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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF 3 MAY 2022

(C/2024/5929)

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2022-2023 SESSION

Sittings of 2 to 5 May 2022

STRASBOURG

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF 3 MAY 2022

PRESIDENZA: ROBERTA METSOLA

President

1. Opening of the sitting

(The sitting opened at 9.03)

2. Threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom, on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day (debate)

President. – Dear colleagues, good morning. I have a short statement from my end because today is World Press Freedom Day. The European Parliament has always sought to defend and promote a strong and free press in Europe and beyond. Our position has always been – and will always be – on the side of the truth, on the side of the truth-seekers. Journalists should never have to choose between uncovering the truth and staying alive. They should never be forced to spend years and savings to argue against vexatious lawsuits or SLAPPs.

So today, on World Press Freedom Day, we launch the second edition of the Daphne Caruana Galizia Prize for Journalism, a prize named after a journalist assassinated for speaking the truth. In her memory, we support those who promote and defend core European values and seek to establish the truth through outstanding journalism.

I am proud that this Parliament stands up for what we believe in. I am proud that we match our rhetoric with action – today and every day – because a strong democracy needs a strong press, and we know that there can be no democracy without freedom of the press.

The next item is the debate on the Commission statement on threats to the safety of journalists and media freedom, on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.

Dear colleagues, I remind you that we are testing some of the recommendations of the focus group on the plenary reform. The free seating is applied, with the exception of the first two rows that are allocated to group leaders. I would like to inform Members that this debate is foreseen with one round of political group speakers and also that speakers can continue to speak from the central rostrum. So I remind colleagues to keep an eye on the speakers' list and to approach the rostrum when your speaking time is imminent.

Věra Jourová, Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, on the occasion of this year's World Press Freedom Day, I would like to pay tribute, in particular, to journalists who are covering the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine from the place. They inform us at the risk of their lives. They are our eyes under Russian bombs and threats. They show us what Russia does not want us to see. Indeed, as the President has just said, we have to stand on the side of truth seekers.

Our first priority is the safety of journalists. This is why the EU has already dedicated more than EUR 6 million to emergency support for journalists in Ukraine, including protective equipment, training and also relocation when necessary. But even in the EU, journalists are at risk for doing their work. This is why the Commission presented in September last year, for the first time ever, recommendations to Member States to improve the safety of journalists.

We want to provide journalists facing threats with legal and psychological support and increase their protection online and offline, for instance, during demonstrations. But any legislation is only as effective as its implementation. Therefore, I call on all Member States to fully implement the measures suggested in the recommendation.

A few days ago, the Commission proposed legislation to protect journalists against abusive lawsuits – strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). These abusive proceedings are often David against Goliath fights. Those bringing these lawsuits are wealthy and powerful, their targets usually not. Journalists speak in the public interest, they keep power in check and this is why we need to protect them. I call this a toughness law.

This directive is in honour of Daphne Caruana Galizia and her family, who have fought so much for it. We adopted also a recommendation to encourage Member States to align their rules with the proposed EU law, including for domestic cases and in all proceedings. The recommendation also calls on Member States to take a range of other measures, such as supporting, training and awareness-raising to fight against SLAPPs.

And we will go further. We are now preparing, together with Commissioner Breton, the Media Freedom Act. The act will enshrine, for the first time in EU law, common safeguards to protect media pluralism and the editorial independence of the media.

Hand in hand with the legislation, we are also dedicating more EU funding to supporting media projects. We have just announced EUR 8 million for cross-border journalism partnerships, and more will come. We support innovation and digital transformation as this is important for the sector to thrive in the long term. And, at the same time, with the Digital Markets Act and the Digital Services Act, we have new rules to better protect fundamental rights online and to ensure fairer digital markets.

To sum up, the EU has never done so much to protect and promote media freedom and pluralism. This is clearly thanks to the strong support of the European Parliament and I would like to thank you for being such a great ally in our common fight to defend our European values and our democracies. Recent crises have showed the importance of standing for media freedom and pluralism and protecting our democracies.

Vladimír Bilčík, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, today we are here to honour and to protect the work of journalists. The job of a journalist is a brave job. A reporter in Ukraine today is also a freedom fighter on the frontlines of Russia's aggression.

Dear journalists in Kyiv and everywhere in Ukraine, you who report on Russian attacks and war crimes, you help shield millions of citizens in any of our European countries from foreign propaganda. All of you who write and work as war journalists, local fixers across Ukraine, cameramen, producers, all of you working for the media that deliver news from the front, all of you provide your citizens with information that literally saves lives. You are heroes who might come under fire even if you wear the 'press' sign. You may be abducted or you might simply die because you do your work for a democratic society that we may enjoy in no small part thanks to free and independent media.

Journalists and journalism face different threats in different parts of Europe. Across the Western Balkans, journalists are exposed to verbal attacks and smear campaigns. This is a region of deeply polarised politics, where the notion of free and independent media is constantly challenged by the idea that journalists serve either the government or opposition politicians.

Quality journalism and quality media anywhere, however, are about the constant search for facts and the truth. We are not immune to attacks against journalists who seek to uncover the truth in EU Member States. Many reporters, anchors and well-known people in the media are constantly attacked online. Women journalists especially are vulnerable to abuse on the internet. Some of those who investigate corruption, the dark side of business and politics, have tragically paid the highest price for their work. Daphne Caruana Galizia was killed in Malta and Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, were brutally murdered in Slovakia. We must bring to justice all perpetrators of crimes against journalists.

The courage of those who produce and write the news for us is an invaluable part of the fabric of European democracy. It deserves our full attention and protection. As we continue to face Russia's brutal attack against Ukraine, we must bluntly acknowledge that Russian media outlets are tools in the Kremlin's war. Disinformation kills. We must not allow any malicious actor to exploit our freedoms.

Across the European Union, we must support independent and quality public service media for lively and free democratic debate. We must give support to organisations of independent journalists, but be vigilant about those who falsely present themselves as journalists. Let us show zero tolerance towards attacks, harassment, violence and threats against journalists. We must swiftly work on the Commission's proposal on the safety of all these persons, including an anti-SLAPP instrument. We need to protect journalists and foster a culture where attacks are unacceptable.

Dear colleagues, today we are paying attention to journalists because it is their special day. Let us work so that every day is special for journalism and media in Europe. This is the only way forward for meaningful democracy and freedom.

Tiemo Wölken, *im Namen der S&D-Fraktion*. – Sehr geehrte Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Kommissarin! Max Levin, Oksana Paulina, Brent Reno: Alle drei sind Putins brutalem Angriffskrieg zum Opfer gefallen. Ermordet und getötet, weil sie ihrer Arbeit als Journalistinnen und Journalisten nachgegangen sind.

Sie setzten ihr Leben aufs Spiel, um uns mit Informationen und der Wahrheit zu versorgen. Die freie Presse ist der Todfeind autoritärer Diktatoren wie Putin. Ihr Ziel ist es, den Glauben an die Wahrheit zu erschüttern, dass sie am Ende mit all ihren Lügen durchkommen. Bevor die Lüge zur Wahrheit werden kann, muss zuerst die Pressefreiheit weichen und mit ihr diejenigen, die sie mit Leben füllen.

Aber heute stellen wir fest: Ohne freie Presse gibt es keine Demokratie. Deswegen verdienen Journalistinnen und Journalisten unseren uneingeschränkten Schutz. Aber die Pressefreiheit ist nicht nur außerhalb der Europäischen Union bedroht. Der Weg zum Ende der Pressefreiheit beginnt nicht im Kugelhagel, sondern er beginnt leise und verdeckt mit Einschüchterungsversuchen, gezielten Bedrohungen, kostspieligen Gerichtsverfahren.

Auch in der Europäischen Union sind mutige Journalistinnen und Journalisten Politikerinnen und Politikern, die korrupt sind, Geschäftsleuten, die mehr Geld verdienen wollen, ein Dorn im Auge. Ein Lieblingsinstrument, um Journalisten mundtot zu machen, sind dabei Einschüchterungsklagen, kurz SLAPP. Bei diesen Klagen geht es nicht darum zu gewinnen, sondern es geht schlicht darum, die Beklagten psychisch und finanziell ans Ende ihrer Kräfte zu bringen, damit sie aufhören, Skandale aufzudecken, damit sie aufhören, journalistische Arbeit zu machen. Fälle wie der der ermordeten Journalistin Daphne Caruana Galizia machen klar, wie wichtig die vorgeschlagene Anti-SLAPP-Richtlinie ist, damit wir Einschüchterungsklagen auch in der Europäischen Union beenden.

Und ich danke der Europäischen Kommission, dass sie die Vorschläge des Europäischen Parlaments für eine gute Anti-SLAPP-Richtlinie aufgenommen hat. Gemeinsam werden wir dafür sorgen, dass Journalistinnen und Journalisten in der Europäischen Union ihre Arbeit machen können, ohne bedroht und eingeschüchtert zu werden. Der Kampf gegen SLAPP beginnt heute, aber er ist damit noch nicht beendet. Wir schulden es Journalistinnen und Journalisten wie Max Levin, Oksana Paulina und Brent Reno.

Ramona Strugariu, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Madam President, an attack on a journalist is an attack on us all. I started my day by reading these words from OCCRP. Emilia Șercan is a Romanian investigative journalist whose private life and reputation are tarnished as we speak only because she had the courage to reveal a rotten system.

When Diana Oncioiu, Vlad Stoicescu and Ovidiu Vanghele shed light on corruption and abuse within the church, they rapidly became targets of abusive lawsuits. Many other names are on this list, and they're not limited to only one Member State.

The anti-SLAPP directive proposal is the first piece of EU legislation which directly addresses the protection of journalists, as it deals with abusive litigation. I would like to thank the Commission for making this possible, and I would like to thank the President of this House for making it possible because it was not an easy fight.

This proposal will be followed by the Media Freedom Act later this year. The MFA should provide us with a surgical tool addressing main threats to the freedom of press, while at the same time avoiding ministries of truth or tearing apart functioning models where journalism thrives. We have long called for such legislation, and this is just the beginning of a complex road to implementation. But it is finally happening now.

Let us not forget those journalists who are reporting from the war in Ukraine or are oppressed by Putin's regime. Ten journalists have been murdered so far by the Russian army in Ukraine while doing their job. Putin's war is also a war against free press. Journalists have been targeted. They have been captured and abducted, held hostage, having their names on extermination lists. These are war crimes and every single one of them needs to be paid for.

We stand with them all. We cherish their work and bravery. We need to support them with facts and actions, not just words. They are gatekeepers of freedom, pluralist, informed and resilient societies. Long live a free and independent press.

Daniel Freund, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, the end of democracy begins when politicians go after journalists. First, they discredit them as mainstream or liberal or Western. Next, they call them liars or fake news. Then they try to stop their publications with strategic lawsuits. Next, they cut their funding or take away their broadcasting licence and, eventually, some don't shy away from physical attacks, intimidation or even murder.

Dear colleagues, this playbook has not only been used by Putin or Xi Jinping. This is a playbook that is used right here inside the European Union. Autocrats build their empires on lies and corruption, and they'll, of course, do everything to silence those that try to expose them. Corruption is the reason that Ján Kuciak was murdered, corruption is the reason that Daphne Caruana Galizia was murdered, corruption is the reason that Klubrádió lost its broadcasting licence, and corruption is the reason why Hungarian journalists are spied on with Pegasus.

It's on all of us, as democrats, to protect journalists and free media. It's on us to stand with them, even when they write things we might not like – which happens as a politician – because protecting free media and protecting journalists is about protecting our democracy. We need to join journalists in their fight against corruption. After 12 years and the near total control of Fidesz over Hungarian media, the European Union finally needs to act. And let's act on rule of law issues in Poland before the last independent TV channel has to stop broadcasting because the end of autocrats is when democratic politicians stand with journalists.

Nicolaus Fest, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin! Tja, wenn ich mir hier so die Sitze angucke, dann scheint das Interesse an Journalismus nicht so ungeheuer hoch zu sein.

Ich selbst habe über 20 Jahre im Journalismus gearbeitet. Das Blatt, für das ich arbeitete, war selber das Ziel zahlreicher SLAPP-Prozesse. Ich habe erlebt, wie wir Kollegen zu Grabe getragen haben, weil sie in Kriegsgebieten erschossen wurden, und zwar wurden diese Angriffe gezielt vorgenommen, um eben den Journalismus zu unterdrücken.

Aber man sollte am *Freedom Day* des Journalismus auch über die Probleme sprechen, die der Journalismus hat. Wir alle wissen, wie ungeheuer wichtig er für die Demokratie ist und dafür, die Leute zu informieren. Aber man sollte eben auch darauf hinweisen, was den Journalismus gefährdet. Und den Journalismus gefährden eben auch die Gesetzesvorschläge, die aus diesem Hause kommen.

Wenn ich lese, dass man versucht, Hatespeech und Desinformation zu unterdrücken, aber – ich selber bin im Innenausschuss – bis heute noch nicht definieren konnte, was eigentlich Hatespeech und Desinformation im Einzelnen sein sollen, dann begeben wir uns hier auf ein sehr abschüssiges Gleis, auf einen abschüssigen Weg, der in der Zensur endet. Weil der, der die Macht hat zu sagen, was denn nun Desinformation ist, der kann den Journalismus bestimmen oder eben auch abwürgen.

Und wenn ich dann in Ausschüssen erlebe, dass jede Kritik an Gender oder auch an Migration sofort als Desinformation gebrandmarkt wird, und wenn ich erlebe, dass die Kommissionspräsidentin von der Leyen Kritik an ihrer Impfstoffbeschaffung als Desinformation bezeichnet – das ist eine Desinformation, die in allen westlichen Zeitungen geschrieben stand, also in der Frankfurter Allgemeinen, im Spiegel, in der Süddeutschen, in den englischen Zeitungen –, dann muss man sich wirklich fragen, ob der Begriff der Desinformation nicht der erste Schritt auf dem Weg in die Zensur ist.

Also: Wir sollten da sehr aufpassen. Ich begrüße natürlich, dass die Kommission versucht, zumindest die finanziellen Probleme des Journalismus ein bisschen abzufedern. Aber auch das ist ein abschüssiger Weg. Ein Journalismus, der von Geldgaben der Regierenden abhängig ist, wird auf Dauer nicht unabhängig sein. Deshalb kann ich auch nur davor warnen, dass man auf diesem Weg weitergeht.

Ehrlich gesagt: Die Leute denken seit über 20 Jahren darüber nach, wie man den Journalismus finanziell wieder auf eine solide Plattform stellen kann. So richtig ist das noch keinem der vielen Manager eingefallen, aber ganz sicherlich der falsche Weg ist es, dies über die Regierung zu machen. Auch darüber sollten wir am *World Freedom Day* der Presse nachdenken.

Dace Melbārde, *ECR grupas vārdā*. – Priekšsēdētāja! Godātā komisāre! Godātie kolēģi! Pagājušajā ceturtdienā, kad Ukrainā viesojās ANO ģenerālsekrētārs, Krievija ar raķetēm apšaudīja Kijivu. Šī simboliskā Putina vēlme pazemot ANO diemžēl prasīja arī radiostacijas “Radio Svoboda” žurnālistes Viras Hiričas dzīvību, un viņa ir divdesmit trešā šajā karā nogalinātā žurnāliste. Daļu no šiem žurnālistiem Krievijas armija ir nogalinājusi apzināti — jo viņi veic savus profesionālos pienākumus.

Putina pasaules redzējumā nav vietas patiesībai un faktiem. Iekarotāji un izvarotāji ir miera nesēji, genocīds ir atbrīvošana, zaudējums ir uzvara. Neatkarīga žurnālistika šādu pasaules redzējumu traucē. Tāpēc Krievijā tā vairs nav iespējama — ir jāmelo vai jāklusē. Daudzi žurnālisti tādejādi ir atstājuši savu dzimteni, ir spiesti bēgt uz Eiropas Savienību, cerībā turpināt darbu drošā vidē.

Taču Putins nekad nav aprobežojies ar vārda brīvības iznīcināšanu tikai Krievijā. Digitālajā vidē Kremļa propagandisti, boti un troļļi uzbrūk neatkarīgiem medijiem, kas informē par kara noziegumiem Ukrainā, bloķē to kontus un saturu.

Tas ir ģeopolitisks konteksts, kādā mums šodien jāskatās uz žurnālistu drošību un aizsardzību. Vienlaikus mēs nedrīkstam aizmirst par žurnālistu sociālo drošību, ko saasinājis mediju ieņēmumu kritums. Mums beidzot ir jāpieņem tiesiskais regulējums pret stratēģiskajām tiesvedībām, un jaunajam digitālās vides regulējumam ir jāparedz arī platformu atbildība par žurnālistu aizsardzību. Tāpat Eiropas Savienībai ir īpaši jāatbalsta neatkarīgi mediji un žurnālisti reģionos, kas ir visvairāk pakļauti Kremļa ietekmei.

Un visbeidzot — mums ir jāpārtrauc Kremļa propagandu uzskatīt par žurnālistiku un nodrošināt tiem Eiropas kabeļtīklus un satelītresursus, bet mums ir jāsniedz atbalsts neatkarīgiem krievu medijiem un žurnālistiem. Tāpat mūsu atbalsts ir nepieciešams Ukrainas žurnālistiem, kas kopā ar savas zemes aizstāvjiem cīnās par savu brīvību.

Κωνσταντίνος Αρβανίτης, *εξ ονόματος της ομάδας The Left*. – Κυρία πρόεδρε, τριάντα χρόνια κάνω αυτή τη δουλειά, είμαι δημοσιογράφος, και θα μας λείψουν κάποιοι συνάδελφοι σήμερα που δεν μπορούν να τιμήσουν την Παγκόσμια Ημέρα Τύπου. Να τη λένε Δάφνη, να τον λένε Γιώργο Καραϊβάζ, να τους λένε με τα ονόματά τους, αυτούς που χάθηκαν στα μέτωπα της Ουκρανίας; Πάντως, στην Ευρώπη πλανάται ένα μεγάλο ερώτημα — αυτό είναι το θέμα —, ποιος εξουσιάζει ποιον: εξουσιάζουν οι μεγιστάνες των ΜΜΕ μέσω του Τύπου την εκάστοτε πολιτική εξουσία, ή μήπως η πολιτική εξουσία μέσω των ιδιοκτητών προσπαθεί να επιβάλει πολιτικές;

Από τη νίκη του Μπερλουσκόνι στην Ιταλία, φάνηκε καθαρά ότι μια καμπάνα χτυπάει. Ότι, δηλαδή, τα οικονομικά συμφέροντα έχουν τον έλεγχο των μέσων ενημέρωσης, και βεβαίως την εξουσία. Κι αυτό είναι σοβαρό θέμα εμπλοκής της πολιτικής στη Δημοκρατία μας. Ολιγοπώλια και μεγιστάνες, από τον Νότο προς τον Βορρά. Βλέπουμε ότι αυτό το φαινόμενο τείνει να γίνει μια νέα πραγματικότητα. Μια νέα πραγματικότητα, ένα ιδιότυπο καθεστώς στον χώρο των μέσων ενημέρωσης. Και δεν φτάνει μόνο αυτό, από τις διώξεις των δημοσιογράφων, από τις απολύσεις δημοσιογράφων, έχουμε φτάσει στις δολοφονίες, στον οικονομικό στραγγαλισμό των μη συστημικών μέσων ενημέρωσης, καθώς οι ολιγάρχες, αφού τους το επιτρέπει το νομικό πλαίσιο, έχουν στην κατοχή τους το σύνολο της παραγωγικής διαδικασίας της είδησης, από την παραγωγή μέχρι και το πρακτορείο. Εδώ μιλάμε ξεκάθαρα πια για μια υπερσυγκέντρωση εξουσίας, αλλά και από την άλλη, δημιουργείται ένα θολό τοπίο, όπου χάνεται η βασική έννοια της διάκρισης των εξουσιών. Μονοπωλιακά οικονομικά συμφέροντα και εξουσία, μέσα ενημέρωσης και πολιτική εξουσία, πολιτική εξουσία και δικαιοσύνη.

Αυτό που σας περιγράψω, πείτε μου ποια χώρα σας φέρει στο μυαλό· την Ουγγαρία, την Πολωνία, την Ελλάδα, την Ιταλία; Νομίζω ότι είναι πλέον ένα νέο καθεστώς στην Ευρώπη και πρέπει να το δούμε πάρα πολύ σοβαρά. Να σας πω κάτι πιο συγκεκριμένο: δολοφονία δημοσιογράφων. Τον δικό μας τον λένε Γιώργο Καραϊβάζ. Παρακολούθησες από την Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών, την οποία έχει στη δικαιοδοσία του ο πρωθυπουργός. Τον δικό μας δημοσιογράφο τον λένε Κουκάκη. Μεγάλες διώξεις δημοσιογράφων. Τη λένε Γιάννα Παπαδάκου. Τον λένε Κώστα Βαξεβάνη. Και, βεβαίως, ο εκφοβισμός όσων τολμούν να κάνουν ερωτήσεις με την πάγια πλέον θέση των SLAPP, λίστες οικονομικής στήριξης, που λέγεται σε εμάς λίστα Πέτσα.

Για να κλείσουμε, για την προστασία των ανθρώπων του Τύπου, για την Ελευθεροτυπία, για τη Δημοκρατία, για τους συναδέλφους που χάθηκαν, που δολοφονήθηκαν, για τον Τεντέν που μας μεγάλωσε. Ένα σύνθημα μπορεί να ακουστεί: μέτρα νομοθετικά τώρα και λευτεριά στον Τεντέν! Δεν θα έβρισκε πουθενά δουλειά ο Τεντέν στις σημερινές συνθήκες.

Miroslav Radačovský (NI). – Vážená pani predsedajúca. Namiesto všeobecných ideologických floskúl chcel by som sa skôr zaoberať skutočnosťou pragmatickou, a to skutočnosťou ochrany novinárov a ľudskoprávných organizácií pred šikanóznymi, neodôvodnenými žalobami, ktoré znepríjemňujú život a ktoré sú predovšetkým doménou silných, bohatých a tých, čo majú na to finančné prostriedky, aby sa takýmto spôsobom ubránili buď voči investigatívnym novinárom, alebo voči tomu, aby sa poukazovalo na niektoré ich nekalé činnosti.

Je nespochybniteľné, že každý procesne spôsobilý subjekt má právo sa žalobou domáhať na súde ochrany svojich práv a oprávnených záujmov. Toto právo však nemôže byť bezbrehé. Toto právo nemôže byť zneužívané na šikanózne, neakceptovateľné žaloby, znepríjemňujúce žalovanému subjektu život. A preto v tomto smere je potrebné urobiť príslušné opatrenia aj zo strany Komisie, ktoré už sú niektoré navrhované, ale aj zo strany národných štátov.

Sú to opatrenia v oblasti procesného práva a v oblasti ochrany novinárov proti fyzickým útokom, v oblasti trestného práva. Podľa môjho názoru je nevyhnutné, že by takéto žaloby, ktorým jednoducho nemôžeme zabrániť, mali nutné prvky obligatórnosti, ktoré sú výnimočné a rozdielne od iných žalôb.

Predovšetkým, žalujúca strana by mala byť zastúpená zo zákona, tak, ako je to v správnom konaní a v iných konaniach, advokátom, pretože je síce pravdou, že bohatí ľudia si advokáta zaplatia, ale predseda len, štatút advokáta je určitým spôsobom honorom, ktorý by mohol nejakým spôsobom obmedziť takéto šikanózne žaloby.

Za ďalšie, bolo by potrebné upraviť zákony o poplatkoch, o návrhoch, kde by takýto poplatok mal byť zvýšený na časť takú, aby nemohol hocikto a hocikedy tieto žaloby podávať. Nič by sa tým neudialo. V prípade úspechu takýto poplatok by sa vrátil.

Ďalšia skutočnosť, ktorá je veľmi rozhodujúca, je potrebné, aby obligatórne boli do trestných príslušných poriadkov nariadené predbežné prejednanie takejto žaloby, bez účasti strán v konaní, a aby žalovaná strana, a to je veľmi dôležité, v konkrétnom prípade novinári alebo ľudskoprávne organizácie, mali nárok, zo zákona, na bezplatnú právnu pomoc prostredníctvom štátnych centier právnej pomoci.

Samozrejme, je potom nevyhnutné mať ďalšie a ďalšie úpravy, ale na to asi dve minúty nestačia. Dalo by sa o tom veľmi veľa rozprávať. To je otázka úpravy občianskeho procesného práva. Nevyhnutná.

A potom tu existuje aj nebezpečenstvo fyzických útokov. Toto už je doménou trestného práva. Je nevyhnutné, aby boli vytvorené na príslušných policajných oddeleniach špecializované tímy, tak ako sú pre rôzne činnosti, drogová trestná činnosť, iba iná idea, týkajúca sa výlučne len tejto ochrany novinárov.

Teda musím končiť. Uplynuli dve minúty. Vedel by som o tom rozprávať veľmi veľa.

Věra Jourová, *Vice-President of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, thank you very much for this debate, which assured me that I will have the support of Parliament for ongoing work to protect the media in the EU.

I said before that the EU has never done so much in the field of media, and it is maybe because we hear from many different sides 'do not regulate media, they have to remain free'. This is exactly what we want. We want rather than regulate, we want to support, to protect and to give the media sufficient space and protection in the EU because we need a well-functioning media sector for our democracy.

We discussed today about SLAPP or anti-SLAPP and as Tiemo Wölken said, we owe it to the journalists because we see too many processes and too many cases of abuse of justice, against freedom of speech, in fact. As the former Justice Commissioner, I have to fight against that. I do not want our courts to be abused. There is something elementarily unfair or incorrect.

We have to narrow the space for abuse of justice. And why? Also because we see that the goal of these abusive litigations is the process itself. And the longer and the more costly, the better for those who complain and who abuse the system. So this is not what European justice should be used for.

This is a pioneering exercise. Ramona Strugariu said that it has not been easy to come to this point. It will not be easy to come to the point of the final adoption because I had a debate with the Ministers of Justice, and only some understood fully why we need to act. I am not criticizing them, I just say that this is surprisingly new for many of them and that it will require a lot of work not only to convince them to say yes to the cross-border directive or the directive which is looking into cross-border cases, which are always more costly and more difficult. We are doing it for a very good purpose, but at the same time to convince them to address the issues of domestic cases.

The argument I heard from the ministers mainly was that we have to balance or guarantee free access to Courts for everyone. Even the rich and powerful person has the right to go to the Court when he is facing some unprofessional behaviour from the side of the journalist or human rights or rights defenders. It can happen.

So, I will keep promising to the Ministers of Justice that we will, in any case, balance these rights. I think already the text itself of the legislation shows that we tried to find the right balance.

I said that never before so much attention to media. When you look into our rule of law reports, there is a very strong chapter on media. We are mapping the situation in all the Member States this year. For the first time we will issue the recommendations. This might be a very strong instrument for the years to come, to have the proper insight on how the media situation looks like in the Member States and what might be the measures to be taken.

In the rest of my time – I have a generous five minutes, so I will use it in full. We have to do more for the media, especially now when we are in the information war. Now we see things very clearly what we didn't see several years ago. I have to say I was calling on action already several years ago when I saw that disinformation is part of the Russian military doctrine.

It was openly known that disinformation will be used as a weapon and they are exactly doing this, and disinformation can be very efficient. Russian disinformation already is bearing fruits and it has the potential to do a lot of dirty work in the EU. That's why we have to fight against disinformation by all means, and not to forget that our primary obligation is also to protect freedom of speech.

But freedom of speech cannot be absolute and is not absolute in the EU. We have laws which are limiting the freedom of speech. Nicolaus Fest said that it is not defined anywhere, but hate speech is defined in all the Member States penal courts. It is clearly defined. As for disinformation, we define it in several strategic papers and also in the Digital Services Act it's defined in the way of harmful content. If we give the freedom of speech absolute power, then we also absolutely resign on the truth. I truly believe that we must not be naive, especially now, in war time. We have to defend ourselves.

We see how disinformation works. It's not new. It was here already since 2014 and the annexation of Crimea. We saw a lot of disinformation campaigns against Ukraine and our campaigns which were organised to influence and manipulate European people. What we saw in COVID time, disinformation was used as a poison. Now in the Ukrainian war, disinformation is used as a weapon. This is why we have to act.

Sorry, I had to also mention this because in the fight against disinformation, the media, the professional journalists, play an extremely important role because we need to get the facts right and we need the European people to understand the situation and make their own decisions and choices based on trustworthy facts. This is the job of the media, and that's why we have to protect journalists.

President. – The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 171)

Sirpa Pietikäinen (PPE), kirjallinen. – On ilmiselvää, että nyky-yhteiskunnissamme tarvitsemme kipeästi laadukasta journalistista sisältöä ja riippumatonta mediaa nostamaan esille ja tulkitsemaan piileviä epäkohtia sekä raporttoimaan luotettavasti paikan päältä. Tämä on korostunut muun muassa Ukrainan sodan aikana. Tarvitsemme viestintää, johon voi luottaa. Tarvitsemme vahvan kansainvälisen sopimuksen, joka suojelee toimittajia ja sananvapauttamme globaalisti. Lisäksi EU:n tulisi auttaa kolmansissa maissa työnsä vuoksi hengenvaarassa olevia toimittajia erityisellä suojelu- ja viisumiohjelmalla, jollaista olen aiemmin ehdottanut naisihmisoikeuspuolustajille.

Koska demokratiamme kohtaavat monia haasteita, kuten laajalle levinnyttä disinformaatiota ja misinformaatiota sekä valeutisia ja niitä levittäviä trollitehtaita, meidän on luotava sellainen ympäristö, jossa media voi täyttää tehtävänsä sekä vallan vahtikoirana että neljäntenä valtiomahtina. Kansalaisilla tulee olla pääsy monipuolisiin ja riippumattomiin uutislähteisiin ja toimittajien työolot ja turvallisuus on taattava. On valitettavaa, että kehitys Euroopassakin on ollut tässä asiassa viime vuosina negatiivista. Vapaa media on demokratian elinehto, ja meidän pitää tehdä kaikkemme toimittajien turvallisuuden takaamiseksi joka tilanteessa.

VORSITZ: OTHMAR KARAS

Vizepräsident

3. Artificial intelligence in a digital age (debate)

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über den Bericht von Axel Voss im Namen des Sonderausschusses zu künstlicher Intelligenz im digitalen Zeitalter über künstliche Intelligenz im digitalen Zeitalter (2020/2266(INI)) (A9-0088/2022).

Ich weise Sie darauf hin, dass mit Ausnahme der ersten beiden Reihen, die den Fraktionsvorsitzenden vorbehalten sind, freie Sitzplatzwahl besteht und daher alle Kolleginnen und Kollegen sich in die Nähe des Redners bewegen können.

Sie können mithilfe Ihres Abstimmungsgeräts spontane Wortmeldungen beantragen und blaue Karten einsetzen, nachdem Sie Ihre Abstimmungskarte eingeschoben haben. Ich bitte Sie daher, stets Ihre Abstimmungskarte mitzubringen. Anleitungen liegen im Plenarsaal aus.

Wenn Sie sich für eine spontane Wortmeldung anmelden möchten, ersuche ich Sie, das bereits jetzt zu tun und nicht das Ende der Aussprache abzuwarten.

Im Einklang mit den Empfehlungen der Fokusgruppe beträgt die Redezeit für alle Wortmeldungen während der Aussprache zu Schwerpunktthemen mindestens zwei Minuten. Das gilt auch für spontane Wortmeldungen.

Außerdem möchte ich Sie darauf hinweisen, dass blaue Karten auch für eine kurze Wortmeldung hochgehalten werden können und dass danach eine Anschlussfrage zulässig ist.

Ich weise Sie auch darauf hin, dass Wortmeldungen im Plenarsaal weiterhin vom zentralen Rednerpult aus erfolgen. Dies gilt allerdings nicht für spontane Wortmeldungen, blaue Karten und Wortmeldungen zur Geschäftsordnung. Ich ersuche Sie daher, die Rednerliste im Blick zu behalten und sich kurz vor Beginn Ihrer Redezeit zum Rednerpult zu begeben.

Das musste ich deshalb sagen, weil das Neuerungen über die Fokusgruppe sind und weil zweitens natürlich noch nicht alle Kolleginnen und Kollegen unseres Hauses diese Usancen bereits leben konnten, weil wir zwei Jahre Pandemie und Sonderregelungen hinter uns haben.

Axel Voss, Berichterstatter. – Herr Präsident! Ich danke auch dafür, dass Sie hier das alles noch mal so gut erklären können, und ich finde es gut, dass Sie da sind. Aber auch Ihnen, Frau Vizepräsidentin, recht herzlichen Dank für Ihr Kommen, und liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, recht herzlichen Dank für das, was wir hier jetzt erreicht haben, und natürlich auch dem Sekretariat und unseren Assistenten. Wir haben viel erreicht, aber wir hätten auch noch mutiger oder revolutionärer eigentlich sein können, denn die künstliche Intelligenz ist eine Schlüsseltechnologie. Es ist die Schlüsseltechnologie, im Grunde eine Art Booster der Digitalisierung, und hat für uns hohe strategische Relevanz.

Jeder Bereich unseres Lebens wird von diesem technologischen Wandel erfasst werden, und die Konsequenzen für unsere Wettbewerbsfähigkeit, für unseren Wohlstand, für unsere Sicherheit sind dabei eben nicht zu unterschätzen. Und ich finde, wir müssen uns eigentlich hier bei dieser schnelllebigen Entwicklung die Frage stellen: Wie wollen wir eigentlich als EU, als Europa überleben in einer digitalen und datengetriebenen Welt? Wie wollen wir mithalten mit anderen Regionen in der Welt, die weitaus konsequenter und gezielter Forschung und Entwicklung voranbringen, investieren, Talente ausbilden, die viel Geld in die Hand nehmen und viel flexibler auf neue Entwicklungen reagieren können?

Wir haben doch als Europa der Welt auch was zu bieten, indem wir eben unsere Werte verbinden mit einer Technologie. Und das gibt es in diesen anderen Regionen so nicht. Nur muss das in unserer doch auch sehr komplexen Struktur in einer Geschwindigkeit passieren, dass wir die ersten sind, die mit neuen Ideen rauskommen, dass wir künftig auch Entwicklungen schon antizipieren können. Das Beharren auf das, was einmal geschaffen wurde, ist der falsche Weg. Wir müssen uns eigentlich jeden Abend neu hinsetzen und uns überlegen, wie wir morgen besser sein können.

Das soll uns alles keine Angst einjagen, sondern sollte uns Mut machen, denn dieser Wandel hat riesige Chancen für uns zum Wohl der gesamten Gesellschaft, ob das der Gesundheitsbereich ist, ob das die Nachhaltigkeit ist – das sollen ja nur einige Beispiele sein. All diese Chancen gilt es zu nutzen. Die haben wir aufgeführt in diesem Bericht, und mit unserem menschenzentrierten, vertrauenswürdigen Ansatz für die KI, der auch auf den Grundrechten, auf den europäischen Werten beruht, können wir eben all denjenigen Risiken auch entsprechend begegnen, die unsere Freiheit und Sicherheit infrage stellen. *Social Scoring*, Desinformation, automatisierte Waffen oder weniger drastische Beispiele: Das ist natürlich das, was wir nicht wollen.

Mit diesem europäischen Ansatz haben wir aber die Chance, globale Standards zu setzen. Da müssen wir aktiver werden. Und diese Chance würden wir vertun, wenn wir im globalen Wettbewerb nicht weltweit führend sind. Sonst fallen unsere Standards zurück, und stattdessen enden wir als eine Art digitale Kolonie genau bei den Kräften, die unsere Werte dann nicht teilen.

Aktuell fällt die Europäische Union im Wettbewerb zurück, und uns fehlt es an Marktmacht, an Forschung, an Kompetenz. Und genau hier setzt der Bericht an: Was muss noch geschehen, damit wir möglicherweise besser vorankommen? Welche Schritte müssen in den nächsten Jahren gegangen werden, um KI mitzugestalten und nicht passiv zuzuschauen? Künstliche Intelligenz bringt den Wendepunkt in dieser digitalen Revolution in Europa, und dieser Bericht soll auch der Wendepunkt sein.

Leider ist meine Zeit schon abgelaufen. Ich hätte gerne noch was zum Inhalt gesagt, aber das kann man vielleicht nachher noch nachholen. Ich möchte aber noch einmal allen recht herzlich danken, um dieses Ergebnis hier dann auch gebührend zu begehen.

Margrethe Vestager, *Executive Vice-President of the Commission*. – Mr President, thank you very much for this debate. I find it very important that we are here today. And, first of all, I want to congratulate all members of the AIDA Committee. The report is very comprehensive; it draws, I think, a rich picture of the landscape of artificial intelligence in Europe.

Artificial intelligence can be a precious tool, solving some of the biggest challenges in our time, or at least helping us solve some of the biggest challenges. Because artificial intelligence, as any other technology, is a tool for humans and no matter the technology, our societies will be no better or no worse than the choices we make as humans.

But we have choices to make because some citizens are still left out when it comes to health, and we are all still not quite there when it comes to fighting climate change.

We see many synergies in the AIDA report and the Commission approach to artificial intelligence. Our approach to AI also recognises the two sides of the AI mettle that we just heard of, providing enormous opportunities in terms of economic growth, to our well-being.

But using AI for certain applications, well, it also carries risks, risk of something fundamental that are the building blocks of our society and our democracy. And there you have use cases that should be tackled with legislation.

We want artificial intelligence to flourish, to reap the benefits but, of course, also to make sure that we address any possible concern to ensure what is trustworthy technology, what is technology used in a way that puts the human at the centre and that respects Europe's social market model.

We want to make Europe a global leader in adapting these latest technologies and in developing these technologies, seizing the benefits, promoting the development of this technology. Our ambition is to increase public and private investment to a total of EUR 20 billion per year over the course of this coming decade.

Well, currently we stand at about EUR 14 billion per year of combined public and private investment in artificial intelligence throughout Europe. For the Commission side, we're investing 50 billion in Horizon Europe to create a network of AI excellence centres, to bring together excellence, because we know that talent attracts talent, and if we want the best to come here, we need to invest.

And we are also investing in industrial research. We just set up a public-private partnership on artificial intelligence to deal with data and robotics, strengthening the use of artificial intelligence when it comes to our industrial needs, and of course, also how we can make our societies more sustainable.

And in the context of the AI Act, we foresee a number of measures that ensure that startups and SMEs are encouraged and not discouraged from developing their technologies within the European Union. Foremost is the creation of regulatory sandboxes, which will ensure an environment in which business and regulators can cooperate in ensuring the development of AI is in compliance.

But I think the most important thing here is that, as legislators, we are not suggesting you to regulate technology. We are suggesting you to regulate the use of technology in order for that to be future-proof, in order not for making the next developer, the next researcher, the legislator look as if we were in the past. But to regulate in the use cases, and I think that is how to create trust, that elected representatives as you are thinking about something that is indeed future-proof, that preserves the fundamentals while at the same time enabling this technology to serve us at our best when we want to fight climate change, increase cohesion and make sure that all the other use cases they can be as prosperous as possible.

I think together we can achieve this, and Parliament has already put forward suggestions for civil liability regimes for AI and we will follow up on this with legislative proposals later this year, to create the necessary synergies between the AI Act and AI liability rules to develop an overall regulatory framework for AI, because that is part of creating trust – that, if damaged, you can get compensation.

Together, I think we can achieve this. I have been enjoying and I've been learning from the cooperation with the European Parliament in these many months, and I look forward for our continued cooperation.

Eva Maydell, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, Executive Vice-President, Rapporteur, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, in the past, whoever ruled the waves ruled the world. In the future, I believe whoever rules artificial intelligence will dominate the world. And this is where I believe Europe's challenge lies. Just as we seek to use AI for the betterment of society, we see autocracies seeking ways to weaponise it. They do so by trying to create a digital dystopia. What we notice is that when it comes to the spread of disinformation, mass hacks, the dark web, cyberattacks and autonomous weapons systems, all these phenomena can be aided by artificial intelligence.

If the West loses the race to gain the social, economic and security benefits of AI, there will be a fundamental shift in global order, and this is why I believe this report seeks to shape AI in our democratic image. And it is precisely to build trust, to create an ethical framework for innovation; we have to try and be the champions for a future that ensures AI is the vessel for those ground-breaking innovations when it comes to health outcomes, when it comes to effective cybersecurity or scientific discovery or greater sustainability.

We cannot let authoritarian states such as China and Russia beat us to this technological punch. And I believe if we have enough political will, which I hope we show in this report, enough financial investment and legal certainty, I believe we could attract the so much needed investment, but also be able to foster world-leading innovation.

So I would like to congratulate my colleague Axel Voss on this report, because I believe technology and democracy have to go hand in hand. And I think with this report, we set the right path in achieving that.

Brando Benifei, *a nome del gruppo S&D*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, vicepresidente Vestager, l'intelligenza artificiale presenta numerose opportunità e potenziali benefici in moltissimi campi, se utilizzata in conformità con i nostri valori fondamentali, nel rispetto della dignità umana e dell'ambiente, per il bene della società. Questo è il nostro modello europeo.

