

C/2024/5254

23.8.2024

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF 25 MARCH 2021

(C/2024/5254)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2021-2022 SESSION

Sittings of 24 and 25 March 2021

BRUSSELS

Contents	Page
1. Opening of the sitting	3
2. Announcement of voting results	3
3. Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention (debate)	5
4. Composition of committees and delegations: see Minutes	14
5. European strategy for data – Commission evaluation report on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation two years after its application (debate)	14
6. First voting session	24
7. European strategy for data – Commission evaluation report on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation two years after its application (continuation of debate)	24
8. 2019-2020 Reports on Albania – 2019-2020 Reports on Kosovo – 2019-2020 Reports on North Macedonia – 2019-2020 Reports on Serbia (debate)	30
9. Resumption of the sitting	50
10. Announcement of voting results: see Minutes	50

Contents	Page
11. Assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia and the rule of law in Malta (debate)	50
12. Delegated acts (Rule 111(6)) (action taken): see Minutes	63
13. Control of exports, brokering, technical assistance, transit and transfers of dual-use (debate)	63
14. Second voting session	70
15. Control of exports, brokering, technical assistance, transit and transfers of dual-use (continuation of debate)	70
16. Resumption of the sitting	71
17. Announcement of voting results	71
18. Explanations of vote: see Minutes	71
19. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes	71
20. Documents received: see Minutes	71
21. Transfers of appropriations and budgetary decisions: see Minutes	71
22. Approval of the minutes of the part-session and forwarding of texts adopted: see Minutes	71
23. Dates of forthcoming sittings : see Minutes	71
24. Closure of the sitting	71
25. Adjournment of the session	71

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF 25 MARCH 2021

PRESIDENZA: ROBERTA METSOLA

Viċi President

1. Opening of the sitting

(Hin tal-ftuħ tas-seduta: 09.02)

2. Announcement of voting results

Il-President. – *(wara li habbret ir-riżultati tal-votazzjonijiet)* Qabel l-ewwel sessjoni ta' votazzjoni tal-lum, li se ssir fis-11.00, nixtieq nagħti l-kelma lill-Kummissjarju, li skont l-Artikolu 163(3) tar-Regoli ta' Proċedura se tressaq żewġ talbiet għal proċedura urġenti li jikkonċernaw il-fajls legiżlattivi dwar

Ċertifikat Ahdar Diġitali – ċittadini tal-Unjoni, u

Ċertifikat Ahdar Diġitali – ċittadini ta' pajjiżi terzi;

Nagħti issa l-kelma lill-Kummissarju Dalli.

Helena Dalli, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, on 17 March the European Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation on a Digital Green Certificate. This framework, once in place, will allow for the free movement of our citizens to gradually resume under safe conditions. It will allow for a consistent European approach to what you have always advocated in this House: a European solution to a European problem.

Yesterday's debate on this proposal showed that we share a common ambition. We need to have this framework fully in place in June. We owe this to our Union, to the citizens, to the businesses who have been asking for a safe return to normality.

As you know, this is essential to put Europe back on its feet and our economies out of this crisis and to allow people to look forward to travelling in summer. For this to be possible it is important that interinstitutional negotiations start straight away. It is with this concern in mind that the Commission has requested the Parliament to activate the urgent procedure.

During yesterday's debate, we heard some concerns by Members of this House on the use of this procedure. These concerns stem from the fact that with this procedure there will be no vote on a report in the competent parliamentary committee. Yet the whole Parliament will be able to scrutinise the proposal within a time-frame of about a month and adopt its position in plenary before engaging in negotiations with the Council.

Exceptional times call for exceptional measures and while we are called to work fast, it is important that the role of each institution is respected and that democratic scrutiny fully takes place. Citizens are looking at us for responses, for solutions, for fast decisions.

So, moving forward, let us confirm that the Commission stands ready to provide its full support. We will act as an honest broker during the interinstitutional negotiations. In parallel we will support Member States in developing the necessary technical infrastructure.

Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, yesterday our Group already welcomed the proposal for a Digital Green Certificate, as we believe that a harmonised approach on lifting the borders is necessary to avoid health-risk chaos, insecurity and arbitrariness. The Green Certificate could thus pave a better way to restored freedom of movement. We also share your view that we need to expedite this harmonisation if you want to be ready for the summer season, to allow for holidays abroad, but more specifically to save tourist industries from a second summer without revenues.

But what we do not share with you is the view that the urgent procedure has to be triggered in order to reach a vote in the June part-session, because as the 'Rule 163 procedure' sets aside the normal parliamentary procedure, it can only be justified if it's absolutely necessary. And this is not the case, because if we use the accelerated procedure of Rule 49 we can treat the proposal with exactly the same speed while also maintaining our democratic role. And I can tell you, Commissioner, that role is also necessary. The proposed regulation may serve our freedom, but it also touches upon rights and freedoms that are dear to us.

As representatives of the citizens, we need to ensure that the Green Certificate is non-discriminatory, is easily available, that it meets the highest standards of data protection and is only required when strictly necessary. As a Parliament, we have the responsibility to ensure and improve these safeguards, and that is why the prerogatives of the different committees have to be respected.

As said, we agree that the certificate must be ready for the summer season and that adoption at the June part-session is necessary, but we can do that perfectly well in a responsible way through a normal, but accelerated, procedure. And that is why the urgent procedure deprives us of parliamentary scrutiny competences. It's not necessary. On the contrary, the far-reaching decision we are about to make and the societal support for it, require democratic control and legitimacy. Parliamentary scrutiny is inherent to our checks and balances in the making of EU legislation, and indeed Commissioner, these are exceptional circumstances. But even in times of crisis, we need those checks and balances. Rigidity? No. Carefulness? Yes.

Our Group will therefore vote against the request for the urgent procedure.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar, presidente de la Comisión LIBE. – Señora presidenta, intervino ayer en el debate general sobre la presentación de esta propuesta de la Comisión de un certificado verde. Es decir, un certificado unitario y europeo, sanitario e inmunológico, que combata la actual situación de fragmentación que conduce a discriminación con respecto de los requisitos que en estos momentos impiden la libre circulación en la Unión Europea. Sin duda, el activo máspreciado de la construcción europea.

Adelanté en mi intervención la preocupación de la comisión que tengo el honor de presidir, la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, Justicia y Asuntos de Interior. Da la bienvenida a esta iniciativa, da la bienvenida a la base jurídica elegida, que es precisamente la preservación de la libre circulación de personas, consagrada en los artículos 21 y 45 del Tratado de Funcionamiento de la Unión Europea y en el artículo 45 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea. Porque la libre circulación es efectivamente el primero de los derechos fundamentales de los europeos y de las europeas.

Y, en la medida en que la comisión responsable es la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, Justicia y Asuntos de Interior, expresé que una mayoría de coordinadores apuesta por no solamente dar la bienvenida a esta iniciativa, sino darle cauce por el procedimiento acelerado. Pero la Comisión somete a votación en este Parlamento Europeo el procedimiento de urgencia del artículo 163. Y el procedimiento de urgencia significa que se vota la urgencia, se abre inmediatamente en el mismo Pleno un plazo de presentación de enmiendas y se votan las enmiendas. Pero inmediatamente después, como presidente de la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, Justicia y Asuntos de Interior, tengo el derecho y el deber de solicitar que se devuelva la iniciativa a la comisión competente, que es la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, Justicia y Asuntos de Interior, para asegurar exactamente el trámite parlamentario y el debate sobre la base del mandato de negociación con el Consejo.

El mandato de negociación interinstitucional significa que es la comisión responsable quien se pronuncia en primer lugar sobre el resultado del así llamado «trílogo», es decir de la negociación con el Consejo y la Comisión. Y solo después del voto en la comisión responsable, regresa, finalmente, para su votación en Pleno en primera lectura. Esto significa cumplir con el calendario. Es posible efectivamente acudir al desplazamiento del verano.

Y es importante que, antes del verano, las europeas y europeos que nos miran y cuyas esperanzas representamos en este Parlamento sepan que estamos acelerando no solamente la vacunación, sino también la restauración de la libre circulación sin discriminación; y por eso subrayo los derechos fundamentales que están involucrados.

Está involucrado el derecho a la confidencialidad de los datos, a la privacidad y a que el principio de proporcionalidad y necesidad en el tratamiento de los datos sea estrictamente aplicado en esta iniciativa. En segundo lugar, que su aplicación sea homogénea en el conjunto de la Unión Europea. Pero, en tercer lugar y fundamental, que no sea discriminatorio, de modo que se potencie la libre circulación, pero en ningún caso se exija como un requisito el certificado verde, de modo que el certificado verde ayude a la libre circulación, pero ni la impida ni la obstaculice.

3. Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention (debate)

Il-President. – Il-punt li jmiss fuq l-aġenda huwa d-dibattitu dwar id-dikjarazzjonijiet tal-Kunsill u tal-Kummissjoni dwar il-hruġ tat-Turkija mill-Konvenzjoni ta' Istanbul (2021/2610(RSP)).

Nixtieq infakkar lill-onorevoli Membri li, għad-dibattiti kollha ta' din is-sessjoni parzjali, mhux se jkun hemm proċedura "catch-the-eye" u mhux se jiġu aċċettati karti blu.

Barra minn hekk, bħal fis-sessjonijiet parzjali preċedenti, huma previsti interventi mill-bogħod mill-Uffiċċji ta' Kollegament tal-Parlament fl-Istati Membri.

Ana Paula Zacarias, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, equality between men and women is inherent to human dignity. Combating all forms of violence against women and girls is a core element of respect for fundamental rights.

On Turkey's decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, I would like to underline the statement issued by the High Representative last Saturday. He deeply regretted the decision by the Turkish Government to withdraw from the convention, the first international legally binding instrument aiming at ensuring essential legal protection for women and girls across the world. The decision is a huge setback, all the more as Turkey was the first country to sign this landmark treaty.

Mr Borrell also noted that this comes at a moment when violence against women has increased to new levels worldwide as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A step backwards which sends a very dangerous message. I would like to recall that on Monday, the Council on Foreign Affairs met here in Brussels and the ministers discussed the situation in Turkey on the basis of the report presented by the High Representative.

The question of the convention was highlighted by several Member States. On the following day, I had the honour of chairing the VTC meeting of ministers of European affairs, where we also had a discussion on Turkey's withdrawal from the convention. And once again many ministers echoed the High Representative's words of regret.

We have seen the reaction in Turkey as well as international reactions, including from the leaders of the Council of Europe. The Presidency, as many others, consider this a regrettable and grave matter in itself and because it's also combined with other setbacks on Turkey's obligations to respect democracy and the rule of law. These and other recent developments will also certainly be part of the leaders' discussion on Turkey today.

Honourable Members, as President von der Leyen said, violence against women is not tolerable. Women deserve a strong legal framework to protect them. The Council has consistently called for increased efforts to ensure gender equality and respect for human rights. The Union is redoubling its efforts to defend the rights of women and girls as fundamental elements of human rights and equality. In this context, let me reiterate the Presidency's attachment to the Istanbul Convention and say that combating violence against women features prominently on the agenda of the Portuguese Presidency and of the relevant Council bodies.

This year, as we mark the 10th anniversary of the Istanbul Convention, on this occasion the Presidency will organise on 6 April a high-level conference with the German Presidency of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers. The Council has repeatedly called on the Member States that have not done so to ratify the Istanbul Convention. The Presidency will continue in any possible way to work towards the conclusion of this important instrument within the legal framework set by the Treaties and pending the European Court of Justice's opinion requested by this Parliament.

Dear Honourable Members, we are only a few days away from 8 March and we have often debated women's rights in this Chamber. Only last month we were discussing the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and its platform of action. Much progress has been made over the past decades, to the benefit of women and girls in the Union and across the world.

However, as we see every day, many challenges remain, and we must keep on fighting for women's rights and combatting violence against women. We have to do this all together.

Helena Dalli, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, the Istanbul Convention is a landmark treaty of the Council of Europe and the most comprehensive and effective legally binding instrument at international level to combat violence against women and domestic violence. Its aim – its only aim, I would say – is to ensure that violence is prevented, victims are protected and perpetrators are prosecuted.

The Commission is fully committed to eradicate violence against women in the EU and outside its borders because violence against women is never justified. It's just not acceptable that women and girls are afraid or need to be cautious when walking down the street. We cannot look away when we know or suspect violence in the house next door. Women and girls should live free from violence and have a strong legal framework to protect them. This is why the EU signed the Istanbul Convention and why the Commission is pushing for EU accession. As you know there are hurdles in the Council, and thus to ensure we do have a comprehensive legal framework, the Commission is preparing a legislative proposal to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. We are planning to present this by the end of this year.

We are hearing more and more dissenting voices on the importance and the aim of the Istanbul Convention, not only outside but also inside the European Union. The Convention is based on the understanding that violence against women and domestic violence are not private or family matters, but criminal behaviour. Consequently, politicians need to ensure it is a criminal offence in national law for which there should never be impunity. This approach requires measures for the prevention of crime, the protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators. It also requires practical measures that contribute to an overall effort for better policies, services and discourse around the violence that women and girls experience so that awareness is raised, mentalities are changed and women are supported and empowered.

I stress that the aim of those measures is prevention, and that the Convention is based on the premise that violence against women cannot be eradicated without investing in gender equality. That is what the Convention is about and what it aims for. There are no other hidden motives. Turkey's decision to withdraw from the Convention sends a regrettable signal at a bad moment. It risks compromising the protection and fundamental rights of women and girls in Turkey with devastating effects on its entire society at a time when this protection is needed more than ever. The High Representative/Vice-President Borrell was very clear on this in his statement issued in immediate reaction to this news. This is a wrong step from Turkey, a country that hosted the Convention in the first place. It is a huge setback to efforts made in the country in recent years and sends a dangerous message across the world. We therefore cannot but urge Turkey to reverse its decision. Turkey should fully commit to defending the rights of women and girls, a fundamental element of human rights, peace, security and equality.

Now, more than ever, it is essential that state parties, both in the European Union and outside, stand by the standards of the Istanbul Convention as a source of guidance for action. Now, especially at this point in time, is the moment to show leadership and enhance global efforts to fight violence against women and girls, and not to retreat. This is why we deeply regret the decision of the Turkish Government to withdraw from the Convention that even bears the name of Istanbul, and Turkey was the first country to ratify it. The lives and health of women and girls are at stake and we need to stand by all women and girls.

Frances Fitzgerald, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, not every discussion in the European Parliament is about life and death, but this is. The increase in domestic violence across Europe of 30% during the pandemic gives truth to the pervasiveness of this issue.

To withdraw support for the Istanbul Convention is unconscionable. To see a major country such as Turkey opt out is shameful, inhumane and wrong. The misunderstandings that have been allowed to fester by leaders in some countries are disgraceful and threaten the lives of women and girls. Women are being attacked every moment of every day in every country around the world. Women are being attacked, and they are dying.

The Istanbul Convention simply ensures fundamental and basic human rights and safety for women. Today the leaders of the Member States will meet and Turkey is on the agenda. Prime ministers from across Europe must give the issue more than a passing glance or comment. Turkey has long been a geopolitical discussion for Europe. If Europe is to be a beacon of light for human rights around the world, then let's start with the basics: being safe in one's home.

I call on the EU leaders to stand up for Turkish women today and to know that in Europe they have supporters and advocates. Let's call it out; let's end violence against women.

Iratxe García Pérez, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señora presidenta, señora ministra, señora comisaría, señorías, cuatrocientas mujeres han sido asesinadas en Turquía desde 2018: a manos de sus maridos, víctimas de violencia de género, o a manos de sus padres y hermanos, víctimas de los crímenes de honor. Sinceramente, es insostenible, es inaceptable y es una vergüenza lo que hoy está haciendo el Gobierno del señor Erdogan.

En ese pulso contra Europa vuelve a utilizar a las mujeres como moneda de cambio porque siempre somos nosotras las que tenemos que pagar los platos rotos y siempre tienen que ser las mujeres las que sufran los ataques a los derechos fundamentales, en una decisión que además va en contra de la propia Constitución turca.

Hay una involución en todo el mundo. Los derechos de las mujeres no tienen fronteras. Tenemos noticias de que, en breves días, el Gobierno de Polonia decidirá hacer lo mismo. Y alguien podría preguntarse qué tienen en común el Gobierno de Turquía y el Gobierno de Polonia: su alergia y su odio a las mujeres. Y aquí hay un Parlamento que va a levantar la voz para decir que no lo vamos a permitir.

María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, *en nombre del Grupo Renew*. – Señora presidenta, efectivamente, esta decisión del Gobierno turco es una decisión devastadora. Lanza un mensaje terrible, un mensaje terrible a las mujeres turcas: al 40 % de las mujeres turcas que sufren violencia de género; a las más de trescientas mujeres que han sido víctimas, han sido asesinadas, aunque esta cifra se queda pequeña porque el Gobierno turco nos dice que muchas de estas mujeres se han suicidado. Es un claro desprecio a su vida, es un mensaje claro de «no nos importáis».

Por eso hoy, este Parlamento Europeo tiene que lanzar el mensaje contrario: nos importan, nos importan mucho. Y tenemos que decir a Turquía que debe retirar su decisión y debe implementar el Convenio. Pero, señorías, ¿qué ha pasado en estos nueve años desde la firma del Convenio por parte de Turquía a su retirada por Erdogan?

Han pasado muchas cosas: un deterioro de los derechos humanos en este país, día a día; un gran sectarismo; un alejamiento de los valores de lo que significa Europa. Y finalmente, la cesión de las libertades y de los derechos de las mujeres a los grupos más conservadores y radicales. Señorías, así se construyen las dictaduras. Así mueren las democracias, con la cesión por decreto de los derechos y libertades de todos a los grupos conservadores, radicales y ultras. Y por eso esta lucha -el Convenio de Estambul- es la lucha de todos los demócratas. La lucha por los derechos de las mujeres y de las niñas en Turquía, señorías, y también aquí en la Unión Europea.

Christine Anderson, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Kollegen! Die Türkei tritt also aus der Istanbul-Konvention aus – einem Abkommen, welches zumindest vordergründig Gewalt an Frauen zu bekämpfen sucht und die Unterzeichnerstaaten durch präventive und gesetzliche Maßnahmen zur Eindämmung öffentlicher und häuslicher Gewalt gegen Frauen verpflichtet.

Was aber nutzt eine solche Konvention, wenn man die Grenzen sperrangelweit aufreißt und Millionen von jungen Männern in die EU importiert, die so ein Schriftstück entweder gar nicht lesen können oder denen es wegen ihrer Sozialisierung in einer Macho-Kultur schlichtweg egal ist, welche Rechte eine Frau hierzulande haben sollte?

Seit 2015 hat sich die Zahl der Frauenmorde in den Mitgliedstaaten fast verdoppelt. Zwangsheiraten, Kinderehen und auch Genitalverstümmelung sind in der EU auf dem Vormarsch. Die Betroffenheitslyrik der Istanbul-Konvention hat dies nicht verhindert.

Der Schutz von Frauen vor Gewalt beginnt mit dem Schutz der Grenzen. Es ist scheinheilig, der Türkei im Zuge des Austritts nun frauenfeindliche Bestrebungen vorwerfen zu wollen, wenn sie doch bloß die traditionelle Familie schützen will. Das ist ihr gutes Recht und auch richtig so.

Die Istanbul-Konvention gibt nämlich nur vor, sich gegen Gewalt von Frauen zu richten. In Wahrheit – unter dem Deckmantel des Frauenschutzes – wird ein völlig abstruser, irreführender Genderwahn-Quatsch implementiert.

Sergey Lagodinsky, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, this is incredible. I feel ashamed to have to speak after a speech like that.

And honestly, for years we friends of Turkey have been telling those people, those opponents, we have been trying to convince them that they are incorrect, that we share a common future because we share common values. And now it's the Government of Turkey itself that proves us wrong, that tells us that this convention is European values and they don't want to deal with that? No, they want to prove us wrong, but we're not wrong. Because they can throw the rights of women out of the window, they can ridicule their own LGBTI minorities, they can prosecute the Kurdish minority and try to ban their party, but they cannot take away the dignity of those people, and we are obliged to the dignity of those people. And the Member States are obliged to the dignity of those people. That's why I say: don't sell out human rights for realpolitik. And that's why I say to Mr Erdoğan: stop the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.

Jadwiga Wiśniewska, *w imieniu grupy ECR*. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani komisarz! ECR jest przeciwny wszelkiej przemocy. Z niepokojem słuchamy doniesień z Turcji o wciąż istniejącej tam przemocy względem kobiet, zwłaszcza o tzw. honorowych zabójstwach. Nie można jednak tego wiązać wyłącznie z wypowiedzeniem konwencji stambulskiej. Proszę zwrócić uwagę na dane stowarzyszeń monitorujących przestrzeganie praw kobiet w Turcji: w 2019 r. doszło do 474 zabójstw kobiet, czyli dwa razy więcej niż w 2011 r., a przecież przez te wszystkie lata obowiązywała tam konwencja stambulska, która okazała się kompletnie nieskuteczna.

Dziś pani komisarz Dalli mówi, że konwencja stambulska jest najbardziej skutecznym instrumentem przeciwko przemocy. Pani chyba żartuje! Unia Europejska podpisała konwencję stambulską, a to w Unii Europejskiej ciągle są okaleczane narządy płciowe małych dziewczynek. To w Unii Europejskiej ciągle małe dziewczynki przymuszane są do małżeństw z dorosłymi mężczyznami. Czy chce pani może porozmawiać o handlu dziećmi, o surogacji? Tu w Unii Europejskiej mamy bardzo dużo do zrobienia, a konwencja stambulska nie działa, bo jest podlana lewicowym, ideologicznym...

(Przewodnicząca odebrała mówczyni głos.)

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, *en nombre del Grupo The Left*. – Señora presidenta, Erdogan ha retirado a Turquía del Convenio de Estambul en un momento en el que los feminicidios y la violencia machista están aumentando en el país. Hablamos del primer país que lo firmó y del único instrumento vinculante en Europa para proteger a las mujeres.

Erdogan ha canjeado su vida a cambio del favor de quienes ven en el Convenio una amenaza para la familia tradicional: los mismos que en la Unión Europea impiden que se ratifique o animan a Polonia a retirarse; los que se llaman provida y creen que las mujeres son sus particulares máquinas reproductoras; los que se oponen al aborto porque no les importa si los embarazos son el fruto de una violación o de estupro; los que piensan que la familia no se elige, sino que es un yugo formado por papá y mamá, donde papá es el propietario, y mamá, la propiedad.

Turquía es un socio prioritario de la Unión Europea y Erdogan ha dejado a las mujeres turcas vendidas a sus asesinos. Un paso atrás que debería tener consecuencias.

Arba Kokalari (PPE). – Fru talman! Misshandel, våldtäkter, sexuella övergrepp, mord och stalking – det här är brott som dagligen drabbar miljontals kvinnor. Mord och dessa brott utsätts de för av sin partner. Detta är brott som ibland aldrig utreds eller tas på allvar. I Europa har en av tre kvinnor varit eller är drabbade av detta, och coronapandemin har ju förvärrat situationen avsevärt.

I Turkiet är det ännu värre. Ungefär fyra av tio kvinnor har blivit utsatta för våld. När det inte kan bli värre, ja då meddelar Turkiets regering att man lämnar Istanbulkonventionen som garanterar rättsligt skydd för våldsutsatta kvinnor och åtar förövare. Detta händer alltså tio år efter det att Turkiet anslöt sig till Istanbulkonventionen i Istanbul. Detta är en skandal. Det är ett enormt bakslag för kvinnors frihet från våld. Det är ett enormt bakslag för kvinnors grundläggande mänskliga rättigheter.

Det massiva fördömande som vi nu har sett från EU, Europarådet och från USA måste följas med tydliga krav i våra relationer med Turkiet på att vi inte kommer tolerera detta och att Turkiet måste tillbaka till Istanbulkonventionen. Jag hoppas innerligt att denna debatt kan leda till att öka trycket både på EU:s ledare och på Turkiet.

Som Europaparlamentets ansvariga för just Istanbulkonventionen så ser jag att det är ett arbete i motvind, där kvinnors grundläggande rättigheter utmanas. Detta är en kamp som EU måste föra mycket hårdare. Detta är vår tids nya frihetsfråga, nämligen att stå upp för kvinnors grundläggande mänskliga rättigheter.

Pina Picierno (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, leggiamo in questi giorni due diversi tipi di notizie: da una parte il rafforzamento di un'agenda positiva delle relazioni tra Turchia e UE; dall'altra il cappio liberticida di Erdoğan che si stringe sempre di più sui diritti delle donne e del popolo turco.

Sembrano notizie diverse ma io inizio a pensare che siano correlate, perché migliori sono le relazioni tra il nostro continente e la Turchia, più la mano di Erdoğan è libera per battere il pugno sulle libertà e sui diritti nel proprio paese.

Non è la prima volta che capita nella storia: l'inazione che ha portato alle aberranti ideologie totalitarie può sembrare lontana nel tempo ma allora è utile ricordare le ferite più recente, da quelli dei Balcani, al Medio Oriente, al Maghreb.

«La storia insegna, ma non ha scolari» diceva un grande intellettuale italiano e allora, se migliorare i rapporti con la Turchia significa condannare il suo popolo, le sue donne, i suoi intellettuali, i suoi giornalisti, i suoi studenti, le sue minoranze, mi chiedo quanto tempo passerà prima che quella condanna infiammi tutto il Mediterraneo?

Susanna Ceccardi (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi,

«Lamento. Essere donna significa essere invasa. Mi hanno preso tutto. Una donna mi prese la mia infanzia. Un uomo il mio essere donna. Dio non dovrebbe creare la donna. Dio non sa come partorire. Qui le costole di tutti gli uomini sono fratturate. Il nostro collo è sottile come un capello. Gli uomini ci trasportano come a un funerale sulle spalle. Siamo state sotto i loro piedi, leggere come piume. Abbiamo volato da un mondo ad un Adamo. E le mie parole sono le loro impronte.»

Müesser Yenai, poetessa turca.

In Turchia 300 donne sono morte ammazzate nel 2020. Negli ultimi dieci anni il numero di donne uccise in Turchia è triplicato. Molte sono le donne incarcerate per motivi politici e il recesso dalla convenzione di Istanbul è l'ulteriore conferma di una Turchia lontana dai valori occidentali.

Per le donne, per i valori europei, per la libertà, lo ribadiamo ancora una volta: la Turchia non è Europa.

Sylwia Spurek (Verts/ALE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani komisarko! Po pierwsze chciałabym wyrazić solidarność i przekazać słowa wsparcia Turczynkom protestującym przeciwko pozbawieniu ich praw i ochrony.

Kierujemy dziś swój wzrok i oburzenie ku Turcji, a tymczasem Polska, państwo członkowskie, jest o krok od pójścia w jej ślady, a Unia Europejska nie reaguje. Polski Sejm może w przyszłym tygodniu skierować do dalszych prac parlamentarnych obywatelski projekt ustawy, który zakłada wypowiedzenie konwencji stambulskiej. Polski Trybunał Konstytucyjny może w każdej chwili rozpoznać złożony przez premiera wniosek o uznanie konwencji stambulskiej za niezgodną z polską konstytucją. To ten sam Trybunał, który pozbawił Polki resztek praw do legalnej aborcji.

Jeśli Komisja Europejska poważnie traktuje swoje zobowiązanie do przeciwdziałania przemocy ze względu na płeć, nie może milczeć i czekać. Za chwilę będzie za późno.

Nikolaj Villumsen (The Left). – Fru formand! Beslutningen om at trække Tyrkiet ud af Istanbulkonventionen er en legitimering af vold mod kvinder, legitimering af en vold, som rammer op mod 40 procent af den kvindelige befolkning i Tyrkiet. En vold, som alene i 2019 slog mindst 474 kvinder ihjel. En vold, som må og skal stoppes. Siden beslutningen blev annonceret, er modige kvinder i Tyrkiet strømmet ud på gaderne i protest. De har brug for vores støtte. De har brug for vores solidaritet. De har brug for en klokkeklar kritik af Erdogan fra EU-lederne. Erdogans formørkede angreb på kvinders rettigheder skal fordømmes. Kvinder mishandles, kvinder myrdes. EU må og skal handle.

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE). – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, señora ministra, señorías, en mayo de 2011 se firmó el Convenio de Estambul. Turquía fue el primer país en firmarlo y por eso lleva el nombre de su ciudad más emblemática. Desde entonces, treinta y cuatro países lo han firmado y ratificado, y cuarenta y cinco lo han firmado. La Unión Europea ha querido siempre estar en primera línea en la lucha contra la violencia de la mujer. Es el primer instrumento internacional jurídico y vinculante para poder acabar con esta lacra social y esas cifras sonrojantes que cada día, por desgracia, tenemos en el mundo. La defensa de los derechos humanos es un valor intrínseco a la Unión Europea. No hay Unión Europea sin democracia y sin derechos humanos.

Turquía, por desgracia, el sábado pasado —la noche del viernes al sábado—, abandonó el Convenio de Estambul con una absoluta malinterpretación intencionada, con un absoluto desprecio al Estado de Derecho. Supone un mazazo a los derechos humanos y pisotea la lucha por los derechos de las mujeres. Supone también más víctimas y menos democracia en un país donde mueren más de cuatrocientas mujeres cada día. Envía una peligrosa señal al mundo.

Tenemos que reflexionar y volver al Convenio. En el año 2019 se colgaron 440 pares de zapatos de tacón en la fachada de un edificio de Estambul. La obra del artista turco Vahit Tuna se hizo en memoria de las más de 440 mujeres asesinadas por sus parejas estos años. ¿Cuántos pares de zapatos más hacen falta para convencer al Gobierno de que estas vidas humanas están en juego?

Nacho Sánchez Amor (S&D). – Señora presidenta, como ponente sobre Turquía me centro en dos aspectos: la secuencia de decisiones contra los derechos democráticos y el momento en el que se produce la retirada, para concluir en la importancia de mantener en todo momento la condicionalidad democrática en la relación con Turquía.

Me gustaría que la gravedad del hecho de la retirada no ocultara lo que pasó la semana pasada: el levantamiento de la inmunidad de un parlamentario activista de los derechos humanos, luego detenido en el Parlamento; el intento de la Fiscalía de cerrar el tercer partido político del país, partido hermano de los Socialistas Europeos; y una nueva ridícula condena al líder del HDP. A pesar de este aterrador panorama, el Consejo y la Comisión mantuvieron en la agenda una videoreunión con el líder turco.

Primer error: no mostrar claramente nuestro enfado por lo que estaba pasando. Conclusión: la decisión sobre el Convenio se tomó horas después de esa conversación entre Erdogan, Von der Leyen y Michel, en la que estos ofrecieron continuar la denominada «agenda positiva», una agenda que parece basarse en olvidar los derechos humanos.

Segundo error: esa desatención a la situación de los derechos ha sido entendida como una luz verde europea para continuar masacrando y desmontando la oposición democrática en Turquía.

Por mis funciones, tengo muy frecuentes y directas relaciones con la oposición turca. Se mantienen absolutamente desalentados por este abandono de la Unión Europea y he de decir que el Parlamento ha mantenido en todo momento la condicionalidad democrática. Yo quiero que el Consejo y la Comisión no dejen nunca de... *(la presidenta retira la palabra al orador).*

Gilles Lebreton (ID). – Le 20 mars, nous avons appris que la Turquie se retirait de la convention d'Istanbul de 2011. Ce retrait est un événement dont la portée politique est considérable: la convention d'Istanbul est en effet le principal instrument européen de lutte contre la violence à l'égard des femmes. Certes, c'est un texte imparfait dont le préambule cède à un féminisme exacerbé qui dresse les femmes contre les hommes, mais elle a l'immense mérite d'essayer de protéger les femmes contre toutes sortes de violences, parmi lesquelles la violence domestique, le viol, le mariage forcé ou encore l'excision. C'est pourquoi je l'ai personnellement toujours défendue.

En se retirant de cette convention, la Turquie tourne donc le dos à l'égalité de l'homme et de la femme, qui est une valeur essentielle de la civilisation européenne. Sur le plan symbolique, ce retrait est une déclaration de guerre qui nous est adressée par Erdoğan, qui se rallie clairement à l'islamisme le plus rétrograde. Nous devons en tirer les conséquences et abandonner définitivement le processus d'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne. Nous lamenter ne sert à rien, il faut agir.

Terry Reintke (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, every year, just as in the European Union, hundreds of women are killed by their partners, ex-partners and close relatives in Turkey. Thousands are battered, raped and beaten.

After deciding to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, you might argue that Erdoğan does not care about this brutal violence against women, but actually it is worse. Autocrats like Erdoğan and his lookalikes in the European Union are afraid of free and independent women. They are afraid of societies where women can freely decide about their own bodies, their money and their lives. They are afraid of the strength of women and LGBTI movements and that is why they hate the Istanbul Convention. That is why they hate us to be protected from discrimination and violence, and that is why they attack our freedom and independence.

We cannot let these autocrats win, not in Turkey nor in the European Union. We express our solidarity with all the feminists and queers who are standing up to this in Turkey right now. But most of all we need to have the full accession, ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention all over Europe.

Niyazi Kizilyürek (The Left). – Madam President, the Turkish presidency wants to justify its withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention by claiming that it is incompatible with Turkish traditional family values, and argues that women in Turkey are already protected by Turkish values and traditions.

What values and traditions? Laws or Turkish patriarchy? In Turkey on average everyday five women are killed. Sixty-one per cent of women are subjected to physical violence by their partners, fathers or brothers.

Withdrawing from a convention which aims to prevent domestic violence against women in a country such as Turkey, where murders of women have tripled in the past 10 years, is to leave the woman at the mercy of male domination. On top of that, Turkey justifies the withdrawal by attacking the LGBTI community: an open violation of sexual liberty.

The European Union should show zero tolerance to the Turkish Government, which day by day becomes more authoritarian and more and more disrespects fundamental human rights. We need to make all necessary steps in order to provide strong protection and promotion of the rights and freedoms of women and the LGBTI community.

