and widespread undeclared working;

10. Calls, therefore, for Community action to combat undeclared work to be more pro-active and incisive, so as to ensure that the modernisation of labour law in the Union is not confined to the purely theoretical level but is translated into effective, high-quality policies, and to ensure that improved job quality can be achieved in every case in accordance with the ‘decent work’ objective;

11. Considers that the eradication of undeclared work depends, to a large extent, on the effectiveness of labour standards and tax and social security regulations, implying a need to boost the resources of, and action taken by the various national authorities responsible for those matters and a need to improve their coordination and the flow of information among them;

12. Calls for a strategy for combating undeclared work that is based on strong and efficient coordination and administrative cooperation between government enforcement agencies, labour inspectorates and the social partners, social security authorities and tax authorities;

13. Stresses that undeclared work has various definitions in the national legal systems and that a definition common to all Member States would ultimately eliminate uncertainties in relation to statistical surveys of this phenomenon; notes in this connection that the definition used in the Commission report, which distinguishes between legal and illegal activities, can be used as a starting point, bearing in mind that the extent of the phenomenon differs in quality and quantity from one Member State to another;

14. Points out that the measures introduced to combat undeclared work will also shed light on irregularities in declared employment relationships based on legal contracts;

15. Urges the Member States to better enforce existing labour laws and labour standards designed to combat undeclared work; believes that the Union should play a greater role in promoting more and better cooperation and coordination between national labour and social inspectors;

16. Notes that the elimination of the informal economy cannot be achieved without the implementation of appropriate incentive mechanisms; considers that the Member States should report, in the context of the Lisbon Scoreboard, what achievements materialise as a result of reducing the size of the informal economy;

17. Calls on the Commission to submit proposals with a view to developing a set of generally accepted methods of measuring undeclared work based on a grid of data broken down by gender and sector, given the significantly differing extent to which men and women are engaged in undeclared work in many sectors, and the resulting indirect effect on the pay gap between men and women;

18. Stresses the essential need to set up a Community-level platform for the collection, in close cooperation with the Member States, of the information required for the establishment of a reliable database recording undeclared work within the Union, with due regard for the gender dimension and, in particular, the situation of women;

19. Stresses that women are not over-represented where undeclared work is concerned, but when compared with men they nevertheless account for a larger proportion of jobs in a number of ‘traditionally female’ areas of the labour market, such as domestic service, the hotel and restaurant trade and health care, that are characterised by low skills, poor job security, low wages and low or non-existent social protection, which often places them in a particularly vulnerable position;
20. Calls on the Commission to consider establishing a database recording the various approaches and methodologies used to measure undeclared work by Member States aimed at promoting the sharing of good practices and knowledge transfer and evaluating the feasibility and transferability of the measures implemented;

21. Calls on the Commission to frame policies to provide for both general measures and sectoral measures to prevent undeclared work, doing so with the full involvement of the social partners and with special reference to the most affected sectors, such as the hotel and catering industry, farming, domestic services and the construction industry; draws the attention of the Commission and the Member States to the specific situation of the domestic care sector, where there is a significant concentration of women who are third-country nationals and, in many cases, not legally resident in the Union;

22. Notes that undeclared work can be prevented by way of the recognition of national safety-at-work standards and conditions set out in bilateral and trilateral agreements between Member States and between the social partners, and that this endeavour would be underpinned by cooperation and exchanges of information between the social partners;

23. Calls on the Member States to reduce the economic attractiveness of undeclared work by ensuring that their tax and social protection systems are as simple, transparent and accessible as possible, with efficient policies to create more and better jobs;

24. Calls on the Commission to propose to the Member States a framework statute for spouses or family members helping in family businesses which would ensure their compulsory membership of a social security scheme, as already called for by the European Parliament in its resolution of 21 February 1997 on the situation of spouses assisting self-employed workers (1);

25. Points out that running a family is itself a family business and that recognising atypical family work and including it in a social security scheme should be considered;

26. Believes that any reform of economic policies and tax and social protection systems in the Member States by Member States should be integrated and take into account the key causes of undeclared work;

27. Calls on the Member States to provide strong incentives for those who undertake to put undeclared work on a formal economic footing and believes that atypical contracts can in this context play a role in helping on the one hand to get people out of illegal work and on the other in increasing the stability of work;

28. Calls on the Member States to introduce severe penalties for employers who, notwithstanding any incentives offered, continue to make use of undeclared labour;

29. Encourages the Member States to make use of the policy tools they have at their disposal, combining preventive action and sanctions aimed at transforming undeclared work into regular employment, and where possible to coordinate the use of those tools in order to achieve greater coherence throughout the internal market;

30. Notes the important role that the social partners in many Member States have played in combating undeclared work and calls on the Commission and the Member States to give more support and encouragement to employers’ organisations and trade unions in this fight; notes with concern that workers who do undeclared work often find they are not protected by important health and safety legislation and legislation on minimum wages and are denied the option of joining a trade union; calls in particular for better enforcement of existing minimum wage legislation in every Member State and urges those Member States which do not currently have a decent minimum wage to consider adopting one, in negotiation with the social partners and in accordance with nationals practices;

31. Calls for new regular work measures to be assessed and promoted, in agreement with the social partners at the appropriate level, on the basis of the experience gained in several Member States, so as to allow those involved in undeclared activities to bring their practices within the law, in line with the best of the current regulatory practices which have proved effective;

32. Draws attention to service voucher schemes in Belgium, Germany and France, whereunder households can buy household services at a lower price but still ensure that social security contributions and taxes are paid through the voucher;

33. Strongly believes that bringing undeclared employment relationships within the law must always include an obligation to pay contributions, on the understanding that the Member States could take steps to facilitate the necessary payments by employers;

34. Invites the Member States to consider sector-specific approaches when taking policy action concerning the regularisation of undeclared work;

35. Welcomes the Commission initiative to bring proceedings before the Court of Justice of the European Communities against those Member States that have still not introduced into national law the automatic recognition of qualifications obtained in the new Member States; calls on the Member States to honour their obligations immediately;

36. Calls on those Member States which have applied transitional arrangements to the free movement of workers within the Union to open up their employment markets to workers from all the new Member States, given that any restrictions — even partial ones — on access to the labour market, not only run counter to the founding principles of the Union and the European spirit but also give rise to increasing recourse to undeclared work and create territorial imbalances; in this context, believes it vital to implement the principle of equal workers’ rights and to counteract unfair competition and social dumping;

37. Considers that, in the case of workers benefiting from the right of free movement, their undeclared work may be due to a lack of familiarity with the relevant provisions; calls therefore on the Member States to mount public information campaigns to raise awareness of this matter among workers and employers;

38. Is of the opinion that simplifying or reducing administrative burdens and procedures, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, would diminish the use of undeclared labour and promote business activity in the Union;

39. Invites the relevant national authorities to encourage the use of e-government and on-line registration, and to exchange good practices with the aim of reducing the costs and complexity of registration and administrative procedures for businesses and, in particular, for small and medium-sized enterprises, for example by reducing the number of tax forms, through the use of one-data entries, single payment fiches and one-stop shops;

40. Takes the view that effective, on-the-spot inspections and sanctions must be directly introduced and Member States given the necessary margin of manoeuvre to contain the volume of undeclared work;

41. Expresses a demand for contractors to be held co-responsible for any contributory irregularities on the part of subcontractors to which they are linked with a direct subcontracting agreement;

42. Stresses that the number of cases of undeclared work in subcontracting chains might be reduced by a system of national provisions requiring contractors and developers to act responsibly and fairly;

43. Calls on the Member States, social partners and other key actors on the labour market to encourage corporate social responsibility (CSR) and other like approaches in order to combat undeclared employment;
44. Calls on the Member States to use innovative methods based on indicators and benchmarks specific to the various business sectors in order to combat undeclared work and fiscal erosion; calls upon the Commission to support the exchange of best practices among Member States in the fight against undeclared work;

45. Points out that, unless it is followed up by better coordination between Member States, a policy that is exclusively punitive could concentrate undeclared work in the less structured States and in the less regulated economies;

46. Strongly advocates the conclusion of agreements at regional, national and local levels that provide a progressive and sectoral response to illegal labour and encourage measures that provide effective solutions for the benefit of society as a whole;

47. Calls on the Commission, in this connection, to propose to the Member States and the social and economic stakeholders involved in combating undeclared work a 'pact to declare the undeclared', geared to allowing undeclared activities to gradually come to light; believes that such a pact should provide for a limited transitional period, during which there are no sanctions, at the end of which, however, stronger sanction mechanisms would come into effect;

48. Calls for greater and more effective respect of the right to work and of existing employment rules, as one means of promoting the Decent Work Agenda and the application of Community laws, in particular those set out in Directive 96/71/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1996 concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, from the first day of posting, on the basis of a congruent interpretation of the directive which reverses the current trend towards interpreting it in such a way as to vary the treatment of workers downwards towards minimum basic standards;

49. Calls on the Commission to review Directive 96/71/EC, and in particular to reinforce administrative cooperation and exchanges of information between the competent national authorities (workplace inspectors, tax authorities and social security bodies) so as to prevent undeclared work and remedy the situation;

50. Calls on the Member States to introduce more stringent inspection procedures and tighter checks, these having become laxer in a number of countries;

51. Hopes that the Union can play a greater role in promoting better and increased cooperation and coordination between labour inspectorates, by strengthening the economic and technological resources of inspection services, by intensifying measures enabling labour inspectorates to work together and by developing ICT systems for their shared use, in accordance with data protection legislation; in this context, calls on the Commission to carry out a study of feasibility into the establishment of some kind of permanent Community structure for cross-border cooperation that would draw together the efforts of the Member States in their fight against undeclared work;

52. Calls for greater cooperation and sharing of information between Member States in an effort to study the undeclared work phenomenon and to set out the results achieved and those which were unexpected;

\(^{(1)}\) OJ L 76, 22.3.2005, p. 16.
55. Invites the Commission to consider whether the systems put in place by Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market (1), including points of single contact, could be useful and operational for the purposes of the fight against undeclared work;

56. Welcomes the establishment of a high-level committee to assist Member States in identifying and exchanging good practices with regard to monitoring and to the improvement of legislation for posted workers;

57. Favours a stronger response to uninsured labour and measures to encourage cooperation and exchanges of views and best practices by trade unions in the EU;

58. Takes the view that there is a need to raise awareness amongst employers, workers, potential users of undeclared work and all social organisations of the risks and costs of undeclared work and of the benefits of eliminating it or ensuring the regularity of that work;

59. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to launch an information campaign directed at employers and workers with the aim of drawing attention to the applicable minimum Community rules and regulations and the adverse effects that undeclared work has on public finances, national social security systems, fair competition, economic performance and workers themselves;

60. Calls for permanent campaigns concerning the prevention of undeclared work, with information and awareness-raising initiatives at Community, national and local levels, involving the social partners, public authorities, chambers of commerce and employment centres, schools, local councils and the various control and punishment systems;

61. Considers that such permanent campaigns should accompany the various measures adopted with a view to instilling a culture of legality and promoting quality work and a legal business culture, and calls on the Member States, the relevant national authorities and the structures of civil society to unite their efforts and create circumstances of intolerance towards undeclared employment and change the public’s view thereof;

62. Emphasises that Member States need to allocate more public funds to raising public awareness, inter alia, from the European Social Fund and the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity — Progress; suggests that activities to raise awareness should emphasise sanctions, costs, the risks of undeclared work and the benefits of declared work, such awareness raising being consonant with the main objectives of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and employment; invites the social partners to play an active role in that process;

63. Calls on all Member States to sign the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;

64. Takes the view that, in order to combat the phenomenon of undeclared work, there is a need for local and Community programming instruments which allow both economic and social support and development policies to be pursued and supervisory and punitive action to be taken;

65. Calls on the Commission to assess the possibility of accompanying the fights against undeclared work with financial policies that support regional and local plans;

66. Calls on the Commission to develop a pilot tool for the Member States based on the good practices which exist in some Member States and models such as that developed by the 2 Plus project in Luxembourg (co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Objective 3 Programme) aimed at curbing non-declared work by making it less appealing through:

— very significant simplification of administrative requirements imposed upon employers, whilst ensuring social security cover for workers,

— attractive tax rates for employers, including the deduction of charges concerning, inter alia, local work,

— a tax exemption for all work carried out for pay lower than an amount to be determined by the Member State;

67. Takes the view that it would be desirable to study and assess the possibility of pursuing the channel of State aid exempted from the notification requirement for addressing the phenomenon of undeclared work, by broadly interpreting the expression ‘job creation’ and the meaning of ‘creation of a regular job’; notes that undeclared employment is not equivalent to a proper job and therefore any incentive to ensure its regularity could be deemed ‘employment creation aid’;

68. Points out the generally weaker position of women on the labour market, which is often due to their family obligations, as a result of which access to the official labour market is hampered, and underpaid and undeclared work more readily accepted, making a mockery of the right to decent work, a right which is strongly supported by the International Labour Organisation, particularly in the case of housewives, illegal immigrants and women who sometimes combine a poorly paid job with undeclared work; points to the resulting serious consequences for the career advancement and retirement prospects of women, but also for the proper functioning of the labour market and the capacity for financing social security schemes;

69. Takes the view that a policy of recognising maternity and parental leave as working time and continuing to pay wages during these periods would diminish the adverse consequences of family obligations and contribute to the career advancement of women and also to the proper functioning of the labour market;

70. Calls for the financing of research projects into health and safety at work and of promotional activities geared to prevention and the dissemination of a culture of health and safety in the workplace, with particular reference to those sectors in which there is the highest risk of accidents, in which undeclared labour is more prevalent; considers that the relationship between accidents at work and unlawful work should be investigated on the basis of the data on fatalities;

71. Considers that an appropriate training policy is a first step towards combating undeclared work;

72. Recommends that agreement be reached at national, regional and local levels involving social institutions and employers’ organisations seeking a commitment to monitoring and progressively eliminating undeclared employment.

73. Welcomes the Commission’s efforts to provide for sanctions against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals, but regrets the absence of measures to combat the exploitation of third-country nationals who are staying legally in the Union;

74. Stresses the significant impact on undeclared working of the Commission’s proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council providing for sanctions against employers of illegally staying third-country nationals, and expresses its concern that repressive measures are being put in place before any common framework of rules and policies on lawful access to the employment market has been laid down;

75. Notes the progress contained in the proposal for a Council Directive on a single application procedure for a single permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State (COM(2007)0638), but regrets that there is still a long way to go in order to guarantee the rights enshrined in Articles 27 to 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
76. Calls on the Member States to take measures to alleviate the particular vulnerability of the immigrant population in undeclared employment;

77. Takes the view that the issue of the employment of immigrants in an illegal situation is a complex one which cannot only be resolved simply by punishing employers, but which also calls for cross-sector, wide-ranging measures; in particular, believes it necessary to ensure compliance with ILO guidelines on support for migrant workers seeking to ensure that their rights are respected;

78. Believes that the fight against undeclared work requires a comprehensive approach which must take into account the need to safeguard and promote the rights of migrant workers, whether legal or illegal, who are exploited by their employers;

79. Believes that the fight against undeclared work performed by illegal immigrants cannot be effective without opening up channels for legal migration in order to guarantee the third-country labour which the Union needs, be it highly skilled or less skilled;

80. Considers that the fight against the growing informal economy and, in particular, against the exploitation of migrant workers in an illegal situation can be based not only on a policy of repatriation, but also on instruments and mechanisms to prevent and combat the exploitation of migrant workers, making provision for the recognition of and respect for fundamental human rights;

81. Calls on all Member States to urgently sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

82. Calls on the Member States to define or strengthen the appropriate legislative measures to encourage migrants who are victims of exploitation to report their situation, which would make it easier, in particular, to fight more effectively against undeclared work;

83. Advocates combined financial, fiscal and labour inspection procedures to combat undeclared work;

84. Invites the Commission to foster administrative cooperation and the exchange of good practices in the fight at Community level against the informal economy;

85. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the governments and parliaments of the Member States and to the Council and Commission.

---

Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

P6_TA(2008)0467

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU (2008/2034(INI))

(2010/C 9 E/02)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Modernising social protection for greater social justice and economic cohesion: taking forward the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market’ (COM(2007)0620),

— having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Concerning a consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market’ (COM(2006)0044) and the Synthesis report by the Commission Services on the outcome of that consultation,

— having regard to the Commission's opinion on an equitable wage (COM(1993)0388),

— having regard to the national Lisbon reform programmes, the national reports on strategies for social protection and social inclusion 2006-2008 and updates 2007 as presented by the Member States,


— having regard to the Social Protection Committee Task Force Report on Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU of January 2008,

— having regard to the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966,

— having regard to Articles 3, 16, 18, 23, 25, 26 and 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,


— having regard to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979,

— having regard to the UN Millennium Development Goals of 2000, particularly the elimination of poverty and hunger (first goal), the attainment of universal basic education (second goal), equal opportunities for men and women (third goal) and protection of the environment (seventh goal),

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (UNRC), and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,

— having regard to the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families of 1990,

— having regard to the UN International Plan of Action on Ageing of 2002,

— having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006 and its Optional Protocol,

— having regard to ILO Convention Nos 26 and 131 on minimum wage fixing,

— having regard to the UN and ILO's decent work agenda;

— having regard to the Commission Communication 'Promoting decent work for all: The EU contribution to the implementation of the decent work agenda in the world' (COM(2006)0249) and to Parliament's resolution of 23 May 2007 on promoting decent work for all (3).