Un anno e mezzo di lavori della commissione speciale ci ha consentito di esplorare gli aspetti fondamentali di queste tecnologie e l'impatto nei vari settori economici, le ricadute sociali, le implicazioni geopolitiche. Implicazioni che rendono necessario un ruolo di leadership dell'Europa nell'affermare il proprio modello per l'intelligenza artificiale, nel lavoro sugli standard globali, perché quello tecnologico sarà uno dei principali teatri su cui si giocherà il futuro assetto delle relazioni internazionali.

Ciò richiede un mercato interno unito e competitivo, in cui tutti siano in condizioni di poter innovare nel rispetto delle regole, dalla privacy alla concorrenza. Ed è per questo che stiamo lavorando sul regolamento – che anche Lei vicepresidente ha ricordato prima – il quale sarà un tassello fondamentale per lo sviluppo di una vera industria europea in questo campo.

Tra i vari spunti contenuti nella relazione, cito in particolare la proposta di un'iniziativa legislativa sull'uso dell'intelligenza artificiale nei luoghi di lavoro. Il telelavoro ha infatti accelerato e reso più evidenti non solo i vantaggi in termini di efficienza, ma anche gli effetti potenzialmente dannosi dell'impiego di queste tecnologie sui lavoratori. Monitorarne la performance senza il loro consenso o a loro insaputa, senza una previa consultazione dei loro rappresentanti, come purtroppo vediamo accadere, non deve essere consentito in Europa.

Allo stesso tempo dovremo contrastare i possibili abusi del riconoscimento biometrico in tempo reale nei luoghi pubblici per ragioni di sicurezza. Non vogliamo una società della sorveglianza. Ringrazio dunque i relatori e tutti i colleghi per le discussioni costruttive degli scorsi mesi che hanno portato a un testo equilibrato e denso di proposte, molto utile per il lavoro legislativo che ci aspetta.

Andrus Ansip, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Mr President, first of all, I would like to thank our rapporteur, Axel Voss, and all the shadow rapporteurs for their good work and excellent cooperation.

I consider this report a good vision paper which describes our ambitions and how to reach them. Our aim is to build human-centric artificial intelligence, which will serve our people while respecting their privacy. The report encourages us to use more solutions based on artificial intelligence. The report is carried out by the sense of urgency.

The European Union must significantly increase its investments in artificial intelligence so we have competitive solutions.

The European Union must also significantly improve the access to data, but bearing in mind that the only legal basis for the processing of data is the General Data Protection Regulation. I hope this report will lead the way in the development of artificial intelligence in Europe.

Damian Boeselager, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, Executive Vice-President, dear colleagues, first of all, I also want to thank you for the great collaboration. I think we had long hours trying to figure out what the best use of AI in Europe is.

But let me go one step back. When we hear AI, I think – and this is thanks to the movie industry – we often think of bots and of holograms of all of us, MEPs, of the Executive Vice-President to be just replaced by AI in this kind of futuristic scenario. But that's not what AI really is about. In all seriousness, it's about an objective function. It's about probabilistic models, and very often our companies are still trying to grapple with what AI is about. So they're making their way from a very analogue life to an AI-based business model.

In this struggle, we see that we have some issues. For example, one is that there's a strong tendency to market dominance, and that is just the case because you still need a lot of data to train your AI algorithms. I think Europe is trying to find its way in this struggle, and we've seen that if you give too much market dominance, there can be abuses of that. We need to find ways to counter that. And we have seen that, for example, maybe in the Chinese model, AI is used to control society. We have to also fight against that.

So what can help us to make these steps correct? I think it's crucial that we make our algorithmic function focus on human agency, and this has been said before. So we need to safeguard fundamental rights, but we also need to find markets concentration. That can be done if we enable our start-ups, our companies, to enter these markets so there's no closed markets, and there's no market dominance. I think this is a struggle that is worth fighting and that is also very much represented in the report.

Let us continue the struggle, in the Data Act and all other files that are still being discussed in the AI world, so that we create a European way of looking at AI and make it possible for our companies to thrive.

Alessandra Basso, *a nome del gruppo ID*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Commissaria, intanto ringrazio tutti per il lavoro svolto. Questo lavoro ha toccato temi di grande impatto nella vita dei cittadini, dai trasporti alla sanità, all'agricoltura, fino all'uso dell'intelligenza artificiale nel settore militare.

L'obiettivo era di analizzare le varie prospettive per fornire le fondamenta per una futura legislazione dell'Unione in questo settore. Non so se ci siamo riusciti, dato l'alto tasso di innovazione di questo settore, ci troviamo davanti a tante opportunità, ma anche ad altrettanti rischi.

Vediamo tanti miglioramenti del benessere e della vita dei cittadini, ma anche enormi rischi per quanto riguarda le libertà personali e il rischio di errori, con conseguenze anche sociali catastrofiche: penso a quella piattaforma di compravendita immobiliare che per un errore dell'algoritmo ha acquistato case ad un prezzo superiore al valore di mercato, subendo perdite finanziarie e trovandosi costretta a licenziare il 25 per cento dei dipendenti. Durante i lavori, il nostro gruppo ha presentato emendamenti indirizzati a minimizzare questi rischi, sfortunatamente non condivisi da tutti.

Per i nostri cittadini è fondamentale che ci sia il minor numero di rischi possibile. In campo medico, l'attenzione deve essere massima perché anche in questo caso ci siamo trovati davanti ad algoritmi che segnalavano solo pazienti bianchi e l'intelligenza artificiale deve essere esente da pregiudizi di ogni tipo.

E soprattutto in campo militare, consideriamo fondamentale che l'intelligenza artificiale non abbia il sopravvento sull'uomo nei processi decisionali. È essenziale che la libertà di parola e di espressione non venga messa a rischio da sistemi che usano l'intelligenza artificiale, costringendoci ad usare il cosiddetto «*algospeak*», un linguaggio in codice per aggirare gli algoritmi e la censura online.

Non ci opponiamo al progresso, non pensiamo ad una rivolta di stampo luddista. Non vogliamo distruggere le macchine, vogliamo semplicemente un futuro di questa tecnologia che sia guidato dall'etica e dalla volontà di proteggere i nostri cittadini.

Kosma Złotowski, *w imieniu grupy ECR*. – Sztuczna inteligencja rozpala wyobraźnię zarówno entuzjastów technologii, jak i przeciwników coraz szybszej automatyzacji w gospodarce i życiu społecznym. Pogodzenie tych dwóch podejść i zbudowanie szerokiego kompromisu to zadanie trudne, ale możliwe. Niestety w naszej opinii w przypadku tego sprawozdania nie do końca się to powiodło. Doceniamy wysiłek i zaangażowanie sprawozdawcy włożone w pracę nad sprawozdaniem, ale jako ECR wstrzymamy się od głosu. Brakuje w końcowym tekście jednoznacznego, spójnego i silnego komunikatu, że Europa chce na poważnie dołączyć do globalnego wyścigu technologicznego i być miejscem, gdzie innowacje nie tylko się konsumuje, ale przede wszystkim tworzy.

Sztuczna inteligencja to ogromna szansa dla naszych firm, także małych i średnich, które mogą opracowywać nowoczesne produkty i usługi, jeśli otrzymają właściwe wsparcie. Dlatego tak ważne są nakłady na badania i rozwój oraz ścisła współpraca w zakresie standardów etycznych, prawnych i technicznych z partnerami międzynarodowymi, którzy mogą i chcą dzielić się z nami swoją wiedzą i doświadczeniem w zakresie AI. Nie możemy pozwolić, aby nasza strategia w zakresie rozwijania sztucznej inteligencji i gospodarki opartej na danych padła ofiarą długich i jałowych dyskusji. Zwłaszcza że przed nami prace nad rozporządzeniem AI Act, które przede wszystkim powinno stworzyć ramy prawne przyjazne innowacjom. Mam nadzieję, że wykorzystamy tę szansę i nie zbudujemy kolejnego gorsetu biurokratycznego dla firm, także europejskich, działających w sektorze nowych technologii.

Pernando Barrena Arza, *on behalf of The Left Group*. – Mr President [...] (*start of speech off mic*) works of the AIDA Committee. It took a lot of effort and a lot of mutual understanding as well. I have to say that we are highly critical about the main ideas of the final draft. I have to admit that some progress was made in the course of the procedure and that some slight positive elements were introduced as regards artificial intelligence and the labour market, health and data privacy and digital skills literacy as a component of basic education. Beyond those points, the report acknowledges that it's not possible to devise artificial intelligence algorithms, as our group pointed to.

However, our group cannot share the overall flexible and risk-based business approach of artificial intelligence and the dramatic one on the European Union at risk, including a bold narrative of a pro-United States and anti-China approach throughout the report, instead of a broader, multilateral and collaborative global vision.

We particularly regret that our proposal to include a multilateral approach for artificial intelligence cooperation with third countries, using international organisations such as the United Nations, was not accepted in the committee. The final report lacks relevant points, like the absence of regulation for high-risk cases and no strong message on the environmental impact of uncontrolled development of artificial intelligence as regards raw materials, CO₂ emissions and energy consumption.

The report acknowledges the gender gap, but falls short on making clear policy recommendations for increasing the role of women in artificial intelligence research and development.

The worst part is the one concerning law enforcement and defence, where it calls for closer cooperation with NATO in cyber defence and calls on NATO allies to regulate the military use of artificial intelligence. No ban on the deployment of facial recognition and no ban on all autonomous weapons systems.

These are key points for a civil liberties-compliant development of artificial intelligence. Therefore, we are left with a report with no clear goals except for flexible regulation for business, aligning with NATO and the US in foreign AI policy, and stressing on China's standard setting of artificial intelligence posing as an evil challenge for the European Union.

These issues are crucial for our group and I encourage you all to support our amendments on NATO's role and on the implementation of AI in the field of the development of European minority languages. But may I call your attention to our amendments, particularly regarding the banning of facial recognition and autonomous weaponry. As I said before, these aspects should be taken on board in a sensitive document like this.

Geoffroy Didier (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, mon collègue Axel Voss a vu juste: l'intelligence artificielle constitue une chance à saisir. Les bienfaits de cette technologie sont très nombreux. Ils peuvent s'appliquer par exemple à la médecine et aider à sauver bien des vies.

La machine n'a pourtant de sens que si l'homme en garde l'absolue maîtrise. Les réflexes, que les technologies les plus avancées permettent de programmer, vaudront toujours moins que le discernement, le libre arbitre et la sensibilité inhérents à l'être humain. Tout est une question d'usage.

Exemple d'un bon usage de l'intelligence artificielle: la régulation d'Internet à l'aide d'algorithmes pour mettre fin à l'anarchie qui y règne. Nous venons d'aboutir à un accord politique historique en Europe: le DSA (*Digital Services Act*, législation sur les services numériques) va permettre de combattre les dérives les plus inadmissibles des réseaux sociaux. Le principe? Il est simple: tout ce qui est illégal hors ligne doit le devenir en ligne. Pas plus, pas moins. Non, les messages de haine et de harcèlement ne constituent pas des opinions qui feraient partie de la liberté d'expression. Ils en sont même le contraire, car ils imposent le silence à tous ceux qui craignent d'en devenir les victimes. Ceux qui ont harcelé et appelé au meurtre sur Internet de Samuel Paty, sont-ils, étaient-ils, des vecteurs de liberté d'expression? Poser la question, c'est déjà y apporter une réponse.

Telle qu'elle a été prévue, cette nouvelle réglementation devra s'appliquer aux moteurs de recherche et à tous les plus grands réseaux sociaux. Et aussi génial et innovant soit-il, Elon Musk, devra y soumettre Twitter comme n'importe quel géant du numérique.

Protéger les citoyens de la haine en ligne, voici un bel usage des technologies les plus avancées. Et voici aussi un usage très approprié de l'Union européenne.

Ibán García Del Blanco (S&D). – Señor presidente, estamos debatiendo un informe que, efectivamente, es clave, que concluye un trabajo de dieciocho meses, y que supone también un ejercicio muy notable de diálogo en el Parlamento Europeo.

Quiero agradecer especialmente a los coordinadores de esta Comisión Especial, también al presidente y a la Mesa, la tarea realizada, en particular los numerosos debates y conferencias y un total catorce audiencias públicas y ocho seminarios. Un trabajo conjunto, en definitiva, de todo el Parlamento Europeo, que abarca desde el transporte a la agricultura, a la salud y la lucha contra el cáncer, la economía, la competitividad, las finanzas, el Pacto Verde y la Estrategia de Datos. Y también hemos hablado del impacto en la democracia, la desinformación, de los riesgos de los derechos fundamentales, de la discriminación, incluida la igualdad de género, y del papel que las mujeres deben desempeñar también en el desarrollo de la inteligencia artificial europea.

Hay dos aspectos que cabe destacar: en primer lugar, que este ha sido un debate plenamente democrático. Se han defendido diversos puntos de vista con la participación de las partes interesadas de la industria, de la sociedad civil, del mundo académico y también de los usuarios, así como de los Parlamentos nacionales. En segundo lugar, ha habido un equilibrio necesario para favorecer la innovación y limitar los riesgos en la inteligencia artificial.

Desde el Grupo de Socialistas y Demócratas quiero agradecer también la tarea de los ponentes y ponentes alternativos en la articulación del informe, que es un informe muy equilibrado, con más de mil enmiendas, muchas de ellas, por cierto, del Grupo de Socialistas y Demócratas, que responde perfectamente a la tarea que se nos encomendó. Indica una posición mayoritaria del Parlamento Europeo en todos los aspectos relativos al desarrollo y la difusión de la inteligencia artificial en Europa. Hace hincapié, además en aspectos muy concretos, con ejemplos, en cada caso, de los potenciales beneficios o riesgos que puede presentar el uso de la inteligencia artificial. Por poner algunos ejemplos, en la salud, resalta los beneficios en el tratamiento de enfermedades y nuevos medicamentos; en el Pacto Verde, resalta la necesidad de crear una inteligencia artificial para que sea sostenible y apoye la transición medioambiental; en la política exterior y de seguridad, hace un análisis geoestratégico; en la competitividad, resaltamos la necesidad de mejorar nuestra investigación y el apoyo de las pequeñas y medianas empresas; en el mercado de trabajo, pedimos una iniciativa legislativa específica que pueda regular el uso en el trabajo y que respete los derechos de trabajadores y trabajadoras y acabe con la vigilancia en los lugares de trabajo; también en la escuela, fomentando la ilustración digital.

En fin, creo que este es un informe que va a ser sobre todo muy útil para el trabajo en el futuro y quiero dar las gracias a todos los que han participado en él.

Dragoș Tudorache (Renew). – Mr President, first and foremost, my congratulations to you, Axel Voss, and to the shadow rapporteurs for the very important work that you've done with this report. It was my privilege to serve as Chair of the AIDA Committee for the duration of this mandate, and I am very proud about the way in which we have achieved our objectives.

As Chair, and even before, when negotiating the mandate of the committee, I imagined AIDA as a place where we, as Parliament, think politically about the future of artificial intelligence, a place where we have an honest, introspective and forward-looking assessment of our technological competitiveness on the global stage, and a place where we think beyond the status quo, where we look at the next steps to 2030 and even past that threshold.

The AIDA report captures this vision. So here are three main points I will take away from our work in the AIDA Committee and from this report.

First, artificial intelligence is no longer a technical subject. AI is a political or rather – as I have said many times – a geopolitical issue. I am happy that in our work in AIDA and in this report, we did not shy away from making this point very clearly. We need closer cooperation with our like-minded democratic partners in setting the rules of the digital future. We need to make strategic choices based on our values, and this may come at odds with how other players on the global stage view the role and future of AI in their societies.

Second, artificial intelligence is, no doubt about it, an opportunity. It is not only an opportunity to improve efficiency in every sector of our economy, it is an important opportunity for us to correct historical biases and discrimination in our societies and, quite literally, build a better future.

This leads me to the last, but very important, conclusion. At the end of the AIDA mandate and after working on this report, Parliament is better equipped to regulate the use of technology to work on acts such as the Artificial Intelligence Act, the first legislation of its kind worldwide. We have explored, we have learned and we have defined our political vision. Now it's time to write the laws.

Once again, congratulations to you, rapporteur, to the coordinators and to the shadow rapporteurs for the work we've done together.

Alexandra Geese (Verts/ALE). – Herr Präsident, Frau Kommissarin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Künstliche Intelligenz wird ja von vielen, auch von mir, in vielen Bereichen als Versprechen für eine bessere Zukunft gesehen.

Aber ohne klare Regeln riskieren wir einen „Zurück-in-die-Zukunft“-Effekt, so wie Marty, der Filmheld, der 1985 mit seiner Zukunftsmaschine ambitioniert in die Zukunft startet und dann im Jahr 1955 landet. Und das ist das, was wir heute erleben: Wenn nämlich zum Beispiel bei *Apple Pay* der Kreditrahmen des Mannes bei gleicher Kreditwürdigkeit und gleichem Einkommen 20 Mal größer ist als der seiner Frau. Das hat nichts mit Intelligenz, mit Innovation oder mit Fortschritt zu tun, denn das ist künstliche Intelligenz ohne kluge Regeln, eine Technologie, die auf Daten der Vergangenheit basiert und uns deswegen nicht von selbst in die Zukunft trägt.

Und damit sie ihr Potential wirklich entfalten kann, brauchen wir klare Regeln, klare Ex-ante-Regeln gegen Diskriminierung. Das bedeutet hochwertige Datensätze, gemischte Teams und vor allen Dingen Überprüfbarkeit. Und deswegen muss der AI-Act, also die jetzige Regulierung, die auf dem Tisch liegt, für künstliche Intelligenz einen Quantensprung machen. Es reicht nicht, eine Produktzertifizierungs- oder Produktsicherheitsregulierung zu haben. Was wir brauchen, ist ein wahres Gesetz zur Umsetzung von Grundrechten im Zeitalter der künstlichen Intelligenz.

Und genau das kann auch ein Wettbewerbsvorteil für europäische Unternehmen sein, denn das können die Unternehmen, die Tech-Giganten, die gerade den Markt dominieren, nicht. Und was auch bemerkenswert ist an diesem Bericht, ist die Anerkennung, dass das Geschäft mit der auf Datenprofilen basierenden Onlinewerbung die Grundlage für die Marktdominanz der großen Big-Tech-Unternehmen – der gleichen Unternehmen, die wir gerade im DSA und DMA regulieren – auch im Bereich künstliche Intelligenz ist. Und da wünsche ich mir, dass die Europäische Union den Boden – denn die Daten sind auch der Boden, auf dem die digitale Wirtschaft gedeiht und wächst – dass sie diesen Boden nicht mehr ausverkauft, sondern endlich selbst bestellt.

Gilles Lebreton (ID). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, une révolution technologique est en train de s'opérer. Le développement de l'intelligence artificielle va transformer nos vies dans des proportions que la plupart des hommes et des femmes a encore peine à imaginer. L'Union européenne doit encourager cette nouvelle manifestation de la créativité humaine, car elle est une formidable promesse de progrès économique. Il en est plus que temps, car face à la concurrence des États-Unis et de la Chine, nous, Européens, avons déjà pris beaucoup de retard. Si nous ne voulons pas devenir une colonie numérique de puissances extérieures, nous devons soutenir la recherche européenne, favoriser l'émergence de start-ups dans nos États membres et éviter la concentration du marché en assurant l'accès des PME à l'économie de l'intelligence artificielle. Je remercie le rapporteur, M. Axel Voss, d'avoir veillé à rappeler ces priorités.

Bien sûr, l'intelligence artificielle n'est pas sans danger. Entre les mains de régimes autoritaires, elle peut conduire à une surveillance de masse et à une grave restriction des libertés, dont la généralisation discutable du passe sanitaire nous a donné une première idée.

C'est pourquoi il faut réglementer son utilisation en l'obligeant à respecter les droits de l'homme, et notamment les droits des patients en matière de santé. En tant qu'auteur du rapport du 20 janvier 2021 sur l'utilisation de l'intelligence artificielle dans les domaines militaires et régaliens, je tiens aussi à réaffirmer la nécessité de réglementer, sous l'égide de l'ONU, l'utilisation des systèmes d'armes létales autonomes, appelés plus communément robots tueurs. Là encore, le rapport de M. Voss a le mérite de le rappeler.

Le groupe Identité et Démocratie insiste particulièrement sur les risques de censure et de négation du pluralisme que cette technologie pourrait favoriser. En aucun cas, l'utilisation de l'intelligence artificielle, notamment pour filtrer les contenus en ligne, ne devrait entraver la liberté d'expression, en particulier la liberté d'expression politique. Comme le disait un célèbre révolutionnaire français: «les orages des discussions politiques ne sont que les douleurs de l'enfantement de la liberté».

Un dernier danger réside dans la tentation d'utiliser l'intelligence artificielle pour aggraver la ségrégation sociale dont les habitants des campagnes sont victimes dans plusieurs États membres, comme la France, au profit des habitants des métropoles. Pour y parer, il faudra exiger un déploiement équitable de la 5G dans l'ensemble de nos territoires: l'enjeu est fondamental, car si nous y parvenons, nous pourrions même, grâce à cette démocratisation de l'accès à l'intelligence artificielle, diminuer les inégalités et faire de cette technologie un instrument de progrès social.

Assita Kanko (ECR). – Voorzitter, in 2020 heeft de EU haar doelstelling om drie procent van het bbp aan onderzoek en ontwikkeling te besteden niet gehaald. De recente cijfers met betrekking tot privéinvesteringen zijn zeer alarmerend: tachtig procent in de VS en in China ten opzichte van minder dan vijf procent in de EU.

De strategische relevantie van artificiële intelligentie (AI) kan niet worden ontkend. De EU moet dan ook meer ambitie tonen om AI te stimuleren en Europese bedrijven kansen te bieden. We moeten talent aantrekken om gelijke tred te houden met de VS en China om de braindrain naar de VS te voorkomen en om te groeien en nieuwe technologieën te ontsluiten voor onze burgers en bedrijven.

Namens Geert Bourgeois, die voor dit verslag schaduwrapporteur is, wil ik rapporteur Voss bedanken voor het goede werk dat hij geleverd heeft. Wij steunen de inspanningen om een rechtskader tot stand te brengen voor veilige, verantwoordelijke, ethische en betrouwbare AI. Daarbij moeten we een redelijke en evenredige aanpak hanteren die gericht is op hogerisicosystemen en ons in staat stelt trouw te blijven aan onze normen en ons volledige potentieel te bereiken.

Op dit moment gaan te veel EU-middelen naar kleine, kortlopende en dikwijls elkaar overlappende projecten. De EU moet zich richten op de lange termijn en op de samenwerking tussen de lidstaten en moet gerichte investeringen doen op een aantal strategische gebieden. Bovendien mag de EU zichzelf niet buitenspel zetten door te rigide regelgeving vast te stellen en moet zij zich bewust zijn van de noodzaak van internationale samenwerking. Ook het risico op vooringenomenheid en discriminatie dat AI met zich meebrengt, moet worden aangepakt. De klemtoon is echter vooral op grondrechten en regelgeving komen te liggen in plaats van op het geheel.

Ten slotte zijn de toegang tot en het delen van gegevens van cruciaal belang voor de ontwikkeling van AI. De AVG is vastgesteld voordat AI op de radar verscheen en leidt momenteel tot te veel onzekerheid bij ondernemingen, omdat deze niet vooruitstrevend genoeg is. Wij pleiten voor een pragmatische en vooruitstrevende no-nonsense-aanpak, aangezien deze volgens ons zal leiden tot groei, innovatie en open strategische autonomie. Te veel en te rigide regelgeving zal daarentegen bedrijven afschrikken en ons ervan weerhouden een koploper te worden op het wereldtoneel.

Deirdre Clune (PPE). – Mr President, I want to thank Axel Voss and the chair of the committee for bringing us to this point. We look forward to dealing with the regulation on artificial intelligence. ‘What is it and what is it about’ is a topic that has so many answers and so many approaches, but it does have so many potential benefits for our societies, for our economy and for development.

Climate can be addressed there, and how we can help to meet our green targets and green ambitions, how to make more efficient decisions based on high-quality inputs. In agriculture, again, efficient approaches measuring inputs to maximise outputs, improving levels and quality of food production. In health we have seen the benefits in the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, and also in appropriate care and treatments for patients.

So we’ve seen much activity in areas such as the DSA and the DMA – and thanks to the Commissioner for leadership in that area – and they regulate current practices. Now we move to the opportunity to shape AI and its future so we can use it in the way that we want, which is trustworthy, if we are to gain citizens’ confidence. We need human oversight with transparency and strong regulatory bodies. We need clear standards for a human-centred approach to AI that is based on our core European ethical standards. We don’t want to stop AI, we want to use it and harnesses it for its enormous potential. Investment from public to encourage private sector in artificial intelligence needs to be encouraged. We need to send a message that Europe is a place to invest, to innovate and to know that you can do so with legal certainty, to know that there is a regulation in place in Europe that applies across the Union.

The proposed AI regulation will put Europe at the forefront internationally in the area of artificial intelligence. We’d be the first to regulate it and other nations will follow. So we have done so with our leadership before and we can now do it again. So the proposed legislation would be future-proofed, which I think is really important, with the ability to react so that we’re not always coming from behind, but we are prepared to deal with this very important technology as it evolves.

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D). – Mr President, dear Commissioner, dear colleagues, getting artificial intelligence right is one of the key questions for the future – also for the European Union. This technology will shape the way value is created in our economy and who wields the power in our societies. We cannot look away from this development and just let it happen. That became clear from our work. We need to sail not drift in technological development.

The work of the AIDA Committee was a European push to get artificial intelligence right. I had the honour to serve as the first vice-chair, and I thank the chair and the rapporteurs for this work. I think we worked hard and I am proud of the results.

For 18 months, AIDA organised 12 public hearings on different aspects of AI, from tackling the bias of the data to the role of AI in achieving the Green Deal objectives. We debated, different political groups worked together to bring the whole spectrum of AI-based values on the table. Like we condemned AI surveillance in the working place and are concerned that is happening in schools also.

In the end, we delivered. The report we are voting on today is a good report that takes steps towards the European approach to AI. We consider, for example, that the imbalance in powers might have negative effects for democracies.

If there's one conclusion I can draw from this work, it is that AI can only be a tool, not an end itself. We should not focus on the specific technologies, but we should focus on what kind of societies we want to see.

It is crucial that we see AI as a stepping stone towards inclusive, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable societies. This requires a political effort in directing technological developments towards these goals and help investing in them. I see the report as a sign of Europe taking an active role in the global development of AI. The current AI Act gives the world's first legal framework for the development of AI, and Parliament has now shown a sign, a strong signal where we want to go.

In terms of AI, Europe will no longer be a bystander. Europe will no longer be a battleground. In the future, the EU will be an ecosystem of excellence, trust and purpose that delivers AI to take us to the future we want.

Svenja Hahn (Renew). – Herr Präsident, verehrte Kollegen! Der Abschlussbericht des Sonderausschusses legt nicht weniger als eine Vision für künstliche Intelligenz für Europa vor. Das ist so wichtig, wenn wir in der ersten Tech-Liga mitspielen wollen. Denn wir sollten nicht immer nur über *worst-case*-Szenarien hyperventilieren, sondern die EU ganz, ganz dringend aus dem Dornröschenschlaf wecken. Wir müssen unseren europäischen Weg in die technologische Zukunft finden, einen Weg jenseits des totalitären Überwachungsstaates *à la* China und des durchaus auch riskanten *anything goes* eines in vielerlei Hinsicht unregulierten US-Marktes.

Der Rahmen für die Nutzung von künstlicher Intelligenz müssen immer unsere Grundrechte sein. Staatliche Massenüberwachung oder Diskriminierung sind inakzeptabel, vor allem wenn wir unsere europäischen Demokratien wetterfest für die Zukunft machen wollen. Dann legen wir die Grundlage für den Innovationskontinent Europa, und dann können wir auch ein unglaubliches Potenzial für unsere Gesellschaft abrufen und unseren Unternehmen ganz neue Freiräume für Ideen eröffnen: Erforschung neuer Medikamente, die *smart cities* von morgen, eine moderne Industrie. Das Potenzial von KI ist so groß, das können wir uns heute kaum vorstellen.

Daher muss uns auch der politische Spagat – möchte ich fast sagen – gelingen, nicht zu überregulieren, was bereits da ist, und vor allem nicht kaputt zu regulieren, was morgen da sein könnte. Denn zuallererst brauchen wir Mut. Mehr Mut, um Chancen zu sehen und um die zu fördern, die sie auch ergreifen, um unseren Entwicklern keine *stumbling stones* in den Weg zu legen, sondern *stepping stones* zu bauen.

Ich will, dass die EU zu einem weltweiten Innovationsführer im Tech-Bereich wird. Künstliche Intelligenz braucht dafür den digitalen Binnenmarkt, wie übrigens viele andere Technologien auch. Wenn dabei unsere Bürgerrechte der Grundpfeiler sind, dann geben wir der digitalen Zukunft das Gesicht Europas und der Demokratie.

Danke an den Berichtersteller Voss und meinem Fraktionskollegen Andrus Ansip für ihre Arbeit und unserem Vorsitzenden Dragoș Tudorache für seine Führung.

VORSITZ: EVELYN REGNER*Vizepräsidentin*

Kim Van Sparrentak (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, today we as a Parliament send a strong signal. We need a legislative proposal to protect workers when AI is deployed at work. And it's about time we had legislation to protect workers from becoming robots.

For too long, when talking about AI and the future of work, we worried about humans going to be replaced by technology. But the reality is that technology hasn't replaced people; it is used to push people to work at a machine-like pace. Employers are tracking employees' every move – how many emails you send, how much time you spend at your keyboard, and even your emotions – to evaluate your performance.

Amazon workers delivering packages have several tracking devices in their vans to not only track if they are reaching their targets, but also whether they look happy or tired while on the road. Zara shop assistants' locations are continuously monitored and they are given automated orders in their earpieces and call centre workers are evaluated with emotion-recognition technologies based on how chirpy they sound while talking with customers.

AI-driven surveillance at work is already a reality, and this endangers health and safety, mental health and fundamental rights. We must not treat AI like a magical tool for efficiency and productivity. Rather, we need clear rules to protect workers when there are issues at work. A new legislative proposal can help AI make our work easier and more pleasant, and this is what makes people productive at work.

We need laws to empower workers and make sure technology is used to promote workers' rights instead of allowing our bosses to continuously stalk, evaluate and exploit us. And this is why Parliament sends a strong signal with broad support. We need a legislative proposal to protect workers' rights when AI is deployed at work.

Riho Terras (PPE). – Austatud istungi juhataja, head kolleegid!

Eelmisel aastal ellu kutsutud parlamendi erikomisjon, mis analüüsis ja tegi ettepanekuid tehistaibu [tehisintellekti] küsimuses, on oma tööle täna joone alla tõmmanud. Mina hindan kõrgelt seda initsiatiivi, mille parlament erikomisjoni loomisega võttis. Tehistaip ning selle kasutamisest lähtuv tehnoloogia areng on äärmiselt kiire ning ilmselgelt on tehistaibuga seotud palju olulisi küsimusi, millega ka antud raport tegeles.

Minu hinnangul peame tulevikku vaadates silmas pidama järgmisi olulisi tegureid seoses tehistaibu rakendamise ja selle kasutamise reguleerimisega.

Vajame ka tasakaalustatud lähenemist seadusandlusele ning peame vältima ülereguleerimist, mis pärsib innovatsiooni ja tehistaibu kasutuselevõtmist julgeoleku- ja kaitsevaldkonnas. Ülereguleerimine piirab meie võimalusi tehistaibu tehnoloogilisel arendamisel, eriti peame silmas seda, et meie konkurentidel puuduvad piirangud.

Kindlasti tuleb tähelepanu pöörata tihedale transatlantilisele koostööle tehistaibu valdkonnas. USA on Euroopa Liidu tõsisem koostööpartner selles valdkonnas. Peame vältima regulatsioone, mis meie omavahelist koostööd segavad.

Olen veendunud, et Euroopa Komisjonil tuleb tehistaibu valdkonda planeerida rohkem ressursse. Igasugune tehnoloogia areng nõuab märkimisväärsed investeeringuid.

Minu hinnangul võiksid kujundamisjärgus ja murrangulised tehnoloogiad üldiselt, sealhulgas tehistaip, saada Euroopa Liidu ja NATO ühiseks töövaldkonnaks. NATO tegeleb kaitsevaldkonna tehistaibu strateegia väljatöötamisega. Euroopa Liidult ootaksin eelkõige tehistaibu kaitsevaldkonna rakendamise rahastamist läbi kaitsefondi ja muude asjakohaste finantsinstrumentide.

Ma soovin veelkord tänada oma kolleege tehistaibu erikomisjonist. Ja loodan väga, et komisjoni järelused ja ka minu poolt rõhutatud küsimused saavad Euroopa Liidus ka tulevikus piisavalt tähelepanu. Tehistaibu teemal peame kindlasti oma konkurentidega sammu pidama ja vältima mahajäämist – see on meie konkurentsivõime küsimus.

Alex Agius Saliba (S&D). – Sinjura President, Kummissarju, ahna bnedmin u mhux biss numri. Ghalkemm l-intelligenza artifiċjali holqot diversi opportunitajiet, ziedet il-kapital, il-produttività, l-innovazzjoni, l-iżvilupp sostenibbli, ikk-reat numru ta' impjegi ġodda, ma rridux ninjoraw numru ta' diffikultajiet. Diffikultajiet etiċi, legali, diffikultajiet relatati anke mad-dinja tax-xoghol, mad-drittijiet tal-haddiema taghna.

It-teknoloġiji diġitali qeghdin jaffettwaw il-kwalità tal-hajja tal-haddiema taghna u qeghdin joholqu żbilanċ. Żbilanċ li qed jaffettwa l-iktar daww il-haddiema li huma vulnerabbli. L-AI u t-teknoloġiji diġitali irriorganizzaw, b'mod partikolari, il-futur tad-dinja tax-xoghol taghna u qeghdin ukoll jheddu numru ta' setturi tax-xoghol partikolari, minhabba outsourcing, minhabba wkoll numru ta' realtajiet oħrajn. Huma kkreaw ukoll numru ta' għodod ġodda kif jispjajaw fuq il-haddiema taghna, jispjajaw fuq il-hajja personali tagħhom, l-użu li jagħmlu min numru ta' pjattaformi diġitali, u dan qed johloq ukoll diversi realtajiet. Realtaġiet relatati wkoll ma' prattiċi abbużivi illi hafna drabi jkun qeghdin isehhu mingħajr ma l-haddiema jkun jafu; dan mingħajr l-ebda standard morali, mingħajr l-ebda standard etiku.

Il-kumpaniji u dawn l-għodod diġitali wkoll qeghdin jikkontrollaw ukoll il-mod kif il-haddiema jahdmu wkoll u dan qed isir ukoll fuq livell Ewropew. U għalhekk huwa importanti, huwa fundamentali li naraw li l-AI tintuża b'mod li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar tkun imdawra wkoll mad-drittijiet fundamentali tal-bnedmin taghna, tkun iktar *human centric*, u għalhekk jiena nemmen li dan ir-rapport huwa pass fid-direzzjoni t-tajba sabiex isejjah għal att leġislativ fuq livell Ewropew biex jikkontrolla dawn ir-realtajiet li qeghdin jaffettwaw ukoll lid-dinja tax-xoghol taghna. Għalhekk huwa importanti li dawn ir-realtajiet fl-aħħar mill-aħħar niehdu konjizzjoni tagħhom tad-dinja tax-xoghol, sabiex naraw u nassiguraw li jkollna verament bilanċ, work-life balance, u kif ukoll drittijiet oħra wkoll rispettati, fost l-oħrajn, dak tar-*right to disconnect*.

Għalhekk huwa importanti li naġixxu llum qabel għada u nemmen li dan huwa pass fid-direzzjoni t-tajba illi għandu jwassalna wkoll għall-att dwar l-Intelligenza Artifiċjali. Grazzi hafna.

Susana Solís Pérez (Renew). – Señora presidenta, querida vicepresidenta Vestager, compañeros, corremos el riesgo de que los valores europeos sean reemplazados globalmente, nuestras empresas queden marginadas y nuestros estándares de vida se vean drásticamente reducidos. Estas, como saben, no son mis palabras, sino las que recoge el informe que aprobamos hoy tras meses de trabajo en la Comisión Especial sobre Inteligencia Artificial.

Luchar por el liderazgo tecnológico de la Unión Europea no es una opción. No solo porque de ello depende nuestra competitividad, sino porque no podemos correr el riesgo de que otros que no comparten nuestros valores acaben imponiéndonos las normas. Europa es valiente y está marcando los estándares globales de la inteligencia artificial: ética confiable, al servicio de los ciudadanos y centrada en nuestros valores democráticos.

El reto lo tendremos en no sobrerregular, en evitar duplicidades y en un sistema de gobernanza que evite un mercado fragmentado con veintisiete interpretaciones diferentes. Nuestras empresas, especialmente las pequeñas, necesitan un mercado único, sin burocracia, que les permita innovar y crecer en Europa.

Dicho esto, el informe que hoy aprobamos es más que un toque de atención. Es una hoja de ruta con propuestas claras que deben acompañar la legislación si queremos competir por el liderazgo. Hablo, por ejemplo, de la creación de una bolsa de valores parecida al Nasdaq, que ayuda a que nuestras empresas digitales puedan financiarse rápidamente con capital europeo. Hablo de aumentar las inversiones públicas y privadas para alcanzar al menos los 20 000 millones de euros anuales. Hablo de invertir en formación para reducir la escasez de personal cualificado, pero también para que los trabajadores sepan integrar la tecnología en su día a día y librarles de trabajos repetitivos que puedan hacer las máquinas. Y, sobre todo, hablo de un espacio europeo de datos interoperables que nos libere de dependencias extranjeras.

Urge recuperar el tiempo perdido para asegurar que los enormes avances de la inteligencia artificial benefician a toda la sociedad. Y hoy damos un gran paso.

Angelika Niebler (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Vizepräsidentin der Europäischen Kommission, liebe Kolleginnen, liebe Kollegen! Künstliche Intelligenz kann eine große Bereicherung für unsere Gesellschaft und für unsere Wirtschaft sein.

Heute stellen wir ja schon fest, dass künstliche Intelligenz im Alltag ganz vielfältig im Einsatz ist: Bei Musikstreaming-Plattformen beispielsweise wird künstliche Intelligenz eingesetzt, bei Onlinesprachübersetzern ist künstliche Intelligenz im Einsatz. Allein wenn Sie in die Medizin schauen: Welche Fortschritte gibt es im diagnostischen Bereich durch den Einsatz von künstlicher Intelligenz und Big Data! Bilddaten werden ausgewertet, Krankheitsmuster werden frühzeitiger erkannt. Auch für den Klimaschutz gibt es eine Vielzahl von Möglichkeiten, Geodaten zu nutzen. Die Landwirtschaft kann mithilfe von KI-Systemen hier gezielter arbeiten, und auch im Haushalt: Was es da an Effizienzsteigerungen geben kann – ungemein.

Es ist ganz, ganz wichtig, dass wir uns mit dem Thema „Künstliche Intelligenz“ beschäftigen. Künstliche Intelligenz ist die Zukunft und hat ein riesengroßes Potenzial. Aber: Wo es Chancen gibt, gibt es meist auch große Risiken. Ich sage immer: Fluch und Segen zugleich. Das Thema „*Social Scoring*“ ist beispielsweise angesprochen worden, die Angst davor, dass doch auch mithilfe von KI-Systemen hier flächendeckende Überwachungen durchgeführt werden, sei es im Arbeitsbereich oder sonstwo. Deshalb, glaube ich, müssen wir uns gut überlegen, wie wir hier Regulatorik auch künftig gestalten.

Ich denke, für uns als Europäer ist es wichtig, dass bei allem, was wir in Sachen Regulierung jetzt überlegen – und die Vorschläge liegen ja auf dem Tisch –, die digitalen Technologien immer dem Menschen dienen müssen. Also der Mensch muss bei uns bei der Frage, wie hier reguliert wird, im Mittelpunkt stehen. Das ist das Allerwichtigste, damit wir Diskriminierung und anderes verhindern.

Ich möchte dem Kollegen Axel Voss für seinen großartigen Bericht danken und allen Kolleginnen und Kollegen, die in diesem Sonderausschuss wirklich über viele Monate sich mit den vielfältigsten Fragen in Sachen KI-Einsatz beschäftigt haben. Und ich freue mich jetzt auch auf die weiteren Diskussionen und Debatten, wenn es dann um die konkreten Regulierungsvorschläge geht.

Ich glaube, wir Europäer können hier wirklich eine weitere Duftmarke setzen und in diesem digitalen Umfeld hier doch eine Regulierung schaffen, die am Ende des Tages unseren Bürgerinnen und Bürgern in ganz Europa dient.

Christel Schaldemose (S&D). – Fru formand! Kolleger, kommissær! Hvad ser I for jer, når I hører begrebet kunstig intelligens? Robotter, der overtager verden? En dystopi af orwellske dimensioner? Eller måske en app, der kan diagnosticere hudkræft ligeså nøjagtigt som eksperter? Eller maskinen Bluedot, der forudså covid-19-pandemien, før WHO gjorde det? Kunstig intelligens har, ligesom alt andet, mindst to sider. Hvis det bruges ansvarligt, kan det komme os alle til gavn. Men hvis det misbruges, kan det få katastrofale konsekvenser. Derfor er det vigtigt, at vi i EU bliver førende, når det gælder udviklingen af kunstig intelligens, for vi har en helt unik tilgang til teknologisk udvikling. Vi har mennesket i centrum og insisterer på, at teknologi skal være pålidelig. Det går hånd i hånd med høj innovation, økonomisk vækst og større konkurrenceevne.