PRZEWODNICTWO: EWA KOPACZ*Wiceprzewodnicząca*

Cindy Franssen (PPE). – Voorzitter, het Verdrag van Istanbul is het eerste juridisch bindende verdrag dat lidstaten verplicht om huiselijk geweld te voorkomen en te bestrijden. En net als blijkt dat het geweld op vrouwen de laatste maanden met alarmerende cijfers is toegenomen ten gevolge van de lockdown, waarbij niet minder dan één op vijf vrouwen de afgelopen maanden geconfronteerd werd met huiselijk geweld, net op dat moment beslist Turkije om zich terug te trekken uit het verdrag!

De voorzitter van de Commissie heeft de ratificatie van het Verdrag van Istanbul altijd verdedigd als een van haar topprioriteiten. Het is tijd om woorden om te zetten in daden. Want sommigen willen de klok terugdraaien. Daarom vraag ik de Commissie met absolute aandring om een duidelijk signaal te geven aan Turkije, maar ook om zelf het goede voorbeeld te geven door de resterende lidstaten aan te moedigen om eindelijk het verdrag te ratificeren en om de Europese ratificatie niet langer te blokkeren. Beste collega's, hoelang gaan we nog wachten om te doen wat moet?

Heléne Fritzon (S&D). – Fru talman, rådet, kommissionen! Vi har en konvention för att bekämpa våld mot kvinnor, som bär namnet på en stad där bekämpandet av detta våld mot kvinnor inte längre är viktigt – Istanbulkonventionen.

Det kan tyckas självklart att varje människa ska ha rätt att leva sitt liv fritt från våld, men så är det inte i Turkiet. Turkiets agerande är en attack mot kvinnors mänskliga rättigheter, mot demokratin och mot rättsstatens principer. Kvinnor utsätts för våld, och kvinnor mördas.

Vi socialdemokrater i parlamentet har tydligt fördömt Turkiets beslut, och i dag förväntar vi oss att EU:s medlemsstater gör detsamma. Låt Istanbulkonventionen bli en påminnelse om att vi aldrig, aldrig får acceptera attacker mot flickor och kvinnor. Det är deras liv det handlar om.

Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Żadna kobieta ani dziewczynka nie powinny doświadczać przemocy. Jej skutki są katastrofalne dla zdrowia psychicznego, dla funkcjonowania rodziny, dla rozwoju młodej kobiety i podejmowanych przez nią w dorosłym życiu decyzji.

Prezydent Erdogan, wypowiadając konwencję, mówił o próbie narzucenia ideologii gender, wartości Zachodu, promocji homoseksualizmu i podważaniu tradycyjnej roli rodziny. Tych samych argumentów używają dzisiaj politycy partii rządzącej w Polsce, w moim kraju, którzy chcą wypowiedzenia konwencji, zakazu rozwodów, karania aborcji czy dekryminalizacji pierwszego pobicia. Kilka lat temu uznałabym to za absurd, dzisiaj z niepokojem słucham tych wypowiedzi, bo one uderzają nie tylko w rodzinę, ale zniechęcają do jej założenia i niestety jakoś nie słyszę słów sprzeciwu ze strony wielu kobiet, ale przede wszystkim ze strony polityczek partii rządzącej. Gdzie nasza kobieca solidarność? Nie widzę jej i mówię to z przykrością.

Ja nie wiem, czy prezydent Erdogan zmieni zdanie, ale mam nadzieję, że żaden europejski kraj nie wypowie konwencji, bo tylko słabi, kreujący się na macho mężczyźni boją się silnych kobiet i biją kobiety i tylko słabi, kreujący się na macho politycy chcą przyzwolenia na takie działania.

Pernille Weiss (PPE). – Fru formand! Mindst 38 procent af kvinder i Tyrkiet udsættes årligt for vold fra deres partner. Derfor er det ikke forkert at konstatere, at værdien af, at Tyrkiet i ti år har haft sin underskrift på Europarådets konvention, har været lig nul. Konventionen har til formål at bekæmpe hustruvold, voldtægt i ægteskabet, anden seksuel vold mod kvinder samt lemlæstelse af pigers og kvinders kønsorganer.

Konventionen er opkaldt efter byen Istanbul, som ironisk nok ligger i grænselandet mellem Europa og den arabiske verden. Men når Erdogan skal tilfredsstill sine formørkede middelalderlige støtter og i øvrigt finde nye måder at håne og provokere det EU, landet aldrig bliver medlem af, ja, så ofres kvinders sundhed, sikkerhed, trivsel, frihed og værdighed.

Det er modbydeligt at være vidne til, og den væmmelse bør vi bruge til at speede op under vores bestræbelser, for at vi kan agere kraftigere imod Erdogan. Det fortjener tyrkiske kvinder og alle ordentlige mennesker, som sætter deres lid til samarbejdsaftaler for at gøre verden til et bedre sted.

Ελισάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρουνίδη (PPE). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, 350 γυναίκες δολοφονούνται κάθε χρόνο στην Τουρκία και, σύμφωνα με τον Παγκόσμιο Οργανισμό Υγείας, τα περιστατικά υπερβαίνουν το 38%, όταν ο ευρωπαϊκός μέσος όρος δεν ξεπερνά το 25%. Οι μισές και πλέον δολοφονίες αναφέρονται ως αυτοκτονίες, ενώ δεν τηρούνται αρχεία ούτε στο Υπουργείο Οικογενειακής Πολιτικής. Τον καιρό της πανδημίας, η ενδοοικογενειακή βία έχει τεράστια αύξηση και τα θύματα είναι απολύτως απροστάτευτα.

Παρά ταύτα, ο πρόεδρος Erdogan απέσυρε τη χώρα του από τη Σύμβαση της Κωνσταντινούπολης, τον μήνα που παγκοσμίως προβάλλονται οι αγώνες για ισότητα και καταπολέμηση της βίας κατά των γυναικών. Διεθνής κατακραυγή, αντιδράσεις και εκκλήσεις από τον ΟΗΕ, την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, από ηγέτες κρατών και οργανώσεις πολιτών για αναθεώρηση της απόφασης του πέφτουν στο κενό. Ο Erdogan συστηματικά περιφρονεί το κράτος δικαίου και τις ευρωπαϊκές αξίες. Συνάδελφοι, ως εδώ: να υποχρεωθεί η Τουρκία τώρα να σεβαστεί τα θεμελιώδη ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα· να αναγνωρίσει, επιτέλους, τον ακρογωνιαίο λίθο του ευρωπαϊκού οικοδομήματος.

Helena Dalli, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, thank you so much to the minister and the Honourable Members for this debate. But isn't it sad that we should be discussing this and speaking about this?

I can assure you that the Commission continues to support women and girls, victims of gender-based violence, both in the EU and outside its borders. We will continue to keep the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence, as well as the protection of the victims, high on the internal and international agenda.

We stand ready to enhance our cooperation with stakeholders, partners and Member States to make Europe and the rest of the world a safer place. We stand ready to engage in discussion with those who are sceptical or have doubts. Only by joining forces and sharing expertise and best practice can we be successful and accelerate the societal change we need for achieving gender equality in law and practice, and eradicate discourage of violence against women and girls.

Ana Paula Zacarias, Presidente em exercício do Conselho. – Senhora Presidente, Senhoras e Senhores Deputados, Senhora Comissária, resulta deste debate, bastante claro, que a retirada da Turquia da Convenção de Istambul é um assunto grave, que representa um passo atrás nas obrigações da Turquia de respeitar a democracia, o Estado de Direito e os direitos das mulheres.

Depois de ter sido o primeiro país a ratificar a convenção, a Turquia é agora o primeiro país a abandoná-la, mas não há cultura, religião ou tradições que possam servir de desculpa para ignorar a violência contra as mulheres. Neste momento marcado pela pandemia, é hora de mostrar liderança e aumentar os esforços globais para combater a violência contra as mulheres. Por isso, como já referi, não podemos deixar de lamentar profundamente e expressar incompreensão em relação à decisão do Governo turco de se retirar desta Convenção.

Esta decisão corre o risco de comprometer a proteção dos direitos fundamentais das mulheres turcas, mas envia também uma mensagem perigosa de retrocesso dos direitos das mulheres no mundo, a que temos que estar atentos. A Presidência Portuguesa do Conselho continuará a acompanhar este assunto com toda a atenção, nomeadamente, instando a Turquia a reverter a sua decisão e a juntar-se aos países que, no século XXI, defendem os direitos das mulheres e das raparigas como um elemento fundamental dos direitos humanos, da paz, da segurança e da igualdade.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 171)

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D), raštu. – Šiandien kalbame apie Turkijos sprendimą pasitraukti iš Stambulo konvencijos. Dėl to galime tik apgailestauti ir raginti Turkijos vyriausybę persvarstyti šį sprendimą. Deja, tačiau tai nėra tik Turkijos problema. Pažanga, taip sunkiai padaryta per daug metų moterų ir vyrų lygybės srityje, sparčiai blogėja. COVID pandemija šią situaciją pablogino ir pagreitino. Nepateisinama, kad konvencija, kuria siekiama apsaugoti ir ginti moteris ir mergaites nuo smurto, tapo politiniu įrankiu kiršinant visuomenę bei iškreipiant konvencijos pagrindinį tikslą. Turkijos pasitraukimas tai labai aiškiai parodo. Tačiau ne tik Turkijoje, bet ir pas mus, kai kuriose ES valstybėse, kuriama stipri provokacinė kampanija prieš šią konvenciją, kuri neturi realaus faktinio pagrindo, tačiau kurią labai aktyviai naudoja ypač radikali politinės jėgos su tikslu suskaldyti visuomenę. Labai reikalingas aktyvesnis vaidmuo ES lygmeniu siekiant informuoti mūsų žmones apie tikrą konvencijos tikslą – užtikrinti, kad moterys ir mergaitės būtų apsaugotos nuo visų rūšių smurto, ir privalome dėti visas pastangas, kad bent jau Europos Sąjungoje visos ES valstybės narės ratifikuotų šią konvenciją. Jei to nebus padaryta, kova su smurtu prieš moteris liks vien tik tuščia deklaracija ir visos mūsų pastangos siekti saugesnės ir lygesnės visuomenės liks tik tuščiais pažadais.

Caterina Chinnici (S&D), per iscritto. – La pandemia di COVID-19 ha avuto e continua ad avere, un impatto molto forte sulle donne: l'occupazione femminile è diminuita considerevolmente, e sulle donne si riversano maggiormente le difficoltà legate al telelavoro e alla chiusura delle scuole. E soprattutto, la violenza contro donne e ragazze, in particolare la violenza domestica, ha conosciuto un drammatico incremento, tanto da configurare un'epidemia ombra, come l'hanno definita le Nazioni unite. Desta quindi profondo rammarico e preoccupazione il ritiro dalla Convenzione di Istanbul della Turchia, che pure è stata il primo paese a ratificarla. La Convenzione, infatti, rappresenta il primo strumento giuridico internazionale volto a dettare norme vincolanti per la prevenzione e il contrasto ai reati di violenza nei confronti delle donne e violenza domestica, e per la protezione delle vittime, inclusi i bambini che vi assistono. L'Unione europea deve allora adoperarsi perché la Turchia riveda questa decisione, che rischia di minare la protezione e i diritti delle donne e delle ragazze turche, e di compromettere l'impegno internazionale nella lotta a queste intollerabili violazioni dei diritti fondamentali e del principio di uguaglianza. E va ribadito l'appello del Parlamento europeo, perché l'Unione stessa concluda al più presto il processo di adesione alla Convenzione.

Łukasz Kohut (S&D), na piśmie. – Konwencja stambulska jest pierwszym prawnie wiążącym instrumentem, który tworzy kompleksowe ramy prawne dla zwalczania przemocy wobec kobiet i koncentruje się na zapobieganiu przemocy domowej, ochronie ofiar i ściganiu oskarżonych. Bycie stroną tej konwencji, wdrażanie jej postanowień oznacza zaangażowanie w walkę z przemocą wobec kobiet i przemocą domową.

Zarzuty formułowane przez skrajną prawicę, jakoby konwencja była „narzędziem walki ideologicznej” są absurdalne. I byłyby śmieszne, gdyby nie to, że mogą mieć prawdziwie tragiczne skutki. Wypowiadając konwencję stambulską, prezydent Erdogan po raz kolejny oddalił Turcję od standardów państwa prawa i liberalnej demokracji. Pogorszył sytuację Turczynek i wszystkich ofiar przemocy domowej w Turcji. I zrobił to w imię swojego partykularnego interesu politycznego.

To samo usiłują zrobić autokraci w niektórych państwach członkowskich Unii. W Polsce, rządzonej przez Zjednoczoną w Nienawiści Prawicę, już rozpoczęła się próba wypowiedzenia konwencji. Unia Europejska podpisała konwencję, czas ją jak najszybciej ratyfikować. Jako sprawozdawca Komisji Wolności Obywatelskich, Sprawiedliwości i Spraw Wewnętrznych Parlamentu Europejskiego w sprawie przystąpienia UE do konwencji zrobię wszystko, żeby tak się stało. Pamiętajmy – Unia to jej mieszkanki i mieszkańcy. I wszystkie organy władzy publicznej, niezależnie od ich szczebla, mają obowiązek zapewnić im ochronę przed przemocą i pełnię praw.

Bettina Vollath (S&D), schriftlich. – Der Austritt der Türkei aus der Istanbul-Konvention ist ein dramatischer Rückschritt für die türkische Gesellschaft und absolut unverständlich. Die Vertrauensgrundlage zur türkischen Regierung wird dadurch immer dünner. Auf der einen Seite wird der EU die Kooperation bei der Umsetzung von Menschenrechtsrichtlinien zugesagt, auf der anderen kehrt Präsident Erdoğan uns mit dem Austritt aus der Konvention den Rücken zu. Religiöse und kulturelle Traditionen dürfen niemals dem Schutz von Frauen vor Gewalt im Weg stehen. Besonders während der COVID-19-Pandemie hat sich gezeigt, dass Frauen durch sie noch schutzbedürftiger sind. Jegliche Gewaltverbrechen müssen strafrechtlich verfolgt werden! Es ist zwar nach wie vor wichtig, den diplomatischen Dialog mit der Türkei aufrechtzuerhalten, jedoch muss die EU mit angemessener Härte auf dieses Verhalten reagieren. Das Europäische Parlament ist ebenso in der Verantwortung, sich mit der türkischen Zivilbevölkerung und den Frauen in der Türkei solidarisch zu zeigen und mit ihnen gemeinsam einen Weg zurück in die Konvention zu finden.

4. Composition of committees and delegations: see Minutes

5. European strategy for data – Commission evaluation report on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation two years after its application (debate)

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest debata łączna na temat europejskiej strategii w zakresie danych nad:

— sprawozdaniem sporządzonym przez Miapetrę Kumpuli-Natri w imieniu Komisji Przemysłu, Badań Naukowych i Energii w sprawie europejskiej strategii w zakresie danych (2020/2217(INI)) (A9-0027/2021) oraz

— oświadczeniem Komisji w sprawie sprawozdania Komisji z oceny wdrożenia ogólnego rozporządzenia o ochronie danych po dwóch latach jego stosowania (2020/2717(RSP)).

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, rapporteur. – Madam President, I'm happy to present the European Parliament's draft report on the European data strategy.

We believe that this strategy will be a basis for European businesses and their global competitiveness. It will define the conditions for a fair data economy which will lead to better services, sustainable growth and quality jobs.

It must be designed in such a way as to facilitate innovations, data access and flows, interoperability and cross-border data portability. We must safeguard fair competition and legal clarity for all actors.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted even more the role and need for high quality real-time data sharing. Data can be used to predict and treat diseases and understand better how viruses spread.

Future data legislation must be based on the EU's rules and values: privacy, transparency and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. Human-centric data policy is at the heart of the European Parliament position. As GDPR is another topic this morning, the right to data portability and other rights provided by the General Data Protection Regulation must be untouched. But the tools to use these rights must be reinforced.

Data strategy must support and contribute to the sustainability of the Green Deal and Union climate targets, as well as the resilient recovery of the Union's economy and social cohesion.

During our report process, the Commission gave a legal proposal for the Data Governance Act. I warmly thank it for the discussions along the way.

We fully support the creation of the Data Governance Framework and common European data spaces. In this report we touch on various ways of how to get data out from the silos and to benefit Europe in machine-readable formats.

Parliament insists that data governance must be built on a decentralised data operating environment that will support the emergence of interoperable and secure data ecosystems in various sectors. If I were to pick one of the most important messages from this report and the negotiations on the DGA, I would highlight the need for interoperability and standards.

Well-formed APIs could provide essential access to data and interoperability would enable automated real-time data flows between the different actors.

We still expect important legislative proposals on the Data Act to clarify data access rights and flows, business-to-business, business-to-government and vice versa, and also between all governmental actors. Economic growth can be secured by ensuring a level playing field and a competitive multiplayer and fair market economy. We don't want to see monopoly markets on data.

Data sharing culture and voluntary data sharing schemes must be encouraged by, for example, fair contractual model agreements and security measures. But also market imbalances must be tackled. Business-to-business contractual agreements do not always necessarily guarantee adequate access to SMEs, owing to disparities in negotiating power. Actors' rights and obligations to access the data they have been involved in generating must fall within that focus.

This report highlights also the role of the public sector in fostering an innovative and competitive data economy. We call for EU institutions and Member States to lead by example and put in place real-time services based on real-time quality data.

Let me take some other important topics I want to highlight.

First, infrastructure. The success of data and AI strategies depend on the wider ICT systems. We must close the digital gap, accelerate technological developments and investments on cutting-edge technologies. We are waiting for the Cloud rulebook to happen, and welcome new Cloud initiatives, but also high performance computing, 5-6 G, AI, fibre and so on.

On the climate, the digital sector has a significant potential to contribute to the reduction of emissions. We call for modern energy efficient solutions fit for our climate goals.

A cybersecurity framework is also needed for the data economy, as is its deployment, for example in the EU toolbox on 5G cybersecurity.

The Union's growth potential depends on the skills of its population and workforce. From overall digital literacy, to software engineering and the challenge to build European know-how on next generation technologies.

The data economy goes hand in hand with AI and AI relies on high quality and increased data availability. We must prevent all kinds of biases, especially gender, from being reflected in AI applications. Transparency on algorithms is a priority and we must focus on the employment of women in tech to help this.

On working life, we call in this strategy on the social partners to explore the potential of digitalisation, data and AI for increasing sustainable productivity while respecting workers' rights. To increase trust, employees should have the right to know where and how their data is collected, used, stored and shared.

I conclude with the global perspective. Establishing an international framework for data-sharing and international rules with like-minded third countries is a role that the EU has to take seriously.

Parliament calls for the free flow of data with proper rules in place, and this funding and legislative proposal will make these a reality.

I thank all the tens of colleagues, my shadows and, all and all, the seven committees who provided material for this report.

Christel Schaldemose, *ordfører for udtalelse fra IMCO*. – Fru formand! Data er vor tids olie, data er afgørende for økonomisk vækst, for bæredygtighed og for innovation og ikke mindst for jobskabelsen i Europa. Derfor skal vi skabe et indre marked for data, som er frit, retfærdigt og sikkert, både for den enkelte borger og for virksomheden.

Den balance, den rammer vi i betænkningen. Vi vogter nidkært forbrugernes sikkerhed, samtidig med at vi sikrer virksomhederne adgang til vigtige data. Vi prøver at imødegå markedsfejl og muliggør frivillig datadeling. Vi stiller krav til virksomhederne og giver plads til innovation.

Samtidig skal vi sikre, at EU's standarder følger med den teknologiske udvikling. Det må ikke tage flere år at opdatere en standard, for så løber udviklingen fra os. Derfor opfordrer vi Kommissionen til at sikre en fast track-model for standarder. Vores besked til Kommissionen er klar. De nye datainitiativer skal sikre en effektiv, ansvarlig og sikker adgang til data, som skaber reel værdi for borgere og virksomheder i hele Europa.

Axel Voss, *Verfasser der Stellungnahme des mitberatenden Rechtsausschusses*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar Reynders! Ich frage mich: Haben wir eigentlich noch den Willen und die Kraft, digital überleben zu wollen? Wenn wir global im digitalen Wettbewerb bestehen wollen, brauchen wir Datenräume, den Zugang zu Datenanalyse- und Trainingsmöglichkeiten sowie das Teilen von Daten. Das muss innovationsfreundlich und prinzipienbasiert sein und wir müssen die Rahmenbedingungen dafür schaffen, und die Kommission hat dafür gute Vorarbeit geleistet.

Doch der Mut und die Entschlossenheit und Zielgerichtetheit fehlen meines Erachtens, wenn es um Verbesserungen oder Modernisierung der Datenschutz-Grundverordnung geht. Einige Kollegen und auch einige Teile der Kommission scheinen immer noch zu glauben, dass man das Rennen um die digitalen Erfolge auch ohne personenbezogene Daten erreichen kann. Und es gibt Möglichkeiten heute, Datenschutz, Innovation und Wettbewerb durchaus miteinander zu verbinden. Man muss es nur wollen und auch zulassen. Und wenn hier der Ruck nicht kommt, bleiben wir Datenkolonie der USA oder Chinas, und das zeugt nicht unbedingt von einem Überlebenswillen.

Marina Kaljurand, *kodanikuvabaduste, justiits- ja siseasjade komisjoni arvamuse koostaja*. – Head kolleegid, alustan Euroopa andmestrategieast, mis on oluline samm parema andmevahetuse, andmekasutuse ja taaskasutuse suunas. Seejuures peame meeles pidama, et me ei kaota andmete vahele üksikisikut, seda reaalselt inimest, kelle huvides tahame andmetel põhinevaid paremaid otsuseid teha. Kuidas seista üksikisiku eest?

Esiteks tuleb lähtuda üksikisiku huvidest ning teha seda kooskõlas Euroopa Liidu väärtuste, põhiõiguste ja normidega. Teiseks, andmestrategia nurgakiviks on ja peab jääma isikuandmete kaitse üldmääruse ja e-privatsuse õigusaktide absoluutne täitmine. Ning kolmandaks tuleb luua üksikutele isikutele parimad võimalused oma õiguste kasutamiseks, alustades andmekirjaoskusest ja lõpetades oskusega teha tarku otsuseid oma andmete üle.

Ja lõpetuseks tahaksin kommenteerida ka isikuandmete kaitse üldmääruse kohaldamist. See on olnud edukas, see on saanud rahvusvahelisel isikuandmete kaitse rahvusvaheliseks standardiks. Aga on ka kitsaskohti, nagu väikeste ja keskmise suurusega ettevõtete osas, samuti järelevalveasutuste rahastamisel ja mehitamisel. Need on teemad, millele peame pöörama suuremat tähelepanu, kui tahame, et GDPR töötaks sajaprotsendilisel. Täna tähelepanu eest!

Didier Reynders, *membre de la Commission*. – Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, je voudrais tout d'abord vous remercier pour le débat de ce matin, relatif à la fois à la stratégie européenne pour les données et au rapport de la Commission, publié en juin dernier, quant à la mise en œuvre du règlement général sur la protection des données, le RGPD.

En ce qui concerne la stratégie européenne pour les données, tout d'abord, je m'exprime aujourd'hui devant vous en lieu et place de mon collègue Thierry Breton, et je tiens à remercier les membres de la commission ITRE et la rapporteure, M^{me} Kumpula-Natri, pour son rapport très complet à ce sujet, ainsi que les commissions associées pour avoir enrichi ce rapport de leurs avis.

Lorsque la Commission a publié sa stratégie européenne pour les données en février de l'année dernière, nous n'aurions pas pu imaginer quelle année extraordinairement turbulente nous attendait. Une année marquée, bien entendu, par la pandémie de COVID-19. Cette crise a encore davantage mis en évidence l'importance des données et des technologies numériques pour faire face à des défis sans précédent.

La Commission partage pleinement le point de vue de la rapporteure, selon lequel le potentiel des données n'est pas encore pleinement exploité en Europe, principalement en raison du manque de confiance dans le partage de ces données et du manque d'interopérabilité et de normes permettant de les faire circuler entre secteurs et entre États membres.

La Commission partage également l'idée que nous devons tracer notre propre voie européenne vers une économie et une société des données; une voie fondée, permettez-moi d'insister sur ce point, sur nos valeurs communes. L'Europe a besoin de prendre davantage le contrôle de ses intérêts stratégiques, tout en maintenant une économie ouverte et, comme le permet déjà le RGPD en matière de données personnelles, de garantir que les entreprises et les citoyens européens contrôlent leurs données.

Avec la stratégie européenne sur les données, notre objectif est de créer un véritable marché unique des données, où celles-ci circulent entre secteurs et entre États membres, et où des données de haute qualité sont disponibles pour l'innovation et la création de valeur, tout en minimisant l'empreinte environnementale et en assurant la protection des données personnelles.

Comme vous le savez, en novembre dernier, la Commission a adopté une proposition de règlement sur une gouvernance européenne des données – premier volet de la stratégie –, dans le but de débloquent la valeur des données volontairement mises à disposition par leurs détenteurs pour être réutilisées. Ce cadre vise à favoriser la disponibilité des données en augmentant la confiance dans les intermédiaires et en renforçant les mécanismes de partage de données au sein de l'Union, de manière pro-concurrentielle.

Nous visons à adopter ici, peut-être déjà dès l'été, un acte d'exécution sur les ensembles de données à forte valeur afin que plus de données de haute qualité issues du secteur public soient disponibles pour réutilisation, ce dans toute l'Union, gratuitement, dans un format lisible par les machines au moyen des interfaces de programmes d'application.

Afin d'améliorer l'accès et l'utilisation des données, la Commission proposera également, d'ici à la fin de l'année, un *Data act*, une initiative législative visant à améliorer l'équité dans l'économie des données en clarifiant les droits d'utilisation, notamment dans des configurations *Business to Government* et *Business to Business*.

Il est important de souligner que toutes ces initiatives sont ou seront pleinement conformes aux législations existantes en matière de protection des données et des droits fondamentaux, ainsi qu'aux obligations internationales de l'Union en matière de commerce.

Enfin, la stratégie des données prévoit également le déploiement d'espaces européens communs de données dans des secteurs stratégiques et des domaines d'intérêt public. La Commission prévoit de soutenir ces espaces de données.

Le programme pour l'Europe numérique et le deuxième programme pour l'interconnexion en Europe joueront un rôle déterminant dans la réalisation de notre objectif de renforcement d'une infrastructure européenne des données et d'une utilisation de celles-ci qui respecte pleinement les valeurs européennes.

Nous attendons également de l'industrie qu'elle investisse dans les infrastructures de données, comme nous l'attendons des États membres, notamment par le biais de la facilité pour la reprise et la résilience, le RRF, et dans le cadre de projet multi-pays.

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, permettez-moi maintenant de passer au second point de notre débat. Je me réjouis que votre Parlement ait décidé de débattre aujourd'hui du rapport de la Commission sur les deux premières années de mise en œuvre du règlement général sur la protection des données, publié en juin de l'année dernière, ainsi que d'exprimer sa position dans une résolution.

Au regard du projet de résolution de la commission LIBE, je ne peux que me réjouir de voir qu'il met en avant l'importance du RGPD en tant que norme mondiale de la protection des données et la nécessité de focaliser nos efforts sur la mise en œuvre effective de cet instrument.

Nous convergions également quant à l'évaluation des principaux défis qui devront être relevés au cours des mois et années à venir. Premièrement, il est clair qu'il importe de continuer à soutenir les petites et moyennes entreprises pour faciliter le respect du RGPD. C'est la raison pour laquelle la Commission soutient financièrement les autorités nationales de protection des données dans leurs efforts à destination du grand public et des entreprises, en particulier des PME. Un nouvel appel à propositions couvrant notamment le développement d'outils pratiques pour aider les PME sera lancé avant l'été.

National data protection authorities are the cornerstone of the effective application of the GDPR, as it is up to them and to national courts to enforce its rules. We need to continue to closely monitor the resources allocated to them, while noting that many have benefited from increases in recent years. We also need to facilitate their cooperation in cross-border cases. We welcome the European Data Protection Board's new procedures to ensure that the one-stop-shop mechanisms functions effectively.

We recognise that more must be done towards a European data protection culture, also among Data Protection Authorities, and notably within the EDPB. The Commission is working towards this objective. With regard to some national divergences in the application of the GDPR, we will continue our discussions with the Member States and consider how these issues can be best addressed.

Let me say generally that if GDPR provisions are violated, the Commission does not shy away from having recourse to all the tools at its disposal, including infringement proceedings. We also use harmonisation tools, such as the Standard Contractual Clauses for intra-EU transfers, to help the controllers and processors across the EU to comply with the GDPR and to use the same set of clauses.

As the recent proposal on the Digital Green Certificate shows, the Commission strives to ensure the highest level of personal data protection, in line with the GDPR, in its initiatives. We systematically ask the opinion of the European Data Protection Supervisor as well as, for major proposals, like the certificate, that of the EDPB.

In this context, I would like to address more generally the relationship between the GDPR and technological development. As already demonstrated during the COVID pandemic, the GDPR allows for developing innovative tools in compliance with fundamental rights. Being technologically neutral, the GDPR frames innovation, but does not preclude it. A precondition for this is that the GDPR is also interpreted and enforced in a technologically neutral way.

Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, avec la pandémie actuelle, nous réalisons une fois de plus combien la question de la protection des droits fondamentaux, notamment le droit à la protection de la vie privée, est une question fondamentale.

Le RGPD prévoit la flexibilité nécessaire pour aborder les défis de notre temps. Par exemple, dans le cadre de la pandémie actuelle de COVID-19, la réponse de l'Union ne consiste pas à ériger des barrières, mais à rester ouverte aux échanges de données, tout en assurant la continuité de leur protection. Les objectifs de protection de la vie privée et de libéralisation des flux de données, et donc du commerce, doivent être complémentaires.

Dans ce contexte, il est encourageant de constater qu'un nombre croissant de pays dans le monde convergent vers la mise en place de régimes modernes de protection des données, qui partagent de nombreux points communs avec le RGPD. Il s'agit là d'une tendance mondiale à laquelle participent des pays comme le Brésil ou le Japon, la Corée du Sud, l'Inde ou le Kenya.

On a bilateral basis we have set up with Japan the world's largest area of safe data flows. We will finalise soon a similar arrangement with South Korea and we have drafted two adequacy decisions in relation to the UK.

Following the recent case-law of the European Court of Justice on the Privacy Shield, we are engaging with the United States to reach a solid and legally sound arrangement. Moreover, we are working with like-minded partners to define standards at multilateral level – I am thinking for instance of the promising work taking place at the level of the OECD on developing common principles on access to data by public authorities.

We are also pursuing debates in the WTO as concerns data protection in an e-commerce context.

I look forward to our debate today and to your final resolution, of course. As always, your resolutions will inspire our work and offer us – Thierry Breton, myself and the entire Commission – a roadmap for the key objectives to achieve.

Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez, *ponente de opinión de la Comisión de Agricultura*. – Señora presidenta, Europa necesitaba esta estrategia de datos y digitalización. La inversión en datos es fundamental para apoyar la innovación de las empresas y para mejorar la vida de los ciudadanos, de todos los ciudadanos, independientemente de donde vivan. Porque, como reconocía la presidenta Ursula von der Leyen, el 40 % de los habitantes de las zonas rurales de Europa todavía no tienen acceso a conexiones de internet de banda ancha. Mientras se recortan los servicios en la Europa vacía, sus ciudadanos siguen desconectados de la Europa urbana; desconectados de nuevas oportunidades; desconectados de nuevos servicios; desconectados, en definitiva, de un futuro más próspero.

Los fondos de recuperación son la oportunidad perfecta para invertir en conexiones de fibra y en 5G, y para llenar de datos la brecha que existe entre el campo y la ciudad. Es hora de avanzar en la igualdad entre todos los europeos. Es hora de conectar a la Europa rural.

Radka Maxová, zpravodajka Výboru pro kulturu a vzdělávání. – Paní předsedající, jako zpravodajka stanoviska Výboru pro kulturu a vzdělávání děkuji všem kolegům za spolupráci a za výslednou podobu této zprávy.

Evropská unie musí zvýšit svoji konkurenceschopnost v digitálním světě a ve vývoji umělé inteligence. To je možné pouze tehdy, když budeme mít dostatek odborníků a budou mít přístup k datům napříč obory a státy. Musíme být ambiciózní a usilovat o to, aby evropští občané byli vybaveni takovými digitálními dovednostmi, které jim umožní plně zapojení do čím dál více digitalizované společnosti. Tyto dovednosti a technologie musí být přístupné pro všechny, i pro znevýhodněné skupiny, aby digitalizace ještě nerozšířila nerovnosti v naší společnosti. Podpora digitalizace ve vzdělávání a celoživotním učení nám pomůže být lídry v oblasti férového využití moderních technologií a umělé inteligence.

Chci ocenit i to, že zpráva zaujala k vytvoření jednotného datového trhu správný přístup, který chrání naše data a zaručuje ochranu osobních údajů.

Angelika Niebler, im Namen der PPE-Fraktion. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, meine lieben Kolleginnen, liebe Kollegen! Das Abbauen von Barrieren ist eine der größten Errungenschaften in der Europäischen Union: Erst der Abbau unserer Binnengrenzen und die Abschaffung von Zollkontrollen haben der europäischen Wirtschaft zu wahrer Größe verholfen.

Es wird Zeit, dass wir diese Idee auch auf den digitalen Raum übertragen. Genau das ist das Ziel der europäischen Datenstrategie – wir wollen ein Schengen für Daten in Europa aufbauen. Innerhalb Europas sollen Daten sicher und einfach zirkulieren können. Nur wenn wir unsere nationalen Datensilos öffnen und Daten europäisch verknüpfen und nutzbar machen, die heute oft noch ungenutzt in öffentlichen Einrichtungen oder auf den Festplatten von mittelständischen Unternehmen verstauben, können wir zum Beispiel künstliche Intelligenz *made in Europe* vorantreiben.