— having regard to the conclusions of the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Employment and Social Affairs in Berlin on 18 to 20 January 2007 on ‘good work’,

— having regard to Articles 34, 35 and 36 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which specifically define the right to social and housing assistance, a high level of human health protection and access to services of general economic interest,

— having regard to the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights for Workers of 1989 and the Revised European Social Charter of the Council of Europe of 1996,

— having regard to the European social partners’ recommendations in the report entitled Key Challenges Facing European Labour Markets: A Joint Analysis of European Social Partners, of 18 October 2007,


— having regard to its resolution of 5 June 2003 on the application of the open method of coordination (4),

— having regard to the Commission Communication Social reality stocktaking — Interim report to the 2007 Spring European Council (COM(2007)0063) and to Parliament’s resolution of 15 November 2007 on Social Reality Stocktaking (5),

— having regard to the Commission Communication ‘Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child’ (COM(2006)0367) and to Parliament’s resolution thereon of 16 January 2008 (6), in particular paragraphs 94 to 117 thereof,

— having regard to the Commission Communication ‘A renewed commitment to social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and social Inclusion’ (COM(2008)0418),


— having regard to its declaration of 22 April 2008 on ending street homelessness (8),

— having regard to the findings and recommendations contained in the UN Secretary-General’s landmark Study on Violence against Children of 2006, according to which economic inequalities and social exclusion are among the risk factors for child maltreatment,

— having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee’s opinion of 9 July 2008, entitled A new European Social Action Programme,

— having regard to the Committee of the Region’s opinion of 18 June 2008 entitled Active Inclusion,

(2) OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2006, p. 129.
— having regard to the Commission Communication 'Towards a European Charter on the Rights of Energy Consumers' (COM(2007)0386),

— having regard to Articles 136 to 145 of the EC Treaty,

— having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0364/2008),

A. whereas the Nice European Council of 7 to 9 December 2000 set the EU objective of achieving a decisive and measurable reduction in poverty and social exclusion by the year 2010; whereas progress towards that objective should be improved,

B. whereas the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 agreed to eradicate child poverty in Europe by 2010,

C. whereas the Nice European Council of 7 to 9 December 2000 called on the Member States to ensure a follow-up to the 1992 recommendation on minimum guaranteed resources to be provided by social protection systems,

D. whereas Council Recommendation 92/441/EEC recognises 'the basic right of a person to sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity',

E. whereas the Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights for Workers 1989 recognises a workers' right to 'an equitable wage'; whereas in 1993 Parliament and the Commission addressed the need for coordinated policies on minimum wages in order to implement this right of workers to a wage 'sufficient to enable them to have a decent standard of living',

F. whereas at the start of the Union's commitment to combat poverty and social exclusion in 2001, 55 million people in the Union lived at risk of income poverty (15 % of the population of EU-15); whereas in 2005 that figure had risen to 78 million (16 % of the population of EU-25),

G. whereas the persistent gender pay gap puts women in a weaker position when it comes to escaping poverty,

H. whereas in the absence of all social transfers, the poverty risk in the Union, especially for women, would increase from 16 % to 40 %, or 25 % excluding pension payments,

I. whereas the shorter, slower and less well paid careers of women also have an impact on their risk of falling into poverty, especially for the over-65s (21 % or 5 points percentage more than men),

J. whereas children and young people make up almost one third of the population of the Union and 19 million children are at risk of poverty, many of them being separated from their family because of the family's poverty; whereas there is a complex relationship between poverty, parenting and children's well-being in diverse social circumstances, including the protection of children from all types of abuse,

K. whereas in particular extreme poverty and social exclusion constitute a violation of all human rights,

L. whereas a sizable part of the Union's population remains socially excluded, since one in five live in sub-standard housing and each day about 1.8 million people seek accommodation in specialist shelters for homeless, 10 % live in households where nobody works, long-term unemployment approaching 4 %, 31 million workers or 15 % are earning extremely low wages, 8 % of workers or 17 million experience income poverty despite employment, the proportion of early school leavers is over 15 % and the digital divide still persists (44 % of the EU population lack any Internet or computer skills),
M. whereas poverty and inequality disproportionately affect women; whereas the average income of women is just 55 % that of men; whereas women are highly and disproportionately affected by poverty in old age; whereas inability to gain access to high quality services increases the risk of poverty for women unacceptably,

N. whereas regional and local authorities already have considerable responsibility for providing general public services and benefits, but are at the same time subject to the restrictive pressure of public budgets,

O. whereas investing in children and young people helps raise economic prosperity for all and helps break the cycle of deprivation, and whereas it is essential to prevent problems and to intervene as soon as they are identified in order to preserve children’s life chances,

P. whereas poverty and unemployment have been linked to poor health and poor access to health care, due to factors such as poor diet, inferior living conditions in disadvantaged areas, inadequate housing, and stress,

Q. whereas the effects of inequality, poverty, social exclusion and lack of opportunity are interlinked, requiring a coherent strategy at Member State level focusing not only on income and wealth, but also on issues such as access to employment, education, health services, the information society, culture, transport and the opportunities for future generations,

R. whereas, in the period 2000 to 2005, income inequality in the Union (S80/S20 ratio) rose remarkably from 4.5 to 4.9 according to the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) data, so that in 2005 the richest 20 % of the Union’s population had an income nearly 5 times higher than that of the remaining 80 % of the population,

S. whereas imprisonment without adequate rehabilitation and education often only leads to further social exclusion and unemployment,

T. whereas 16 % of the Union’s total working population is disabled (Eurostat 2002); whereas unemployment levels among disabled people, which includes people with mental health problems, some older people and ethnic minorities across the Union remain unacceptably high; whereas 500 000 disabled people still live in large closed residential institutions,

**A more holistic approach to active social inclusion**

1. Welcomes the Commission’s approach to active social inclusion; considers that the overarching aim of active social inclusion policies must be to implement fundamental rights in order to enable people to live with dignity and participate in society and the labour market;

2. Considers that active social inclusion policies must make a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty and social exclusion, both for those in employment (the ‘working poor’) and for those not in paid employment; agrees with the Commission that a more holistic approach to active social inclusion should be based on the following common principles:

(a) income support sufficient to prevent social exclusion: Member States should, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, define minimum income schemes, related benefits and social assistance which should be easily accessible and provide sufficient resources, and should accompany these with a strategic plan for active inclusion policies in order to lift people out of poverty and prevent social exclusion (noting that active inclusion policies comprise greater equity of social protection systems and also provide specific flanking measures (e.g. rehabilitation, training, counselling, childcare, housing, language training for immigrants and support services) to enable people to lead a dignified life);
(b) a link to inclusive labour markets: active inclusion policies should aim at fostering stable and secure highly skilled jobs, improving the attractiveness of jobs, creating quality jobs and promoting quality in employment, providing a high level of health and safety at work, increasing productivity and active support for the most disadvantaged, providing specific support measures and services to increase employability and helping to keep people in the job market, developing entrepreneurial activity and providing job search assistance, high-quality education, vocational training, further training and lifelong learning, personalised counselling, special assistance and subsidised employment where absolutely necessary for vulnerable groups such as workers with disabilities;

(c) a link to better access to quality services: the accessibility, affordability, openness, transparency, universality, and quality of essential services (social services, services of general (economic) interest) must be strengthened in order to promote social and territorial cohesion, guarantee fundamental rights and ensure a decent existence, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society, such as disabled people, elderly people, single-parent families and large families, and services should be designed in ways which take into account the needs of different groups; the further privatisation of public and social services must be avoided unless affordability, quality and accessibility to all citizens are ensured;

(d) gender mainstreaming, anti-discrimination and active participation: active inclusion policies must ensure the promotion of equality between men and women and contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination in all the aspects of active social inclusion mentioned above; active participation: good governance, participation and integration of all relevant actors should be promoted by directly involving those affected by poverty, social exclusion and inequality at both national and European levels — and particularly people living in situations of extreme poverty — as well as the social partners, non-governmental organisations and the media in the development, management, implementation and evaluation of strategies;

3. Considers that Council Recommendation 92/441/EEC needs to be broadened and updated in the light of the results of the Union’s social reality stocktaking and the proposed holistic approach to active inclusion, and also that that Recommendation should take due account of the emergence of new social risks linked to demographic change and the knowledge-based and service economy;

4. Endorses the Commission’s view that a more holistic approach to active inclusion should also include a special focus on the eradication of child poverty, on the elimination of inequalities concerning access to health care and health outcomes, on tackling poverty and social exclusion linked to public and private pensions and retirement, and on the provision of decent high-quality long-term care;

Guaranteeing sufficient income to ensure a dignified life for all

5. Points out that most Member States in EU-27 have national minimum income schemes, but several do not; encourages the Member States to provide for guaranteed minimum income schemes for social inclusion, and urges them to exchange best practice; recognises that, where there is provision of social assistance, Member States have a duty to ensure that citizens understand and are able to obtain their entitlements;

6. Deeply regrets that some Member States appear not to have regard to Council Recommendation 92/441/EEC, which recognises the ‘basic right of a person to sufficient resources and social assistance to live in a manner compatible with human dignity’;

7. Agrees with the Commission that social assistance in most Member States is already below a level which makes poverty a risk; insists that the central objective of income support schemes must be to lift people out of poverty and enable them to live in dignity; calls on the Commission to examine whether an unconditional basic income for all could be an effective tool for combating poverty;

8. Calls on the Commission to provide a detailed report on whether welfare provision in the Member States (inter alia, minimum income schemes and related benefits, unemployment, invalidity and survivors’ benefits, statutory and supplementary pension schemes, early retirement benefits) provide for incomes above the Union’s at-risk-of poverty threshold of 60 % of national median equalised income;
9. Suggests that the Commission should consider establishing a common method of calculating the minimum subsistence amount and the cost of living (a basket of goods and services) in order to ensure comparable measurements of the poverty line and define the criterion for necessary social intervention;

10. Points out that the risk of falling into extreme poverty is greater for women than for men; points out that the persistent trend towards feminisation of poverty in European societies today demonstrates that the current framework of social protection systems and the wide range of social, economic and employment policies in the Union are not designed to meet women's needs or to address the differences in women's work; underlines the fact that poverty among women and their social exclusion in Europe requires specific, multiple and gender-specific policy responses;

11. States that adequate minimum income schemes are a fundamental prerequisite for a European Union based on social justice and equal opportunities for all; calls on the Member States to ensure that an adequate minimum income is provided for periods out of work or in between jobs, with particular attention being paid to groups of women that have additional responsibilities;

12. Calls on the Council to agree an EU target for minimum income schemes and contributory replacement income schemes of providing income support of at least 60% of national median equalised income and, further, to agree a timetable for achieving this target in all Member States;

13. Considers that the risk of falling into poverty is greater for women than for men, particularly in old age, because social security systems are often based on the principle of continuous remunerated employment; calls for an individualised right to an adequate minimum income which is not conditional on employment related contributions;

14. Considers that poverty affecting those who are already employed does not reflect equitable working conditions, and calls for efforts to be concentrated on remedying this state of affairs in such a way that remuneration in general and especially minimum wages — be they of a statutory nature or collectively agreed — is such as to prevent income poverty and ensure a decent standard of living;

15. Calls on the Council to agree an EU target for minimum wages (statutory, collective agreements at national, regional or sectoral level) to provide for remuneration of at least 60% of the relevant (national, sectoral, etc.) average wage and, further, to agree a timetable for achieving that target in all Member States;

16. Points out that minimum income schemes should be complemented by a package of support measures to facilitate social inclusion, such a package including facilities for social inclusion, for example in housing, as well as support for education, training and professional re-training and lifelong learning, as well as sound economic management and income support schemes, to contribute towards covering the costs to individuals and households, in such a way as to ensure the satisfaction of living needs and lifelong education needs, in particular for single persons, single-parent families and large families;

17. Calls on the Member States to examine their often complex and entangled mesh of income support schemes, whatever their specific nature (be they minimum income schemes and related benefits, contributory replacement income schemes or whatever), with a view to improving their accessibility, effectiveness and efficiency;

18. Considers that the Member States should provide targeted additional benefits for disadvantaged groups (such as people with disabilities or chronic diseases, single parents, or households with many children) which cover extra costs in connection, inter alia, with personal support, the use of specific facilities and medical and social care, establishing inter alia affordable price levels for medicines for less-favoured social groups; stresses the need to ensure decent invalidity and retirement pension levels;

19. Recognises the unequal distribution of income among self-employed people and the fact that a quarter of self-employed people live below the poverty line and, therefore, that more institutionalised support needs to be given to entrepreneurs to avoid the poverty trap;
Eradicating child poverty: from analysis to targeted policies and implementation

20. Highlights the importance of a holistic approach to the material security and well-being of children, based on the UNRC child rights-centred perspective, so that families, and especially large families, can benefit from sufficient income levels to give their children adequate housing and an adequate diet, as well as access to high quality health, social and education services, with a view to their harmonious development in both physical and personality terms; recognises, however, that children's fundamental needs should take priority over Member States' financial considerations;

21. Calls on the EU institutions, the Member States and organised civil society associations to ensure that child participation is always organised according to the fundamental principles of safe and meaningful participation;

22. Draws attention to the following dimensions of a holistic approach:

(a) recognising that children and young people are citizens and independent holders of rights as well as being part of a family;

(b) ensuring that children grow up with the support of resources and every form of assistance to meet all aspects of their emotional, social, physical, educational and cognitive needs, providing in particular essential support for parents and families living in extreme poverty, so that they can acquire the resources to fulfil their responsibilities, and thus preventing the abandonment or institutionalisation of children by parents in difficult material circumstances;

(c) providing access to services and opportunities that are necessary for all children to enhance their present and future well-being; also paying special attention to children in need of special support (ethnic minorities, immigrants, street children and children with disabilities), enabling them to reach their full potential and preventing situations of vulnerability from arising, in particular multigenerational poverty, also by ensuring that children have access to education and health care;

(d) allowing children to participate in society, including in decisions appropriate to their age that directly affect their lives, as well as in social, recreational, sporting and cultural life;

(e) granting financial aid to large families, with a view to helping arrest population decline, as well as aid for single parents raising one child or more, together with measures to facilitate their entry into or return to the labour market, recalling that this situation is more and more widespread and that the difficulties facing parents in such circumstances are far greater than those facing two-parent families;

(f) recognising the role that families play in the well-being and development of children;

(g) Stresses the importance of supporting the reuniting of street children, trafficked children and unaccompanied minors with their families, considering in each case the best interests of the child; emphasises that reunion should be accompanied by special measures of social reintegration where the socio-economic situation has led the child to engage in illicit income-generating activities which are harmful to the child's physical and moral development, such as prostitution and drug dealing; calls for joint coordinated action addressing the root causes of the extreme marginalisation and poverty of street children and their families, improving their access to quality services and combating organised crime; calls on the Council to agree on an EU-wide commitment based on Parliament's resolution of 16 January 2008 Towards an EU strategy on the rights of the child to make sure that by 2015, no children have to live in the street;

(h) Encourages the Member States to recognise that the vicious circle of extreme poverty, vulnerability, discrimination and social exclusion puts children, and particularly street children, at particular risk and that differentiated and individualised actions are required to address multiple deprivations; urges the Member States to endorse an EU joint effort to stop child trafficking and prostitution, child drug addiction, violence against children and juvenile delinquency;
23. Calls on the Commission to consider child poverty and social exclusion in a broader context of EU policy making, including issues such as immigration, disability, discrimination, protection of children from all forms of maltreatment and abuse, child and adult carers, equality between men and women, family support, active social inclusion, early-years care and education, life-long learning and the reconciliation of working life, non-working life and family life;

24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to implement effectively the principle of equal payment for work of equal social value and to carry out a specific analysis and reform of social protection systems and to develop EU guidelines to reform social protection systems from a gender equality perspective, including the individualisation of rights to social security, adapting social protection and services to changing family structures and ensuring that social protection systems better counteract the precarious situation of women and meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups of women;

25. Calls on the Commission to improve benchmarking and monitoring in the Open Method of Coor-
dination, to establish common indicators and to collect comparable high-quality data and long-term statistics on the situation of children, covering all aspects of a holistic approach to combating child poverty and social exclusion, including the housing of children and families, in order to be able to monitor children's well-being;

26. Encourages Eurostat to establish a link with the set of indicators that is being developed to monitor the impact of EU action on children's rights and welfare, commissioned by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights; points to the need for a joint effort of the Commission, the fundamental rights agency and the Member States to work in cooperation with relevant UN agencies, international organisations and research centres towards improving the collection of comparable statistical data on the situation of children in the Union, a need which it mentioned in its abovementioned resolution of 16 January 2008; calls on the Member States to take all possible measures to comply with the recommendation expressed in the Social Protection Committee's Report on Child Poverty and Well-being in Europe, adopted on 17 January 2008, which stresses that Member States should review the various sources of data available at national and regional levels on children in vulnerable situations;

27. Urges the Member States to put in place preventive systems to detect critical situations, such as where parents are about to lose their home, the abrupt removal of children from school, or cases of abuse suffered by parents during their own childhood; calls on the Member States to pursue an active policy aimed at preventing children from leaving school early, through mechanisms which provide support for groups at risk;

28. Urges those Member States which have not yet done so, to devolve to their local authorities the power to set up and run systems to assist children in trouble, in order to ensure that they are as efficient as possible;

29. Supports the Commission's view that a balance between targeting the diversity of modern family structures and targeting the rights of the child achieves the best outcomes in combating child poverty;

30. Calls on the Commission to promote a well-balanced policy mix adequately resourced and under-
pinned by clear objectives and targets that takes into account the specific national context and focuses on early intervention;

31. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the mutual learning process and their monitoring of successful and unsuccessful policies to combat child poverty and social exclusion;

32. Stresses the importance of integrated, holistic family policies going beyond active inclusion to address all aspects of child and family well-being and to eradicate child poverty and social exclusion in the Union;

33. Calls on the Member States to exchange best practices on children's participation and to promote the involvement of children in decisions concerning their own future, as this is the best way to get a children's perspective;
34. Welcomes the Commission's and Member States' commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; calls on the Commission and Member States to establish a clear connection between the children's rights agenda and the agenda to combat child poverty and exclusion, as child poverty and deprivation is a violation of fundamental human rights; encourages Member States to have regard to the recommendations of the Convention Committee in response to the implementation reports from State parties and non-governmental organisations alternative reports when preparing their social inclusion strategies;

35. Points out that single parents must not be placed in a worse position than couples with children as regards services and benefit payments;

36. Urges the Member States to develop national strategies for reducing and eradicating child poverty on the basis of a differentiated approach which takes into account variations in the level of poverty depending on the region and the age under consideration;

37. Calls on the Member States to ensure that all children and families, including those experiencing poverty and social exclusion, have access to high quality social care services which reflect a clear understanding of the impact of poverty on families, including the increased risks of, and impact of, child abuse and maltreatment;

Employment policies for socially inclusive labour markets

38. Agrees with the Commission that having a job is the best way to avoid poverty and social exclusion, but that it is not always a guarantee thereof, as, according to official statistics, 8 % of workers in the Union are at risk of poverty; calls on the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to implement effectively Directive 2000/78/EC;

39. Calls on the Member States more effectively to implement existing Community legislation in the fields of employment and social affairs;

40. Points out that 20 million people in the Union, most of them women, are affected by in-work poverty, or, in other words, 6 % of the total population and 36 % of the working population are at in-work poverty risk; calls on the Member States to agree on minimum wage legislation as an integral element of active inclusion;

41. Stresses that the proportion of part-time employment in the Union is 31 % for women and 7,4 % for men; emphasises that part-time employment for women is often only petty and marginal part-time work with poor remuneration and insufficient social protection; points out that women are therefore at greater risk of falling into poverty, especially in old age, as pensions from part-time employment very often do not suffice to lead an independent life;

42. Considers that, for active inclusion in the labour market, the most disadvantaged groups need specific measures:

(i) supporting personal development, through education, training, lifelong learning, the acquisition of IT skills and assessment, as well as family stability, social integration and inclusion before employment, recognising that the individual's responsibility to integrate into society is of great importance and should be stimulated;