Men lige nu er det altså USA og Kina, som har taget førertrøjen, og hvis ikke vi indhenter dem, så bliver det dem, der kommer til at sætte standarden for, hvordan kunstig intelligens skal være og skal bruges. Sådan skal det ikke være! Der er virkelig brug for, at det er EU, der gør det. De udfordringer, der er med kunstig intelligens i dag, må ikke gøres til maskinstormere. De må ikke blive en undskyldning for at være imod fremskridt og imod teknologisk udvikling. Det afgørende er, at vi stiller nogle krav til den kunstige intelligens. Den skal udvikles og bruges på en gennemsigtig, på en etisk og på en ansvarlig måde. Det er det, der er den europæiske vej. Her har vi mulighed for at tage førertrøjen tilbage.

Jeg syntes, at AIDA-betænkningen er rigtig god, fordi den netop finder denne balance. Vi øger investeringerne i kunstig intelligens, vi sørger for, at den europæiske lovgivning harmoniseres, og vi adresserer de risici, der helt naturligt er ved brugen af kunstig intelligens. Jeg håber, vi i fremtiden kan bruge kunstig intelligens mere i Europa. Men det forudsætter, at den er menneskecentreret, og at vi har en lovgivning, som sikrer pålidelighed i den måde, vi bruger kunstig intelligens på. Med det hilser jeg betænkningen hjertelig velkommen.

Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE). – Señora presidenta, señora vicepresidenta, enhorabuena al ponente Axel Voss y a los ponentes alternativos y también al presidente, que ha desempeñado un papel fundamental en el desarrollo de esta Comisión Especial.

La inteligencia artificial se ha convertido en un motor clave para cualquier economía que quiera ser competitiva globalmente y, por lo tanto, tiene una importancia estratégica decisiva. Su impacto es económico y también social y, desde luego, geopolítico. Por eso, este informe que debatimos hoy nos ofrece una visión omnicomprendensiva sobre el potencial, las necesidades y los riesgos que plantea la inteligencia artificial. Analiza aspectos centrales para su desarrollo, los principios éticos y, en especial, la centralidad que deben tener las personas, la necesidad de aumentar nuestra inversión en I+D, la ciberseguridad, la capacidad de formar y retener el talento en Europa o el futuro del empleo.

Me voy a referir específicamente a dos condiciones que son *sine qua non* para su desarrollo: los datos y la infraestructura. Es fundamental eliminar la fragmentación legislativa en materia de datos y promover el acceso a esos datos en condiciones de igualdad. Unos datos seguros, unos datos fiables, unos datos que se puedan compartir. En ese sentido, hemos aprobado recientemente el Reglamento relativo a la gobernanza europea de datos y en ese sentido empezamos a discutir ahora también la Ley de Datos, cuyo foco está en la internet de las cosas y los datos industriales. Pero, además, debemos poner fin a nuestras carencias en infraestructuras digitales en la Unión Europea. Seguimos dependiendo no solo en materia de procesadores de terceros países, sino que, además, el mercado de la infraestructura en nube está en manos de cinco proveedores no europeos.

En fin, el desarrollo de la inteligencia artificial en Europa va a tener un gran impacto en la capacidad competitiva de nuestra economía y en el progreso de la sociedad en todos los ámbitos: educación, sanidad, transportes, energía, etc. Es una oportunidad que debemos aprovechar bien y tenemos en ello, en la Unión Europea, una enorme responsabilidad.

Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, no mundo só cerca de 22 % dos profissionais de inteligência artificial são mulheres. Infelizmente, esta desigualdade de género reflete-se também aqui no Parlamento Europeu. Todos os responsáveis por este relatório dos vários grupos políticos foram homens. Deve ser muito importante...

Existem, contudo, várias mulheres interessadas neste tema, como se vê até neste debate, que submeteram alterações e, felizmente, na sua versão final, o relatório reconhece a importância de adotar uma perspetiva de género quando falamos de inteligência artificial.

Temos que evitar que os dados na base dos quais se constroem os algoritmos sejam enviesados e discriminatórios. Mas a inteligência artificial também pode ser usada para combater esta discriminação. Por exemplo, a inteligência artificial permite tornar os processos de recrutamento mais objetivos, baseando as decisões em critérios pré-definidos e reduzindo o espaço para análises subjetivas que, muitas vezes, discriminam mulheres jovens pelo risco de virem a engravidar.

Temos que investir na requalificação e na melhoria das competências, colocando ênfase nos grupos sub-representados, como são as mulheres. A forma como usamos a inteligência artificial tem que ser baseada em valores democráticos e assegurar que homens e mulheres beneficiam igualmente desta tecnologia.

Radosław Sikorski (PPE). – Pani Marszałek, Wysoka Izbo. Sztuczna inteligencja to wspaniały wynalazek, ale – jak każdy wynalazek – może służyć dobru lub złu. Może służyć wykrywaniu raka albo inwigilacji, bezpieczniejszej jeździe samochodem albo autonomicznemu zabijaniu, także przy pomocy broni masowego rażenia. Może poszerzać naszą wiedzę albo tworzyć *deepfake*'i i manipulować całymi społeczeństwami.

Jako Unia nie jesteśmy liderem tej technologii, ale liderzy nie zawsze robią to dobrze. Rosja na przykład przy pomocy botów stworzyła czy wspierała ruch antyszczepionkowy podczas ostatniej pandemii. W Chinach system jest tak zaawansowany, że można dostawać punkty społeczne za płacenie rachunków w terminie, przechodzenie przez jezdnię na pasach. Całe życie może być regulowane przy pomocy takich punktów jak u nas w Europie punkty za jazdę samochodem. Koszmar. W Stanach Zjednoczonych z kolei te technologie są własnością wielkich korporacji, które uzyskują niebotyczne zyski i mają taki wpływ na Kongres Stanów Zjednoczonych, że sensowna regulacja jest prawie niemożliwa.

A więc to my w tej izbie jesteśmy jedyną nadzieją ludzkości na sensowną regulację tej technologii, na zrównoważenie interesów przemysłu z ludzką potrzebą życia w prywatności, odpowiedzialności za słowo i po prostu życia w cywilizowanym społeczeństwie. Potrzebujemy więcej inwestycji w tę technologię, ale także lepszych regulacji. I dlatego chciałbym pogratulować autorom naszego sprawozdania.

Ernő Schaller-Baross (NI). – Madam President, the report of the AIDA Special Committee set out the direction of the EU's approach to artificial intelligence. On an unparalleled scale, Europe can establish its own leadership in the area of AI by creating a regulatory environment that gives both private and business users the most appropriate and complete rights and the widest possible protection. This report can be – and confidentially will be – used as a compass during the AI-related process ahead.

Faced with the rapid technological development of AI and a global policy context where more and more countries are investing heavily in AI, the EU must act to harness the many opportunities and address the challenges of AI in a future-proof manner. We have to set the appropriate standards – neither more nor less than is necessary to achieve our goals. We can pave the way to ethical technology worldwide and ensure that the EU remains competitive all along the way.

On artificial intelligence, trust is not an option but a must. That is what human-centred artificial intelligence is all about. The primary purpose of the development and the use of algorithms, sensors and robots is not to produce technology or create scientific knowledge, but to support the quality of human life, the preservation of health and the organisation of social relations. AI should be used at the service of people, families and businesses, and not the other way around.

I would like to thank Mr Axel Voss for his excellent work and congratulate him on this very good report.

Spontane Wortmeldungen

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Doamnă președintă, vreau și eu să felicit raportorul. Cred că este un subiect extrem de important, în primul rând pentru că avansul tehnologic ne-a oferit o nouă lume digitală care ne-a transformat fundamental viața. Și, odată cu această transformare, s-au creat oportunități extraordinare care trebuie să servească în primul rând oamenilor, cetățenii noștri. Însă, în același timp, trebuie să privim și către riscuri și tocmai de aceea cred că regulile pe care le pregătim trebuie să fie extrem de clare, astfel încât ele să inspire încredere. Și, aici, este rolul Comisiei să aibă grijă astfel încât investițiile în inteligență artificială să fie consistente, astfel încât să putem recupera distanța care există între noi și celelalte state, pentru că doar așa putem redeveni și ocupa locul pe care îl merităm pe glob.

Karlo Ressler (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, poštovana povjerenice, kolegice i kolege, umjetna inteligencija već danas nas okružuje čak i više nego što smo toga svjesni, u mnogim svakodnevnim aplikacijama, primjenama i uslugama, od društvenih mreža i internetskih tražilica pa do medicinske dijagnostike ili pametnog transporta.

U svakom slučaju, umjetna inteligencija već je danas središnja tehnologija nove digitalne ere koja ima potencijal promijeniti i transformirati naša društva iz temelja. Jasno je, isto tako, da njezina široka primjena ne dolazi bez opasnosti. O zaštiti temeljnih prava građana mnogo smo slušali i čuli i danas u ovoj debati te je potpuno jasno da od novih tehnologija moramo očekivati da poštuju prije svega ljudsko dostojanstvo i da poštuju sve one demokratske europske vrijednosti u koje vjerujemo.

Istodobno, naš razvoj ovisi o sposobnosti prilagođavanja novim, često i okrutnim vremenima, okrutnom vremenu u kojem živimo. Zato trebamo pristup koji potiče na usvajanje, koji potiče na europsku konkurentnost i na brže i bolje usvajanje novih tehnologija. Novim generacijama dužni smo ponuditi upravo to, da u Europi bude moguće kvalitetno, dobro živjeti. To nije moguće bez primjene novih tehnologija, to nije moguće bez primjene umjetne inteligencije. Istodobno, dužni smo im i odgovornost u upravljanju našim društvom i upravljanju budućnošću.

Zato, u svakom slučaju podržavamo pravu, učinkovitu, bolju, kvalitetniju primjenu umjetne inteligencije, ali uz sve one osigurače koji će osigurati da čovjek ostane u središtu njezine primjene i da imamo jedan normalni, europski, uravnoteženi pristup između onih ekstrema koje nažalost vidimo kada promatramo globalnu situaciju.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, después de un año y medio de trabajos, la Comisión Especial sobre Inteligencia Artificial concluye con este documento que hoy examina el Parlamento Europeo y que impacta a todas las materias y bases jurídicas sobre las que legisla el Parlamento Europeo de contenido relativo a la industria, la energía, el comercio y, por supuesto, el empleo.

Este documento también debe respetar el estándar europeo de protección de los derechos fundamentales, que resulta ser el más alto del mundo, establecido no solamente en el Reglamento de protección de datos, sino también en la Directiva dirigida a las agencias que investigan los delitos, las agencias de *law enforcement*. Ese estándar tiene que estar muy presente en la legislación, que debe colocar a la Unión Europea a la cabeza de la referencia en normativa sobre inteligencia artificial.

Cuando hablamos de *predictive policing* tenemos que saber que impacta sobre la presunción de inocencia. Cuando hablamos de reconocimiento biométrico tenemos que saber que impacta sobre el principio de no discriminación consagrado por la Carta de Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea. Y cuando hablamos de contenido potencialmente tan abrasivo sobre los derechos fundamentales como el que tiene que ver con el manejo de los datos personales, el estándar europeo de protección de datos tiene que ser respetado.

Por tanto, ese es el compromiso: colocar a la Unión Europea en la cabeza de la legislación sobre inteligencia artificial, pero no ceder en ningún caso a los cantos de sirenas que pretenden que esto estaría en contradicción con el mantenimiento del estándar europeo de protección de datos personales y de respeto a los derechos fundamentales.

Por tanto, enhorabuena, sí, a los ponentes. Pero, sobre todo, alerta ante la legislación europea sobre inteligencia artificial para que mantenga el respeto a los derechos fundamentales protegidos por la Carta.

Clare Daly (The Left). – Madam President, I think there's no doubt about it that AI has the potential to positively transform the situation for humankind. We see this particularly in the fields of medicine and scientific research, but if maintained in the hands of private companies for private profit, then that societal gain is very much limited. These are the circumstances which give rise to the undermining of workers' rights outlined by colleagues or the massive invasion of privacy which we have already experienced.

I think we have to proceed with caution. The report, in fairness, I think, is very unhelpfully dramatic in its tone. I mean, to label the tech race as the fight for the survival of the EU and its battles against China, to be honest I think undermines it. Human survival is not at risk in Europe. Calling AI the fifth element after water, earth, fire and air actually delegitimises the report a little bit, in my opinion. I think we could have put a lot more stronger message if we dealt more with the environmental impact of the uncontrolled and unlimited development of AI, which it has on raw materials, and which does impact on our fight for survival.

I think one of the key weaknesses is the area of dealing with the threat of emerging great powers, so-called, such as China and Russia, where there's supposedly little oversight for the deployment of lethal offensive weaponry. The response of the report to that is to hand it over to NATO, to align more closely with NATO and to have NATO execute counter strikes against those performing cyberattacks – so, if you like, an eye for an eye ... and suddenly the world is blind.

In this report there should be a very strong call for no place for AI in autonomous weapons, a very strong guarding influence in terms of facial recognition, and so on. We live in a global world and these issues should be dealt with multilaterally in the global field, and not geo-politicised.

Sandra Pereira (The Left). – Senhora Presidente, a inteligência artificial, como representação dos avanços tecnológicos e científicos a que assistimos, deve ser posta ao serviço da melhoria das condições de vida dos trabalhadores e dos povos. Deve estar ao serviço da paz, do desenvolvimento, da criação de riqueza e de bem-estar.

Mas não é isto que este relatório defende. Pelo contrário, põe o foco no sacrossanto mercado com o objetivo de colocar estes avanços ao serviço do lucro de uns poucos, com o aumento da exploração e da deterioração das condições de vida e de trabalho de muitos outros. Coloca os desenvolvimentos da ciência ao serviço do militarismo e da guerra e não da paz.

Afastamo-nos desta visão mercantilista e belicista e defendemos que os avanços na inteligência artificial devem promover, nomeadamente, a redução do horário de trabalho sem perda de rendimento, a diminuição da penosidade no trabalho e devem ser direcionados para sectores primordiais, como os da saúde.

Consideramos que a inteligência artificial deve contribuir para o progresso social e não ser o motor e o álbi para mais exploração e para retrocessos sociais e laborais.

(Ende der spontanen Wortmeldungen)

Margrethe Vestager, *Executive Vice-President of the Commission*. – Madam President, thank you very, very much for this very rich and interesting debate.

As, I think, many of you have mentioned, with this work the European Union is pioneering: we are the first to take this endeavour upon us, to make this comprehensive legislative framework and to promote trust in a very promising technology. But the thing is that promoting trustworthy AI is a global endeavour. It is not something that can be done in Europe alone. This is why we must complement our legislative work with an ambitious external agenda everywhere we go. We need to influence global standards so that they reflect democratic values – because fighting for that is also fighting for democracy as such.

This is what we have done in several international forums, such as the OECD and UNESCO, and what we are now taking forward bilaterally with our like-minded partners, such as through the EU-US Trade and Technology Council. There is one thing I think very characteristic for the debate today, and it is that Dragoș Tudorache was very right in his first takeaway from the work of the AIDA Committee. AI is not about technology; AI is politics. The way we deal with technology reflects how we want our societies to develop.

So it has indeed been a pleasure to be part of this, I think, very passionate, debate – a debate about how we would want to create societies that are inclusive, where people feel seen and heard and counted in, where we can live with the freedom of not being discriminated against or not being under surveillance by machines, in our lives, in our workplaces.

I think this is a very promising starting point for the next chapter of our legislative procedure, but also for Europe assessing itself in these global endeavours to be the creators of a human-centric, trustworthy, artificial intelligence. And, in that, I feel very encouraged with the debate today, so thank you very much.

Axel Voss, *Berichterstatter*. – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Frau Vizepräsidentin Vestager! Im Grunde, glaube ich, merken wir alle eins: Wir wollen nicht in Schönheit hier sterben. Werte sind wichtig, aber sie müssen ausbalanciert werden zu den Neuerungen auch einer Technologie, und das ist das, worauf es ankommt. Wir wollen eigentlich für den digitalen Bereich nur noch Verordnungen sehen, hier vorgeschlagen von der Kommission. Wir brauchen den besseren Zugang zu Daten, und damit meine ich auch personenbezogene Daten, weil nicht jede künstliche Intelligenz ohne personenbezogene Daten auskommen wird.

Wir brauchen den einheitlichen Binnenmarkt – also viele Hausaufgaben, die wir Ihnen mitgeben. Wir brauchen die stärkere, robuste digitale Infrastruktur, was Sie erwähnt hatten, das Ökosystem der Exzellenz, das Ökosystem des Vertrauens, eine KI-Industriestrategie mit den nachhaltigen Investitionen, aber auch klare Regelungen für KI im Bereich von Sicherheit und stärkerer Kooperation, auch Cybersicherheit etc.

Wir brauchen natürlich aber auch den unbedingten Willen, digital als Europa, als Europäische Union überleben zu wollen und damit auch führend werden zu wollen. Wir brauchen eine Strategie, einen Plan, Konzeption und deren Umsetzung. Wir brauchen viel Geld, Talente, die Cybersicherheit, die Bündelung unserer Kräfte in Europa, damit wir auch zu einer Größe gelangen, europäische Projekte und am Ende natürlich Rechtssicherheit.

Eine Aneinanderreihung von Rechtsakten, die jeder für sich genommen richtig sind, aber das macht aus meiner Sicht noch keinen Plan, noch keine Strategie für die Zukunft, für die Wettbewerbssituation, der wir ausgesetzt sind. Wir brauchen die Aufbruchsstimmung unserer Gesellschaft, und dazu brauchen wir politische Führung, die auch auf Ihren Schultern ruht. Und wir brauchen aber auch Mitgliedstaaten, die ihre Gesamtverantwortung auch endlich einmal wahrnehmen.

Jedenfalls: Ich bedanke mich noch einmal recht herzlich bei allen Beteiligten, die dies ermöglicht haben, und hoffe, dass nachher die Abstimmung auch entsprechend das signalisiert, was wir alles wollen und was wir Ihnen mitgeben, sozusagen zur Umsetzung.

Die Präsidentin. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Die Abstimmung findet am Dienstag, 3. Mai 2022, statt.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Adam Bielan (ECR), na piśmie. – Sztuczna inteligencja odgrywa coraz bardziej istotną rolę w gospodarce i w demokracji. Z rozwiązaniami opartymi na sztucznej inteligencji spotykamy się coraz częściej w naszej codziennej pracy i życiu. Zastosowanie tej technologii może w przyszłości znacznie poprawić wydajność, zwiększyć innowacje oraz napędzić wzrost gospodarczy wielu państw europejskich.

Podczas tego mandatu będziemy po raz pierwszy horyzontalnie regulować sztuczną inteligencję, a sprawozdanie posła Vossa, które jest wynikiem prac komisji specjalnej powołanej w celu rozważenia przyszłych potrzeb politycznych Unii w tej dziedzinie, to kolejny krok naprzód. Niemniej jednak chciałbym zaznaczyć, że potrzebujemy podejścia jeszcze bardziej sprzyjającego innowacjom, które uznaje rolę ochrony praw własności intelektualnej, a także podejścia eksperymentalnego, takiego jak dedykowane środowiska regulacyjne.

Jednocześnie musimy zapewnić równowagę między koniecznością wdrażania nowych technologii a realizacją polityki ochrony środowiska. Wierzę, że Zielony Ład i polityka w dziedzinie technologii powinny się wzajemnie uzupełniać. Przyjęcie z góry, że Zielony Ład powinien przeważać nad wszystkim, nie jest rozsądnym rozwiązaniem, ponieważ takie założenie zagraża przyszłości naszych gospodarek i ogólnej zdolności do osiągnięcia naszych celów, zarówno w dziedzinie technologii, jak i ekologii.

Wierzę, że w niedalekiej przyszłości będziemy w stanie wypracować takie przepisy, które będą dążyły do maksymalizacji możliwości korzystania z tej technologii, zarazem chroniąc obywateli przed związanymi z nią zagrożeniami.

Milan Brglez (S&D), pisno. – Umetna inteligenca se razvija z izjemno hitrostjo in bo v prihodnosti vplivala na vsa področja našega življenja, zato je ključnega pomena, v katero smer bo šel razvoj te tehnologije in ne nazadnje, kdo bo delovanje in uporabo te tehnologije nadzoroval. Tako bi lahko povzeli glavno sporočilo končnega poročila Posebnega odbora Evropskega parlamenta za umetno inteligenco v digitalni dobi, ki smo ga poslanci sprejeli na majskem plenarnem zasedanju.

V poročilu so zapisana priporočila in usmeritve, ki jim bo morala Evropska unija slediti, če bo želela pri razvoju umetne inteligence dohiti trenutno vodilni tehnološki velesili – Kitajsko in Združene države Amerike. Področij, na katerih nam lahko umetna inteligenca izboljša življenje, je ogromno; od boja proti podnebnim spremembam in hitrejših ter natančnejših diagnoz v medicini, do izboljšanja delavskih standardov ter pospešitve inovacij.

A zavedati se moramo, da razvoj novih tehnologij prinaša tudi nove nevarnosti. Avtorski režimi umetno inteligenco že izkoriščajo za množični nadzor prebivalstva in sistemsko kratenje človekovih pravic. Zato je ključno, da bo v prihodnosti Evropska unija tista, ki bo postavljala normativni okvir na področju umetne inteligence in s tem zagotavljala, da se bo ta razvijala in uporabljala v skladu z evropskimi načeli.

Urmas Paet (Renew), *kirjalikult.* – Eesmärk on luua inimkeskne tehisintellekt, mis teenib meie inimesi, austades samas nende privaatsust. Raportis julgustame kasutama rohkem tehisintellektil põhinevaid lahendusi. Tehisintellekt pakub hulgaliselt võimalusi tervishoiu, sealhulgas personaalse meditsiini edendamiseks, aitab parandada elukeskkonda ja -tingimusi (näiteks võidelda pandeemiatega ja nälgihädadega) ning ohjeldada kliimamuutusi. Ühtlasi aitab tehisintellekt koos vajaliku tugitaristu, hariduse ja koolitusega panustada jätkusuutlikku majanduskasvu. Euroopa Liit peab aga kiiremas korras oluliselt suurendama oma investeringuid tehisintellekti, et püsiksime konkurentsivõimelistena.

Edina Tóth (NI), *írásban.* – A digitális versenyben Európa komoly hátrányban van Kínával és az Egyesült Államokkal szemben. Szomorúan látjuk, hogy az uniós gazdaság és ipar digitalizálása továbbra sincs megfelelő szinten kezelve. A mesterséges intelligencia szabályozása terén jelenleg jelentős elmaradás tapasztalható, amelyet hatékonyabb és célzottabb uniós beruházásokkal kellene orvosolni e technológia előnyeinek teljes mértékű kihasználása érdekében. A globális versenyhátrány leküzdésének egyedüli kulcsa az erős, nemzetállamokra épülő digitális unió megteremtése, amely biztosítja a tagállamok nyújtotta lehetőségek megvalósítását. Végezetül pedig nem szabad elfeledkezni polgárainkról sem: a technológia célja az emberek szolgálata kell, hogy legyen! Ezért a mesterséges intelligencia terén nem csupán szerencsés, ha megvan a bizalom, hanem egyenesen elengedhetetlen. Nekünk pedig az a feladatunk, hogy ezt biztosítsuk mindenki számára!

Tom Vandenkendelaere (PPE), *schriftelijk.* – Artificiële intelligentie (AI) is geen sciencefiction meer, maar is vandaag al realiteit – ook in het dagelijks leven. AI-toepassingen bepalen welke muziek je beluistert en welke filmpjes je online te zien krijgt. Ze zorgen ervoor dat de voeding die je eet niet onnodig met pesticiden is behandeld en beslissen mee over de lening voor je droomhuis en de vaststelling van jouw kankerdiagnose.

AI heeft, met grote hoeveelheden gegevens als brandstof, sterke algoritmen en een grote rekencapaciteit, in nagenoeg elke sector het potentieel om antwoorden te bieden op de uitdagingen waarvoor we ons vandaag de dag gesteld zien: op sociale media, in de landbouw, bij de verlening van financiële diensten, in de gezondheidszorg en voor politie en justitie.

Uiteraard moeten we ons bewust zijn van de mogelijke neveneffecten. We kunnen niet blind vertrouwen op een algoritme dat onvoldoende kan worden uitgelegd, waarop geen toezicht kan worden gehouden en dat gevoed wordt met uiterst gebrekkige of duidelijk foute gegevens en mogelijk tot discriminatie kan leiden. AI zal pas slagen met een evenwichtig rechtskader dat AI-systemen toelaat zich te ontwikkelen en te verfijnen met behulp van grote hoeveelheden gegevens en tegelijkertijd voorziet in waarborgen die ons in staat stellen om te gaan met de mogelijke negatieve neveneffecten.

(Die Sitzung wird um 11.16 Uhr unterbrochen)

PRESIDENZA: ROBERTA METSOLA

President

4. Resumption of the sitting

(The sitting resumed at 11.39)

5. This is Europe – Debate with the Prime Minister of Italy, Mario Draghi (debate)

President. – We have the Prime Minister of Italy, Mario Draghi, with us today.

Prime Minister, let me start by thanking you for accepting our invitation to address the European Parliament as part of our 'This is Europe' debates where, together with European leaders, we discuss our common agenda for Europe's future.

We know, dear colleagues, that Prime Minister Draghi is a committed European who, as President of the European Central Bank, has already steered the eurozone out of a crisis that could have seriously undermined our monetary union. Prime Minister, it is largely thanks to your vision, your commitment and your steady hand that we got through. You gave confidence to our people and to our banks, and I have no doubt that we can rely on your expertise as Europe again faces challenges of a different kind, but that are just as existential in nature.

After the Russian army's illegal and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine, Europe faces another 'whatever it takes' moment. We have seen unprecedented European coordination, solidarity and unity against this war, and this must remain the blueprint for us going forward, be it on further sanctions, on sending aid to Ukraine, on disentangling ourselves from energy dependence on the Kremlin, helping the millions forced to flee, or building a new Security and Defence Union.

Prime Minister, you guided your country through the worst of times, coming out from the pandemic stronger. We know that we must take stock of the lessons learned and ensure that we have the flexibility that we need to care for our populations. We must build our future in a sustainable manner that protects the next generation. We can do this, and I know that we will look to you for a way forward.

Prime Minister, let me also thank Italy and the Italian people for your leadership on migration in the Mediterranean. You have borne the responsibility thrust upon you in a humane and value-based approach, and it is now on us to ensure a way forward where Italy and other states do not feel alone.

Next week, on Europe Day, we will receive the conclusions from the Conference on the Future of Europe. The onus will be on us to listen and to act. In terms of responding to people's demands on policy changes in health, climate, security and more, no suggestion for change should be off-limits because, if not now, then when?

Mario Draghi, *Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri italiano*. – Presidente Metsola, deputate e deputati, care cittadine e cari cittadini, sono davvero felice di essere qui, nel cuore della culla della democrazia europea.

Voglio prima di tutto rendere omaggio alla memoria di David Sassoli, che ha presieduto il Parlamento europeo in anni difficilissimi. Durante la pandemia, il Parlamento ha continuato a riunirsi, discutere, decidere, a testimonianza della sua vitalità istituzionale e della guida di Sassoli. Sassoli non ha mai smesso di lavorare a quello che definì nel suo ultimo discorso al Consiglio europeo, un «nuovo progetto di speranza» per «un'Europa che innova, che protegge, che illumina». Questa visione di Europa è oggi più necessaria che mai. Ringrazio la Presidente Metsola e voi tutti per il vostro contributo a portare avanti questa idea ogni giorno.

La guerra in Ucraina pone l'Unione europea davanti a una delle più gravi crisi della sua storia. Una crisi che è insieme umanitaria, securitaria, energetica, economica e che avviene mentre i nostri paesi sono ancora alle prese con le conseguenze della maggiore emergenza sanitaria degli ultimi cento anni.

La risposta europea alla pandemia è stata unitaria, coraggiosa, efficace. La ricerca scientifica ci ha consegnato, con una rapidità senza precedenti, vaccini capaci di frenare il contagio, di abbattere in modo drastico la severità della malattia. Abbiamo organizzato la più imponente campagna di vaccinazione della storia recente, che ci ha permesso di salvare vite, riportare i ragazzi e le ragazze a scuola, far ripartire l'economia.

Abbiamo approvato Next Generation EU, il primo grande progetto di ricostruzione europea, finanziato con il contributo di tutti, per venire incontro alle esigenze di ciascuno. La stessa prontezza e determinazione, lo stesso spirito di solidarietà ci devono ora guidare nelle sfide che abbiamo davanti.

Le istituzioni che i nostri predecessori hanno costruito negli scorsi decenni hanno servito bene i cittadini europei, ma sono inadeguate per la realtà che ci si manifesta oggi. La pandemia e la guerra hanno chiamato le istituzioni europee a responsabilità mai assunte fino ad ora. Il quadro geopolitico è in rapida e profonda trasformazione. Dobbiamo muoverci con la massima celerità. E dobbiamo assicurarci che la gestione delle crisi che viviamo non ci porti al punto di partenza, ma permetta una transizione verso un modello economico e sociale più giusto e più sostenibile.

Abbiamo bisogno di un federalismo pragmatico, che abbracci tutti gli ambiti colpiti dalle trasformazioni in corso – dall'economia, all'energia, alla sicurezza.

Ho parlato di un federalismo pragmatico, ma devo aggiungere che mai come ora, i nostri valori europei di pace, di solidarietà, di umanità hanno bisogno di essere difesi. E mai come ora questa difesa è per i singoli Stati difficile e diventerà sempre più difficile. Abbiamo bisogno non solo di un federalismo pragmatico, ma di un federalismo ideale.

Se ciò richiede l'inizio di un percorso che porterà alla revisione dei trattati, lo si abbracci con coraggio e con fiducia. Se dagli eventi tragici di questi anni sapremo trarre la forza di fare un passo avanti, se sapremo immaginare un funzionamento più efficiente delle istituzioni europee che permetta di trovare soluzioni tempestive ai problemi dei cittadini, allora potremo consegnare loro un'Europa in cui potranno riconoscersi con orgoglio.

L'aggressione dell'Ucraina da parte della Russia ha rimesso in discussione la più grande conquista dell'Unione europea: la pace nel nostro continente. Una pace basata sul rispetto dei confini territoriali, dello stato di diritto, della sovranità democratica; una pace basata sull'utilizzo della diplomazia come mezzo di risoluzione delle crisi tra Stati; una pace basata sul rispetto dei diritti umani, oltraggiati a Mariupol, a Bucha, e in tutti i luoghi in cui si è scatenata la violenza dell'esercito russo nei confronti di civili inermi.

Dobbiamo sostenere l'Ucraina, il suo governo e il suo popolo, come il Presidente Zelensky ha chiesto e continua a chiedere di fare. In una guerra di aggressione non può esistere alcuna equivalenza tra chi invade e chi resiste. Vogliamo che l'Ucraina resti un paese libero, democratico, sovrano. Proteggere l'Ucraina vuol dire proteggere noi stessi, vuol dire proteggere il progetto di sicurezza e democrazia che abbiamo costruito insieme negli ultimi settant'anni. Aiutare l'Ucraina vuol dire soprattutto lavorare per la pace.

La nostra priorità è raggiungere quanto prima un cessate il fuoco, per salvare vite e consentire quegli interventi umanitari a favore dei civili che oggi restano molto difficili. Una tregua darebbe anche nuovo slancio ai negoziati, che finora non hanno raggiunto i risultati sperati.

L'Europa può e deve avere un ruolo centrale nel favorire il dialogo. Dobbiamo farlo per via della nostra geografia, che ci colloca accanto a questa guerra, e dunque in prima linea nell'affrontare tutte le sue possibili conseguenze. Dobbiamo farlo per via della nostra storia, che ci ha mostrato capaci di costruire una pace stabile e duratura, anche dopo conflitti sanguinosi.

L'Italia, come paese fondante dell'Unione europea, come paese che crede profondamente nella pace, è pronta a impegnarsi in prima linea per raggiungere una soluzione diplomatica.

Già oggi la guerra sta avendo un impatto profondo sui nostri paesi. Dall'inizio del conflitto, circa 5,3 milioni di persone hanno lasciato l'Ucraina verso l'Unione europea – soprattutto donne e bambini. È più del doppio del numero di rifugiati presenti nell'Unione alla fine del 2020 — circa 2,5 milioni. L'Italia crede nei valori europei dell'accoglienza e della solidarietà.

Abbiamo accolto oltre 105 000 rifugiati ucraini, grazie alla generosità delle famiglie, dei volontari, delle organizzazioni non governative – a cui va il mio più profondo ringraziamento. Altri paesi – tra cui la Polonia, la Romania, la Germania e la Slovacchia – hanno fatto sforzi ancora maggiori. Molti rifugiati vogliono ritornare presto a casa e alcuni hanno già iniziato a farlo. Tuttavia, non sappiamo in che modo evolverà il conflitto, né quanto durerà. Dobbiamo essere pronti a dare continuità al nostro slancio iniziale perché i rifugiati ucraini si integrino al meglio nelle nostre società.

Dal punto di vista economico, il conflitto ha causato instabilità nel funzionamento delle catene di approvvigionamento globali e volatilità nel prezzo delle materie prime e dell'energia. Le forniture alimentari ucraine sono crollate a causa delle devastazioni della guerra e dei blocchi alle esportazioni imposti dalla Russia nei porti del Mar Nero e del Mar d'Azov.

L'Ucraina è il quarto maggiore fornitore estero di cibo nell'Unione europea – ci invia circa metà delle nostre importazioni di granoturco, e un quarto dei nostri oli vegetali. Russia e Ucraina contano per oltre un quarto delle esportazioni globali di grano. Quasi 50 paesi del mondo dipendono da loro per più del 30 per cento delle loro importazioni. A marzo, i prezzi dei cereali e delle principali derrate alimentari hanno toccato i massimi storici.

C'è un forte rischio che l'aumento dei prezzi, insieme alla minore disponibilità di fertilizzanti, produca crisi alimentari. Secondo la FAO, 13 milioni di persone in più potrebbero soffrire la fame tra il 2022 e il 2026 a causa della guerra in Ucraina.

Molti paesi, soprattutto dell'Africa e del Medio Oriente, sono più vulnerabili a questi rischi e potrebbero vivere periodi di instabilità politica e sociale. Non possiamo permettere che questo accada. Il nostro impegno, attraverso le banche di sviluppo e le istituzioni finanziarie multilaterali e il nostro impegno su base bilaterale deve essere massimo.

Per quanto riguarda l'energia, il prezzo del greggio, che tra dicembre e gennaio oscillava tra i 70 e i 90 dollari al barile, si aggira oggi intorno ai 105 dollari, dopo un picco di 130 dollari a marzo. Il prezzo del gas sul mercato europeo è intorno ai 100 euro per megawatt/ora – circa cinque volte quello di un anno fa.

Questi aumenti – che seguono i rincari che si osservavano già prima dell'inizio del conflitto – hanno spinto il tasso d'inflazione su livelli che non si vedevano da decenni. Nell'eurozona, l'indice dei prezzi è cresciuto del 7,5 per cento ad aprile rispetto a un anno fa, e sta avendo un impatto significativo sul potere d'acquisto delle famiglie e sui livelli di produzione delle imprese. L'economia europea è in una fase di rallentamento: nei primi tre mesi del 2022, il prodotto interno lordo nella zona euro è cresciuto dello 0,2 per cento rispetto all'ultimo quadrimestre del 2021. Il Fondo monetario internazionale prevede che l'Unione europea crescerà quest'anno del 2,9 per cento, rispetto al 4 per cento stimato fino a poco tempo fa.

Ciascuna di queste crisi richiederebbe una reazione forte da parte dell'Unione europea. La loro somma ci impone un'accelerazione decisa nel processo di integrazione. Nei prossimi mesi dobbiamo mostrare ai cittadini europei che siamo in grado di guidare un'Europa all'altezza dei suoi valori, della sua storia, del suo ruolo nel mondo. Un'Europa più forte, coesa, sovrana, capace di prendere il futuro nelle proprie mani, come disse qualche tempo fa, la Cancelliera Merkel.

Negli ultimi 75 anni, l'integrazione europea è stata spesso la migliore risposta – pratica e ideale – alle sfide comuni. I padri fondatori dell'Unione europea intuirono che lo sviluppo economico e il progresso sociale erano difficili da realizzare soltanto tramite le risorse dei singoli Stati nazionali.

Individuarono nel modello sovranazionale l'unico capace di unire gli interessi dei popoli europei e di esercitare influenza su eventi che altrimenti sarebbero stati fuori dalla loro portata. L'integrazione ha seguito un processo graduale, fatto di crisi e rilanci, di successi ottenuti malgrado divisioni interne e, talvolta, di fronte a resistenze estreme. Un risultato costruito «pezzo per pezzo, settore per settore», per citare Robert Schuman, poiché l'Unione europea non poteva nascere «di getto, come una città ideale».

Ai traumi della Seconda guerra mondiale, l'Europa ha risposto con la creazione delle prime istituzioni per la cooperazione economica. Penso all'Unione europea dei pagamenti, che favorì il ritorno alla stabilità delle monete e la ripresa degli scambi commerciali, o alla Comunità economica del carbone e dell'acciaio, che abolì le barriere doganali e altri impedimenti alla libera circolazione delle merci in settori cruciali dell'economia.

Le tensioni geopolitiche nate con la crisi di Suez nel '56 contribuirono ad accelerare il percorso verso i trattati di Roma. Di fronte al crollo del sistema di Bretton Woods nel '71, i paesi europei reagirono con l'istituzione del serpente monetario e poi del Sistema monetario europeo.

Al crescente euroscetticismo degli anni '80, risposero con i programmi di interventi mirati proposti dalla Commissione Delors e con l'Atto unico del 1986.

Alla fine dell'Unione Sovietica e alla riunificazione della Germania, l'Europa fece seguire la firma del trattato di Maastricht, la creazione dell'Unione monetaria e, infine, l'allargamento a Est dell'Unione europea. La crisi dell'eurozona nei primi anni dello scorso decennio ha portato a un rafforzamento e a una modernizzazione delle istituzioni economiche, a partire dalla Banca centrale europea.

La pandemia, come ho ricordato in precedenza, ci ha uniti e ha portato alla creazione del Next Generation EU. Vedete, questo lungo cammino di integrazione ha cambiato le nostre vite per il meglio, perché ci ha dato pace, prosperità e un modello sociale di cui essere fieri.

Il mercato unico non ha soltanto rilanciato l'economia europea in un momento di difficoltà, ma ha assicurato tutele per consumatori, per lavoratori, e forme di previdenza sociale uniche al mondo. Abbiamo costruito istituzioni democratiche comuni, come questo Parlamento, in cui raggiungere decisioni condivise e con cui far valere il rispetto dei diritti fondamentali. Abbiamo reso l'Unione europea uno spazio non solo economico, ma di difesa dei diritti e della dignità dell'uomo. È un'eredità che non dobbiamo dissipare, di fronte alla quale non possiamo arretrare. Ora è il momento di portare avanti questo percorso.

Il 9 maggio si conclude la Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa e la dichiarazione finale ci chiede di essere molto ambiziosi. Vogliamo essere in prima linea per disegnare questa nuova Europa.

In un quadro geopolitico divenuto improvvisamente molto più pericoloso e incerto, dobbiamo affrontare l'emergenza economica e sociale e garantire la sicurezza dei nostri cittadini. Gli investimenti nella difesa devono essere fatti nell'ottica di un miglioramento delle nostre capacità collettive – come Unione europea e come NATO.

L'ultimo Consiglio europeo ha preso una decisione importante con l'approvazione della «Bussola strategica», che dobbiamo attuare con rapidità. Occorre però andare velocemente oltre questi primi passi e costruire un coordinamento efficace fra i sistemi della difesa. La nostra spesa in sicurezza è circa tre volte quella della Russia, ma si divide in 146 sistemi di difesa. Gli Stati Uniti ne hanno solo 34.

È una distribuzione di risorse profondamente inefficiente, che ostacola la costruzione di una vera difesa europea. L'autonomia strategica nella difesa passa prima di tutto attraverso una maggiore efficienza della spesa militare in Europa. È opportuno convocare una conferenza per razionalizzare e ottimizzare i nostri investimenti in spesa militare.

Inoltre, la costruzione di una difesa comune deve accompagnarsi a una politica estera unitaria e a meccanismi decisionali efficaci. Dobbiamo superare il principio dell'unanimità, da cui origina una logica intergovernativa fatta di veti incrociati, e muoverci verso decisioni prese a maggioranza qualificata.

Un'Europa capace di decidere in modo tempestivo è un'Europa più credibile di fronte ai suoi cittadini e di fronte al mondo. Una prima accelerazione deve riguardare il processo di allargamento. La piena integrazione dei paesi che manifestano aspirazioni europee non rappresenta una minaccia per la tenuta del progetto europeo. È parte della sua realizzazione.