Dabei müssen wir natürlich sicherstellen, dass Bürger und Unternehmen genau wissen, wofür ihre Daten verwendet werden. Ein solcher europäischer Binnenmarkt für Daten soll – gerade als Alternative zu den Geschäftsmodellen der amerikanischen Datenriesen – die Kontrolle über die Daten an Bürger und Unternehmen zurückgeben.

Beispiel Gesundheitsdaten: Ein europäischer Medizindatenraum kann uns in der Krebsforschung um Jahre voranbringen. Beispielsweise Geo- und Mobilitätsdaten: Hier können wir für den Umwelt- und Klimaschutz viele nützliche Informationen ziehen. Oder beispielsweise alle Daten, die in der Landwirtschaft generiert werden – auch das hilft unseren Bauern, ressourcenschonender zu wirtschaften.

Also, wir haben Riesermöglichkeiten, wenn wir die EU-Datenstrategie entsprechend umsetzen, und wir sind jetzt alle aufgerufen, das zu tun.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar, en nombre del Grupo S&D. – Señora presidenta, durante la primera legislatura de plena vigencia del Tratado de Lisboa y la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea, la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, Justicia y Asuntos de Interior de este Parlamento Europeo —que tengo el honor de presidir— consumió mucho tiempo y energías en ejercitar su papel de legislador de los derechos fundamentales en materia de protección de datos, aprobando el Reglamento General de Protección de Datos y la Directiva que protege los datos de los europeos ante la investigación de los delitos.

Y entra finalmente en vigor ese paquete de protección de datos en 2018, mandatando que dos años después, en 2020, la Comisión de Libertades Civiles, Justicia y Asuntos de Interior presente un informe de aplicación. Y lo hace en un contexto que no puede ser más desafiante: en el momento en que la Unión Europea está legislando el paquete digital, la inteligencia artificial y, al mismo tiempo, se enfrenta a la protección de datos en el control de la pandemia, en la investigación médica y en la aprobación de los certificados verdes.

Y este informe tiene una valoración globalmente positiva. Las empresas, incluso las pequeñas y medianas, se han adaptado, lo mismo que las administraciones públicas, al nuevo régimen de protección de datos. Y, sin embargo, sigue habiendo problemas y los detectamos.

En primer lugar, abusos del consentimiento por parte de la publicidad en línea o los «patrones oscuros».

En segundo lugar, abusos a rebufo de la protección de datos contra derechos fundamentales, como son la libertad de expresión y de comunicación o las libertades sindicales y de negociación colectiva.

Pero, en tercer lugar, también discrepancias en el modo de aplicar, porque, sobre todo, algunos países están fallando a la hora de dotar de medios materiales, tecnológicos y personales a sus agencias de protección de datos para que puedan efectivamente embridar a los gigantes en la red. Y detectamos que hay autoridades de protección nacionales que no están cumpliendo adecuadamente su función.

Por tanto, una valoración positiva, pero al mismo tiempo una llamada de atención para ejercitar a fondo la autoridad de las autoridades de protección de datos para hacer cumplir plenamente el Reglamento General de Protección de Datos en los años venideros.

Nicola Danti, *a nome del gruppo Renew*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor Commissario, ogni secondo dai nostri satelliti, dagli apparati che ormai regolano la nostra vita, vengono prodotti globalmente miliardi di dati, dati che hanno l'enorme potenziale di aumentare la sostenibilità e l'efficiamento dei sistemi produttivi, dei trasporti, delle reti energetiche, dell'agricoltura, dei servizi sanitari – solo per citarne alcuni – e, non ultimo, di contribuire al raggiungimento degli ambiziosi obiettivi che ci siamo posti in campo climatico.

La sfida che dobbiamo vincere oggi è proprio quella dei dati non personali. Con la relazione che andiamo ad approvare il Parlamento sostiene con convinzione l'obiettivo di creare una governance europea dei dati che crei opportunità per il nostro sistema economico, in particolare per le piccole e medie imprese, rendendolo sempre più competitivo e innovativo e che miri al contempo a migliorare la quotidianità dei cittadini, dei lavoratori e dei consumatori.

Certo, ci sono anche rischi connessi all'utilizzo improprio o fraudolento dei dati che dovremmo saper prevenire per creare un clima di fiducia. Dobbiamo creare quindi regole chiare e facilmente applicabili che si basino su principi solidi, come l'interoperabilità, da una parte, e la tutela dei dati personali e la coerenza con il GDPR, dall'altra.

Abbiamo bisogno di un'Europa che investa su *cloud*, 5G, intelligenza artificiale, cibersicurezza, così come su formazione e competenze digitali; un'Europa che rimanga aperta al dialogo con i paesi partner e che guidi lo sviluppo di standard internazionali, promuovendo i propri valori a livello globale.

Isabella Tovaglieri, *a nome del gruppo ID*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, questa relazione tocca sicuramente molti temi e aspetti cruciali ma vorrei concentrarmi in particolare sul tema della sicurezza dei dati.

La pandemia e l'aumento dell'utilizzo delle tecnologie digitali ha certamente creato delle nuove opportunità ma, al contempo, ha rinforzato grandi criticità che spesso impattano sui soggetti più deboli e fragili, donne e minori in primis.

Non è quindi solo una questione di genere o di diversità, come cita la relazione, e nemmeno solo una questione di truffe online o di disinformazione, tematiche comunque sensibili. Mi riferisco piuttosto a delitti odiosi come il *revenge porn*, che spesso porta le persone che lo subiscono al suicidio, o all'aumento dei casi di pedopornografia online, come quelli recentemente scoperti dalla polizia postale italiana.

Sarebbe quindi importante che questa relazione incentivasse la cooperazione in materia di contrasto alle attività illecite online, contribuisse a una maggior consapevolezza di operatori e utenti, in particolar modo se più vulnerabili, e favorisse una dimensione digitale nella quale i nostri dati siano protetti e tutelati.

La digitalizzazione crescente ha dei costi e questi, purtroppo, non si limitano solo a tecnologie, infrastrutture e reti.

Patrick Breyer, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, verehrte Damen und Herren! Unsere persönlichen Daten sind in Europa so stark gesetzlich vor Missbrauch, vor Datenklau, vor Datenverlust geschützt wie nirgendwo sonst auf der Welt. Dieser Goldstandard an Datenschutz und Privatsphäre sichert unsere Freiheit und Selbstbestimmung – im Unterschied etwa zur chinesischen Diktatur. Persönliche Daten sind kein Industrirohstoff.

Aber unsere Datenschutzrechte sind nur so viel wert, wie wir um ihre Einhaltung zu kämpfen bereit sind – auch gegen Industrieinteressen, auch gegen mächtige Staaten wie die USA. Die Datenschutzbehörden müssen ohne Rücksicht auf Standortinteressen zeitnah Anordnungen treffen und Strafen verhängen. Die EU-Kommission muss Vertragsverletzungsverfahren einleiten, wo das nicht klappt.

Und wir als Volksvertretung müssen bei *ePrivacy* und beim Digitale-Dienste-Gesetz gegen Chatkontrolle, gegen Vorratsdatenspeicherung, gegen totales Tracking und für das Recht auf Anonymität kämpfen.

Denn auch unsere Kinder haben ein Recht auf ein Leben frei von ständiger Beobachtung und Manipulation. Packen wir es an!

Assita Kanko, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, de algemene verordening gegevensbescherming (AVG) is niet perfect, maar ze is baanbrekend en heeft tot doel een globale standaard op te stellen. In een post-covidwereld met de snelle ontwikkeling van artificiële intelligentie en de toegenomen dreiging van cyberaanvallen is een robuust en tegen phishing bestand juridisch kader voor gegevens dat onze economie toestaat op te bloeien, van vitaal belang.

De AVG heeft het potentieel om de grootste troef van de EU uit te spelen: wederzijds vertrouwen, onafhankelijk toezicht en een juridisch gelijk speelveld. Maar we moeten nog steeds de hardnekkige inconsistenties, de niet-naleving en lacunes aanpakken. Het is niet het moment om alle regels te verzaken en opnieuw te beginnen. Maar het is juist tijd om de regelgeving te laten werken zoals de wetgever bedoeld heeft.

We moeten nagaan hoe we de AVG hand in hand kunnen laten gaan met de veranderende technologie. Hoe kunnen we bedrijven helpen groeien in een digitaal tijdperk? Hoe kunnen we kmo's meer begeleiding en steun bieden? En uiteindelijk, hoe kunnen we de privacy en de gegevens van onze burgers beter beschermen? Daarover moet het gaan!

Marisa Matias, *em nome do Grupo The Left*. – Senhora Presidente, Senhor Comissário, uma estratégia europeia para os dados não é só absolutamente necessária como é urgente. Ainda que estejamos a falar de primeiros passos, é importante incluir dimensões que muitas vezes não são consideradas. Desse ponto de vista, lutámos para incluir três recomendações, saudando a sua inclusão.

Em primeiro lugar, os direitos de quem trabalha. É preciso garantir o direito dos empregados a saber onde estão os seus dados, como são usados, como são partilhados. É preciso também incluir orientações para reduzir a vigilância no local de trabalho e para garantir a privacidade.

Em segundo lugar, os dados da saúde. É importante que se estabeleça que as companhias de seguros ou qualquer outro prestador de serviços, que tenha acesso à informação guardada em aplicações de saúde, não possam usar esses dados para fins discriminatórios, incluindo a definição dos preços.

Em terceiro lugar, por último, mas não menos importante, é importante garantir os impactos ambientais das tecnologias da informação e comunicação e a sua pegada ecológica. Estamos satisfeitos com o facto de terem sido incluídos.

Queremos ver consequências agora para o futuro.

Jeroen Lenaers (PPE). – Voorzitter, deze evaluatie van de algemene verordening gegevensbescherming komt op een goed moment. Want laat daar geen misverstand over bestaan: privacy is niet alleen een individueel recht, het is ook een maatschappelijke waarde. Het is absoluut cruciaal dat onze persoonlijke gegevens wettelijk goed beschermd zijn. Het is ook goed dat we dat in Europa doen. Het is zoveel beter en duidelijker om één setje regels te hebben dat in de hele EU van kracht is, in plaats van 27 nationale wetten, met alle grensoverschrijdende gevolgen en moeilijkheden van dien.

We moeten dus goede en duidelijke regels hebben die onze privacy waarborgen, maar tegelijkertijd moeten we ervoor zorgen dat er ruimte is om maatregelen te kunnen nemen voor onze veiligheid en voor onze gezondheid. We hebben in de afgelopen twee jaar vele honderden, zo niet duizenden signalen vanuit de samenleving gekregen over onduidelijkheden en onvolkomenheden in de huidige wetgeving: vanuit het midden- en kleinbedrijf, vanuit verenigingen, vanuit scholen, vanuit jeugdzorg en gezondheidszorg, vanuit startups en technologieën van de toekomst.

We hebben nu een keus. Wij kunnen die signalen negeren. We kunnen vanuit deze ruimte hier zeggen dat wij het allemaal beter weten en dat wij vasthouden aan ons eigen absolute gelijk. Of we kunnen die signalen serieus nemen. We kunnen ze oppikken en we kunnen daar iets mee doen. We kunnen samen kijken naar hoe en waar wij de huidige regels op een gerichte manier beter, duidelijker en toekomstbestendiger kunnen maken.

Ik kies heel duidelijk voor die tweede optie en ik ga die uitdaging aan. Ik hoop van harte dat veel collega's mij daarin zullen volgen.

Josianne Cutajar (S&D). – Madam President, I should like to thank all colleagues who have been working on this important file. The European data strategy paves the way to an effective and inclusive digital transition. Data is a key to the success of our societies. I stress its potential in improving health services and research on chronic and rare diseases that, unfortunately, affect many European citizens.

An effective and inclusive data strategy is necessary to enhance the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises. Way too often SMEs lag behind large firms, lacking the means and skills necessary to take advantage of their own data and get their knowledge through analytics. Nowhere is this truer than in transport and tourism. It will be paramount to ensure trust by all and data-sharing that is rooted in legal clarity. I conclude by noting that the European Parliament is putting forward a noble cause when speaking about data for a public good. Citizens must always come first.

Bart Groothuis (Renew). – Madam President, for two years Russia has actually been testing whether it can disconnect itself from the internet, and whether it can do so without severe consequences for the Russian economy or its society. Well, it can. That same country, Russia, has developed a highly advanced military capability to potentially sabotage the internet optic-fibre cables that connect our continent with others and which form the backbone of our digital economy. Many NATO and EU members have warned about this and any European data strategy should therefore not just address the data addressed, but should also cover the flow security of data in transit, both under the sea and on our continent. Well I believe every incident must be reported, investigated and attributed. Our navies should engage actively with any adversarial operation. And I therefore ask for a strategy that also deals with flow security.

Alessandro Panza (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il GDPR è uno strumento importante per la difesa della privacy di ognuno di noi ed è un punto fondamentale.

Serve però essere molto, molto franchi anche sulle ricadute pratiche dipendenti da questo provvedimento: troppo spesso le piccole o soprattutto le piccolissime aziende vedono questo provvedimento come l'ennesimo adempimento burocratico e quindi come l'ennesimo costo, che a volte sembra essere eccessivo o persino superfluo.

Le sfide dell'imminente futuro in merito, ad esempio, all'implementazione dell'intelligenza artificiale devono avere le giuste condizioni per poter recuperare il divario accumulato con concorrenti come Stati Uniti e Cina.

Per fare questo serve avere un approccio maggiormente dinamico, sempre senza precludere la sicurezza, nella gestione dei dati per poter permettere alle imprese di essere competitive.

In ultimo, un appello affinché la condivisione dei dati soprattutto sulla pubblica sicurezza possa diventare la normalità per prevenire la diffusione di reti criminali sul territorio europeo.

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, those who control shares, profit from data. This is the key question that we are trying to tackle with this report. At its core this question is a question of power and I think with GDPR we have made a big step towards ensuring that some of this power is being given back to individuals. With this report we ask for further steps to rebalance this power. Currently, there seems to be an imbalance when it comes to the concentration of market power in many of the aspects related to data.

We need to make sure in our future steps in this legislation when it comes to the Data Governance Act, when it comes to the Data Act, that we give power back to individuals, that we safeguard their rights, that we clarify the role of intermediaries and that we empower governments and businesses to share data in a trusted and safe environment. This has to be the European model to get towards greater digital competitiveness.

Kosma Złotowski (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie komisarzy! Dane to paliwo dla gospodarki cyfrowej. Bez niego tworzenie innowacyjnych produktów i usług jest niemożliwe. Zbudowanie jednolitej europejskiej przestrzeni danych jest niezbędne, aby nasze przedsiębiorstwa mogły konkurować w obszarze nowych technologii. Dotyczy to zwłaszcza start-upów, z których zdecydowana większość to małe i średnie przedsiębiorstwa. Projektowane przepisy muszą traktować te przedsiębiorstwa priorytetowo.

Pozycja, jaką mają dzisiaj na rynku globalnym największe firmy technologiczne, wynika właśnie z ogromnych zasobów informacji, jakie udało się im zgromadzić do tej pory. Instytucje publiczne dysponują ogromnymi zasobami danych, które mogą i powinny być nieodpłatnie udostępniane i otwierane do ponownego wykorzystania.

Rozwój nowych modeli biznesowych w sektorach transportu, turystyki nie będzie możliwy bez dostępu do danych wchodzących w zakres infrastruktury informacji przestrzennej, takich jak dane kartograficzne. Komisja powinna stworzyć system zachęt dla państw członkowskich wspierający proces otwierania tych zasobów.

(Debata została na chwilę zawieszona)

6. First voting session

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest głosowanie.

Będziemy głosowali nad punktami zapisanymi w porządku obrad. Głosowanie będzie otwarte od godz. 11.00 do godz. 12.15. Przyjęto taką samą metodę głosowania jak w poprzednim głosowaniu. Wszystkie głosowania będą imienne. Ogłaszam otwarcie pierwszej części głosowania, można głosować do godz. 12.15. Wyniki pierwszej części głosowania zostaną ogłoszone o godz. 14.30.

7. European strategy for data – Commission evaluation report on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation two years after its application (continuation of debate)

Przewodnicząca. – Powracamy do debaty łącznej na temat europejskiej strategii w zakresie danych nad:

— sprawozdaniem sporządzonym przez Miapetrę Kumpuli-Natri w imieniu Komisji Przemysłu, Badań Naukowych i Energii w sprawie europejskiej strategii w zakresie danych (2020/2217(INI)) (A9-0027/2021) oraz

— oświadczeniem Komisji w sprawie sprawozdania Komisji z oceny wdrożenia ogólnego rozporządzenia o ochronie danych po dwóch latach jego stosowania (2020/2717(RSP)).

Henna Virkkunen (PPE). – Arvoisa puhemies, todellakin, kulunut pandemiavuosi on vauhdittanut digitalisaatiota kaikkialla Euroopassa, ja se tekee tästä datataloutta koskevasta mietinnöstä entistä tärkeämmän ja ajankohtaisemman. Haluan kiittää kaikkia esittelijöitä ja kollegoita hyvästä työstä tämän tärkeän mietinnön eteen.

EPP-ryhmässä olemme halunneet erityisesti painottaa pk-yritysten, mikroyritysten, ja startupien merkitystä ja osuutta tässä mietinnössä, koska on tärkeää, että myös ne pääsisivät hyödyntämään nykyistä paremmin datatalouden mahdollisuuksia. Samoin meille tärkeää on se, että investointeja yritysten digitalisaatioon, sekä yksityisiä että julkisia, vauhditetaan kaikkialla Euroopassa ja että suuntaamme rahoitusta alan koulutukseen ja tutkimukseen, jotta pystymme todella hyödyntämään kaikki ne mahdollisuudet, joita datatalous tuo tullessaan.

Erityisesti pk-yritysten mahdollisuuksien korostaminen on nyt tärkeää seuraavissa askelissa, koska pk-yritykset ovat valtava osa meidän talouttamme ja niihin syntyy yhä suurempi osa työpaikoista. Täytyy siis hakea ratkaisuja, ei pelkästään siihen, mikä nyt mietinnössä painottuu. Datavirtojen sujuvoittaminen, se on ilman muuta tärkeä asia, mutta täytyy löytää myös parempia keinoja siihen, miten pk-yritykset pystyisivät hyödyntämään paremmin jo omistamaansa ja tuotamaansa dataa ja luomaan uusia palveluita ja innovaatioita.

Meidän pitää myös arvioida, onko Euroopan tasolla oma lainsäädäntömme tässä mielessä ajan tasalla, niin että se kannustaa todellakin jakamaan dataa. Tässä on erityisesti tarkasteltava myös tietosuojasetusta, koska usein tiedämme, että teollinen data ja henkilöihin liittyvä henkilökohtainen data ovat yhteydessä keskenään. Jos siinä on vähänkin mukana henkilökohtaista dataa, silloin sitä käsitellään niin kuin henkilökohtaista dataa, ja saattaa olla, että iso osa tuosta mahdollisuudesta jää hyödyntämättä.

Иво Христов (S&D). – Уважаема г-жо Председател, бих искал да благодаря на Миапетра Кумпула-Натри за цялостната работа по Европейската стратегия за данните. Приветствам призива за изграждане на прозрачна икономика, която обаче зачита правото на неприкосновеност на личния живот и не залага допълнителни предпоставки за усилване на социалните неравенства.

Ускореното и повсеместно навлизане на технологии, базирани на изкуствен интелект, редом със създаването на европейски пространства на данни, ще промени драстично самите понятия за труд, работно място и работно време. Затова е необходимо изграждането на европейска нормативна рамка, която да гарантира социалните права на работниците. Кризата с Ковид-19 е показателна за нуждата от изграждане на общоевропейско пространство на здравни данни. Същевременно съм убеден, че не бива да допускаме извънредната ситуация да се използва като основание за намаляване на контрола на гражданите върху личните здравни данни.

В дигитализирания свят изобилието от данни нараства, с него нарастват и възможностите ни, но информационните масиви крият рискове за демокрацията и правата на индивида, които трябва да отчитаме преди да се опияняваме от възможностите, защото тъкмо демокрацията и свободата са онова, което ни обединява.

Dragoș Tudorache (Renew). – Madam President, dear Commissioner, I welcome the work on the digital future of Europe, of which the strategy for data is an important piece, but not the only one.

The Digital Markets Act (DMA) and Digital Services Act (DSA), the digital decade, the Data Governance Act, the upcoming AI legislation are all ambitious and ground-breaking proposals. It is in this context of setting up our digital future that we need to remember that everything we do should be for the benefit of all citizens. And in light of this, I have three points to make.

First, our citizens need to benefit from the personal data that they generate. We need to go beyond the GDPR and data protection, we need to find ways to make personal data generate value, not just for a few global tech platforms but also directly for all citizens. So looking forward to the Data Act, I encourage the Commission to reflect on such ways.

Second, our citizens and our businesses need a single market, they need data economies of scale in order to take advantage of all that the digital age has to offer. This is one area where we cannot afford fragmentation. We need to do more at the European level, including in the way we write laws and we need to make sure that our data strategy leads to more convergence and better data flows in Europe.

And third, in order to thrive, our citizens need additional protection against novel threats specific to the data economy. Fake news and disinformation, which threaten the foundations of our democracies, and other forms of data-fuelled hybrid threats can only be countered if we leverage our geopolitical weight and our strategic partnerships to set the global rules on how data can and cannot be used.

Alexandra Geese (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, data is not the new oil, data is the new soil, because data uses knowledge and we can harvest it over and over again. And that is an excellent reason to farm that soil with great care. First of all, we should have the expertise to do it ourselves because every good farmer knows how to farm her crop. But today European companies don't have the top-notch expertise to process big data and therefore we need huge investment in European talent, rather than outsourcing that task permanently to global hyperscalers that don't respect our fundamental rights, like data protection.

Secondly, we need to focus on innovation to minimise electricity consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and waste, because the data economy must mitigate and not precipitate the climate crisis.

And thirdly, we urgently need to close the gender-data gap in order to obtain high-quality data and create a digital economy in which all population groups are equally represented. Let's respect privacy, focus on open source and decentralised systems, ensure intra-operability and above all, make sure that the produce of our new soil goes to the many and not the few.

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Dane są fundamentem transformacji cyfrowej i innowacyjności. Są podstawą do tworzenia nowych produktów i usług oraz rozwoju sztucznej inteligencji. Ich dostępność oraz otwarta i bezpieczna międzynarodowa wymiana mogą być podstawową wartością dodaną i przełomem w budowaniu autonomicznej europejskiej gospodarki cyfrowej oraz przyczynić się do poprawy warunków zdrowia, życia, a także środowiska naturalnego.

Pamiętajmy jednak, że zapewnienie lepszego dostępu do danych i wymiana danych powinny odbywać się przy jednoczesnym zagwarantowaniu wysokich standardów ochrony danych osobowych i cyberbezpieczeństwa. Szczególną uwagę pragnę zwrócić na aspekt związany z cyberbezpieczeństwem, bo to jest poważne wyzwanie, z którym będziemy musieli się zmierzyć.

Tom Vandenkendelaere (PPE). – Voorzitter, de AVG is inmiddels meer dan twee jaar van kracht en we kunnen er niet omheen: de verordening bewijst haar nut. Ze zorgt voor een betere bescherming van persoonsgegevens en een breder bewustzijn onder de bevolking en zet de normen wereldwijd.

Duizenden bedrijven hebben tot nog toe hun uiterste best gedaan om volledig aan de AVG te voldoen. Ze hebben daar ook de nodige investeringen toe gedaan.

Ik wens vandaag drie opmerkingen over ons databeleid te maken. Ten eerste mogen we niet blind zijn voor de tekortkomingen en de problemen die de voorbije jaren duidelijk zijn geworden. We moeten erkennen dat de AVG voor kmo's en alledaagse verenigingen tijdrovend en duur is. Daarnaast loopt de toepassing en de handhaving niet in iedere lidstaat gelijk. Dat verstoort een goede werking van de interne markt.

Ten tweede mogen we de uitwisseling van data met derde landen niet hinderen. Adequaatheidsbeslissingen met derde landen zijn inderdaad cruciaal om bedrijven in staat te stellen om op een vlotte en met de AVG strokende manier gegevens met elkaar uit te wisselen.

Ten derde en ten laatste zijn er de nieuwe technologieën, die vaak op artificiële intelligentie gebaseerd zijn en grote hoeveelheden data behoeven om fatsoenlijk te werken. De AVG mag de Europese Unie in de wereldwijde wedloop naar innovatieve strategische technologieën niet belemmeren.

Daarom roep ik samen met mijn fractie de Commissie ertoe op in de komende maanden en jaren de effecten van de AVG op die nieuwe technologieën volledig in kaart te brengen en een plan uit te werken, opdat deze verder kunnen gedijen en zich ontwikkelen in de toekomst.

Svenja Hahn (Renew). – Frau Präsidentin! Danke, Kommissar Reynders, dass Sie heute mit uns diskutieren.

Datenschutz und Cybersicherheit sind Voraussetzung für einen sicheren strategischen Umgang mit Daten. Es sind aber Qualität, Zugang und Umgang mit ihnen, die über den Erfolg von datengetriebenen Technologien wie künstlicher Intelligenz entscheiden werden. Die Datenstrategie muss unterscheiden zwischen personenbezogenen, nicht personenbezogenen und anonymisierten Daten. Gesundheitsdaten können zum Beispiel anonymisiert sehr gut und sinnvoll in der Forschung genutzt werden – aber bitte nicht individuell zur Berechnung der Krankenkassenbeiträge.

Ein Algorithmus kann übrigens auch immer nur so gut sein wie die Daten, mit denen er gefüttert wurde. Datensätze müssen frei von Diskriminierung sein, damit die Bewerbungssoftware, die von der Frau in der Führungsposition noch nichts gehört hat, eben nicht die Frauen aussortiert.

Es braucht auch Zugang zu öffentlichen Daten und klare Regeln, was Unternehmen teilen müssen und was nicht, damit morgen nicht nur die groß sind, die heute schon einen großen Datenvorsprung haben. Denn: Innovation und Fortschritt braucht Daten, und die Zukunft von künstlicher Intelligenz braucht eine kluge europäische Datenstrategie. Denn unser Ziel ist es doch, dass wir die Europäische Union an die Weltspitze der Innovation führen. Und eine Datenstrategie ist dafür der Grundstein.

Joachim Stanisław Brudziński (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie komisarzu! Każdy z nas ma coraz więcej urządzeń, które komunikują się z internetem, przysyłając tam dane o naszym funkcjonowaniu. Pustka prawna, która istniała dotąd, jeśli chodzi o przetwarzanie takich danych, prowadziła do nadużyć i budziła słuszne obawy obywateli naszych krajów.

To właśnie regulacje dotyczące anonimizacji, bezpieczeństwa użytkowników urządzeń cyfrowych budzą nasze zadowolenie. Chcemy, by dane były przetwarzane w celu znajdowania rozwiązań poprawiających jakość życia i napędzających gospodarkę. Jednocześnie dostrzegamy ryzyko zdominowania procesów udostępniania danych przez największe na świecie spółki technologiczne, będące skądinąd właścicielem największych, systemowo ważnych platform internetowych.

W naszej ocenie projekt nie daje wystarczających gwarancji, by wyeliminować ryzyko takiej dominacji. Podkreślę również, że zależy nam na tym, by dane gromadzone przez rządy, a udostępniane biznesowi przyczyniały się do budowy nowoczesnej gospodarki cyfrowej podnoszącej komfort życia obywateli. Nie chcemy jednak, by służyły do budowania przewagi kompetencyjnej prywatnych firm nad państwowymi. W tym kierunku potrzebny jest jeszcze większy wysiłek, zarówno ze strony instytucji unijnych, jak i państw narodowych.

Karen Melchior (Renew). – Fru formand! Data er i dag vores største kilde til viden, og den viden skal komme os alle til gode. Med den europæiske datastrategi skal vi sikre adgang til data på tværs af medlemslandene, mellem virksomhederne og ind til forskerne. Hvorfor? Fordi vi er en af de regioner, som er mest datarige, men også mest datanære. Vi deler ikke data, selv om det vil komme os alle til gode.

Adgang til data gør det muligt at forske i sundhed og udvikle de nye grønne løsninger, som vi har brug for. Adgang til data gør det muligt for ikke kun nye virksomheder, startups, men også de gamle at udvikle nye løsninger. Derfor vil en ambitiøs datastrategi sikre, at Europa ikke bliver verdens frilandsmuseum.

Vi skal skabe grundlaget for, at Europa kan stå i spidsen for ny viden. Med vores egne løsninger og ved at beholde nogle af dataene i EU skaber vi øget sikkerhed for dine data. Vi skal også sikre øget anonymisering af data, og at Europa bliver ledende inden for forskning, for syntetiske datasæt. I Europa sætter vi ansvarlighed og mennesker først, også når vi udvikler teknologi. Så lad os skabe et fundament i datastrategien, hvor vi skaber et EU baseret på viden og integritet. Data er viden, og Europa skal baseres på viden.

Didier Reynders, membre de la Commission. – Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, une fois encore, je tiens à remercier le Parlement pour son soutien dans ce programme ambitieux en matière de données. Nous avons débattu ensemble de la stratégie européenne pour les données et, vous le savez, la Commission est engagée, tant sur le plan législatif qu'au travers du programme et de l'alliance industrielle, afin que l'Europe puisse bénéficier pleinement de la vague des données industrielles qui définiront notre capacité à intégrer la transformation numérique de nos écosystèmes industriels.

La Commission compte sur le soutien de votre Parlement, notamment dans les différents dossiers législatifs déjà sur la table, mais aussi dans ceux à venir.

Turning to the GDPR, I would like to thank you again for our interesting discussion. I am pleased to see that we share many ideas on how to continue the work for an effective implementation and enforcement of the GDPR. On SMEs, the Commission is ready to assist the development of consistent and practical national guidance and guidelines of the EDPB in order to help businesses, in particular SMEs, to comply with data provision rules.

The Commission financially supports national data protection authorities in their efforts to reach out to SMEs and citizens. And we will continue this financial support in 2021, including on projects aimed at developing templates and all the practical tools to help SMEs to comply with the rules.

As announced in the Commission evaluation report, we will also explore whether, in the light of further experience and relevant case-law, proposing possible targeted amendments to certain provisions of the GDPR might be appropriate in the future, in particular regarding records of processing by SMEs that do not have the processing of personal data as their core business.

While it is clear that there is still work ahead to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of the GDPR, I am convinced that our efforts will contribute to reaching our ambition of creating a common culture of data protection in the EU, and even beyond.

I look forward to continuing of course our exchange on the GDPR and on data protection issues more generally. So thank you very much also again for your support.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 25 marca 2021 r.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 171)

Andrus Ansip (Renew), in writing. – The data strategy for Europe is extremely important. We cannot compete with China and the United States if we are not able to create a common European data pool. If we continue with relatively small data sets, we will not be able to create new innovative products as quickly as our competitors. Ensuring access to data is crucial for our businesses' innovation and growth. We need to boost data sharing and the free flow of data within the European Union, but this cannot come about as a protectionist measure. We need to extend the data flows also between the Union and third countries, provided that privacy and security requirements are met. Further, I would like to highlight the rise of edge computing. As said in the Commission's communication today 80% of the processing of data takes place in the cloud and 20% in smart connected objects. The share of edge computing will increase rapidly and it will be 80% by 2025. Therefore, we need to make sure that there are technical and legal solutions in place for providing effective access to data on the edge. We also need to address the emerging cybersecurity and data interoperability challenges the distributed nature of edge computing brings along.

Adam Bielan (ECR), na piśmie. – Dane mają kluczowe znaczenie dla wzrostu gospodarczego, zrównoważonego rozwoju i innowacji w Europie. Pandemia COVID-19 jeszcze bardziej uwypukliła rolę i potrzebę udostępniania wysokiej jakości danych. Naszym zadaniem jest więc zapewnienie standardów europejskich, które nadążają za rozwojem technologicznym i pomagają firmom, a szczególnie małym i średnim przedsiębiorstwom rozwijać się w erze cyfrowej.

Stworzenie jednolitej europejskiej przestrzeni danych wydaje się być zatem kluczowe. Powinniśmy zwrócić uwagę na bezpieczeństwo konsumentów, jednocześnie zapewniając firmom dostęp do ważnych danych. Priorytetami powinny być także interoperacyjność danych oraz współpraca między państwami członkowskimi.

Mam nadzieję, że nowa strategia zapewni skuteczny, odpowiedzialny i bezpieczny dostęp do danych, które stwarzają rzeczywistą wartość dodaną dla obywateli i przedsiębiorstw w całej Unii Europejskiej. Mamy więc ogromne możliwości i potencjał w Europie – nadszedł czas, aby je wykorzystać.

András Gyürk (NI), írásban. – A digitalizáció előretörése egyre nagyobb és gyorsuló ütemben alakítja át a gazdaságot, valamint az emberek mindennapi életét. Ennek egyik legfőbb lenyomata a rohamosan növekvő adatforgalom, ami globális szinten átlagosan másfél évente megduplázódik. A folyamat ellenőrzése és a technológiai cégeknek való kiszolgáltatottság elkerülése érdekében megfelelő szakpolitikai célkitűzésekre, illetve jogalkotási eszközökre van szükség, melyeknek három szempontot érdemes szem előtt tartaniuk. Az új digitálisadat-alapú gazdaságnak az európai polgárok életminőségének javítására kell irányulnia. A digitális átállás minden munkavállaló, vállalkozó, valamint helyi közösség számára előnyös kell, hogy legyen. Ehhez jelenthet megfelelő eszközt a közös európai adatterek létrehozása.