(ii) providing maximum access to information and personalised pathways to secure and stable, highly skilled employment in accordance with people's needs and capacities; eliminating the obstacles to people entering or returning to the labour market, with particular attention being paid to single-parent families, and promoting gradual retirement to increase elderly people's income levels and prevent their impoverishment;
(iii) supportive measures fostering employment and the ability to remain in the job market (e.g. on-the-job training and lifelong learning opportunities); developing entrepreneurship and also work arrangements that help marginalised people to enter the workplace or the job market and reconcile employment with their efforts to deal with social disadvantage (such as a lack of housing, care responsibilities or health problems);

(iv) monitoring the cessation of work by persons of retirement age in the interests of releasing posts;

43. Considers that make-work-pay policies should address the problem of the low-pay trap and the low-pay/no-pay cycle at the lower end of the labour market whereby individuals move between insecure, low-paid, low-quality, low-productivity jobs and unemployment and/or inactivity; stresses that the need for flexibility in unemployment and social benefits should be addressed as a matter of priority; considers that welfare systems should actively motivate people to look for new job opportunities while encouraging openness to change by mitigating income loss and providing opportunities for education; urges policy makers to use the concept of flexicurity in their ‘make-work-pay’ policies;

44. Calls on the Member States to rethink ‘activation policies’ that are based on too restrictive eligibility and conditionality rules for benefit recipients and force people into low quality jobs that do not provide a decent living standard;

45. Proposes that a balance be stuck between the personal responsibility of individuals and the provision of social assistance, so as to enable everyone to live in dignity and participate in society;

46. Highlights the Council’s position that active labour market policies should promote ‘good work’ and upward social mobility and provide stepping stones towards regular, gainful employment with adequate social protection and decent working conditions and remuneration;

47. Highlights the potential of the social economy, social enterprises, the not-for-profit sector and the public employment sector to provide supported employment opportunities and working environments for vulnerable groups, which should be explored and supported to the fullest by the Member States and under Community policies (the European Social Fund, Regional and Cohesion Funds, etc.);

48. Agrees with the Commission that, for those who cannot work for various reasons (such as severe disability, age or incapacity, the impact of persistent and generational poverty and/or discrimination, the burden of family or caring responsibilities or local area deprivation), active inclusion policies must provide income support and supportive measures to prevent poverty and social exclusion and to enable such people to live in dignity and participate in society;

49. Calls on the Member States to reduce fiscal pressure not only on lower income earners but also on average income earners, so as to prevent workers from being caught in a low-wage trap and to deter recourse to undeclared work;

50. Draws attention to the social changes in Europe, which are altering the social make-up of households; calls for these changes to be taken into account with a view to eliminating barriers to the labour market for the non-working partners of unmarried cohabiting couples;

51. Considers that the social economy and social enterprises must provide decent working conditions and remuneration and also promote gender equality and anti-discrimination policies (such as closing the gender pay gap, adhering to collective agreements, paying minimum wages and ensuring equal treatment);

52. Notes that, despite welcome moves towards greater participation in higher education, the Member States should be encouraged to maintain and introduce work-based apprenticeships; calls on the Member States to develop consistent policies on traineeships that provide for minimum guarantees and decent remuneration and, furthermore, to combat the current trend of disguising jobs as unpaid traineeships;
53. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop a coherent approach across the education systems in the Union to the professional orientation process, based on similar coaching formulae that enable younger people to obtain training in work-oriented areas chosen by them as part of their career path; points out that training systems should be based on the mutual recognition of diplomas and vocational certificates and should include language instruction, with a view to eliminating communication barriers within the Union; considers that retraining measures should strike a balance between emotional and professional wellbeing, so that professional retraining is not seen as a handicap or an obstacle to professional development;

54. Draws attention to the need to promote the active inclusion of young people, older people and immigrants in all efforts to create an inclusive labour market; calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to draw up a set of urgent measures to combat undeclared work, forced child labour and the abusive exploitation of workers and to resolve the misleading confusion of economic migration with asylum seeking, and of both with illegal immigration; calls on the Member States to put forward legislation to prevent the exploitation of vulnerable workers by gang-masters and to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families;

Providing quality services and guaranteeing access for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

55. Welcomes the Commission’s view that statutory and complementary social security schemes, health services and social services of general interest must play a preventive and socially cohesive role, facilitate social inclusion and safeguard fundamental rights; points to the need to ensure the development of high-quality, accessible and affordable long-term care for those in need and support for those who provide the care; calls on the Member States to identify and address the problems faced by carers, who are often forced to remain outside the labour market;

56. Agrees with the Commission that all services of general interest, including network industries such as transport, telecommunication, energy and other public utilities and financial services should play an important role in ensuring social and territorial cohesion and should contribute to active inclusion;

57. Stresses that access to goods and services should be a right for every citizen of the Union and therefore welcomes the Commission’s proposal for a horizontal directive complementing Directive 2000/78/EC and covering all forms of discrimination on the grounds set out in Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which should help to combat discrimination in areas of life other than employment, including discrimination based on disability, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation; at the same time considers that further progress should be made as regards the implementation of the existing Community anti-discrimination directives;

58. Encourages the Member States to consider social default tariffs for vulnerable groups for example in the fields of energy and public transport and also facilities for obtaining microcredits, so as to promote active inclusion, as well as free healthcare and education for people having difficulties of a material nature;

59. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to enhance universal service obligations (for example in the telecommunications and postal services sector) in order to strengthen the accessibility and affordability of essential services and also to enhance targeted public service obligations so as to address vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society;

60. Calls on the Council to agree an EU-wide commitment to end street homelessness by 2015 and calls for the development by Member States of integrated policies to ensure access to affordable quality housing for all; urges the Member States to devise ‘winter emergency plans’ as part of a wider homelessness strategy, as well as to establish agencies dedicated to enabling provision and access to housing for groups facing discrimination; suggests the collection of comparable data on the extent of homelessness and poor housing; calls on the Commission to develop an EU framework definition of homelessness and provide annual updates on action taken and progress made in the Member States towards ending homelessness;
61. Urges the Member States to reduce child poverty by 50% by 2012, such a reduction to be measured using indicators that are not solely economic, as a first commitment towards the eradication of child poverty in the Union, and to allocate sufficient resources in order to achieve this goal; considers that the indicators used to measure this reduction should take particular account of children in families living in extreme poverty;

62. Highlights the importance of promoting integrated services that respond to the multidimensionality of poverty and social exclusion, addressing, for example, the link between poverty and homelessness, violence, health and mental health, education levels, social and community integration, lack of access to information technologies and infrastructure and the widening of the digital divide;

63. Calls on the Member States to adopt a health-in-all policies approach and to develop integrated social and health policies to combat inequalities in health care provision, prevention and health outcomes, especially as far as vulnerable groups and the most difficult to reach are concerned;

64. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote voluntary activities and to help with the social integration of people who have lost touch with or no longer participate in the labour market;

65. Welcomes the Commission's focus on better accessibility (availability and affordability) and better quality of services (user involvement, monitoring, performance evaluation, good working conditions, equality in recruitment policies and service provision, coordination and integration of services and adequate physical infrastructure);

66. Calls on the Member States to improve the coordination of public services, particularly the links between services for children and those for adults; urges the Member States to introduce assistance programmes for parents in various fields where poverty leads to a lack of knowledge with regard to bringing up children and to ensure that child helplines are sufficiently resourced; emphasises that public services for children and families must ensure that the right structures, incentives, performance management systems, funding streams and workforce are in place, that the front-line workforce has the right skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver better prevention and early intervention and that the services are responsive to users' needs, especially those of vulnerable families;

67. Calls on the Member States to attach greater importance to the fact that cuts in grants for specific services such as dinner money, free teaching materials and school buses, and for essential leisure and out-of-school educational opportunities, might lead to direct social exclusion, in particular for children from socially vulnerable families; highlights the need for Member States to provide equal opportunities for the integration of all children through an active sports policy in schools and access to information technologies; calls on the Commission to incorporate services for children such as child care, school transport and school meals in the list of general interest social services;

68. Welcomes the deinstitutionalisation of disabled people but notes that this requires the promotion of the provision of comprehensive community-based high-quality support and care services favouring independent living, the right to personal assistance, the right to control one's own budget and full participation in society;

69. Highlights the need for Member States to promote the development and implementation of comprehensive local, regional and national ageing strategies;

70. Believes that more action should be taken both at Member State and EU level to acknowledge, research and tackle domestic violence and the abuse of children and older people;

71. Calls on the Member States to develop a more constructive approach to drugs policy, with the emphasis on education and treatment for addiction rather than criminal sanctions;

72. Calls on the Member States to prioritise public health measures which seek to tackle head-on the inequality that exists in the degree of health and of access to health care in many ethnic minority communities;
73. Notes that, in all Member States, alcohol and drug abuse can lead to crime, unemployment and social exclusion; believes it therefore unacceptable that, for many people, the only way to obtain such treatment and advice is through the prison system;

74. Stresses that there are many forms of disability, including mobility problems, visual impairment, hearing impairment, mental health problems, chronic illness and learning disabilities; highlights the fact that people with multiple disabilities have exceptional problems, as do people subjected to multiple discrimination;

75. Calls for the ‘de-stigmatisation’ of people with mental health problems and people with learning disabilities, the promotion of mental health and well being and the prevention of mental disorders as well as for increased resources for treatment and care;

76. Calls on the Member States to enforce anti-trafficking and anti-discrimination legislation and in particular to sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings;

77. Urges all Member States to safeguard human-rights based asylum policy in accordance with the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and other relevant human rights law, whilst working to end the dependence of asylum seekers on benefits by allowing them to work, and to consider the development of more legal immigration routes;

**Improving policy coordination and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders**

78. Regrets that the Commission’s Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008 does not provide a sufficiently strategic focus on eradicating poverty and overcoming social exclusion;

79. Agrees with the Commission that the active inclusion approach must promote an integrated implementation process at EU, national, regional and local levels, involving all relevant actors (social partners, NGOs, local and regional authorities, etc.) and also provide for the active participation of disadvantaged people themselves in the development, management, implementation and evaluation of strategies;

80. Stresses the need for a uniform series of measures at European level with a view to preventing and penalising abuses of any kind of minorities, people with disabilities and senior citizens, in the context of concrete actions for the across-the-board reduction of the vulnerability of those social groups, including in material terms;

81. Calls on the Council and the Commission to reinvigorate a clear strategic focus on the eradication of poverty and the promotion of social inclusion in the context of the Social Agenda 2008 to 2012; calls for a more explicit commitment in the next cycle of the Open Method of Coordination in the fields of Social Protection and Social Inclusion, to a dynamic and effective Community strategy that would set meaningful targets and lead to the creation of effective instruments and to monitoring focused on fighting poverty, social exclusion and inequality; calls on the Council and the Commission to tackle the problems concerning the various coordination processes (Lisbon Strategy, EU strategy for sustainable development, the Open Method of Coordination in the fields of Social Inclusion and Social Protection) in such a way as to provide for a clear commitment towards the eradication of poverty and the promotion of social inclusion under all of these policies;

82. Calls on the Commission, the Social Protection Committee and the Member States to set up specific gender equality objectives and targets to combat poverty and social exclusion, including a set of policy actions to support groups of women facing a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion, such as non-traditional and one-parent families, immigrant women, refugee and ethnic minority women, older women and disabled women;
83. Encourages the social partners to continue with their efforts already started with the Joint Social Partner Analysis and their work programme 2006-2008 for the integration of disadvantaged people in the labour market; considers that better governance is needed to coordinate those labour market related activities of the social partners on the one hand and the broader civil dialogue (NGOs, etc.) on social inclusion beyond employment on the other hand;

84. Supports the Commission's view that, with regard to Recommendation 92/441/EEC and the Open Method of Coordination in the fields of Social Protection and Social Inclusion, there need to be appropriate indicators and comprehensive national systems for the collection and analysis of data (e.g. statistical data on the average disposable income, household consumption, the level of prices, minimum wages, minimum income schemes and related benefits); considers that the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of strategies for social inclusion and Member States' progress reports should demonstrate whether the basic right to sufficient resources and social assistance enabling people to live in dignity is respected in each Member State, also at regional level;

85. Welcomes the Commission's Communication 'A renewed commitment to Social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion' (COM(2008)0418), which proposes to strengthen the social OMC by improving its visibility and working methods and by strengthening its interaction with other policies; especially welcomes the Commission's proposals to set targets for the reduction of poverty (in general, child poverty, in-work poverty and persistent long-term poverty), for a minimum level of income provided through pensions and for access to and the quality of health care (reducing infant mortality, improving health and increasing life expectancy, etc.);

86. Calls on the Member States to take effective measures to achieve the Barcelona targets for childcare services; calls on the Commission and the Member States to formulate recommendations as to how to meet the need for care services in Europe (more particularly the organising and financing of care for children and other dependent persons), including setting precise targets and indicators, with the aim of providing childcare facilities across the Union for 90% of children from birth until mandatory school age and a sufficient level of care provision for other dependent persons by 2015; underlines the fact that all services should meet the criteria of affordability, accessibility and good quality, so that bringing up children and caring for dependents is no longer a special 'poverty risk' for women;

87. Stresses that those furthest from the labour market should benefit more from Community programmes such as the European Social Fund and the EQUAL initiative; calls on the Commission to assess the contribution of the Structural Funds to the objectives of the Open Method of Coordination based on social inclusion indicators and to encourage the application of the provisions of the new European Social Fund regulation and the use of Progress funding to support active inclusion measures and explore possibilities for ring-fencing ESF funds or identifying a specific budget for a Community initiative in this area; believes that this will also foster the creation of networks of good practice in combating poverty and encourage exchanges of experience between the Member States;

88. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to commit themselves to the effective actions to be taken in the context of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, which should represent a substantial part of the long-term effort to combat poverty;

89. Calls on the Commission to support the meaningful and safe participation of children in all matters affecting them, ensuring that all children have an equal opportunity to be involved;

90. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, and the Social Protection Committee.
The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 8 July 2008, in particular as regards the governance of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB),


— having regard to its resolution of 24 April 2008 on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the governance of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) (2),


— having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2007 on the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 809/2004 as regards the accounting standards in accordance with which historical information contained in prospectuses is drawn up and on the draft Commission decision on the use by third country issuers of securities of information prepared under internationally accepted accounting standards (5),

— having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2007 on the draft Commission regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 809/2004 as regards the accounting standards in accordance with which historical information contained in prospectuses is drawn up and on the draft Commission decision on the use by third country issuers of securities of information prepared under internationally accepted accounting standards (5),

— having regard to its resolution of 24 October 2006 on the accounting standards used by third country issuers and their equivalence to IFRS as mentioned in the draft implementing measures of the Prospectus Directive and the Transparency Directive (6), which sets out the conditions under which the European Union has accepted the convergence and equivalence process between IFRS as adopted by the European Union and US Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAPs),

— having regard to the report by the International Accounting Standards Committee Foundation (IASCF) entitled ‘Review of the Constitution — Public Accountability and the Composition of the IASB — Proposals for Change’, of July 2008,


— having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas EU issuers are required to apply international accounting standards for their consolidated financial statements,

1. Notes that the IASCF proposes establishing a monitoring group; is of the opinion that such a monitoring group should be entitled to recommend candidates as Trustees and should be responsible for approving the selection of Trustees after an agreed nomination process;

2. Calls for the monitoring group to be involved in setting the agenda for the IASB so as to ensure transparency and accountability; recognises that the subsequent accounting standard setting process should remain free of undue interference and should be effected in full consultation with all stakeholders, including investors;

3. Expresses doubts as regards the desirability of setting up the monitoring group at this stage, before the second phase of the consultation process of the review of the governance of the IASB is launched and without a clear overview of the relationship to be established between the monitoring group and the IASCF in the constitution of the latter;

4. Considers that the monitoring group should reflect the balance of the world’s most significant currency areas, cultural diversity, and the interests of both developed and emerging economies and of international institutions which have accountability requirements before public authorities; considers also that the monitoring group should play an active role in promoting the transparency of financial reporting and the development and effective functioning of capital markets, as well as avoiding pro-cyclicality and ensuring financial market stability and preventing systemic risk; takes the view that the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision should be included in the monitoring group; notes with approval the proposal that the monitoring group comprise, at the outset:

   — the responsible member of the Commission;

   — the chair of the Emerging Markets Committee of the International Organisation for Securities Commissions (IOSCO);

   — the chair of the IOSCO Technical Committee (or the vice-chair or designated securities commission chair, in cases where the chair of an EU securities regulator, the commissioner of the Japanese Financial Services Agency or the chair of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (US SEC) is also the chair of the IOSCO Technical Committee);

   — the commissioner of the Japan Financial Services Agency;

   — the chair of the US SEC; and

   — the chair of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision;

5. Deplores the fact that Parliament was not consulted about the establishment of an International Accounting Advisory Group;

6. Considers that EU financial market regulators should also be represented in the monitoring group; stresses that no organisation should be represented in the monitoring group by more than one delegate;

7. Stresses the complex institutional set-up of the monitoring group; emphasises the need for the monitoring group to have effective cooperation mechanisms in place so as to ensure its operability and fulfil its principal responsibilities; insists, in this context, that the members of the monitoring group have sufficient competence to ensure that they can be held politically accountable;

8. Is concerned that some of the proposed members of the monitoring group do not require domestic issuers to apply IFRS; is of the opinion that membership of the monitoring group should become effective only after a commitment to introduce IFRS as the domestic standard; emphasises that no country should be represented in the monitoring group by more than one delegate;

9. Notes that the IASCF also proposes enlarging the IASB by two members to a total of 16; considers such enlargement to be acceptable as it could lead to a more balanced IASB, in particular if the IASCF proposal is amended to ensure parallel treatment of the most significant global currency areas;
Thursday 9 October 2008

10. Calls for a memorandum of understanding to be concluded between Parliament, the Council and the Commission so as to define the conditions of association of the legislators with the work of the monitoring group, if such a group is established at this stage;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Central Bank, and the Committee of European Securities Regulators and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

Belarus

P6_TA(2008)0470

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the situation in Belarus after the parliamentary elections of 28 September 2008

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus, in particular that of 22 May 2008 (1),

— having regard to the Commission’s declaration of 21 November 2006 on the European Union’s readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),

— having regard to the Declaration by the Presidency of the Council on behalf of the EU, of 26 August 2008, concerning the release of Sergei Parsyukevich and Andrei Kim,

— having regard to the Council conclusions of 15-16 September 2008 on Belarus,

— having regard to the preliminary findings, of 29 September 2008, of the OSCE Election Observation Mission in Belarus,

— having regard to the statement by the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the parliamentary elections in Belarus of 30 September 2008,

— having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas, following the release by the Belarusian authorities between 16 and 20 August 2008 of the political prisoners Mr Alyaksandr Kazulin, Mr Sergei Parsyukevich and Mr Andrei Kim, no more internationally recognised political prisoners are currently incarcerated in Belarus,