L'Italia sostiene l'apertura immediata dei negoziati di adesione con l'Albania e con la Macedonia del Nord, in linea con la decisione assunta dal Consiglio europeo nel marzo 2020. Vogliamo dare nuovo slancio ai negoziati con Serbia e Montenegro, e assicurare la massima attenzione alle legittime aspettative di Bosnia Erzegovina e Kosovo. Siamo favorevoli all'ingresso di tutti questi paesi e vogliamo l'Ucraina nell'Unione europea. Dobbiamo seguire il percorso d'ingresso che abbiamo disegnato, ma dobbiamo anche procedere il più speditamente possibile.

La solidarietà mostrata verso i rifugiati ucraini deve poi spingerci verso una gestione davvero europea anche dei migranti che arrivano da altri contesti di guerra e sfruttamento. Più in generale, è necessario definire un meccanismo europeo efficace di gestione dei flussi migratori, che superi la logica del trattato di Dublino.

Dobbiamo rafforzare e rendere davvero efficaci gli accordi di rimpatrio, ma dobbiamo anche rafforzare i canali legali di ingresso nell'Unione europea. In particolare, dobbiamo prestare maggiore attenzione al Mediterraneo, vista la sua collocazione strategica come ponte verso l'Africa e il Medio Oriente. Non possiamo guardare al Mediterraneo soltanto come un'area di confine, su cui ergere barriere. Sul Mediterraneo si affacciano molti paesi giovani, pronti a infondere il proprio entusiasmo nel rapporto con l'Europa. Con essi, l'Unione europea deve costruire un reale partenariato non solo economico, ma anche politico e sociale. Il Mediterraneo deve essere un polo di pace, di prosperità e di progresso.

La politica energetica è un'area in cui i paesi del Mediterraneo devono e possono giocare un ruolo fondamentale per il futuro dell'Europa. L'Europa ha davanti un profondo riorientamento geopolitico destinato a spostare sempre di più il suo asse strategico verso il Sud.

La guerra in Ucraina ha mostrato la profonda vulnerabilità di molti dei nostri paesi nei confronti di Mosca. L'Italia è uno degli Stati membri più esposti: circa il 40 per cento del gas naturale che importiamo proviene infatti dalla Russia. Non abbiamo carbone, non abbiamo energia nucleare e quasi non abbiamo petrolio. Una simile dipendenza energetica è imprudente dal punto di vista economico e pericolosa dal punto di vista geopolitico. L'Italia intende prendere tutte le decisioni necessarie a difendere la propria sicurezza e quella dell'Europa. Abbiamo appoggiato le sanzioni che l'Unione europea ha deciso di imporre nei confronti della Russia, anche quelle nel settore energetico. Continueremo a farlo con la stessa convinzione in futuro.

Nelle scorse settimane ci siamo mossi con la massima celerità e determinazione per diversificare le nostre forniture di gas. E abbiamo preso importanti provvedimenti di semplificazione per accelerare la produzione di energia rinnovabile, essenziale per rendere la nostra crescita più sostenibile. La riduzione delle importazioni di combustibili fossili dalla Russia rende inevitabile che l'Europa guardi verso il Mediterraneo per soddisfare le sue esigenze.

Mi riferisco ai giacimenti di gas, come combustibile di transizione, ma soprattutto alle enormi opportunità offerte dalle rinnovabili in Africa e in Medio Oriente. I paesi del Sud Europa, e l'Italia in particolare, sono collocati in modo strategico per raccogliere questa produzione energetica e fare da ponte verso i paesi del nord.

La nostra centralità di domani passa dagli investimenti che sapremo fare oggi. Allo stesso tempo, dobbiamo trovare subito soluzioni per proteggere le famiglie e le imprese dai rincari del costo dell'energia. Moderare le bollette e il prezzo dei carburanti è anche un modo per rendere eventuali sanzioni più sostenibili nel tempo.

Sin dall'inizio della crisi, l'Italia ha chiesto di mettere un tetto europeo ai prezzi del gas importato dalla Russia. La Russia vende all'Unione europea quasi due terzi delle sue esportazioni di gas naturale – in larga parte tramite gasdotti che non possono essere riorientati verso altri acquirenti.

La nostra proposta consentirebbe di utilizzare il nostro potere negoziale per ridurre i costi esorbitanti che oggi gravano sulle nostre economie. Allo stesso tempo, questa misura consentirebbe di diminuire le somme che ogni giorno inviamo al Presidente Putin, e che inevitabilmente finanziano la sua campagna militare.

Vogliamo poi rivedere in modo strutturale il meccanismo di formazione del prezzo dell'elettricità, che dipende dal costo di produzione della fonte di energia più costosa, che di solito è il gas.

Anche in tempi normali, la generazione di energia da fonti fossili ha infatti costi di produzione maggiori di quella da fonti rinnovabili. Si tratta di un problema destinato a peggiorare nel tempo. Con l'aumento progressivo della quota di energia rinnovabile nel nostro mix energetico, avremo prezzi sempre meno rappresentativi del costo di generazione dell'intero mercato se continuiamo ad avere questo sistema.

In questo periodo di fortissima volatilità sul mercato del gas, la differenza di prezzo è spropositata. I rincari sul mercato del gas si sono riversati su quello dell'energia elettrica, sebbene il costo di produzione delle rinnovabili, da cui ormai otteniamo una parte consistente di energia, sia rimasto molto basso.

In Italia, nei primi quattro mesi di quest'anno, il prezzo dell'elettricità è quadruplicato rispetto allo stesso periodo dell'anno scorso, con un impatto durissimo sull'economia. E il governo italiano, ma anche gli altri governi hanno reagito con forza per tutelare imprese e famiglie, soprattutto quelle più deboli. L'Italia, da sola, ha speso circa 30 miliardi di euro solo quest'anno.

La gestione emergenziale di questi rincari ha molti limiti, primo fra tutti la sostenibilità per il bilancio pubblico. Il problema è sistemico e va risolto con soluzioni strutturali, che spezzino il legame tra il prezzo del gas e quello dell'elettricità. Il problema del costo dell'energia sarà al centro del prossimo Consiglio europeo. C'è bisogno di decisioni forti e immediate, a vantaggio di tutti i cittadini europei.

Le diverse crisi che derivano dal conflitto in Ucraina arrivano in un momento in cui l'Europa aveva già davanti a sé esigenze di spesa enormi. La transizione ecologica e quella digitale ci impongono investimenti indifferibili. A questi vanno aggiunti i costi della guerra, che dobbiamo affrontare subito, per evitare che il nostro continente sprofondi in una recessione. In entrambi i casi si tratta di costi asimmetrici, che colpiscono fasce della popolazione e settori produttivi in modo diverso e che dunque richiedono diverse misure di compensazione. Nessun bilancio nazionale è in grado di sostenere questi sforzi da solo. Nessun paese può essere lasciato indietro.

Ne va della pace sociale nel nostro continente, della nostra capacità di sostenere le sanzioni, soprattutto in quei paesi che per ragioni storiche sono maggiormente dipendenti dalla Russia. L'Unione europea ha già ideato alcuni strumenti utili per governare queste sfide. Si tratta delle risposte che abbiamo messo in campo durante la pandemia e che hanno assicurato all'Unione europea una ripresa economica rapida e diffusa. Dobbiamo partire da questo successo, e adattare questi stessi strumenti alle circostanze che abbiamo davanti.

Lo SURE – lo strumento europeo di sostegno temporaneo per attenuare i rischi di disoccupazione in un'emergenza – ha concesso prestiti agli Stati membri per sostenere il mercato del lavoro. L'Unione europea dovrebbe ampliarne la portata, per fornire ai paesi che ne fanno richiesta nuovi finanziamenti per attenuare l'impatto dei rincari energetici.

Mi riferisco a interventi di riduzione delle bollette, ma anche al sostegno temporaneo ai salari più bassi, per esempio come abbiamo fatto ieri, con misure di decontribuzione per i salari più bassi. Queste hanno il vantaggio di difendere il potere di acquisto delle famiglie, soprattutto le più fragili. Il ricorso a un meccanismo di prestiti come SURE consentirebbe di evitare l'utilizzo di sovvenzioni a fondo perduto per pagare misure nazionali di spesa corrente. Allo stesso tempo, in una fase di rialzo dei tassi d'interesse, fornirebbe agli Stati membri con le finanze pubbliche più fragili un'alternativa meno cara rispetto all'indebitamento sul mercato. Potremmo così ampliare la portata degli interventi di sostegno e allo stesso tempo limitare il rischio di instabilità finanziaria.

Si tratta di una misura che dovrebbe essere messa in campo in tempi ormai molto rapidi, perché sono 8-9-10 mesi che siamo in questa situazione, per permettere ai governi di intervenire subito a sostegno dell'economia. Per quanto riguarda gli investimenti di lungo periodo in aree come la difesa, l'energia, la sicurezza alimentare e industriale, il modello è quello del Next Generation EU.

Il sistema di pagamenti scadenziati, legati a verifiche puntuali nel raggiungimento degli obiettivi, offre un meccanismo virtuoso di controllo della qualità della spesa. Spendere bene le risorse che ci vengono assegnate è fondamentale per la nostra credibilità davanti ai cittadini e ai partner europei che, come ho detto tante volte, hanno accettato di tassare i loro cittadini per poter aiutare l'Italia e altri paesi che hanno utilizzato questi *grant*.

Il buon governo non è limitarsi a rispondere alle crisi del momento. È muoversi subito per anticipare quelle che verranno. I padri dell'Europa ci hanno mostrato come rendere efficace la democrazia nel nostro continente nelle sue progressive trasformazioni. L'integrazione europea è l'alleato migliore che abbiamo per affrontare le sfide che la storia ci pone davanti.

Oggi, come in tutti gli snodi decisivi dal dopoguerra in poi, servono determinazione, visione, ma soprattutto unità. Sono sicuro che sapremo trovarle ancora una volta, insieme.

(Applausi)

Manfred Weber, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, first of all, my congratulations. Who else than the Italian Prime Minister should start the new dialogue between the European Parliament and the Member States with this new framing of 'This is Europe'? Italy was always a driver for European integration. I want to mention also Alcide de Gasperi and I also want to mention David Sassoli. A lot of European leaders have come from Italy and Italy needs a strong Europe, but also Europe needs a strong Italy.

Thank you, dear Prime Minister Draghi, not only for being here today, but also for your brilliant work as an ECB president in the last decade. I want to thank you, first of all, for your leadership in the last period of time as Prime Minister of Italy. Italy was the first target of the pandemic, and finally Italy reacted in a very well organised way. It became a kind of role model in managing the pandemic on the European level.

It was the RRF, you mentioned it. My party, the European People's Party, with Angela Merkel, with Ursula von der Leyen, also I want to mention Antonio Tajani and other friends – we showed that we are ready to invest in solidarity on the European Union level after the pandemic, to restart our economy, to give a good idea about the future of our economy and our European solidarity approach.

Italy is the country which gets the biggest share of this RRF and you are showing that this money is well spent. You combined this with the reform agenda in Italy and that is great because, for the long run, a good implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Fund gives us on European level arguments for the continuation of the European solidarity approach.

And also for Ukraine, Italy had a clear position in this conflict. So your clear leadership is good for Italy, but also good for Europe in crisis.

We need more than ever before this kind of leadership and towards, to quote Alcide de Gasperi, he said once, 'a politician looks to the next election; a statesman looks to the next generation', and Europe needs more statesmen and less tactics in Europe.

When we describe now the challenges of today – you mentioned a few of them – I could sum up my contribution today and say, 'well great, let's do it now', because we have a lot of these speeches and we see ambitious approaches from our leaders on the Council side. When I would frame, let me say, the general consideration from my party's point of view, then I want to underline that Europe must avoid another lost generation. We need a Europe for the youth. We have to shape a Europe of hope and not of fear, and we have to shape a Europe of opportunities and not of limitations – and that's why you mentioned it.

The outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe is, for us, a motivating starting signal to now go further. And that's why let me really underline, let me be clear, that I am really happy that you today, as one of the first leaders on the Council side, you are outspoken but clear that after this Conference you are ready for a convention, indeed a new power architecture for the European Union. Thank you so much for this leadership.

When we speak about the concrete points, then for sure foreign affairs and defence is a main pillar. We experience clear momentum in the European Union. Citizens are together showing solidarity with Ukraine friends and we have to speed up now our efforts to build up a European defence union, integrated for sure into NATO.

You spoke about a pragmatic federalisation of the European Union, federal system of Europe. I want to give you an example. On this defence, the long-term idea is a European army, no doubt about this, but in the short term we should focus on European added value. For example, on cyber defence, it's obvious that we are much stronger if we do it together. Or on a missile defence system, it's obvious that we can protect our airspace together much more effectively than if we do it at national level.

So let's focus on the concrete things. We need these kind of flagship projects now to make things possible. Unvestments would be much easier, much cheaper in the future – you mentioned this, and also for our military, it would be much more effective.

I want to underline a second point, which is important for us, and that is we can only have a good future for our European Union if we create growth again. Economic strength is the real power base for today's strengthened European Union. And as a central banker, you know that a good future needs a union of growth, but not a union of further debt. And as a family father, you also know that the most important thing for the future of the next generation is opportunities and not additional burden. So that's why when we speak about the economic model for the future, we face fundamental changes.

We haven't spoken so much in the last weeks about China, about what is happening on the global market, but we know things are fundamentally changing. We speak about independence in today's European Union, but this means also to have a little bit less globalisation, which was the foundation for our economic success in the last decades. So that's why we have to rechange and reorganise the economic model, including on a global level. And that's why we are strongly fighting for a single market for the free world on the global stage. We have to bring together Australia, India, Japan, all those who believe in our values on the economic base that can create a precondition for the growth for tomorrow.

And finally, on migration, let me underline that there are No Italian, Greek or Spanish migrants. There are only European migrants. It's a common European challenge, and that's why the European Parliament is ready for a solution. You know that we are waiting for the Council to solve the legislative blockade on the Council side. Let's go now after the Ukraine experience for solving this problem.

Ladies and gentlemen, we hear today a leader who was ambitious for the future of Europe. Now it's a moment to implement things. Now it's a moment to do it, to make it real. That is what brings us the trust and the support from our citizens. Let's use this debate, thanks to Roberta Metsola's initiative, for creating exactly the precondition for the delivery process.

Iratxe García Pérez, en nombre del Grupo S&D. – Señora presidenta, señor primer ministro, bienvenido a esta Casa, que es la Casa de la democracia europea. Muchas gracias por sus palabras sobre nuestro querido presidente Sassoli que, como usted bien ha dicho, representaba lo mejor del espíritu europeo y, por lo tanto, vamos a trabajar continuando con su legado, muy conscientes de lo importante que fue esa labor.

Como bien ha descrito usted en su intervención, nos enfrentamos a una serie de crisis que llevamos varios años encadenando y que se ven ahora exacerbadas con la guerra de Ucrania. No son retos fáciles, pero nuestra mejor arma en este momento es la unidad y la determinación.

Ya lo vimos en la respuesta a la pandemia, tanto en su dimensión sanitaria como en sus efectos económicos y sociales. Con unidad y solidaridad pudimos sacar adelante el NextGenerationEU y ahora la clave para afrontar las consecuencias de la guerra de Rusia contra Ucrania vuelve a ser nuevamente la unidad y la determinación.

Hace casi diez años, cuando usted presidía el Banco Central Europeo, en plena crisis de la deuda soberana, y cuando algunos predecían el colapso del euro, usted pronunció tres palabras que han hecho historia: «*whatever it takes*» (lo que haga falta). Y ese mismo espíritu es el que debemos demostrar ahora ante la amenaza de Putin a nuestros valores.

Igual que hace diez años, la respuesta para superar esta crisis tiene que ser más integración, porque compartiendo nuestra soberanía es como somos más fuertes y más dueños también de nuestro propio destino.

Pero para seguir construyendo esta Casa necesitamos poner más ladrillos. Necesitamos urgentemente una Unión energética, una Unión fiscal, una Unión sanitaria, una Unión de la defensa. Y debemos avanzar y trabajar para ello, porque este proyecto de paz y de libertad, que ha ido creciendo durante las últimas décadas y ha establecido una amistad y una solidaridad entre nuestros países y entre nuestros ciudadanos, todavía no es suficiente.

Desde aquella declaración de Schuman, el objetivo de la Unión ha sido también contribuir a la paz y al desarrollo de nuestros valores y a unas relaciones internacionales basadas en el Derecho, en la dignidad humana y en el multilateralismo. Desgraciadamente, el deseo de los ucranianos y de las ucranianas de formar parte de este proyecto les ha costado muy caro.

A diferencia de la Unión Soviética, la Unión Europea no se impone. La Unión Europea no obliga, la Unión Europea no domina, sino que atrae por su promesa de futuro, por sus valores de libertad y de dignidad humana, como clamaban los manifestantes del Maidán en 2013. Por ello, no podemos cerrarle las puertas a ningún país europeo.

Apoyar la autodefensa y las legítimas aspiraciones de Ucrania nos obliga a repensar nuestras políticas internas en la Unión, nuestro objetivo de avanzar en una transición hacia un desarrollo económico más sostenible desde el punto de vista ecológico y humano. A este objetivo no podemos renunciar.

Es urgente acordar una política energética que nos libere de las importaciones de combustibles fósiles y que apueste por las energías renovables diversificando las fuentes, lo que debe ir acompañado de medidas que garanticen también unos precios asequibles para las empresas y para las familias.

No olvidemos que necesitamos también pensar en el futuro de los jóvenes, que necesitan trabajos dignos y acceso a la vivienda, que necesitan pensar que su futuro puede ser mejor que el de sus padres y que el de generaciones anteriores. Necesitamos dar un mensaje de optimismo a estas generaciones de jóvenes que están esperando más y mejor Europa.

La ciudadanía nos lo ha dicho muy alto y muy claro durante el proceso de la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa: quieren más políticas sociales y quieren reducir la pobreza. Y para ello es fundamental ampliar en el tiempo la suspensión de las normas fiscales, porque sin inversiones públicas no seremos capaces de cumplir con nuestras propuestas, ni con nuestro apoyo a Ucrania, ni con el apoyo a los refugiados, ni con las sanciones que hemos acordado, ni podremos cumplir nuestra hoja de ruta para una transición justa y eliminar progresivamente los combustibles fósiles.

Señor Draghi, contamos con usted en el Consejo para defender unas políticas fiscales realistas con el momento en el que vivimos. Y también necesitamos abordar una cuestión que es totalmente inaceptable en este momento: que haya quienes se están haciendo ricos a costa del sufrimiento de las familias. Hay empresas que con la elevación del precio de la energía están teniendo unos beneficios desorbitados a costa, insisto, de que muchas familias caigan en la pobreza y no puedan pagar ni siquiera las facturas de la luz y, por lo tanto, algo hay que hacer con esos beneficios caídos del cielo para no permitir esta injusticia.

Podemos y debemos seguir adelante con nuestro proyecto, pero siempre con la dignidad y el bienestar en el centro de nuestras políticas. Porque nuestra Unión no es contra nadie, nunca lo ha sido. Lo diremos una y otra vez para que lo oiga Putin, pero, sobre todo, para que lo oiga el pueblo ruso.

Digámoslo todos alto y claro: haremos todo lo que haga falta para garantizar el futuro de nuestra Unión Europea.

Stéphane Séjourné, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Premier ministre, chers collègues, permettez-moi tout d'abord de saluer votre discours, de saluer l'engagement européen de votre gouvernement et votre contribution au débat européen.

Votre action est venue en quelque sorte clore une période bien trop longue où certains responsables politiques européens ont, à tort, regardé l'Italie avec une pointe de condescendance, d'indifférence certaines fois. Ce fut d'ailleurs peut-être une des raisons du retard de l'action européenne d'aide à l'Italie au moment de la pandémie. Heureusement, cette Assemblée et tant d'autres ont réagi à temps, avec force, pour que l'Europe se montre à la hauteur des attentes du peuple italien. Le vaccin et le plan de relance, dont l'Italie est le premier bénéficiaire, en sont en quelque sorte la concrétisation, Monsieur le Premier ministre.

J'ai eu l'occasion de le dire à Rome il n'y a pas longtemps: oui, l'Italie a besoin de l'Europe, toujours, mais l'Europe a toujours besoin de l'Italie, de ses idées et de ses talents. L'Italie n'est pas d'ailleurs étrangère à la constitution du nouveau consensus européen qui est en train de se créer parmi les chefs d'État et de gouvernement et nos institutions, auquel le Parlement européen souscrit pleinement.

Oui, nous ne sommes pas tous d'accord sur tout, notamment sur les outils, mais nous le sommes en tout cas sur les objectifs, comme la neutralité carbone, l'autonomie stratégique et la lutte contre les inégalités. Dans ce nouveau consensus, mon groupe politique souhaiterait avoir votre vision.

Tout le monde s'accorde sur le besoin de rénover notre cadre budgétaire et de convergence économique. Nous le savons, il faut investir plus — plus pour la planification écologique, plus pour l'innovation, plus pour l'autonomie stratégique de notre continent. Quelle est, selon vous, la meilleure méthode pour parvenir à cette solution européenne sur les réformes du pacte de stabilité? Vous avez évoqué un certain nombre de pistes, mais la méthode sera essentielle dans les prochains mois et dans les prochaines semaines.

Un nouveau consensus est aussi né sur la solidarité européenne. Depuis la guerre en Ukraine, l'intérêt supérieur de l'Europe et de la paix est au cœur de l'action de la plupart de nos gouvernements européens. Nous réalisons, Monsieur le Premier ministre, le courage politique qu'il a fallu à votre gouvernement pour interroger des positions nationales vieilles de plusieurs décennies. Sur ces questions-là, vous avez fait non seulement des déclarations, mais vous avez aussi posé des actes, et en dépit des tentatives de manipulation dans les médias italiens de la part de la Russie, vous avez tenu et de la part de mon groupe, en tout cas, vous avez toutes nos félicitations.

Enfin, nous aimerions savoir si, dans le cadre du sixième paquet de sanctions, vous soutiendrez l'embargo sur l'ensemble des hydrocarbures russes et si vous pensez qu'un accord est possible dans les prochains jours ou dans les prochaines semaines au Conseil.

Un dernier mot peut-être sur la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe, Monsieur le Président, qui nous tient beaucoup à cœur dans cette plénière, qui est consacrée notamment à des discussions institutionnelles importantes et qui matriceront l'ensemble de notre construction européenne dans les prochaines années. J'ai entendu dans votre discours et j'ai bien compris que nous pouvons compter sur l'Italie pour défendre les réformes institutionnelles attendues par les citoyens. Je pense notamment à la fin de l'unanimité en matière de politique étrangère, et vous avez été très clair sur ce sujet — il faudrait qu'un certain nombre de vos collègues le soient aussi. Mais allez peut-être plus loin dans un certain nombre de propositions, je pense notamment au droit d'initiative du Parlement sur les listes transnationales, ce seront aussi, Monsieur le Premier Ministre, des éléments importants pour notre hémicycle et notre institution.

Enfin, Monsieur le Président, les élections en France et en Slovénie la semaine dernière ont encore montré que nous sommes dans un moment européen. Les populistes n'osent même plus dire qu'ils assument de quitter l'Union européenne, ce qui est une bonne chose, c'est une victoire, y compris idéologique, dans la période. Les europhobes sont disqualifiés en ce moment à trouver des solutions, mais leurs idées simplistes continuent et vont peut-être continuer, en tout cas, à prospérer sur le désespoir économique et social. Nous avons donc besoin de réformes, de solutions concrètes et que s'ouvre une nouvelle ère européenne verte, plus prospère, sociale, démocratique, et nous espérons pouvoir compter sur vous et sur l'Italie pour accompagner cet élan. Vous aurez en tout cas le groupe Renew à vos côtés dans ces objectifs.

Philippe Lamberts, *a nome del gruppo Verts/ALE*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Presidente Draghi, benvenuto al Parlamento europeo.

Avec vous à la tête de son gouvernement et Paolo Gentiloni à la Commission européenne, on peut dire que l'Italie renoue avec un engagement européen résolu à la hauteur de ses responsabilités de membre fondateur et de troisième puissance économique de l'Union. S'il est un domaine, Monsieur le Président où l'Italie n'a pas seulement assumé sa part de responsabilité, mais bien plus que sa part de responsabilité en Europe, c'est l'accueil des migrants.

Pendant de nombreuses années, l'Italie, pays de première ligne face à la Méditerranée, a pris plus que sa part du devoir moral d'accueil de l'Union européenne, sans pouvoir bénéficier de la nécessaire solidarité de ses alliés européens. Et je me réjouis de pouvoir dire que ce Parlement, déjà lors de la législature précédente, était prêt à une très large majorité à faire ce que vous demandez: dépasser la règle de Dublin. Il va vraiment falloir que nous dépassions cette doctrine de l'unanimité au Conseil pour que nous décidions, comme vous le disiez d'ailleurs, à la majorité qualifiée, y compris en matière de migration, où c'est déjà le cas en réalité.

«Whatever it takes»: par ces trois mots, alors à la tête de la Banque centrale européenne, vous aviez pris la mesure de l'enjeu. Face aux attaques des marchés financiers, il fallait sauver l'euro «quoi qu'il en coûte».

Avec la pandémie, le «quoi qu'il en coûte» est devenu l'alpha et l'omega de la politique économique au sein de l'Union. Sauver des vies, tout en soutenant les travailleurs et les entreprises face aux répercussions de la crise, quel qu'en soit le prix. Telle était l'ambition.

Aujourd'hui, vous l'avez dit, c'est l'invasion de Poutine en Ukraine qui teste notre détermination. À nouveau, l'Union européenne doit se montrer prête à faire «tout ce qui est nécessaire» pour à la fois venir en aide aux Ukrainiens et assurer notre indispensable autonomie énergétique.

L'Italie est d'ailleurs exemplaire puisqu'elle agit dans un esprit d'unité aux côtés de ses alliés européens, et ce malgré, vous l'avez dit, sa dépendance massive et exagérée à l'égard de la Russie. Contrairement à d'autres, elle a bien compris que cette guerre est le moment où l'Union européenne doit prouver qu'elle peut devenir une puissance géopolitique.

Dans l'immédiat, les efforts de l'Italie pour diversifier ses sources d'approvisionnement en énergies fossiles sont compréhensibles. Mais, vous l'avez dit vous-même, ce n'est pas une solution de long terme. Seule la transition vers les énergies renouvelables et la sobriété énergétique peuvent à la fois assurer durablement notre indépendance énergétique, tout en nous permettant de relever notre part du défi climatique. Et là-dessus, je vous ai bien écouté, j'ai l'impression que nous partageons la conviction, mais quand j'entends votre ministre de l'environnement plaider, comme une monomanie, pour l'arrivée du nucléaire en Italie, alors que cette énergie a été rejetée massivement par le peuple italien il y a à peine dix ans, je ne comprends plus. Et j'entends dire, peut-être que vous pourrez infirmer cela, que votre gouvernement remettrait en cause le principal programme de rénovation du bâtiment, le SuperEcoBonus 110 %, alors même que la Commission européenne le prend en exemple de bonne pratique.

Je me rappelle que, dans nos nombreux échanges, le Mario Draghi banquier central refusait d'intégrer la contrainte climatique dans sa politique monétaire, au motif que cela relevait de la compétence du politique.

Je vous ai bien écouté et je suis heureux d'entendre que Mario Draghi, devenu chef du gouvernement italien, a entendu le message: il appartient aux responsables politiques de faire preuve de leadership, et la transition énergétique est un impératif non seulement climatique, mais aussi géopolitique.

Pour financer cette transition, nous avons besoin de moyens colossaux. Vous avez à juste titre plaidé pour une réforme des règles budgétaires, mais il faut aller plus loin et passer à la vitesse supérieure en réalisant, enfin, une véritable union budgétaire. Qui doute encore que ce n'est qu'ensemble que les États membres parviendront à faire de l'Union européenne le leader mondial de la transition écologique et solidaire et une puissance géopolitique respectée. Il nous faut donc des emprunts communs, remboursés par des impôts communs pour financer des projets communs. Le plan de relance NextGenerationEU, dont votre pays est le premier bénéficiaire, est le prototype d'une telle Union budgétaire. J'ai envie de dire que le plus grand service que l'Italie peut aujourd'hui rendre au projet européen, c'est de faire de ce plan un succès pour en assurer la pérennité.

Aussi, au nom du groupe des Verts, je me réjouis de vous entendre plaider avec nous et vous engager avec nous et les citoyens présents au cœur de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe, pour une réforme des traités européens.

Monsieur le Président, *this is what it takes*, voilà ce qui est indispensable à ce fédéralisme à la fois pragmatique et idéaliste que vous appelez de vos vœux. Président Draghi, votre capital politique dans votre pays et au sein de l'Union est incontestablement grand. Je vous encourage à continuer à mobiliser sans compter pour que l'Union européenne soit une actrice clé de ce XXI^e siècle. Je vous le dis: avanti!

Marco Zanni, a nome del gruppo ID. – Signora Presidente Metsola, Commissario Gentiloni, Presidente Draghi, bentornato al Parlamento europeo.

Come Lei ha ricordato, stiamo affrontando uno dei momenti più critici della storia europea, con una guerra a pochi chilometri da noi, che oggi ci chiama a dare una risposta forte, ponderata, ma soprattutto credibile al periodo buio che stiamo affrontando.

Purtroppo in queste settimane abbiamo dovuto constatare che l'iniziale convinzione di essere forti e uniti Stati membri, istituzioni e leader europei si è dissolta per effetto, a nostro avviso, di errori strategici passati e presenti, di costruzione del nostro sistema europeo che continuano a renderci deboli, inefficienti e soprattutto ricattabili. È necessario elaborare questi errori prima di guardare al futuro.

Oggi occorre soprattutto riflettere sulle scelte fatte in passato. Dobbiamo trovare soluzioni nuove a vecchi problemi e soprattutto farlo in fretta. La dipendenza da paesi come la Russia è stata una decisione politica degli scorsi decenni. Abbiamo reso la nostra prosperità dipendente da materie prime ed energia a basso costo, non avendo quindi più garantito alcun controllo sui livelli di produzione, rischiando la paralisi di interi settori economici, ma l'autonomia strategica che oggi tutti invochiamo non esisterà finché non cambieremo profondamente il nostro modello di sviluppo industriale e il nostro modello socioeconomico.

A pochi giorni dal 1° maggio vorrei richiamare l'attenzione sul tema del lavoro e ricordare che su salari e potere d'acquisto la sicurezza strategica dell'Unione richiede che alcune produzioni fondamentali non siano più fatte in un unico paese fuori dai nostri confini, ma sul suolo europeo. E sappiamo che ci sarà un prezzo da pagare per questo, cioè un inevitabile aumento dei costi. Per cui – e questo Lei lo sa bene da economista – l'equilibrio economico richiederà che sia possibile pagarli di più e che questi beni siano fruibili anche dagli stessi lavoratori che dovranno essere pagati meglio.

Purtroppo il livellamento verso il basso, che abbiamo visto durante il periodo di una globalizzazione incontrollata, deve essere invertito anzitutto per motivi di sicurezza nazionale. Prima, però, credo che occorra fare chiarezza su un punto: perché questa inversione sia sostenibile dovremmo tutti insieme ragionare in termini di corsa verso l'alto, esigere la qualità, sostenerne il costo e ovviamente pretenderne la remunerazione.

Oggi ci si accorge che sugli approvvigionamenti dobbiamo renderci più autonomi, ma invito tutti a non ripetere gli stessi errori del passato. Passare dalla dipendenza russa a quella cinese, ad esempio, non può essere considerata una strategia vincente. Le più alte cariche dell'Unione devono riconsiderare le decisioni del passato e riflettere sulle risposte agli enormi interrogativi che il drammatico conflitto in Ucraina ci ha posto. È ancora questa la direzione giusta da seguire? È stato saggio affidarsi alla leadership di un singolo paese per delineare il percorso politico e strategico di un intero continente? È davvero irrinunciabile insistere nel proporre ricette ideologiche a problemi reali?

Quello che serve adesso è più pragmatismo e meno ideologia, più azioni concrete e meno annunci sui temi che Lei ha toccato – lavoro, energia, ambiente e difesa – per trovare una soluzione l'UE può fare riferimento proprio alla questione energetica. Come stiamo vedendo, i mix energetici variano di paese in paese, necessità e stili di vita sono diversi a seconda della capitale in cui ci troviamo. Ecco, mi auguro che questo stato delle cose, che è insieme realtà e metafora, possa finalmente spingere questa istituzione europea ad abbandonare la retorica del «*one size fits all*» che in molti casi ha reso il compimento dello stesso progetto europeo un ostacolo e non una risorsa come dovrebbe essere. Non è un crimine ammettere gli errori e cambiare rotta, ma va fatto in tempo.

Concludo, Presidente Draghi, perché la difficoltà del momento porta con sé un'opportunità, quella di cambiare le cose. Lei ne ha parlato parlando dei trattati europei che sono il punto finale, ma ci sono tante piccole cose che possiamo fare insieme prima. Mi auguro che l'Unione, come il nostro paese, possa seguire il buon senso di questo rinnovato approccio alla gestione dei problemi che affliggono i nostri paesi e l'Europa intera. Noi su questo ci saremo sempre.

Raffaele Fitto, a nome del gruppo ECR. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Commissario Gentiloni, Presidente Draghi, anch'io Le voglio augurare, a nome del nostro gruppo, il benvenuto in questo Parlamento.

In un momento molto complesso e difficile, è certamente necessario il richiamo all'unità che è stato fatto da tutti, da Lei in modo particolare, che rappresenta, anche nell'ambito della condanna forte e netta di quello che sta accadendo, un punto di forza delle istituzioni occidentali.

Da una parte c'è una tragedia umana, un disastro, insieme ad un attacco forte a quelli che sono i valori della libertà, della democrazia, della pace, che non possono meritare alcun tipo di dubbio e di perplessità, per questo non abbiamo mai avuto alcun dubbio, come gruppo dei conservatori e al tempo stesso come partito dei conservatori, a sostenere con forza questa linea e questa azione.

Lo voglio dire, perché da qui parte una riflessione che si sviluppa anche a livello nazionale, dove le esitazioni magari non sono mancate, Presidente, me lo consenta, non certamente da parte nostra, laddove con un'azione seria e responsabile abbiamo dato il supporto pieno a un sostegno in questa direzione.

Però, è anche l'occasione per poter mettere in campo una riflessione un po' critica. L'idea di essere uniti e di guardare al futuro senza ragionare su ciò che è accaduto nel passato non può passare, è sbagliata perché rischieremmo di ripercorrere gli stessi errori e quindi è necessario, seguendo proprio il Suo schema, il Suo discorso, ragionare su alcuni punti essenziali.

Noi non siamo certamente – uso un eufemismo – entusiasti del lavoro della Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa, che rischia di essere una semplice autocelebrazione. Così come siamo anche dell'idea che i richiami che sono stati fatti su temi come la necessità di una centralità nel Mediterraneo e nell'Africa si scontrano con quella che è la realtà con la quale abbiamo verificato nei giorni scorsi, nei mesi scorsi, negli anni scorsi, una sempre crescente maggiore presenza della Russia, della Cina e della Turchia, grazie ad imbarazzi ed errori che sono stati compiuti in Europa.

Così come è altrettanto importante fare un ragionamento sugli errori che hanno portato ad una mancanza di indipendenza sui temi strategici, che hanno visto una politica industriale delocalizzare sempre di più in assenza di una capacità di autonomia dal punto di vista energetico, agricolo, alimentare. Dati di fatto oggettivi dai quali non si può prescindere se vogliamo guardare al futuro in modo serio e credibile e lo dobbiamo fare anche perché ritengo che sia fondamentale mettere in campo una strategia concreta che chiarisca anche un altro equivoco: il tema dell'immigrazione.

Ebbene, la narrazione fatta in questi anni è caduta, perché noi in questi giorni vediamo che quei paesi indicati come i responsabili del mancato accordo sono i principali paesi che hanno aperto le frontiere, le braccia e il cuore alla vera immigrazione fatta di profughi, di donne e bambini che scappano dalla guerra.

Queste considerazioni dobbiamo farle se vogliamo avere un'analisi reale della prospettiva e dobbiamo farle anche con due proposte, perché non ci appartiene la critica fine a se stessa. Siamo capaci e abituati a fare delle proposte. Lei in questo consesso è molto autorevole e credibile. Noi Le chiediamo con forza, glielo chiedo da parlamentare europeo, presidente di un gruppo, ma glielo chiedo anche da italiano, Lei facciamo due proposte concrete.

La prima è quella di mettere in campo un'azione strategica forte, concreta, così come ha detto, per affrontare il tema delle sanzioni che vanno sostenute con un fondo di compensazione adeguato che legga le esigenze e i bisogni dei singoli paesi dal punto di vista energetico, ma anche e soprattutto dal punto di vista dell'export, che è uno degli aspetti fondamentali che rischia di mettere in ginocchio un paese come il nostro.

E in secondo luogo, nei giorni scorsi e parte del dibattito politico nazionale, Giorgia Meloni Lei ha proposto la modifica del piano nazionale di ripresa e resilienza, uno strumento che, purtroppo, anche se appena partito, è già vecchio. L'articolo 21 dell'RRF prevede che in casi straordinari si possa intervenire per modificare l'organizzazione e le scelte che sono state inserite in questo contesto. Ebbene è uno strumento previsto per la pandemia, per la ripresa economica, la guerra, cosa c'è di più straordinario per cercare di individuare le soluzioni e modificare strutturalmente, adeguando alle vere esigenze questo strumento?

Non è un fatto nazionale. Lei ha ricordato, come in tanti, che qui in Europa l'Italia è il principale beneficiario di queste risorse ed è in questa direzione che abbiamo bisogno di una risposta forte, perché il successo o il fallimento del PNRR italiano sarà il successo o il fallimento di una strategia in questo senso. E siccome noi – e chiudo – non siamo abituati al tanto peggio, tanto meglio, Lei chiediamo con forza di valutare questa proposta nell'interesse non solamente dell'Italia, ma anche della prospettiva futura dei giovani, dei cittadini e delle imprese europee.

Martin Schirdewan, im Namen der Fraktion *The Left*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Premierminister Draghi! Die italienische Regierung geht entschlossen gegen russische Oligarchen vor und friert deren Besitztümer und Vermögen ein. Damit Sie aber nicht auf den Wartungskosten für die eingefrorenen Besitztümer sitzen bleiben, müssen die Güter beschlagnahmt, enteignet und anderer Verwendung zugeführt werden. Ich will, dass die Oligarchenvillen ukrainischen geflüchteten Kindern zur Verfügung gestellt werden, deren Yachten für die Naherholung bereitgestellt werden und die Protzautos für den öffentlichen Nahverkehr.

Sie erheben eine Krisengewinnsteuer für Energiekonzerne – Bravo! Krisengewinner müssen zur Kasse gebeten werden. Wenn ich jedoch Ihr Finanzminister wäre, wäre mein Rat an Sie, dass auch Pandemiegewinner wie *BigTech* und große Pharmakonzerne ihre Übergewinne an den Staat abzuführen haben. Und das gilt auch für die Kriegsgewinner, also die Rüstungsindustrie.

Sie fordern eine Reform der europäischen Schuldenbremse, also des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspaktes – auch hier Bravo! Doch hier steht insbesondere die deutsche Bundesregierung auf der Bremse, ebenso wie diese Bundesregierung nur zögerlich gegen russische Oligarchen vorgeht und vor der Besteuerung von Krisengewinnern zurückschreckt.

Doch, Herr Premierminister Draghi, diese Debatte nennt sich „*This is Europe*“. Lassen Sie uns auch gemeinsam in die politische Geschichte der jüngsten Finanz- und Wirtschaftskrise blicken, eine Geschichte, in der Sie eine herausragende Hauptrolle gespielt haben. Manche nannten Sie damals Super Mario, andere nannten Sie einen Superschurken. Sie waren EZB-Präsident, als die EZB in Griechenland der Regierung von Alexis Tsipras den Geldhahn abgedreht hat, weil diese sich gegen die Spar- und Kürzungspolitik gewehrt hat. Bezahlt für die Bankenkrise haben damals die Arbeitnehmer und Arbeitnehmerinnen, die Rentner und Rentnerinnen, die Patienten und Patientinnen, die Empfänger und Empfängerinnen von Sozialleistungen. Alles und überall wurde brutal gekürzt. Und als die Troika ihre verheerende Tätigkeit in Griechenland aufnahm, lag die griechische Staatsverschuldung bei circa 150 % des Bruttoinlandsprodukts.

Die italienische Staatsverschuldung liegt heute aber bei – Sie wissen das besser als ich – knapp 160 %. Und jetzt stellen Sie sich einmal mit mir vor, nur für einen Moment, irgendjemand käme auf die absurde Idee, Italien dem gleichen brutalen Sparkurs zu unterwerfen, wie es damals mit Griechenland geschehen ist. Sie würden sich richtigerweise politisch dagegen wehren. Und dann dreht Ihnen Frau Lagarde, also die EZB, über Nacht den Geldhahn zu. Italien würde kopfstehen.