Szintén kiemelt fontossággal bír, hogy a mikro-, kis- és középvállalkozások megfelelő jogi és technikai támogatásban részesüljenek a digitalizáció kapcsán. A kkv-k mintegy 100 millió munkahelyet és a GDP több mint 50%-át adják az Európai Unióban. Versenyképességük megőrzése elengedhetetlen feltétele a digitális átmenet sikerének. Végül az adatalapú technológiáknak hozzá kell járulniuk a klímavédelmi célkitűzések teljesítéséhez is. Az informatikai ágazat jelentős potenciállal bír ezen a téren. Egy megfelelő sebességgel és ambícióval végrehajtott digitális átállás nagyban javíthatja a klímasemlegesség elérésének esélyeit 2050-re.

Sandra Pereira (The Left), *por escrito*. – A estratégia europeia para os dados não aborda a questão fundamental da propriedade dos «dados», que deve ser sempre de quem os originou em primeiro lugar (normalmente os cidadãos nas suas interações com a máquina) e não dos agentes que coligiram e classificaram tais dados. Esta é a questão fundamental para a IA, na sua transformação da experiência da força de trabalho em capital fixo, e que a UE insiste em não abordar. Além disso, a questão da federação de dados em nuvem (interligação), da criação dos chamados espaços europeus comuns de dados, da interoperabilidade e da partilha de dados na UE pode contribuir para a concentração ainda maior da recolha, conservação e tratamento de dados, em benefício não dos povos e dos estados, mas das grandes multinacionais de variados sectores, não apenas no domínio digital. Estes aspetos deviam ser integrados numa visão do desenvolvimento soberano, visando a preservação e salvaguarda de dados no plano nacional, e numa gestão de dados que comporte simultaneamente uma dimensão pública e de interesse nacional. O exemplo de um espaço europeu comum de dados de saúde servirá obviamente as entidades privadas a operar no sector, nomeadamente no ramo segurador.

Ernő Schaller-Baross (NI), *írásban*. – Az Európai Bizottság Digitális Iránytű javaslatára 2030-ra egy olyan digitális Európát vizionál, amely a vállalkozások és az állampolgárok digitális fejlődését helyezi a középpontba. Támogatandó cél, hogy 2030-ra a vállalkozások háromnegyedének felhőalapú számítástechnikai szolgáltatásokat, big data és mesterséges intelligencia technológiákat kell alkalmazniuk. Szintén lényeges a versenyképesség szempontjából, hogy a javaslat szerint a kis- és középvállalatok 90%-ának el kell érnie az alapszintű digitális fejlettséget. A fentiek eléréséhez azonban a Bizottságnak megfelelő támogatást kell nyújtania az európai vállalkozások, különösen a kkv-szektor számára.

A bizottsági elképzelések egyeznek a magyar kormány Digitális Jólét Programjának céljaival is. Az annak részeként 2019-ben bemutatott Digitális Jólét Tőkeprogram legalább 10 és legfeljebb 500 millió forint összegű tőkebefektetéssel támogatja a hazai mikro-, kis-, és középvállalkozások, illetve startupok digitális termék- és szolgáltatásfejlesztési projektjeit. Ennek keretében a tavalyi év végéig összesen mintegy 3,7 milliárd forintnyi támogatást osztott ki a kormány a vállalkozások számára. Fontos, hogy a Bizottság proaktívan tárja fel a digitális technológiában, az adatokban és a mesterséges intelligenciában rejlő lehetőségeket a vállalkozások termelékenységének és a munkaerő jólétének növelése érdekében. Emellett áll ki a magyar kormány Mesterséges Intelligencia Stratégiája is, amely 2030-ig előírja, hogy egymillió állampolgár találjon digitális szempontból jelentősebb hozzáadott értékű munkát, a Mesterséges Intelligencia segítségével Magyarország GDP-je növekedjen, továbbá, hogy a kkv-k termelékenysége 26%-kal emelkedjen.

Susana Solís Pérez (Renew), *por escrito*. – Necesitamos una estrategia de datos que permita la libre circulación de datos dentro de la UE que garantice la competitividad global de Europa y la soberanía de los datos. Europa puede liderar en cuanto a gestión y uso responsable de datos como ya lo ha hecho con la RGPD, y para ello es fundamental que todos los actores —grandes o pequeños— formen parte y se beneficien de los ecosistemas de datos europeos y de la inteligencia artificial.

Los datos están en el centro de la transformación digital; traen enormes mejoras para los ciudadanos europeos y contribuirán a un crecimiento sostenible con empleos de alta calidad. Pero los ciudadanos europeos solamente confiarán y adoptarán innovaciones basadas en datos si están seguros de que cualquier intercambio de datos personales estará sujeto al pleno cumplimiento de las normas de protección de datos de la UE.

Por ello, debemos asegurar los más altos estándares seguridad, anonimidad, transparencia y confianza, y que los usuarios tengan herramientas simples y efectivas de utilizar para mantener el control sobre sus datos. Además, debemos evitar que una mayor regulación obstaculice el camino de I+D+i, y cerciorarnos de que este camino sea uno destinado a crear valor y no destruirlo.

Riho Terras (PPE), in writing. – Data is an essential resource necessary for training artificial intelligence. Furthermore, the processing of anonymized medical data will enable us to draw very useful conclusions regarding the spread of pandemics, such as COVID-19 and its various mutations. It will also allow us to make progress in figuring out treatments for rare and chronic illnesses. In order to be able to achieve these scientific developments and to be able to find potential efficiency gains in our everyday lives, for instance in the field of energy efficiency, data needs to be shared and it needs to be accessible for those that need to process it. Although some fundamental safeguards are necessary, we must make sure that the regulatory burden and cost of compliance does not overwhelm the administrative capabilities of our SMEs. It is precisely our SMEs that are the cradle of innovation in Europe. In addition to fostering innovation, they provide a significant number of jobs, forming the backbone of our economy. Therefore, our data strategy and its implementation are of key importance for our future prosperity. We need to get it right from the beginning!

Edina Tóth (NI), írásban. – A globális koronavírus-járvány folytán milliók kényszerültek otthoni munkavégzésre, a digitálizáció szerepe így még inkább felértékelődött. A mai virtuális világ gazdaság fő motorját az adatok gyors és hatékony cseréje képezi. Nem csoda tehát, hogy az adatok állnak az EU digitális átalakulásának középpontjában, hiszen azok a társadalom és a gazdaság minden aspektusában fontosak. Örömteli, hogy az Európai Parlament mai plenáris ülésén megszavazta az európai adatstratégiáról szóló jelentést. A Covid19-világjárvány még inkább kiemeli a digitálizáció, az elektronikus infrastruktúra, a high-tech eszközök és készségek fontosságát.

Úgy gondolom, hogy a digitálizáció segítségével hatékonyabb lesz a gazdasági helyreállítás, amely lehetőséget teremt a régiók és tagállamok közötti digitális megosztottság felszámolására. A digitálizáció nem vezethet nagyobb vagy újabb társadalmi egyenlőtlenségekhez, régiók leszakadásához! Az adatgazdaság terén Európa jelenleg vesztesre áll az Amerikai Egyesült Államokkal és Kínával szemben. A baloldali, Brüsszel-központú, bürokratikus elképzelés helyett a nemzetállamoknak szerepet adó, rugalmas adatstratégiára van szükség. Úgy vélem, hogy a nemzetállamok közötti hatékony és gyors adatfelhasználás a kulcsa a globális versenyhátrány leküzdésének. Örömteli, hogy az európai parlamenti jelentés a tagállami hatóságok szerepének fontosságát hangsúlyozza.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D), por escrito. – O relatório de iniciativa em debate posiciona o Parlamento Europeu para desenvolver com maior eficácia e capacidade de influência o seu papel de legislador no pacote legislativo para a segunda vaga da digitalização e para a transição digital e, em particular, nos regulamentos da gestão de dados, dos serviços digitais e dos mercados digitais.

Saliento o compromisso alargado que foi obtido, dando força a uma visão da economia dos dados fortemente interligada com os objetivos do Pacto Ecológico Europeu, respeitando os princípios da transparência, da confiança, da centralidade das pessoas, dos direitos humanos e da democracia. Um compromisso importante também na prioridade dada à criação de mais serviços e oportunidades para os cidadãos e para as empresas, em particular para as pequenas e médias empresas.

O conteúdo do relatório está em linha com a visão que tenho proposto em diversos debates e processos negociais em curso, de que é necessário um pacto europeu de cidadania para os dados, que permita que os dados disponibilizados pelos cidadãos sejam convertidos em serviços de interesse geral e acesso fácil, promovendo uma digitalização democrática, verde e inclusiva. As apostas nas qualificações e na interoperabilidade são chaves para esta abordagem.

8. 2019-2020 Reports on Albania – 2019-2020 Reports on Kosovo – 2019-2020 Reports on North Macedonia – 2019-2020 Reports on Serbia (debate)

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest debata łączna na temat sprawozdań z postępów w sprawie Albanii, Kosowa, Macedonii Północnej i Serbii za lata 2019-2020 nad:

— sprawozdaniem sporządzonym przez Isabel Santos w imieniu Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie sprawozdań Komisji dotyczących Albanii za lata 2019-2020 (2019/2170(INI)) (A9-0041/2021),

— sprawozdaniem sporządzonym przez Violę Von Cramon-Taubadel w imieniu Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie sprawozdań Komisji dotyczących Kosowa za lata 2019-2020 (2019/2172(INI)) (A9-0031/2021),

— sprawozdaniem sporządzonym przez Ilhana Kyuchyuka w imieniu Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie sprawozdań Komisji dotyczących Macedonii Północnej za lata 2019-2020 (2019/2174(INI)) (A9-0040/2021) oraz

— sprawozdaniem sporządzonym przez Vladimíra Bilčíka w imieniu Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych w sprawie sprawozdań Komisji dotyczących Serbii za lata 2019-2020 (2019/2175(INI)) (A9-0032/2021).

Isabel Santos, Relatora. – Senhora Presidente, Caros Colegas, compreendam que hoje, ao dirigir-me a esta câmara, as minhas palavras vão também para o povo albanês, para aqueles que olham para a União Europeia com uma contagiante esperança de progresso, modernidade e justiça social. O ânimo, a coragem e a determinação com que os albaneses têm avançado, sem hesitação, nas reformas que lhes foram pedidas, mesmo em momentos de desaire como o caso do terramoto no final de 2019 e da pandemia no último ano, são verdadeiramente inspiradores e permitiram atingir as condições apresentadas em março de 2018 para avançar com as primeiras negociações formais.

As eleições europeias e o atraso por parte da Comissão Europeia na apresentação do relatório no ano passado levaram a que este Parlamento não se pronunciasse sobre a situação na Albânia desde 2018.

Felizmente, durante este período, como já foi reconhecido pelo Conselho de Associação e pela Comissão Europeia, registaram-se muitos progressos em campos tão diversos como os da justiça, do Estado de Direito, do respeito pelos direitos fundamentais, da lei eleitoral, da administração pública, da política económica, da educação e do emprego, da conectividade e da luta contra a corrupção e a criminalidade organizada.

O retomar das condições de funcionamento do Supremo Tribunal e do Tribunal Constitucional com o processo de nomeação de juizes continua a decorrer, bem como o começo do funcionamento das agências de luta contra a corrupção.

São apenas alguns exemplos dos esforços e da vontade demonstrada pela Albânia.

Sei que existem visões diferentes relativamente às reformas implementadas no país. Alguns dirão que é preciso aprofundar estas reformas e avançar com outras. Claro que sim, é sempre possível e necessário fazer mais e melhor.

Este relatório formula, inclusive, um conjunto de recomendações para áreas muito distintas, como o ambiente, a cooperação regional, a comunicação social, o Estado de Direito, entre outras, com o intuito de contribuir para a modernização do país e proporcionar novos horizontes de qualidade de vida às novas gerações e progredir rumo a um maior alinhamento com as políticas europeias.

Este é um caminho que faremos juntos, mas agora, no imediato, impõe-se que o esforço feito pelo país seja reconhecido sem hesitações nem adiamentos, a bem da credibilidade de todo este processo. O mérito no cumprimento das diferentes etapas tem que ter claras consequências nos progressos rumo à adesão.

Um processo em que todos temos a ganhar em oportunidades de negócio, investimento, livre circulação, desenvolvimento, qualidade de vida, capacidade de competição a nível global e na afirmação dos valores que nos unem.

Estou convencida de que as eleições gerais na Albânia, no próximo dia 25 de abril, uma data com grande significado no meu país, permitirão consolidar e renovar procedimentos e estruturas democráticos e ultrapassar a polarização que se tem feito sentir.

Arrumada a disputa eleitoral, importa que todos se concentrem no essencial, porque todos são necessários, todos somos necessários, na exigente tarefa de construir um futuro melhor.

A opção europeia dos albaneses, 97% segundo os estudos de opinião, é clara. Não os podemos defraudar.

Este é um relatório abrangente, equilibrado, que procura abordar as questões mais importantes para a União Europeia e para o povo albanês, algo que só foi possível com a atitude construtiva e dialogante dos diferentes grupos políticos e dos relatores-sombra, a quem deixo o meu profundo agradecimento.

Agora, é tempo de agir na concretização das expectativas do povo albanês, legitimadas pelo caminho feito.

É tempo de agir, colocando os interesses coletivos dos europeus acima dos interesses individuais ou momentâneos de alguns países e de algumas fações políticas.

Sim, Albânia, sim, Albânia, juntos iremos mais longe. Boa sorte, Albânia. *Good luck, Albânia.*

Good luck Albania!

Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel, *rapporteur*. – Madam President, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this report, which I believe sends clear and positive signals to Kosovo. We here in the Parliament have confidence in Kosovo's European future, and we would expect an equal commitment by the newly elected government of Kosovo. Our committee's report is a strong one, and this result would have been impossible without the help of the interlocutors in Kosovo and the constructive support of my colleagues here – so thank you once again.

Kosovo's progress on the European path is in our common interest. Parliament stands strong and united with Kosovo and its people, and we need to make sure that all political actors work alongside us for this European perspective. People in Kosovo are overwhelmingly in favour of the European Union, in fact, no country in the region shows a more positive attitude towards the EU than Kosovo. This fact is not self-evident, however, and cannot be taken for granted forever. If we do not fulfil our promises, we lose credibility and trust. It is high time for the Council to deliver at last on the promise of visa liberalisation. I absolutely share the frustration of the citizens of Kosovo. I wish the European Parliament could decide on this matter.

A very topical problem is also the lack of vaccine supply in Kosovo. The production capacities here in the EU are currently being increased, and this must lead to a much better supply for Kosovo as soon as possible. The EU should support the speedy vaccination of healthcare workers and other most vulnerable groups.

Compared to crisis response, our cooperation regarding the pre-accession funds might not seem that pressing, but in the pursuit of a more sustainable and healthier future for Kosovo the fight against air pollution mainly caused by coal and outdated infrastructure must be tackled as well.

We need to use the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) funds wisely. If we do not invest in the energy transition now, we are harming the health of millions of people, not to mention our climate commitments. IPA funds aim at sustainable development. Therefore they need to be accessible. We particularly expect the Commission not to prioritise only state-sponsored infrastructure projects; SMEs, NGOs, civil society are crucial for sustainable development in the region and they must have access to these funds too. Experts advise the EU to spend more of its resources on democratic institution-building, and less on gas pipelines.

Apart from those obvious EU topics, our report also encourages Kosovo to make more effort on various domestic issues. Amongst them are topics such as climate change, education policy, gender-based violence, to name just a few. The responsibility for this work lies in Pristina. Ultimately, the Government of Kosovo has to pass the reforms and implement them consistently. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the new Prime Minister Albin Kurti and his government. I wish them every success in responding to the many challenges ahead and look forward to working on our shared priorities.

To overcome the current difficulties, political stability is a precondition. In the interest of the country, the new assembly and the government should find common ground and enable the election of the new President.

Regarding the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, I ask them not to go for the low-hanging fruits. I ask Kosovo to stay committed to continue to work with Belgrade and the EU, and despite all difficulties not to abandon the dialogue.

An agreement, and yes ultimately mutual recognition, is a precondition for EU accession both for Serbia and Kosovo. Joining the EU without a comprehensive agreement will not be feasible, neither for Serbia nor for Kosovo. Asking what Kosovo can gain from the dialogue is the wrong approach. All political actors should rather ask themselves what is lost by abandoning the dialogue? The opportunity-cost of not having any agreement is high, and no one gains anything from the current status quo.

This leads me directly to Serbia and the respective report for which I am a shadow rapporteur – after all, Belgrade's responsibility in this dialogue is not any less, and abandoning it should not be an option for Serbia either.

If President Vučić is truly committed to Serbia's European path, he should show commitment regarding a comprehensive agreement, which is a precondition for Serbia's accession. Aleksandar Vučić could and should use his two-thirds parliamentary majority as a strong backing for continuing the dialogue. With this majority ratio, he could easily push through domestic reforms, prove his democratic commitment and deliver changes that improve the livelihood of all Serbian citizens.

We are looking forward to seeing the actual results of his work: better democratic conditions and economic prosperity. What we do not want to see, but unfortunately have to, are certain forms of misuse of power. Here I think about how government and individual MPs attack those whose opinions they do not share: silencing, threatening and harassing political opponents are surely not in line with democratic and EU principles to which Serbia has also committed itself. Political debates can sometimes be very controversial, heated and emotionally charged, but hate speech and orchestrated personal attacks are never tolerable.

These reports are not an end or a conclusion but a stocktake and guidance for further cooperation.

It is almost needless to say that my commitment will continue as ever.

Ilhan Kyuchyuk, *rapporteur*. – Madam President, the progress report that we'll be discussing and voting on today covers a period of two years. This should have been full of dynamic events for the Western Balkans. Despite some positive developments like the enlargement methodology, the decision of the European Council on North Macedonia and on Albania at the end of last year was harmful for the Western Balkans and had a direct negative impact on the respective countries and their societies.

But the COVID pandemic that hit the region dramatically has shown us something else. Europe has managed to prove that it stands behind its partners. The mobilisation of EUR 3.3 billion for the countries of the region to deal with the effects of the pandemic was a clear demonstration of the European solidarity which has long been called into question. It has now proven to be real and this is well underlined in all four reports, because the EU's engagement with the Western Balkans surpasses that of any other region and is in our strategic interest.

In particular, on the Republic of North Macedonia, as standing rapporteur I would work to highlight some important elements of the report. But before that, let me first express my gratitude for the constructive work of the shadow rapporteurs, whose contributions undoubtedly enriched the report. North Macedonia has come along an uneasy way to building reforms and compromises, until it reached the stage of starting formal EU accession negotiations and deservedly became the 30th NATO member.

The report clearly reflects that. It is an objective account of what we have seen in that country in recent years. Indeed, consistent progress was achieved. The country demonstrated continuity in its dedicated commitment to the European path and understanding of the need to implement stable and inclusive democratic reforms, to stand for democracy and the rule of law in order to reinforce the climate of mutual trust. The report recognises that and further calls on all political parties to remain constructive, to refrain from using nationalistic and inflammatory rhetoric. Engaging in a constructive dialogue is a prerequisite of good governance in the pursuit of the cross-party goal of accession. Maintaining a steady pace in adopting EU reforms as a means of ensuring efficient functioning of democratic institutions and procedures is also well recognised.

Of course, some setbacks such as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the tensions in the diplomatic relations with Bulgaria were noted as well.

But North Macedonia shouldn't stop with the reforms as in some areas, like the fight against corruption, organised crime and media freedom, more reforms are needed. Reforms are needed in areas like more inclusivity in the society. We need to see deeper and faster reforms, and we need to see progress for sure.

It is further important that public administration reforms are prioritised by systematically applying merit-based standards in public appointments and in promotions. The cooperative approach of North Macedonia throughout the negotiations of the Prespa Agreement with Greece and the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations with Bulgaria is also underlined.

Having said that I hope that both countries – North Macedonia and Bulgaria – will resume the constructive dialogue on the pending bilateral issues in order to achieve sustainable results. Reaching a compromise over an action plan of concrete measures, implementation of which is to be regularly assessed in accordance with the Friendship Treaty, would start the process and would allow the Council to convene the first intergovernmental conference as soon as possible.

I am convinced that further delays will put at risk the credibility, objectivity and reliability of the accession process.

We have to focus on the bigger picture. Through building trust together we are building our common future within the EU as we need bridges that unite us more than walls that divide.

няколко думи и на български. Когато едно доверие е нарушено, безспорно то трябва да бъде възстановено и най-добрият начин за това е да се върнем към основите на Договора. Само той ще ни даде възможност да начертаям пътната карта на региона, който неминуемо е свързан с интеграцията на всички страни в Европейския съюз. От това ще спечели регионалното сътрудничество, от това ще спечелят добросъседските отношения, от това ще спечели и целият Европейски съюз.

Finally, on the Kosovo report, for which I am shadow rapporteur, the country has demonstrated continued and strong commitment to advancing on its European path and accelerating the reforms, as well as strong support for European integration among the population, and all of this deserves to be underlined.

I do believe it is high time for all European Member States to recognise Kosovo and all its citizens to benefit from visa liberalisation, because all the benchmarks have been fulfilled since 2018.

The last elections once again demonstrated that the country deserves credit for showing a high level of political opportunity, and I look forward for the new government speeding up the reforms and working actively on the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue.

Vladimír Bilčík, *rapporteur*. – Madam President, let me begin by saying that I very much regret that I have not been able to travel to the Western Balkans in over a year. And this is the case for all of us here, colleagues and I think it's important to underline that we need to re-open as soon as this is possible, because if we really truly want to be engaged in the region of the Western Balkans, we must be engaged on the ground.

Meanwhile, we have been engaged. We have been engaged through various channels, online and through the modern technologies and we have followed the situation very, very closely. We have been engaged in conversation with our partners, and I do want to express my sincere condolences to all of those who have lost their loved ones in Serbia but also across the Western Balkans.

We are all in this pandemic together and we can come out of this pandemic only together; and I hope we come out of it stronger by also underlying what unites us. And what unites us is the European perspective, European perspective for Serbia, European perspective for the countries in the region of the Western Balkans.

As a standing rapporteur for Serbia, I believe we have a balanced report on Serbia. We welcome progress where progress has been made and we are critical where criticism is due. But most of all, what I've tried to push – and we did have difficult negotiations on the report, is a constructive forward looking approach. We cannot dwell on a single case or a single detail. I think we as politicians have the responsibility for pushing a systematic change. A systematic change, not because of us in Europe, only, but because of the people and the countries in the region. This is important, and this is especially important as a message to my and our Serbian partners.

Let me highlight some of the details from the report and some of the key messages. I very much welcome the fact that EU membership continues to be Serbia's strategic goal and strategic priority, and that it is among the priorities of the newly formed government following the elections in June last year.

However, we need to inject more dynamism into the negotiating process. It's a welcome sign that the report by the Commission was discussed in the Narodna Skupština. That was a very good point, but of course what's in the report by the Commission but also in this report – which I hope we adopt successfully in this House today – are the key messages, which we want to discuss in partnership.

We are here to support the reforms and the change, which must take place on the ground. It's important that we remember the basic criteria, the Copenhagen criteria, and the basic criterion is the political criterion. That's why rule of law reforms are essential. That's why the inter-party dialogue within Serbia – which I very much welcome and I welcome the fact that we launched its second phase in our conversation with Ivica Dačić earlier this month – is key for making progress on the quality of political competition, on the quality of electoral conditions and on the quality of democracy in Serbia.

I do hope we have a meaningful conversation with all pro-European forces in the coming months in Serbia, and we can help through our facilitation by Members of the European Parliament and other colleagues, to achieve progress in this area. We need more trust, more good faith, more dialogue, less and fewer conflicts and we also need a calmer atmosphere. Attacks against journalists are unacceptable. Attacks against NGOs are unacceptable.

We will have a debate this afternoon in this House about Malta and I do hope that all of us who are so critical about the situation with journalists in Serbia will be equally critical with respect to Malta, or other countries: my own Slovakia, for instance. This is important. We need to hold everybody to the same standards. This is the message which I want to send to our Serbian partners.

I do want to welcome the progress that's been made in the Pristina in the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. That's something which has been a big achievement in terms of the past year. The EU facilitated, EU-led dialogue. It is important it continues and it is important it brings results. We do need a comprehensive legally binding agreement, which will help us reconcile the past and move forward.

This is important for the European perspective for Serbia and the European perspective of the region. Reconciliation in general is a point which we must underline. And I also want to underline the fact that in public communication it is important to take action following words. This is in particular important when it comes to foreign policy, in the case of Serbia. Serbia has had the lowest alignment rate with our foreign policy.

This must change. The only meaningful European future of Serbia can only take place if Serbia does gradually move ahead in this respect. And I very much hope that we can have much closer ties when it comes to countering the negative influences, also the fight against disinformation with respect to Russia and China.

This is a joint debate, and let me just make a point on Albania very quickly on behalf of my colleague David Lega, who is a shadow rapporteur. We welcome the commitment of Albania to integration and support the convening of the first intergovernmental conference following the complete fulfilment of the conditions set out by the European Council, but the fight against corruption and amendments to the media law are a crucial element.

Let me make one last point on enlargement in general. I think we would deserve a much bigger debate on this issue here. This has been one of the biggest achievements of the European project in the past decades. I think each country would deserve its own debate and I hope we can do this next time we meet and discuss the Western Balkans.

Ana Paula Zacarias, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, first of all I would like to thank the distinguished rapporteurs for their presentations and their reports that are very timely and important for us also in the Council.

And let me begin by recalling the EU's unequivocal support for the European perspective of the Western Balkans region based on fair and rigorous conditionality and on the principles of own merits. The Portuguese Presidency remains committed to strengthening the EU engagement with the region, in particular in these challenging times of the coronavirus crisis.

I would like to recall that the Council, in its conclusions of March 2020, decided to open the accession negotiations with the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania. And I concur with you in welcoming the determination demonstrated by these two countries to advance on the EU reform agenda and to deliver tangible and sustained results.

These decisions pave the way for the important work on the framework for negotiations that is still going on in the Council. The Presidency is determined to continue the work with a view to holding the first intergovernmental conferences and formally opening the accession negotiations as soon as possible.

As you know, in March 2020, the Council endorsed the Commission communication enhancing the accession process. The objective is to make this process more predictable, more credible, dynamic and subject to stronger political steering, based on objective criteria and rigorous positive and negative conditionality and reversibility.

At the same time, it underlines that fundamental, democratic rule-of-law and economic reforms represent the core objective of the accession process. The proper functioning and independence of the democratic institutions are essential elements of well-functioning democracies and a key condition for EU accession. In this regard, let me stress the importance of continued reforms and their implementation by both the Republic of North Macedonia and the Republic of Albania.

Regarding the Republic of North Macedonia in particular, I would like to stress that the Portuguese Presidency, along with the Commission, has been actively supporting all efforts to find pragmatic solutions to pave the way for the approval of the negotiation framework in the Council with a view to holding the first intergovernmental conference as soon as possible. Consistent progress has been achieved, but at the same time, we also urge the authorities and the political parties of North Macedonia to sustain their efforts to strengthen democracy and implement the deeper reforms.

With regard to Albania, constructive political dialogue and cooperation in parliament between the government and the opposition is essential for progress and the sustainability of the reforms. Even after the electoral reform, the political environment remains strongly paralysed and we stress the importance of further strengthening the political dialogue within the country. We also commend Albania for its continuous 100% alignment with EU common foreign and security policy, which serves as a positive example for the entire region.

Now on Serbia, I would like to start by underlining that the President's aim is to hold an intergovernmental conference if possible, still this semester, under the revised enlargement methodology and to advance the EU enlargement process as much as possible. As you well know, the pace of the accession negotiations will continue to depend on Serbia's own progress and reform efforts, in particular in the key areas of the rule of law and in the normalisation of relations with Kosovo. We welcome the fact that the new Serbian Government has made EU integration and the normalisation of relations with Kosovo its priority. Despite some advances, we need to see more progress on the rule of law and we need to see more, faster implementation of the reforms.

It is particularly important that the reforms focus on the independence of the judiciary, the fight against corruption, media freedom, domestic handling of war crimes and the fight against organised crime. It is also important that Serbia fulfils its commitment and steps up its efforts in gradually aligning with EU common foreign and security policy.

We encourage parliamentary political forces in Serbia to engage in the inter-party dialogue, led by the European Parliament, with a view to forging broad cross-party and societal consensus on EU-related reforms. And I really would like to thank the European Parliament for its relentless efforts in this process.

We also welcome the resumption of the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. It's important that it will continue. It's important that we will get some concrete results. We expect Serbia and the new government in Kosovo to engage in this dialogue in good faith and in the spirit of compromise to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding agreement in accordance with international law and the EU *acquis*.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement offers Kosovo an opportunity for sustainable progress and rapprochement with the European Union, in line with the European perspective on the region. At the same time, it creates opportunities for trade and investment.

We share your concerns about the limited progress in reforms in Kosovo and the challenging domestic political context marked by early elections and several changes in government. We certainly call for an acceleration of the reforms and all political actors must now deliver.

We recognise the importance of visa liberalisation for Kosovo's citizens and the Portuguese Presidency will continue to follow this matter.

Finally, I would like to stress, as some of you have mentioned here, that the COVID-19 crisis continues to have a severe negative impact on all our societies and on all our economies, and the EU is providing significant support to the Western Balkans, including to Kosovo. So let me assure you that we remain committed to continuing this important cooperation. Thank you very much for your attention, and thank you, Madam President, for your indulgence.

Olivér Várhelyi, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, I should like to thank the House for its continued strong support for the European perspective of the whole of the Western Balkan region.

As your reports recognise, we have gone through an extremely difficult year. But we have never lost sight of our closest neighbours, providing unprecedented support to the Western Balkans region. For example, the EUR 3.3 billion emergency support package a year ago was also coupled with an economic package of EUR 9 billion only last October, and we hope to raise another EUR 20 billion together with the economic plan.

In addition, we extended a number of initiatives normally reserved for EU Member States to our partners in the region, effectively treating them as future EU members. This is in line with the strong commitment of this Commission to the Western Balkans. The region is a priority for us. Its future lies in the European Union.

Our current focus is on providing vaccines as soon as possible. Unfortunately, this is proving more difficult than we had hoped. But I can assure you that we are leaving no stone unturned to get vaccines to the region. I am very pleased that the COVAX mechanism, to which the EU is one of the biggest contributors, is now delivering the first doses to the Western Balkans. We also continue working with EU Member States and vaccine manufacturers to work to resell vaccine doses to the Western Balkans under the advance purchase agreements for which the EU is making available EUR 70 million, only to the Western Balkans.

In order to be able to continue our important support to the Western Balkans we would need to agree as soon as possible on the future instrument, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) III. I express my hope and expectation to this distinguished House that we will soon be able to reach a compromise confirming to the region that the EU is a credible partner.

Let me now turn to the reports. I thank all rapporteurs for their work and commitment. I will begin with Albania. Let me start by acknowledging the exceptional challenges the country has had to cope with due to the devastating earthquake just before they were hit with the COVID-19 pandemic. Albania's determination in the pursuit of its EU reform agenda is therefore all the more remarkable. This enthusiasm and engagement is something that we need to praise and recognise.

We consider that Albania has fulfilled the conditions set by the Council in March last year for the holding of the first intergovernmental conference (IGC). The implementation of the justice reform has continued. Both the Constitutional Court and the High Court have resumed functioning. The vetting process of the re-evaluation of judges and prosecutors is progressing smoothly. This is an unprecedented reform and has our full support. The fight against corruption, organised crime and money laundering have also continued. The specialised structures against corruption and organised crime have all been established.

As you may have seen, there has been good progress made in law enforcement, where we have witnessed a number of successful large-scale international operations. Of course, we need to stress the importance of continuing the reform effort, particularly with respect to the further vetting and appointment of magistrates, as well as strengthening the track record on law enforcement.

We have commended progress made on the electoral reform in accordance with the 5 June agreement of last year and implementing the recommendations made by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights at the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE/ODIHR). Ahead of the upcoming elections it is important – and I do encourage all political parties to do their best here – to maintain a constructive dialogue, also on all other crucial matters. This will ensure that Albania continues to deliver results and moves steadily on its path towards the EU. The Commission will continue to monitor this thoroughly and, at the same time, it goes without saying that the track record of the efforts against crime and corruption must continue.

Against the background of all these achievements, we do look forward to the adoption of the negotiating framework and to holding the first IGC as soon as possible with Albania. We stand ready to help the Presidency to this end.

Let me now turn to Kosovo. I'm pleased to see that we are very much on the same page on what Kosovo's priorities should be to advance on its European path. The Commission also agrees with the Parliament's position that it is high time to proceed on visa liberalisation for Kosovo's citizens but, as you know, the decision has to be made by the Member States in the Council. We encourage Kosovo's authorities to reach out to Member States to address their remaining concerns. This is a critical moment for Kosovo. The citizens have just made their voices heard through elections and the new leadership will soon be in place.

There are three main messages I would like to make. First, it is essential to complete the setting-up of new institutions. After the formation of the new assembly and the new government this Monday, Kosovo needs to elect a new president without delay. Kosovo cannot afford more political uncertainty in these challenging times.

Second, we welcome the fact that the winning party has put a strong emphasis on issues that are at the core of Kosovo's European agenda, such as the fight against corruption and organised crime, economic and social development and the shift towards a greener economy. With its strong mandate, the new government will have an opportunity to deliver on reforms. The Commission stands ready to support it in its direction. However, we also expect the government to build and take ownership of key existing reform commitments and achievements.

My third message concerns the EU-facilitated dialogue with Serbia. It is essential that the new government of Kosovo commits to continuing the dialogue. This is crucial for the citizens of Kosovo and Serbia, the normalisation of relations between the two and for the perspectives of both. EU Special Representative Lajčák visited the region earlier this month and expects that the next high-level meeting can take place within a reasonable time.

Let me now turn to North Macedonia. Overall, the draft report is in line with the main findings of the Commission report and also the latest developments are fully reflected. As you have rightly pointed out, North Macedonia has maintained a steady pace in its implementation of EU reforms, in particular in key areas of the rule of law, the fight against corruption and organised crime. However, much needs to be done.