B. whereas the release of the political prisoners has been seen by the EU as a significant step towards the adoption by Belarus of the fundamental values of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and was made one of the preconditions for reviewing the restrictive measures currently applying to certain leading political figures in Belarus, and for gradually restoring relations with Belarus,

C. whereas President Alexander Lukashenko publicly called on 10 July 2008 for the elections to be conducted openly and democratically, and reiterated this during a television appearance on 29 August 2008, promising that the elections would be unprecedented in terms of fairness,

D. whereas the democratic conduct and pluralistic aspect of the parliamentary elections scheduled for 28 September 2008 was seen by the EU as another opportunity for Belarus to demonstrate its respect for democratic values and European standards,

E. whereas in this context the EU welcomed the deployment of the OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) observers, stressed the importance of guaranteeing those observers effective access to all stages of the electoral process, including the counting of votes, and underlined in particular the importance of guaranteeing the rights of the opposition as regards both the right to stand and access to electoral monitoring commissions and the media,

F. whereas the EU, in the event that the election proceeded smoothly, was prepared to begin to review the restrictive measures against Belarusian leaders, and to take positive and concrete measures leading to a gradual re-engagement with Belarus,

G. whereas the request from the United Democratic Forces of Belarus for the government to engage in an open dialogue on the election process remained unheeded; whereas the opposition candidates raised concerns over the fairness of the electoral process, referring to their lack of confidence in the process of voting and in the expected conduct of the vote count,

H. whereas the OSCE Election Observation Mission stated in its preliminary conclusions that although there had been some minor improvements, the elections of 28 September 2008, which took place in a strictly controlled environment with a barely visible campaign and were marked by a lack of transparency in vote counting and in aggregating results from various polling stations, ultimately fell short of internationally recognised democratic standards,

I. whereas the opposition, which did not win any of the 110 seats, denounced the election as a farce, expressing its fears that President Lukashenko's 'flirt' with democracy is over and calling on the EU and the US not to recognise the results of the election,

J. whereas Lidiya Yarmoshyna, head of the Belarus Central Election Commission, declared the elections had been 'free and fair',

K. whereas around 800 opposition supporters protested in Minsk late on election day,

1. Expresses its satisfaction that the political prisoners Mr Alyaksandr Kazulin, Mr Sergei Parsyukevich and Mr Andrei Kim have been released; still expects, nevertheless, that they will enjoy all the civic rights guaranteed to all Belarusian citizens by the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus;

2. Regrets that the significant progress which the EU had hoped for, in the interests of the Belarusian people, in the democratic development of Belarus did not materialise and that, despite some minor improvements, the 28 September 2008 parliamentary elections in Belarus ultimately fell short of international standards;

3. Believes that the parliament elected in Belarus is of questionable democratic legitimacy;

4. Is concerned that the opposition-staged rally on 28 September 2008 in Minsk was termed a gross violation of public order by the interior ministry, and is also concerned by reports that information on the rally will be submitted to the Office of the Prosecutor-General for legal review; calls on the Belarusian authorities to respect the fundamental rights of freedom of assembly and expression, as defined by the Belarusian constitution;

5. Points out that, while the EU has taken note of the recent release of several democratic opposition activists and harboured hope of an improvement in the organisation of the elections, the persistent failure to organise free and fair elections will be a further set-back for Belarus and will remain a serious challenge to relations between Belarus and the European Union;

6. Calls on the Belarusian Government to confirm its statements about its willingness to improve cooperation with the EU and to create more favourable conditions for the commencement of discussions between the EU and Belarus;
7. Calls in this context on the Belarusian Government to move towards genuinely democratic elections in the future in accordance with international democratic standards by introducing changes to electoral law and practice, such as:

(a) creating fair conditions and opportunities for all candidates to conduct a genuine electoral campaign;

(b) ensuring that all parties participating in elections are represented at all election commission levels, in particular at precinct election commission level;

(c) ensuring that votes cast preclude any doubts as to the possibility of fraud in this connection;

(d) abolishing the early-voting procedure or, at least, guaranteeing that early votes cast are subject to a separate procedure from that for ordinary votes cast and that early-voting results are recorded separately in electoral protocols;

8. Urges the Belarusian Government, to respect human rights by:

(a) making necessary changes to the Belarus Criminal Code by abolishing Articles 193, 367, 368 and 369-1, some of which, in particular Article 193, are cited by Amnesty International and which are often misused as a means of repression;

(b) refraining from threatening with criminal prosecution, including for avoiding military service in Belarus, against students expelled from universities for their civic stance and obliged to continue their studies abroad;

(c) eliminating all obstacles that prevent proper registration of NGOs in Belarus;

(d) improving the treatment of and respect for national minorities, including recognition of the legitimately elected body of the Union of Poles in Belarus, led by Angelika Borys, culture, churches, the education system and the historical and material heritage,

in order to end the country's self-imposed isolation from the rest of Europe and in order for relations between the EU and Belarus to improve significantly;

9. Recalls that on 21 November 2006 the European Union declared its readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy as soon as the Belarusian Government demonstrated respect for democratic values and for the basic rights of the Belarusian people;

10. Calls on the Council and the Commission to continue the dialogue with and devise a policy vis-à-vis Belarus, subject to strict positive conditionality based on a gradual step-by-step approach, containing benchmarks, timetables, a revision clause and adequate financial resources;

11. Calls on the Council and the Commission to consider a selective review and possible suspension of existing restrictive measures, with a view to providing advantages for ordinary citizens and promoting the development of a free society;

12. Calls on the Council and the Commission not to lift the visa ban on those directly involved in violating democratic election standards and human rights; calls for consideration to be given to a six-month partial suspension of this sanction for other officials, provided that during that period the restrictive law on mass media adopted at the end of June 2008 is amended before it is fully implemented;

13. Calls on the Council and the Commission to take further steps towards the facilitation and liberalisation of visa procedures for Belarusian citizens, as such action is crucial to fulfil the main goal of EU policy towards Belarus, namely to facilitate and intensify people-to-people contacts and to democratise the country; urges them, in this context, to consider the scope for lowering the cost of visas for Belarusian citizens entering the Schengen Area, which is the only way to prevent Belarus and its citizens from becoming increasingly isolated; calls on the Belarusian authorities to end their practice of issuing exit visas to their citizens, in particular children and students;
14. Calls on the Council and the Commission to consider selective application of the European Neigh-
bourhood and Partnership Instrument (1) and the European Instrument for Human Rights and Democracy (2)
to Belarus by extending more support to Belarusian civil society and, in particular, to increase financial aid
to the independent media, NGOs and Belarusian students studying abroad; welcomes the financial support
given by the Commission to the Belarusian ‘European Humanities University’ in exile in Vilnius (Lithuania);
calls on the Council and the Commission to call on the Belarusian Government, as a sign of good will and
positive change, to enable the European Humanities University in exile in Vilnius to return legally to Belarus
and re-establish itself in adequate conditions for its future development in Minsk; calls on the Council and
the Commission to grant financial support for the independent Belarusian television channel Belsat;

15. Calls on the Council and the Commission to consider measures to improve the business climate,
trade, investment, energy and transport infrastructure and cross-border cooperation between the EU and
Belarus, so as to contribute to the well-being and prosperity of the citizens of Belarus, as well as their ability
to communicate with and freely travel to the EU in this context;

16. Regrets the decision of the Belarusian authorities to repeatedly refuse entrance visas to members of
the European Parliament and national parliamentarians in the last couple of years; calls on the Belarusian
authorities not to create any further obstacles preventing the European Parliament Delegation for relations
with Belarus from visiting the country;

17. Welcomes the will of the Belarusian nation to safeguard the country’s independence and territorial
integrity;

18. Welcomes the approach taken so far by the Belarusian authorities, despite enormous pressure, not to
recognise the unilateral independence declared by South Ossetia and Abkhazia;

19. Condemns the fact that Belarus is the only country in Europe which still has the death penalty,
contrary to European values;

20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and
governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Parliamentary
Assemblies of the OSCE and the Council of Europe, the Secretariat of the Community of Independent
States and the Parliament and Government of Belarus.

---

Suspension of the WTO Doha Round

P6_TA(2008)0471

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the suspension of the WTO Doha Round and
the future of the Doha Development Agenda

(2010/C 9 E/05)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Doha Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) of
14 November 2001,

— having regard to its previous resolutions on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA),

— having regard to the Outcome Document of the 2008 Annual Session of the Parliamentary Conference
on the WTO, adopted by consensus on 12 September 2008 in Geneva,

— having regard to Rule 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,
A. whereas the WTO Ministerial Meeting intended to close the Doha Development Round ('Doha Round') stalled at the end of July 2008,

B. whereas negotiations broke down in Geneva in July 2008; whereas some progress was achieved on certain issues, while other issues important for the conclusion of full modalities were not dealt with in the outline agreement,

C. whereas the interests of the developing countries, and in particular of the least developed countries (LDCs), as well as the commitment of all WTO members to the Doha Round, should remain at the heart of the negotiations,

D. whereas a failure to conclude the Doha Round would add to the current global economic uncertainty and could challenge the credibility of the multilateral trading system, resulting in a shift towards bilateral and regional trade agreements,

1. Expresses its serious disappointment and concern at the stalemate that occurred at the WTO Ministerial Meeting held in July 2008;

2. Reiterates its full commitment to the multilateral approach to trade policy and to a WTO able to guarantee a comprehensive, ambitious and balanced outcome for international trade on the basis of full respect for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals;

3. Is convinced that in the current context, characterised by economic and financial crisis, a successful conclusion of the Doha Round could be a stabilising factor;

4. Believes that whatever happens in terms of progress on the DDA, the WTO, along with other international organisations, needs consistently and urgently to tackle new global challenges in which trade plays a part, such as food security, energy, Aid for Trade and climate change;

5. Is fully aware of the difficulties of the principle of the single undertaking; acknowledges the progress made during the negotiations so far, which should provide an important and consolidated basis for pursuing the Doha Round at the next meeting and achieving a successful outcome;

6. Calls on the EU and the USA, as well as the G20 as new major economic players, to assume their responsibilities in the current negotiations, to respect fully the spirit of the Doha Round, and to make every effort to reach a deal as rapidly as possible; emphasises once more the importance of a differentiation between developing and emerging countries;

7. Calls on India and the USA to find a political solution on the issue of the conditions for the application of Special Safeguard Mechanisms (SSM) to ensure a fair balance between trade and food security concerns, in order to enable a continuation of DDA negotiations in Geneva on other outstanding issues;

8. Calls on the developed and advanced developing countries to follow the EU Everything But Arms initiative, offering 100 % duty-free, quota-free market access for LDCs; emphasises also the importance of Aid for Trade;

9. Believes that the needs of developing and, especially, the LDCs should be given priority in the DDA negotiations, with development being at the forefront of all considerations;

10. Believes that the difficulties relating to the DDA highlight the need, once the Doha Round is over, to address urgently the question of reform of the WTO in order to make it more effective and transparent and improve its democratic legitimacy, accountability, transparency, inclusiveness and integration into the wider architecture of global governance; believes that parliamentarians should exercise even more vigorous and effective scrutiny in the area of international trade;

11. Reiterates the need for targeted technical assistance and capacity-building to help developing countries to engage effectively in the DDA;
12. Calls on the Commission and Council to establish an agreement in the spirit of the Lisbon Treaty to ensure the full participation of Parliament in the EU’s international trade negotiations;

13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and the parliaments of the Member States and the Director General of the WTO.

Addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union

P6_TA(2008)0473

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on addressing the challenge of water scarcity and droughts in the European Union (2008/2074(INI))

(2010/C 9 E/06)

The European Parliament,


— having regard to the Impact Assessment Report and studies prepared by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and the European Environment Agency (EEA),

— having regard to its resolution of 4 September 2003 on the Commission communication on water management in developing countries and priorities for EU development cooperation (2),

— having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2006 on natural disasters (forest fires, droughts and floods) — agricultural aspects (3),

— having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Regional Development and the Committee on Agriculture (A6-0362/2008),

A. whereas the issue of water scarcity and droughts is not limited geographically to the European Union but has international repercussions and is a global problem; whereas international conflicts over water already exist and there is a rising danger of their increasing in frequency,

B. whereas water is essential to life and a common good which should not be reduced to a mere commodity; whereas ensuring fair access to water for all, including future generations, should guide all water policy,

C. whereas water scarcity and drought represent a major challenge with relevant socio-economic and environmental impacts in the EU; whereas the total economic impact of drought at EU level over the last 30 years is estimated at EUR 100 billion,

D. whereas water scarcity and drought already affect various parts of the EU with around one fifth of the EU’s population living in countries experiencing stress on their water resources,

(2) OJ C 76 E, 25.03.2004, p. 430.
E. whereas the desertification which is affecting Community countries to differing degrees is impoverishing the natural environment and leading to degradation of soils and consequent loss of their agricultural value,

F. whereas water scarcity and drought are not equally acute in all regions of the EU, being most acute in the more southerly Member States,

G. whereas there are significant regional differences in the way in which problems resulting from water scarcity and drought manifest themselves; whereas measures to deal with these problems would be best based on a regional approach,

H. whereas water scarcity and drought have occurred with increasing frequency and severity over the past 30 years and climate change is likely to aggravate the situation, contributing to an increase in extreme hydrological events inside and outside the EU, probably affecting both the quality and quantity of water resources,

I. whereas trends in water use are unsustainable with the EU continuing to waste 20% of its water due to inefficiency,

J. whereas intense drought, accompanied by lower rainfall, is increasing the danger of forest fires, as evidenced by the devastating fires which recently swept through southern Europe,

K. whereas no comprehensive, technically and scientifically sound assessment of the water quantity situation in the EU exists; whereas the available data at regional level and on seasonal variations are very limited,

L. whereas water scarcity may be the result of natural causes, human activities or an interaction of both, either through over-use of the natural supply or through degradation of water quality; whereas the misuse of water is one of the causes of desertification;

M. whereas tourism further increases demand for water, particularly during the summer period and in the coastal areas of southern Europe,

N. whereas awareness raising and providing good information to citizens in different forms, e.g. via information and education campaigns, is of key importance to facilitate a change in behaviour and practices and the emergence of a water saving and efficient water use culture,

O. whereas public supply of water is a fundamental public service linked to public health which should not be disrupted,

P. whereas water scarcity and drought are a complex environmental issue, and should as such be regulated in close connection with and taking account of other environmental issues;

Q. whereas agriculture, as a productive sector, suffers acutely from the effects of water scarcity and drought, while at the same time playing an important role in the sustainable management of available water resources,

R. whereas multifunctional agriculture in the EU plays an important role in the preservation of landscapes, biodiversity and clean water and therefore needs financial support for certain measures as well as scientific advice on water management,

S. whereas water scarcity and droughts are a significant factor in pushing up the prices of agricultural raw materials; whereas it is necessary to guarantee a stable food supply,
T. whereas large amounts of water are required in agriculture and, as it therefore depends on water supply, agriculture must be included as a responsible actor in integrated regional water management systems as regards balanced use of water, stopping water wastage, adapted landscape and crop-planning as well as protection of water from pollution,

U. whereas drought is also a contributory factor in the proliferation of certain phytosanitary pests, resulting in substantially lower harvests,

V. whereas the Commission's Fourth Report on Economic and Social Cohesion (COM(2007)0273) identifies climate change, in particular drought and water scarcity, as one of the new challenges with far-reaching territorial implications that cohesion policy has to tackle, having affected to date 11 % of the population and 17 % of the territory of the European Union,

1. Welcomes the Communication and supports the proposed first set of policy options for action, but regrets that its scope is limited to the EU and Member State level only; recalls that water scarcity and drought is a problem with an international dimension and that action needs to be taken accordingly;

2. Stresses that the cross-regional and trans-border nature of river basins can have a serious cross-border impact on upstream and downstream regions, and that it is thus indispensable for the Member States, as well as regional and local authorities, to cooperate on the issue of water scarcity and drought, ensuring sustainable and fair use of water resources; considers that the specificity of the water scarcity and droughts issue requires coordinated action at EU and Member State level as well as at regional and local government level;

3. Regrets that the Communication limits itself to promoting general objectives, proposing only a limited number of precise measures and no concrete timetable for their implementation in regions threatened by water scarcity and droughts; regrets the absence of realistic goals and time constraints for reaching them, as well as the lack of emphasis on the need for close cooperation with national, regional and local authorities; calls on the Commission to present an ongoing programme, in particular a progress report in 2009 and the review and development of the European Union's strategy;

4. Highlights the importance of the regions as a driving force behind technological innovation in the field of water, given that water efficiency will be an increasingly important factor for competitiveness; therefore urges regional authorities to consider national and international inter-regional cooperation, information exchange and strategic partnerships, with a view to organising efficient regional water management;

5. Calls on regional and local authorities to take advantage of the great opportunities offered by the Structural Funds and invest in the improvement or renewal of existing infrastructure and technology (in particular in regions where water resources are wasted due to leakages from water pipes) including, notably, clean technologies that facilitate the efficient use of water and can be linked to integrated water resource management (IRM), in particular to address the challenge of water efficiency (in terms of savings and reutilisation) in the industrial and agricultural sectors as well as on the part of domestic consumers;

6. Maintains in this context that infrastructure funding should be allocated with a view to implementing measures to improve the management and supply of high-quality water, in keeping with existing needs;

7. Recalls that a demand-side approach should be preferred when managing water resources; takes the view, however, that the EU should adopt a holistic approach when managing water resources, combining measures of demand management, measures to optimise existing resources within the water cycle, and measures to create new resources, and that the approach needs to integrate environmental, social and economic considerations;
8. Notes that supply-side measures should also be considered, with a view to achieving the most economically and environmentally efficient solution, optimising the balance between supply and demand, and ensuring an uninterrupted public water supply including during drought conditions, in accordance with the principle of sustainable development; takes the view that action should be encouraged to establish an effective hierarchy of water uses, and that the construction of diversions to transport water over large distances should not be the solution to the problem of water scarcity; stresses, however, the importance that supply-side measures may have for the regions most affected by water scarcity and drought, which may take the form of traditional options, such as the construction of infrastructure to regulate watercourses, or alternative and innovative solutions such as the sustainable re-use of waste water or desalination;

9. Highlights the contribution made by European farmers to combating soil erosion and desertification and seeks recognition of the pivotal role played by European producers in preserving plant cover in regions affected by persistent drought or threatened by wind-blown sand; emphasises the specific benefits of permanent crops, orchards and vineyards, grassland, pasture and forestry for water collection;

10. Stresses the importance of the issue of water management in mountain areas and calls on the Commission to encourage local and regional authorities to develop a sense of solidarity between downstream and upstream users;

11. Recalls the link between climate change, water scarcity and drought and integrated territorial care aimed at maintaining and preserving local water resources and is deeply concerned about the possible impact on public health; calls for account to be taken of the impact on water resources when policies to combat climate change are drawn up; asks that an in-depth study be made of the inter-relationship between the development of biofuels and the availability of water resources; calls, likewise, for a specific assessment to be made of installations with a high consumption of water resources; stresses the need to mainstream the issue of water into all policy areas and to create a truly integrated approach when addressing it, including all of the financial and legal instruments of the EU; underlines that all political levels (national, regional and local) should be involved in the process;