Das war Ihr großer historischer Fehler. Und damit haben Sie der europäischen Demokratie damals großen Schaden zugefügt. Ihr *whatever it takes* galt in den Augen der Bevölkerung nur für die Rettung der Banken und der Großinvestoren. Europa wird jedoch dann eine gute Zukunft haben, wenn es ein *whatever it takes* gibt, das vor explodierenden Energiepreisen, Mietpreisen, Nahrungsmittelpreisen schützt, damit die Krise und die Inflation nicht die Löhne und Renten auffressen, ein *whatever it takes*, um das Klima und die Demokratie vor der autoritären Rechten zu schützen. Kurz: ein *whatever it takes* für Mensch und Planet.

Tiziana Beghin (NI). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Presidente Draghi, bentornato al Parlamento europeo.

Durante la pandemia abbiamo scoperto quante cose positive può fare l'Europa per i cittadini, come Lei ha giustamente sottolineato, con il Next Generation EU abbiamo messo in salvo la nostra economia e creato le premesse per la ripartenza. Poi con SURE abbiamo stanziato miliardi per aiutare disoccupati e precari. Certo, non è stato semplice: c'erano molti leader europei scettici sulle misure da prendere, ma hanno prevalso solidarietà e unità e oggi, proprio grazie all'unità europea, Putin finora non ha ottenuto quello che voleva in Ucraina, ma attenzione, nemmeno noi abbiamo ottenuto quello che volevamo e cioè la pace.

Cari colleghi, dopo oltre due mesi dall'inizio di questo conflitto è arrivato il momento di salvare con la forza della diplomazia il popolo ucraino da ulteriore morte e sofferenza. Il diritto di difesa dell'Ucraina è sacrosanto, ma non dimentichiamoci che il nostro vero obiettivo finale deve essere la pace.

E poi allo stesso tempo facciamo tesoro di questi mesi difficili e iniziamo concretamente a lavorare per l'indipendenza energetica dal gas e dal petrolio russi. Combattiamo la pandemia energetica con gli stessi strumenti utilizzati durante quella sanitaria. Replichiamo il successo del Recovery Fund e approviamo un Energy Recovery Fund: è questa la proposta del Movimento 5 Stelle per accelerare al massimo lo sviluppo delle rinnovabili.

Il sole è il nostro gas e il vento è il nostro petrolio, ma come Lei sa bene, Presidente Draghi, non tutti gli Stati hanno la leva finanziaria per attivare gli investimenti necessari. Serve la potenza di fuoco dell'Europa e su questo Le chiediamo di insistere al prossimo Consiglio europeo perché sul caro energia è in gioco la nostra credibilità. E anch'io, come il presidente dei Verdi Lamberts, La invito a rendere europeo il successo del super bonus al 110 per cento che la Commissione europea ha apertamente elogiato, mentre è vergognoso che, mentre i colossi petroliferi accumulano profitti per miliardi di dollari, un cittadino su sette in Italia non riesce a pagare la bolletta di luce e gas perché troppo cara.

L'inflazione galoppante toglie potere di acquisto alle famiglie e tutto questo accade mentre i salari sono fermi e poi ci domandiamo perché gli europei non fanno più figli. Abbiamo un problema di equità sociale che va contrastato con il salario minimo europeo.

Presidente Draghi, siamo d'accordo con Lei quando parla di riformare il regolamento di Dublino, serve solidarietà, responsabilità sempre, così come dimostrato nell'accoglienza dei rifugiati ucraini. Con altrettanta onestà, Le ricordo che quest'Aula, grazie anche al contributo del Movimento 5 Stelle, ha votato quattro proposte legislative del pacchetto «rifiuti». Le norme europee non prevedono l'uso indiscriminato degli inceneritori. La stella polare dell'Unione europea si chiama economia circolare, appliciamola anche in Italia.

Infine, Presidente, oggi è la Giornata mondiale della libertà di stampa. Dimostriamo di essere fieri dei nostri valori. Chiediamo ufficialmente, come Europa, il rilascio e la libertà di Julian Assange. Per lui, per il popolo ucraino e per tutti i cittadini oppressi nel mondo l'Unione europea sia la terra della libertà e della pace.

Cari colleghi, dopo oltre due mesi dall'inizio di questo conflitto, è arrivato il momento di salvare con la forza della diplomazia il popolo ucraino da ulteriore morte e sofferenza. Il diritto di difesa dell'Ucraina è sacrosanto, ma non dimentichiamoci che il nostro vero obiettivo finale deve essere la pace. Poi, allo stesso tempo facciamo tesoro di questi mesi difficili e iniziamo concretamente a lavorare per l'indipendenza energetica dal gas e dal petrolio russi. Combattiamo la pandemia energetica con gli stessi strumenti utilizzati durante quella sanitaria. Replichiamo il successo del Recovery Fund di Approviamo, un Energy Recovery Fund. È questa la proposta del Movimento cinque Stelle per accelerare al massimo lo sviluppo delle rinnovabili. Il sole è il nostro gas, il vento è il nostro petrolio. Ma come lei sa bene, presidente Draghi, non tutti gli Stati hanno la leva finanziaria per attivare gli investimenti necessari. Serve la potenza di fuoco dell'Europa e su questo le chiediamo di insistere al prossimo Consiglio europeo perché sul caro energia è in gioco la nostra credibilità. E anche io, come presidente dei Verdi, la invito a rendere europeo il successo del super bonus al 110% che la Commissione europea ha apertamente elogiato. Mentre è vergognoso che mentre i colossi petroliferi accumulano profitti per miliardi di dollari, un cittadino su sette in Italia non riesce a pagare la bolletta di luce e gas perché troppo cara. L'inflazione galoppante toglie potere di acquisto alle famiglie. Tutto questo accade mentre i salari sono fermi. E poi ci domandiamo perché gli europei non fanno più figli? Abbiamo un problema di equità sociale che va contrastato con il salario minimo europeo. Presidente Draghi, siamo d'accordo con lei quando parla di riformare il regolamento di Dublino? Serve solidarietà e responsabilità, sempre così come dimostrato nell'accoglienza dei rifugiati ucraini. Con altrettanta onestà le ricordo che quest'Aula, grazie anche al contributo del Movimento cinque Stelle, ha votato quattro proposte legislative del pacchetto rifiuti. Le norme europee non prevedono l'uso indiscriminato degli inceneritori. La stella polare dell'Unione europea si chiama economia circolare. Appliciamo la anche in Italia. Infine presidente. Concludo. Oggi è la Giornata mondiale della libertà di stampa. Dimostriamo di essere fieri dei nostri valori. Chiediamo ufficialmente come Europa il rilascio e la libertà di Julian Assange. Per lui, per il popolo ucraino, per tutti i cittadini oppressi del mondo. l'Unione europea sia la terra della libertà e della pace. Grazie. Grazie. Onorevole Glenn close to speech, chiosa il vice presidente Giovanni Floris conclude. Ma prima di tutto vorrei ringraziare tutti i capigruppo per le parole e le espressioni di stima e di apprezzamento che avete avuto per il mio Paese. Per me sono espressioni molto importanti. Devo dire che mi hanno sorpreso e mi hanno commosso. Quindi grazie ancora. Voglio ringraziare ovviamente la presidente del Parlamento europeo per questa occasione, questa opportunità di incontro che per me è la prima da quando ho lasciato la Bce e quindi sono tre anni che non avevo occasione di.

Mario Draghi, *Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri italiano*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli deputati, prima di tutto vorrei ringraziare tutti i capigruppo per le parole e le espressioni di stima e di apprezzamento che avete avuto per il mio paese. Per me sono espressioni molto importanti. Devo dire che mi hanno sorpreso e mi hanno commosso. Quindi grazie ancora.

Voglio ringraziare ovviamente la Presidente del Parlamento europeo per questa occasione, questa opportunità di incontro che per me è la prima da quando ho lasciato la BCE, quindi sono tre anni che non avevo occasione di parlare e di scambiare opinioni e vedute con il Parlamento europeo.

Due o tre punti specifici prima di arrivare a quella che è secondo me una condivisione degli obiettivi e delle finalità della nostra visione europea. Due o tre punti specifici: l'Italia sarà a favore dell'embargo su tutte le energie fossili. Come ho detto nel discorso, abbiamo appoggiato le sanzioni che l'Unione europea ha deciso di imporre nei confronti della Russia, anche quelle nel settore energetico, e continueremo a farlo con la stessa convinzione in futuro.

Bisogna darsi da fare, però non basta appoggiare soltanto le sanzioni. Bisogna darsi da fare per diventare indipendenti dal gas russo. Noi l'abbiamo fatto e lo continueremo a fare. Ci siamo mossi con notevole rapidità per diversificare le nostre fonti di approvvigionamento e per accelerare gli investimenti nelle rinnovabili, con un ritmo che non era previsto l'anno scorso.

Anche i provvedimenti di ieri presi dal governo portano a una liberalizzazione dei processi delle autorizzazioni per l'installazione di rinnovabili, perché questo è l'unico ostacolo oggi presente in Italia, ma credo anche in molti paesi europei. Sono i processi autorizzativi per le installazioni di fonti rinnovabili.

Credo che abbiamo fatto un passo in avanti notevole ieri per quanto riguarda l'Italia. Imprese che hanno fatto profitti e famiglie povere, non c'è alcun dubbio. Le imprese che hanno operato nel settore elettrico e nel settore dell'importazione delle energie fossili hanno fatto profitti incredibili. Pensate soltanto alla Norvegia, i cui profitti poco tempo fa erano stati stimati a 150 miliardi di dollari per un paese di 5 milioni di abitanti.

Altrettanto sta succedendo per le imprese italiane e degli altri paesi che hanno importato energie fossili. Il nostro governo ieri ha deciso di rinnovare la tassazione su questi extraprofitti delle imprese che hanno importato e prodotto energie di diverso tipo.

La tassazione complessiva ora ha raggiunto il 25 per cento di questa definizione di extraprofitti che il governo ha dato. In sostanza si tratta di un ammontare complessivo di circa 11 miliardi tra il primo provvedimento e il secondo provvedimento. E così siamo riusciti a dare un assegno *flat*, un assegno uguale per tutti di 200 euro a 28 milioni di persone, a coloro che tra i 28 milioni di persone, cioè pensionati e lavoratori dipendenti, guadagnano poco. Tutti coloro che sono nella fascia più bassa o nelle fasce più basse, cioè che guadagnano fino a 35 000 euro l'anno, otterranno questo assegno uguale per tutti. Quindi una misura fortemente progressiva, ovviamente, che premia molto le fasce più basse di reddito e che compensa in parte, in alcuni casi in gran parte, per la perdita di potere d'acquisto che queste famiglie hanno avuto a causa dell'inflazione.

Vedete, questo è un modo per aiutare le famiglie più povere senza necessariamente, come dire, minare la solidità del bilancio pubblico. Questo è molto importante per noi perché come sapete il nostro bilancio richiede particolare cura.

Secondo punto sul clima. Questo governo è nato, come mi ricordo in un discorso in Parlamento, come un governo ecologico. Quindi fa del clima, della transizione verde e anche della transizione digitale il pilastro portante. In questo senso devo dire che il nostro ministro dell'Ambiente è stato straordinario. Ha fatto quello che difficilmente poteva essere immaginato anche un anno e mezzo fa. Ha fatto provvedimenti straordinari.

Possiamo non essere d'accordo sul superbonus del 110 per cento e non siamo d'accordo sulla validità di questo provvedimento. Cito soltanto un esempio: il costo di efficientamento è più che triplicato grazie ai provvedimenti del 110 per cento. I prezzi degli investimenti necessari per attuare le ristrutturazioni sono più che triplicati, perché il 110 per cento di per sé toglie l'incentivo alla trattativa sul prezzo e quindi questo è il risultato. In ogni caso le cose vanno avanti in Parlamento, il governo ha fatto quello che poteva fare e il nostro ministro è molto bravo.

Terzo: modifiche al PNRR. Allora qui bisogna intendersi. Prima di tutto, il primo problema sul PNRR è assicurarsi che i cantieri dei lavori pubblici, delle opere restino aperti e si aprano quelli delle nuove gare. A questo fine, ieri il governo ha stanziato inizialmente 3 miliardi per permettere alle imprese di recuperare il 90 per cento dell'aumento dei prezzi delle materie prime.

Questo provvedimento è stato accolto con grande favore, naturalmente non solo dalle industrie che producono queste infrastrutture che partecipano ai lavori pubblici, ma in generale da tutti. Quindi questa è la strada che abbiamo scelto. Quindi prima di parlare di modifiche del PNRR, facciamolo funzionare. Non è vecchio il PNRR. Non è per niente vecchio. Abbiamo rispettato tutti gli obiettivi. Continueremo a farlo ora, a fine giugno. Lo faremo anche il 30 dicembre. Che vecchio, non è vecchio. Quindi, ci sono dei punti e se è necessario modificare certe cose in alcuni punti, in alcuni settori, investimenti specifici, però non si parli di rivoluzioni del PNRR. Ci sono degli investimenti che forse verranno modificati, per i quali bisognerà intervenire appositamente. Queste sono le tre cose specifiche che volevo dire.

Ma veniamo ora alla visione complessiva di questo scambio. Io credo che questo scambio sia caratterizzato da una profonda condivisione. Condivisione di visioni, di progetti, di ideali. Le sfide dell'Unione sono molte, abbiamo visto, la prima di tutte – condivido quello che ha detto probabilmente l'ultima capogruppo, anzi non è una capogruppo, non so – che ha detto che la sfida più importante è la pace. Questo è indubbiamente l'obiettivo principale verso cui si deve muovere l'Unione europea, verso cui si muove questo governo, il mio governo, ma ve ne sono molte altre e su tutte la risposta è: l'integrazione è la nostra migliore alleata. Su tutte.

Ho parlato di federalismo pragmatico, che significa? Significa che per tante di queste sfide l'unico modo è affrontarle insieme. Affrontarle insieme non significa soltanto finanziarle insieme. Perché voi pensate, io sono un banchiere, quindi penso sempre quello. Ma non è questo. Affrontarle insieme significa disegnarle insieme, significa sorvegliarle insieme, significa assicurarsi che i soldi siano ben spesi tutti insieme.

E di questo l'Italia è profondamente consapevole e si sente, come sapete bene, perché l'ho detto tante volte, molto responsabile della buona spesa di questi fondi che sono stati assegnati per il Next Generation. Ma altrettanto lo sarà per quello che si vorrà decidere sul fronte energetico, sul fronte degli investimenti pubblici, sul fronte della transizione verde, del digitale.

Sono delle sfide di proporzioni – voi sapete che sono stati fatti dei conti per quanto riguarda la transizione verde e la transizione digitale, per cui il bisogno da qua al 2030, il fabbisogno finanziario per l'intera Unione europea è di circa 2 trilioni di euro – quindi non sono cifre che si possono affrontare con i bilanci nazionali.

Quindi abbiamo due obiettivi: uno è l'autonomia strategica per quanto riguarda la difesa. Abbiamo detto tante volte che un'Europa forte significa anche una NATO forte. Ma per l'autonomia strategica, l'ho detto nel discorso e lo ripeto, il primo passo è quello di rendere la nostra spesa militare più efficiente. Ripeto: tre volte la spesa della Russia. Non è pensabile che si possa fare alcunché finché non si rende più efficiente, più coordinata la spesa militare. Per questo ho, come dire, richiamato la possibilità di avere una conferenza su questo obiettivo.

Condivido la necessità, e ciò è l'esperienza di questi ultimi anni, di arrivare a un'autonomia anche per certe produzioni cruciali per il nostro continente. Quindi, per esempio i microprocessori. È un tipo di cose, ma ci sono altre produzioni che sono cruciali nelle catene di produzione, che effettivamente si dimostrano essenziali e per le quali si dimostra essenziale l'autonomia strategica.

La guerra, ma anche prima, gli ultimi eventi hanno dimostrato che il mercato e le catene di produzione non funzionano fluidamente sempre e la loro interruzione può creare crisi profonde. Quindi dobbiamo anche attrezzarci per questo.

Questo è, dicevo, il federalismo programmatico, ma insisto su un'altra cosa, su quello che ho chiamato il federalismo ideale. In questo momento i nostri valori sono sottoposti a sfide che non hanno conosciuto da quando è stata costituita l'Unione europea. Di fronte a queste sfide dobbiamo essere uniti. È lì che si vede in un certo senso il federalismo ideale, la capacità di arrivare a risposte che sono unite, pur essendo noi profondamente diversi per storia, tradizioni e condizioni di partenza. Quindi è lì la difficoltà vera, in un certo senso, che dobbiamo superare e dobbiamo riuscire a superarla per aver successo come Europa.

E finalmente questo, come ho detto prima, se ciò e credo che sia necessario, che lo renderà necessario, se ciò porterà a un inizio di un percorso per la revisione dei trattati, percorriamolo con coraggio e con fiducia.

(Applausi)

President. – Thank you very much, Prime Minister Draghi.

The debate is closed.

Written statements (Rule 171)

Gunnar Beck (ID), *schriftlich*. – Allein im Jahr 2021 haben die Negativzinsen die deutschen Haushalte 160 Milliarden Euro gekostet. Unterdessen profitieren korrupte italienische Bankster von Prämien auf ihre TLTRO-Kredite von der EZB, und die hoch verschuldeten Mitgliedstaaten südlich der Alpen und Pyrenäen profitieren von der höchsten Inflation seit 30 Jahren. Laut offiziellen Statistiken der Europäischen Bankenaufsichtsbehörde ist die Zahl der italienischen Banker, die mehr als 1 Million Euro pro Jahr verdienen, im Jahr 2020 um 16 % gestiegen, der höchste Anstieg in der gesamten EU. Nordeuropäische Sparer und Rentner leiden und bezahlen die Rechnungen, während die mediterranen Banker Champagner trinken. All dies ist das orchestrierte Werk von Mario Draghi. Zuerst als Präsident der EZB und jetzt als Ministerpräsident von Italien. Dank der Großzügigkeit der deutschen Steuerzahler soll das italienische Dorf Cedi mit 200 Einwohnern 200 Millionen Euro an NGEU-Mitteln erhalten. Unterdessen haben die Deutschen das niedrigste Medianvermögen des gesamten Euroraums, die niedrigste Haushaltseigentumsquote und einen der höchsten Einkommenssteuersätze in der gesamten EU. Jetzt hat der deutsche Finanzminister Christian Lindner die Tür zur Errichtung einer europäischen Einlagensicherung geöffnet. Bald müssen deutsche Sparer für die Misswirtschaft südeuropäischer Banken büßen. Aus der Währungsunion ist eine Transferunion entstanden. Nur die AfD hat immer wieder vor dieser Verirrung gewarnt.

ΠΡΟΕΔΡΙΑ: ΕΥΑ ΚΑΪΛΗ

Αντιπρόεδρος

6. Ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) TEU regarding Poland and Hungary (debate)

President. – The next item is the debate on the Commission statement on the ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) TEU regarding Poland and Hungary.

I will remind you that free seating is applied with the exception of the first two rows, which are allocated to group leaders, and also inform Members that this debate is foreseen with one round of political group speakers.

The interventions in the Chamber will continue to be made from the central rostrum except for catch-the-eye, blue cards and points of order. I therefore kindly invite you to keep an eye on the speakers' list and to approach when your speaking time is imminent.

Didier Reynders, *membre de la Commission*. – Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, je tiens à vous remercier d'avoir mis à nouveau à l'ordre du jour de cette plénière les procédures au titre de l'article 7 à l'encontre de la Pologne et de la Hongrie.

Comme vous le savez, la Commission considère qu'il est important de maintenir les procédures «article 7» à l'agenda du Conseil. La Commission se tient d'ailleurs à la disposition du Conseil pour le soutenir dans ce cadre, à l'occasion d'auditions ou d'états des lieux que nous présentons devant lui. C'est dans le même esprit que nous apprécions évidemment le débat aussi en plénière avec vous.

En ce qui concerne la situation en Pologne, comme vous le savez, la cinquième audition au titre de la procédure «article 7» a eu lieu devant le Conseil Affaires générales le 22 février dernier. La Commission a informé le Conseil des développements survenus au cours des derniers mois, notamment un certain nombre de décisions du Tribunal constitutionnel polonais remettant en cause les fondements de l'ordre juridique de l'Union. Ces décisions nous ont d'ailleurs conduits à introduire une procédure d'infraction devant la Cour de justice, non seulement, d'ailleurs, sur la mise en cause de la primauté du droit européen, mais aussi concernant les remarques que nous avons à propos de la non-indépendance de ce tribunal constitutionnel. La Commission a également informé le Conseil de plusieurs arrêts récents de la Cour européenne de justice et de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, qui ont confirmé les préoccupations de la Commission concernant l'État de droit en Pologne, notamment sur la question de l'indépendance de la justice, que je viens d'évoquer à propos du Tribunal constitutionnel.

La Commission n'a pu que conclure que la situation sur le terrain continuait de susciter de très sérieuses préoccupations au cours des dernières semaines. Nous avons suivi de près les développements législatifs concernant les amendements à la législation polonaise visant à modifier le régime disciplinaire des juges en Pologne.

The fact that there seems to be momentum towards reforming the disciplinary regime for judges in Poland is a positive step. Yet, what will eventually matter is the extent to which the legislation, as finally adopted by the Polish Parliament, if it's possible to go to the final adoption, will address the requirements set out by the Court of Justice in its ruling of 14 and 15 July last year.

I also note that last week the Polish Government put forward two draft laws that seek to fundamentally change the structure of the ordinary judiciary, including by changing the structure of courts and by transferring judges. We understand that these draft laws are now subject to public consultations.

Let me underline in that respect that any new legislation concerning the judiciary must comply with the requirements of EU law on judicial independence, taking into account European standards and the case-law of the European Court of Justice in this regard. The Commission will continue to follow closely the legislative development in that respect and you know that it's in line with some decisions of the Court of Justice, including decisions about interim measures and including a decision about a fine of EUR 1 million per day if there is no fulfilment of the requirements of such a decision on interim measures. And we are now at a total amount of more than EUR 160 million with such a fine, until there is a possible positive evolution in Poland.

As regards the situation in Hungary, the Commission has had the opportunity to explain on different occasions that it shares an important number of concerns expressed by the European Parliament in its reasoned opinion and proposal triggering the Article 7 procedure.

The Commission has also made very clear that whatever position the Council will take on the Article 7 procedure, it must ensure a fair handling of the reasoned proposal tabled by Parliament. The Commission stressed this again in the Geneva Council of 14 December last year during a state of play point on the situation in Hungary.

Hungary's fourth hearing under the Article 7 procedure has been scheduled for the meeting of the Geneva Council of 23 May. We appreciate that the French Presidency has included this hearing in the Council's agenda.

In addition to the Article 7 procedures, the Commission, as I said, has all the instruments at its disposal to protect the rule of law, and we don't hesitate to use them. One of these is the rule of law conditionality regulation, a financial instrument. We have to protect the EU budget and financial interests against breaches of the rule of law, as underlined by the Court of Justice.

Last week, the Commission sent a written notification to Hungary under the conditionality regulation. The Commission has identified a number of rule of law issues, including corruption-related, that constitute reasonable grounds for the launch of the procedure under the general regime of conditionality. Indeed, these issues affect or seriously risk affecting the sound financial management of the Union budget or the protection of the financial interests of the Union in a sufficiently direct way.

The identified issues, together with the long-standing Commission recommendations and request to address them, combined with the lack of measures to address the identified issues in a structured manner over time are indicative of a serious risk for the sound financial management of the Union budget and for the protection of the Union's financial interests. Hungary can now submit observations on the findings in the written notification within two months. It may also propose the adoption of remedial measures to address the findings.

Such a written notification is the first formal step of the procedure set by the conditionality regulation, which establishes exchanges between the Commission and the Member State concerned with the view to address the findings of the Commission and protect the Union budget. Throughout the procedure, Hungary has the possibility to submit remedial measures. We continue, of course, to monitor the situation in all the other Member States on the basis of the same regulation.

La Commission n'hésite pas non plus à ouvrir des procédures d'infraction pour répondre aux préoccupations liées au respect de l'État de droit. Dans le cas de la Hongrie, la Commission a lancé plusieurs procédures d'infraction liées au respect des valeurs de l'Union. Ces procédures ont notamment porté sur les droits des organisations de la société civile, la liberté académique, les droits des migrants et demandeurs d'asile, la liberté des médias et les droits des personnes LGBTIQ.

En ce qui concerne la situation en Pologne, comme je l'ai dit plus tôt, la Commission a décidé en décembre dernier de lancer une nouvelle procédure d'infraction contre la Pologne concernant le Tribunal constitutionnel polonais et sa récente jurisprudence. Ce tribunal a expressément remis en cause la primauté du droit de l'Union, et nous y avons ajouté nos doutes concernant son indépendance, qui avait déjà été évoquée dans le cadre de l'article 7 depuis 2017.

Where relevant, the Commission has also other instruments, such as the European Semester, to promote and uphold the rule of law. In 2019, the Council, following the Commission's proposal, recommended to Hungary to reinforce its anti-corruption framework and to strengthen judicial independence. In 2020, the Council recommended to Poland to enhance the investment climate, in particular by safeguarding judicial independence.

When assessing the national recovery and resilience plans, the Commission verifies whether they are expected to contribute to effectively addressing all, or in a significant subset, of the challenges identified in the relevant country-specific recommendations.

Moreover, in July, the Commission will publish its third annual rule of law report, and you know that for the first time the report will include recommendations. These recommendations will help Member States to focus their follow up on the key issues, including on justice, anti-corruption, media freedom, and checks and balances. They should also help and support Member States in their efforts to uphold the rule of law and to prevent problems from emerging or deepening.

Et pour conclure, je regrette, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, de ne pas être en mesure aujourd'hui de rendre compte d'évolutions positives en ce qui concerne l'état de droit en Pologne et en Hongrie. Je ne peux qu'espérer que les procédures en cours au titre de l'article 7, comme d'autres procédures que je viens d'évoquer, permettront aux autorités polonaises et hongroises de réfléchir à la manière de répondre aux préoccupations exprimées. Je remercie également à nouveau la présidence française d'avoir maintenu à l'ordre du jour du Conseil les procédures engagées au titre de l'article 7 contre la Pologne et la Hongrie. Et nous continuerons bien entendu à intervenir à chaque occasion devant le Conseil «Affaires générales» lorsque les points seront mis à l'ordre du jour, comme je l'ai annoncé pour la Hongrie à la fin de ce mois, comme nous continuerons à avancer dans toutes les autres procédures que nous avons initiées, jusqu'à une mise en ordre complète des systèmes juridiques en Hongrie comme en Pologne, par rapport aux normes européennes que nous tentons de partager à travers toute l'Union.

Jeroen Lenaers, on behalf of the PPE Group. – Madam President, before I go into the content of my contribution here today, I do have to say that I find it disappointing that we are having this debate today only with Commissioner Reynders. This is nothing personal against Commissioner Reynders obviously, but the fact that we're talking about the ongoing Article 7 procedures and there is an empty chair on my left, even though we all know that the main challenge, when it comes to Article 7 procedures, lies with the Council – it is very disappointing that the Council is not present here today for this debate.

In the plenary session in March or April, we already discussed the ongoing procedures for Hungary and Poland in detail and the lack of any progress when it comes to protection of the rule of law. So today it is also good to look at the procedural issues that we have in this European Union.

For the EPP, the European Union is, first and foremost, a community of values. A shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights is the glue that holds our Union together. We can make all the progress we want on the internal market, on trade policy, in any other policy field, whatever we want, but, without a joint commitment to our founding values, none of that progress will ever be sustainable for the future. Because how can we create a single area of freedom, justice and security if we cannot rely on the impartiality and independence of judges in all Member States? How can we expect to have a level playing field for our SMEs if we cannot rely on the fact that Member States will actually follow the rules that we have set together? And how can we count on the democratic legitimacy of the decision-making process when national elections are marred by the absence of a level playing field?

When the rule of law is undermined in one Member State, it affects the whole of the European Union. This is precisely why we have always been very strict with countries that want to join the European Union. The rule of law and the Copenhagen criteria are the main focal points of the whole accession procedure and for good reasons. But, when we look back, it's also fair to say that, as soon as an accession treaty is signed, that scrutiny seems to somehow disappear. This is a situation that we can no longer accept. The rule of law is so important and so crucial that it requires a constant and full commitment from all European institutions.

It's not that no progress has been made. The annual rule of law reporting that the Commissioner referred to is a very welcome and important step because it also shows that the rule of law and the debates we have here in this Parliament are not directed towards only one or two countries, but it's something that all Member States need to work on. But, even more importantly, with the conditionality mechanism, we took the historic step of linking values to the European budget, making sure that European taxpayers' money is not used to further undermine and weaken the rule of law and democracy, but instead to strengthen it.

We welcome the Commission's decision to send a formal notification to Hungary, and we look forward to seeing the concrete follow-up. We call on the Council, in that context, to show full political commitment to bringing this procedure to a successful conclusion without delay. As much as the annual rule of law report and the conditionality mechanisms are necessary and welcome supplements to the Article 7 procedure, just as with the Article 7 procedure, without real political commitment in the Council, added value will always remain limited. For a long time, it seemed that, in the Council, the rule of law was, like Voldemort in Harry Potter, something that should not be mentioned by name. Even though we now see Article 7 hearings resume in the Council – and we welcome this resumption under the French Presidency – actions speak much louder than words, and it's actions that we need. We need concrete recommendations with strict deadlines. EU leaders cannot just talk about the rule of law every now and again and then pat themselves on the back for a job well done, tick off the box on the to-do list and continue work as usual. We need concrete recommendations. If nothing concrete comes out of these hearings, there is little point in having them at all. So concrete recommendations with strict deadlines and, if these deadlines are not met, we need to look at all the other possibilities that the Article 7 procedures offer us.

We cannot allow our common values to be put at risk. This is also our main call to the Council in the resolution we will adopt this week: show genuine commitment in defending our founding values and make real and meaningful progress in the ongoing Article 7 procedures.

I know there are people who argue that, with the terrible war in Ukraine ongoing, now is not the time to focus on rule of law issues at home, and that it would not be fair to bother Member States like Hungary and Poland with procedures or conditionality at a time when the Polish and Hungarian people are making such great efforts to welcome Ukrainian refugees. But let me be absolutely clear and repeat what I said last week. Yes, we need solidarity in the EU. We need to help the Member States most affected in hosting hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees. This is why we are together in one union. But let me also be clear: helping Member States deal with an unprecedented crisis should not come at the expense of being silent about rule of law issues at home. It would be cynical, while Ukrainians are fighting – are dying – for freedom, democracy and the rule of law, to turn a blind eye to the attack of those very same values at home. If anything, Putin's Russia should be a stark warning to all of us about the dangers of a system where checks and balances, democracy and the rule of law have ceased to exist. It should embolden us to fight for those values even more passionately at home.

Katarina Barley, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, so here we are again speaking about the situation in Poland and in Hungary. And I do come across people who say, well why do we actually bother? I mean, it's their countries, and what does that have to do with us if democracy and rule of law is declining in some Member States?

Well, last debate that we just heard, with Mario Draghi, was called This is Europe. And it's all about that. It's about the question, who are we as a European Union? Who do we want to be? And why do so many people all over the world actually look at us as a place where you can turn to when you are in need, in distress?

That is because we have a very clear fundament of values. It is laid down in Article 2 that all Member States signed and it is worth having a look at it. What are the values in there? Respect for human dignity. Freedom. Democracy. Equality. Rule of law. Respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. And this is one of the things that some people really get wrong. They think they have obtained a majority in an election and then they can do whatever they want.

Democracy is exactly not that. Democracy is exactly that, of course, as a majority you set the rules, but you have to respect the rights of those who are different to yourself, who think differently, who look differently, who believe differently, who live differently. That is exactly what the European Union is all about. Most of the Member States adhere to those values and some don't.

And it's not the people – I really want to make this clear – it's not the people in Poland and in Hungary, who are at the moment doing such an excellent job welcoming these refugees, giving them shelter, it's the governments. And it's the governments that we really have to address at this point. In Hungary, we haven't seen fair elections for the last nine years – the OSCE said so. The media and the judiciary are under the control of the government. LGBTI people are being deprived of their rights. Corruption – I mean, look at Hungary, corruption everywhere.

In Poland, the situation is different, but not less worrying. It has been seven years since the Polish Government abolished the independence of the judiciary, the constitutional tribunal, Commissioner Reynders talked about it, and it negates now the founding primacy of EU law.

The facts are clearly established. We do not have to discuss any more about that. The European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights have found persistent violations, systematic violations on these rights and values. And this has to stop. Not only we demand this, it is also the people of Europe who demand this. In the Conference on the Future of Europe this aspect is one of the most important ones; representing almost 450 million European citizens, they sent us a very clear message. They demand that we all ensure the protection of EU values as they are laid down in the treaties that I just quoted.

And the EU has the means at its disposal. One of them being the Article 7 procedure. Article 7 sends a strong signal. It's not only about protecting the people in Poland and Hungary, it's about protecting all of us, protecting our internal values, our data, our individual rights, our taxpayers' money also. And it is high time to do so to protect all of this.

Now, the Commission and the Parliament have sent their cases to the Council and the Council has to act. The French Presidency has promised to protect the rule of law in the European Union. Where are they? Where are they to protect the rule of law now that we discuss this very important topic?

The European Union will ask three things at least from the Council. First, be transparent about the proceedings. The citizens have a right to know and they, in fact, demand this knowledge. Second, follow up the pointless hearings with recommendations to the Member States in question. And let me remind you, there is no unanimity necessary for this step. Third, consider the facts that are already there. If you look at the Commission's letters to Poland and Hungary, under the rule of law conditionality regulation, the annual rule of law report, the rulings of the European Court of Justice, of the European Court of Human Rights, the OLAF reports, you will have it all on the table.

Today we send a strong message to the Council. You, the Council, the governments of the Member States, you owe this to 450 million EU citizens and to the many more people who look at us because of our values, who fight and give their lives to defend just those same values.

Michal Šimečka, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Madam President, Mr Commissioner, dear colleagues, the trouble with authoritarian politics is that without pushback, it becomes ever more aggressive and dangerous. The European Union has learned this the hard way with Putin. But it seems to me that we haven't really learned this lesson when it comes to our own values and rule of law in Europe.

We now have a Member State government that has stifled independent media, captured independent institutions, which is spreading hate against minorities, and where billions of EU money has disappeared into the hands of oligarchs close to the ruling party. We also have a Member State whose government works to dismantle the independent judiciary by targeting judges, by firing them.

Now, all of this takes place in the EU, a democratic community, with EU financial support and despite the many mechanisms and tools that we have in place to protect our values.

Today we are here to discuss Article 7, which if you look at it, is a fairly straightforward procedure with hearings, with recommendations and ultimately sanctions. So on paper, it is a pretty powerful tool. In practice, the Council has made it toothless and quite opaque. Hearings are random and non-transparent, and even today, even after everything that has happened in Hungary, the Council has failed to even agree that this constitutes a serious breach of EU values, despite no unanimity needed for that statement.

Now thankfully, and after much hesitation, the Commission has finally activated the Conditionality Regulation. But even here there is a risk that the scope will be too narrow and that it will fail to address the systemic deficiencies and risks that stem from the absence of checks and balances in the rule of law, which is precisely what this regulation is for.

Colleagues, I remember last time around many of you were saying when we had this debate that the situation is now unprecedented with a full-scale war on our borders. And now here we are four weeks later after the massacres in Bucha, Mariupol and many others, and what strikes me is that I hear many voices, even in this House, saying that while in times of war we should relax our principles and our rules when it comes to defending democracy in Europe.

But I strongly believe that this is precisely the opposite of what is needed. After Putin's invasion, many have said that we are now locked in a broader, protracted conflict between autocracy and democracy, between Vladimir Putin's model and our European model, between tyranny and freedom, between brute force and the rule of law. And I agree. I agree that this is the conflict that we're facing, which is precisely why, now more than ever, it's important to protect our democratic model in Europe, why we cannot relent, why we cannot now relax our rules, because otherwise, how are we going to prevail in this conflict that is upon us?

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Madame la Présidente, effectivement, nous voilà à nouveau réunis ici pour discuter de ces procédures de l'article 7. Ce sont toujours un petit peu les mêmes dans la salle, avec l'absence notable du Conseil, qui effectivement est une grande tristesse et qui provoque de l'inquiétude. On a tendance à dire ces dernières années que la culture de l'état de droit s'est enfin développée et qu'on parle autant état de droit qu'économie. On peut voir en deux heures que ce n'est toujours pas le cas puisque, pour le débat économique, on avait une présence très forte du Conseil.

Cette résolution, nous en avons fait d'autres dans ce Parlement, ne sera certainement pas la dernière, mais nous avons besoin effectivement de continuer à en faire puisque cette procédure de l'article 7 n'est toujours pas prise sérieusement en considération par le Conseil, tout comme le rôle du Parlement d'ailleurs, qui, pourtant, est celui qui a déclenché la procédure en ce qui concerne la situation en Hongrie. Mais c'est aussi les impacts réels et sérieux sur les vies de nombreux Hongrois et Polonais qui ne sont pas aujourd'hui pris en compte sérieusement, puisqu'on les a en quelque sorte abandonnés à leur sort. Ce sont des gens qu'on continue à appeler des citoyens européens, mais qui peuvent légitimement se sentir un peu abandonnés.

L'Union européenne a aussi abandonné en Hongrie et en Pologne son image crédible et positive puisque, dans les mois qui viennent de se passer, en Hongrie notamment, les fausses informations et les caricatures à propos de l'Europe se sont développées massivement et nous n'agissons pas face à cela. Le législateur a pourtant pensé une procédure, à savoir l'article 7. De nombreux professeurs de droit européen défendent et font confiance à cette procédure, et pourtant, ceux qui l'ont à disposition, ces hommes et ces femmes politiques qui peuvent l'utiliser, ne le font pas suffisamment. Il faut redire l'importance de cette procédure. Il faut redire à quel point chaque outil est utile, nécessaire et complémentaire. Il faut des procédures d'infraction lancées par la Commission. Une étude récente a montré que, là aussi, la Commission n'en fait pas assez, elle reste encore trop prudente, mais elle fait quelque chose. Il faut effectivement le mécanisme de conditionnalité financière, notamment en ce qui concerne la Hongrie, puisque l'argent européen est très mal utilisé en Hongrie. Quand on voit le niveau de corruption, ce sont des sommes massives qui sont mal utilisées. Et puis cette procédure de l'article 7, qui est une base parce qu'il n'y aurait pas de déclenchement de mécanismes de conditionnalité s'il n'y avait pas, à un moment donné, un accord documenté entre nous sur le fait qu'il y a eu un écart avec l'état de droit. Donc, on a bien eu besoin de ce travail-là. Cette procédure est aujourd'hui entre les mains du Conseil. C'est une procédure qui a beaucoup de garanties, donc il n'y a aucun problème. C'est difficile de juger ses pairs, mais on ne peut pas dire que les choses sont précipitées, et c'est pour agir dans l'intérêt collectif.

Simplement, c'est aussi un outil qui, trop souvent, n'est pas utilisé de manière logique, mais sous forme de tractations politiques à chaque étape, dépendant du bon vouloir de la présidence. Selon ce qui se passe à ce moment-là politiquement, les choses s'arrêtent, il n'y a pas d'audition régulière, c'est particulièrement instable. Nous n'avons une fois de plus pas eu d'audition de la Pologne sous la présidence française. Nous en aurons une de la Hongrie, et c'est une bonne chose. Nous aurons ensuite besoin de recommandations qui seront travaillées pendant la présidence tchèque. Nous aurons ensuite besoin que ces recommandations soient votées pendant la présidence suédoise. Il faut que cet agenda soit tenu, sinon, encore une fois, nous abandonnerons les citoyens hongrois et polonais à leur sort.

Et je voudrais rappeler deux choses. D'abord, c'est que, dans la procédure de l'article 7, nous sommes dans le mécanisme de prévention, et pas dans celui de la sanction. Donc nous sommes au tout début du processus et déjà ça, nous n'avons pas réussi à le faire. Et je voudrais rappeler à tout le monde, ici, au Conseil et à la Commission, qu'en 2024, c'est en principe la Hongrie qui assurera la présidence de l'Union européenne. Est-ce que ce n'est pas un petit peu étrange de se retrouver sous la présidence d'un État dont on considère tous qu'il n'est plus totalement une démocratie?

Susanna Ceccardi, a nome del gruppo ID. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, «Dio La benedica, benedica la Sua famiglia e l'Ungheria». Questo ha detto Papa Francesco a Viktor Orbán al termine del loro colloquio, dopo avergli regalato un medaglione di bronzo raffigurante San Martino, protettore dei poveri. Questo bellissimo incontro, carico di significato è stato un vero smacco alla sinistra europea che da anni cerca di attaccare l'Ungheria e la Polonia attraverso i mezzi più subdoli, semplicemente perché queste nazioni hanno governi di centrodestra.

L'annuncio dell'avvio della procedura per la violazione dello Stato di diritto arriva giusto giusto a ridosso della vittoria di Viktor Orbán alle recenti elezioni. Questo accanimento nei confronti di governi pienamente legittimi è in questo momento assurdo e dannoso. Voglio ricordare che in questi giorni drammatici la Polonia ha accolto tre milioni di profughi e l'Ungheria mezzo milione. Per questo l'Europa dovrebbe mostrare la propria solidarietà e non minacciare inutili sanzioni.