The Member States' decision to open accession negotiations last spring was truly historic. We look forward to the adoption of the negotiating framework and the holding of the first intergovernmental conference as soon as possible, hopefully still under this Presidency. In the meantime, it is important that both the government and the opposition continue to deliver on EU-related reforms, in particular with regard to the fundamentals. As you know, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations form an essential part of the country's process of moving towards the EU. It is important that bilateral agreements, including the Prespa agreement with Greece and the Treaty on good neighbourly relations with Bulgaria, continue to be implemented in good faith by all parties.

At such a pivotal moment, I encourage both Skopje and Sofia to redouble their efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution to the pending bilateral issues. I would like to echo your report by encouraging all parties to act in a constructive manner and to refrain from statements or actions that might undermine the EU's wider interests. This House has shown its continued dedication to improve the democratic processes in North Macedonia and to support the country's EU perspective, including through the Jean Monnet dialogue. I count on you to remain engaged and to send common messages of encouragement to North Macedonia.

Lastly, let me turn to Serbia. I welcome the report as an encouragement for Serbia to accelerate on its path to the EU accession. The report acknowledges the accomplishments while, of course, much more still needs to be done. I'm glad that the Joint Parliamentary Committee with Serbia has recently been relaunched, the inter-party dialogue with the Serbian Parliament and the European Commission, of course, strongly supports this dialogue as a crucial forum for cross-party debates.

On the accession negotiations with Serbia, last week I presented to the Council a proposal of how the revised methodology could be applied both to Montenegro and Serbia. I look forward to the Member States deciding soon and bringing this forward. We need to encourage the country to remain fully engaged on its EU path. This is key for the stability of the region. We now have the opportunity to speed up the country's accession negotiations provided that key EU-related reforms are implemented as an urgent priority. This is also an opportunity to make progress in the EU-facilitated dialogue with Pristina towards a comprehensive, legally binding agreement. We must build on the commitment of the new government in Belgrade. We need to engage intensively with the authorities in these three interconnected objectives: bring forward reforms; bring forward accession negotiations and successfully conclude the dialogue with Pristina.

We have already seen commitment in a number of crucial areas, such as kicking off the second phase of the inter-party dialogue, launching the constitutional reform by submitting the initiative to change the constitution in the area of the judiciary to the parliament, and the government's adoption of the action plan of the new media strategy.

Of course, much more still needs to be done. Our priority now is to work with the authorities to help them translate these steps into tangible progress on the ground. We're grateful for the continued support of Members of the European Parliament in passing these messages. Whatever the difficulties, Serbia should not lose sight of its EU membership goal. It should keep focusing on fundamental reforms with continued EU support. With this, I thank you very much for your attention.

Андрей Ковачев, от името на групата PPE. – Г-жо Председател, г-н Комисар, уважаеми колеги, ние сме за разширяването, защото сме убедени, че това е най-добрият начин по най-бързия начин да се преодолеят ужасните последици от комунизма. Все още в сегашната Република Северна Македония се дискриминира всеки, който открито заяви своята българска идентичност и произход. Историческата истина е табу, а който открито я споделя, бива подлаган на натиск, обиди и дискриминация.

Проблемът не е културно-исторически спор, а потъпкване на основни демократични права от една страна кандидат, като правото на свободно изразяване без страх от негативни последици. Над 130 000 са българските граждани по произход в Република Северна Македония, като част от българската историческа общност, която до идването на Титовия режим представлява мнозинство там. Тези хора живеят в страх, те са притискани да не се впишат като българи по време на предстоящото преброяване. Последен пример е представителят на конкурса Евровизия. Неговият единствен грях беше, че сподели своя български произход. Последва вълна от обиди, заплахи и опити за отстраняването му от конкурса. „Да“ на разширяването към всички страни от Западните Балкани, „Не“ на лъжите, омразата и дискриминацията.

Colleagues especially from the Greens and from the Socialists: please wake up and open your eyes.

I see colleague Fajon is after me. Is it for you a historical provocation towards the Slovenian people if I say something about the atrocities of the Tito's Communists, especially, for example, in Huda Jama?

Г-жо Председател, г-н Комисар, уважаеми колеги, ние сме за разширяването, защото сме убедени, че това е най-добрият начин по най-бързия начин да се преодолеят ужасните последици от комунизма. Все още в сегашната Република Северна Македония се дискриминира всеки, който открито заяви своята българска идентичност и произход. Историческата истина е табу, а който открито я споделя, бива подлаган на натиск, обиди и дискриминация.

Проблемът не е културно-исторически спор, а потъпкване на основни демократични права от една страна кандидат, като правото на свободно изразяване без страх от негативни последици. Над 1 30 000 са българските граждани по произход в Република Северна Македония като част от българската историческа общност, която до идването на Титовия режим представлява мнозинство там. Тези хора живеят в страх, те са притискани да не се впишат като българи по време на предстоящото преброяване. Последен пример е представителят на конкурса Евровизия. Неговият единствен грях беше, че сподели своя български произход. Последва вълна от обиди, заплахи и опити за отстраняването му от конкурса. „Да“ на разширяването към всички страни от Западните Балкани, „не“ на лъжите, омразата и дискриминацията.

Tanja Fajon, *v imenu skupine S&D*. – Gospa predsedujoča, širitvena politika je temelj stabilne in povezane Evrope. Ni več časa za izgovore, za opravičila, za politično izsiljevanje, neiskrenost, neizpolnjevanje obljub.

Države Zahodnega Balkana so del Evrope in skupaj nosimo odgovornost za napredek in razvoj naše celine. Preveč razočaranj smo doživeli na eni in na drugi strani v širitvenem procesu.

In brez temeljitega preskoka v zavedanju, da potrebujemo drug drugega, nam bo spodletelo in škodo bodo čutili državljani, posebej mladi ljudje, ki danes množično zapuščajo Zahodni Balkan.

Poročila, o katerih danes razpravljamo, so uravnotežen in verodostojen pregled dveletnega dela v štirih državah. Vse so dosegle napredek na področju pravne države, temeljnih pravic, svobodnih medijev, v boju proti korupciji, a čaka jih še veliko dela.

In danes mora biti naše sporočilo jasno: podpiramo države na njihovi poti v Evropsko unijo, a hkrati ne bomo pristali na popuščanje, posebej ko gre za spoštovanje vladavine prava in demokracije.

Vlade Evropske unije danes vnovič pozivam, naj izpolnijo obljubo in odprejo pristopna pogajanja za Albanijo in Severno Makedonijo.

Državi sta izpolnili pogoje. Bolgarski veto Severni Makedoniji je neodgovoren. Enostranski interesi, volilni koledar nimajo nič skupnega s kriteriji, ki jih mora država izpolniti. Zato pozivam, naj Bolgarija umakne veto.

Zdaj je na preizkušnji verodostojnost Evropske unije. Kriza, ki je danes na obzorju, bo ogrozila tudi širitveni proces za ostale države.

Državam Zahodnega Balkana danes želim predvsem srečno na njihovi poti, nam pa veliko modrosti in poguma, da jim pri tem pomagamo.

Michal Šimečka, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Madam President, I'll focus on the progress report on Albania, but many of the key messages are in fact wider in application and relate to the Western Balkans as a whole. And the key message from the European Parliament on Albania, but also more generally, is that despite all the difficulties, despite the pandemic, the European Union and this Parliament specifically remains absolutely committed to moving forward with the accession negotiations with respect to Albania, and convening that very important first intergovernmental conference as soon as possible.

Now as elsewhere, in Albania obviously the challenges are obvious and must be addressed. In the case of Albania, its democracy is in dire need of consolidation and stability and the country needs to move beyond the climate of constant political conflict and division that we've seen in recent years. And here the upcoming parliamentary elections in April, as was said by the Commissioner, will be a crucial test.

Whoever wins, there can be absolutely no doubt that elections are organised in a free and fair fashion and in accordance with the best international practices. Anything short of that will sow distrust of democratic institutions, prolonged political conflict and damage Albania's accession trajectory.

And second, and this is again of a more general nature and it has been mentioned by the Commissioner, the justice sector and reforms in the rule of law must be of the highest priority to the next government, especially after what we are experiencing in the EU that some Member States after accession are, we say, undermining the rule of law, checks and balances. Therefore, it is absolutely clear and right that compliance when it comes to rule of law will become more stringent than ever when it comes to the enlargement countries.

The European Union, and this Parliament in particular, will continue to support Albania and all the other states on the European path.

Thierry Mariani, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Madame la Présidente, la politique européenne à l'égard des Balkans occidentaux peut se résumer en deux mots: soumission et hypocrisie.

La soumission, d'abord, car l'Union européenne ne poursuit pas l'intérêt de ses États membres dans les Balkans; elle sert les intérêts de l'OTAN. L'hypocrisie, car les différents rapports prétendent que le Kosovo a vocation à intégrer l'Union européenne, ou que l'Albanie est sur le point de le faire, alors que chacun sait que cela n'est ni une prérogative du Parlement européen, ni une volonté de l'intégralité des États membres.

Qu'on le dise clairement: les Français subissent déjà les effets déplorables du précédent élargissement; ils n'ont aucune envie de voir les mêmes erreurs se répéter. Nous voyons bien que ces élargissements ne tiennent pas leurs promesses: ils devaient densifier notre stature internationale, ils nous rendent encore plus dépendants de Washington; ils devaient prévenir l'avènement de nouveaux conflits, ils poussent sans cesse à la provocation avec Moscou; ils devaient renforcer notre coopération pratique, la gestion calamiteuse de la crise du COVID démontre l'inverse.

L'Albanie ne doit pas intégrer l'Union européenne. Elle exporte ses mafias jusqu'au cœur des campagnes françaises. Elle a signé des accords d'extradition avec le régime d'Erdoğan. Elle ne cache même plus ses inclinaisons hégémoniques, aux dépens de populations serbes constamment discriminées par la communauté internationale. L'Albanie constitue aujourd'hui une zone de confluence des influences étrangères les plus dangereuses pour la sécurité des nations.

Le débat public donnera bientôt en France l'occasion à chacun de clarifier sa position sur cette question, mais je pense que les Français y sont très majoritairement opposés et nous ne céderons pas au jeu de couloir habituel sur ces sujets. Sortons de l'hypocrisie et affirmons-le: non à l'élargissement, non à l'entrée de l'Albanie, cheval de Troie de la Turquie dans l'Union européenne.

VORSITZ: KATARINA BARLEY

Vizepräsidentin

Thomas Waitz, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin! Ich beziehe mich auf den Albanien-Bericht, und zuerst möchte ich für die gute Zusammenarbeit und für die kooperative Stimmung bei der Erstellung des Berichts danken.

Wir haben in dem Bericht festgehalten, dass wir die Justizreformen, die in dieser Form und in dieser Dramatik wohl keinen Vergleich zu scheuen haben, willkommen heißen. Wir haben die Fortschritte in der Korruptionsbekämpfung gesehen und haben diese in dem Bericht auch entsprechend erwähnt.

Aber natürlich bleibt viel zu tun beim Kampf gegen die organisierte Kriminalität, bei dem Einsatz für Medienfreiheit in Albanien, aber auch bei der Frage der Unterstützung zum Beispiel von Frauen, die Opfer von häuslicher Gewalt geworden sind. Es reicht hier nicht, wenn die richtigen Gesetze verabschiedet werden, sondern es muss dafür Sorge getragen werden, dass die Behörden auch fähig sind, entsprechend auf solche Fälle zu reagieren und Frauen in diesem Zusammenhang Sicherheit zu bieten.

Wir brauchen eine weitere Modernisierung der öffentlichen Verwaltung, keine Frage. Albanien ist ein Land mit einem wunderbaren kulturellen Erbe, mit reichhaltigen historischen Gütern, mit einer wunderbaren Natur, mit Naturschätzen, die man an anderen Orten Europas heute leider vergeblich sucht. Wir heißen die Ankündigung des Ministerpräsidenten Edi Rama willkommen – zur geplanten Errichtung des ersten Wildfluss-Nationalparks Europas, an der Vjosa: 300 Kilometer unverbauter Fluss, ein Juwel für die Arterhaltung, ein Juwel für die Biodiversität, etwas, was in die Strategie des *Green Deals* passt. Und wir hoffen, dass wir von der Seite der Europäischen Union über IPA-III-Mittel und andere Finanzmittel diese Entwicklung unterstützen können.

Aber eines ist klar: Wir sollten unseren Ankündigungen auch Folge leisten und Beitrittsverhandlungen mit Albanien ehestmöglich beginnen.

Ангел Джамбазки, *от името на групата ECR*. – Г-н Председател, уважаеми колеги, днес в Република Северна Македония се извършва драстично нарушаване на човешките права, на основното човешко право на самоопределение. Днес в Македония един певец, Гарванлиев, получи повече от 400 смъртни заплахи, само защото се определи като българин. Днес в Македония 50 човека са привикани от драстичната бивша югославска тайна полиция, за да дадат обяснения защо са купили български книги. Днес в Република Северна Македония се горят български знамена, уважаеми колеги. Днес в Република Северна Македония се привикват хора, защото са се самоопределили като българи. Днес в Република Северна Македония има не повече от 130 хиляди човека, които са се самоопределили като българи и които нямат право да направят това свое самоопределение на предстоящото преброяване на населението.

Това, уважаеми, е Северна Корея. Това се случва не в Африка, това се случва не в Азия, това се случва не някъде по света. Това драстично нарушаване на основно човешко право се случва в Европа, под носа ви и затова съм възмутен от поведението на част от нашите колеги, главно от групата на социалистите и зелените, които се правят, че не забелязват тези драстични нарушения на човешките права, а напротив – се опитват да стоварят някаква хипотетична вина върху българското правителство за това, че защитава историческата истина.

Да, Гоце Делчев е българин, да, Иван Михайлов е българин, да, Тодор Александров е българин, да, Братя Миладинови са българи и те винаги са се самоопределяли като такива. И да, днес в Македония живеят стотици хиляди граждани, които се самоопределят като българи и затова, колеги, не си позволявайте лицемерието да се опитвате да се правите, че не виждате това драстично нарушаване на правата им. И не си позволявайте да налагате двойни стандарти, това просто не може и няма да се случва, защото противоречи на всякаква идея за Европейски съюз, защото противоречи на всичките ви идеи за това как трябва да се защитават правата на всяко едно човешко същество на самоопределение. И това, пак казвам, се случва в Европа. Не можете да промените факта, че до 1944 г. Македония е българска и тя ще остане такава.

Στέλιος Κούλογλου, *εξ ονόματος της ομάδας The Left*. – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, θα μιλήσω στα ελληνικά γιατί σήμερα είναι μια πολύ σημαντική μέρα για την Ελλάδα: είναι τα 200 χρόνια από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση, η οποία ήταν η αρχή του τέλους της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας στα Βαλκάνια, αλλά και η αρχή της ευρωπαϊκής αλληλεγγύης, γιατί η επανάσταση νίκησε χάρη, φυσικά, στον ηρωισμό των εξεγερμένων, αλλά και χάρη στην ευρωπαϊκή αλληλεγγύη που εκφράστηκε τότε από τις δημοκρατικές δυνάμεις και τους δημοκρατικούς ανθρώπους της Ευρώπης.

Ήδη, όμως, από εκείνα τα χρόνια και μέχρι σήμερα, υπήρχε ένας «ιός», για να χρησιμοποιήσω έναν όρο, ο «ιός των Βαλκανίων», που σήμαινε πολέμους και εθνικές συγκρούσεις. Συνέχιστηκε μέσα στα χρόνια και μέσα στην ιστορία: πρόσφατα είχαμε τον καταστροφικό πόλεμο της Γιουγκοσλαβίας την περίοδο 1991-1995, και βέβαια τον καταστροφικό βομβαρδισμό το 1999 της Σερβίας, που τότε ανήκε στη Γιουγκοσλαβία.

Σήμερα, ακόμα υπάρχουν τέτοιοι «ιοί»: υπάρχουν εθνικές διαμάχες, εδαφικά προβλήματα και διενέξεις, προβλήματα σεβασμού των μειονοτήτων, του κράτους δικαίου, προβλήματα καταπολέμησης της διαφθοράς σε όλα τα υποψήφια κράτη μέλη. Υπάρχουν σοβαρά ζητήματα, υπάρχουν και λιγότερο σοβαρά, όπως η Eurovision και ποιος θα είναι ο τραγουδιστής στη Eurovision· αλλά υπάρχει και ένα αντίδοτο, ένα φάρμακο σε όλα αυτά.

Το φάρμακο, το εμβόλιο απέναντι στον «ιό των Βαλκανίων» είναι το πνεύμα της Συμφωνίας των Πρεσπών. Χάρη στη Συμφωνία των Πρεσπών και στο κουράγιο και το θάρρος που έδειξαν οι ηγέτες της Ελλάδας και της Βόρειας Μακεδονίας, έχουμε μια συμφωνία που μπορεί να αποτελέσει το μοντέλο, τον τρόπο επίλυσης και το φάρμακο για τον εθνικισμό στα Βαλκάνια που, δυστυχώς, συνεχίζεται ακόμη.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor Commissario, sono estremamente preoccupato perché ho la forte sensazione che l'Unione europea stia perdendo i Balcani occidentali.

Lo slancio dato dalla decisione del Consiglio di aprire i negoziati con l'Albania e la Macedonia del Nord si è schiantato sul vedo bulgaro e la pandemia COVID ha esacerbato alcuni trend geopolitici già in atto, amplificando, anche a causa della geopolitica dei vaccini e delle infrastrutture, il ruolo di Cina, Russia, Turchia ed Emirati Arabi, pronti a sfruttare il vuoto politico, o quantomeno percepito dai nostri *partners*, e lasciato proprio da noi, dall'UE.

Serve un cambio di passo, servono azioni decise perché questa disaffezione non diventi anche una vera e propria alienazione. È importante valorizzare i passi in avanti compiuti da Serbia, Albania, Macedonia del Nord e Kosovo e trasformarli in opportunità, piuttosto che soffermarsi solo ed esclusivamente sulle mancanze.

Serve che si sblocchi quanto prima la negoziazione di Albania e Macedonia del Nord con l'organizzazione delle relative conferenze intergovernative ed è fondamentale che tutti i paesi dei Balcani occidentali siano veramente e seriamente coinvolti in quell'importante momento di riflessione che ci accingiamo ad affrontare: la Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa, un progetto europeo del quale devono inequivocabilmente tornare a sentire di far pienamente parte. E tutto questo dipende anche da noi.

Christian Sagartz (PPE). – Sehr geehrte Frau Präsidentin, geschätzte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Nordmazedonien hat zweifelsfrei in den letzten Jahren tiefgreifende Reformen konsequent umgesetzt, um Teil der Europäischen Union zu werden.

Dabei wurden nicht nur Gesetzesänderungen beschlossen, sondern teils tiefgreifende Schritte gesetzt. Das Land hat seine Verfassung verändert. Ja, es hat sogar seinen Namen geändert, um Teil dieser Europäischen Gemeinschaft zu werden, und das waren harte – sehr harte – Schritte, um Teil der Gemeinschaft zu werden. Und natürlich möchte ich auch hier nicht verhehlen: Es gibt weiterhin Reformbedarf. Das betrifft die Korruptionsbekämpfung, aber auch die Stärkung einer unabhängigen Justiz.

Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass weiterhin ein Wille zur Veränderung gegeben ist und dass dieses Tempo bei den Reformen gehalten werden kann. Man darf aber festhalten: Nordmazedonien hat seine Aufgaben abgearbeitet. Es liegt an der Europäischen Union, jetzt unsererseits ihre und unsere Aufgaben zu erledigen. Wenn wir in dieser Region glaubwürdig bleiben wollen, dann ist das höchste Zeit.

Zu den Bedenken meiner bulgarischen Kollegen möchte ich ganz klar Stellung nehmen: Ich verstehe diese Sorgen, und ich appelliere an beide Länder, bei der Wortwahl abzurüsten und bei den Differenzen die gemeinsame Zukunft der Region in den Mittelpunkt zu stellen. Drohungen und politische Propaganda stehen im krassen Widerspruch zu den Werten unserer Europäischen Union.

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar! Der Westbalkan steht ganz oben auf der EU-Agenda. Und dort muss er auch ganz oben stehen, denn die EU-Perspektive ist ein ganz, ganz wichtiges Signal an die Menschen im Westbalkan. Aber: Wir müssen auch den EU-Mitgliedstaaten einmal ein klares Signal schicken, dass sie nicht weiter verschleppen und blockieren dürfen – zumindest einzelnen Ländern, die das leider tun.

Ein paar Worte zur Situation im Kosovo: Die Visaliberalisierung ist hier das allerwichtigste Thema. Denn gerade die junge Generation im Kosovo erwartet sich, dass sie auch gleichberechtigter Teil der Europäischen Union, der europäischen Idee sein kann. Albin Kurti, der neue Regierungschef im Kosovo, braucht die Unterstützung für seine Reformen, die Perspektive geben sollen, die die soziale Entwicklung in dem Land organisieren – und aber auch den Kampf gegen Korruption. Gerade politische Stabilität ist eine Voraussetzung für eine erfolgreiche Zukunft des Landes, aber auch für einen erfolgreichen Dialog mit Belgrad. Nationalistische Töne sind hier – wie immer übrigens – fehl am Platz.

Ein Satz auch noch zu den Entwicklungen in Nordmazedonien: Zoran Zaev, der Regierungschef der Republik Nordmazedonien, hat mit den Nachbarländern und in seinem eigenen Land extrem viel weitergebracht – und gerade diese Reformen brauchen unsere Unterstützung. Ich halte die Blockade, die die Regierung in Sofia gerade inszeniert, für fundamental falsch. Es ist so jammerschade, dass damit so viele Chancen, die Bulgarien, Nordmazedonien, die Europa insgesamt haben könnte, verspielt werden.

Es braucht – und das ist mein Appell – gemeinsame Lösungen. Dieses Hervorziehen von Geschichte darf nicht der Parameter für die Zukunft sein. Unsere Zukunft – auch am Balkan – muss eine gemeinsame Zukunft sein, und daran müssen wir mit aller Kraft arbeiten und nicht blockieren.

Klemen Grošelj (Renew). – Gospa predsedujoča, kot del Zahodnega Balkana je Srbija in tudi celotna regija na pomembni prelomnici. Od odločitev in dejanj, sprejetih v času po epidemiji COVID-19, bo odvisna prihodnost tako regije kot tudi držav v njej.

Regija kljub težkim bremenom preteklosti sodi in je del Evrope. Nekako bi lahko rekli, članstvo v evropskih evroatlantskih integracijah je njen naravni razvojni cilj. Seveda pa to ne pomeni, da bo pot do tega cilja zaradi tega lažja ali enostavnejša.

Proces širitve EU je zahteven in je zahteven bil za vse današnje članice, saj zahteva od držav in njenih družb globoke družbene, politične in gospodarske reforme in spremembe.

Zato je ključni izziv, ki je pred današnjo Srbijo, predvsem, kako ponotranjiti, da vključevanje v EU in sam pogajalski proces nista tehnično-mehanična, ampak da zahtevata predvsem ponotranjenje ključnih političnih, gospodarskih in širših družbenih sprememb in reform.

Gre za reforme, ki niso namenjene samo članstvu v EU, ampak so predvsem potrebne za dvig blagostanja in splošne dobrobiti državljanov in državljanek Srbije. Samo s temi reformami bo Srbija lahko v celoti in v polnosti izkoristila prednosti članstva, potem ko bo enkrat polnopravna članica.

Pri tem se je potrebno zavedati, da brez političnih reform ne bo trajnega gospodarskega uspeha. Polnokrvna moderna demokracija, utemeljena na kulturi dialoga, spoštovanju temeljnih vrednot, kot so vladavina prava, svoboda medijev, človekove in državljske pravice, so temelji, na katerih se lahko države in družbe socialno, pravno in gospodarsko razcvetijo.

Ne gre torej za vprašanje tehničnega sprejemanja zakonodaje, ampak je ključnega pomena njeno dejansko udejanjanje v vsakdanjem življenju. Zato v bistvu pri tem ne gre za nikakršne zahteve EU, ampak za potrebe same Srbije.

Pri tem žal ni bližnjic, ampak je potrebno trdo delo in naporno iskanje širokega političnega in družbenega konsenza. Seveda obstajajo vabljive bližnjice, ki pa se ... *(Predsedujoča je prekinila govorca.)*

Jérôme Rivière (ID). – Madame la Présidente, mes chers collègues, s'il est un mal qui frappe cette assemblée et les institutions de l'Union européenne, c'est bien celui de l'aveuglement. Dans votre volonté frénétique d'élargir l'Union européenne aux pays des Balkans, volonté fédéraliste de soumission à l'OTAN, qui n'en demandait pas tant, vous oubliez l'un des dangers qui menacent notre civilisation.

Avant tout, comment passer sous silence le fait que le Kosovo n'est pas un pays reconnu par l'ensemble de la communauté internationale, ni même par toute l'Union européenne? En effet, cinq États membres, à savoir l'Espagne, la Grèce, Chypre, la Slovaquie et la Roumanie, ne reconnaissent pas le Kosovo.

Oubliées, pour la France, les promesses de campagne contre l'adhésion des Balkans à l'Union européenne faites par les députés français macronistes de Renew. Quel mensonge aux électeurs! Mais les Français s'en aperçoivent et sanctionneront ces *serial* menteurs. Plus largement, oubliées la corruption et la criminalité qui règnent dans les Balkans, qui seront autant de problèmes pour l'Union européenne. Oubliées les racines de ces peuples, arrachés à leur terre historique et parfois massacrés, comme le furent les Serbes. Oubliée l'islamisation rampante et agressive qui gangrène les pays instrumentalisés par la Turquie, adversaire déclaré des nations européennes. Face à la Turquie, je pense à la Grèce, qui fête aujourd'hui le 200e anniversaire de son indépendance, conquise à l'époque sur les Ottomans, avec l'aide notamment de la France. Oublié, enfin, le refus des peuples européens de ce projet qui broie les identités et écrase les classes moyennes.

La seule réponse aux problèmes que vous multipliez serait de prôner toujours plus d'Europe, toujours moins de frontières et finalement toujours plus de migrants. Telle la grenouille qui veut se faire aussi grosse que le bœuf, votre politique d'élargissement conduira cette Union européenne à la fin funeste de la fable de La Fontaine. Craignez que le Brexit n'en soit qu'un signe avant-coureur.

Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, already 12 years ago the Commission recommended to start the negotiations with North Macedonia and since then the country has done a tremendous job regarding EU integration. I would like to thank the rapporteur and my shadow rapporteurs for their great cooperation.

The report rightly commends North Macedonian authorities for the deep and many, and sometimes painful, reforms and it encourages them to further improve the rule of law and anti-corruption policies, to support civil society, strengthen women's rights and combat discrimination of minorities, including LGBTIQ, Roma and also the Bulgarian minority.

North Macedonia of course has to work on regional cooperation and resolving bilateral disputes, and the appointment of a special envoy to Bulgaria is a sign of willingness, but a solution requires cooperation from both sides. However, this bilateral conflict which is unfortunately ongoing cannot stand in the way of keeping our promise by kicking off the negotiations talk without further delay.

North Macedonian citizens have waited long enough. They deserve that we deliver. Let us grant them perspective. Let us prove our credibility.

Hermann Tertsch (ECR). – Señora presidenta, los Balcanes tienen más historia de la que pueden digerir. Esto lo decía Bismarck, creo, y, desde luego, vuelve a verse ahora, que estamos en un momento en el que se están bloqueando unos pasos absolutamente necesarios. Porque, mientras tenemos un agujero negro en los Balcanes Occidentales, tenemos una serie de potencias extranjeras que están entrando allí y cubriendo lo que debíamos haber cubierto nosotros hace tiempo. Tenemos a China, tenemos a Rusia y tenemos a Turquía dentro activamente, tomando posiciones, tomando las economías y tomando una fuerza que nos va a resultar después en una seria preocupación de seguridad.

Por eso, hay que hacer un llamamiento a la generosidad por parte de todos, a superar, por parte de todos -como digo, los cuatro candidatos y los vecinos-, esas diferencias porque necesitamos cohesión, necesitamos seguridad y necesitamos que ese agujero negro deje de existir.

Dorien Rookmaker (NI). – Madam President, I believe that the enlargement strategy that takes into account the benefits, costs and risks of all parties involved, facilitates prosperity and stability in the region, defends the geopolitical interests of the EU.

I am especially addressing my fellow members of the opposition on the left, right and in the back of this Parliament. We need our neighbouring countries to help us contain the ever-closer union aspirations of the leading parties in Parliament, especially when the EU terminates the veto right of Member States in the near future. Certain Member States are blocking the entrance into the EU of Albania, Kosovo and North Macedonia, which will only continue to create resentment, giving leeway to China and Russia.

I urge the Member States and politicians that are blocking this process to reconsider their stance. The EU needs to act fast and decisively if it wants to remain a credible factor in the Western Balkans.

Marion Walsmann (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Zukunft von Nordmazedonien und des westlichen Balkans liegt in der Europäischen Union. In Zeiten der Unsicherheit, die durch diese verheerende Pandemie verursacht sind, verhilft eine europäische Perspektive diesen Ländern zu mehr Stabilität.

Als stellvertretende Vorsitzende der Delegation EU-Nordmazedonien und Verhandlungsführerin des Jean-Monnet-Dialogs bin ich der Meinung, dass die Fortsetzung dieses politischen Dialogs in der *Sobranie* essenziell ist. Das ist das richtige Instrument zur Stärkung der demokratischen Kultur und des demokratischen Handelns. Dadurch wird ein gesundes politisches Umfeld für die notwendigen Reformen und die Umsetzung der EU-Vorgaben geschaffen.

Lassen Sie uns die Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas als Gelegenheit nutzen, um Nordmazedonien und den westlichen Balkan mit ins Boot zu holen, indem wir sie in die Debatte einbeziehen. Wenn wir über die Zukunft Europas sprechen, dann müssen wir auch über die Zukunft des westlichen Balkans sprechen.

Tonino Picula (S&D). – Madam President, today we are sending once again a clear message of support for countries wishing to join the European Union. The future of Western Balkans remains within a united European Union and we encourage them to continue the path of reforms towards European Union laws, standards and values. We in the S&D Group particularly insist that all countries in the region uphold fundamental rights and the rule of law, defend the freedom of media and fight corruption. We are and we will remain a reliable voice for enlargement in this House, but we will not compromise on these issues.

At the same time, the European Union should live up to its commitments, and therefore preserve its credibility, which has been under pressure during the ongoing pandemic and because of persistent blockage in the Council. Accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania, as well as a visa-free regime for Kosovo, should be implemented without delay. Upholding our values means not opening new chapters with Serbia without clear progress related to democratic standards, minority rights and fundamental freedoms.

To conclude, our engagement and commitment to the European future of the Western Balkans should remain a priority for the Union, not just side policy. In the turbulent times we are living in, we must keep in mind that enlargement is the most effective foreign policy instrument the European Union has to promote our values of peace, democracy, fairness and prosperity.

Bernhard Zimniok (ID). – Frau Präsidentin, werte Kollegen! Die EU-Erweiterung auf dem Westbalkan dürfte heute nicht zur Debatte stehen. Der Balkan ist ein höchst fragiles Gebilde, auf dem die Feindseligkeiten lediglich ruhen und jeden Moment wieder ausbrechen können. Sich dieses zusätzliche Konfliktpotenzial in die EU zu holen, ist purer Wahnsinn. Aber auch darüber hinaus gibt es unzählige Gründe gegen diese erneute Erweiterung.

Die EU hat so viele hausgemachte und ungelöste Probleme, denen sie sich zunächst einmal widmen müsste. Die Westbalkanländer haben – trotz aller Finanzhilfen – nach wie vor bisher keine kompatiblen Rechtssysteme, die Korruption ist nach wie vor vorherrschend, und die Justiz ist nicht unabhängig. Millionen von illegalen Migranten wurden einfach in die EU durchgewunken. Laut den Vereinten Nationen ist der Balkan darüber hinaus noch der Hauptlieferant für alle Schusswaffen oder illegalen Schusswaffen in Europa.

Das ist alles nur die Spitze des Eisbergs. Die EU sollte sich deshalb dringend vorrangig der Bewältigung ihrer eigenen Probleme widmen, statt sich noch weitere aufzuhalsen.

Romeo Franz (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich möchte mich bei meiner Kollegin für den exzellenten Bericht bedanken. Das Kosovo muss für seine Bestrebungen, in Zukunft ein EU-Mitglied zu werden, noch sehr viele Aufgaben erledigen. Dazu gehört natürlich auch, wie das Land mit seinen Minderheiten wie den Aschkali, den Roma und anderen umgeht und inwieweit es eine Inklusion und eine gleichberechtigte Teilhabe in allen Lebensbereichen für diese Menschen ermöglichen wird.

Die neue Kurti-Regierung wird sich nicht zuletzt auch in dieser Frage messen lassen. Aber die Bringschuld darf nicht nur einseitig gesehen werden – auch die EU muss jetzt bei der Visaliberalisierung liefern. Es kann nicht sein, dass das Kosovo als einziges Land auf dem Westbalkan von dieser Liberalisierung ausgenommen bleibt, obwohl es alle Bedingungen seit 2018 erfüllt hat. Wenn die EU nicht ihre Glaubwürdigkeit verlieren möchte und zur Stabilität des Kosovo beitragen möchte, muss sie diesbezüglich nun handeln. Gerade für die jungen Menschen wäre die Visabefreiung ein wichtiger Fortschritt.

Ivan Vilibor Sinčić (NI). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, govoreći o zemljama jugoistočne Europe na njihovom putu u Europsku uniju pokazalo se jasno, u ovoj krizi, da im Europa sve manje ima za ponuditi.