12. Believes that a link should be established between water scarcity and drought and climate change and their specific strategies, bearing in mind that concerns as regards adapting to climate change must be integrated as priorities in the implementation of the WFD;

13. Urges the Commission and Member States to acknowledge that deforestation and unrestrained urban development are contributing to growing water scarcity; calls on the Member States and the authorities concerned to pay heed to water-related considerations in their land-use planning, especially in connection with the development of economic activities in sensitive river basins, including in the islands and outermost regions; stresses that any supply of water regardless of the purpose of its consumption must comply with the principle of fair water pricing, thereby encouraging companies especially to use water more efficiently;

14. Stresses that the revision of Community budget priorities should accord a higher ranking to environmental measures and, in particular, to policies designed to combat the effects of climate change, which include drought and water scarcity, ensuring that the necessary additional resources are available;

15. Asks the Commission to take into account the inter-sectoral link between the social and economic impact of climate change on land usage and the energy costs associated with climate change; encourages the EU to conduct all water efficiency evaluations using objective and economic indicators;

16. Acknowledges that water scarcity and droughts have direct effects on economic, social and territorial cohesion; maintains that this should be adequately considered in the development of future cohesion policy and that all necessary budgetary measures and other instruments need to be made available to this end;

17. Points out that a region’s economic situation, competitiveness and development opportunities are determined by the complex environmental issues mentioned in the communication;
18. Acknowledges the importance of the WFD as a framework for achieving 'good status' for all European waters, promoting inter-regional cooperation, sustainable water use and protection of available water resources while contributing to mitigating the effects of floods and droughts, and calls upon the Commission and all the Member States to implement fully its provisions and to ensure that water scarcity and drought measures have no negative effects on water quality objectives;

19. Stresses the need to clarify the definition of 'prolonged drought' (in the context of the WFD) and its implications for achieving the environmental objectives of the WFD in periods of drought and after such periods; points out that water scarcity and drought are related but different, and differentiated strategies should be adopted for them;

20. Stresses that there is a close link between drought, soil erosion, desertification and forest fires;

21. Takes the view that the river basin management plans required under the WFD should also integrate drought and other hydro-meteorological disaster management and set up crisis management tailored to the concrete needs of river basins threatened by water scarcity and droughts including cross-border coordination, public participation and early warning systems operating at different levels, i.e. European, national, regional and local; highlights the need to avoid creating barriers to the natural course of rivers in an effort to minimise flooding, and encourages more extensive impact assessment as regards sealing off the natural courses of the water flow;

22. Underlines the role of forests in the water cycle and the importance of a balanced mix of forests, grassland and crop land for sustainable water management; in particular highlights the role of soils with high organic content and adapted crop rotation; warns that the increasing consumption of land is a threat to agriculture, food security and sustainable water management;

23. Points out that desertification is closely connected to the forest economy; urges that greater use be made of afforestation to restrain and alleviate extreme surface and groundwater flow and to combat soil degradation and erosion;

24. Recommends that the Community civil protection mechanism make provision for intervention in crisis situations resulting from extreme drought;

25. Stresses the importance of reassessing the available quantities of groundwater throughout the EU and the rules governing the use thereof, the principal objective being to ensure rational use of groundwater resources according to the needs of the individual country concerned;

26. Notes that the Communication fails to address the problems arising in numerous regions from the non-purification of waste water;

27. Stresses that the need to protect groundwater resources should not be forgotten if they are to be included in overall water resource management;

28. Calls on the Council, the Member States, and regional and local authorities, as far as other specific policies are concerned, to take into account the points made in the Communication, so as to avert counterproductive effects on water resource conservation;

29. Stresses that worldwide experience proves that river diversion leads to irreparable damage of ecological and hydromorphological conditions and may mean that people have to move from their homes and that businesses have to relocate, thus disturbing social and economic cohesion; calls on the Member States to prevent any deterioration of their river basins and fully respect the requirements set out in Articles 1 and 4 of the WFD and calls on the Commission to grant EU funding only to projects that fully comply with those requirements;
30. Urges the Council, without further delay, to adopt a decision on the proposed regulation establishing the EU Solidarity Fund (COM(2005)0108) in order to provide a better definition of the criteria and of the eligible events, including droughts, and hence enable damage caused by natural disasters to be countered more effectively, flexibly, and swiftly, bearing in mind also that Parliament adopted its position as long ago as 18 May 2006 (1);

31. Welcomes the fact that water saving is the Commission’s first priority in response to water scarcity and droughts; urges the Commission in this connection to ensure that use of Structural Funds does not run counter to this priority, to incorporate sustainable water management as a criterion that projects must satisfy, and to obtain evidence of the utilisation by local and regional authorities of water savings and of their compliance with the requirements of the WFD, before granting them funding from the Structural Funds;

32. Considers it necessary, where a watercourse passes through more than one Member State, to introduce inter-regional and trans-national cooperation for the integrated management of watercourses, particularly in relation to farming;

33. Recalls that almost 20% of water in the EU is lost due to water inefficiency and stresses the need for major investments in order to improve technical progress in all economic sectors (focusing on the most intensive water uses and the sectors where the water saving potential is most significant); notes that poor water management is a problem that influences water scarcity, and that may have more negative impacts in times of drought but that does not cause it, since drought is a natural phenomenon;

34. Proposes to the Commission — given that the water scarcity and drought problem is closely linked to the complex of issues surrounding the wasteful use of water — that the criterion of economical water use should be incorporated into the system of conditions for the award of subsidies from EU funds;

35. Encourages the EU to support technology, exchanges of good practice and innovation that are less water- and energy-intensive and aimed at improving efficiency in the use of water;

36. Calls on the Commission, bearing in mind that losses owing to leakages in the public water supply network in urban centres may exceed 50%, to look into the possibility of promoting a network of cities to encourage sustainable water use with the aim of exchanging good practices such as re-use, saving and improved water efficiency and jointly carrying out pilot demonstration projects; calls, likewise, on local authorities to improve supply networks for water distribution that have become obsolete;

37. Stresses that 40% of the water used in the EU could be saved; calls for concrete measures and financial incentives to promote a more efficient and sustainable use of water; calls, likewise, for the widespread installation of metering devices to measure water consumption in order to encourage saving, re-use and the efficient and rational use of water; encourages the Member States most affected to use part of their structural funds for projects to improve water use and water saving; encourages river basin authorities to pursue a cost-benefit analysis for alternative water management measures in all sectors;

38. Stresses the need to combat waste and balance water uses, in particular through re-use, bearing in mind its manifold values: biological, social, environmental, symbolic, cultural and in terms of landscape and tourism;

39. Recalls that Article 9(1) of the WFD lays down that ‘Member States shall take account of the principle of recovery of the costs of water services (…) in accordance in particular with the polluter pays principle’ and ‘shall ensure by 2010 that water-pricing policies provide adequate incentives for users to use water resources efficiently (…) [and] an adequate contribution of the different water uses (…) to the recovery of the cost of water services’;

40. Considers that, while water management policies must be based on the polluter pays principle, they should also be accompanied by measures to put an end to the significant losses that occur as a result of defective equipment and unsuitable crops and agrarian systems;

41. Stresses that a lot of progress towards more efficient use of water can be achieved in some countries in the agricultural sector; hopes that the Common Agricultural Policy health check will take this problem into consideration and will propose concrete actions promoting a more sustainable use of water through incentives to mobilise the best available practices and technologies, in particular support for rural development, through cross-compliance, the application of the polluter pays principle and the user pays principle, and Rural Development Programmes; considers that the European Union should support measures to improve water management in agriculture, promoting a modernisation of irrigation systems to reduce water consumption and boosting research in this field;

42. Underlines the role that environmental programmes in the framework of the second pillar of the CAP play in the setting of incentives for agricultural practices for protecting the sustainability and purity of water resources;

43. Underlines the fact that biofuel production will increase demand for large quantities of water and stresses the need to closely monitor the impact of the use of biofuels and to regularly review European Union and national biofuel policies;

44. Points out that major water users (such as power plants) do not consume water but release water to the water cycle after having used it in their processes; stresses that by doing this they have a strong effect on surface water availability, ecological systems and public health by increasing the water temperature; underlines the need to take these effects into consideration;

45. Recalls that consumers have a major role to play if a sustainable use of water resources is to be achieved in the EU, calls therefore on the EU to launch a public information and education campaign to make people aware of the water issue and encouraging them to take concrete actions;

46. Points out to the Commission that by devising an efficient water pricing policy which reflects the true value of water, it may encourage consumers to be more sparing in their use of water;

47. Stresses the pre-eminent role of regional and local authorities and civil society organisations in awareness-raising campaigns and in organising educational activities;

48. Calls on the Commission and the regions and cities of the Member States to encourage the development of a water saving culture within the EU by promoting rain water catchment and by launching campaigns to raise public awareness of water saving, for instance through suitable educational programmes; calls on the Commission to encourage the exchange of good practice among regions, cities and civil society organisations, focusing on measures to save water (including the purification of rain and waste water), improve water efficiency and manage the risk of droughts;

49. Considers it necessary to promote information, awareness and training campaigns for producers in order to make an active contribution towards the sustainable management of water resources;

50. Takes the view that a labelling system for the water consumption of products, which already exists for energy efficiency, would be an appropriate tool for achieving a more sustainable water consumption, but stresses that:

(a) such a system should be voluntary, and

(b) existing labels and labelling schemes should be taken into account to avoid confusing consumers with an overload of information;

51. Urges that water performance criteria should, where possible, become part of construction standards for buildings;
52. Encourages all stakeholders to develop a voluntary scheme for labelling sustainable water management and to draw up voluntary water savings programmes in the various economic sectors (for example agriculture, tourism, manufacturing);

53. Takes the view that water must remain a public good and a fundamental element of countries’ sovereignty which should be accessible to everyone at fair ‘social and environmental prices’, taking particular account of the specific situation of each country and the various farming systems in existence, as well as the social role played by farming;

54. Calls on the Commission to consider financing in 2009 a pilot project intended to cover research, surveying and monitoring for the development of prevention activities to halt desertification and steppe formation in Europe thus preventing erosion, deflation, agriculture and biodiversity losses, increasing soil protection and fertility and the soil's capacity to retain water as well as its abilities in coal sequestration; reiterates the importance of establishing reliable and transparent data so that policy can be truly effective;

55. Welcomes the establishment of the European Drought Observatory and the early warning system; stresses the importance of an extended discussion on its basic objectives, budget and organisation;

56. Calls on the Commission to promote the entry into operation of the European Drought Observatory within the framework of the European Environment Agency and emphasises that it should work on complementing national data by standard regional and local seasonal information on precipitation and cross-sector consumption to enhance sound, strategic decision-making;

57. Underlines the importance of soil rich in humus, an adapted crop rotation system and a balanced mix of forest, grassland and crop land for sustainable water management; warns that the increasing consumption of land constitutes a threat to agriculture, security of food supply and sustainable water management;

58. Calls on the Commission to support the Member States in reforesting areas which have been affected by cyclical drought and fires on the basis of respect for their bio-climate and ecological characteristics, and hopes that rehabilitation of the rural and urban landscape will be treated as a matter of particular importance, having due regard to specific local features;

59. Takes the view that water scarcity and cyclical droughts have accentuated the scourge of fires and their gravity, increasing the fragility and risk of destruction of many species that are characteristic of forests in southern European countries, for which forests often represent the main natural resource;

60. Stresses that planning for the European agricultural model should take account of the most frequent and acute environmental hazards as well as water scarcity and drought and that, in that context, an effective crisis management mechanism should constitute a fundamental element of the CAP;

61. Takes the view that the environmental value of forests and agricultural production must be reassessed in a context of climate change where it is absolutely vital to balance the increase in greenhouse gas emissions with an increase in forest cover, whose contribution as a carbon sink must be taken into account in all policies on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;

62. Supports the Commission’s commitment to continue to highlight the challenge of water scarcity and drought at international level, in particular through the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

63. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
Arctic Governance

P6_TA(2008)0474

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic governance
(2010/C 9 E/07)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the International Polar Year (March 2007 to March 2009),

— having regard to the Eighth Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians, held in Fairbanks, Alaska from 12 to 14 August 2008,

— having regard to the Commission communication on Arctic policy expected in the autumn of 2008,

— having regard to its earlier resolutions on the Northern Dimension of 16 January 2003 (1), 17 November 2003 (2), 16 November 2005 (3) and 16 November 2006 (4),

— having regard to the conclusions of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report from 2005,

— having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,


B. whereas on 14 March 2008 the High Representative and the Commission issued a policy paper to the European Council, entitled ‘Climate Change and International Security’,

C. whereas the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Arctic region is growing, as symbolised by the planting of a Russian flag on the sea bed below the North Pole in August 2007,

D. having regard to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos), which has not yet been ratified by the US Senate and which was not formulated with specific regard to the current circumstances of climate change and the unique consequences of melting ice in the Arctic Seas,

E. whereas the recent conference of Arctic parliamentarians brought together elected representatives from the European Parliament, Canada, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and the US, to discuss the issues of maritime safety, health care, environmental protection and sustainable development,

F. whereas the Arctic region is currently not governed by any specifically formulated multilateral norms and regulations, as it was never expected to become a navigable waterway or an area of commercial exploitation,

G. whereas maritime traffic in Arctic waters has increased exponentially in recent years, owing to increased interest in offshore drilling and the ever more frequent passage of cruise ships, as well as the prospects offered by the Northwest Passage,

(3) OJ C 280 E, 18.11.2006, p. 73.
H. whereas the Arctic region may contain approximately 20% of the world’s undiscovered oil and gas reserves,

I. whereas the Ilulissat Declaration was adopted by the ‘A5 countries’ (Denmark, Canada, Norway, Russia and the US) in May 2008,

J. whereas the Commission participated fully in the conference on ‘The Arctic: Our Common Concern’, organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers in Ilulissat (Greenland) on 9 and 10 September 2008, and whereas Parliament notes the chairman’s conclusions in respect of that conference,

K. whereas the abovementioned conference on the Arctic also focused on climate change in the region, its effects on the indigenous populations and possible adaptations to these effects,

L. whereas the rate of global warming in the Arctic region is much higher than in the rest of the world, with an increase of 2 °C in the last hundred years compared to an average of 0.6 °C in the rest of the world,

M. whereas the changes in climatic conditions in the Arctic are already such that the Inuit people, for example, can no longer hunt in the traditional manner, as the ice is too thin to hold their sleds, while wildlife such as polar bears, walruses and foxes are in danger of seeing much of their habitats disappear,

N. whereas three of the EU’s Member States, and a further two of the EU’s closely-related neighbours participating in the internal market through the EEA Agreement, are Arctic nations, meaning that the EU and its associated states comprise more than half the numeric membership of the Arctic Council,

1. is deeply concerned at the effects of climate change on the sustainability of the lives of the indigenous peoples in the region, in terms of both the general environment (melting icecap and permafrost, rising sea levels and flooding) and the natural habitat (the retreating icecap poses problems for polar bears’ feeding habits), and underlines that any international decisions relating to these issues must fully involve and take account of all peoples and nations of the Arctic;

2. Recalls that during the 20th century, Arctic air temperatures increased by approximately 5 °C, and that this increase is ten times faster than the observed global mean surface temperature; underlines that additional warming of about 4-7 °C in the Arctic is predicted for the next hundred years; believes, therefore, that the time for diagnosis is over and the time for action is now;

3. Underlines that Arctic species and societies have developed highly specialised methods of adaptation to the harsh conditions found at the poles, thus making them extremely vulnerable to dramatic changes in these conditions; is very concerned for walruses, polar bears, seals and other marine mammals which rely on sea-ice for resting, feeding, hunting and breeding, and which are particularly threatened by climate change;

4. Welcomes the concluding conference statement adopted by the Eighth Conference of Arctic Parliamentarians in Fairbanks on 14 August 2008;

5. Welcomes the fact that the ‘High North’ forms part of the EU’s Northern Dimension policy, but is convinced that awareness of the Arctic’s importance in a global context needs to be raised further by delivering a standalone EU Arctic policy;

6. Underlines the significance of the Arctic for the global climate in this respect, and hopes that the present support for research activities in that region will be continued beyond the International Polar Year;
7. Awaits with great interest the forthcoming Commission communication on Arctic policy, and hopes that it will lay the foundations for a meaningful EU Arctic policy; calls on the Commission to address, at least, the following issues in its communication:

(a) the state of play in relation to climate change, and adaptation to it, in the region;

(b) policy options that respect the indigenous populations and their livelihoods;

(c) the need to cooperate with our Arctic neighbours on cross-border issues, in particular maritime safety; and

(d) options for a future cross-border political or legal structure that could provide for the environmental protection and sustainable orderly development of the region or mediate political disagreement over resources and navigable waterways in the High North;

8. Calls on the Commission to include energy and security policy in the Arctic region on its agenda, and to propose, in particular, in its expected communication on the region, suitable subjects and joint working procedures for the EU and the Arctic countries in the fields of climate change, sustainable development, security of energy supply and maritime safety;

9. Draws attention to the fact that the Arctic region, by virtue of its impact on the world's climate and its singular natural environment, merits special consideration as the EU develops its position for the COP 15 UN Climate Change Conference, due to be held in Copenhagen in 2009;

10. Is of the view that the maritime traffic in the region (both tourist- and offshore drilling-related) does not enjoy anywhere near the level of minimum international safety rules that prevail in other international waters, in terms of either protection of human life or protection of the environment, and urges the Commission to ensure, as soon as possible, that appropriate amendments are made to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) regulations;

11. Emphasises the external aspects of energy policy and the role of the Arctic in the formulation of the Energy Policy for Europe (EPE), as proposed by the March 2007 European Council;

12. Supports the Arctic Council in maintaining the Arctic region as a region of low tension, open to international research cooperation, so as to allow its potential as a future energy supplier region to be fully developed within a sustainable environmental framework;

13. Remains particularly concerned over the ongoing race for natural resources in the Arctic, which may lead to security threats for the EU and overall international instability;

14. Urges the Commission to take a proactive role in the Arctic by at least, as a first step, taking up 'observer status' on the Arctic Council, and considers that the Commission should set up a dedicated Arctic desk;

15. Suggests that the Commission should be prepared to pursue the opening of international negotiations designed to lead to the adoption of an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic, having as its inspiration the Antarctic Treaty, as supplemented by the Madrid Protocol signed in 1991, but respecting the fundamental difference represented by the populated nature of the Arctic and the consequent rights and needs of the peoples and nations of the Arctic region; believes, however, that as a minimum starting-point such a treaty could at least cover the unpopulated and unclaimed area at the centre of the Arctic Ocean;

16. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Governments of the Member States, Norway, Iceland, Russia, Canada and the United States, and the regional cooperation actors.
Implementation of the social legislation relating to road transport

P6_TA(2008)0475

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 on the implementation of social legislation relating to road transport (2008/2062(INI))

The European Parliament,


— having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85 of 20 December 1985 on the harmonisation of certain social legislation relating to road transport (1),


— having regard to the judgment of 24 September 2004 in Joined Cases C-184/02 and C-223/02 Kingdom of Spain and Republic of Finland v European Parliament and Council of the European Union (5), in which the Court of Justice of the European Communities ruled that self-employed drivers could not be excluded permanently from the scope of Directive 2002/15/EC,

— having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament entitled Keep Europe moving — sustainable mobility for our continent — mid-term review of the European Commission's 2001 transport White Paper (6),

— having regard to the letters of 21 June 2007 and 29 June 2007 from the Chairman of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs to Commissioner Vladimir Spidla and Vice-President Jacques Barrot and the reply from Vice-President Barrot of 3 October 2007,

(4) OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p. 35.
— having regard to the report of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions entitled Impact of the working time directive on collective bargaining in the road transport sector (1),

— having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A6-0357/2008),

A. whereas some Member States failed to supply within the time limits the information on inspection and enforcement activities in 2003-2004 required under Council Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85, with the result that the Commission’s report on the implementation of that Regulation during the period in question (COM(2007)0622)) was submitted one and a half years late,

B. whereas the average number of contraventions detected has remained stable, although the total number of contraventions reported in some Member States rose considerably, with breaches of the rules on breaks and rest periods tending to increase while breaches of the rules on driving times fell,

C. whereas the next biennial report will have to include, for the first time, information on the implementation of Directive 2002/15/EC,

D. whereas it is in the general interest that the rules on working time, driving times and rest periods for both mobile workers and self-employed drivers should be properly applied,

E. whereas the aim of Directive 2002/15/EC is to establish minimum requirements in relation to the organisation of working time in order to improve the health and safety protection of persons performing mobile road transport activities, to improve road safety and to align conditions of competition,

F. whereas Directive 2002/15/EC came into force on 23 March 2002 and gave Member States three years, until 23 March 2005, to implement its provisions, and yet most Member States failed to transpose the Directive during that three-year transitional period,

G. whereas, two years after the end of the transitional period for the transposition of Directive 2002/15/EC, some Member States still have not transposed all of its provisions,

H. whereas self-employed drivers are excluded from the scope of Directive 2002/15/EC until at least 23 March 2009,

I. whereas the Commission report on the consequences of excluding self-employed drivers from the scope of Directive 2002/15/EC sets out the advantages and disadvantages of both including and excluding self-employed drivers, but without reaching any final conclusions,

J. whereas Parliament has on various occasions pointed to the importance of addressing the industry malpractice of classifying many employees falsely as self-employed drivers,

K. whereas it is important to eliminate disparities between the Member States and to help to ensure fair competition in the road transport sector by including self-employed drivers,

L. whereas it is important for the scope of Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85 to remain consistent with regard to the length of driving time and rest periods, with no distinction between drivers,

M. whereas restricting working time in the road transport sector will have much greater benefits in terms of road safety if self-employed drivers are included,

(1) http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/eiro/tn0704039s/tn0704039s.pdf
N. whereas the inclusion of self-employed drivers will not detract from their capacity or the need to perform administrative or managerial duties for their company, since, for the purposes of Directive 2002/15/EC, working time is confined to activities related directly to road transport,

O. whereas the social actors represented on the European Economic and Social Committee are broadly in agreement on including self-employed workers, so as to ensure equal treatment for all workers in the sector, prevent distortions of competition and promote better working conditions,

P. whereas the Court of Justice of the European Communities has clearly established that Article 71 of the EC Treaty offers a sufficient legal basis for applying Directive 2002/15/EC to self-employed workers, precisely because it contributes to the objectives of road safety and the approximation of conditions of competition,

Q. whereas the abovementioned Commission Communication and Commission report on the consequences of excluding self-employed drivers from the scope of Directive 2002/15/EC reflect the continuing concern at the delays in transposing and applying Directive 2002/15/EC in some Member States, as well as other social legislation in the road transport sector,

R. whereas, even though some Member States have still not transposed Directive 2002/15/EC, the two-yearly implementation reports should be submitted in accordance with the timetable laid down in the Directive,

1. Regrets that considerable differences still remain in the application and enforcement of Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85; notes that Member States must step up their efforts to guarantee efficient and uniform implementation of the improved social provisions;

2. Expresses concern at the shortcomings and delays in the transposition and implementation of Directive 2002/15/EC in some Member States; seeks rapid clarification and comment from such Member States as to the reasons for non-implementation, together with an indication of what obstacles may still remain;

3. Points out that Directive 2002/15/EC establishes minimum requirements and its transposition must not lead to a lower level of protection for workers or less compliance with more favourable conditions in certain Member States resulting from general employment legislation or collective agreements,

4. Calls on the Member States to speed up the process of transposition and show the utmost diligence in implementing social legislation in the road transport sector, so as to properly comply with the general interests of road safety and the health and safety of drivers and provide a clear framework of fair competition;

5. Calls on the Commission to draw up the implementation reports required under Directive 2002/15/EC at the two-yearly intervals laid down, even though some Member States have not yet transposed the Directive’s provisions into national law;

6. Expresses concern at the consistently high average number of infringements, particularly in the field of passenger transport, and looks to the Member States to improve their enforcement of the rules; calls on the Member States to step up joint initiatives to encourage an exchange of information and personnel, together with coordinated controls;

7. Calls on the Commission to display the utmost firmness in dealing with infringements of Community law by Member States as regards social provisions in the road transport sector, to provide for coercive measures in the event of failure to comply with provisions and to take preventive measures, if necessary via judicial process, to ensure strict compliance with Community law;

8. Calls on the Commission, under the comitology procedure set out in Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, to propose by October 2008 guidelines for the uniform definition and classification of infringements;
9. Calls on the Commission to give appropriate priority to the social dimension of road safety and the health and safety of drivers and other road users in connection with all other considerations, when drawing up its official impact assessment in view of a legislative proposal modifying Directive 2002/15/EC as called for in Article 2(1) thereof;

10. Calls on the Commission, when drawing up the abovementioned official impact assessment, to take account of the difficult working conditions experienced by lorry drivers travelling through Europe arising from inadequate access to proper rest areas despite the fact that Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 implicitly recognises the importance of a sufficient number of safe and secure rest areas for professional drivers along the Union’s motorway network; calls, therefore, on the Commission to follow up the pilot project on safe and secure parking areas launched by the European Parliament, taking account of the measures recommended in the European Economic and Social Committee’s opinion on ‘European Road Safety Policy and Professional Drivers — Safe and secured parking places’ (1);

11. Calls on the Commission, when drawing up the abovementioned official impact assessment, to give full consideration to the position expressed by Parliament and to its arguments for the full inclusion of self-employed drivers within the scope of Directive 2002/15/EC;

12. Calls on the Commission, when drawing up the abovementioned official impact assessment, to take into account the general view within the transport sector that self-employed drivers should be included and considers that it would be extremely difficult from a legal point of view to identify and pursue ‘bogus’ self-employed workers, not to mention the practical and bureaucratic difficulties that would have to be overcome to prevent this concept from being widely exploited to evade the restrictions on working days;

13. Calls on the Commission to submit the relevant measures sufficiently well in advance to ensure that Directive 2002/15/EC as a whole, including all its elements, can enter fully into force on 23 March 2009 and that its scope is extended to include self-employed workers;

14. Calls on the Commission to ensure that impact assessments are completed with urgency, so that an objective analysis can be concluded without further delay of what changes, if any, should be considered;

15. Calls on the Commission to review traffic inspection procedures in each Member State and send Parliament a report thereon; calls on the Commission, in the event that inspection procedures restricting the free movement of goods or persons are detected, to review existing legislation and propose amendments, so as to ensure uniform traffic inspection procedures;

16. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to submit the information, and the implementation reports based on that information, more rapidly, so that any necessary legal corrections arising from the analysis of the implementation may be addressed without further ado;

17. Considers that the figures on contraventions confirm once again its view that there is an urgent need for legal adjustments; is confident, therefore, in the light of Directive 2006/22/EC, which entered into force in May 2006, and Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, which entered into force in April 2007, that the rules will be more strictly and uniformly enforced in future;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

(1) OJ C 175, 27.7.2007, p. 88.
Lamfalussy follow-up — Future Structure of Supervision

P6_TA(2008)0476

European Parliament resolution of 9 October 2008 with recommendations to the Commission on Lamfalussy follow-up: future structure of supervision (2008/2148(INI))

(2010/C 9 E/09)

The European Parliament,


— having regard to Directive 2001/24/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 April 2001 on the reorganisation and winding up of credit institutions (6),


— having regard to Directive 2004/109/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on the harmonisation of transparency requirements in relation to information about issuers whose securities are admitted to trading on a regulated market (9),


(6) OJ L 125, 5.5.2001, p. 15.
A. whereas there is an ongoing review of Directives 2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC and an expected proposal on credit rating agencies,

B. whereas the Commission has not addressed a series of requests from Parliament, including those made in its abovementioned resolutions and whereas a list of recommendations as to how the functioning of financial markets supervision might be improved is set out in the Annex,

C. whereas financial supervision has not kept pace with market integration and the global evolution of financial markets demanding an update of the existing regulation and supervision systems in order to tackle systemic risks better, provide financial stability, attain the objectives of the European Union and contribute to an improved global financial governance,

D. whereas any suggestion made by Parliament for legislation should be principle-based and the recommendations set out in the Annex should be developed in consultation with the supervisory authorities, financial markets participants and other relevant bodies,

E. whereas there is a growing number of pan-European entities, whose activities span several Member States; whereas the interlocking of many national authorities has increased complexity and blurred the lines of responsibility, especially for macro-prudential supervision and crisis management,

F. whereas the current financial crisis, which was triggered by US subprime mortgages and derived products, has spread worldwide due to the increasingly integrated nature of markets, reinforcing the indication that existing financial market regulation and supervision is not sufficiently convergent at either EU or international level; whereas a reform of financial market regulation and supervision is therefore welcome,

(2) OJ C 175 E, 10.7.2008, p. 392.
(4) OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2006, p. 140.
G. whereas the crisis has led to a credit squeeze entailing a higher price of credit for many market players; whereas economic growth and employment are impaired by the current turmoil on the financial markets,

H. whereas capital markets intermediation and new kinds of financial vehicles did bring about benefits, but have also given rise to new sources of systemic risk globally,

I. whereas the 'originate-to-distribute' model has enhanced competition and spread risk; whereas that model has, however, weakened incentives to evaluate and monitor risk and led to a breakdown in due diligence in some cases,

J. whereas improper practices such as inadequate risk management, irresponsible lending, excessive debt (leverage), weak due diligence and sudden withdrawal of liquidity pose significant risks to financial institutions and may threaten financial stability,

K. whereas innovative techniques, which were designed to diminish risk at the micro level, and themselves complied with current regulation, could lead to risk concentration and systemic risk,

L. whereas harmful regulatory arbitrage should be prevented,

M. whereas the increasing cross-border nature of banking in Europe and the need to respond in a coordinated way to adverse shocks, as well as the need to deal with systemic risks effectively, require divergences between the national regimes of Member States to be reduced to the greatest extent possible; whereas there is a need to move beyond the studies that the Commission has already carried out in this regard and to amend Directive 94/19/EC as soon as possible to provide the same level of protection for bank deposits across the whole European Union in order to preserve financial stability and depositors' confidence and avoid distortions of competition,

N. whereas adequate levels of transparency towards the public, investors and supervisory authorities must be ensured,

O. whereas compensation schemes which reflect individual and corporate performance should not reward excessive risk-taking for short-term, at the expense of necessary long-term, performance and prudence,

P. whereas conflicts of interest, which may arise from the business model used by financial institutions, credit rating agencies, and audit and law firms, must be addressed and monitored,

Q. whereas failures by credit rating agencies in respect of complex structured products and misconceptions of the meaning of ratings by market participants have generated substantial negative externalities and market uncertainties; whereas credit rating agencies' procedures need reviewing,

R. whereas self-regulatory solutions, proposed by the credit rating agencies are as yet untested and probably insufficient to meet the pivotal role they play in the financial system,

S. whereas market integration, while generally beneficial, should be accompanied by an appropriately integrated approach to supervision, which also avoids unnecessary red tape and is consistent with better regulation policies,

T. whereas the Commission should carry out a comprehensive impact assessment of a legislative proposal,

U. whereas the European Union needs more consistent and effective, properly implemented, but not overly burdensome, regulation and supervision in order to mitigate the risk of future financial crises and ensure a level playing field across borders and among all market participants; whereas the European Union should play a leading international role and should reinforce the consistent implementation and convergence of its own regulation and supervision,
V. whereas a comprehensive review of current EU regulatory and supervisory arrangements is necessary together with measures to improve global supervisory cooperation covering the capital adequacy framework, transparency, and governance as key prerequisites for effective regulatory and supervisory arrangements in a coordinated manner,

W. whereas the supervisory approach should be adapted to specificities of the business and aspects of it that are already regulated; whereas the objectives of financial market supervision and the prudential supervision of particular institutions vary,

X. whereas future proposals should take account of negotiations on the Solvency II proposal and the review of Directives 2006/48/EC and 2006/49/EC,

Y. whereas supervisory cooperation needs to take into account the third-country dimension of supervision of international groups as most, if not all, major financial groups in the European Union have third-country interests,

Z. whereas following the Council conclusions of 3 June 2008, 4 December 2007 and 9 October 2007, a major programme of work is already under way to make targeted improvements to the arrangements for EU supervisory cooperation; whereas extensive work programmes are under way in the European Union and worldwide with a view to understanding the causes of market turmoil and responding appropriately,

AA. whereas a group of wise persons should be set up by autumn 2008, bringing together different stakeholders, such as supervisors, regulators and industry representatives, and elaborating a longer term supervisory vision; whereas that group should be tasked with developing a blueprint and a roadmap for a more radical long-term reform towards full institutional integration; whereas going beyond the architecture of financial supervision, the group could also address issues such as a single rulebook for financial supervision, a deposit guarantee scheme and a common insolvency regime, which are commensurate with an integrated financial and supervisory system,

1. Requests the Commission to submit to Parliament by 31 December 2008, on the basis of Article 44, Article 47(2), Article 55, Article 95, Article 105(6), Article 202, Article 211 or Article 308 of the EC Treaty, a legislative proposal or proposals covering the matters dealt with in the detailed recommendations below;

2. Confirms that the recommendations respect the principle of subsidiarity and the fundamental rights of citizens;

3. Considers that, where appropriate, the financial implications of the requested proposal or proposals should be covered by EU budgetary allocations;

4. Instructs its President to forward this resolution and the accompanying detailed recommendations to the Commission, the Council and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
ANNEX TO THE RESOLUTION

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CONTENT OF THE PROPOSAL(S) REQUESTED

1. Recommendation 1 — Basic prerequisites for effective regulatory and supervisory arrangements

The European Parliament considers that the legislative act(s) to be adopted should aim to regulate:

1.1. Measures to improve the EU financial services regulatory framework

Capital adequacy framework, in particular:

(a) revise capital requirements rules by strengthening risk management, liquidity and exposure provisions in a consistent and, where appropriate, counter-cyclical manner for entities operating on financial markets, and ensure appropriate capital requirements for all entities operating on financial markets while taking into account systemic risk;

(b) enhance the resilience of the capital adequacy framework to be able to deal with financial market disruption, whilst respecting the responsibilities of national authorities;

(c) ensure that the rules are counter-cyclical as far as possible;

(d) reform the framework to improve risk management; ensure adequacy of mathematical models, and, as appropriate, expand the range of scenarios and frequency of stress testing;

(e) ensure appropriate capital requirements for complex financial products and derivatives;

(f) ensure disclosure of off-balance-sheet items, structured investment vehicles (SIVs) and any liquidity assistance facility, and require proper assessment of the risks that they pose, so that market participants are aware of their existence and of how they operate.

1.2. Measures to improve transparency

(a) Securitisation: foster transparency, clarity and the provision of data on complex financial products and the securitisation process, taking into account industry-led initiatives in this area; ensure that the securitisation and credit rating process does not result in an unjustified increase in the total value of the securitised product beyond the value of the underlying assets.

(b) Complex Financial Products (CFS): ensure that credit rating agencies use consistent and appropriate rating terminology that clarifies how such products differ among themselves especially in terms of volatility, complexity and vulnerability to market stress, while taking account of the need for investors to develop procedures to assess the quality of structured products without relying solely on ratings.

(c) Accounting rules, valuation and pricing:

(i) ensure an appropriate accounting treatment of material securitisation vehicles, so that companies and financial institutions cannot artificially keep material special purpose vehicles or SIVs, etc. off their balance sheets;

(ii) ensure that the rules on valuation and pricing standards for complex financial products are appropriate, in particular in the context of IAS 39, to be elaborated in cooperation with the IASB and other competent international bodies.

(d) Unregulated markets: increase transparency of over-the-counter (OTC) markets with regard to their liquidity, address major sources of systemic risk (i.e. counterparty concentration risk), and, where appropriate, encourage market participants to clear OTC trades in clearing houses.
1.3. Governance measures

(a) Securitisation: require originators to assess and monitor risk and ensure transparency of the debt or mortgage backed securities in order to allow investors to perform adequate due diligence.

(b) Remuneration schemes: ensure financial institutions disclose their remuneration policy, including stock options, in particular the remuneration and compensation packages of directors; ensure that all transactions involving management can be clearly identified in the financial statements; ensure prudential supervisors include in their assessment of risk management the influence of remuneration, bonus schemes and taxation to ensure that they contain balanced incentives and do not encourage extreme risk taking.

(c) Corporate liability regime: ensure that liability regimes providing for appropriate fines and other penalties for failure to comply with financial services legislation are established, allowing executives in financial institutions to be suspended or disqualified from working in all or relevant parts of the financial sector in the event of a breach of duty or wrongful trading.

(d) Credit rating agencies: measures addressing e.g. conflicts of interests, quality assurance systems and oversight in a manner consistent with the considered recommendations of the Financial Stability Forum, the International Organisation of Securities Commissions, the Committee of European Securities Regulators and the European Securities Markets Expert Group relating to potential enhancement of credit rating processes, drawing lessons where appropriate from the oversight of auditors; for supervisors to be able to call for an ‘audit trail’ of the originator/credit rating agency correspondence and to be notified in the event of significant concerns over models; ensure that credit rating agencies provide enhanced information as to the particular characteristics of complex debt products, mortgage related products and traditional debt, and that the rating agencies apply differentiated symbols for the rating of complex debt products, mortgage related products and traditional debt; foster transparency of credit rating agencies, provide enhanced transparency as to the methodology and criteria relevant to particular ratings of complex debt products, mortgage related products and traditional debt.