Abbiamo sentito tante e legittime preoccupazioni sul rispetto dello Stato di diritto in questi due paesi membri, ma stiamo sottovalutando un pericolo ben più grave: che venga violato quel principio di sussidiarietà su cui l'Unione si fonda. La riforma della giustizia polacca viola lo spirito dei trattati, minando il principio della divisione dei poteri? Questa è la domanda che ci stiamo ponendo negli ultimi mesi e da anni, ma inviterei tutti a un'altra riflessione: fino a che punto l'Unione europea ha il potere di ingerenza sulle riforme della magistratura di uno Stato membro? Onestamente fa poi ridere che parlamentari di certi paesi dove i giudici rispondono quasi totalmente alla sinistra si permettano di giudicare la Polonia o l'Ungheria.

Stesso discorso per i media, certamente in Ungheria e in Polonia sono più i media pro-governativi che quelli anti-governativi, ma è forse diverso in Francia o in Italia? Assolutamente no.

Anche il discorso sui diritti degli omosessuali è ricco di *fake news*. Non è vero che in Ungheria non siano riconosciute le unioni civili. Lo sono, non lo sono invece in parecchi altri paesi dell'Unione europea che stranamente però non sono nel mirino di Bruxelles, evidentemente per altri meriti, magari di natura politica.

Se esiste un tratto distintivo della nostra civiltà europea che ha consentito l'affermazione dei diritti umani, la prosperità e uno sviluppo che nei secoli non ha avuto pari, è grazie al pluralismo. La competizione pacifica e creativa tra nazioni diverse per lingua, tradizione, anche sistemi giuridici differenti, ha reso grande l'Europa. Dove si cerca di affermare il centralismo, invece, si crea divisione e conflitto.

Il premier Orbán è stato eletto per la quarta volta in elezioni assolutamente regolari. Chi lo nega e asserisce che Orbán è un irremovibile dittatore a capo di un partito parafascista dovrebbe spiegare perché Orbán è stato a lungo un apprezzato leader all'interno del PPE. Su importanti media europei subito dopo la vittoria di Orbán è stata pubblicata la lettera di un famoso opinionista inglese che spiegava come fosse necessario tagliare ogni fondo europeo all'Ungheria perché il governo ungherese usa i fondi per aiutare le famiglie e in tal modo guadagna popolarità. È pazzesco. Un governo che usa i fondi per aiutare le famiglie anziché essere elogiato, viene criticato fino al punto da chiedere punizioni.

L'Unione europea deve smettere di combattere politicamente i governi legittimi degli Stati membri, si concentri invece su come difendere la nostra Europa dai nemici che la minacciano, quelli che sono sempre stati alle nostre porte pronti ad aggredire e che avete sempre finto di non vedere finché non ci sono entrati in casa.

Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, w imieniu grupy ECR. – Pani Przewodnicząca. Szanowni Państwo! Zacznę od cytatu, słów, które dwa tygodnie po agresji Rosji na Ukrainę wypowiedziała była ambasador USA w Polsce, przyznając w tym samym wywiadzie, że sama często nie zgadzała się z polskim rządem.

Cytuję: „Unia zajmuje się w tej chwili praworządnością w Polsce i debatuje nad sankcjami. Pora powiedzieć to głośno! Jeśli chodzi o problem z praworządnością, spora część z tego, co docierało na Zachód, była efektem rosyjskiej dezinformacji. Zarówno Unia, jak i Ameryka przyjmowały ją bezkrytycznie” stwierdziła Pani Mosbacher.

Dziś minęły ponad dwa miesiące od ataku Putina. W tym czasie byliśmy świadkami bohaterstwa Europejczyków i kompromitacji europejskich elit. Myślę tu o busach i ciężarówkach na niemieckich, włoskich czy belgijskich numerach rejestracyjnych, które można było spotkać na polskich autostradach, gdy wiozły pomoc humanitarną na Ukrainę.

Myślę też o politykach francuskich czy niemieckich, którzy wisieli na telefonie ze zbrodniarzem wojennym i prześcigali się w pomysłach, jak zablokować albo ominąć nałożone na niego sankcje.

Co w tym czasie robiła Polska?

Dumni Polacy, bez finansowego wsparcia z Brukseli, przyjęli, głównie do swoich domów, miliony uchodźców z terenów objętych wojną. A polski rząd nawet słowem nie wspomniał o relokacji.

Nasz kraj stanął na czele humanitarnej i wojskowej pomocy dla naszych sąsiadów, a nasi politycy budzili sumienia europejskich elit. Słowa premiera Morawieckiego o tym, że gazociąg Nord Stream płynie krew niewinnych ludzi, przejdą pewno do historii.

Po co zaplanowaliście tę debatę o naszej praworządności?!

Czy chcecie zagłuszyć swoje palące sumienia?

Wstyd, o którym każdego dnia przypominają wam wasi dziennikarze i obywatele?

Ponad milion Ukraińców zostało porwanych i wysłanych do Rosji, często na Syberię.

To samo robił z Polakami 80 lat temu Stalin. A to wszystko dzieje się na naszych oczach.

A co robicie Wy? Europejscy politycy?

Politycy, którzy mają czelność dzisiaj pouczać polski rząd. Wasz „zielony ład” ma być zasilany ruskim gazem. Wasi przywódcy namawiają wasze firmy, by nie likwidować biznesów w Rosji, bo marzą wam się brudne, poplamione krwią ruble, które wymienicie na euro, rzekomo już czyste.

Tej plamy na honorze już nie zmyjecie. Historia wam tego nie zapomni. Możecie próbować ganić Polaków, ale to nasz kraj jest dzisiaj na ustach całego wolnego świata. Wiele już powiedziano o ofiarności Polaków w niesieniu pomocy humanitarnej i przyjmowaniu uchodźców.

To teraz jeszcze jeden cytat z ostatnich dni na temat działań rządu: „rządząca w Polsce partia PiS odetchnęła i zyskała więcej prestiżu dzięki twardej polityce wobec Rosji, po latach bycia pod lupą Brukseli”.

Pisze to prestiżowy hiszpański dziennik, wskazując, że to nasz rząd w wielu sprawach miał rację i dziś korzysta z tego, by pokazać, co naprawdę dzieje się w naszym kraju.

Dziś jest ważny dzień dla Polaków, święto narodowe. Ustanowiono je na pamiątkę Konstytucji 3 maja, tej sprzed 231 lat, kiedy Polska reformowała się, by uniknąć niemiecko-rosyjskiego zaboru, kiedy Polska była przykładem dla Europy, wprowadzając pierwszą konstytucję właśnie na naszym kontynencie, konstytucję dającą wiele wolności najślabszym, których wyzyskiwała pańszczyzna – ówczesnie rozpowszechniona w Europie forma niewolnictwa.

Chciałbym zapytać Francuzów: jak byście się czuli, gdyby was 14 lipca ktoś próbował pouczać? Prowadził debatę na temat brutalnej reakcji policji na protesty żółtych kamizelek i próbował strofować za to wasze władze? Dlaczego więc psujecie święto Polaków? Dlaczego próbujecie odebrać nam prawo do bycia dumnymi Europejczykami?

W dniu naszego najważniejszego narodowego święta!

To Konstytucja 3 maja była wzorem dla waszych konstytucji. Dziś o tym zapominacie. I zakończę słowami:

Niech żyje Polska! Niech żyje Europa!

Ale Europa oparta na prawdziwych wartościach, tych wywiedzionych ze Starego i Nowego Testamentu, filozofii greckiej, z prawa rzymskiego, a nie z neomarksistowskiego, lewackiego bełkotu.

Malin Björk, *au nom du groupe The Left*. – Madame la Présidente, est-ce qu'il y a quelqu'un qui a vu les représentants de la présidence française? Quelqu'un les a vus? Bon, en fait, ils ne sont pas là. On fait juste un petit débat sur la démocratie et l'état de droit, mais ils ne sont malheureusement pas là. Donc, si vous les voyez, dites-leur de venir, ce sera vachement intéressant.

We all know by now, friends, what is happening in Poland and Hungary. The attacks on democracy are far-reaching. Hungary can no longer be considered a real democracy. They are institutionalising a view where the majority has unlimited powers to undermine judicial independence, close down media and media pluralism, take control over higher education, silence civil society and, not least, attack people's fundamental rights.

If I could maybe ask my colleagues to sit down more quietly so that I can finish my speech.

(The President asked the Members to be quiet when taking their seats)

I am sure very many are interested because it's about democracy and the rule of law so keep your ears open.

With this attack on democracy, who pays the highest price? Where is it felt the most? It's women who see their rights attacked, it's my lesbian sisters and my LGBTQ community who are scapegoated in several of the EU Member States, and in Poland and Hungary. It is ethnic minorities, it's Roma and migrants who are discriminated against and targeted for hate speech.

It is nothing new for some of us to be attacked by anti-democratic and ultra-conservative political forces. It always hurts, it always minimises people's lives and it is always potentially very dangerous but, when the attack appears in a context where the institutions and the public courts do not function, then it's a totally different story. When it's sometimes even persecuted by the state, it's a different story. Then it is state-sponsored persecution, and we are in Europe 2022. Think about that for a second.

And still, Commission, you do so little. The Council is not even here apparently. How is it possible? And don't think that citizens don't see you. They see you fumbling with your toolbox, they see you stumble and they see you failing and falling.

So now it's up to the governments. You have to meet in the Council and get recommendations forward. The Commission has to stop the funding of undemocratic countries. You have to prioritise bringing Member States to court for breaches of democracy and the rule of law. And, if needed, you have to create new tools.

Friends, democracy in the EU is broken. Either you are on the team of those who say it has to be fixed and we will do everything we can to fix it, or you are on the slippery slope of resignation, of accepting the authoritarian derive, content with your toolbox and your fumbling.

I know which team I'm on. I'm on democracy and the rule of law and fundamental rights. I stand with all those that fight out there, in Hungary, Poland and other Member States, to keep up this fight for all our rights, for all of our values.

Balázs Hidvéghi (NI). – Madam President, dear colleagues, thank you very much for the floor. The Article 7 procedure has been going on against Hungary for almost four years without any tangible results. There's a clear reason for this: the accusations are not factual; they are not of a legal nature but clearly and only political.

Hungary has come under heavy criticism for years because we stand up for our sovereignty and right to decide on issues that do not concern the European Union. It all started with the migration crisis back in 2015, when we maintained that only Hungarians can decide who to let into their own country. Hungary, in fact, was the first country to differentiate between a refugee and an economic migrant.

The left-wing liberal forces propagating the new religion, multiculturalism and open society, à la George Soros, did not like this policy, so they launched a political offensive against my country. Then they criticised us because for us, marriage is between a man and a woman. What is more, the father is a man and the mother is a woman. Now, even if you don't like this, you have to accept that it's only Hungarians who can decide about these issues in Hungary and for Hungarians.

More recently, we have come under attack because we have chosen to protect our children. We made it clear that it is the parents' right to determine what kind of sexual education they want their children to receive. You know, our children will always be more important for us than to conform to the latest gender madness spreading in the West.

Now these significant political and ideological differences have also motivated many other unfounded accusations. These include the ridiculous claim that there is no press freedom in Hungary. Well, in reality, Hungary today has a more balanced press and media landscape than in many other places in Europe. What hurts you so much is that, unlike in Western Europe, in Hungary right-wing, conservative, Christian democratic media exists and flourishes.

As for the accusations of an all encompassing corruption. Well, if this was true, the significant and constant economic growth, exceeding the EU average for over nine years now, would have been impossible. This spectacular economic success has benefited the whole country, the entire society, and not only a few businessmen. Otherwise, the government would not be re-elected over and over again with such a large majority.

So it is high time to stop these absurd attacks and respect the right of Hungarians to their own country. We do not want you to dictate to us our values and convictions, thank you very much, we can define them for ourselves.

18 years ago, when we joined the European Union, it was clear to us where we wanted to belong after four decades of Soviet domination – to a community of freedom that respected classical European values, traditions and was based on mutual respect. Since then, Brussels – and especially this Parliament – has increasingly become a self-righteous post-modern witch-hunt club, that wants to impose a radical and narrow ideology on everyone else. If somebody resists, like we do, then you start the blackmailing, the sanctions and the aggressive attacks.

We still believe in a Europe which will respect each other's similarities and differences. I therefore demand: stop once and for all the poisonous and shameful attacks against Hungary and Poland!

Didier Reynders, *membre de la Commission*. – Madame la Présidente, Mesdames et Messieurs les députés, je voudrais vous remercier aussi, à la fin de ce débat, pour avoir vraiment inscrit à l'agenda ces procédures «article 7». Elles doivent rester aussi à l'ordre du jour du Conseil tant que les causes qui ont déclenché ces procédures persistent. Il est important que l'on puisse continuer ce travail, que l'on puisse traiter de manière satisfaisante les critiques que nous avons formulées, que ce soit la Commission ou le Parlement à l'égard de la Pologne et de la Hongrie. Je crois que les procédures contribuent à maintenir une pression politique, et la Commission restera prête à fournir au Conseil tous les éléments concernant l'évolution de la situation, mais aussi à participer à l'ensemble des auditions.

I've said also that we are ready to use all the tools at our disposal. And I want to say, because I have listened to the comments about the way to organise infringement proceedings, in my portfolio and certainly also about the rule of law, we have introduced more infringement proceedings since the beginning of the mandate of this Commission than before.

I know that there are some studies about a global approach on all infringement proceedings, but I want to insist that in the rule of law – I know your interest for the rule of law – in the rule of law we have introduced more infringement proceedings than before.

I want also to insist on the fact that we also have discussions, I've said on conditionality and on all the elements, but also on the recovery and resilience plan. You know that we are until now in discussions with Hungary and Poland about their own recovery and resilience plan. We did not agree for the moment about the content of those plans.

I want to conclude, Madam President, ladies and gentlemen, about the remarks that I have listened to concerning the situation in Ukraine. Since 24 February, of course it was needed for the Commission, like for all the institutions and the Member States to react with sanctions, with support for Ukraine, and also with real solidarity concerning all the Member States confronted with the flow of refugees. And we will continue to do that. We need to express our solidarity with Ukraine, but also with the Member States having a very important number of refugees on their territories.

But I want to be clear, I want to say that *a fortiori* because we are asking Russia to have full respect for a rules-based international order, we need to continue to do the job at home in the EU. We need to be very aware about any possible breach of the rule of law. We need to be very attentive to a correct functioning of a rule-based order in the EU if we want to be credible when we ask others to follow the rules, like Russia and Ukraine. If they are not, then we would impose sanctions on Ukraine. If we have problems in the EU, we need also to react.

So I thank you for your attention for such an important debate and for your participation in such a number to the discussions about the rule of law.

President. – Thank you, Commissioner.

The deadline for tabling motions for resolutions to wind up this debate expired at 10.00.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Thursday, 5 May 2022.

We can now proceed with the voting.

Written statements (Rule 171)

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D), *por escrito*. – La Delegación Socialista ha votado a favor de esta Resolución ya que muestra un verdadero compromiso para realizar progresos significativos en los procedimientos en curso del apartado 1 del artículo 7 del TUE, en consonancia con sus obligaciones en virtud de los Tratados.

A peticiones del Parlamento, las audiencias no se organizan de forma regular, estructurada y abierta. Instamos a las futuras Presidencias a que organicen las audiencias con regularidad y como mínimo una vez por Presidencia. Pedimos al Consejo que garantice que las audiencias en virtud del apartado 1 del artículo 7 del TUE también aborden los nuevos acontecimientos, incluidos los relacionados con las violaciones de los derechos fundamentales. Pedimos a la Comisión y al Consejo que se abstengan de aprobar los planes nacionales de Polonia y Hungría en el marco del Mecanismo de Recuperación y Resiliencia hasta que hayan cumplido plenamente todas las recomendaciones específicas para cada país en el marco del Semestre Europeo y hayan aplicado todas las sentencias pertinentes del Tribunal de Justicia de la UE y del Tribunal Europeo de Derechos Humanos.

Las conclusiones de la Comisión deberían constituir motivo suficiente para que el Consejo adopte recomendaciones en el procedimiento del artículo 7.1 del TUE.

Sylwia Spurek (Verts/ALE), *na piśmie*. – Po raz kolejny słyszymy ze strony Komisji Europejskiej, że w związku z brakiem postępów w przywróceniu zasady praworządności w Polsce Komisja „jest zaniepokojona”, że Komisja w dalszym ciągu „będzie śledzić” proponowane zmiany legislacyjne. Monitorowanie, przyglądanie się, analizowanie... Po raz kolejny widzimy, że Komisji brakuje determinacji i woli do konkretnych działań.

Tymczasem w Polsce niezawisli sędziowie nadal są prześladowani i podważane są fundamenty systemu sądownictwa. Atakowane są niezależne media, naruszane są podstawowe prawa człowieka kobiet, osób z niepełnosprawnościami i osób LGBTIQ.

A przecież Unia to wspólnota wartości. Nie możemy sobie wybierać, których wartości i zasad przestrzegamy, a których nie. Musimy być solidarni i wspierać państwa, które przyjęły uchodźczynie z Ukrainy, ale nie możemy jednocześnie przymykać oka na łamanie zasady praworządności przez rządy tych państw. Nie mamy już czasu i nie chcemy więcej słuchać o „wyrażaniu zaniepokojenia”.

Konieczne jest, aby Komisja pilnie wdrożyła działania w ramach mechanizmu warunkowości, pilnując przy tym jednak, żeby jego zastosowanie nie dotknęło obywateli i obywaterek tych krajów. Środki nie mogą trafić do sprawców naruszeń, a powinny – do samorządów i organizacji pozarządowych.

Bettina Vollath (S&D), *schriftlich*. – Eigentlich ist es schon 5 Minuten nach 12! Wo bleibt das kraftvolle Eintreten für Grundrechte, Demokratie und Rechtsstaatlichkeit innerhalb der EU seitens der Kommission und des Rates? Was tun sie gegen den Abbau – auch mit EU-Mitteln – von Demokratie in Polen und Ungarn?! Art. 2 EUV definiert diese Werte als die Basis unserer Union – sie müssten daher in allen Ländern unserer Gemeinschaft eine Selbstverständlichkeit sein, doch insbesondere in Ungarn und in Polen werden sie seit Jahren mit Füßen getreten. Es ist allerhöchste Zeit, dass Kommission und Rat zeigen, dass sie glaubwürdig und standhaft für Rechtsstaatlichkeit eintreten – und nicht weiter nur schlepend oder gar nicht agieren. Wir brauchen unbedingt laufend Anhörungen, Transparenz und konkrete Vorschläge und Empfehlungen mit festgelegten Fristen, und wir brauchen es jetzt. Die Lage hat sich seit der Einleitung des Verfahrens in beiden Ländern weiter verschlechtert, wir müssen diesen Trend umkehren! Die Kommission redet groß und handelt wenig. Wenn man mit dem Artikel-7-Verfahren nicht vorankommt, liegt es an der Kommission, dementsprechend zu reagieren und andere Instrumente zu verwenden. Wir müssen endlich alles tun und andenken, um unsere Werte zu schützen, bei den Werten von Art. 2 EUV darf es keine Kompromisse geben.

(The sitting was suspended briefly)

VORSITZ: OTHMAR KARAS*Vizepräsident***7. Resumption of the sitting***(Die Sitzung wird um 14.07 Uhr wieder aufgenommen)*

Der Präsident. – Bevor wir zur Abstimmung kommen, hat Herr Fest um das Wort gebeten. Ich bitte ihn, den Artikel der Geschäftsordnung zu nennen und die eine Minute nicht zu überschreiten.

Nicolaus Fest (ID). – Herr Präsident! Nur ein kleiner Hinweis: Nachdem wir heute schon den italienischen Ministerpräsidenten begrüßen durften, möchte ich das Haus nur darauf hinweisen, dass wir heute auch zahlreiche Abgeordnete des Bundestages und der deutschen Landesparlamente oben auf der Besuchertribüne haben, die wir begrüßen sollten.

Der Präsident. – Herr Kollege, Sie wissen, dass das kein Punkt zur Geschäftsordnung war, und ich komme daher zur Abstimmung.

8. Voting time

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Abstimmung.

8.1. Transitional rules for the packaging and labelling of veterinary medicinal products (C9-0054/2022) (Rule 163)

Der Präsident. – Wir stimmen zunächst über den Antrag auf Beratung im Dringlichkeitsverfahren für das Dossier Übergangsbestimmungen für die Verpackung und Kennzeichnung von Tierarzneimitteln ab.

Möchte sich jemand im Plenarsaal für oder gegen den Antrag auf Beratung im Dringlichkeitsverfahren aussprechen?

Das ist nicht der Fall. Ich stelle den Antrag zur Abstimmung.

*(Das Parlament beschließt die Dringlichkeit.)**

Die Abstimmung findet am Donnerstag, 5. Mai, 12.00 Uhr, statt. Die Frist für die Einreichung von Änderungsanträgen endet heute, 3. Mai, 19.00 Uhr. Die Frist für die Beantragung von getrennten und gesonderten Abstimmungen endet morgen, 4. Mai, 16.00 Uhr.

8.2. Election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage (A9-0083/2022 - Domènec Ruiz Devesa) (vote)**8.3. Amending Annexes IV and V to Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 on persistent organic pollutants (A9-0092/2022 - Martin Hojsík) (vote)**

— Nach der Abstimmung über den Vorschlag der Kommission:

Martin Hojsík, rapporteur. – Mr President, I would like to request a referral back to committee for institutional negotiations, pursuant to Rule 59(4).

*(Das Parlament nimmt den Antrag auf Rücküberweisung in den Ausschuss an.)**

- 8.4. Common system of value added tax (VAT): extension of the application period of the optional reverse charge mechanism in relation to supplies of certain goods and services susceptible to fraud and of the Quick Reaction Mechanism against VAT fraud (A9-0128/2022 - Markus Ferber) (vote)**
- 8.5. Application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis in the area of Schengen Information System in Cyprus (A9-0082/2022 - Peter Kofod) (vote)**
- 8.6. Nomination of a member of the Court of Auditors – Lefteris Christoforou (A9-0132/2022 - Luke Ming Flanagan) (vote)**
- 8.7. Nomination of a member of the Court of Auditors – George Marius Hyzler (A9-0130/2022 - Angelika Winzig) (vote)**
- 8.8. A sustainable blue economy in the EU: the role of fisheries and aquaculture (A9-0089/2022 - Isabel Carvalhais) (vote)**
- 8.9. EU action plan for organic agriculture (A9-0126/2022 - Simone Schmiedtbauer) (vote)**
- 8.10. Persecution of minorities on the grounds of belief or religion (A9-0071/2022 - Karol Karski) (vote)**
- 8.11. EU strategy to promote education for children in the world (A9-0058/2022 - David Lega) (vote)**
- 8.12. Reaching women's economic independence through entrepreneurship and self-employment (A9-0096/2022 - Pernille Weiss) (vote)**
- 8.13. Artificial intelligence in a digital age (A9-0088/2022 - Axel Voss) (vote)**

Der Präsident. – Damit ist die Abstimmungsstunde geschlossen.

(Die Sitzung wird um 15.19 Uhr unterbrochen.)

Puhetta johti HEIDI HAUTALA

varapuhemies

9. Resumption of the sitting

(Istuntoa jatkettiin klo 15.23.)

10. Approval of the minutes of the previous sitting

Puhemies. – Eilisen istunnon pöytäkirja ja hyväksytyt tekstit ovat saatavilla.

Onko niihin huomautuksia?

Ei ole.

Pöytäkirja hyväksytään.

11. Question Time (Commission) Europe's Energy Autonomy: The strategic importance of renewables and energy interconnections and efficiency

Puhemies. – Esityslistalla on seuraavana komission kyselytunti (työjärjestyksen 137 artikla).

Haluan aivan ensimmäiseksi toivottaa komissaari Kadri Simsonin tervetulleeksi tälle kyselytunnille.

Tämän kyselytunnin aihe on "Euroopan energiaomavaraisuus: uusiutuvien energialähteiden, energiaverkkojen yhteenliittämisen ja energiatehokkuuden strateginen merkitys".

Minun on luettava teille hieman ohjeita. Nyt on kysymys siis siitä, että testaamme parhaillaan joitakin täysistuntouudistusta käsittelevän fokusryhmän suosituksia, ja kyselytunnin ottaminen jälleen esityslistalle on yksi niistä.

Tämä kyselytunti kestää noin 90 minuuttia. Kysymyksiä ei myönnetä etukäteen yksittäisille jäsenille. Kysymyksen esittämiseen varataan yksi minuutti, komissaarin vastaukseen kaksi minuuttia, edustajan lisäkysymykseen puoli minuuttia ja sitten komissaarin lisävastaukseen kaksi minuuttia.

Huomautan, että mahdollisen lisäkysymyksen olisi liityttävä varsinaiseen kysymykseen eikä se saisi muodostaa uutta kysymystä.

Jos siis haluatte esittää kysymyksen, pyydän rekisteröimään pyyntönne nyt käyttämällä äänestyskoneenne catch-the-eye-toimintoa sen jälkeen, kun äänestyskortti on syötetty koneeseen.

Tästä on ohjeita saatavilla istuntosalissa.

Edelleen kerron, että voitte vapaasti valita paikkanne istuntosalissa lukuun ottamatta kahta ensimmäistä riviä, jotka on tarkoitettu ryhmien johtajille.

Kyselytunnin puheenvuorot käytetään siis nyt omalta paikalta. Kehotan kaikkia puhujia pitäytymään kullekin varatussa puheajassa.

Kollegat saattavat tarvita hetken rekisteröidäkseen äänestyskoneella pyyntönsä esittää kysymys. Pyydän teitä rekisteröimään pyyntönne nyt, ja sen jälkeen aloitamme ensimmäisellä kysymyksellä.

Radan Kanev (PPE). – Madam President, dear Commissioners, I refer to today's topic with regard to the crisis that we have in Bulgaria and Poland due to the cutting off of Russian gas.

So, most naturally in this situation, my question is oriented twofold. One is the direction of concrete measures of European solidarity towards our two countries in this crisis period. Since there is already certain initiatives on behalf of the Commission – and we are thankful for that – I have another, and I would say rather more important, question: what are the precise countermeasures against Gazprom and the Russian Federation that the Commission is preparing? We are not yet aware of these.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Madam President and honourable Members of the Parliament, thank you for allowing me to be part of your testing of new working methods.

Indeed, we do have in place solidarity measures between Member States, and yesterday we had in Brussels an Extraordinary Energy Ministers Council format where all the colleagues expressed their strong solidarity towards Poland and Bulgaria whose gas supplies were cut off. By doing so, Gazprom clearly showed that they are not a reliable supplier and they unilaterally broke the contract, despite the fact that companies from two countries did their payments according to their existing contracts, so they did their payments in euros.

Last week already our President Ursula von der Leyen, who met with the Bulgarian Prime Minister, announced that we will set up this purchase platform to support Bulgaria, which has to find alternative supplies, and neighbours have already put in place the alternative routes so that the cuts from the Russian side can be replaced by LNG shipments in the short term.

What are our countermeasures to the company who breached the contract? Well, these are contracts between private companies and we have to take care that they can protect their rights based on legal assessment. Our legal assessment says that Bulgarian and Polish companies complied to the contract. So, the penalties have to be coming from Gazprom side.

Radan Kanev (PPE). – My additional question would be on the countermeasures. I do not, Madam Commissioner, really agree that when you have Gazprom on the table, it is a purely commercial dispute. When you have Gazprom acting, especially acting by cutting off the contract-based gas supply of two NATO and European Union countries, it's obviously purely political.

And therefore, my question was mainly what political countermeasures would the Commission take?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well as you know, we have been preparing for this situation that there will be a full or partial disruption from Gazprom's side since the beginning of this year. So now this is a clear testimony that we cannot regard Gazprom as a reliable supplier, and we don't know which country will be the next one. That means that from our side, the Commission point of view, we have to ensure that our Member States are prepared, that they do have contingency plans in place and that we can find alternative suppliers. But of course, there will also be civil disputes between companies and there will be additional steps from our side towards Russia. So I came here directly from the Commission where we were discussing our forthcoming steps, and you can expect that later today this will be announced.

Κώστας Μαυρίδης (S&D). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, το ερώτημά μου είναι πάρα πολύ συγκεκριμένο. Μιλάμε για στρατηγική αυτονομία, η οποία ξεκινά με την ενέργεια. Κύριε Επίτροπε, θέλω να μου εξηγήσετε το εξής πράγμα, που είναι και η απορία πάρα πολλών Ευρωπαίων πολιτών, ιδιαίτερα στην ανατολική Μεσόγειο. Στρατηγική αυτονομία αυξάνοντας τις εισαγωγές ενέργειας δεν είναι στρατηγική αυτονομία στην ενέργεια. Έχουμε δικά μας ευρήματα, και ιδιαίτερα στην ανατολική Μεσόγειο. Γιατί δεν προχωράμε;

Και το ερώτημα είναι το εξής: η υποψία όλων μας είναι ότι ο λόγος είναι ότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, ή κάποιοι συγκεκριμένοι αξιωματούχοι, δεν τολμούν να συγκρουστούν με το καθεστώς Ερντογάν. Τόσο απλά είναι τα πράγματα. Θέτουν, δηλαδή, τη στρατηγική αυτονομία της Ευρώπης κάτω από την προτεραιότητα να συγκρουστούν με τον Ερντογάν.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Thank you for your question. Since the war began this February, it has become even more imminent that we have to scale up our clean transition. We cannot replace all Russian fossil fuels, natural gas, oil products with alternative suppliers' products.

We have to prioritise energy savings and renewables because in the long run, they will serve us in the way that we will not be dependent on imports in the way we are right now. 90% of our gas consumption is covered by imported natural gas. 97% of oil products are coming from abroad. And this is a situation that cannot continue.

Now, in the short run, according to our REPowerEU plan, we announced that we can replace Russian natural gas, in part, with alternative supplies. To be more concrete, we have reached out to all the major suppliers, we have mapped the available volumes, and one third, by the end of this year, we can replace with alternative supplies. But one third has to be replaced by renewables, so we have to frontload investments, we have to scale up the production of clean gases. And that means that, if we achieve our goals, our imports of fossil fuels will decrease, not increase.

Costas Mavrides (S&D). – LNG, by the way, is part of the transition period towards 2050. So LNG can be part of the energy mix tomorrow. But my question is this: talking about energy autonomy, would the Commission consider to extend the sanctions, Madam Commissioner? Would the Commission consider to extend the sanctions by including companies controlled by the Kremlin, such as Rosatom, which built up nuclear stations throughout countries in Europe and outside as well?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – I'm sorry I didn't answer completely your first question that you were asking, have we mapped also the available production sites inside Europe? And as you know, since last August, the European Commission became an observer member of EastMed. So we are really participating in these projects.

Now, about the next sanctions, as our President von der Leyen said nothing is off the table. So we are assessing all the necessary steps, and later today, you will hear the announcement of the sixth package of sanctions. Already since the first package of sanctions, we have targeted Russia's energy sector. We have made clear that they do not have access to the new technological equipment, so they cannot upgrade their energy sector.

With regard to Rosatom and their activity in Europe, there are five Member States who do have nuclear power plants that are based on Russian technology, and we are helping them to diversify their nuclear fuel and to accelerate the process so that alternatives will be ready as soon as possible.

Michael Bloss (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin! Frau Kommissarin, wir sind unfrei in Europa. Wir hängen an Putins fossilem Tropf, und davon müssen wir weg, hin zu Wind- und Sonnenstrom. Jetzt haben wir mit REPowerEU die Möglichkeit dazu – auch ein bisschen spät –, deshalb die konkrete Frage: Schlagen Sie so etwas wie einen europäischen *Solar Act* vor, ähnlich wie der *Chips Act*?

Da müssten drei Dinge drin sein: Erstens: Werden Sie eine europäische Solarpflicht vorschlagen? Auf jedes Dach, wo es geht, muss eine Solaranlage kommen. Zweitens brauchen wir viel mehr Gelder für die Erneuerbaren. Schlagen Sie vor, dass wir aus dem Innovationsfonds des ETS die Erneuerbaren finanzieren können! Und drittens: Wir wollen in den nächsten Jahren so viele Solaranlagen bauen. Es wäre wirklich dumm, wenn wir sie nicht hier in Europa produzieren werden. Schlagen Sie vor, dass wir ein IPCEI, ein Ansiedlungsprojekt für Solarindustrie in Europa haben werden!

Herzlichen Dank, und seien Sie mutig, schlagen Sie einen europäischen *Solar Act* vor!

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Indeed, I do agree with you that there are ways how we can replace, relatively fast, partially our fossil fuel consumption with renewables. And in this regard, we already mentioned in our REPowerEU communication that you can expect in the middle of May, actually in two weeks, a detailed plan how we can replace by the end of this year two-thirds of Russian gas and as we were tasked and 100% of Russian gas by the end of the decade. We will do this and the core of this plan will be renewables and energy efficiency. So we foresee a faster uptake of renewable energy projects.

And of course, one work stream is that we have to address the bottlenecks, if possible, but you can expect from our side also that there will be a solar energy strategy, including a European solar rooftops initiative. And we are looking into, together with the industry – just a couple of weeks ago I had a chance to participate at the solar summit – what we can do to bring back manufacturing to Europe because we do not want to replace one dependency with another. So we have to bring back manufacturing also to Europe and this is possible.

Michael Bloss (Verts/ALE). – Thank you very much. That was still a bit vague. I think you said we will do whatever it takes to bring solar energy production back to Europe so I hope that also means an IPCI.

But I have another question. Currently, the Commission is proposing to go to 40% renewable energy by 2030. Our studies show that we can go to up to 57% and not be dependent on Russian oil and gas. So are you proposing to increase the renewable energy share for Europe for the year 2030?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – As you know, we made our proposal to update the renewable targets for 2030 a year ago, and now we are in the phase where co-legislators are negotiating their positions. And of course, we are in the situation where everybody understands the necessity to increase the ambitions for energy efficiency and on renewables and from our side, the Commission is also working to partially update our impact assessments.

So the target is to support the co-legislators during your negotiations and in our REPowerEU communication, we also announced that right now we are in this situation, but first we have to frontload the investments that governments plan to have during this decade and make these investments as soon as possible.

If we achieve everything that the Commission proposed in our energy efficiency and renewables directive, then actually by the end of 2030, we will achieve the volume savings and renewable volumes that help us easily replace and get rid of Russian imports.

But we do not have so much time. So, broadly it is agreed among Member States that that we need to accelerate the green transition, and energy savings are also at the core of our strategy because upgraded energy efficiency programmes actually help governments to avoid more severe curtailment needs if there will be a full disruption due to the Russian site decision.

Maria Spyrali (PPE). – Thank you, Commissioner, for being here in the plenary.

My first question concerns the level of the crisis that our citizens are facing. They are facing energy prices that are soaring and they are struggling to find a way to address them. In this regard, I think that it is now time for a European solution in order to address the price crisis. In this regard, I would like to ask you the following:

First of all, is the Commission ready to proceed with an amendment of the target model in order to proceed with decoupling of natural gas prices with electricity? Secondly, is the Commission ready to draw lessons from the pandemic in order to proceed with specific financial instruments to address the crisis? Third, is the Commission ready to proceed with an intervention in the crisis in the Amsterdam market?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Thank you. In these extraordinary times, we have to be ready to assess the immediate needs when they are there. In this regard, already last autumn we tasked our agency, ACER, to conduct a study on what we can do with the current electricity market design. Just last Friday, I had a chance to see their analysis, which is good reading and I suggest everyone looks it up on ACER's website. The Commission will now carefully analyse the final ACER report and also other contributions on the functioning of the electricity market, and we will propose a way forward.

We know that, at times of crisis, there might be a need for extraordinary measures and, in this regard, only a month ago, we guided Member States about additional measures that they can take up to protect their retail consumers and also to tackle the situation where the TTF gas price is extraordinarily high. We don't have any safeguards that the dynamics of this price will be different in the near future.

With regard to the question asking what the Commission can do about different pricing models or trading platforms, we are monitoring whether there is any market manipulation. This has also been the same for the pricing components that are added to the fossil fuels. So the services are monitoring the market developments and, if we see that there is manipulation, we will of course take action.

Maria Spyraiki (PPE). – This is very good news, Commissioners, and thank you very much for your response. I would like just to say that the suggestions coming from ACER are looking for medium- and long-term solutions. In the cases (*inaudible*) the Commission is ready to intervene in a very short measure. And that's why I insist on very short measures. Thank you very much once again.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – There will be another communication from the Commission at the end of May. Right now, the services are discussing what will be our clear guidance. That's why I am not in the position where I can give details to you right now. But, of course, we are taking it very seriously that our households will be impacted by the very high gas price. And another measure that the Commission can use and what is at our disposal is this platform where we will pool up the demand and Member States voluntarily can participate in joint purchase programmes. That should also allow our companies to find alternative gas supplies at a more competitive price.

Dan Nica (S&D). – Doamna președintă, doamna comisar, mulțumesc pentru aceste precizări și aș vrea să vă întreb dacă, totuși, nu credeți că în aceste condiții pe care le traversăm cu toții din cauza războiului pe care Rusia l-a pornit în Ucraina, ar trebui luate și alte tipuri de măsuri decât cele pe care le luăm și cu care suntem obișnuiți în mod tradițional. Și întrebarea este referitoare la cum anume credeți că ar trebui, totuși, supravegheați acești importatori de gaze, în special pentru că prețul la energie, din păcate, este legat de prețul gazelor, astfel încât să ne asigurăm că nu există un abuz de putere dominantă de piață, cunoscut fiind faptul că în Uniunea Europeană nu prea ai cum să te duci să-ți alegi tu de unde cumperi gazul. În principal, pentru că sunt doar câțiva producători mari și lați de gaze. Și această chestiune cred că ar necesita o abordare mult mai precisă din partea dumneavoastră, astfel încât să nu dea satisfacție Gazpromului care, întrerupând alimentarea cu gaze în Polonia sau în Bulgaria sau în altă țară, să poată să aibă și satisfacția că dă peste cap economia Uniunii Europene.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Mr Nica, I very strongly agree with you that at a time of war, we can't continue business as usual. And I very much encourage our governments, but I also reach out to the parliaments, whenever I can, to find alternatives.

Even if the war will be over and Russia is out of Ukraine's borders, we should not end up in a situation where we are so dependent on one supplier and, in this regard, several governments have done very bold steps to replace their Russian imports with alternatives.

Just a week ago, I was in Poland. After tomorrow, I'm going back there because I will open the new pipeline connection that allows Poland to use also energy drawn from Lithuania. Soon they will have a pipeline that connects them with Norway. So they have been prepared for the situation that actually took place last week.

About conventional measures, I think that the clearest testimony that I am open for extraordinary measures is the way we encourage Member States and transmission system operators to solve the problem that was there in Ukraine after they started their island test, and they had to be reliant on their own capability until our ENTSO-E decided to synchronise them with Europe. So it was supposed to happen by the end of next year and they did it within 16 days. So this really shows that, in the energy sector, we are doing our utmost to support Ukraine to get rid of this dangerous dependency, and by doing so also taking care of our consumers so that the prices will be as affordable as we can provide.

Dan Nica (S&D). – Mulțumesc pentru precizări, doamna comisar și mă bucur că nu e *business as usual*.

Întrebarea mea este: în această iarnă va exista o firmă de electricitate sau de furnizare de gaze în Uniunea Europeană care să poată să vândă cu o rată de profit, să spunem, mai mare de 15 %?

Și nu vom mai avea exemplele pe care le-am văzut în această iarnă, în care producătorii de energie sau de gaze au vândut și la prețuri de zece ori mai mari decât prețul lor de cost?

Pentru că aceste prețuri le-au plătit firmele dând afară oameni sau oamenii care au trebuit să-și plătească facturile, să nu mai cumpere mâncare sau medicamente. Care este asigurarea pe care ne-o puteți da, doamna comisar?

Kadri Simson, *Member of the Commission*. – Indeed, during the winter months, during the heating season, our consumption of natural gas is significantly higher than during the summer. So in April we, as the EU27, consume 40% less natural gas than in January.

We already have to start preparations for the next heating season now and Member States have done so. Injections to underground storage are taking place all across Europe. I am very grateful to the European Parliament that you decided to opt for an extraordinary procedure so that that we could guide Member States in the way that they take up the measures and fill their underground gas storage at least 80% before the next heating season starts. So this actually gives us some safeguard before the next heating season.

Of course we also have to find alternatives. One obvious alternative for the heating season is electrification where we can. Heat pumps are an available technology and we have to promote these alternatives so that households who are really willing to take care of their safety next winter will already think about that during this summer.

Maria da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Comissária, a Europa precisa de reforçar rapidamente as alternativas à importação de gás natural proveniente da Rússia.

Uma possibilidade é intensificar o gás natural liquefeito na entrada da Europa, por exemplo, aproveitando os terminais existentes na Península Ibérica. Mas, para isso, precisamos de reforçar a ligação à interligação dos Pirenéus.

A minha pergunta é: quais são os planos da Comissão para agilizar e ajudar a que este projeto progrida rapidamente?

Kadri Simson, *Member of the Commission*. – Thank you for your question. And indeed, well, compared to the previous gas crisis when Russia cut off the gas supplies via Ukraine in 2009, now we do have a pretty impressive LNG network in place in Europe, but many of the LNG terminals are located in the Iberian Peninsula, which is not well interconnected.