Mogu li im se ponuditi demokratski standardi nakon što Europa ide u ubranu proceduru donošenja COVID putovnice, bez javne rasprave. Nažalost, vidio sam mnogo toga u hrvatskom parlamentu. Može li se ponuditi sloboda kretanja Schengena nakon uvođenja COVID putovnice, koja je sada minirana? To je opasan presedan koji može otići u diskriminaciju i segregaciju, jesu li to te europske vrijednosti? Već sada se u upravljanju ovom krizom, došlo do ozbiljnog potkopavanja ljudskih prava. Mogu li se tim zemljama ponoviti europski standardi, ako da, zašto onda Europska medicinska agencija odobrava cjepiva bez ikakvih nezavisnih studija, bez ikakvog znanja o dugoročnim efektima? Nažalost, to ono što danas vidimo.

U tom kontekstu odluka Ustavnog suda recimo Bosne i Hercegovine iz te jugoistočne Europe da je poštenje maski neustavno je napredna za brojne evropske odluke i institucije.

Александър Александров Йорданов (PPE). – Г-жо Председател, г-н Комисар, Република Северна Македонија не изпълнява договора с България и продължава антибългарската кампания. Все още не е осъден геноцидът над българите по време на комунистическия режим, продължава политиката на смяна на идентичността на починали българи, дейци на културата и образованието, борци за свобода, както и кражбата на българското културно историческо наследство. Това, г-н Кючюк, г-н Комисар, са престъпления, а не спор за историята.

В Скопие не се говори македонски език, а език на омразата срещу българите и България. Предлаганото от социалисти и зелени изменение II е скандално и обидно за България. Колеги, не го подкрепяйте, не обиждате моята страна. Уважаеми колеги, България желае да приемем Република Северна Македонија в Европейския съюз, но след като тази страна се ваксинара срещу комунистическия корона вирус от миналото.

Δημήτρης Παπαδάκης (S&D). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, ως Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο οφείλουμε να στείλουμε τα σωστά μηνύματα προς όλες τις κατευθύνσεις και ιδιαίτερα προς τον λαό της Σερβίας. Θέλω να τονίσω ότι η ευρωπαϊκή προοπτική της χώρας θα αλλάξει τα μέχρι σήμερα δεδομένα, θα επηρεάσει θετικά τον τρόπο με τον οποίο οι πολιτικοί πολιτεύονται και συμπεριφέρονται στο εσωτερικό της χώρας και θα δώσει ελπίδα για ένα καλύτερο μέλλον σε όλους τους πολίτες της.

Είναι πολύ σημαντικό οι μεταρρυθμίσεις στη Σερβία να προωθηθούν με διαφάνεια και διάλογο με όλους τους ενδιαφερομένους, με εμπλοκή όλων των πολιτικών δυνάμεων της χώρας και της κοινωνίας των πολιτών. Με αυτό τον τρόπο, θα επέλθουν θετικές αλλαγές στην καθημερινότητα όλων των κατοίκων της χώρας, εξασφαλίζοντας νέες θέσεις εργασίας, με την απαραίτητη προστασία για τους μη προνομιούχους της κοινωνίας. Αυτό είναι πολύ σημαντικό, κυρίως για τη νεολαία, έτσι ώστε να παραμείνει στη χώρα και να πιστέψει σε ένα καλύτερο μέλλον. Οι περαιτέρω προοδευτικές μεταρρυθμίσεις στη Σερβία θα τη φέρουν ακόμη πιο κοντά στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, με αποτέλεσμα να συνεχιστεί απρόσκοπτα η ενταξιακή της πορεία.

Αναγνωρίζω ότι οι δυσκολίες παραμένουν και χρειάζεται ακόμη πολλή δουλειά και έμπρακτη εφαρμογή των συμφωνηθέντων. Ως Προοδευτική Συμμαχία Σοσιαλιστών και Δημοκρατών, θα συνεχίσουμε να αγωνιζόμαστε για τη δημοκρατική λογοδοσία, το κράτος δικαίου, την ελευθερία των μέσων ενημέρωσης, την καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς, και θα συνεχίσουμε να προασπίζόμαστε τη διασφάλιση και εφαρμογή των θεμελιωδών ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων. Καταληκτικά, υποστηρίζω πλήρως την ευρωπαϊκή προοπτική της Σερβίας: αναμένουμε να γίνουν γρήγορα βήματα για να βρεθεί όσο το δυνατόν πιο σύντομα εντός του ευρωπαϊκού οικοδομήματος.

Clara Ponsatí Obiols (NI). – Madam President, on Kosovo the European Union needs a unique position, but five Member States are still opposing recognition. Four are neighbours of the region, but the fifth? It's Spain. Why? What is Spain's problem with Kosovo? Colleagues, Spain's problem is not about Kosovo: it's the 'C' problem. 'C' as in Catalonia.

In a landmark decision on Kosovo, the International Court of Justice ruled that international law does not prohibit unilateral declarations of independence. This applies to Kosovo, but it also applies to Catalonia.

Spain's tantrum about Kosovo expresses their fear to set a precedent that threatens their sacred unity. The EU cannot have a unique position on Kosovo because Spain is obsessed that unity is more sacred than democracy and human rights. The unity of Spain is not sacred! It is, with the crown of the corrupt Borbón family, an imposition from the political will of General Franco, the only Fascist dictator never defeated in Europe. It is time to move on. Spain must recognise Kosovo and let Catalans decide about their future.

Miriam Lexmann (PPE). – Madam President, let me first thank my colleague Vlado Bilčik for his hard work on this file, and for vigorously supporting Serbia's path to the EU.

The creeping malign influence of the Chinese Communist Party and other authoritarian regimes across the Western Balkans is increasingly worrying. In particular, Chinese investments are emblematic of its growing malign influence in Serbia and elsewhere in the Western Balkans.

Chinese investment, as highlighted in the case of several heavy industry projects in Smederevo, Bor and Kostolac, as well as the tyre plant in Zrenjanin, lack transparency and sustainability, cause serious environmental damage, have negative impact on labour rights and have a corrosive effect on democratic governance. This is why it is important that the European Union takes this malign influence seriously, and works with the governments and civil society to help the countries of the Western Balkans to become more resilient to the negative impact of Chinese investments as part of their EU accession process.

Петър Витанов (S&D). – Г-жо Председател, по доклада за Република Северна Македония не желая да се конфронтираме с колегите от своята парламентарна група, защото досега винаги сме водили битките рамо до рамо, но днес тук мога да говоря само като българин.

Част от предложените изменения задълбочават съществуването на един проблем. Вземането на страна пречи на диалога и изостря конфронтацията. То се ползва от една страна в България от крайни фашизирани и националистически партии в предизборна кампания, а в Македония за допълнителен натиск върху всички онези хора, които имат българско самосъзнание. Ние сме „за“ напредъка на Република Северна Македония, но той минава само през зачитане и през уважение на добросъседските отношения. Българо-македонския диалог има нужда от динамо, не от динамит.

Andor Deli (NI). – Tisztelt Elnök Asszony! Biztos Úr! Ha ismerjük Szerbia jelentőségét a térségben, akkor tudnunk kell azt is, hogy a csatlakozás késleltetése ellentétes az EU saját érdekeivel is. Ezért mi a Fidesz delegációban mindig is azon dolgoztunk, hogy Szerbia a lehető legrövidebb időn belül az EU teljes jogú tagjává váljon. Ennek ellenére a baloldali képviselők által benyújtott módosítók miatt a jelentés szövege nélkülözi a kellő tárgyilagosságot. Megkérdőjelezi, például a tavalyi választások legitimitását, a szerbiai parlament összetételét, miközben ezekről a témákról Szerbia polgárai már határozott véleményt nyilvánítottak a választásokon. A jelentés kritikus hangon szól a szerb egészségügyről és a járvány kezeléséről, miközben oltások tekintetében Szerbia messze lekörözte azokat a tagállamokat, ahonnan ezek a kritikák érkeznek.

Inkább a saját udvarukban kellene sepregetni. Néhány uniós tagállam, köztük Magyarország már megtapasztalhatta, hogy az EP-jelentéseket a politikai ellenfelekkel való leszámolás eszközeiként használják. Azonban, ha ezt a módszert egy uniós tagjelölt ország ellen alkalmazzák, az nagyon rossz üzenet. Ezért a mi számunkra, a Fidesz képviselői számára elfogadhatatlan a Szerbiáról szóló jelentés.

Λουκάς Φουρλάς (PPE). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κύριε Επίτροπε, επιτρέψτε μου να αρχίσω ευχόμενος χρόνια πολλά στην Ελλάδα και στους Έλληνες, που γιορτάζουν σήμερα τα 200 χρόνια από την Ελληνική Επανάσταση η οποία οδήγησε σε ένα ελεύθερο ελληνικό κράτος.

Ο σεβασμός των ευρωπαϊκών ιδανικών και αξιών αποτελεί βασική προϋπόθεση για ένα ευρωπαϊκό κράτος. Υποστηρίζουμε πλήρως την ευρωπαϊκή προοπτική της Σερβίας και χαίρετιζουμε το γεγονός ότι αποτελεί κοινό στρατηγικό στόχο της κυβέρνησης αλλά και όλων των πολιτικών δυνάμεων της χώρας. Η ένταξη της Σερβίας στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση θα είναι προς όφελος όλων μας.

Θέλω να τονίσω ότι υποστηρίζουμε το άνοιγμα περισσότερων κεφαλαίων στις διαπραγματεύσεις μεταξύ της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και της Σερβίας, γεγονός που θα δώσει πρόσθετο δυναμισμό στη διαδικασία και επιπλέον κίνητρα και ενθάρρυνση στους Σέρβους πολίτες. Στην έκθεση προόδου καταγράφεται η κοινή βούληση όλων των πλευρών να επιταχυνθούν οι διαδικασίες των διαπραγματεύσεων, ώστε να καταφέρουμε να δούμε τη Σερβία σύντομα εκεί όπου ανήκει, στους κόλπους της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Kinga Gál (NI). – Tisztelt Elnök Asszony! Biztos Úr! Meggyőződésem, hogy a Nyugat-Balkán stabilitásának garanciája az európai integráció. És az EU érdeke egy prosperáló és saját határait hatékonyan védeni képes nyugat-balkáni térség. Ezért szorgalmazom a csatlakozási folyamat felgyorsítását. Az országjelentések közül, ma sok mindent hallottunk itt ezekről, egy másik szempontra hívnám fel a figyelmet. A szerbiai jelentés ezúttal az eddigiektől eltérően feltűnően kritikus, egyoldalú hangot üt meg a jobboldali-konzervatív kormánnyal rendelkező Szerbia esetében. Pedig az ország a térségben stabilizáló tényező, békés rendezésre egyértelműen törekszik.

A szomszédaival való kapcsolatok terén jelentős előrelépéseket tett, derekasan védi az Európai Unió külső határait, és a világválság ellenére gazdasága kiválóan teljesít. Egyik úttörője a Covid elleni átolottságnak. Ugyanakkor, megnézve alaposan a többi jelentést, a baloldali vezetéssel rendelkező Észak-Macedónia, Albánia, vagy Koszovó tekintetében a jelentések sokkal megengedőbbek, amiben az Európai Parlamentben oly gyakran alkalmazott kettős mércét látom újra. Ez eltérő mércékkel mérés. A politikai alapú hozzáállás nem segíti a Nyugat-Balkán stabilitását. Az Unió elfogadottságát kérdőjelezzük meg ezekben az országokban.

Olivér Várhelyi, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, I thank all the Members of this House for the continued very strong support for the European perspective of the whole Western Balkans region. Now more than ever we must show that the EU will continue to stand with our Western Balkan partners and to support the whole region during this pandemic.

The future of the Western Balkan region lies in the European Union. It is not only their interest, it is our interest. They are surrounded by EU Member States, they are integrated and getting even more integrated into our economies but also into our societies. The region is clearly committed to an EU path. Now it is time for us also to deliver. As you know this Commission is very heavily committed to deliver on this promise and we need the support of the Member States, we need the support of this House, to be able to move on and move fast.

Ana Paula Zacarias, *Presidente em exercício do Conselho*. – Senhora Presidente, Senhoras e Senhores Deputados, Senhor Comissário, agradeço-vos este debate proveitoso e pelo empenhamento construtivo do Parlamento Europeu na região dos Balcãs Ocidentais. Gostaria também de manifestar a minha sincera gratidão pelo excelente trabalho e pelo empenho dos relatores, de todos estes relatórios tão importantes que aqui foram hoje apresentados.

Neste ano tão difícil, marcado pela pandemia, continuaremos a trabalhar em todas as áreas para apoiar os parceiros dos Balcãs Ocidentais no seu percurso europeu.

A realização de reformas é crucial. Os progressos realizados estão a ser cuidadosamente acompanhados e incentivamos os dirigentes políticos a continuar a trabalhar com entusiasmo e empenho para o bem dos seus cidadãos, para assegurar um diálogo construtivo na região, o seu desenvolvimento económico e social e o seu percurso de adesão à União.

Posso assegurar-vos que a Presidência continuará a trabalhar nesta área, continuará a congratular-se com todos os progressos que forem sendo alcançados pelos países candidatos, apesar das diferentes circunstâncias e dos difíceis momentos que atravessamos. Reiteramos o nosso compromisso com o processo de adesão dos Balcãs Ocidentais à União.

Todos sabemos que este é um caminho difícil, complexo. Sabemos que há ainda muito para fazer em termos das necessárias reformas, particularmente na área das reformas da administração, dos sistemas judiciais, da luta contra a corrupção, no respeito pelo Estado de Direito e pelos valores fundamentais, mas este diálogo é fundamental para a União e para os países dos Balcãs.

A pandemia veio demonstrar a importância e o valor de nos mantermos unidos e de respondermos em conjunto a estes desafios comuns que são de todos nós.

Die Präsidentin. – Die gemeinsame Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Die Abstimmung findet heute, Donnerstag, 25. März 2021, statt.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Dominique Bilde (ID), *par écrit*. – D'une manière générale, je ne suis pas favorable à ce que la reconnaissance du Kosovo comme un État indépendant soit une condition sine qua non imposée à la Serbie en vue d'une éventuelle adhésion à l'Union européenne – quelle que soit l'opinion que l'on porte quant à cet élargissement sur le fond. En effet, à l'heure actuelle, cinq États membres de l'Union européenne ne reconnaissent toujours pas le Kosovo, dont l'Espagne. Dans le monde, ce sont des puissances comme l'Inde, la Russie, ou encore la Chine qui maintiennent une position similaire. Par ailleurs, l'actualité récente ne plaide pas en faveur de la normalisation des relations avec la Serbie, en dépit des accords de Washington signés sous l'égide de Donald Trump. En témoigne la déclaration récente d'Albin Kurti, à nouveau Premier ministre kosovar, à Euronews, par laquelle il affirmait qu'il voterait favorablement à un éventuel référendum portant sur l'unification de l'Albanie et du Kosovo. Enfin, l'attitude de la Turquie lors de la polémique relative à l'installation d'une représentation diplomatique kosovare à Jérusalem, dans la foulée des accords de Washington susvisés, a mis en évidence l'ingérence croissante d'Erdogan dans les Balkans.

Guido Reil (ID), *schriftlich*. – Nach dem Internationalen Währungsfonds ist ein Narco-Staat ein Land, „in dem alle rechtmäßigen Institutionen von der Macht und dem Reichtum des illegalen Drogenhandels durchdrungen sind“. Albanien ist ein Narco-Staat, denn in diesem Land sind Drogenhandel und politische Macht sehr verstrickt. Drogenbosse sind mit der politischen Elite vernetzt und beeinflussen maßgeblich die Entwicklung Albaniens. Dieser Narco-Staat versorgt unter anderem Deutschland mit Cannabis und Kokain. Auch der regierenden Sozialistischen Partei werden Korruption und Verbindungen zum organisierten Verbrechen vorgeworfen. Viele junge Leuten sind gefangen in einem Netz von Armut und Korruption. Sie haben keine Hoffnung auf Verbesserung und wollen das Land verlassen. Es gibt nirgendwo so viele EU-Anhänger wie in Albanien. Die meisten Albaner wollen einen EU-Beitritt. Ich glaube aber nicht, dass ein Beitritt in unserem Interesse ist. Korruption und kriminelle Machenschaften werden belohnt. Ein Beitritt führt zu noch mehr Armutsmigration. Darüber hinaus wird ein Beitritt den *brain drain* noch verschärfen. Es gibt viele Beispiele: Rumänien, Kroatien, Bulgarien. Übrigens wird der Grüne Deal die bestehenden politischen Gräben zwischen wes-

teuropäischen und osteuropäischen Staaten noch vertiefen. Wir sollen über andere Lösungen nachdenken.

Θεόδωρος Ζαγοράκης (PPE), γραπτώς. – Το μέλλον των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων βρίσκεται στην Ευρώπη. Η πλειοψηφία των πολιτικών δυνάμεων αυτού του Κοινοβουλίου συμφωνεί με αυτή την προοπτική. Κάθε χώρα και κάθε υποψηφιότητα όμως θα κριθεί ξεχωριστά. Η πορεία των μεταρρυθμίσεων και η εκπλήρωση των κριτηρίων ένταξης προφανώς διαφέρει από χώρα σε χώρα. Πρέπει να δώσουμε στήριξη στις υποψήφιες χώρες των Βαλκανίων· αλλά και οι υποψήφιες χώρες οφείλουν να αναλάβουν τις αναγκαίες δεσμεύσεις και να υλοποιήσουν τις απαραίτητες μεταρρυθμίσεις. Οι σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας είναι καθοριστικής σημασίας για την πορεία των ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων. Πολλοί ζητούν να ξεπεράσουμε τις περιφερειακές διαφορές και το δύσκολο, κάποιες φορές, παρελθόν και να επικεντρωθούμε στο μέλλον. Αυτό, όμως, δεν μπορεί να γίνει εις βάρος της ιστορίας. Εάν δεν επιλυθούν οι εκκρεμείς διαφορές, εάν απλώς «κρύψουμε τα προβλήματα κάτω από το χαλί», είναι βέβαιο ότι θα βρεθούμε αντιμέτωποι με νέες διενέξεις στο μέλλον.

(Die Sitzung wird um 13.02 Uhr unterbrochen)

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. FABIO MASSIMO CASTALDO

Vicepresidente

9. Resumption of the sitting

(La seduta è ripresa alle 14.33)

10. Announcement of voting results: see Minutes

11. Assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia and the rule of law in Malta (debate)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sulla dichiarazione della Commissione sull'assassinio di Daphne Caruana Galizia e sullo Stato di diritto a Malta (2021/2611(RSP)).

Ricordo a tutti gli onorevoli e le onorevoli colleghe che per tutte le discussioni di questa tornata non è prevista la procedura «catch-the-eye», né saranno accettate domande «cartellino blu».

Inoltre, come già nelle precedenti tornate, sono previsti interventi a distanza dagli Uffici di rappresentanza del Parlamento presso gli Stati membri.

Věra Jourová, *Vice-President of the Commission.* – Mr President, I would like to thank you for inviting the Commission to this debate. The Commission has always condemned the brutal assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia in the strongest possible terms. It was a shocking event and a stark reminder that the safety of journalists is not a given, even in a democratic European Union. The right of a journalist to investigate, ask uncomfortable questions and report, is at the heart of democracy. It needs to be guaranteed at all times.

The Commission is closely following the developments in the criminal investigation regarding the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. We have repeatedly stressed the need for those responsible for her assassination to be brought to justice, without any political interference. The Commission has also welcomed the ongoing public inquiry as a positive aspect, as it also gives the possibility to civil society in Malta to monitor developments and to play a role in defending the rule of law. And indeed, the inquiry praised a strong public demand for a strengthened capacity to tackle corruption and wider rule-of-law reforms.

The work of Daphne Caruana Galizia unveiled patterns of corruption, fraud and money laundering. Recent events resulting from a magisterial inquiry that was inspired by Daphne's work are very symbolic. They show the value and importance of media freedom in a free and open society, and today they also show that the prosecution and justice system in Malta can work. We all, and particularly her family, expect that justice be ultimately fully served.

The 2020 rule-of-law report acknowledges that a number of significant reforms of the Maltese justice system were adopted last year. In particular, the reforms of the system of judicial appointments and of disciplinary proceedings aim at strengthening judicial independence and the system of the separation of powers. They also aim at responding to some of the Venice Commission's recommendations and the recommendations from the European Commission and from the Council in the framework of the European Semester. Also a prosecution service under the authority of the Office of the Attorney General, and fully separate from the State Advocate, has been set up and these are all steps in the right direction. But important concerns remain as regards the efficiency of the justice system – the judicial proceedings being very long at all levels, and in all categories of cases.

As regards the anti-corruption framework, it still lacks a track record of securing convictions in high-level corruption cases. We take note that authorities have launched broad reforms to address gaps and strengthen the institutional anti-corruption framework, including law enforcement and prosecution. The effective implementation of these reforms will show the extent to which the Maltese Government has addressed the recommendations from the Venice Commission and the group of states against corruption – GRECO – in addition to those from the European Commission.

The assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia was widely seen as an attack on the free press. It triggered concerns about media freedom and the safety of journalists in Malta and beyond. We see the increasing number of threats against investigative journalists online and offline across the whole of Europe. And this is why we need to act. The Commission is now working on a recommendation to Member States on the safety of journalists. On Tuesday I opened the first ever European news media forum with a dialogue on the safety of journalists. Several Members of the European Parliament participated in this event and today it is Matthew Caruana Galizia, the son of Daphne Caruana Galizia and the director of the Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, who is delivering the closing address at this event.

Other areas of concern regarding the media in Malta include the effective independence of the media regulator. The ownership, control or management by the two main political parties in Malta of multiple Maltese media outlets continues to have a significant impact on the Maltese media landscape. The reforms of institutional rules, such as limiting the role of the Prime Minister in the appointment of independent commissions, aim at strengthening the overall system of checks and balances and at responding to some of the recommendations made by the Venice Commission.

In light of these findings, the Commission has called on the Maltese authorities to do three things in particular. One, continue with its reform efforts. Two, ensure a wide consultation of society on these reforms. And three, ensure a proper implementation of the reforms already adopted.

The Commission has underlined the need for an inclusive approach when preparing and adopting structural reforms that have a strong impact on the rule of law. It is also important to follow the recommendations from the Council of Europe. Such reforms can only succeed when support for them is widespread in the society. This is why it is vital that all relevant actors, including civil society organisations and the people, have their say. The Commission is in contact with the Maltese authorities in the spirit of sincere cooperation in order to support reform steps.

Manfred Weber, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, when Daphne Caruana Galizia was assassinated in a horrific car bomb in October 2017, it was clear that she could only have been killed because of what she wrote or because of what she was about to write. For years, she had been exposing corruption in power right up to the office of the prime minister himself.

Since then, the judicial process has been moving slowly but surely. We recognise that. But the public institutions remain politically captured and the political consequences have been totally absent, until now. This is a matter of major concern for us.

New developments in court are deeply disturbing: a former minister and deputy leader of the ruling Labour Party has been named by one of the killers as having known about the plot and tipped off the killers. And just this week, on Tuesday, the two other killers also offered information about the involvement of ministers. This means that the ruling party knew about the plot to kill Daphne. I have no words to describe how shocking this is. When I hear these things I ask myself: how is this possible in today's European Union?

But what is even worse is that there have been no consequences at all for the moment, no arrests, no resignation, no political consequences, nothing. It's as if nothing has happened in Malta, and this is unacceptable for the European Union of today.

When public institutions are politically captured, they obstruct justice instead of serving justice. This becomes a problem of rule of law, not only for Malta, but for all of us. And this is why we are seriously worried about what is happening today in Malta, because the government is not allowing the institutions to work, because the people who should be brought to justice are part or were part of the government itself.

I repeat: this is unacceptable. So we expect the Maltese Government to clean up its house because these things are not acceptable. The EPP stands with the people of Malta in their fight for justice.

Elena Yoncheva, *au nom du groupe S&D*. – Monsieur le Président, l'état de droit doit être une priorité pour chaque État membre, et personne ne doit fuir un tel débat. C'est la clé de la confiance mutuelle.

Le destin tragique de Daphne Galizia nous a tous secoués. Nous avons insisté sur une action décisive pour ne plus jamais être témoins de ce qui est arrivé à Daphne. À Malte, nous voyons déjà un désir de changement, et il y a également un procès en cours. Je crois personnellement que justice sera rendue prochainement. Nous le devons à la famille de Daphne, aux journalistes en Europe et à tous les citoyens européens.

Vous voulez également que nous adoptions une résolution. Nous l'adopterons. Mais je vous demande: que faisons-nous avec la Bulgarie, la Hongrie, la Slovaquie? Souvenez-vous: nous avons récemment adopté une résolution à propos de la Bulgarie dans cette même salle. Que s'est-il passé en Bulgarie après cela? Rien. Rien ne s'est passé. Le premier ministre bulgare n'a jamais commenté la résolution. Je voudrais demander à mes collègues du PPE combien de temps l'état de droit sera une question de mathématiques politiques?

Enfin, ma question à la Commission est la suivante: quand va-t-elle commencer à utiliser le règlement pour lier l'état de droit au budget? Combien de temps allez-vous serrer la main de dirigeants comme Orbán et Borissov, qui détruisent le fondement de nos sociétés démocratiques?

Sophia in 't Veld, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Mr President, let me start by saying that the rule of law is not a partisan issue, and let's also establish that there isn't a single political family, not a single political family, that is immune to corruption and wrongdoing.

I welcome the progress made recently in the judicial proceedings. Finally, we have one conviction. We have several high-profile arrests in the cases that Daphne Caruana Galizia was investigating. But I also conclude that it's all taken far too long; that too much time has been allowed for the destruction of evidence, thanks to years of inertia and inaction; and that I regret to note that judges may now have to rely on the testimonies of criminals who will get pardoned in return, just for the judges to be able to build their cases. That is not real justice.

I also welcome the process of institutional reforms that has been set in motion. But I also conclude that the political culture has not yet sufficiently changed. I'm concerned that there is too little reform in the internal culture of the political parties, and it's not a partisan issue. It is an issue of common concern.

The need for political responsibility has already been mentioned, but I would also like to emphasise the need for the selection procedures, the vetting procedures for candidates for high political offices to be reviewed, because I still get too many signals of corrupt practices. I'm quite surprised to know that there is somebody who has now temporarily stepped down as a minister, who was taking cash – large cash payments – when having dinner in a restaurant, and that person is now being investigated by an ethics committee. Now, I cannot judge the details. I don't want to judge. But I would say against the backdrop of everything that's happened, an ethics committee may not be the appropriate procedure.

We, in the Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights Monitoring Group, will continue to monitor the situation, to work towards strengthening the rule of law, and we will do that together with all the people of Malta, as Europeans, shoulder to shoulder.

Maximilian Krah, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren Kollegen! Wir beschäftigen uns heute mit einem Land, das die Meinungsfreiheit wohl einschränkt durch sein korruptes System, und es ist nicht Ungarn, es ist nicht Polen – es ist Malta. Das erklärt vielleicht auch, dass es doch relativ sanft ist, was hier vorgeschlagen wird, dass nicht darüber nachgedacht wird, EU-Zahlungen einzuschränken, wie in Fällen von Ländern, wo keine Journalisten umgebracht werden.

Malta ist ein Land, das abwechselnd von Sozialdemokraten und Christdemokraten regiert wird und wo sich seitdem – oder vielleicht gerade deshalb – ein System und ein Dickicht von Korruption und Kriminalität herausgebildet hat. Es geht hier eben um einen Mord. Nachdem dieser Mord die Zivilgesellschaft aufgerüttelt hat, ist jetzt der Polizeipräsident zurückgetreten, haben wir festgestellt, dass der Chef der Bankenaufsicht Schmiergelder einer Bank, die er überprüfen sollte, angenommen hat, und ist klar geworden, dass sich in Malta ein Geflecht von Politik, Kontrollinstitutionen, Polizei und Geschäftswelt herausgebildet hat, das mit einer freien Marktwirtschaft, mit Rechtsstaatlichkeit nichts zu tun hat, sondern eher an eine Drittwelt-Oligarchie erinnert.

Und die Frage ist: Wieso so verhalten? Oder umgekehrt: Wieso so aggressiv, wenn es gegen konservative Länder geht, wo komischerweise keine Journalisten umgebracht werden, wo Sie aber jede Art und Weise von irgendwelchen Einschränkungen der Pressefreiheit – ob bestehend oder nicht – dazu zum Anlass nehmen, regelrechte Strafexpeditionen zu fordern? Es ist diese elende Doppelmoral der hier tonangebenden Fraktionen, die unsere gesamte Europäische Union in Misskredit bringt und die Fragen aufwirft, wie ehrlich Sie es meinen.

Malta, liebe Frau Kollegin in 't Veld, ist eben nicht das Problem aller Gruppen hier im Hause. Malta ist das Problem der etablierten Gruppen hier im Hause – der Sozialisten und der Christdemokraten: Es ist ihre Korruption, es ist ihre Geschäftshuber-Wirtschaft, es ist ihr Dickicht der Korruption, das Daphne Caruana Galizia in die Luft hat sprengen lassen. Nicht unsere, nicht die von Herrn Orbán und nicht die von Herrn Kaczyński.

Wir sollten den Mut haben, die Verantwortlichkeiten zu benennen. Und die Verantwortlichkeiten haben etwas mit Machtsicherheit und Arroganz, mit zu langer Nichthinterfragung der eigenen Position zu tun. Und das ist das Markenzeichen von Sozialisten und Christdemokraten, aber nicht von konservativen bürgerlichen Erneuerungsbewegungen, die sie sonst immer angreifen, um von ihrem eigenen Versagen, der eigenen Korruption und dem eigenen Machtmissbrauch abzulenken.

Endlich kümmern wir uns um Malta – jawohl. Aber wir tun es viel zu sanft, und wir tun es nicht forsch genug. Angemessen wäre hier das, was wir den Polen und den Ungarn nachtragen – nämlich dass wir fordern, die Zuwendungen der Union an dieses Land zu beenden, wenn nicht endlich aufgeräumt wird. Diese Aufforderung geht an die hier tragenden Mehrheitsfraktionen: Räumen Sie bei sich auf, damit keine Journalisten mehr sterben müssen.

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Monsieur le Président, nous sommes à Malte. Celui qui était Premier ministre jusqu'en janvier 2020, Joseph Muscat, a participé à des échanges de mails avec son chef de cabinet, Keith Schembri, où il était question d'entraver, de paralyser le travail d'une journaliste par l'accumulation de poursuites en diffamation.

Cette journaliste, c'était Daphne Caruana Galizia. Elle enquêtait sur des affaires de corruption, notamment dans le domaine de gros appels d'offres publics en matière d'énergie. Le chef de cabinet en question a ensuite été désigné par un des suspects comme un possible complice de la commande du meurtre. Et puis, aujourd'hui, depuis samedi, il fait face à de graves accusations de corruption par la justice. Le Premier ministre, quant à lui, a tenté de conclure prématurément l'enquête publique et l'enquête policière à plusieurs occasions.

Nous sommes à Malte. En novembre 2020, l'ancien ministre de l'énergie a refusé de répondre à plus de 100 questions dans le cadre de l'enquête publique. L'ancien ministre de l'économie a vu son nom circuler parmi les suspects. Une députée a reçu à plusieurs occasions de l'argent en cash. Des politiciens, des hommes d'affaires, des fonctionnaires, un nombre considérable de personnes semblent avoir des connexions avec ceux qui ont préparé et perpétré ce meurtre.

Nous sommes à Malte. Le 16 octobre 2017, Daphne Caruana Galizia était assassinée un meurtre prémédité, organisé, financé, et on peut craindre une implication jusqu'au plus haut niveau de l'État. Justice et police ont été entravées parfois, au point qu'Europol s'est demandé s'il fallait continuer à collaborer.

Nous sommes à Malte. On peut, avec beaucoup d'argent, y acheter la citoyenneté européenne; on peut être trafiquants, criminels, on peut être un exilé fiscal, on peut être terroriste, on ne vous posera pas de questions, si vous avez l'argent, comme à Chypre, comme en Bulgarie, comme dans divers endroits. Voilà la valeur de la citoyenneté européenne. Nous sommes à Malte; nous sommes dans l'Union européenne.

Assita Kanko, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, as Mr Weber also just pointed out, it's very hard to imagine that this is happening inside the European Union. To me, it's even harder to imagine when I discussed with people I grew up with in Burkina Faso about what is happening here in the continent of enlightenment, while we're travelling around the world to show everyone how to respect human rights. We knew inside the EU for years that there was something rotten in the state of Malta and yet it was continually ignored or diminished. In recent days and weeks we have seen the highest echelons of government implicated in the murder of a journalist.

We can never bring back Daphne Caruana Galizia to her husband and children, but we can bring them justice. We must bring them justice. We can show that Europe has learned its lessons. No corner of the EU must be free from scrutiny of the rule of law. It makes no difference whether you are a conservative, a liberal or a socialist. We are all equal in the eyes of democracy and the law. As long as we treat the rule of law as a political football we will chip away at our own credibility and authority, both at home and on the global stage.

We have discussed in this Chamber the shortcomings of governments on the right, but we failed miserably in this House to discuss Malta, due to its origins being on the left. Let's never repeat the mistake. I hope that finally justice is delivered for the family of Daphne Caruana Galizia. I hope that the truth is delivered for our citizens and I hope that journalists will never live in fear of writing their story in our territories.

Κωνσταντίνος Αρβανίτης, *εξ ονόματος της ομάδας The Left*. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Επίτροπε, κυρίες και κύριοι συνάδελφοι, είναι 25 Μαρτίου σήμερα. Η πατρίδα μου και οι απανταχού Έλληνες και φιλέλληνες τιμούμε τα 200 χρόνια από την επανάσταση των σκλαβωμένων Ελλήνων και Ελληνίδων. Σήμερα, η Ελλάδα τιμά τα 200 χρόνια από την έναρξη του αγώνα της εθνικής της ανεξαρτησίας και της δημοκρατίας. Είναι μια πολύ μεγάλη ημέρα για όλους τους Έλληνες και για όλους εσάς που, πιστεύω, είστε φιλέλληνες.