2. Recommendation 2 — Financial stability and systemic risk measures

The European Parliament considers that the legislative act(s) to be adopted should aim to regulate:

(a) Financial stability and systemic risks: establish databases, forward-looking scenarios, policies on macro prudential supervision and financial stability, as well as an early-warning system and ensure that the European Central Bank (ECB), the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) and the Banking Supervisory Committee of the ESCB (BSC) take an active role in their initiation, elaboration and operation; ensure that EU supervisors and central banks provide the ECB, via the BSC, with relevant non-public and confidential up-to-date aggregate micro-prudential information/data to allow it to fulfil this function and prevent systemic risk;

(b) EU crisis prevention, management and resolution arrangements: In particular:

(i) enhancing crisis prevention and management arrangements at EU level, where necessary, including:

— monitoring and assessing systemic financial risks at EU level;

— setting up an EU early-warning system and early-intervention mechanism for dealing with weak and failing entities, when an EU cross-border financial group is concerned or when the EU financial stability is threatened; such a mechanism should be well-defined, clear, able to prompt action and comply with EU State aid rules;
— facilitating the cross-border transfer of funds within a group in extreme situations by taking into account the interests of the creditors of the group's individual entities and having regard to Directive 2001/24/EC;

— cross-border crisis management and clarifying State aid rules in cases of cross-border crisis;

(ii) enhancing crisis resolution arrangements by improving the EU rules on winding up and setting up arrangements of burden sharing among relevant Member States in cases of insolvency within cross-border financial groups;

(c) ensure that EU rules on deposit guarantees are urgently revised to avoid arbitrage between guarantee levels in Member States that may further increase volatility and undermine financial stability instead of increasing security and depositors' confidence; they should also guarantee a level playing field for financial institutions; EU rules on deposit guarantees should be amended to support further development of ex-ante schemes financed by contributions from financial institutions; the level of refund should be significantly increased and the availability of refunds to retail clients in case of failing financial institution should be ensured within a reasonable timeframe including in cases of cross-border situations;

(d) promote similar rules for insurance guarantees, whilst recognising the different nature of insurance and banking;

(e) ensure market diversity and encourage institutions that have long-term funding or liabilities to diversify market and liquidity risks.

3. Recommendation 3 — Supervisory framework

The European Parliament considers that the legislative act(s) to be adopted should aim to regulate, streamline, integrate and complete the present supervisory system by means of the following:

3.1. Supervision of large cross-border financial groups:

(a) by 31 December 2008, a regulation will require colleges of supervisors for the largest cross-border financial groups or holdings operating in the EU. The regulation should contain clear criteria for identifying the cross-border financial groups or holdings for which such colleges will be mandatory. In cases of substantial third-country involvement, separate parallel structures should be avoided, and third country supervisors could be invited to be involved as far as reasonable and practicable;

(b) the colleges will be composed of representatives of the national supervisory authorities dealing with prudential supervision. The regulation should contain clear principles for the national supervisors that have to be represented in the mandatory colleges, taking into account the group's market size in a Member State, the volume of cross-border operations, the volume and value of assets to reflect the importance of the group activities, ensuring that all Member States in which the parent undertaking, subsidiaries and significant branches are operating will be represented, and also taking into account the need to involve third-country supervisors where reasonable and practicable. Special attention should be given to the challenges with which supervisors in rapidly catching up economies are faced. To achieve operational integration, the consolidating supervisor must have full process-leadership within the college, i.e. the consolidating supervisor must be the central point of contact for the financial group, ensuring appropriate delegation of tasks and responsibilities within the college;

(c) the colleges will normally be chaired by the consolidating supervisor from the Member State where the central administration or the main EU office of the cross-border financial groups or holdings is established. The consolidating supervisor will host and primarily staff the secretariat;

(d) ensure collection, exchange and access to relevant information among the members of the college and among all supervisors involved within the EU and stimulate arrangements for maximising exchange of information with third-country supervisors;

(e) the colleges will decide, where appropriate, on the basis of a qualified majority voting (QMV) system based on principles and objectives that will ensure consistency, fair and appropriate treatment and a level playing field.
3.2. Configuration of EU supervision: Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees:

(a) by 31 December 2008 a regulation will strengthen and clarify the status and accountability of the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees, giving the Level 3 Committees legal status commensurate with their duties, and coordinate and streamline the action of the different sector supervisory authorities, reinforce their tasks and ensure appropriate staffing and resources;

(b) in addition to advisory tasks, the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees will be given the task (and the tools and resources) to ensure and actively promote supervisory convergence and a level playing field in the implementation and enforcement of EU legislation. National supervisors should be committed to the execution of the tasks and decisions of the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees. This should be included in the mandates of the national supervisors and their mandates must be brought better in line with each other;

(c) the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees should present an annual work plan. Parliament, the Council and the Commission should approve the Committees’ annual work plans and reports;

(d) the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees can take decisions on the basis of a fair and appropriate QMV system that takes into account the relative size of the financial sector and the GDP of each Member State, as well as the systemic importance of the financial sector for the Member State; such a procedure should be elaborated both for decisions on supervisory convergence issues and for the advice to the Commission on legislation and regulation;

(e) the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees should:

   (i) develop procedures for data provision in cross-border situations;
   (ii) issue recommendations on specific (macro) supervisory practice issues;
   (iii) issue guidelines to ensure coherence and streamline the supervisory practices of the colleges;
   (iv) develop procedures to mediate conflicts that may arise between members of a college;
   (v) design common reporting standards and data provision requirements for groups, preferably in a multi purpose format such as Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL);
   (vi) represent the EU in international sector bodies of supervisors such as the International Organisation of Securities Commissions;
   (vii) establish a periodical panel review process for each of the colleges to ensure convergence on college processes. The review panel should be set up as a joint group of the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees and the BSC, the latter bringing in the macro-prudential perspective which is crucial to ensure close cooperation between supervisors and central banks and to effectively manage crisis situations;

(f) the chairs of the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees should meet on a regular basis to reinforce cross-sector cooperation and coherence between the three Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees. Where possible, mediation should be used to resolve disputes in the first instance with the mediator(s) agreed by the parties to the dispute in issue. Failing that, a group, made up of the chairs of the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees, together with an independent chair and vice chair, should be given the legal powers to mediate and, where necessary, intervene to resolve conflicts between supervisors within the structure of colleges and sectoral Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees. The chair and vice chair for that Lamfalussy Level 3 Committee coordinating group should be nominated by the Commission and approved by the Parliament for a five year term;

(g) together they should:

   (i) coordinate between the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees;
   (ii) provide for common data and statistics;
(iii) cooperate with the BSC and the ECB for the purpose of coordinating financial stability issues;

(iv) where necessary, establish appropriate arrangements for dealing with conflicts that may arise between the national and/or sectoral supervisors that participate in colleges, or between the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees;

(v) promote a European supervisory culture for the future that is solid and sustainable and provides for a better cross-sector and cross-border integration and coordination;

(h) elaborate a supervisory architecture that is solid and sustainable and which provides for a better cross-sector and cross-border integration and coordination.

3.3. EU financial stability arrangements:

(a) by 31 December 2008, a proposal will require arrangements for financial stability oversight at EU level. Those arrangements should ensure the efficient collection and analysis of micro and macro prudential information for the early identification of potential risks to financial stability, integrated with global work on financial stability. Those arrangements should enable EU supervisors and central banks to react promptly and develop a rapid reaction force for crisis situations with a systemic impact for the European Union;

(b) the oversight arrangements should, most importantly, aim to strengthen horizontal links between macroeconomic and financial market supervision. Strengthening the ECB’s role in this respect is necessary. Procedures for cooperation and information-sharing between the Lamfalussy Level 3 Committees and ESCB/BSC should be developed;

(c) specific issues to be addressed should include:

(i) establishing a proper system of supervisory data collection and exchange;

(ii) analysing and elaborate those data;

(iii) developing procedures for the provision and collection of confidential data;

(iv) providing early-warning signals about dynamics that can endanger the stability of the financial system;

(v) mechanisms for rapid reaction force in case of a threat to financial stability;

(vi) representing the European Union in international bodies of supervisors such as the Financial Stability Forum and identify an EU counterpart for supervisors in other parts of the world.
— having regard to the Council Conclusions of 5-6 December 2007 on the White Paper entitled 'Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013',


— having regard to the Council Conclusions of 1-2 June 2006 on common values and principles in European Union health systems (3),


— having regard to the Council Conclusions of 1-2 June 2006 on women's health (5),

— having regard to the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) (6),


— having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2006 on protecting European healthcare workers from blood-borne infections due to needlestick injuries (7),

— having regard to the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines in the framework strategy on ‘Health for All in the 21st Century’,

— having regard to its resolution of 22 April 2008 on organ donation and transplantation: Policy actions at EU level (8),

— having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2008 on combating cancer in the enlarged European Union (9),

— having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2008 on the Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work (10),

— having regard to its resolution of 12 July 2007 on action to tackle cardiovascular disease (11),

— having regard to its resolution of 6 September 2006 on improving the mental health of the population — towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union (12),

(2) OJ L 301, 20.11.2007, p. 3.
— having regard to its resolution of 23 February 2005 on the European Environment and Health Action Plan 2004-2010 (1),

— having regard to its declaration of 27 April 2006 on diabetes (2),

— having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0350/2008),

A. whereas health is one of the most precious things, whereas our goal is health for all and whereas we must guarantee a high level of health,

B. whereas Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that any discrimination inter alia on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin shall be prohibited and Article 35 states that everyone has the right of access to preventive health care and the right to medical treatment and that a high level of human health protection shall be ensured,

C. whereas the positive effect of developments in health is that more and more people are living longer,

D. whereas increasing rates of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, rheumatic diseases, mental illness, overweight and obesity problems, along with malnutrition and inadequate nutrition, HIV/AIDS, the poor quality of the environment and the re-emergence of certain diseases associated with growing social inequalities, as well as new challenges, are increasingly threatening health in the EU and beyond, thus increasing the need for prevention and formal and informal health and care provision as well as rehabilitation after sickness,

E. whereas new threats to health with cross-border dimensions, such as pandemics, new communicable disease patterns, tropical diseases and biological terrorism, and the consequences of climate change and globalisation, particularly as regards water, food, increased poverty and migration, as well as existing threats such as environmental pollution, are becoming more serious,

F. whereas supportive health care systems are an essential element of the European Social Model and social and health services of general interest perform a general interest task, thus making a major contribution to social justice and social cohesion,

G. whereas population ageing is changing disease patterns thus increasing the need for formal and informal health and care provision and putting pressure on the sustainability of health systems, and whereas therefore special attention needs to be devoted to support for research and innovation by both the public and the private sector, and whereas strong policies are called for in support of the first stages of life, particularly in some Member States,

H. whereas there are wide disparities in health care between and within Member States,

I. whereas citizens increasingly expect common and effective action on health,

J. whereas at the same time the competences of Member States in the field of health and their freedom to decide what kind of health services they consider appropriate to provide must be respected, in strict compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, including respect for the different management systems and for the specific approaches chosen by the Member States in integrating public and private provision of health care services,

K. whereas in the event of concerns based on ethical grounds, it remains within the competence of the Member States to determine whether or not a certain service constitutes a health service,

L. whereas occupational health and safety is a health area in which the EU has a clear remit for action,

M. whereas there are areas where Member States cannot act alone effectively and whereas the EU is committed to a common health policy with which it can provide added value (e.g. exchange of information and good practice),

N. whereas investment in health is essential for human development and has an indirect impact on the various sectors of the economy,

O. whereas there is a lack of clarity about the number of different work streams and work programmes in the field of health,

P. whereas opportunities for disease prevention remain unexploited,

Q. whereas antibiotics are becoming increasingly useless as antibiotic resistance rises, whereas resistance levels vary across the EU, resulting from different attitudes to the use and control of antibiotics (3 to 4 times greater consumption of antibiotics in some Member States than in other Member States), whereas antibiotic resistance is a European problem as frequent movements including tourism take place, increasing the risk of spreading resistant bacteria, and inappropriate use of antibiotics should therefore be monitored and prudent use of them encouraged, and whereas the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) serves as the appropriate agency to coordinate these activities,

R. whereas 40 % of health spending is linked to unhealthy lifestyles (arising for instance from consumption of alcohol, tobacco, inactivity and poor diet),

S. whereas effective protection of health and safety at work can prevent industrial accidents, inhibit the emergence of occupational diseases and reduce the number of people permanently disabled for work-related reasons,

T. whereas Directive 2004/37/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks relating to exposure to carcinogens and mutagens at work (1) does not adequately cover EU citizens at work from exposure to substances toxic for reproduction,

U. whereas malnutrition, which affects a significant number of EU citizens, including an estimated 40 % of patients in hospitals and between 40 % and 80 % of older people in care homes, costs European health care systems similar amounts to obesity and overweight,

V. whereas health is not only influenced by alcohol, tobacco, inactivity, diet and similar external factors, and therefore more attention should be devoted to the psychosomatic dimension of many diseases and to the deeper causes of the growing number of people affected by depression and other mental disorders,

W. whereas Member States should further promote assistance to people affected by a chronic disease and/or by a disability so as to allow them to be integrated into society to the fullest extent possible,

X. whereas, in many Member States, the increasing demand for health care services is creating an urgent need to take active steps to recruit and retain health care professionals and to provide services to support relatives and friends who provide unpaid care for dependants,

Y. whereas more attention should be paid in the EU’s health strategy to long-term care using new technologies, the care of persons suffering from chronic diseases and the provision of home-based health care for the elderly and for people with physical or mental disabilities and services for those who care for them and whereas, in this context, synergies between health services and social services should be sought,

Thursday 9 October 2008

1. Welcomes the abovementioned Commission White Paper on an EU health strategy for the period 2008-2013 and supports the values, principles, strategic goals and specific actions set out therein;

2. Calls on the Commission to review existing work in the field of health to determine which work streams are delivering value for the Community and Member States; as part of this work calls on the Commission to determine which working methods and practices add value to the work of Member States in the field of health and which should be better coordinated;

3. Believes that, given the existence of new threats to health, there is a need to address health as a key political issue in the Lisbon Strategy, which includes the need to provide citizens with access to decent health care of the highest quality available to ensure a healthy and competitive workforce;

4. Deplores the fact that the White Paper does not set specific quantifiable and measurable objectives whose attainment could produce tangible results, and recommends that such objectives be adopted;

5. Stresses that health care needs the support of effective policies in all areas and at all levels in the Member States and the EU ('Health in All Policies') and at a global level;

6. Stresses the fundamental importance of recognising the right of men and women to have a greater say on matters concerning their health and care and the right of children to unconditional protection of their health, on the basis of the general principles of universality, equality and solidarity;

7. Notes that, according to the WHO, chronic diseases and particularly strokes and heart disease are steadily overtaking infectious diseases;

8. Recommends, as part of efforts to prevent disease, the widespread adoption of the practice of performing health impact assessments, as the impact on human health of the decisions of decision-making bodies at various levels including local and regional authorities and national parliaments is measurable;

9. Stresses that action plans should address, in particular, the causes of certain diseases and the need to reduce and prevent epidemics and pandemics; points out that problems also exist which are linked to gender, such as prostate cancer in the case of men and cervical cancer in the case of women and that specific policies should be developed on these;

10. Recommends that the mandate of the ECDC be extended to non-communicable diseases;

11. Proposes that the Commission set as a priority goal a reduction in avoidable health inequalities and inequities between and within Member States, as well as between different social groups and sections of the population, including men and those with mental health problems; moreover, calls on the Member States to fully enforce such Community legislation as the Transparency Directive (1);

12. Stresses that actions aimed at reducing inequities in health should include targeted promotion, public education and prevention programmes;

13. Believes that disease prevention efforts and vaccination campaigns, where effective products exist, should be stepped up significantly; therefore urges the Commission to draw up an ambitious plan for preventive actions for the entire 5-year period; agrees that spending on health, particularly on prevention and early diagnosis of diseases, is not only a cost but also an investment that could be evaluated in terms of Healthy Life Years as a Lisbon Structural Indicator;

14. Underlines the fact that health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity;

---

15. Stresses that access to reliable, independent and comparable information about healthy behaviours, diseases and treatment options is a prerequisite for an effective disease prevention strategy;

16. Stresses that the desire to prevent diseases must not lead to a climate in society that would prevent children with a chronic disease or a disability from being born; asks the Commission to promote concrete assistance to parents of children with a chronic disease and/or a disability;

17. Stresses furthermore that, in order to promote investment in health, it is vital to measure the effectiveness of investments to date and to publish the findings;

18. Stresses the importance of carrying out well-organised, comprehensive and effective screening programmes to facilitate the early detection and immediate treatment of disease, thereby reducing the associated mortality and morbidity;

19. Believes that the rights of citizens to have access to health care and their responsibility for their own health should be fundamental given that the EU imposes high health and food safety standards throughout people’s lifetimes and calls for further investment in research on health literacy in order to identify the most appropriate strategies to address this issue across different groups of the population; encourages all sectors of society to lead healthy lifestyles;

20. Stresses that the concept of ‘healthy lifestyle’ (i.e. a healthy diet, the absence of drug abuse and sufficient physical activity) needs to be complemented by a psychosocial dimension (i.e. a balanced approach to work and family life); argues that a healthy lifestyle includes good mental and physical health and that these are also important factors in maintaining a competitive economy;

21. Expects the Commission to pay particular attention to the question of the sustainability of health systems and, in that context, also to the role and responsibility of the pharmaceutical industry;

22. Welcomes the Commission’s intention to define fundamental health values and establish a system of health indicators (at national and sub-national level) and to promote health literacy programmes and programmes to prevent health problems;

23. Stresses that the prohibition on making the human body and its parts as such a source of financial gain, as mentioned in Article 3 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, should be considered a guiding principle in the area of health, especially in the field of cell, tissue and organ donation and transplantation;

24. Welcomes the Commission’s intention, in the spirit of ‘health for all’, to promote health and disease prevention among all age groups; stresses the need to highlight key health-related issues, such as nutrition, obesity, malnutrition, physical activity, consumption of alcohol, drugs and tobacco and environmental risks, including air pollution, both at the workplace and at home, and in compliance with the principle of equality between men and women, providing support for healthy ageing and reducing the burden of chronic illnesses;

25. Urges the Commission to take a more holistic approach to nutrition and make malnutrition, alongside obesity, a key priority in the field of health, incorporating it wherever possible into Community-funded research, education and health promotion initiatives and EU-level partnerships;

26. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, in the framework of the EU’s health strategy, to work towards the development of guidelines for a common definition of disability, which may include people with chronic illnesses or cancer and, in the meantime, for Member States that have not yet done so, to act as quickly as possible to include such people within their national definitions of disability;