So we have mapped the possible alternative routes for each and every Member State which is dependent on Russian gas, and indeed the Iberian Peninsula lacks interconnection to France. So what we have asked our gas system operators ENTSOG, we have asked them to map the possible bottlenecks that prevent us from using existing capacity. Of course, they are also mapping the possible sites for floating LNG terminals in the regions where they are closer to the countries which will lose Russian supply.

And we are not mapping only the gas infrastructure. We will prioritise as much renewables where we can replace natural gas with renewables, especially in power generation, we should do so because this helps us to get rid of imports. I am not saying that, well, imports from our reliable partners are a threat to us. But, well, just replacing partially Russian gas with our own production is good for our economy and helps us to keep in mind what we are committed to for 2050 and 2030. And that's why in this REPowerEU financing plan, there will be not only gas projects but also renewables.

Maria da Graça Carvalho (PPE). – Thank you very much, Commissioner. I fully agree with you that renewables and energy efficiency are very important alternatives. But mapping is not enough. We need a very concrete roadmap of procedures and funding in order to push forward both renewables, energy efficiency and the interlinks, especially the ones through the Pyrenees. When do you think that you will have these concrete actions to show us?

Kadri Simson, *Member of the Commission*. – You can expect concrete actions in our REPowerEU proposal, which will be due after two weeks. I do believe that this is a very important challenge that we have to solve – that the Iberian Peninsula – Portugal, Spain – are not sufficiently interconnected, but I would prioritise in this time frame the electricity interconnections.

In our preparation for next heating season, the possible pipeline project might be too slow. And that's why we are in a position where we have to coordinate other LNG shipments between the LNG terminals that, until very recently, didn't work at full capacity. We have to upgrade the production of clean gas this year in Europe, and of course again, where we can produce electricity by avoiding natural gas as a source, we should do so.

Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, Commissioner, for coming here to debate with us. It is more than clear that we have to substitute fossil fuels as much as we can through renewables. But my very concrete question is: are you intending to launch a call to European citizens and companies that can afford it to spare energy, to spare the use of gas, to reduce the consumption of oil for the sake of reducing energy prices for all those in our society who cannot afford to pay the energy bills anymore, and for the sake of reducing the amount of euros that we are sending towards Russia for their warfare on a daily basis? Wouldn't that be a measurement where we all could stand in solidarity with our people in society that are less wealthy and reduce the financing or indirect financing of war that we're doing vis-à-vis Russia? Are you intending to launch such a call?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – I absolutely agree with you that partially our solution has to be connected to the savings. Energy savings will help us to reduce the costs for consumers and help us to replace some of the imports.

Actually, the very first weeks of the war I, together with executive director of the International Energy Agency, we presented a ten-step plan how to cut gas consumption. And they also presented another plan, how to cut oil consumption.

Now, on energy efficiency, the Commission is elaborating a Union-wide energy savings campaign aimed at strengthening the contribution of energy efficiency and energy savings. Because there are millions of small steps that each and every household can take, and altogether they will bring us huge savings. So we have to communicate it very loud and clearly and call on our citizens to think about that because sometimes all that is necessary is to be aware of the impact of your behaviour.

And there are already, as I was mentioning, some good lists what everyone can do, but now we have to also call Member States to strengthen their energy efficiency plans. And we are planning to do that too, because emergency plans have to be aligned with savings.

Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE). – Thank you, Commissioner, for sharing these plans with us. I would just urge you to be louder in communicating those. I think it is a very crucial moment, and we can count on the solidarity and the cooperation of our citizens. So please speak out loud on energy savings.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – I will do my best, but if I can have a counter-request to you – you are the ones who are meeting every day, every week with tens and hundreds and thousands of voters, so please help me to do that.

Krzysztof Hetman (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Komisarz! Nie chciałbym się powtarzać. Wszyscy wiemy, że europejską racją stanu jest uniezależnienie się od surowców energetycznych z Rosji. Musimy poszukiwać nowych kierunków importu tych surowców. Musimy rozwijać odnawialne źródła energii.

Ale moje pytanie dotyczy nadwyżki produkcji energii na Ukrainie. W tej chwili m.in. z elektrowni atomowych Ukraina ma dość sporą nadwyżkę produkcji energii. I moje pytanie brzmi: czy Komisja Europejska zamierza zakupić tę energię od Ukrainy? Bo z jednej strony jest to świetny sposób na dywersyfikację zakupu źródeł energii dla państw członkowskich Unii Europejskiej, a z drugiej strony byłaby to doskonała forma wsparcia dla Ukraińców, którzy walczą z putińską Rosją, która w taki bezwzględny sposób morduje ich obywateli. I to Ukraińcy dzisiaj potrzebują także pieniędzy na tę walkę, a także na funkcjonowanie państwa ukraińskiego.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Indeed, this is the situation in Ukraine right now – they are able to produce more electricity than they need for their own consumption.

Just last week, on Tuesday, we had a ceremony in Warsaw where we accepted the Ukrainian DSO as a member of ENTSO-E, which means that the Ukrainian grid is now interconnected, together with Moldova, with the continental European grid. This is an emergency synchronisation. We have to do our utmost so that we can have a final synchronisation, so that commercial trade will not have any unwanted impact on the stability of our grid.

Poland has already introduced a pilot project, so there is a (*inaudible*) connection between Poland and Ukraine and Ukrainians are already selling electricity to Poland. I think that this is a very fine example of how Poland was able to get rid of Russian coal. They partially replaced their energy need with imports from Ukraine and by doing so, they help Ukrainian company to take care of their liquidity because, of course, when there are millions of families who have left Ukraine, they do have a problem with electricity bills and payments.

So, we have to help the Ukrainian DSO so that the final synchronisation can take place as fast as possible. There are some technical issues that we need to deliver on, mainly connected to the nuclear power plants. But I do have a member in my team who has dedicated a significant amount of her time to find a solution for this situation.

Krzysztof Hetman (PPE). – Jeśli Pani Komisarz byłaby uprzejma troszeczkę to rozwinąć, bo nie do końca rozumiem problem związany z tym, że ta energia produkowana na Ukrainie pochodzi z energii atomowej. Tak, Polska już kupuje energię od Ukrainy, ale moje pytanie szło w tym kierunku: Czy Komisja Europejska ma zamiar stworzyć instrument, który będzie kupował tę nadwyżkę energii na Ukrainie bez względu na to, z jakiego ona źródła jest produkowana, dla większej ilości państw członkowskich niż tylko to, co robi Polska dziś?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well, after the necessary technical steps have been made and Ukraine is fully synchronised with our grid, then they have the full right to participate in our market and their energy production companies can earn the same revenues as other market participants. So we actually don't need to create any additional body that accommodates it. They can participate in our energy market as all the rest of us can, and this is not extraordinary. We do have market zones where third-party companies are selling their products to the European market. But this demands full synchronisation. That is why I was explaining what we are doing right now to achieve this next step, which is a logical step after the emergency synchronisation that took place already at the beginning of March.

Nicolás González Casares (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, gracias por someterse a este ejercicio, que es la primera vez que lo hacemos y sé que es un desafío.

Y también gracias por las medidas que están tomando. No tendremos autonomía energética en Europa sin disminuir los combustibles fósiles, sin aumentar las energías renovables, sin interconexiones, y tampoco podremos empezar a aumentar esa autonomía estratégica si no pensamos en los problemas que tenemos con los precios, ahora mismo, en el mercado de la electricidad.

El reciente informe de la ACER nos acaba de dejar claro que este mercado no fue diseñado para situaciones de emergencia y estamos ante una situación de emergencia.

Por lo tanto, mi pregunta concreta es si piensan abordar reformas del mercado eléctrico en lo que tiene que ver con estas situaciones de emergencia, porque yo creo que es importante.

Y, por último, en relación con las interconexiones, yo voy a ser más concreto que la señora Maria da Graça Carvalho. Yo le voy a preguntar claramente si piensan financiar conexiones compatibles con gas o hidrógeno verde en la Península Ibérica.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – I will start with the second part of the question. Right now, we reached out to the Member States to map the necessary bottlenecks that avoid us providing solidarity to the neighbours. Based on this list we then can map the financing needs. So at first we have to identify if there are necessary investments that we have not made so far because there are lots of LNG terminals already under construction so we can expect that there will be several of them coming to the market in next two years. There are several pipelines financed by EU funds that will help us send our Member States to get rid of Russian imports.

Then, on the ACER report, as I was mentioning, we received this final report only last Friday. And ACER was tasked to give us a guidance, how we can avoid unnecessary and unwanted volatility at these extraordinary times. So indeed, they gave us some clear guidance, what we can do in the mid— and long-term. And also extended this to the explanation that in the immediate term, the most useful steps are towards retail market that Member States can take. And we have given two sets of guidance to Member States, what are the measures that are in line already with the existing EU regulation.

I do know that, in the May EUCO, the heads of governments will discuss again the situation at the electricity market, and by that time we will come up with our recommendations.

Nicolás González Casares (S&D). – Señora presidenta, quería decir que la comisaria Simson no ha sido muy concreta con las interconexiones de gas. Entiendo que hay que hacer valoraciones, pero en cuanto a las interconexiones eléctricas, que están en menos de un 3 % cuando deberían estar ya casi en un 15 %, no se está cumpliendo con la península ibérica.

Entonces, ¿qué van a hacer con las interconexiones eléctricas? Porque estamos cortados en gas y en electricidad. Por lo tanto, de alguna manera habrá que solucionar esto si queremos integrar de verdad el mercado. Porque si queremos que todos juguemos con las mismas reglas, deberemos tener todas las mismas condiciones.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well, indeed. You asked me if the Iberian Peninsula will be interconnected with gas pipelines which are hydrogen-ready. And we just concluded the trilogues on self-financing and infrastructure that is hydrogen-ready, that means that is future-proof, could be financed also partially by EU funds, and this is known to all of us. REPowerEU additional plan and additional mapping is trying to identify the emergency needs so that we can help Member States who will be hit by full disruption this year. But also to map the medium-term investments that will help us by the end of this decade, or well before that, replace fully Russian gas imports.

Now, I do prioritise electricity interconnections. I do believe that well-interconnected markets can accommodate more renewables and this is beneficial for both sides, not only the ones who do produce lots of renewables, but also the other ones, other market participants who will benefit out of these hours where electricity is really coming with very affordable prices. That's why I have expressed my strong commitment to the ministers, and I truly hope that the project managers will find a way so that there will be many more electricity interconnections. Right now, the European Commission is financing the SkyBay interconnector, but this is clearly not enough. And we will encourage the counterparts to proceed with additional interconnections.

Georg Mayer (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Geschätzte Kommissarin, danke, dass Sie uns heute dieses neue Instrument und Mittel im Haus hier ausprobieren lassen. Meine Frage ist jetzt ganz konkret: Die geltende EU-Mehrwertsteuerrichtlinie erlaubt ja auch den Mitgliedstaaten derzeit schon eine Senkung des Mehrwertsteuersatzes auf 5 %. Sie haben in Ihrer Toolbox vom 21. Oktober die Möglichkeit in den Raum gestellt, dass die Mitgliedstaaten im Rahmen der Energiekrise und der Preisentwicklung dies auch im Zusammenhang mit eben diesen Preisentwicklungen tun können.

Meine ganz konkrete Frage an Sie ist nun: Haben Sie Kenntnis davon oder wissen Sie, warum die österreichische Bundesregierung etwa diese Mehrwertsteuersenkung nicht schon längst veranlasst hat?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well, we do have a full list of different measures that different governments have adopted. Right now, I can say that all the governments have announced that they have made a decision to use some of our proposed measures. But, of course, this was a very broad range of measures. We wanted to achieve the situation that the final bill for consumers, retail consumers, will be more affordable, and on average in the European Union, only one third of the final bill represents the real price of electricity. One third is transmission costs and one third is different levies and taxes. These are national decisions that Member States and their governments will adopt.

All together, these measures are designed in a way that the final costs for households will not exceed their paying ability. I know that some Member States have opted for a different solution; they have decided that they will provide direct vouchers to the households that are most vulnerable.

I visited Austria just a month ago, but unfortunately, in the current moment, there are big challenges ahead of us, and Austria is one of the most dependent member states. The political discussion was more around the future plans and preparedness than the measures that the government has taken already.

Georg Mayer (ID). – Frau Kommissarin! Eine zweite Frage, im Zusammenhang zur ersten natürlich. Neben dem Staat, der hier auch immer wieder als Profiteur erhöhter und massiv erhöhter Steuereinnahmen durch die Energiepreise dasht, gibt es natürlich auch Energieunternehmen, die von den hohen Energiepreisen wahnsinnig profitieren und auch Rekordeinnahmen einfahren. In Österreich etwa ist es die teilverstaatlichte ÖMV, die ihren Gewinn inzwischen verdreifacht hat, und das natürlich zulasten der Bevölkerung.

Die Frage ist nun: Denkt man auch darüber nach, ob es endlich Gewinnobergrenzen zum Beispiel für Energiekonzerne geben sollte?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well, how you tax profits is also a national decision. But from the energy policy perspective, we gave guidance to Member States, if they are willing to use this voluntary guidance, on how to handle the windfall profits that companies do earn due to the extraordinary high gas prices. So, this guidance is a public document. We provided it already a month ago, in March. So, this is one of the options for national governments to consider.

Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE). – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, Europa, a efectos energéticos, se podría representar como un gigante encadenado. Es decir, un actor global con capacidad de competir estratégicamente, pero limitado y lastrado por estar encadenado ante la ausencia de una autonomía estratégica en materia de energía.

Eso es lo que nos ha dejado en claro, entre otros muchos temas, mucho más desgraciados, la guerra en Ucrania.

Hay que actuar en relación con las medidas urgentes, pero hay que actuar en una dirección contraria a la que se había venido tomando, que, en vez de fomentar la independencia estratégica en energía, ha ido fomentando durante largos años la dependencia, que ahora hay que ir resolviendo.

Pues bien, en relación al gas, no hay que olvidar que la Comisión, junto con la energía procedente de la energía nuclear, ha considerado al gas como una fuente de energía medioambientalmente sostenible durante el periodo de transición energética. Hay maneras muy concretas de resolver y de iniciar al menos la resolución de la falta de interconexión entre la Península Ibérica y el continente... *(la presidenta interrumpe a la oradora)*

President. – Excuse me, could you give your question to the Commission?

Pilar del Castillo Vera (PPE). – No voy a hacer la segunda pregunta, si no le importa. Renuncio a mis treinta segundos posteriores y quiero concluir esta pregunta: los proyectos de interés común están ahí, es una fórmula para potenciar el desarrollo de las infraestructuras. El Midcat era un proyecto que contaba con todos los avales y, en cambio, la Comisión no lo consideró. La pregunta es: ¿va a incluir la Comisión el proyecto Midcat como proyecto de interés común? Y, si es así, ¿cuándo?

President. – Okay, thank you, but I need to say that it is for questions and one minute at a time for the first question and then 30 seconds. You spoke for two and a half, I think. I give the floor to the Commissioner.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well, as we just concluded the trilogue, this Parliament and Member States know that the new pipelines have to be hydrogen-ready. So to enter to the next PCI list, the pipeline project should not be designed to transport natural gas as such, but it has to be hydrogen-ready. On the projects that are already on the PCI list, we will open the next goals after three weeks. All the projects that are already major enough can apply for EU co-financing.

Robert Roos (ECR). – Voorzitter, commissaris Simson, dit debat gaat over het strategisch belang van hernieuwbare energie. Hernieuwbare energie is echter de oorzaak van onze volledige afhankelijkheid van Russisch gas. Meer hernieuwbare energie betekent meer afhankelijkheid. Zonne- en windenergie kunnen immers niet worden opgeslagen. Bij gebrek aan zon en wind is een back-upinstallatie die voor honderd procent voor gas bestemd is dus de enige optie. Dit houdt in dat hernieuwbare energie voor onze zelfvoorziening juist een strategisch risico vormt.

U stelt voor tegen 2030 veertig procent van onze energie uit hernieuwbare energiebronnen te halen. Ik wil u vragen een einde te maken aan deze irrationele obsessie. Er zijn in de Europese Unie 450 miljoen burgers en ruim 22 miljoen bedrijven die betaalbare en betrouwbare energie nodig hebben en het is onze verantwoordelijkheid daarin te voorzien. Bestaande kerncentrales en fossiele-energiecentrales moeten onmiddellijk worden heropend om de leveringszekerheid te garanderen en er moet vandaag nog worden geïnvesteerd in nieuwe kerncentrales.

Ziet de commissaris het risico van hernieuwbare energie ook in en is zij bereid in plaats daarvan in te zetten op meer schone, betrouwbare kernenergie?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Thank you for your question and this is really impressive how you keep repeating that nuclear is also needed for energy mix. So, this is actually the sovereign right of every Member State to choose their energy mix. And some of our Member States have announced that they plan to build new nuclear power plants. We guide them to do that in the way that they respect the highest safety standards and this is our responsibility.

And we are not only taking care of nuclear safety here in Europe, but also in our closest neighbourhood. So in this regard, one of my major concerns right now is also the situation in Ukraine, where they do have nuclear power plants. One of them is occupied by Russian troops, but they still keep going. And from our side, we provide them the necessary equipment.

Now, the challenges that renewables are presenting. Well, you said that our investments in renewables will create situation where we will be 100% dependent on Russian gas. No, this is not true. We have never been 100% dependent on Russian gas. They provide a significant share of gas that we do consume, but this significant share has never been more than 40 and, day by day, this is decreasing because of the hard work that we are doing to reach out to alternative suppliers. And in past weeks we have witnessed record high deliveries of LNG shipments to our terminals and that shows that alternatives are possible. We will need gas also in the next decade but we do our utmost so that partially this gas demand will be covered by our own production and also by the production of biomethane and green hydrogen.

So, energy mix is decided by the Member States. We do support them so that they can do it in accordance with three principles: decarbonisation, affordability and security of supply.

Robert Roos (ECR). – Voorzitter, ik heb niet gezegd dat wij honderd procent Russisch gas krijgen, maar dat wij op het moment dat we naar hernieuwbare energie overschakelen een back-upinstallatie moeten hebben die voor honderd procent voor fossiele energie bestemd is. Bent u in dat geval bereid het quotum van veertig procent hernieuwbare energie tegen 2030 los te laten? Dit vormt namelijk een enorm risico.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – I am at the situation where co-legislators are forming their position. It depends what you and your colleagues here at the European Parliament will agree. I have heard also loud voices that 40% is not enough and we should raise our ambitions. Also I am dependent on what the Council will tell us and then we are starting the trilogues.

I do believe that renewables are a smart way to lessen our dependence on imports. Renewable gases are also a wonderful tool in the hands of our farmers, for example, because we do have lots of residues that could be taken into good use and used to produce biogas. So this is one tempting way to provide our farmers also with alternative revenues – by using their production and replacing with that the imports. But of course, the targets that we set are individual, so every Member State will have its unique target based on their starting position. There are some Member States who do have a better starting position than others. We do prioritise, for example, the vast potential that offshore wind provides us, and you can expect that by the end of this month we will also come out with a permitting proposal, so that permitting of offshore and mainland wind and other installations could be done faster than it has been so far.

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Doamnă președintă, doamnă comisar, a fost necesar ca Putin să ne demonstreze că Gazpromul este mai eficient decât Armata Roșie pentru a discuta despre nevoia de autonomie energetică în Europa. Este cunoscut faptul că la nivel european nu avem un cadru la fel de bun pentru rezervele de gaz, spre exemplu cum avem pentru cel de petrol. Și întrebarea mea către dumneavoastră este: ce măsuri concrete a luat Comisia pentru a susține statele astfel încât să își poată mări capacitatea de stocare a rezervelor de gaz?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Indeed, in Europe, we do have in place a strategic oil stock or oil reserve that serves 90 days consumption. And we don't have this kind of obligation for gas because underground gas storage has to meet some specific geological conditions. Usually depleted gas fields are used for storage. And that means that we do have several Member States which don't have their own underground gas storage.

To give also them necessary protection, we have put in place regional gas coordination groups so that the contingency plans are designed in a way that we take into account interconnections, LNG terminals, possible means to use reverse flows and of course underground gas storage.

Last month we proposed the gas storage obligation and I am really grateful –I see you there, Professor Buzek – I am grateful that you are taking the fastest procedure that you can and will tackle the underground storage now as a strategic infrastructure.

And in the longer run, last December we proposed the gas decarbonisation package that guides us to decarbonise our gas market and many Member States have already achieved the situation where natural gas represents a very small share in their energy mix.

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Întrebarea mea următoare este legată de faptul că: dacă Comisia ia în calcul achiziția comună de gaz pe viitor, achiziția acestor stocuri legate de rezerve?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – It is important to make the distinction that our proposal on gas storage is not a proposal to create strategic gas storage that markets cannot use during heating season. So this is not a copy of the strategic oil stock, which is impossible to release unless there is a specific position among International Energy Agency members to do so.

Our proposal on gas storage is seasonal storage. This means that before the heating season starts, before the withdrawal season starts, we do have this additional buffer that complements the flows via pipelines or LNG terminals. By creating this seasonal storage, we are not creating additional demand this very summer where we do have to meet the deficit situation.

Your first question was: will we finance underground storage sites? There have been some Member States proposing underground storage sites and we will see the full list of what member states are proposing when we will complete the REpowerEU projects list.

Jutta Paulus (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin! Frau Kommissarin, liebe Kadri, vielen Dank für diese Gelegenheit! Meine Fragen beziehen sich auf die Ziele unserer europäischen Energiepolitik. Nicht nur bei fossilen Energieträgern, sondern auch bei Uran ist die EU hochgradig abhängig von Importen. Aber unter den acht Szenarien, die die Kommission modelliert hat, findet sich kein einziges, was zu 100 % erneuerbare Energien abbildet, obwohl solche Szenarien von anderen Forschungseinrichtungen und mehreren Akteuren außerhalb der Kommission bereits modelliert wurden. Wird die Kommission hier nachlegen?

Und außerdem bildet auch keines dieser Szenarien ab, wie eine stärkere Beteiligung von Bürgerinnen und Bürgern an der Energiewende den Vorgang beschleunigen könnte. Wird die Kommission den Mitgliedstaaten eine Handreichung geben, damit die Rechte der europäischen *prosumers*, der *active consumers*, die ja im europäischen Recht garantiert sind, auch endlich in den Mitgliedstaaten umgesetzt werden? Die Deadline dafür ist bereits im Juni vergangenen Jahres abgelaufen. Wie wird die Kommission hier vorgehen, damit die Bürgerinnen und Bürger auch aktiv etwas gegen den Krieg der Russen gegen die Ukraine tun können?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – The first part of the question of why we don't have a 100% renewable scenario comes from our Treaty and the Treaty says that Member States do have the sovereign right to choose their energy mix. And we know that we do have Member States who are committed to becoming climate-neutral, with the help of nuclear. And this is the sovereign right of the Member States.

Now, on the part of the citizens' empowerment, we have met bilaterally several times, and I fully agree with you that we should give citizens the feeling of ownership – because this actually accelerates our green transition if they do feel that they make a difference. And coming from Estonia, I do truly believe that digitalisation is the key. So, there are lots of actions already taking place on the ground and we do have good partners at the ENTSO-E or different associations that unite our energy market participants who are promoting this. But, of course, in big markets, it takes more time than in small markets, but this is a necessary way forward.

Now, the question that there was a deadline on one proposal already last year, I will reach out again. I don't have an answer ready for that for you right now.

Jutta Paulus (Verts/ALE). – So as a follow up, if I may. You are totally right. If we want smart, active consumers being part of the electricity market, we, of course, would need a smart meter rollout in order for them to be able to sell their energy. So this is maybe the follow up question because the smart meter rollout was also due to be completed already, but not every single Member State has succeeded in doing so.

So my question is when will the Commission act on this and put a bit more pressure on Member States to get going on the digitalisation of the energy sector?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – *(start of speech off mic)*... based on our annual working plan and, of course, we are in 2022, well, this is all about extraordinary measures but you can expect that in September we will have our Digital Energy Action Plan and by that time we have to do our utmost that everything that is already agreed will be also taken into account. And then, of course, digitalisation is key to empowering small producers who also make a great difference if there are millions of them.

Laura Ferrara (NI). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Commissaria, il *recovery fund* ha rappresentato la risposta ambiziosa e unitaria di un'Unione europea che è stata messa a dura prova dalla pandemia.

Abbiamo contrastato in questo modo una crisi che non poteva essere affrontata singolarmente dagli Stati membri, ma in questo momento stiamo affrontando un'altra pandemia, che è quella energetica e che richiede un'analogia risposta. Fonti energetiche rinnovabili più sicure e accessibili contribuiranno a risolvere i problemi legati ad ambiente, cambiamenti climatici e sicurezza, a contenere i costi per famiglie e imprese e a raggiungere l'autonomia energetica dai paesi terzi. Eviteremo così anche di contribuire indirettamente al finanziamento della campagna militare della Russia in Ucraina con i proventi della vendita dei suoi combustibili fossili.

Allora tutti questi obiettivi sono parte della strategia *REPower EU*, ma servono tempo e risorse straordinarie, fondi che non tutti i paesi hanno a disposizione. Le chiedo perché non presentate una proposta legislativa per un *energy recovery fund* finanziato con fondi europei? Perché in questo modo lavoreremmo con ambizione a risolvere i problemi dei cittadini.

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Yes, indeed, we need significant investment in our energy sector in order to replace old solutions with new ones. In this regard, already the recovery plans that national governments presented to us were designed so that 37% of the funds were dedicated to climate-related expenditure. Now the Member States who do have plans in place and projects ready in the pipeline are willing to frontload those investments. This is a very necessary action from their side.

You were asking why we are not adding something on top of the multiannual financial framework. Well, right now we are mapping the investment needs, so this is the plan behind this *REpowerEU* project list, but first, we need to know what the projects are that are not already covered by the recovery plans or are not on the PCI list but are still very much needed. Then, on top of that, of course, if we replace our imports, these homegrown renewables, then this is also a business case for our private sector.

We cannot achieve these high targets without private investment, without our financial institutions stepping in and with the help of the private investors, but also with the EIB, who announced that they will be a Europe's climate bank, we plan to accelerate this transition and we have to do that.

Laura Ferrara (NI). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, mi piacerebbe ritornare sempre sull'*energy recovery fund* perché siamo convinti che contribuirebbe ad investimenti per l'efficientamento energetico e soprattutto in edilizia per le infrastrutture necessarie a interconnettere l'Europa riguardo all'energia prodotta con le rinnovabili per creare comunità energetiche e sistemi di altro consumo.

In Italia è stato realizzato il superbonus al 110 per cento che ha dato una marcia veramente importante per far ripartire l'economia e per garantire l'efficientamento di immobili privati e statali. Dunque Le chiedo se veramente ci sia la possibilità di dare priorità e di introdurre questo strumento finanziario in modo da dare una risposta concreta e immediata.

Kadri Simson, *Member of the Commission*. – Member States do have different financing available to give grants for the households which are starting renovation. Well, there are different EU funds already that can finance this kind of activities. Regional funds, the modernisation fund, recovery funds. And on top of that, the revenues that Member States do receive through the ETS scheme – and they were significantly higher than was predicted just a year ago – should also be dedicated to climate-related actions. So there are funds available.

The Commission at this very moment is in the situation where we have to manoeuvre in the framework of the negotiated and agreed financial budget. And we will do so. We will indicate the resources that are there for the immediate need to solve this current challenge we face.

President. – The last three speakers are off quota, so I would only allow one question each because we are also late. So next is Mr Carlos Zorrinho.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Comissária, estamos perante uma emergência. O diagnóstico está feito, o caminho está desenhado, as respostas conjunturais estão a ser aplicadas de forma rápida e corajosa. Mas a questão que lhe queria colocar é sobre as respostas estruturais, porque as respostas estruturais também são de necessidade imediata.

A Comissão Europeia considerou a Península Ibérica uma ilha energética. Por esse motivo, aliás, os Governos de Portugal e Espanha puderam aplicar o teto ao preço do gás introduzido na eletricidade para reduzir o impacto e também para reconhecer o investimento nas renováveis e o investimento e a falta de investimento nas interligações.

Mas queria fazer-lhe uma pergunta muito concreta. Aquilo que foi feito na Península Ibérica vai ser a pedra de toque da resposta da Comissão Europeia à questão estrutural.

Há pouco, disse: «Apostemos primeiro nas interligações elétricas, as outras demoram muito tempo, mas tem que haver um procedimento excecional. Não podemos baixar os braços.»

Qual é o procedimento excecional para que a terceira ligação da Península Ibérica ao mercado europeu de energia possa ser concretizada?

Kadri Simson, *Member of the Commission*. – Well, indeed, Portugal and Spain have proposed a temporary, targeted solution for their energy market. Their Ministers were in Brussels last week to discuss the challenges and impact to the internal electricity market. We gave them support, but also clear guidance on what are the necessary requirements this measure has to meet. This is a temporary measure.

I can only repeat what I told your colleagues earlier today that I do prioritise the interconnections, electricity interconnections and a better integrated electricity market will help us to accommodate more renewables. And as a result, consumers will have more hours where they can receive electricity at affordable prices. This is already the situation in Europe right now.

The market zones where renewables are representing a bigger share of the electricity mix, there consumers do have more affordable price levels and this is also a result of the EU projects that help these markets to be interconnected. So the Iberian Peninsula has been lagging behind in this process, but there are interconnections that are already decided and financed by the EU [*inaudible*], for example, and this for sure shouldn't be the last one.

So this is work ongoing. I think that is very important to say that we didn't start our energy transition on the day when Russia started war against Ukraine. No. Major proposals were already tabled by the Commission last year, and the year before that and we built from the experience from the first previous Commission. So we were relatively well prepared and we are continuing our work.

Jerzy Buzek (PPE). – Madam President, I would like to thank the Commissioner for being with us. You are probably completely tired after two hours of heavy discussion, but it's a very important discussion.

Let me say, last month we voted in this House almost unanimously a full ban of Russian fossil fuels. And now the main responsibility in this House is the security of gas supply for our citizens, for our small and medium businesses. And as a matter of fact, we discussed the issue all the time – two hours almost, and we mentioned, which is very important, a simplified permission procedure for renewables – absolutely crucial for us, and also some infrastructure projects like interconnectors, maybe Spain, Germany, also Bulgaria and Greece, important, we feel it.

But my question is on LNG terminals, because we need three or four of them to feel really secure. How do you see that – in the Netherlands, maybe, in Germany? So how do you see this possibility – within a REPowerEU proposal, maybe?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Professor Buzek, thank you so much for your moral support. And, well, we are taking your guidance very seriously day and night. We are also working towards getting rid of our dependence and this doesn't happen overnight. But work is really ongoing. So I have dedicated a lot of my time to reach out to the alternative suppliers so that we can attract more LNG shipments to Europe. Well, this is also a global competition. You remember last autumn, it was China which was willing to pay significantly higher premiums than our market and now we have to secure alternative supplies.

On LNG terminals, there are several already under construction. I know that one will be opened today in Greece. There are several governments which have announced and informed us that they have signed contracts to bring their floating LNG terminals to their coast. So this is a faster option that might help already during the next year and a half – and we are mapping these needs. But it is clear that we cannot replace Russian gas 100% with alternative gas supplies. We do have pipelines in place. All the other gas producers have informed us that they are doing their utmost to increase production. We do have commitments. The most prominent one was from the United States that they will deliver, on top of the record volumes already we received, on top of that, 15 billion cubic meters this year. But this doesn't cover 100% of Russian gas.

So, with efficiency savings, renewables, all the other alternatives, without them, we will not get rid of Russian gas 100%.

Marie Toussaint (Verts/ALE). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Commissaire, on a un dicton populaire en France qui dit que, quand c'est flou, c'est qu'il y a un loup. Or, j'ai entendu tout à l'heure l'un de nos collègues, M. Roos, dire que le risque pour l'Union européenne, c'était les énergies renouvelables, parce que ce sont les énergies renouvelables qui nous condamnent à rester enfermés dans le gaz russe. Madame la Commissaire, il y a des flous comme celui-ci qui sont absolument criminels. J'aurais aimé que vous lui répondiez que non, que ce sont les énergies renouvelables qui nous permettent de lutter contre notre dépendance au gaz russe, de protéger le climat et aussi de garantir la paix. Et je pense qu'il faut le dire absolument clairement.

Ma question maintenant s'inscrit dans la même lignée, finalement, que celle de M. Buzek, même si ce n'est pas tout à fait sur le même chemin. Dans nos échanges avec vos services, il nous a été dit que, dans les estimations, nous n'avions pas besoin de nouvelles infrastructures gazières pour l'Union européenne. C'est d'ailleurs aussi ce à quoi nous appelle le GIEC pour le climat, nous disant que, non seulement il faut cesser de construire des infrastructures gazières, mais qu'il faudrait en plus en fermer avant qu'elles ne soient arrivées à leur retour sur investissement. Madame la Commissaire, pouvez-vous me confirmer que non, l'Union européenne ne soutiendra pas la construction de nouvelles infrastructures gazières?

Kadri Simson, Member of the Commission. – Well you were the co-rapporteur so we just concluded the agreement on the proposal. Indeed, if there will be a pipeline that transports molecules, it has to be hydrogen- ready. But right now, we are also mapping other possible bottlenecks that Member States need to replace gas flows from Russia. Most of these do arrive by a pipeline with alternative sources. They have to do it very fast so we don't have years to replace it with renewables.

So what can we do from our side? We can shorten the permitting so that new renewable installations are not taking decades, are not taking seven years, but a significantly shorter timeframe. And then to avoid very severe consequences this winter, we have mapped the needs to coordinate the gas infrastructure activities in the way that we are taking best care of existing infrastructure.

If there is something that we have to deliver in this regard, then we will find out. According to my best knowledge, we are well prepared to act in solidarity mode so that Member States can also help these countries which are landlocked, via reverse flow via the pipeline that is already built there and operational.

President. – Thank you very much, Commissioner Simson. Thank you colleagues. Question hour is finished and I think it was very informative, so it's a good test.

VORSITZ: EVELYN REGNER

Vizepräsidentin

12. The follow up of the Conference on the Future of Europe (debate)

Die Präsidentin. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über die Folgemaßnahmen zu der Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas (2022/2648(RSP)).

Ich weise Sie darauf hin, dass mit Ausnahme der ersten beiden Reihen, die den Fraktionsvorsitzenden vorbehalten sind, freie Sitzplatzwahl besteht.

Sie können mithilfe Ihres Abstimmungsgeräts spontane Wortmeldungen beantragen und blaue Karten einsetzen, nachdem Sie Ihre Abstimmungskarte eingeschoben haben.

Ich weise Sie auch darauf hin, dass Wortmeldungen im Plenarsaal weiterhin vom zentralen Rednerpult aus erfolgen. Dies gilt allerdings nicht für spontane Wortmeldungen, blaue Karten und Wortmeldungen zur Geschäftsordnung.

Paulo Rangel, *em nome do Grupo PPE.* – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Comissária, naturalmente que nós temos de considerar que a Conferência sobre o Futuro da Europa foi um grande sucesso. Foi e vai ser, porque a Conferência não termina aqui. Ela tem que ter um seguimento, tem que ter aquilo a que nós chamamos em inglês um *follow-up*.

Em primeiro lugar, é preciso dizer que nós conseguimos fazer este exercício de participação democrática com a presença ativa dos cidadãos, com uma pandemia que quase que matava a Conferência e com uma guerra agora nesta fase final. Isto foi uma prova da resistência, da resiliência democrática da União Europeia.

É verdade que a generalidade dos painéis de cidadãos produziu recomendações que eu diria muito estimulantes, muitas delas a precisarem, naturalmente, do contributo dos parlamentos nacionais, das instituições europeias, mas que, claramente, estão em linha com um avanço da integração europeia.

Penso que isso é um balanço claro e diria aqui, até, que isso nos veio trazer na saúde, na segurança e defesa, na democracia e no Estado de direito, nas alterações climáticas, na economia digital, verdadeiros impulsos para progredir no processo de integração europeia.

Claramente também, assistimos a uma valorização da democracia participativa, mas à vontade de reforçar a democracia representativa a todos os níveis. Esta é uma mensagem clara dos cidadãos e esta é uma mensagem clara das instituições e dos parlamentos nacionais, bem como de outros parceiros: parceiros sociais, o Conselho Económico e Social, o Comité das Regiões. Todos eles dão esta mensagem muito positiva.

Por isso, creio que o caminho natural como solução resultante desta Conferência é convocarmos uma Convenção para rever os tratados. Há muitas matérias que não precisam de uma revisão dos tratados, mas há outras decisivas para o futuro da União que precisam de uma revisão dos tratados e, por isso, o Parlamento deve propor às restantes instituições e, designadamente, ao Conselho, uma Convenção que possa tratar destas questões que foram levantadas pelos cidadãos, que as possa enquadrar e que possa terminar com um Tratado da União que a possa preparar para os próximos dez anos.

A pandemia, por um lado, e o momento de Kiev, por outro, mostram bem que quem resolveu avançar com a Conferência tinha razão. A Conferência foi confirmada pela História. Compete-nos agora estar à altura desses desafios.

Guy Verhofstadt, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Madam Chair, I'm very grateful for this debate on the follow-up of the conference, because I think, in fact, that we cannot allow this conference, after one year of work, after this innovation, of the involvement of the citizens, and with the publication of a beautiful document – that is then classified vertically, I should say. That is also what the co-chair, Dubravka Šuica, and myself said at the end of the conference.

Therefore, I think that what we as Parliament need to do is to keep the lead in this and to see where the conclusions of the conference can be implemented immediately, as we already did today with the vote on the transnational lists. Let's remember that. Because let's be honest, it was a recommendation of the citizens and it was a conclusion of the conference. Let's not forget it!

But OK, OK, we will not redo the vote from a few moments ago, but we need to do that on every topic and there are a number of topics that require treaty change. When you talk about the health union, to make it a shared competence, you need the treaty change. That was also in the recommendation of the citizens. When you want a real energy union, you need a change of the treaties – because an energy union, we don't have one. We have not one energy mix that is decided at European level and we don't have a common purchase of energy decided at European level. So therefore, we also need a change. When you want to end unanimity in a lot of areas, you need to change. When you want to give the right of initiative to the European Parliament, you need a change.

So, I think it's obvious that the only way to be true to the conclusions of the conference is to call for a convention – a convention, Article 48, a convention in which we are going to say exactly what articles need to change and how they need to be changed. I hope that, if Parliament votes in favour of this with a big majority tomorrow, then on 9 May, there will also be a positive response from the Council, and that we can go in the direction that is absolutely key and needed: a real union, capable of acting and not always acting too little too late, as has been the case until now.

So I hope anyway for a big majority in the House, for the follow-up, the approval of the results of the conference and the goal of the convention, Article 48.

Daniel Freund, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Was kommt dabei heraus, wenn man zufällig ausgewählte Bürgerinnen und Bürger über die Zukunft der EU befragt? Es gibt in diesem Haus gerade rechtsaußen ja einige, die immer vollmundig behaupten, sie würden den wahren Volkswillen repräsentieren und sie wüssten, was man eigentlich will; die bei jeder Gelegenheit sagen, dass das, was wir hier tun, nicht dem entspricht, was die Leute draußen wollen.

Jetzt haben wir es ausprobiert, das ganze letzte Jahr. Wir haben Europas größtes Demokratieexperiment gemacht. Wir haben auf grünen Vorschlag hin 800 Bürgerinnen und Bürger repräsentativ ausgewählt und eingeladen und sie zur Zukunft der EU befragt, welche Art von Politik sie sich wünschen.

Und was ist herausgekommen? Na ja, jetzt zeigt sich, dass das Abschaffen nationaler Vetos, transnationale Listen bei der Europawahl, dass eine wirkliche europäische Staatsbürgerschaft, dass Investitionen in Europas Zukunft und eben nicht in korrupte Autokraten, dass ein sozialeres, ein transparentes Europa nicht irgendeine föderalistische Verschwörung ist, sondern das, was die Mehrheit der Bürgerinnen und Bürger will. 70, 80, 90 % Zustimmung gab es von den Bürgerinnen und Bürgern für die Vorschläge, die auf dem Tisch liegen. Und nicht nur die Bürger und Bürgerinnen, sondern auch die nationalen Abgeordneten, die Zivilgesellschaft, die Regierungen haben am Ende diesen Vorschlägen zugestimmt.

Da wäre es jetzt eigentlich gut, wenn gerade die Schreihälse von rechts das zum Anlass nehmen würden, ihre nationalistische Hasspropaganda über den Haufen zu werfen und das zu vertreten, was die Mehrheit der Bürgerinnen und Bürger wirklich will. Und auch die Regierungen müssen jetzt klar Farbe bekennen. Stehen sie auf der Seite von Demokratie und Bürgernähe? Denn wenn diese Schlussfolgerungen jetzt nicht umgesetzt werden, wenn man das jetzt blockiert bei den Regierungen, dann fügt man Europa wirklich irreparablen Schaden zu – das kann nicht sein.

Und gerade an den ambitioniertesten Vorschlägen wird sich jetzt zeigen, ob man diesen Prozess ernst nimmt. Es geht also gerade um die Vorschläge, die man nicht einfach mit einem Gesetz ändert, sondern bei denen wir die Verträge ändern müssen. Und deshalb ist es so essenziell, dass wir jetzt in den Konvent gehen, dass wir die ambitioniertesten Vorschläge in den nächsten Monaten wirklich umsetzen. Dafür braucht es den Konvent. Es ist für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger. Es ist für die Zukunft der Europäischen Union.