Ο εθνικός μας ύμνος, αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, είναι ύμνος για την ελευθερία και τη δικαιοσύνη, που, δυστυχώς, είναι και σήμερα ζητούμενο σε πολλές από τις χώρες μας και ειδικά εδώ στην Ευρώπη. Στην Ουγγαρία, στην Πολωνία, στη Σλοβενία, στη Μάλτα, στην Ελλάδα, στην Ιταλία υπάρχει πολύ σοβαρό θέμα με τον Τύπο. Εδώ, όμως, μιλάμε για τη δολοφονία ενός ανθρώπου, μιας γυναίκας δημοσιογράφου που ερευνούσε και εργαζόταν για την αλήθεια. Συζητάμε για το αναφαίρετο δικαίωμα στη ζωή.

Δεν γίνεται να μένουμε άπραγοι μπροστά σε αυτή τη φρικτή πραγματικότητα της δολοφονίας ερευνητών δημοσιογράφων, επειδή βγάζουν στο φως υποθέσεις κυβερνητικής διαφθοράς. Δεν θα σταματήσουμε μέχρι να οδηγηθούν ενώπιον της δικαιοσύνης όλοι οι υπεύθυνοι. Και βεβαίως, δεν μπορούμε εμείς απλώς να καταγράψουμε. Οφείλουμε να αναλάβουμε δράση, να λάβουμε μέτρα. Οφείλουμε, νομίζω, όλοι εμείς οι βουλευτές του δημοκρατικού τόξου, όλοι ανεξαιρέτως, να στηρίξουμε και να πιέσουμε θεσμικά να πιέσουμε τα θεσμικά μας όργανα να παράσχουν ουσιαστική στήριξη κάθε μορφής ερευνητικής δημοσιογραφίας, που είναι πολύτιμος σύμμαχος για τη δημοκρατία. Η μάχη για τη δημοκρατία, τη δικαιοσύνη και το κράτος δικαίου είναι μια μάχη για την ψυχή και το αύριο της Ευρώπης που όλοι αγαπάμε.

Sabrina Pignedoli (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, perché è stata uccisa Daphne Caruana Galizia? Perché scriveva. Scriveva senza censura dei traffici illegali che coinvolgevano anche importanti cariche istituzionali maltesi.

Le inchieste della giornalista riguardavano, tra l'altro, la corruzione e la vendita dei passaporti d'oro e il contrabbando del petrolio, affari in cui si arriva al coinvolgimento di membri del governo, a opachi intrecci societari e a legami con le mafie italiane. Ma le indagini sono difficili per la scarsa indipendenza del sistema investigativo e giudiziario dal governo maltese.

Inoltre Malta, in quanto Stato membro dell'Unione europea, è tenuta a cooperare con gli organi inquirenti degli altri Stati: ma le risposte che vengono date arrivano con estrema lentezza e difficoltà. In particolare vengono riscontrate difficoltà oggettive a ottenere collaborazione rispetto alle misure più incisive per contrastare proprio forme gravi di criminalità organizzata, come le intercettazioni telefoniche e telematiche.

Questa situazione non è accettabile: Malta deve mostrare con azioni concrete di voler combattere la criminalità. Lo Stato, tutti gli Stati, l'Unione europea, noi abbiamo l'obbligo di portare avanti le battaglie di Daphne per giustizia e legalità.

Esteban González Pons (PPE). – Mr President, Daphne Caruana was not a remote victim of an incident. She was the target of a criminal organisation of corruption and fraud, plotted from and by the very top of the Maltese Government. For years those in power have tried to transform Malta into a paradise for dark business and golden business. For years they have tried to establish a code of silence and fear. But enough is enough. Malta deserves better. The European Union must do something.

We demand the Maltese Government to take full responsibility in this case. Criminals must be brought to justice: those who killed Daphne, but also those who gave them instructions and political protection. Protecting killers of a journalist from the government – *from* the government – is one of the most serious attacks on the rule of law. The Maltese Government should be aware, if they don't help to solve the murder of Daphne Caruana, this Chamber will have to act, and it will not be just a simple resolution. And we demand to our friends the Social Democrats in this Chamber to break all ties with the Maltese Labour Party, because this party is protecting the killers of Daphne. I say it again, killers! And this is shameful for the Social Democrats and for the whole Chamber.

VORSITZ: RAINER WIELAND

Vizepräsident

Alfred Sant (S&D). – Mr President, in past speeches to this plenary my comrades and I promised that the Labour government in Malta would relentlessly strive to find the murderers of Daphne Caruana Galizia and bring them to justice. That promise is still valid and it is being fully honoured. The road has been longer than we've anticipated, but it is still being followed.

Shocking discoveries have been made. Some have got close to the bone, but there have been no let-ups. Other discoveries may still be made about them too. There will be no indulgence: that this is so, the Robert Abela administration in Malta has given more than enough assurances and it will continue to deliver on its promises.

Meanwhile, it has also been carrying out institutional reforms that respond to what the Council of Europe and EU institutions, including this House, have called for. But there is a time for political initiative and action. There is a time for the police to investigate and prosecute and there is a time for the courts to judge. This debate has been called at the same time that crucial evidence about the Caruana Galizia murder and more is being given in a court of law.

In this House, in the past, the Malta Government was criticised for not having yet prosecuted perpetrators of the murder. Now we are there and there should be no place for political or other intervention in the judicial process. We claim, as one of our basic values, that the full separation should be observed between the judicial, executive and legislative arms of government.

Yet this debate is quite clearly intruding hugely in judicial processes that have been making slow but spectacular progress. It brings no value-added to the rule of law or to justice.

Quite rightly, in the past, this House kept back from discussing lengthy controversial cases arising in the judicial system of Member States, such as the Sarkozy case in France and the Bárcenas-Gürtel scandal in Spain. So why are two weights and two measures being applied today?

I can only repeat one assurance. There will be full justice, without fear or favour, towards all those guilty of the atrocious murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Michal Šimečka (Renew). – Mr President, indeed the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia was an exceptionally gruesome and vicious crime that at the time very few in Europe thought was possible. It awoke everyone all over Europe to some serious rule-of-law problems in Malta, but also more broadly, to the importance of investigative journalism, media freedom and the rule of law.

And after what happened to her, but also Ján Kuciak in Slovakia, we can never become complacent about the safety of journalists in Europe. Yet still, even today, we see people in power in several Member States verbally attacking journalists and complaining about media scrutiny. So today, step by step – although it's taking too long – the work of Daphne Caruana Galizia has been vindicated in Malta and, as has been said, her family is entitled to justice and the full truth behind the murder, but also all journalists in Europe are entitled to a safe and free environment to pursue their hugely important work.

Sven Giegold (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, Europe has a responsibility for Daphne Caruana Galizia. It is our responsibility to ensure justice for Daphne, because Daphne fought for our common European values, for the rule of law, for democracy and for tax justice. When Daphne was murdered the extensive problems around corruption and money laundering that she investigated for so many years did not disappear. On the contrary, these problems are still structural problems in Malta. So as Europeans we must continue Daphne's fight. The continuation of her cause means at least two things.

First, we must urge the Maltese institutions to hold every single person accountable that was involved in the murder of Daphne. The same applies to the cases of high-level corruption Daphne reported on. And let me be clear on this, the role of Joseph Muscat must be fully investigated. Justice for Daphne: that means that every person must be held accountable, no matter how powerful he is.

And second, we have to address the structural problems of corruption and money laundering in Malta. Also on this point I want to be clear. The system in Malta is still rotten. Some improvements have been made, but the big tidying-up still needs to happen. Also, the recommendations of the Venice Commission have not been implemented yet, as the Council of Europe rapporteur Pieter Omtzigt demonstrated recently in a follow-up report.

A culture of impunity for financial crime persists. Parliamentary reform and the effective protection of journalism against lawsuits is equally outstanding. As the European Parliament, we cannot accept this, and therefore I call on the European Commission to hold Malta accountable when it comes to infringements of EU law. The passport issue is not enough. It's also about public procurement, financial supervision, environmental law. So what Europe can and should do for Daphne today is to make sure that her work was not in vain. Europe must do everything it can to continue her fight, for Daphne, for the people in Malta and for the rule of law in our common European Union.

Elżbieta Kruk (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Groźby i ataki na dziennikarzy stały się dziś częścią ich pracy. Nękanie dziennikarzy to coraz częściej metoda uciszania mediów. Poziom wolności prasy obniżył się na całym świecie, a, jak widać, Europa też już nie jest dla dziennikarzy azylem. Tymczasem bezpieczeństwo, w szczególności dziennikarzy śledczych, leży w żywotnym interesie społeczeństw demokratycznych.

Maltanka Daphne Caruana Galizia została zabita przez płatnych morderców w związku ze swoją pracą reporterską. Pisała o korupcji zarówno w środowisku biznesowym, jak i w kręgach władzy. Choć śledztwo w tej sprawie doprowadziło do aresztowania podejrzanych, wydaje się, że nie wszystkie zamieszane w sprawę osoby – sprawcy lub ich wspólnicy – zostały aresztowane i oskarżone. Nie wszystko jeszcze wiemy. Wiemy natomiast, jak wysoko mogła sięgać badana przez dziennikarkę afera korupcyjna. Tylko wówczas, gdy prawda o tym zabójstwie zostanie w pełni wyjaśniona, praca, za którą Daphne Caruana Galizia zapłaciła najwyższą cenę, nie pójdzie na marne. Rozwiązanie tej sprawy ma daleko idące konsekwencje dla poszanowania praworządności i problemu korupcji w ogóle. Nie możemy pozwolić na zabijanie niewygodnych dziennikarzy, by zamykać im usta.

Jest jednak jeszcze inna kwestia dotycząca mediów. Kiedyś spełniały funkcję kontroli społecznej nad pozostałymi władzami, aby nie dochodziło do nadużyć i korupcji. Ale czy dziś zawsze pełnią tę funkcję? Mówi się wszak o nich jako o czwartej władzy, choć nie z wyboru i bez kontroli. Warto o tym pamiętać, choć zdaję sobie sprawę, panie Przewodniczący, że to inna debata, ale może warto taką również podjąć.

Marisa Matias (The Left). – Senhor Presidente, Caros Colegas, Caras Colegas, três resoluções parlamentares sobre Daphne Caruana Galizia e sobre o Estado de Direito em Malta, quatro missões parlamentares das quais saíram muitos dados, todas elas realizadas em Malta, dois debates em plenário onde debatemos as questões relacionadas com Malta, com o Estado de Direito e com o assassinato de Daphne Caruana Galizia. E continuamos exatamente como começámos ou muito perto do que começámos.

Qual é a nossa legitimidade quando todos os meses trazemos aqui, no debate de urgências, casos de violação do Estado de Direito, de assassinato de jornalistas em outras partes do mundo, defendemos a aplicação de sanções a estes países, mas deixamos que tudo continue a acontecer em Malta.

A corrupção em Malta não é de hoje e a gestão da corrupção pelo poder político também não é de hoje: casos de corrupção e lavagem de dinheiro que não são investigados, em relação às quais não se vê nenhum progresso, ou morosidade nos casos em que há progresso, como aconteceu recentemente, ainda bem, mas muito, muito lentamente.

Os criminosos responsáveis pelo assassinato foram perdoados pelo Presidente ou aguardam decisão. Não haverá justiça para dar a Daphne Caruana Galizia enquanto os responsáveis pelo seu assassinato não forem condenados e não haverá nenhuma capacidade de nos olharmos ao espelho enquanto não percebermos que o combate à corrupção e a liberdade de imprensa são mesmo para ser levados a sério.

Balázs Hidvéghi (NI). – Tisztelt Elnök Úr! Daphne Caruana Galizia máltai újságíró nő halálának ügyében évek óta folyik a nyomozás. Ez alapján egyértelmű, hogy a politikai gyilkosság szálai a baloldali máltai kormány legmagasabb szintjéig vezetnek el. Ehhez képest, az európai baloldali frakciók évek óta ködösítenek ebben az ügyben. És emlékezzünk rá, többször megpróbálták megakadályozni, hogy egyáltalán napirendre vegyük ezt az ügyet itt, az EP-ben. Ez a politikai és erkölcsi cinizmus már önmagában is botrányos. Az azonban még ezen is túltesz, hogy ugyanezek a baloldali képviselők, akik a máltai szocialista kormányt érintő gyilkossági ügyben hallgatnának, folyamatosan mondvacsinált ügyekkel és hazugságokkal támadnak jobboldali, kereszténydemokrata kormányokat Lengyelországban, Magyarországon, az utóbbi időben, Szlovéniában, sőt most már Bulgáriában is.

Felszólítom Vera Jourová biztost, hogy ha valóban olyan fontos számára a demokrácia, akkor indítson jogállamisági eljárást Máltával szemben! Úgy tűnik, ott van miért, és ne folytasson ideológiai háborúskodást több millió közép-európai választópolgár ellen, akik szabad és demokratikus választásokon választottak jobboldali kormányokat!

Roberta Metsola (PPE). – Mr President, our message today is clear: we need those responsible for the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia, those who let it happen and those who tried to cover it up to face justice. We need an end to impunity and justice for the stories that she was killed for exposing and we must prevent this from happening ever again. That means strengthening our systems and giving Europol more authority on sharing evidence and investigations. It means having an anti-strategic lawsuit against public participation (anti-SLAPP) directive to not let them dismiss this as partisan bickering. It is far more important.

And do not judge my country by the actions of criminals posing as politicians. Malta is not them. Malta is better than them. We may be an island of 25 by 15 kilometres, but we do not see ourselves as small. We built back better after becoming the most bombed place on earth. We pushed for democracy and joined the EU as equals. We are the country that put climate change on the world agenda. We are the island of Daphne Caruana Galizia's courage, Oliver Friggieri's pen, Joseph Calleja's voice, Edward de Bono's thinking.

When you look at Malta, understand that the criminals do not represent the true face of our country. Look at the thousands of businesses who work hard, create jobs and thrive while playing by the rules. Look at those who stand up as they face down an organised machine of abuse and intimidation. Look at the families who look to Europe to protect the values that our generation was promised.

This House should not give the criminals the comfort of silence or patronage. And let us do our best to ensure that this never happens again anywhere.

Cyrus Engerer (S&D). – Sur President, din ma hijiex kwistjoni ta' politika partiġġjana. Kulhadd f'Malta jrid li ssir ġustizzja fuq l-assassinju atroci ta' Daphne Caruana Galizia; kulhadd f'Malta jrid li l-verità kollha tohroġ u kulhadd f'Malta jrid li kull min kellu x'jaqsam ma' dan il-każ jinghata l-piena li tixraqlu: huma min huma. Però, kollegi, il-verità qiegħda tohroġ għaliex f'Malta llum għandna istituzzjonijiet li qegħdin jaħdmu. Istituzzjonijiet li rajna b'mod ċar li ma huma jharsu lejn wiċċ hadd. Iva, llum għandna Malta aħjar. B'dispijaci li biex wasalna hawn, però, kellna deċennji ta' abbuż u sfortunatament anke qtil.

Però dan id-dibattitu jinkwetani; mhux għax niddejjaq li nitkellmu fuq pajjiżi. Dan nagħmlu b'wiċċi minn quddiem fil-Kumitat tal-Ġustizzja, li jien l-MEP Laburista fih, fejn nagħornakom dwar in-nuqqasijiet li kellna u l-avvanzi li l-Gvern Malti mmexxi minn Robert Abela għamel matul din l-aħħar sena. Avvanzi li minn meta kont tifel jiena, kont nisma' li jridu jsiru, iżda li hadd qatt ma kellu r-rieda li jagħmilhom. Ninkwieta għaliex, bħal ma tghid il-Konvenzjoni tad-Drittijiet tal-Bniedem b'mod ċar fl-Artikolu 6, diskussjonijiet politici u fil-midja bħal dawn, dwar dak li qed jinghad mix-xhieda waqt li għaddej il-każ, jistgħu jippreġudikaw il-proċess ġudizzjarju u jghinu aktar lill-akkużati milli biex issir ġustizzja.

F'għieh il-verità u f'għieh il-ġustizzja, ieqfu ippolitizzaw il-proċess ġudizzjarju! Is-Sur Weber hareġ mill-kamra, però jid-dispijaci nisma' li qal li l-Partit Laburista kien jaf minn qabel bil-qtil ta' Daphne. Ahna l-Partit Laburista: nies ġenwini li nemmnu fil-ġustizzja u li nemmnu fil-progress. Hawn min tatu ferneżija biex b'urgenza niddiskutu llum dak li għadu f'nofs xhieda, wieħed mix-xhud f'dan il-każ. Ferneżija mhux għax iridu li tohroġ il-verità, imma ferneżija għax iridu jirbhu l-punti elettorali qabel elezzjoni ġenerali.

Sur President, saret il-hsara lill-pajjiż minn kull min abbuża mill-istituzzjonijiet tul id-deċennji shah. Din id-drawwa biddilha l-gvern progressiv f'din l-aħħar sena. Sahħah is-saltna tad-dritt, saħħah id-demokrazija, mexa mar-rakkommandazzjonijiet tal-Kummissjoni Venezja.... *(il-President interrompa lill-kelliem)*

Maite Pagazaurtundúa (Renew). – Señor presidente, señora comisaria, ¡qué hermosa lengua es el maltés! Sobre todo cuando no se utiliza para mentir.

El caso de Malta es uno de los que estamos viendo en Europa donde la prensa libre es ninguneada e incluso atacada por parte de partidos políticos y de Gobiernos a quienes no les interesa la verdad, sino el poder con cada vez menos límites. En maltes, en inglés o en español. Y los hechos verídicos son la única vacuna contra esto, y la lucha contra la corrupción.

Daphne Caruana Galizia fue asesinada para callarla. Para que no buscara hechos sobre la corrupción y el caciquismo. Keith Schembri, el exjefe de gabinete del primer ministro, ha sido acusado de corrupción, blanqueo de capitales, fraude y falsificación sobre la base de una investigación que publicó Daphne en 2016. Antes de ser asesinada, fue deshumanizada, vejada, humillada. Hasta ahora no ha habido ni decencia en maltés ni en inglés, ni aceptación de la responsabilidad pese a que los tres sicarios apuntan directamente adonde apuntan. Tres años.

Si queremos ser fieles a la palabra que dimos en los homenajes, primero debemos conseguir ser eficaces en el respeto a la libertad de información y su protección. Y, segundo, en estado de *shock* aprobamos medidas en la comisión contra la corrupción. Apliquémoslas.

Silvia Modig (The Left). – Arvoisa puhemies, oikeusvaltio on ja sen pitää olla yhteisten arvojen keskeinen periaate. Tämä on liian arvokas keskustelu haaskattavaksi puoluepolitiikointiin. Toimivassa oikeusvaltiossa on vapaa ja moniääninen media. Toimivassa oikeusvaltiossa tutkivat journalistit ja riippumaton media toimivat vallan vaihtokoirana tuoden päivänvaloon väärinkäytökset. Toimivassa oikeusvaltiossa rikoksen uhri saa oikeutta riippumattomasta oikeuslaitoksesta.

Daphne Caruana Galizian järkyttävä kohtalo on tehnyt näkyväksi Maltan ongelmat ja korruption laajuuden tavalla, joka vaatii meitä toimimaan. Oikeusvaltioperiaatteen loukkauksia on ilmennyt useita. Rajoituksia mielenilmausten järjestämisessä, median vapauden rajoittamisessa, korruptiota, rahanpesua. Ongelmat näyttävät olevan rakenteellisia. Oikeusvaltioperiaatteiden noudattaminen, se koskee joka ikistä jäsenvaltiota, ja siksi komission on viipymättä ruvettava toimiin varmistaakseen, että Daphne Caruana Galizia saa oikeutta ja että Malta palaa oikeusvaltioperiaatteen polulle. Kiitos.

Paulo Rangel (PPE). – Mr President, my dear fellow European citizens of Malta, we are always very proud of your country, also because you are the Fatherland and the Motherland of such a European hero and the freedom champion like Daphne Caruana Galizia.

But we have to condemn, and also to be ashamed of the former and of the present Maltese Government that are undoubtedly associated to this repugnant and repellent crime. Let me be very loud and very clear: when impunity, corruption, destruction of evidence, concealment, obstruction of justice, flourishes and endures; when the perpetrators of this crime and other crimes dare to ask for pardon and official clemency; when the connections and links with members of government and of the Labour Party are widely proved, we are not in the presence of a crime, we are not before a single case of impunity, no, we are in the presence of a systematic violation and a massive breach of the rule of law.

And that is why I urge the S&D Group to acknowledge this breach. And I appeal to all the members of the meeting of today's European Council to address the persistent breach of all values of the European Union by the Maltese Government.

Please be courageous and honour the memory of Daphne, honour the pride and honour of all Maltese citizens.

Lara Wolters (S&D). – Mr President, well, I will try, and because I'm not here as a member of the S&D to deny the deep corruption patterns in Malta, as identified in the Commission's 2020 rule-of-law report. And I'm not here either to overstate the progress that has been made, even though the Commission's assessment is tentatively positive. I am here to stand up for journalists who must be able to do their work without being pestered by defamation lawsuits and certainly without physical attacks or assassination attempts. And I'm also here to stand up for justice and the rule of law.

The Council of Europe, the Venice Committee, the Commission recommendations on Malta, they should all be implemented urgently. No country is immune to the temptations of power and the serious allegations of money laundering, tax evasion and corruption should be recognised by all here.

And lastly, I am here because far too often our debates in this room do not seem to originate from genuine concerns over our Union and the rule of law. And having studied together with Andrew Caruana, I feel very strongly that he and his brothers deserve better than what we tend to provide them with. I'm here to remind colleagues that Daphne Caruana's family are not helped by the political games that are played on both sides of this House and to remind those that need reminding that their suffering is still real.

Moritz Körner (Renew). – Herr Präsident! Der schreckliche Mord an Daphne Caruana Galizia war ein Angriff auf die Pressefreiheit in ganz Europa und auf Rechtsstaatlichkeit, auf den Kampf gegen Korruption. Und darüber wollte ich eigentlich auch heute vor allem reden.

Und dann bin ich dieser Debatte hier gefolgt und muss mit Bedauern feststellen, dass in der S&D-Fraktion schon im ersten Wortbeitrag abgelenkt wird und von Polen und Ungarn gesprochen wird und gleichzeitig die Rechte hier hinkommt und sagt: „Es wird nicht genügend über Malta diskutiert, Ihr diskutiert immer nur über Ungarn und Polen.“

Übrigens, Herr Krah – der ist ja jetzt schon weg, der ist ja direkt nach seinem Redebeitrag gegangen: Es gab unzählige Missionen dieses Parlamentes in Malta, es gab unzählige Entschließungen. Wer sich also von der Rechten einfach hier hinstellt und sagt „Also, das ist hier ein Fall, der von der Linken in diesem Parlament nicht bearbeitet werden muss“, der lügt einfach faktisch! Und das ist tatsächlich etwas, was wir hier festhalten müssen: Dieser Kampf zwischen Hin und Her, rechts und links – es geht darum, Pressefreiheit und die Sicherheit von Journalisten in ganz Europa zu verteidigen.

Und deswegen sollten wir einzig und allein die Kommission unterstützen, tatsächlich stärker dafür zu sorgen, dass Journalisten überall geschützt werden. Und wir müssen sie auffordern, noch härter gegen Rechtsstaatlichkeitsverbrechen vorzugehen und endlich den Rechtsstaatsmechanismus ... *(Der Präsident entzieht dem Redner das Wort.)*

David Casa (PPE). – Daphne Caruana Galizia, grazzi. Grazzi tal-kuraġġ u d-determinazzjoni tiegħek minkejja t-theddid. Grazzi talli tajt kollox, anke hajtek, biex Malta ma tibqax immexxija mill-kriminali, u fisem dan il-Parlament Ewropew, iva, nerga' nghid: grazzi Daphne.

U allura, intom li kkonfoffajtu biex teliminawha, intom li hallastu l-flus biex teqirduha, ibżgħu! Twerwru! Ghax ghandkom ghaliex! Ghaliex se thallsu għal ghemilkom. Ghaliex dik il-familja li kissirtu u fridtu, għad tridu tharsu f'ghajnejha qabel tmorru l-habs.

Dawn huma n-nies li qed imexxu lil pajjiżna: haġa waħda mal-kriminalità. Realtà kerha li tiġi kkonfermata ma' kull jum li jgħaddi. Kuljum ahbar ġdida. Kuljum skandlu ġdid. Malta għandha bżonn protezzjoni mill-Gvern tagħha stess.

Il-qattielu u l-hallelin isibu lil haddiehor min jiddefendihom, imma mhux lili. Imma mhux lil Roberta.

Naghlaq b'messaġġ lilkom, lill-Maltin u l-Ghawdxin. Taqtgħux qalbkom. Ahna mhux se nieqfu hawn. Se nibqgħu ninsistu li ssir ġustizzja. Hemm nies qalbiena u ta' kuraġġ li mhumiex jibżgħu: nies fil-pulizija, fil-qrati, ġurnalisti u s-soċjetà civili. U fl-ahhar mill-ahhar, mhux inqas, f'dan il-Parlament. Il-Parlament Ewropew hu t-tarka tal-poplu Malti u Ghawdxi, bħalma jien jien.

Grazzi Daphne, u Daphne, ahna ma ninsewk qatt!

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Sur President, iva l-istituzzjonijiet f'Malta qed jahdmu; qed jahdmu bla ma jharsu lejn wiċċ hadd! Ghaliex iva, għalina l-akbar priorità hija dik li ssir ġustizzja wara l-qtil ta' Daphne Caruana Galizia; ġustizzja illi bhalissa qed issir quddiem il-Qrati tagħna fejn seba' persuni jinsabu akkużati b'dan l-omicidju.

Għalhekk, ma nistax nifhem. Ma nistax nifhem kif il-Parlament Ewropew qed jipprova jgħaddi l-ġudizzju politiku tiegħu fuq proċess illi għadu għaddej quddiem il-Qrati tagħna. Ejja nhallu l-istituzzjonijiet tagħna jahdmu fil-libertà u mhux inkomplu naghmlu minn dan il-proċess kummiedja ta' politika partigġjana.

Ġustizzja, pereżempju, illi żgur ma nistgħu nsibuha qatt jekk niehdu l-parir tal-Kap tal-Oppożizzjoni Malti illi jrid jagħti mahfra lil dawk kollha akkużati b'dan id-delitt mingħajr ma jikkonsulta mal-istituzzjonijiet.

Jiena kburi, kburi bil-Gvern Malti. Kburi bil-gvern illi qatt ma kien superv matul dawn l-ahhar xhur u kompli jimplimenta rakkomandazzjoni waħda wara l-ohra, tal-Kummissjoni Venezja, tal-Greco u tal-Kunsill tal-Ewropa. Rakkomandazzjonijiet illi kienu ilhom snin twal fuq l-ixkaffa.

Sahhahna s-saltna tad-dritt. Sahhahna l-ġlieda kontra l-hasil tal-flus billi sahhahna l-legalizzazzjoni u tajna aktar riżorsi lill-Pulizija tagħna. Komplejna ninvestu fil-qrati tagħna billi židna l-maġistrati, billi židna l-imhallfin, billi l-Prim Ministru m'għadx fadallu s-setgħa li hu stess jahtar il-ġudikatura. Appuntajna għall-ewwel darba Kummissarju b'sejha pubblika, bi proċess trasparenti.

Perfetti m'ahniex u r-riformi għadna qed naghmluhom, imma foloz m'ahniex lanqas. Foloz, bħal hafna minn dawk illi tkellmu llum illi qed jippuntaw subgħajhom għall-korruzzjoni u f'pajjiżhom għandhom problemi kbar, ibda minn Weber illi l-partit tiegħu anki fuq daqsxejn ta'... *(il-President interrompa lill-kelliem)*

Irena Joveva (Renew). – Gospod predsednik, že skoraj štiri leta so minila od umora preiskovalne novinarke Daphne Caruana Galizia. Bila je brutalno umorjena zgoľ zaradi opravljanja svoje službe v interesu javnega dobrega in zaradi razkrivanja korupcije. Štiri leta, pa se še vedno zdi, da se celoten proces iskanja krivcev in pravice vedno bolj izmika.

Kakšno sporočilo oblasti Malte s tem dajejo preiskovalnim novinarjem po Evropi? Kdaj bomo dosegli epilog te grozne zgodbe in razrešili sistemske napake, ki so nas pripeljale do te točke?

Zaenkrat je pet od sedmih moških, ki so vpleteni v ta umor, poskušalo skleniti dogovor z državo. Edini, ki je bil zaenkrat obsojen, pa je morilec, ki je sam priznal umor in si za sodelovanje s tožilci izpogajal zmanjšano kazen. In zdaj bi se dva še dodatno pogajala za imuniteto s tem, da razkrijeta svoja pretekla kriminalna dejanja. Resno?

Vsi, ki so vpleteni, morajo dobiti pravične kazni. Nihče ne sme biti pomiloščen. Razčistiti pa se mora tudi korupcija in vse politične povezave. Pika.

Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE). – Mr President, where are the leaders of the left? Missing in action. There are secondary figures here today speaking about Bulgaria, Hungary and the respect that they have for Malta and the Maltese people. Is this the respect they have?

The highest ranks of the Maltese Labour Party are involved in the highest form of corruption and criminal offences. For how long is the European Socialist Party going to maintain them in their ranks? The former Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister is charged with corruption and money laundering. Five of seven people charged with the murder of Daphne Caruana have requested presidential pardons in exchange for providing information against politicians in government.

Just try to imagine if this was a right or centre-right government. Let me be clear, this is not a critique of Malta but of their government. The Maltese people rightly demand justice and political accountability. We have to be bold and clear and call things for what they are. The socialist government in Malta has allowed, in the heart of Europe, a journalist to be murdered for her work, and her killers and the enablers remain free.

Daphne exemplified this need to shine a light on corruption and demand justice. She paid for it with her life. Her life and work should be a lesson and an example for all of us.

Josianne Cutajar (S&D) – Sur President, jien Maltija u rrid li ssir ġustizzja. Imma l-ġustizzja trid tithalla tiegħu l-kors tagħha biex tkun tassew effettiva u serena f'xogħolha. Għandna quddiemna dibattitu illum, li hu barra minn waqt u insensittiv għar-realtà attwali. Dan id-dibattitu u r-riżoluzzjoni mitluba f'dan il-mument, f'it jista' jidher għid minnhom, anzi jistgħu jwasslu għal iżjed firdiet; u dan f'soċjetà li bħalissa qed tftitex li ssaħħah is-sens ta' għaqda u r-rikonciljazzjoni fi hdanha.

X'sens jagħmel li, waqt li membru stat f'pajjiżi qed jagħmel l-isforzi ġenwini kollha tiegħu biex jiżgura titjib fl-oqsma ta' governanza u s-saltna tad-dritt, tinstiga proċess bħal dan? X'sens jagħmel li waqt li Malta dejjem hemm proċeduri ġudizzjarji fil-qrati tagħna, qed jinstemgħu testimonjanzi kruċjali, għaddejjin inkjesti varji b'kunsens sod li jissolvew każijiet maġġuri, tmexxu dibattiti hawnhekk li se jqanqal is-sitwazzjoni aktar milli jirrispetta l-hidma nnifisha tal-ġustizzja?

Din tal-lum hija tassew azzjoni insensittiva lejn ir-realtà ta' Malta bħalissa, u għalhekk la se tkun konċiljatorja u lanqas utli fl-eżitu tagħha. Ftit aktar minn sena ilu kien diġà sar dibattitu u riżoluzzjoni oħra fil-konfront ta' Malta. Minn dakinhar intrefgħet responsabbiltà politika, irreżenja prim ministru, tela' iehor, ikkommettejna bl-akbar sforzi biex insewvu fejn kien mehtieg u nżidu r-rigorozità fil-proċessi kollha tal-governanza tal-pajjiż. La darba xorta dan id-dibattitu seħħ barra minn waqt, nittama li dan il-proċess iwassal jekk xejn, biex jirrikonoxxi u juri fiduċja fl-isforzi li bħalissa verament qeghdin isiru. Ejja nhallu l-istituzzjonijiet jahdmu. Ejja inhallu..... (il-President interrompa lill-kelliema)

Vlad Gheorghe (Renew). – Domnule preşedinte, corupția vulnerabilizează nepermis statele membre și Uniunea în tot ansamblul său. Este o amenințare continuă la adresa statului de drept și a securității, are costuri uriașe, limitează libertatea presei, descurajează avertizările de integritate, adâncește conflictele din societate și alimentează extremismul.

Crima comisă asupra jurnalistei malteze nu poate rămâne nepedepsită.

Rezoluția trebuie să conțină un mesaj ferm împotriva corupției și împotriva criminalității organizate. Presa liberă și jurnalismul de investigație trebuie să știe că sunt sprijiniți și protejați. Cooperarea judiciară este esențială, Parchetul European trebuie să înceapă urgent activitatea, în ciuda celor care încă i se opun.

Corupția este o piedică în calea progresului și prosperității. Ca jurist român, știu, din păcate, asta prea bine. Vă cer să fim uniți în fața corupților care încalcă drepturile fundamentale și valorile familiei europene. Putem și trebuie să eliminăm corupția din Europa pentru a fi puternici împreună.

Isabel Wiseler-Lima (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, un journalisme indépendant, un journalisme d'investigation qui nous apporte les faits, la vérité, est un journalisme indispensable. Aucune démocratie ne peut survivre sans que la vérité soit connue. La vérité est l'arme de la justice. Nous ne pouvons nous passer de vérité.

Il faut s'imprégner du caractère de Daphné Caruana Galizia, de cette soif qu'elle avait de divulguer la vérité à tout prix, ce qu'elle a payé de sa vie. Il faut aussi prendre conscience de la personnalité de ces puissants, de ces criminels, qui ont commis et commandité un crime odieux. Il est inconcevable que des groupes au centre de l'échiquier politique européen, malgré les révélations récentes à Malte, aient refusé d'en débattre ici et maintenant.