27. Furthermore, requests that priority be given to ensuring that persons with disabilities are given equal access to health care and that funding is granted to reflect this focus;
28. Demands effective measures to combat antibiotic resistance including measures to make antibiotics prescription only, guidelines to decrease the prescription of antibiotics to limit it to cases in which the use of an antibiotic is indeed necessary, efforts to improve marker tests in order to encourage a more cautious use of antibiotics, and, where appropriate, hygiene codes; calls for special attention to be paid to the methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteria; points out that the ECDC should monitor and evaluate the application of the guidelines and codes;

29. Draws the attention of the Commission and Member States to the need to support research and promote the prevention, early diagnosis and suitable treatment of chronic diseases in order to ensure sufferers' welfare and quality of life;

30. Acknowledges the vital role of carers in health and health care provision and therefore requests that attention be given to policies which support carers and protect their health alongside the health of those who they care for;

31. Notes that in order to facilitate the mobility of health care professionals and ensure patient safety throughout the EU, the sharing of information between Member States and between their respective regulatory bodies for health care professionals is essential;

32. In the framework of the EU's health strategy, calls for more effective exchanges of best practices within the EU in all areas of health-care provision, in particular in relation to screening programmes and the diagnosis and treatment of serious illnesses such as cancer;

33. Believes that the EU should take further steps to protect health care workers from accidents and injury in the workplace where there is scientific or medical evidence of need;

34. Urges the Commission to include substances toxic for reproduction in its forthcoming proposal for amendment of Directive 2004/37/EC;

35. Endorses the action called for in its abovementioned resolution of 15 January 2008 and urges the Commission to respect Parliament's opinion and take the measures called for and come forward with the necessary initiatives which should include:

— Setting targets for the reduction of occupational illnesses;

— A proposal for a directive on musculoskeletal disorders;

— A proposal for a revision of Directive 2004/37/EC;

— Measures to address the growing problem of third party violence;

36. Regrets that, despite Parliament's repeated and specific requests, the Commission has yet to propose amending Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work (1) with a view to addressing the serious risks to health care workers arising from working with needles and medical sharps; calls on the Commission to expedite the completion of the impact assessment via the Tender (2007/S 139-171103) and calls for an appropriate amendment to be adopted well before the end of the current parliamentary term in line with its abovementioned resolution of 6 July 2006;

37. Considers that poor application of Community environmental legislation also has an adverse impact on the state of health of EU citizens;

38. Stresses that, in certain situations, EU citizens face health problems such as air pollution which represent a considerable threat to health, affecting the proper development of children and reducing life expectancy in the EU (2);

39. Believes that action to promote healthy lifestyles in families, schools, hospitals, care homes, workplaces and places of leisure is essential to successful disease prevention and good mental health; recognises that the family is of vital importance in establishing a 'healthy lifestyle' model which is often replicated in later life;

40. Draws the attention of the Commission and the Member States to Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which calls for legislative bodies to treat the interests of children as a primary consideration, one way being to make the necessary provision for maternity and parental leave, for health protection and access to health services during maternity, taking into account in particular the effect that parents' presence and affection, as well as breastfeeding, have on an infant's mental and physical development;

41. Stresses the need to improve health care and information for pregnant and breastfeeding women concerning the risks associated with alcohol, drug and tobacco consumption during pregnancy and breastfeeding;

42. Stresses the need to increase public awareness of reproductive and sexual health in order to prevent unwanted pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and reduce the social and health problems caused by infertility;

43. Supports action on specific types of disease and believes that, in order to be more effective, suitable working methods and organisation need to be found to improve interinstitutional cooperation;

44. Calls on the Commission and Member States to consider the contribution which integrated social and health policies (socially relevant health service provision) could make to a modern approach to the promotion and protection of health, particularly for the most vulnerable sections of the population such as young children and those who are not self-sufficient;

45. Believes that the EU should increasingly focus its research programme efforts on important but often neglected patient groups, such as those with mental health problems and men;

46. Invites the Commission and the Member States further to explore, in the framework of the EU health strategy, the synergies between scientific and technological research, particularly as regards new kinds of research in medical areas that are currently underfunded, on the one hand, and the development of new medical sectors and therapies on the other, in order to make it possible for everyone to have access to these therapies as they can have a very positive impact on the health status of EU citizens and in terms of increasing the efficiency of the system;

47. Welcomes the approach proposed by the Commission with a view to combating effectively the counterfeiting of medicines and encourages the Commission to promote the drafting of an international convention on this subject or the appending of an additional protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (Palermo Convention);

48. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish centres of excellence for each important disease group, which should serve as a point of reference, information and guidance for patients and their families, doctors, health care workers, industry and others;

49. Points out that regional and local health authorities in many Member States are often responsible for the planning, management, operation and development of the health sector and often also bear the financial responsibility for the sector, have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the health sector and are essential partners in the formulation and implementation of health policy;

50. Calls on the Commission and Member States to consider the recognised positive impact of thermal cures on the convalescence and on preserving people's health;

51. Calls on the Commission to support the development of e-health, new health care technologies and user-driven innovation in medical devices;
52. Welcomes the Commission’s proposal to set up an EU-level structured cooperation mechanism and to establish closer cooperation with stakeholders, with the participation of civil society; stresses the need to include employers’ and employees’ organisations in partnership;

53. Calls on Member States, along with regional and local authorities, to use the cooperation mechanism to improve the exchange of best practice; calls on the Commission to be proactive in producing guidelines and recommendations based on such good practice;

54. Agrees that actions under the EU health strategy must be supported by existing financial instruments until the end of the current Financial Framework (2007-2013), without additional budgetary consequences;

55. Calls upon the Commission to recommend to Member States, when they formulate national health strategies, to include priorities to be pursued in other projects not confined to the field of public health;

56. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
II

(Information)

INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS, BODIES, OFFICES
AND AGENCIES

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Communicating Europe in partnership

P6_TA(2008)0463

European Parliament decision of 9 October 2008 on the approval of the joint declaration on
Communicating Europe in Partnership (2007/2222(ACI))

(2010/C 9 E/11)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Article 255 of the EC-Treaty,

— having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2002 on the Commission communication on a new
framework for cooperation on activities concerning the information and communication policy of
the European Union (1),

— having regard to its resolution of 10 April 2003 on an information and communication strategy for the
European Union (2),

— having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2005 on the implementation of the European Union’s
information and communication strategy (3),

— having regard to its resolution of 16 November 2006 on the White Paper on a European communica-
tion policy (4),

— having regard to the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 25 September 2008,

— having regard to the proposed joint declaration on Communicating Europe in Partnership,

— having regard to Rule 120(1) and 43(1) of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (A6-0372/2008),

A. whereas communication is an important element of both representative and participatory democracy,

B. whereas one of strengths of the democratic elements of the EU is connected to communication
structures at the European level which link the institutions with citizens,

(1) OJ C 47 E, 27.2.2003, p. 400.
(2) OJ C 64 E, 12.3.2004, p. 591.
C. whereas the experience gained from past European elections and referendums suggests that those who are aware of, and interested in, EU issues are more likely to participate, while those who are not as well informed are less likely to do so; whereas this was once again confirmed by research done following the Irish referendum,

D. whereas communicating on the European Union requires the political commitment of EU Institutions and Member States at all levels,

1. Approves the joint declaration on Communicating Europe in Partnership annexed to this decision and decides to annex the declaration to its Rules of Procedure; calls for the declaration to be published in the Official Journal of the European Union;

2. Instructs its President to forward this decision and the annex hereto to the Council and the Commission.

ANNEX

COMMUNICATING EUROPE IN PARTNERSHIP

Objectives and principles

1. The European Parliament, Council and the European Commission attach the utmost importance to improving communication on EU issues in order to enable European citizens to exercise their right to participate in the democratic life of the Union, in which decisions are taken as openly as possible and as closely as possible to the citizens, observing the principles of pluralism, participation, openness and transparency.

2. The three Institutions wish to encourage the convergence of views on the communication priorities of the European Union as a whole, to promote the added value of an EU approach to communication on European issues, to facilitate exchanges of information and best practices and develop synergies between the Institutions when carrying out communication relating to these priorities, as well as to facilitate cooperation among the Institutions and Member States where appropriate.

3. The three Institutions recognise that communicating on the European Union requires a political commitment of EU Institutions and Member States, and that Member States have their responsibility to communicate with citizens about the EU.

4. The three Institutions believe that information and communication activities on European issues should give everyone access to fair and diverse information about the European Union and enable citizens to exercise their right to express their views and to participate actively in the public debate on European Union issues.

5. The three Institutions promote the respect of multilingualism and cultural diversity when implementing information and communication actions.

6. The three Institutions are politically committed to achieving the above objectives. They encourage the other EU institutions and bodies to support their efforts and to contribute, if they so wish, to this approach.

A partnership approach

7. The three Institutions recognise the importance of addressing the communication challenge on EU issues in partnership between Member States and the EU institutions to ensure effective communication with, and objective information to, the widest possible audience at the appropriate level.

They wish to develop synergies with national, regional and local authorities as well as with representatives of civil society.

They would like for that purpose to foster a pragmatic partnership approach.
8. They recall in this respect the key role of the Inter-institutional Group on Information (IGI) serving as a high-level framework for the Institutions to encourage political debate on EU-related information and communication activities in order to foster synergy and complementarity. To that purpose, the IGI, co-chaired by representatives of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission, and with the participation of the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee as observers, meets in principle twice a year.

**A framework for working together**

The three Institutions intend to cooperate on the following basis:

9. Whilst respecting the individual responsibility of each EU institution and Member State for its own communication strategy and priorities, the three Institutions will, in the framework of the IGI, identify yearly a limited number of common communication priorities.

10. These priorities will be based on communication priorities identified by the EU Institutions and bodies following their internal procedures and complementing, where appropriate, Member States’ strategic views and efforts in this field, taking into account citizens’ expectations.

11. The three Institutions and the Member States will endeavour to promote appropriate support for communication on the priorities identified.

12. The services responsible for communication in Member States and EU institutions should liaise with each other to ensure successful implementation of the common communication priorities, as well as other activities linked to EU communication, if need be on the basis of appropriate administrative arrangements.

13. The Institutions and Member States are invited to exchange information on other EU related communication activities, in particular on sectoral communication activities envisaged by the Institutions and bodies, when they result in information campaigns in Member States.

14. The Commission is invited to report back at the beginning of each year to the other EU Institutions on the main achievements of the implementation of the common communication priorities of the previous year.

15. This political declaration has been signed on [date].

### Use by Parliament of the symbols of the Union (new Rule 202a)

P6_TA(2008)0472


(2010/C 9 E/12)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its resolution of 11 July 2007 on the convening of the Intergovernmental Conference (1), in particular paragraph 23 thereof,

— having regard to the letter from its President of 12 September 2007,

Having regard to the importance of symbols for reconnecting the citizens with the European Union and for building a European identity which is complementary to the national identities of the Member States,

— having regard to the fact that the symbols have been in use for over 30 years by all European Institutions and were formally approved by the European Council in 1985 (1),

— having regard to Rules 201 and 202 of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the report of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (A6-0347/2008),

1. Decides to amend its Rules of Procedure as shown below;

2. Decides that the amendment will enter into force on the day following its adoption;

3. Instructs its President to forward this decision to the Council and the Commission, for information.

Amendment 1

Parliament’s Rules of Procedure
Title XIII — Miscellaneous Provisions — Rule 202a (new)

Rule 202a

The symbols of the Union

1. Parliament shall recognise and espouse the following symbols of the Union:

— the flag showing a circle of twelve golden stars on a blue background;

— the anthem based on the ‘Ode to Joy’ from the Ninth Symphony by Ludwig van Beethoven;

— the motto ‘United in diversity’.

2. Parliament shall celebrate Europe Day on 9 May.

3. The flag shall be flown at all Parliament premises and on the occasion of official events. The flag shall be used in each meeting room of the Parliament.

4. The anthem shall be performed at the opening of each constitutive sitting and at other solemn sittings, notably to welcome heads of State or government or to greet new Members following enlargements.

5. The motto shall be reproduced on Parliament’s official documents.

6. The Bureau shall examine further use of the symbols within the Parliament. The Bureau shall lay down detailed provisions for the implementation of this Rule.

III
(Preparatory acts)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Protocol to the EC-Switzerland Agreement on the free movement of persons (participation of Bulgaria and Romania) ***

P6_TA(2008)0464

European Parliament legislative resolution of 9 October 2008 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community and its Member States, of a Protocol to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons, regarding the participation, as contracting parties, of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania pursuant to their accession to the European Union (9116/2008 — C6-0209/2008 — 2008/0080(AVC))

(2010/C 9 E/13)

(Assent procedure)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the draft Council decision (9116/2008),

— having regard to the Protocol to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons regarding the participation, as Contracting Parties, of the Republic of Bulgaria and Romania pursuant to their accession to the European Union (8689/2008),

— having regard to the Protocol to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons regarding the participation, as contracting parties, of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovak Republic pursuant to their accession to the European Union (1),

— having regard to the Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the Swiss Confederation, of the other, on the free movement of persons (2),

— having regard to the request for assent submitted by the Council pursuant to Article 300(3), second subparagraph, in conjunction with Article 300(2), first subparagraph, second sentence and Article 310 of the EC Treaty (C6-0209/2008),

— having regard to Article 6(2) of the 2005 Act of Accession,

Establishment of the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS) *

P6_TA(2008)0465


(Consultation Procedure)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission proposal (COM(2008)0332),
— having regard to Article 31 and Article 34(2)(c) of the EU Treaty,
— having regard to Article 39(1) of the EU Treaty, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C6-0216/2008),
— having regard to Rules 93 and 51 of its Rules of Procedure,
— having regard to the report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (A6-0360/2008),

1. Approves the Commission proposal as amended;
2. Calls on the Commission to alter its proposal accordingly, pursuant to Article 250(2) of the EC Treaty;
3. Calls on the Council to notify Parliament if it intends to depart from the text approved by Parliament;
4. Calls on the Council to consult Parliament again if it intends to amend the Commission proposal substantially;
5. Should that proposal not be adopted prior to the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, is determined to examine any such future proposal by urgent procedure, in close cooperation with national parliaments;
6. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and the Commission.
Proposal for a decision
Recital 6a (new)

(6a) This Decision is based on the principles already established by Council Framework Decision 2008/XX/JHA on the organisation and content of the exchange of information extracted from criminal records between Member States, and supplements and applies those principles from a technical standpoint.

Proposal for a decision
Recital 9

(9) In order to ensure the mutual understanding and transparency of the common categorisation, each Member State should submit the list of national offences and sanctions falling in each category referred to in the respective table, as well as the list of national criminal courts. Such information should be accessible to national judicial authorities in particular through any available electronic channels.

Proposal for a decision
Recital 9a (new)

(9a) The reference tables contained in Annexes A and B do not in any way aim to harmonise the types of offence or the sanctions set out therein, which will continue to be governed by national law.

Proposal for a decision
Recital 13

(13) Both reference tables of categories of offences and sanctions, as well the technical standards used for the exchange of information should require constant revision and regular updates. Implementing powers in this respect were therefore delegated to the Commission assisted by a Committee. The regulatory procedure under Community law should apply mutatis mutandis for the adoption of measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision.
(14) Framework Decision 2008/XX/JHA on the protection of personal data processed in the framework of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters should apply in the context the computerised exchange of information extracted from criminal records of Member States.

In this context it is of paramount importance to adopt as soon as possible Council Framework Decision 2008/XX/JHA on the protection of personal data processed in the framework of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, providing for an adequate level of data protection and including the processing of personal data at national level.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a decision
Article 3 — paragraph 5

5. In order to ensure efficient operation of ECRIS, the Commission shall provide general support and monitoring services.

5. In order to ensure efficient operation of ECRIS, the Commission shall provide general support and monitoring services and verify that the measures set out in Article 6 are correctly implemented.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a decision
Article 5 — paragraph 1 — point a

(a) the list of national offences in each of the categories referred to in the table of offences in Annex A. The list shall include the name or legal classification of the offence and reference to the applicable legal provision. It may also include a short description of the constitutive elements of the offence;

(a) the list of national offences in each of the categories referred to in the table of offences in Annex A. The list shall include the name or legal classification of the offence and reference to the applicable legal provision. It shall also include a short description of the constitutive elements of the offence;

Amendment 8

Proposal for a decision
Article 5 — paragraph 1 — point a — subparagraph1a (new)

The translation of a description of a national offence from the original language of submission shall be the task and responsibility solely of each individual Member State requesting a translation and shall not be done by ECRIS. Once a translation has been completed, ECRIS shall offer the option of adding it to the database;

Amendment 9

Proposal for a decision
Article 6 — introductory part

The following implementing measures shall be adopted in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 7:

Where necessary, and in accordance with Article 34(2)(c) and Article 39 of the EU Treaty, the Commission shall propose that the Council adopt all the measures needed to ensure an optimum functioning of ECRIS and its interoperability with national systems, such as:
Amendment 10
Proposal for a decision
Article 7

Committee procedure

1. Where reference is made to this Article, the Commission shall be assisted by a regulatory committee composed of representatives of the Member States and chaired by a representative of the Commission (the ‘Committee’).

2. The Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure.

3. The representative of the Commission shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft within a time limit which the chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter. The opinion shall be delivered by the majority laid down in Article 205(2) and (4) of the Treaty establishing the European Community, in the case of decisions which the Council is required to adopt on a proposal from the Commission. The votes of the representatives of the Member States within the Committee shall be weighted in the manner set out in that Article. The chairman shall not vote.

4. The Commission shall adopt the measures envisaged if they are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee.

5. If the measures envisaged are not in accordance with the opinion of the Committee, or if no opinion is delivered, the Commission shall without delay submit to the Council a proposal relating to the measures to be taken and shall inform the European Parliament thereof.

6. The Council may act by qualified majority on the proposal, within three months from the date of referral to the Council.

If within that period the Council has indicated by qualified majority that it opposes the proposal, the Commission shall re-examine it. It may submit an amended proposal to the Council, re-submit its proposal or present a legislative proposal on the basis of the Treaty.

If, on the expiry of that period, the Council has neither adopted the proposed implementing act nor indicated its opposition to the proposal for implementing measures, the proposed implementing act shall be adopted by the Commission.
EC-Ukraine Agreement in relation to preservation of commitments on trade in services *

P6_TA(2008)0468


(2010/C 9 E/15)

(Consultation procedure)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the proposal for a Council decision (COM(2008)0220),
— having regard to Articles 71(1) and 80(2) of the EC Treaty,
— having regard to Article 300(3), first subparagraph, of the EC Treaty, pursuant to which the Council consulted Parliament (C6-0202/2008),
— having regard to Rules 51 and 83(7) of its Rules of Procedure,
— having regard to the report of the Committee on International Trade (A6-0337/2008),

1. Approves conclusion of the agreement;

2. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and Ukraine.