Aujourd'hui est le jour où il convient d'évoquer Daphne Caruana Galizia dans cette plénière. Dommage que cela n'ait pas été une évidence pour tous dans cette assemblée! Les Maltais méritent mieux, les Européens méritent mieux.

Nous devons honorer, soutenir et mieux protéger nos journalistes d'investigation. Nous ne pouvons admettre qu'ils soient si exposés, et nous ne pouvons surtout pas admettre que nos propres lois soient utilisées pour les faire taire. Ils sont de plus en plus nombreux à être impliqués dans des procès sans consistance, le but étant simplement de les précipiter dans la faillite personnelle. C'était aussi le cas de Daphne.

Créer un cadre juridique qui empêche cela et protège mieux nos journalistes est absolument nécessaire pour eux et pour nos démocraties. Nous le devons à Daphne et à tous ceux qui se sacrifient.

Antonio Tajani (PPE). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, l'omicidio di Daphne Caruana Galizia non è stato soltanto una ferita inferta al popolo maltese, è stata una ferita inferta a tutta l'Europa. E questo che stiamo svolgendo oggi è un dibattito non per ricordare, ma per andare avanti. Perché quando i mandanti dell'omicidio sedevano nel palazzo del governo socialista a Malta, vuol dire che c'è qualche cosa di ben più grave, che va ben al di là del semplice omicidio: c'era un complotto politico per uccidere una giornalista che stava scoprendo qualcosa che non doveva scoprire, che il governo socialista non voleva che si scoprisse! Ecco perché dobbiamo andare avanti, ecco perché è importante discutere adesso.

E io credo che la famiglia del partito socialista debba anche farsi un esame di coscienza quando non vuole affrontare questi problemi: la difesa dello Stato di diritto è uguale in tutta Europa e in tutto il mondo. Non esistono Stati di diritti più belli e Stati di diritti meno belli, bisogna sempre e comunque difendere i valori nei quali noi crediamo.

Ecco perché il Parlamento europeo – è un impegno che presi da Presidente – non deve lasciare la presa sulla vicenda di Daphne Caruana Galizia. Vogliamo sapere la verità! Non dobbiamo mettere la testa sotto la sabbia: la politica dello struzzo non paga. Dobbiamo anzi incentivare l'approvazione della direttiva anti-SLAPP. Dobbiamo aiutare Europol a poter fare ancora di più, perché non accada mai più in Europa che un governo sia complice dell'omicidio di un giornalista.

Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia has been a wake-up call for Malta to address the rule of law concerns and engage in reforms. Malta has rolled out important reforms and it is key that it continues to consolidate them.

Many of you here repeated today that murders of journalists are unacceptable and intolerable in Europe today. And I agree with those who said here that it is not the matter for party politics that we are speaking here about the universal value, which is freedom of press and freedom of speech and safety of journalists who work for the society.

Whenever I read new revelations about the fact that Daphne Caruana Galizia was right in her work, I realise that she is still working for us now and she is still working for the truth. For us at EU level, we have already taken steps to improve the situation of journalists and the media. More specifically, we are currently working on two important initiatives.

I have already mentioned, the first one. It's the recommendation to Member States on the safety of journalists. I haven't spoken here today about the other initiative, which concerns the fight against abusive litigation against journalists and rights defenders, so-called 'strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP)' cases. And again Daphne Caruana Galizia is a stark reminder of this practice. She had 47 such lawsuits pending against her in Malta and abroad at the moment of her assassination. Journalists should spend their time by doing their investigative work and informing citizens by being the watchdogs of our democracies, not by fighting ingenious claims.

We see the paradoxical situation as if the justice system turns against the freedom of speech. This is something we have to stop. Recent revelations as regards the investigation over the assassination of Daphne Caruana Galizia are important, but are not the end of this sad story. Many questions remain still unanswered. All those responsible must be brought to justice and the whole truth must be fully repealed. Also the public inquiry must continue unhindered.

The Commission is aware that a number of journalistic stories which she broke or worked on have led to criminal investigations, some of which have led to high-profile arrests. It underlines the critical importance of all Maltese and other journalists who continue to hold those in power to account. It also shows the importance of the work of all those organisations which support them.

I also salute those Members of the European Parliament who continue to keep media freedom and pluralism and the safety of journalists high on the EU's agenda, and pledge the Commission's full support in this endeavour. I would like to thank you again for the cooperation. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to defend the rule of law and to put bricks for the strengthening of our democracies.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist damit geschlossen.

Die Abstimmung findet im Rahmen der nächsten Tagung statt.

12. Delegated acts (Rule 111(6)) (action taken): see Minutes

13. Control of exports, brokering, technical assistance, transit and transfers of dual-use (debate)

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über den Bericht von Markéta Gregorová im Namen des Ausschusses für internationalen Handel über den Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates über eine Unionsregelung für die Kontrolle der Ausfuhr, der Verbringung, der Vermittlung, der technischen Unterstützung und der Durchfuhr betreffend Güter mit doppeltem Verwendungszweck (Neufassung) (COM(2016)0616 – C8-0393/2016 – 2016/0295(COD)) (A8-0390/2017).

Markéta Gregorová, rapporteur. – Mr President, today's debate comes after a process that started with an ambitious Commission recast proposal in 2016, which aims to rein in the immoral and damaging export of European cyber-surveillance to dictatorships around the world. My predecessor, Professor Klaus Buchner, took up this political battle against concentrated industry power, lack of willingness to cooperate among national states, and a baseline of secrecy that one usually only finds in spy thrillers. I thank him, my fellow shadow rapporteurs, our Committee Chair Bernd Lange, and our hard-working staff wholeheartedly for engaging in this years-long political battle. The result has been a recast that does not reinvent dual-use export controls, but one that provides the necessary tools to protect human rights and our European security, and one that eases our legitimate exports and cuts red tape. It is not our final destination. It is however an important stepping stone to progress even further.

If we adopt this reform in today's vote, the European Parliament will have put human rights and human security at the forefront of our exports policy for some of the most dangerous dual-use technology. The new rules for cyber-surveillance exports, paired with companies' new due diligence requirements and meaningful transparency, will together mean that powerful European cyber-surveillance technology does not end up in the hands of dictators and authoritarians.

In this regard, I also cannot omit the current and future role of civil society. Watchdogs and non-governmental organisations and journalists always had a crucial role in the identification of problematic companies and areas. We now have their hands with the new transparency provisions to access necessary information. We have also carefully listened to our businesses and narrowed down the scope of new controlled items to a small percentile of all exports. Cyber-surveillance is not the big job-creator in the EU and the costs of it landing in the wrong hands far outweigh those economic gains. Although bureaucratic changes will have to occur, ultimately, the new harmonised reporting, implementation and enforcement measures will improve competitiveness inside the single market.

In addition, the new general export authorisations will allow our businesses to compete in a tough global environment. The recast would also create new listing mechanisms that allow us to go beyond Wassenaar, with its limits in scope and speed of adoption that is hopelessly behind the current technological frontier. Ultimately, we must find a solution with our trading partners and expand controls to all democracies. The European Union alone cannot stop the proliferation of cyber-surveillance, weapons of mass destruction, or new dangerous emerging technologies, but with this recast we take a step in the right direction and invite our democratic allies to go together.

I agree with Antony Blinken's recent statement that when one of us is coerced we should respond as allies and work together. I agree with him. I believe that only when democratic nations that uphold the rule of law, due process and fundamental rights work together on the non-proliferation of new and future weapons technologies of the 21st century can we ensure global peace and rising prosperity. The Chinese Communist Party sanctioned five of our colleagues over defending fundamental rights and speaking out about genocide and horrifying human rights abuses in China. It's caused us all to come closer together, as Europeans, and to get a clearer understanding of this one-party regime. Like any other dictatorship, the CCP attempts to silence all opposition and it does so at home with cyber-surveillance that it legally bought, or backwards-engineered, from our companies. This is unacceptable and cannot continue.

I call on the Member States and the Council Working Group on Dual-use Exports to use the new articles in the recast and to put the CCP on our list. China has become one of the most industrious suppliers of cyber-surveillance to dictatorships around the world. It is launching constant cyber-attacks against our institutions and companies. The Soviet threat after the Second World War saw the birth of the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls. It is time that we realise the threats to our institutions and democracies by the Chinese Communist Party as yet another such pivotal moment that requires a comparable level of increased multilateral export controls.

Let me conclude by saying that an adoption of the recast today would only mark the beginning of much of the necessary work. With many new tasks, the European Commission must dedicate more resources and workforce. I trust Stéphane Chardon to do his job well, but he cannot be alone. Our businesses rightfully demand that due diligence guidelines for the export of cyber-surveillance are provided on time.

I would just like to ask Commissioner Šefčovič, what are the Commission's plans in this regard and how can the European Parliament support him in providing the necessary resources for the tasks ahead?

Maroš Šefčovič, *Vice-President of the Commission*. – Mr President, honourable Members, I welcome this opportunity to debate the new EU Export Control Regulation. When the co-legislator reached an agreement last November, it represented an important step forward for the geo-strategic ambition of the European Union.

By strengthening our exports control toolbox, we strengthen our capacity to protect our interests and our values. I particularly wish to thank the rapporteur, Ms Gregorová, but also the Chair of the Committee on International Trade (INTA), Mr Lange, for their key role in brokering this agreement.

The new regulation will mean a comprehensive system upgrade in the development of the EU export controls. Definitions are clarified, new concepts are introduced, licensing processes are simplified and harmonised and a new basis is provided for enhanced information exchange and transparency. It also strengthens our outreach to industry and dialogue with our partners.

For the first time, EU autonomous controls are being introduced in our export control system. This new toolbox will allow the EU to start setting the agenda rather than simply implementing decisions taken at the multilateral level. We will have a strong foundation to engage with third countries to support the global level playing field and enhance international security through more convergent approaches to export controls at the global level.

With the new regulation, EU export control will be fit for the digital age and I know this is a key priority for the European Parliament. We will now have the tools to address human rights concerns associated with the trade in cyber-surveillance technologies.

The EU already decided in July 2020 to tighten controls on the export of cyber-surveillance technologies to Hong Kong following the introduction of its national security law. In the course of this year, using the new provisions of the regulation, the Commission will bring Member States together to encourage further EU action on cyber-surveillance technology whose misuse leads to human rights violations.

Beyond cyber-surveillance, export controls are also a tool that can support our foreign and security policy objectives. Our updated rules will allow the EU to be more active in striking the right balance between trade and security. We are not immune to the effect of export controls mobilised by others, notably as a part of the strategic competition between the US and China. And we cannot be indifferent when controls on emerging and foundational technologies have the potential to redefine the trade and technology map of the 21st century.

The new regulation helps us to rise to this challenge and make our voice heard. Work to develop an approach to the control of emerging technologies is now under way. This will allow us to mitigate risks associated with threats in potentially dangerous technologies and we stand ready to work with partners and allies to secure supply chains for strategic technologies. We know this is an area of particular interest for the Biden administration.

To conclude, honourable Members, this regulation forms an important element of more assertive European approach to global trade issues. It will strengthen our hand in standing up for key European values. I look forward to hearing your views and I urge you to give this new strategic approach your full support.

Sven Simon, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, meine sehr geehrten Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich habe leider ausgerechnet zeitgleich eine Einladung von Präsident Sassoli erhalten, um mit ihm über die Debatte und die Zukunft zu sprechen, deshalb muss ich um Verzeihung bitten, wenn ich die Debatte gleich verlasse.

Aber, meine Damen und Herren, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, wenn wir heute über diese Exportkontrollverordnung abstimmen, behandeln wir eines dieser Themen, die so technisch sind und weit weg von den Menschen erscheinen. Es ist ja sogar schon schwer zu erklären, um was es eigentlich geht. Dabei hat die Entscheidung, die wir heute treffen, gravierende Folgen für den Alltag vieler Menschen – weltweit.

Es geht um die Frage, wie wir den Export von Gütern kontrollieren, die nicht nur zu zivilen, sondern auch zu militärischen Zwecken eingesetzt werden können. Hubschrauber, Chemikalien, Cyberwaffen, künstliche Intelligenz – in der Regelung der Instrumente, etwa zur digitalisierten Kriegsführung, liegt der Innovationsgehalt dieses Gesetzgebungsaktes. Wir wollen, dass es für Autokraten künftig schwieriger wird, an europäische Spitzentechnologie zu gelangen. Wir wollen uns Europäer aber gleichzeitig nicht vollständig aus der Entwicklung zurückziehen, uns den Weg abschneiden, um jeglichen Einfluss in der Welt zu verlieren.

In den Verhandlungen ist es uns gelungen, einen Kompromiss zu erarbeiten, der für mittelständische Unternehmen Rechtssicherheit schafft und unnütze bürokratische Hürden abbaut – gleichzeitig setzen wir Europäerinnen und Europäer weltweit Standards. Das ist ein Erfolg. Deshalb bitte ich Sie um Zustimmung für dieses innovative Instrument.

Bernd Lange, *im Namen der S&D-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, verehrte Berichterstatterin! Wenn wir uns in der Welt umschauen und sehen, dass in Myanmar Oppositionelle verfolgt werden, in der Türkei Oppositionelle verfolgt werden, in Saudi-Arabien Oppositionelle verfolgt werden, dann finde ich es in der Tat beschämend, dass da europäische Überwachungstechnologie genutzt wird.

Insofern begrüße ich sehr, dass wir heute eine Gesetzgebung verabschieden, die die Kontrolle über den Export von Überwachungstechnologien endlich in der Europäischen Union Gesetz werden lässt. Wir haben ja diese *Dual-Use*-Gesetzgebung, wo eben geschaut wird, ob ein Lastwagen zum Transport von einem Panzer oder von Baumaterialien benutzt wird.

Aber heutzutage geht es eben nicht mehr um den Lastwagen, sondern darum, ob man ein iPhone hackt, ob man ein Profil für die Bewegung herstellt und so Oppositionelle verfolgen kann. Deswegen: richtig und gut, dass das in die Kontrolle hineinkommt. Wir haben sichergestellt, dass auch moderne Technologien – wie Gesichtserkennung, Emotionserkennung – darunterfallen. Wir haben klargemacht, dass die zukünftige Technologie auch hier eingebunden wird. Wir haben das Kriterium der Menschenrechtsverletzung neu eingeführt. Bisher galt nur die militärische Verwendung oder die Verbreitung von Massenvernichtungsmitteln als Kriterium.

Wir haben auch sichergestellt, dass es mehr Transparenz gibt, dass jährlich berichtet wird, was exportiert wird und wohin exportiert wird. Und wir haben eine Sorgfaltspflicht für die Unternehmen eingeführt, dass sie genau schauen, was mit ihrer Technologie passiert.

Also lassen Sie uns darüber abstimmen. Herzlichen Dank, Herr Kommissar, für die gute Zusammenarbeit und den Schattenberichterstattern auch.

Liesje Schreinemacher, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Mr President, in the past years we have seen mass surveillance systems used against Uyghurs in China, spyware used against the people in Hong Kong and surveillance technology used during the Arab Spring.

These are all examples of emerging technologies that fell into the wrong hands. The new export rules we are discussing today, the so-called update of the dual-use regulation, come not a moment too soon, because we should never allow European technologies to be used in a way that goes directly against our democratic values.

Not only can dual-use goods – be it traditional or emerging technologies – be used against Europe, these goods can also be used by repressive regimes against their own citizens, journalists and political opponents. With rapid technological developments in the fields of cyber we are encountering an increasing number of grave human rights violations with these technologies.

Even this past year, it was reported that three European companies exported surveillance technology, such as facial recognition, to China. We must be clear that EU companies and technology should never be or become part of the problem.

So it is an important success that this update focuses on human rights risks and adds cyber-surveillance items to the export control regime. And it is good that we leave room for flexibility to add new emerging technologies in the future. These are good first steps, as the rapporteur said, but we do have to continue monitoring this regulation closely and be ambitious in order to keep it up to date and effective.

By not letting goods or technologies leave Europe when they can be used against us or against a third country's own population, I believe these rules will help make the world a safer place for citizens inside and outside the European Union.

Gunnar Beck, *on behalf of the ID Group*. – Mr President, dual-use goods and technologies are generally sold for a legitimate use and often provide a public or economic benefit, but they may also be put to military use.

The EU is now proposing to tighten existing strict export controls with a particular focus on digital surveillance technology. This proposal also introduces human rights violations as a ground for export bans. Authoritarian regimes should not be aided or abetted in suppressing opposition or limiting free speech.

That's all very well. However, there are two problems here.

First, the COVID crisis has shown that the EU is heavily dependent on US and Chinese imports of digital surveillance and other dual-use technology. If the EU really wishes to catch up, it is shooting itself in the foot if it forgoes export opportunities.

Secondly, if we ban the use of such technology, do we really think that the whole world is following us?

Manuela Ripa, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, sehr geehrter Herr Kommissar Šefčovič. Die EU versteht sich als Wächter der Menschenrechte in Europa und weltweit. Der alljährlich durch das Europäische Parlament vergebene Sacharow-Preis symbolisiert diesen Anspruch.

Daher war es nur folgerichtig, mit der *Dual-Use-Verordnung* die Nutzung von Überwachungstechnik durch autoritäre Regime stark einschränken zu wollen. Denn wir dürfen nicht vergessen: Mithilfe von europäischen Technologien werden Regimekritiker verhaftet, gefoltert und ermordet. Doch diese Verordnung ist nur ein Pyrrhussieg, der die wesentlichen Schutzkriterien nicht garantieren kann. Diese Verordnung bringt kaum sinnvolle Verbesserungen.

Ich finde es mehr als bedauerlich, dass die deutsche EU-Ratspräsidentschaft die *Dual-Use-Verordnung* auf Biegen und Brechen schnell, aber lückenhaft zu Ende bringen wollte, nachdem der Rat die Verhandlungen jahrelang blockiert hatte. Denn eine lückenhafte Verordnung hilft den Menschenrechten nicht. Damit ist eine Gesetzgebung entstanden, die nur uralte Techniken berücksichtigt und den Export von modernen Überwachungssystemen kaum noch einschränkt. Zwar konnten einige Kernpunkte meiner Fraktion in den finalen Text eingebracht werden, doch alle guten Errungenschaften bringen uns nichts, wenn kritische *Dual-Use-Produkte* überhaupt nicht von der Verordnung erfasst werden.

Als Hauptproblem sind hier ganz klar die Definition „Güter für die digitale Überwachung“ und die *Catch-all-Klausel* zu nennen. Beide sind lückenhaft, weil sie nur für verdeckte Überwachungssysteme gelten. Die meisten Überwachungssysteme werden somit nicht erfasst, weil sie nicht verdeckt, sondern gut sichtbar eingesetzt werden wie zum Beispiel Überwachungskameras. Selbst bestimmte Technik für das Anzapfen von Informations- und Telekommunikationssystemen kann problemlos exportiert werden, weil sie eigentlich für harmlose Zwecke konstruiert wurde, zum Beispiel für Telefonabrechnungen – deshalb auch der Begriff *dual use*.

Mit der gleichen Technik, nur anders angewendet, können aber auch Gespräche aufgezeichnet werden. Der Gesetzentwurf hat es versäumt, hier eine gute Unterscheidung zu treffen. Analyseprogramme, mit denen man Regimegegner identifizieren kann, können leider nach wie vor exportiert werden. Die sogenannte *Catch-all-Klausel* hatte den Zweck, der sich rasant entwickelnden Technik Rechnung zu tragen. Man kann heute aber nicht bei allen Überwachungssystemen so exakt definieren, ob ein Verstoß gegen die *Dual-Use-Verordnung* vorliegt oder nicht.

Es bleibt nur noch die Hoffnung, dass die Mitgliedstaaten wenigstens einige der Lücken durch schärfere nationale Gesetze schließen werden. Wir haben hier klar die Chance und damit ein europäisches Momentum verpasst, den betroffenen Regimekritikern zu helfen.

Geert Bourgeois, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, vicevoorzitter, wij steunen het akkoord over de exportcontrole inzake producten voor tweërlei gebruik. Onze dank gaat naar de rapporteur en we drukken ook onze bijzondere waardering uit voor Bernd Lange, die in dezen een zeer bepalende rol heeft gespeeld.

De nieuwe criteria in deze herschikte verordening zorgen voor meer harmonisering van standaarden en procedures, voor een betere coördinatie en informatiedoorstroming tussen de lidstaten en voor een verhoogde transparantie. Nieuw is dat de verordening ook een autonome controle op schending van mensenrechten inzake export van cyberbewakingstechnologie mogelijk maakt. We kunnen inderdaad niet langer tolereren dat schendingen van mensenrechten en onderdrukking van bevolkingsgroepen gebeuren met gebruik van Europese hightech producten. In dit verband wordt mij gezegd dat uitgerekend in dit Parlement camera's hangen van een Chinees bedrijf dat bewakingstechnologie zou leveren voor de fameuze Chinese strafkampen. Als dat klopt is dit wel bijzonder cynisch en ook bijzonder inconsequent.

Vicevoorzitter, u wacht de taak om een gebalanceerde uitvoering te geven aan de nieuwe verordening door het versterken van het concurrentievermogen van de EU, het vermijden van onnodige administratieve rompslomp voor onze bedrijven, het waarborgen van onze veiligheidsbelangen, het hanteren van hoge ethische standaarden en het bevorderen van de mensenrechten.

Clare Daly, on behalf of The Left Group. – Mr President, like colleagues I'd like to welcome the final text of the regulation before us. It contains a number of important new extensions in the scope of the Dual-use Regulation as well as clarifications on control and cooperation mechanisms which definitely will improve monitoring and transparency.

We welcome the measures around the new technologies legislation in terms of biotech and AI, and indeed, despite resistance from the Council, the compromise proposal expanding the catch-all provision to make it obligatory to obtain authorisation for dual-use items not included in the control list if the item is being intended for use in internal repression or a serious violation of human rights – although I find it hard to see any situation where anybody would admit that fact, but undoubtedly many of them are being used for that.

So I do think we have to be wary when we come to civilian items that can have military applications, particularly when they're going to serial rights abusers like Saudi Arabia and Israel, and that's why I think it's a bit of a hard neck for people in here to get up and talk about China and Russia when the EU has been aiding and arming Israel for years, despite its human rights violations and flagrant disregard for international law. The fact that the EU is the second-largest exporter to Saudi Arabia and the UAE countries which have been pummeling Yemen into the dust, murdering civilians, starving babies – clearly human rights isn't really a problem for us when we're selling arms, so why welcome this? We might want to stop our military activity, full stop.

Tiziana Beghin (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, negli ultimi anni alcune società europee hanno venduto software e tecnologie di spionaggio e sorveglianza a dittature e regimi totalitari, che le hanno usate per rintracciare, arrestare e, ahimè, uccidere attivisti e cittadini innocenti.

Tra queste c'era anche una società italiana che ha potuto esportare legalmente queste tecnologie, perché il governo di allora aveva scelto di chiudere un occhio e di permettere l'esportazione, approfittando anche di un vuoto normativo a livello europeo.

Oggi finalmente possiamo dire che questo vuoto è stato colmato. Con il regolamento che stiamo per votare sarà impossibile fornire questa tecnologia ai dittatori stranieri. Questo provvedimento non è perfetto ma, approvandolo, l'Europa fa un grande passo verso la tutela dei diritti umani e la creazione di un mondo più equo.

La delegazione del Movimento 5Stelle ringrazia i relatori di questa e della passata legislatura e volentieri voterà a favore.

Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez (PPE). – Señor presidente, las tecnologías de doble uso, aquellas que pueden emplearse para usos civiles y también para militares, son casi tan viejas como la humanidad. Si nos remontamos al paleolítico, ya encontramos hachas de sílex necesarias para la caza, pero también empleadas para la guerra.

La tecnología, por su propia naturaleza, es un arma de doble filo. Por un lado, es una herramienta para generar innovación, nuevas oportunidades económicas y nuevos empleos. Por eso Europa debe seguir apostando por nuevas técnicas como la inteligencia artificial o la computación cuántica para no perder la carrera tecnológica global. También la tecnología se ha consolidado en los últimos años en un instrumento clave para ayudar a las Fuerzas y Cuerpos de Seguridad del Estado a proteger a todos los ciudadanos. Pero, por el otro lado, existen numerosas razones para controlar y limitar las transferencias tecnológicas y las exportaciones de estos servicios fuera de la Unión Europea.

De caer en manos erróneas, estas tecnologías pueden poner en peligro nuestra propia seguridad nacional o restringir las libertades y los derechos humanos de ciudadanos de terceros países. Creo que el informe que hoy debatimos supone el equilibrio correcto para seguir avanzando gracias a la tecnología sin poner en grave peligro derechos y libertades.

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D). – Mr President, the reform of the Dual-use Regulation is an important step forward in promoting human rights in the value-based EU trade policy. Dual-use equipment is a concern, as emerging and disruptive civilian technologies are more and more frequently used by authoritarian states to suppress human rights both internally and externally. China's military-civil fusion is very good example of this.

There is now an opportunity with a more coherent and responsible EU policy also to step up on the international cooperation to promote human rights. We need coordinated action to deprive authoritarian leaders and states of technology so that they cannot be used for malign purposes. The next step might be that we need to start working more on import controls to also protect our own citizens.

Karin Karlsbro (Renew). – Herr talman! Kolleger! Alltför ofta har vi sett teknologier för cyberövervakning exporteras från EU till repressiva regimer – till länder som använder dem för att spionera på och kontrollera sina egna medborgare, journalister och människorättsförsvare. Detta måste stoppas.

Det är välkommet att EU nu stärker regelverket för export av produkter för dubbla användningsområden. Det behövs, och det är det här parlamentet som har drivit på för det. Sedan är det klart att arbetet med ny lagstiftning kan få svårt att hålla jämna steg med den tekniska utvecklingen. Men detta är en politik i rätt riktning.

Mänskliga fri- och rättigheter ska vara en ledstjärna för EU. Vi ska ta ställning för dem som har minst frihet och aldrig stå på förtryckarnas sida. Detta är ett exempel på där EU verkligen ställer sig på rätt sida.

Filip De Man (ID). – Voorzitter, de EU wil controle op exportvergunningen, maar hier is sprake van een hemeltergende schijnheiligheid inzake wapenuitvoer, bijvoorbeeld naar Saudi-Arabië. 75% van de EU-wapenuitvoer gaat naar dat land en al dat wapengekletter komt uit het Waalse Gewest. Andere lidstaten hebben een wapenembargo ingesteld, maar het Waalse FN blijft leveren. En wie is eigenaar van FN? Dat is de Waalse regering! En wie zit in die Waalse regering? Socialisten, groenen en liberalen.

Die partijen leveren dus wapens aan Saudi-Arabië, dat ze dan gebruikt in Jemen, waar al jarenlang een bloedige oorlog woedt tussen soennieten en sjiieten, waarbij de Saudische oliemiljardairs en de Iraanse ayatollahs elkaar bestoken.

Toppunt is natuurlijk dat de EU tegelijkertijd humanitaire hulp naar Jemen moet sturen, in totaal reeds voor 1 miljard euro. Dus de Saudische soennieten en de Iraanse sjiieten vernietigen half Jemen en wij betalen voor de schade.

Ik kan nog voorbeelden aanhalen: vanuit EU-landen werden de islamitische rebellen in Syrië bevoorraad. De sultan van Turkije krijgt zelfs heuse raketten vanuit Europa. Akkoorden worden gesloten met de communistische dictators in China en de EU laat toe dat de Chinezen onze technologie inpikken. Kortom, hier wordt weer eens door socialisten, groenen, christendemocraten en liberalen, die toch zo graag de gutmensch uithangen, een toch wel bijzonder hypocriet theaterstuk opgevoerd.

Tudor Ciuhodaru (S&D). – Domnule președinte, onorată Comisie, onorați membri, suntem astăzi pe un teren minat. Certificatul verde de călătorie, a cărui introducere ați adoptat-o astăzi prin procedură de urgență, poate deveni fără o dezbatere amplă, bazată pe date concludente medicale și respectarea datelor cu caracter personal, un nou produs cu dublă utilizare. În aceste condiții, pot să vă spun că acest lucru înseamnă un atentat la drepturile noastre fundamentale, la libertățile și valorile noastre europene.

Cel mai important drept, obținut de toți românii, câștigat cu greu de toți românii odată cu aderarea României la Uniunea Europeană, a fost chiar acest drept de a circula liber, fără restricții de circulație și fără cheltuieli suplimentare, doar în baza unui act eliberat de România. Eu vreau ca și acest drept să fie respectat și vă întreb de ce vaccinarea este gratuită iar testarea este pe bani grei?

Vă propun încă o dată ca orice produs cu dublă utilizare, inclusiv acest certificat verde de călătorie, să fie supus unei dezbateri ample, bazat pe date medicale concludente, în așa fel încât „Unitate în diversitate”, deviza Uniunii Europene, să însemne (președintele întrerupe oratorul)...

(Die Aussprache wird unterbrochen)

14. Second voting session

Der Präsident. – Bevor ich nun Herrn Kommissar Šefčovič das Wort erteile, möchte ich die zweite Abstimmungsrunde eröffnen.

Es wird über die auf der Tagesordnung angegebenen Dossiers abgestimmt.

Die Abstimmungsrunde ist von 16.30 bis 17.45 Uhrgeöffnet.

Es kommt dasselbe Abstimmungsverfahren zur Anwendung wie bei den letzten Abstimmungsunden.

Alle Abstimmungen erfolgen namentlich.

Ich erkläre die zweite Abstimmungsrunde für eröffnet. Sie können bis 17.45 Uhr abstimmen.

Die Ergebnisse der zweiten Abstimmungsrunde werden um 19.00 Uhr bekannt gegeben.

15. Control of exports, brokering, technical assistance, transit and transfers of dual-use (continuation of debate)

Der Präsident. – Wir setzen nun unsere Aussprache über den Bericht von Markéta Gregorová (A8-0390/2017) fort.

Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, first I would like to thank the honourable Members for their interventions and also for using very concrete examples of how these technologies can be dangerous in the hands of autocratic or non-democratic regimes – as Mr Lange, Ms Kumpula-Natri and Ms Karlsbro demonstrated in their remarks.

Therefore, as Ms Schreinemacher has just said, it's absolutely important that the European Parliament take full ownership of this new approach to EU export controls.

We have a lot of work ahead of us to develop these new tools and fulfil the promise of the regulation. To answer the rapporteur, Ms Gregorová, I would like to underline that the Commission takes this very seriously, and how you can help us would be with your continuous interest and support in our effort, because I'm sure this will be crucial for the future. Because this has to be a collective joint effort involving the Parliament, Commission and Member States within our respective areas of responsibility, and I'm sure that we also have to work very closely with industry and civil society.

It is in our strong collective interest to adopt this new approach because we know that dual-use technology poses a real risk to national and international security, and we know that cyber-technologies can lead to human rights violations, as we've been reminded by Mr Bourgeois and Mr Zoido Álvarez.

We will now have robust export controls to mitigate these things. Exporters will have to follow due diligence obligations. These are real and positive steps forward for the European Union, and this gives us a strong platform to engage with our global partners on these issues.

So I would kindly ask you, and urge you, to give your full support to an ambitious implementation of the regulation. I believe that we can build on the trust and good collaboration that developed during the negotiations and work closely together to ensure successful implementation.

Once again, thank you very much for the great work and thank you very much for the excellent cooperation.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Über dieses Dossier können Sie bis 17.45 Uhr abstimmen.

(Die Sitzung wird um 16.34 Uhr unterbrochen.)

16. Resumption of the sitting

(Die Sitzung wird um 19.09 Uhr wieder aufgenommen.)

17. Announcement of voting results

Der Präsident. – *(Nach der Bekanntgabe der Abstimmungsergebnisse:)*

Gemäß Artikel 163 Absatz 4 der Geschäftsordnung möchte ich Sie nach dem Ergebnis der Abstimmungen über die beiden Dringlichkeitsanträge zur Annahme eines digitalen grünen Zertifikats – Unionsbürgerinnen und Unionsbürger und eines digitalen grünen Zertifikats – Drittstaatsangehörige darüber informieren, dass die Aussprachen und die Abstimmungen am Mittwoch, dem 28. April 2021, stattfinden werden. Die Fristen für Änderungsanträge werden zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt festgelegt.

18. Explanations of vote: see Minutes

19. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes

20. Documents received: see Minutes

21. Transfers of appropriations and budgetary decisions: see Minutes

22. Approval of the minutes of the part-session and forwarding of texts adopted: see Minutes

23. Dates of forthcoming sittings : see Minutes

24. Closure of the sitting

(Die Sitzung wird um 19.14 Uhr geschlossen)

25. Adjournment of the session

Der Präsident. – Ich erkläre die Sitzungsperiode des Europäischen Parlaments für unterbrochen.

Key to symbols used

*	Consultation procedure
***	Consent procedure
***I	Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading
***II	Ordinary legislative procedure: second reading
***III	Ordinary legislative procedure: third reading

(The type of procedure is determined by the legal basis proposed in the draft act.)

Abbreviations used for Parliamentary Committees

AFET	Committee on Foreign Affairs
DEVE	Committee on Development
INTA	Committee on International Trade
BUDG	Committee on Budgets
CONT	Committee on Budgetary Control
ECON	Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
EMPL	Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
ENVI	Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
ITRE	Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
IMCO	Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection
TRAN	Committee on Transport and Tourism
REGI	Committee on Regional Development
AGRI	Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
PECH	Committee on Fisheries
CULT	Committee on Culture and Education
JURI	Committee on Legal Affairs
LIBE	Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
AFCO	Committee on Constitutional Affairs
FEMM	Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
PETI	Committee on Petitions
DROI	Subcommittee on Human Rights
SEDE	Subcommittee on Security and Defence
FISC	Subcommittee on Tax Matters

Abbreviations used for Political Groups

PPE	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
S&D	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
Renew	Renew Europe Group
ID	Identity and Democracy Group
Verts/ALE	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
The Left	The Left Group in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL
NI	Non-attached Members