Hélène Laporte, *au nom du groupe ID.* – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Président Verhofstadt, chers collègues, tout d'abord, je constate que les propositions finales retenues par le Bureau exécutif ont éliminé plus des deux tiers des propositions des panels de citoyens, risquant d'accentuer la défiance et l'éloignement des citoyens envers l'Union européenne, après toutes les promesses affichées.

Emmanuel Macron avait fait de cette conférence une priorité de la présidence de l'Union, mais l'échec est patent à plusieurs niveaux. L'organisation, de l'avis de tous, a été quelque peu chaotique, il y a une absence de dynamique participative — il faut rappeler qu'il y a eu moins de 53 000 citoyens européens inscrits à la plateforme numérique -, de nombreux citoyens issus des panels ont été déçus par le format en l'absence de dialogue direct avec les députés, et les députés eux-mêmes étaient mécontents en raison d'un très faible temps de parole.

Tout d'abord, je suis naturellement favorable à la démocratie participative pour ce qui est de donner un rôle accru aux citoyens, mais pas dans ce contexte. Le groupe Identité et Démocratie avait conditionné son soutien à la CoFE au respect des idées suivantes: que toutes les forces politiques soient représentées, que les conclusions ne soient pas écrites à l'avance et que, si changement de traité il y a, il soit soumis à référendum.

Force est de constater que le contrat n'a pas été rempli. Nous ne pouvons pas accepter l'existence de multiples conflits d'intérêts entre les citoyens tirés au sort ou encore des recommandations qui proviennent en réalité de certains groupes politiques ou de certaines ONG. Il y a également le coût de cette grande messe européenne, qui est évalué à plus de 200 millions d'euros. Nous sommes en pleine crise du pouvoir d'achat, nous devons le rappeler. Le timing n'était pas le bon — en pleine pandémie — et surtout, pour être mises en œuvre, plusieurs recommandations nécessiteront des modifications des traités, ce qui entraînerait des conflits avec la Commission européenne, qui a déclaré qu'elle n'était pas disposée à prendre de telles mesures. C'est la raison pour laquelle nombre de recommandations ont été éliminées.

Nous pouvons, par contre, rejoindre certaines propositions, comme une politique de traitement des données plus protectrice ou la souveraineté numérique. En revanche, d'autres propositions sont dangereuses, comme la création d'une armée commune, même à des fins d'auto-défense. La défense doit rester une prérogative nationale. D'ailleurs, le panel citoyen a lui-même eu du mal à justifier le doublon avec l'OTAN.

J'ai averti dès le lancement de cet événement que des résultats étaient connus à l'avance, c'est à dire plus de fédéralisme, plus d'intégration européenne et la fin de la règle de l'unanimité au Conseil. Cette conférence s'achève malheureusement sur un constat d'échec, et je ne peux que le regretter pour nos concitoyens européens, qui seront les premiers déçus.

Michiel Hoogeveen, *on behalf of the ECR Group.* – Madam President, as strong believers in democracy, we are always open to new initiatives to engage the citizens. The Conference on the Future of Europe was an interesting experiment; however, used to legitimise a predetermined outcome. The ideas on a digital platform barely used, the representatives of the national citizens panels, outspoken views in favour of EU integration. Eight hundred randomly selected citizens, steered and guided by experts – experts appointed by the Common Secretariats who didn't hide their own views. Don't take my word for it. Ask Professor David van Reybrouck, a renowned expert on citizen participation. He called the conference 'amateuristic and not representative'.

Looking at the recommendations, we see a federalist wish list, an excuse to trigger a convention, to transform the EU into a centralised federal union. Transnational lists, a European migration policy, EU taxes, you name it. It's all there. But based on what legitimate grounds? I appeal to you my colleagues, because I spoke to many of you during the conference from the left to the friends of the EPP, even to colleagues from Renew. You know, this conference has no legitimacy, and I know many of you think as I do.

There is always a time and place to discuss the future of the EU; but this conference has failed. Reject the conclusions and reject the call for a new European Convention.

Helmut Scholz, *im Namen der Fraktion The Left*. – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Dubravka, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! 79 Jahre nach Spinelli hat die Konferenz hier etwas geliefert, nämlich zum ersten Mal, 20 Jahre nach der letzten großen EU-weiten Aussprache, damals zur Grundrechtecharta der Europäischen Union in einem Konvent, hat sie eine Antwort darauf geliefert: Wie wollen wir künftig zusammenleben in dieser Europäischen Union?

Und ich erinnere an unsere Aussprache hier vor anderthalb Jahren oder vor zwei Jahren bereits, wo wir gesagt haben, es muss alles auf den Prüfstand gestellt werden: Ergründen wir, warum so viele Bürgerinnen und Bürger quer durch alle 27 - EU-Mitgliedstaaten frustriert sind, enttäuscht sind von dem Hier und dem Da, von politischen Lösungen bei ihren Alltagsorgen.

Die Linke hat immer gesagt: Die EU muss sozial und demokratisch sein, oder sie wird keinen Bestand haben in der Geschichte. Und ich finde, die Antworten, die mir in dem Schlussfolgerungsdokument vorliegen – 48 Seiten –, geben eine eindeutige Antwort. Die Bürgerinnen und Bürger erwarten konkrete Veränderung im Sozialen – Guy Verhofstadt sprach von der Energieunion und von der Gesundheitsunion. Und der junge Botschafter der Arbeitsgruppe Gesundheit, Nicolas Moravek, hat gesagt, als das Telefon klingelte und die Frage kam, ob er bereit ist, an einer solchen Konferenz teilzunehmen, dachte er, es sind Fake News.

Und ich glaube, wir stehen jetzt als Europäisches Parlament in der Verantwortung, dieses Ergebnis in einem Folgeprozess konkret umzusetzen, und dafür brauchen wir den Konvent. Und ich werbe eindrücklich dafür, dass alle Abgeordneten, wenn sie ernsthaft diese Konferenz begleitet haben, sich hinsetzen und sagen: Machen wir was daraus, bleiben wir der Garant für den Erfolg dieser Konferenz! Machen wir die Verschränkung von partizipativer, repräsentativer Demokratie arbeitsfähig!

Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó (NI). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, alors que nous débattons de l'avenir de l'Europe, l'Ukraine devait défendre son avenir après l'invasion russe dans une guerre dévastatrice. Vous avez tous compris que l'Ukraine lutte pour défendre son autodétermination. Le droit d'exister et de décider librement de son avenir est un principe directeur du droit international.

De nombreux pays de l'Union européenne ont ratifié le Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques, qui place au premier plan le droit des peuples à l'autodétermination. À l'occasion de la CoFE, de nombreux citoyens européens ont demandé que ces droits soient protégés et renforcés dans l'Europe de demain. Mais l'Europe du passé lui a barré la route et a empêché que le droit à l'autodétermination de nations européennes, comme la Catalogne, le Pays basque, la Corse ou la Flandre, soit inscrit dans les conclusions de la conférence. C'est là une façon de décevoir des millions d'Européens qui, en plus, s'expriment dans des langues, comme la mienne, encore interdites dans ce Parlement.

Iratxe García Pérez, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señora presidenta, casi hace un año, bajo el liderazgo de la Presidencia portuguesa y de nuestro primer ministro, Antonio Costa, nos comprometimos con este proyecto único llamado Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa.

He tenido el honor de presidir el Grupo de Trabajo sobre una economía más fuerte, justicia social y empleo, y sus conclusiones, con las recomendaciones de la ciudadanía en el centro, son muy claras. La ciudadanía quiere un cambio hacia una Unión Europea más inclusiva, más resiliente, más sostenible, donde la transición digital y verde sea posibles, pero que se haga con una dimensión social. En el marco de un renovado contrato social, las propuestas se centran en reformar la Unión Europea para mejorar el bienestar de la gente y el progreso humano, sin agotar los recursos ni destruir nuestro planeta.

Señorías, es el momento de reforzar esta Unión y de convertir las propuestas en realidades. Es el momento de establecer una verdadera Europa social. La ciudadanía demanda unos derechos más fuertes para la infancia y la juventud, salarios dignos, ingresos mínimos, un diálogo social y una negociación colectiva reforzada, viviendas accesibles, centros de día e igualdad de género. Las compañías jamás deberían haber sido permitidas a explotar la libertad económica socavando la protección social. Y es por eso que el pilar europeo de derechos sociales debe ser jurídicamente vinculante y ser integrado en los Tratados conjuntamente con el Protocolo sobre el progreso social. Es el momento de ver los rostros de las personas tras las cifras.

Necesitamos reformar nuestras normas fiscales teniendo en cuenta el impacto de la COVID y las transiciones ecológica y digital. También necesitamos asegurar los recursos necesarios suficientes para hacerlo. El Next Generation EU ha sido un paso importante, pero es el momento también de avanzar en otros sentidos.

Por último, debemos acabar con la tiranía de la unanimidad en el Consejo. Esto debilita nuestra capacidad de respuesta rápida a nivel global. Perjudica a nuestros principios básicos democráticos y el Estado de derecho, así como nuestra lucha contra la evasión fiscal. La Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa ha sido un hito. Hemos conseguido involucrar a la ciudadanía para que exprese su opinión sobre el futuro. No dejemos que las discusiones ahora queden en lo puramente institucional, porque eso poco dice a la ciudadanía.

Déjenme ser clara. Los cambios en los Tratados o en una Convención no pueden considerarse como un fin en sí mismo, sino que son las herramientas importantes y necesarias para mejorar la vida de las personas. No les defraudemos. Trabajemos conjuntamente para mostrarles que este proceso ha merecido la pena.

Othmar Karas (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Europäerinnen und Europäer! Wir lassen uns das Ergebnis der Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas nicht kleinreden. Es ist ermutigend: 325 konkrete Vorschläge für eine handlungsfähigere, digitalere, sozialere, unabhängigere, zukunftsfitere und stärkere Europäische Union.

Die Vorschläge sind Rückenwind für uns alle, die wir die Europäische Union nach vorne verändern wollen: Ja zur Beendigung des undemokratischen Einstimmigkeitsprinzips. Ja zur liberalen Demokratie. Nein zu Erpressung und Blockade. Ja zum Initiativrecht des Europäischen Parlaments. Ja zur Budgethoheit. Ja zu transnationalen Listen. Ja zur europäischen Bürgerschaft. Ja zur Energie-, Gesundheits- und Sozialunion. Ja zur Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsunion. Ja zu mehr Zusammenarbeit der Bürgerinnen und Bürger Europas.

Wir sind gewillt, die Zukunft zu unserer Zukunft zu machen. Und ich sage ganz deutlich: Jetzt geht es um die Umsetzung; die Arbeit ist nicht getan. Das Europäische Parlament wird sich zum entschlossenen, transparenten Anwalt aller 325 Vorschläge machen. Das Europäische Parlament wird die Initiative für einen Konvent zu den nötigen Vertragsreformen ergreifen. Das Europäische Parlament wird transparent aufzeigen, was wann mit jedem einzelnen Vorschlag geschehen ist. Die Bürger können nachvollziehen, dass wir Wort halten werden.

Gabriele Bischoff (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich wünschte mir so sehr, dass alle Mitglieder des Parlaments die Gelegenheit gehabt hätten, an dieser Zukunftskonferenz teilzunehmen und die Bürgerinnen und Bürger zu erleben. Die haben sich zusammengerauft, und sie haben wirklich gemeinsam *ownership* für ihre Vorschläge gezeigt. Auch die Botschafter und Botschafterinnen, die sie ernannt haben, haben sich diesen Ergebnissen verpflichtet gefühlt. Ich hoffe, dass wir als Parlament, die diesen Prozess immer wirklich als Motor betrieben haben, genauso Verantwortung und *ownership* übernehmen, genauso gute Hüter und Hüterinnen dieser Vorschläge werden wie die Bürgerinnen und Bürger das sind.

Es ist hier gesagt worden – viele Vorschläge in vielen Politikfeldern. Aber man kann jetzt Diskussionen führen – ist man für Vertragsänderungen, ist man dagegen; hier im Haus wissen wir ungefähr, wie sich das aufteilt. Wenn man die Vorschläge der Bürgerinnen und Bürger ernst nimmt, dann muss man Vertragsänderungen machen, weil eine Vielzahl der Vorschläge, die sie gemacht haben, diese erfordern.

Wir können natürlich jetzt sagen: Pah, nach der Konferenz ist alles wieder anders, wir nehmen das nicht so ernst. Aber es wäre ein Schlag ins Gesicht der Bürgerinnen und Bürger, die darauf vertrauen. Und ich muss eines sagen: Wenn mich eines wirklich begeistert hat, ist es, dass diese Bürgerinnen und Bürger das Vertrauen in das europäische Projekt nicht verloren haben. Die wollen Veränderung, die wollen Europa wieder besser aufstellen, handlungsfähiger, demokratischer, sozialer.

Und deshalb, glaube ich, ist es für uns so wichtig, dass wir als Parlament auch diesen ersten Schritt gehen. Wir können doch nicht vom Rat verlangen, das zu tun. Die haben diesen Prozess verschleppt, immer wieder versucht, da irgendwie Steine in den Weg zu legen, damit sich diese Dynamik überhaupt nicht entwickelt.

Wir als Parlament geben dieses Signal zusammen am 9. Mai, dass wir sagen, die Vorschläge ernst zu nehmen bedeutet auch, Vertragsänderungen auf den Weg zu bringen, genauso wie für die Kommission, das beim nächsten Arbeitsprogramm zu berücksichtigen. In diesem Sinne ist ein starkes Votum doch auch ein starkes Signal.

Pascal Durand (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, on a le droit de temps en temps d'être heureux, on a le droit dans cet hémicycle de se réjouir de certaines possibilités qui nous sont offertes. Il y a un an, quand on avait ouvert la conférence, on ne savait pas trop ce qui allait se passer. Soyons honnêtes. C'était quelque chose de nouveau, c'était un nouveau processus démocratique. La Commission a dit qu'elle allait essayer d'être facilitatrice. Le Conseil était déjà sur les freins. Et puis le Parlement avait dit «allons-y!».

Certains parmi nous avaient un peu peur d'opposer la démocratie représentative à la démocratie participative. Et puis, de quoi est-ce qu'on s'aperçoit un an plus tard? On s'aperçoit que, non seulement on a surmonté dans le dialogue, dans le débat, dans la construction, la terrible crise sanitaire, mais qu'une autre crise est venue depuis, que la guerre est au sein même de l'Europe et que, pour autant, les citoyennes et les citoyens ont commandé, ont commenté et ont demandé plus d'Europe, plus d'intégration, plus de travail.

Alors, effectivement, cela a été dit, et je n'ai pas besoin de le développer plus longtemps, et en plus vous l'avez dit dans le cadre des échanges que nous avons eus: nous devons continuer. Nous devons transformer cette conférence du futur en conférence du présent avec la convention, avec notre capacité à faire évoluer les textes. C'est ce que nous devons faire maintenant. Les citoyennes et les citoyens l'attendent. Le Parlement est prêt, la Commission est d'accord. Alors allons-y, avançons, travaillons tous ensemble.

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE). – Madame la Présidente, lorsque nous avons construit cette conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe, nous étions un certain nombre dans ce Parlement à insister pour avoir une implication forte des citoyennes et des citoyens. Il y eut des réticences de parlementaires qui pensent que la démocratie n'est que représentative, et surtout, il y eut des résistances au Conseil.

Pourtant, comme à chaque fois qu'un dialogue a été engagé avec des citoyens en Irlande, en Allemagne, en France, ces assemblées citoyennes ont été exemplaires. L'engagement sérieux de ces Européennes et de ces Européens tout au long des mois, leur compréhension rapide des enjeux, leurs interventions argumentées, leur capacité à se confronter à d'autres pour faire émerger des idées prioritaires, leur détermination aussi à se faire entendre, tout cela a été positif et montre qu'une démocratie saine du XXI^e siècle exige la participation active des citoyens entre les élections, dans le cadre de certains processus de réflexion ou de travail législatif. C'est la garantie d'un intérêt revigoré dans la société pour la démocratie. Et quand on connaît le désintérêt de beaucoup pour ce qui se passe au niveau de l'Union européenne, par méconnaissance ou parfois à cause de la désinformation de leurs gouvernements, cette connexion avec certains citoyens était d'autant plus importante.

Alors maintenant, nous devons nous inspirer de cet exemple pour continuer à élaborer des temps de démocratie européenne vivante, lors des suites possibles de cette conférence ou pour d'autres sujets pertinents dans notre agenda européen.

Gerolf Annemans (ID). – Voorzitter, de ID-Fractie kan goed begrijpen dat de ridders en jonkvrouwen van het Europees imperium, de machthebbers in het Europees Parlement en de Commissie, de voorstanders van een verder naar een gecentraliseerde staat evoluerende Europese Unie in de loop der jaren zeer gefrustreerd zijn geraakt. Het besef dat steeds meer Europese burgers hun visie op een samenwerking tussen Europese volkeren afwijzen, moet frustrerend zijn. Het feit dat een grote lidstaat als het Verenigd Koninkrijk het eenvoudigweg voor bekeken hield, sloeg in als een bom en heeft een diep trauma achtergelaten. De frustratie van deze elitaire club over de dreiging die bij de ene na de andere verkiezing opdoemt, namelijk het langzaam ontluikend en groeiend ontwaken van een publieke opinie die kritisch tegenover de gang van zaken staat, is te begrijpen.

Iedereen weet en voelt dat de legitimiteit van de strategie van het imperium slinkt. Toen de machthebbers zich in 2019 verplicht zagen ten bate van hun delicate machtsevenwicht en hun imperatieve machtsbehoud de sleutelposten toe te wijzen aan niet-verkozen EU-fanatici Von der Leyen en Michel vond Macron dat dit grote democratische deficit gecompenseerd moest worden. Naar macroniaanse traditie kon dit uiteraard niet door middel van een referendum gebeuren, maar moest dit, naar het voorbeeld van zijn *Grand Débat*, een goed en strak geregisseerd stuk theater zijn, dat vervolgens als beslissing van de burgers zou kunnen worden bestempeld.

Van de vierhonderd miljoen mensen op dit continent zijn er zorgvuldig achthonderd geselecteerd, naar het Parlement gehaald en opgesloten met Guy Verhofstadt tot ze de voortzetting van de imperiumstrategie als eigen voorstel hadden goedgekeurd. De verwarring van deze conferentie met dat wat onder de burgers leeft, getuigt volgens de ID-Fractie dan ook van groot cynisme. Stop deze commedia dell'arte. Ze was een mooi stuk macroniaans en verhofstadtiaans theater, maar is niet meer dan dat.

Jorge Buxadé Villalba (ECR). – Señora presidente, nos traen para votar como conclusiones de la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa cinco folios iguales al documento inicial, porque ustedes ya habían escrito las conclusiones. Venga, sean sinceros: a ustedes les importa un bledo los europeos. Ustedes lo que quieren es más poder. Si por ustedes fuera, no habría ni Parlamentos nacionales. Hablan de democracia, pero imponen la soga del silencio al que disiente. Hablan de derechos sociales, pero su elitismo y fanatismo climático les impide ver que su transición verde está llevando al colapso a las clases populares de Europa. Ustedes han silenciado el debate real, pero se han pegado una buena juerga globalista a costa del dinero de los europeos. En plena crisis económica proponen un nuevo tratado. Son auténticos sociópatas. La Europa que dibujan es una Europa servil a la Agenda 2030, sin nervio, sin espíritu, sin naciones que alimenten su riqueza y diversidad, una Europa que traiciona los pilares sobre los que se construyó, rendida a las economías extranjeras. Pero ahora, sean valientes, vayan ahora a la calle y digan que en este documento no se habla ni una sola vez de familia, de empresas, de cultura y tradición europea, de islamismo radical, de violencia sexual desatada en las calles, de paro, de cierre de empresas o de fronteras desprotegidas.

Miren, hace siglos las élites salían los primeros al campo de batalla; ahora ustedes se esconden en la Torre de Babel y mandan a los europeos al matadero.

(El orador acepta responder a dos intervenciones realizadas con arreglo al procedimiento de la «tarjeta azul»).

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE), blue-card speech. – I just have a very simple question. I was here on Saturday and saw the conclusions, I also read the conclusions and my question is: why are you misrepresenting what's in there, which is actually that we want to strengthen regional parliaments and that we want to strengthen cooperation between national and the European Parliament?

So there's nothing about abolishment of the national regional parliaments, so why are you misrepresenting the results?

Jorge Buxadé Villalba (ECR), respuesta de «tarjeta azul». – Pues es muy sencillo, porque ustedes, sin haber informado a ninguno de los europeos que nos han votado, hablan ahora de una convención para cambiar los tratados y quieren cambiar, incluso, la regla de la unanimidad, que es el respeto absoluto a la democracia y a las naciones que conforman Europa, a sus parlamentos y a sus gobiernos.

Niklas Nienaaß (Verts/ALE), blue-card speech. – *(start of speech off mic)* if unanimity was democratic, then probably we should also do it here. What or why do we have a different voting system?

But my extra question is, you have said that there has been no democratic process. I mean, we have invited, for the first time ever, 800 citizens of the European Union. Have you talked to them? Have you discussed actually with them? Because I have the feeling with all the proposals that you have made and that you've listed, you have never had the discussion with those people because otherwise it would be quite different.

Last part, there was a website with proposals where every citizen could propose something. None of the things that you have mentioned have been submitted to this website. Maybe, just maybe, you don't have any democratic backing for your proposals and that is the fact why this has been not discussed at the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Jorge Buxadé Villalba (ECR), *respuesta de «tarjeta azul»*. – Mi grupo político es el único que ha realizado una conferencia sobre el futuro de Europa yendo a todas las capitales de Europa. 800 ciudadanos son representativos del pueblo europeo. Yo, como político, vuelvo a mi país todos los fines de semana y hablo con los agricultores, hablo con los ganaderos, hablo con los pescadores, hablo con los autónomos, y les puedo asegurar que los problemas de los ciudadanos europeos no son la unanimidad ni un nuevo tratado para crear una Europa más resiliente que les está condenando absolutamente al fracaso económico y al colapso de sus vidas.

Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (The Left). – Señora presidenta, vivimos momentos de incertidumbre, llevamos dos años haciendo frente a la pandemia y hemos logrado que la Europa social salga fortalecida, pero la monstruosidad de la guerra ha hecho que vuelvan los fantasmas de la austeridad económica y la pesadilla ultraderechista de los enclaves seguros (la religión, el Estado nación y la familia convencional).

Europa se tensiona, otra vez, entre la política de la esperanza y la del miedo; entre un mañana luminoso en el que quepamos todos y los atavismos que siempre representan el futuro como amenaza.

La nuestra no puede ser ni la Europa de los mercaderes ni la del temor de su dios, sino la Europa de los cuidados, la democracia y la sostenibilidad de la vida.

Por eso es tan importante que modifiquemos los tratados: para reforzar el pilar social europeo, constitucionalizar las exigencias feministas y ambientales, articular mecanismos reales de participación, evitar los vetos en el Consejo y darle al Parlamento la iniciativa legislativa que merece. Porque es aquí donde se sientan los ciudadanos.

Nunca más las mercancías frente a las personas. Nunca más los pocos frente a los muchos. Ni un gobierno invalidando las decisiones de los demás.

Es el momento de la Europa social, feminista, democrática y federal.

ΠΡΟΕΔΡΙΑ: ΕΥΑ ΚΑΪΛΗ

Αντιπρόεδρος

Kinga Gál (NI). – Tisztelt Alelnök asszony! Ki kell mondanunk, hogy az Európa jövője konferenciasorozat kudarcot vallott. Nem demokratikus, nem pluralista. A módszer, ahogy átnyomták a véleményvezérek nemzeti hatásköröket gyengítő föderalista vízióit pedig nem legitim. A statisztikák szerint az európai polgárok többségét e roppant költséges projekt nem érdekelte, mert ilyen megpróbálkozó időkben az Európa jövőjéről szóló gondolkodás nem transznacionális listákról kellene szólnon, vagy az egyhangú döntések eltörléséről a Tanácsban. Az olyan nemzeti, például magyarországi eseményeket és véleményeket, amelyek nem találkoztak az előre eldöntött következtetésekkel, egyszerűen törölték a digitális felületekről. Ha a nemzeti parlamentek jelezték, hogy nincs konszenzus a leglényegesebb kérdésekben, akkor megkerülték ezeket a véleményeket. A záró vitákban az EP konzervatív és független képviselői szóhoz sem jutottak. Az intoleráns véleményhegemónia színjátéka ez, nem közös szabad gondolkozás. Ezért nem tudjuk elfogadni sem a módszereit, sem a következtetéseit. Mi még hiszünk a vélemény pluralizmusában és a szabadságban.

Sara Skyttedal (PPE). – Madam President, I really welcome a thorough debate on the future of Europe. After the United Kingdom finalised its divorce with the EU, this should have sparked some thought on our account on why they left and how we can improve without them. But not unlike some humans that have been left by a long-time partner, we have decided to take on a very destructive path instead. Instead of trying to see what we could have done better in the relationship and do better in the future, we decided to do more of the empty-headed things that were the reason for the breakup to begin with and to blame everything on the other part.

The so-called conclusions from the Conference of the Future of Europe is a clear example on how poor self-perceptions we have. Now we're asking for more influence over issues where we've shown poor judgment before. When I meet citizens and ask them how EU could improve, they don't mention transnational lists or that they wish for less national influence over the welfare systems. They focus on the aspects that made us an attractive partner to begin with, such as the single market, which is now being jeopardised by these new ambitions in light of the social pillar.

The conclusions of this Conference do not shed much light on how we can be better prepared for the challenges of tomorrow and become an attractive partner again. But rather, it seems to be a self-serving document for the interests of federalists.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il momento della verità per l'Europa è arrivato. Con questa risoluzione, dopo aver approvato oggi le liste transnazionali per le prossime elezioni, il Parlamento europeo recepisce la richiesta dei cittadini emersa nella Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa. Diamo il via a una convenzione per la riforma dei trattati. Chi dice che non sia una priorità sbaglia.

È un passaggio fondamentale per raggiungere obiettivi concreti come l'Unione della difesa per integrare il protocollo del progresso sociale nei trattati, per l'Unione della salute, per superare il diritto di veto e per approfondire l'integrazione in senso federale per chi può e vuole, ma allo stesso tempo per continuare l'allargamento a partire da una confederazione intorno alla federazione, come proposto dal nostro segretario PD Enrico Letta, per dare una prospettiva europea di pace e sicurezza in breve tempo ai paesi del nostro vicinato come l'Ucraina.

Oggi Mario Draghi ha tracciato questa strada con pragmatismo e idealità insieme. Serve una nuova fase costituente per i popoli europei e mai come oggi vale la massima di un saggio «fare l'Europa o non farla, non esiste provare». Andiamo avanti e non ce ne pentiremo.

(L'oratore accetta di rispondere a un intervento «cartellino blu»)

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE), blue-card speech. – Mr Benifei, I was just wondering if you would ever run on a transnational list?

Brando Benifei (S&D), blue-card reply. – Yes. I think the transnational lists will be a good opportunity for all of us. It's not true that they will put us far from our voters. Instead, we can be really able to Europeanise elections and to not talk only about our national priorities, but also looking from the campaign already to the next mandate, to priorities and what we will fight for. I think it's a very good improvement. It will be a good change for a European Union that will be more and more united and able to offer European parties with a real system where our heads of the lists can be our *Spitzenkandidaten* to lead our fight for a more political and so stronger European Commission. So, yes, I could run for that.

Laurence Farreng (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Vice-présidente, la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe, on l'a faite. Oui, c'est vrai, il y a eu des doutes, des défis, des difficultés. Mais aujourd'hui, le résultat est là, avec 325 propositions solides qui sont le fruit d'un exercice de démocratie participative unique, porté particulièrement par le président de la République française, Emmanuel Macron.

Ce que les citoyens nous ont demandé, c'est plus d'Europe et c'est mieux d'Europe. C'est la fin de l'unanimité et du veto au Conseil et c'est une Europe renforcée. C'est une Europe plus humaine par la culture et par l'éducation. À l'heure où nos valeurs sont attaquées, où je vois dans mon propre pays, la France, les partis de droite et d'extrême gauche et même les écologistes, vouloir déstabiliser l'Europe en remettant en cause la primauté du droit européen, il faut écouter ce que les citoyens nous ont dit.

L'avenir de l'Europe, c'est aujourd'hui. Nous le devons aux citoyens, à notre jeunesse qui s'est engagée massivement. Grâce à la détermination de Guy Verhofstadt, le Parlement européen a pris position pour ces propositions et le réaffirmera, je l'espère, à travers le vote de cette résolution de suivi.

Maintenant, c'est le devoir de la Commission et du Conseil de concrétiser, d'agir pour cette nouvelle Europe en ouvrant une convention article 48, comme nous le demandons.

Eleonora Evi (Verts/ALE). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, sul futuro dell'Europa i cittadini hanno dimostrato di non avere dubbi. La vogliono più democratica, più trasparente, più giusta, più equa e soprattutto più coraggiosa per affrontare le sfide della crisi climatica e della crisi ecologica.

I cittadini estratti a sorte hanno dimostrato di essere più avanti di chi li rappresenta, presentando in questo straordinario esperimento di democrazia partecipativa che è stata la Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa, delle raccomandazioni attente e lungimiranti. Faccio un esempio: ci chiedono di abbandonare la pratica dell'allevamento intensivo e di un'agricoltura industriale, perché su questo l'Europa continua a non essere all'altezza delle sfide che ha di fronte.

Ci chiedono quindi un modello agricolo in equilibrio con la natura. Ci chiedono di ridurre drasticamente, ad esempio, il consumo di carne e di prodotti di origine animale, di promuovere diete vegetali. Sono molto più avanti quindi di questa politica europea.

Io chiedo dunque alle istituzioni, in particolar modo ai governi, di non lasciare inascoltato l'appello dei cittadini, ma di farne pietra angolare per quel rinnovamento della nostra casa europea, oggi più che mai necessario. Andiamo avanti con una Convenzione europea.

Gunnar Beck (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Die EU-Zukunftskonferenz fordert EU-Streitkräfte, die Abschaffung des nationalen Vetos und auch des Begriffs illegale Migration. Ihre transnationalen Listen, um Abgeordnete und Wähler voneinander zu entfremden, die bekamen Sie ja heute schon.

Jetzt drängt dieses Parlament auf eine neue EU-Verfassung, nachdem der erste Versuch vor 17 Jahren an Referenden in Frankreich und den Niederlanden scheiterte. Dieses Mal soll es keine Referenden geben, denn die Konferenz sei bereits demokratisch legitimiert durch Beteiligung von 800 Bürgern. Tatsächlich aber weigert sich die EU nach wie vor, erstens die Interessen und Namen ihrer Konferenzbürger offenzulegen. Interessant, denn mein Büro ermittelte: Viele der EU Bürger, die dort teilnehmen, sind Mitglieder von EU-NGOs wie Pulse of Europe.

Zweitens: Ausgewählt wurden die Bürger von Kantar, einem langjährigen EU-Dienstleister. Die Auswahl sei zufällig, aber begünstigt Selbstselektion, denn die Konferenz begann stets donnerstags, wenn die meisten arbeiten.

Drittens: Zu Konferenzbeginn hieß es, die Bürger könnten auch online über die digitale Konferenzplattform teilnehmen. Das taten auch viele EU-Kritiker. Deshalb wurde der Plattforminhalt nun entfernt. Die Konferenzvorschläge ignorieren die Plattformnutzer genauso wie die 450 Millionen EU-Bürger, und sie gründen sich einzig auf die 800 Konferenzbürger, das heißt 0,00018 Prozent aller EU-Bürger oder ein 1,8 Millionstel.

Die Konferenzbürger selbst trifft allerdings keine Schuld, denn beraten wurden sie von ausgesuchten Pro-EU-Experten, die ihnen erklärten, was sie dann vorschlagen sollten. Waren die Bürger skeptisch, wurden sie mundtot gemacht. Das bestätigten mir einige junge Bürger, die mich sofort nach Konferenzende ansprachen. Sie konnten das leider nicht öffentlich sagen. Ihnen sei klar: Jeder Kritiker bekomme hier Probleme.

Kein Wunder also, dass die Konferenzvorschläge genau den Plänen entsprechen, die Macron und Merkel Ursula von der Leyen vor knapp drei Jahren in den Tornister legten. Sie palavern hier über Grundrechte, Demokratie und Rechtsstaat, aber Sie beschränken Meinungsäußerungen und offene Debatte. Seit 30 Jahren führt uns mehr Integration in den wirtschaftlichen Abgrund. Sie machen weiter so – wider alle Erfahrung und gegen alle Vernunft.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-жо Председател, изключително забавно е да се наблюдава как се опитвате да оправдаете несъстоятелната клоунада, която създадохте и гръмко нарекохте „Конференция за бъдещето на Европа“. Каква конференция, какво бъдеще на Европа? Къде ви е представителността? Шайка НПО-та, весела дружинка „Детелинка“. Това ви беше представителността. Трябваше да поканите Мики Маус, Патока Доналд, Патето Яки. Те щяха да бъдат по-представителни и щяха точно да показват това, което вие направихте с тази смешна клоунада, за която изхарчихте страшно много пари, които трябва.... (шум)

(ораторът прекъсва речта си и се обръща към председателя)

Г-жо Председател, дали ще е добре да помолите този колега да се държи прилично, а не като все едно се намира на стадиона в родното си място?

Благодаря. Настоявам обаче да ми върнете времето.

(ораторът възобновява речта си)

Колега, малко превъзбуден ми изглеждате, ако сте се успокоил, да продължим. Въпросът е колко пари похарчихте за тази работа? Кой ги даде и за какво отидоха? Всъщност истината е, че ние се борим за Европа на отечествата: нормална Европа, с нормално организирано общество, семейство, създадено от мъжа и жената, така както върви естественият, хубавият, добрият ред на нещата.

И понеже непрекъснато говорите за европейска идентичност – каквато няма, не е имало, не може да има, ще ви цитирам един голям европеец, Ото фон Бисмарк. Някои от вас, които са любители на книжките, може би са срещали това име. Той казва: „Винаги съм намирал думата „Европа“ в устата на онези политици, които искаха от други сили нещо, което не смееха да изискват от свое име.“

Това е, колеги. Срамота. Тази конференция приключи безславно. Трябва да се види обаче колко пари похарчихте за нея.

(Ораторът приема да отговори на три изказвания „синя карта“)

Niklas Nienaa (Verts/ALE), *blue-card speech*. – Since you've mentioned me so clearly, I think a point of order is definitely due.

I do not think that it's right to call this honourable House, together with the colleagues from the national governments, together with the colleagues from the national parliaments, together with the Commission, together with 800 randomly-selected citizens, 'a house of clowns' or something like this.

I think this is not respectful to the House. And I'm questioning whether you actually have respect for the people that you represent.

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR), *blue-card reply*. – Honourable colleague, it was not a question; it is against the procedure, under the blue-card procedure you are expected to ask me a question, not to make a statement. No, it was not a question.

Madam Chair, is it normal for the Member to take the floor for himself?

President. – He asked you a question. It was the way he felt. We have to be careful of our language in this room.

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR), *blue-card reply*. – I am very careful. My hands are over here, just so you know, because maybe someone will misunderstand my gestures.

Dear colleague, it's not about the people here. It's about the so-called Conference of Europe itself. It was a charade. It was a Mickey Mouse fake organisation. This is the truth. NGOs ... who picked the people here?

Please, I am answering here. Show some respect.

Do you know how are organised, the people from the NGOs, here? Who picked them? No? You don't know? Yes, of course you don't. Nobody knows. That is the answer.

Ah OK. Member States? No, it's not true.

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE), *blue-card speech*. – Actually, I think I will retract my blue-card because I don't think I'm getting anywhere.

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D), *intervención de «tarjeta azul»*. – Sí, señor Dzhambazki, usted ha dicho (*you have it in the podium*) que no existe la identidad, europea y le quiero preguntar al respecto. Yo creo que sí existe.

¿No cree usted que personajes como Beethoven, como Molière, como Cervantes, elementos como la cultura grecorromana, como la aportación de los intelectuales del Renacimiento, de la Ilustración, conforman la identidad europea?

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR), blue-card reply. – No sir, with all my respect, I believe these people were Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Italians, Greeks. And yes, we share this continent, and we need to live together and work together, but we have our differences and we have our own national identity and we must be proud of our identity – respecting the others, of course – but there is no such thing as a European one, because people are different.

What was it? 'United in diversity'? Isn't that right? Yes, it is. So there is No European identity. There is a national one, and there is a European Union and we have to work together respectfully for each other.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης (The Left). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η Διάσκεψη για το μέλλον της Ευρώπης έκανε ένα θετικό βήμα. Όσοι είχαμε αμφιβολίες για το αν ήταν όντως ένα θετικό βήμα για μια πιο ενωμένη, πιο δημοκρατική, πιο διαφανή, πιο δίκαιη κοινωνική Ευρώπη δεχτήκαμε κραυγές, ύβρεις και υποτιμητικά σχόλια από την ακροδεξιά πτέρυγα του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου και το γεγονός αυτό μας πείθει ότι κάτι καλό έγινε από αυτή τη Διάσκεψη για το μέλλον της Ευρώπης. Και έχουμε τώρα την πρόκληση να κάνουμε το επόμενο βήμα, συνάδελφοι.

Το κοινό ψήφισμα που προτείνεται από τους προέδρους, από το Ευρωπαϊκό Λαϊκό Κόμμα μέχρι την Αριστερά, είναι ένα θετικό βήμα. Σημαίνει ότι ακούμε τη φωνή των πολιτών και ότι η άμεση συμμετοχική δημοκρατία ενισχύει την αντιπροσωπευτική δημοκρατία. Το ζητούμενο, όμως, είναι να προχωρήσουμε παραπέρα και θέλουμε, αντιπρόεδρε Šimečka και κύριοι του Συμβουλίου —που απουσιάζατε και ήσασταν και λίγο «φρένο» σε αυτή τη διαδικασία της Διάσκεψης για το μέλλον της Ευρώπης—, θέλουμε να συνδράμετε και να μην υπονομεύσετε την πρωτοβουλία που θα πάρει το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο για συντακτική συνέλευση για την αναθεώρηση των Συνθηκών, με βάση το άρθρο 48.

Εμείς θα πάρουμε πρωτοβουλίες ως Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο με μεγάλες πλειοψηφίες, και ας κραυγάζει η ακροδεξιά. Και περιμένουμε και από την Επιτροπή και από το Συμβούλιο να στηρίξουν αυτή την πρωτοβουλία.

Andrius Kubilius (PPE). – Madam President, dear colleagues, the European continent is hit by a huge geopolitical and security crisis – Russia's war against Ukraine. Such kind of a crisis is showing that we, unfortunately, have been weak in our capacities in foreign and security policy to avoid such kind of crises.

'Europe will be forged in crises,' said Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, 'and will be the sum of the solutions adopted for those crises.'

We need new solutions now.

It's good that we have had broad consultations with the citizens of EU. It gave several important recommendations for the common and security policy to be improved.

But we need to remember that the EU was created and reformed by intellectual and political leaders of the Union. Let's not forget about this side of leadership: Robert Shuman, Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and others were the leaders, who created and who were changing the Union.

We have responsibility of our generation – the EU needs to adapt itself to the changes and challenges of such kind of a crisis. That requires leadership from us. We need to rise to the demand of the citizens, which was expressed very clearly: qualified majority voting, new security capabilities, and strategic responsibility for the neighbourhood. That is what citizens are demanding from us.

The EU needs to change itself, and Treaty change is an instrument for such a change. And let's not be afraid of change. As the prominent Irish-British conservative philosopher and politician Edmund Burke said: 'a state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation.'

If we want to secure and conserve the state of the European Union, we need to go for change. That is what citizens are asking us to do.

Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, a Conferência sobre o Futuro da Europa, iniciada na Presidência portuguesa e que se encerra no próximo dia 9 de maio, foi um muito importante exercício da democracia participativa e agora é a obrigação das instituições políticas europeias levar a sério as suas conclusões.

Os cidadãos falaram claro. Pediram-nos uma Europa mais fiel aos seus valores, mais próxima, mais democrática e mais participada, uma Europa mais social, mais solidária e mais justa, com menos pobreza e menos desigualdades, e uma Europa mais forte e mais eficiente, com menos bloqueios nos seus processos de decisão.

Algumas das propostas requerem uma sempre complexa revisão dos tratados e devem ser discutidas no local próprio, que é uma Convenção. Mas muitas outras podem e devem avançar desde já, explorando o potencial disponível no Tratado de Lisboa e consagrando reformas progressistas para uma Europa à altura das expectativas dos eleitores. É o que nos pedem os cidadãos. É o que devemos fazer sem demora.

Alin Mituța (Renew). – Doamna președintă, a fost multă emoție în acest hemiciclu acum câteva zile, când s-au adoptat concluziile conferinței. Oamenii s-au îmbrățișat și s-au felicitat după un an de muncă. O mamă a venit cu bebelușul ei de câteva luni și ne-a vorbit despre viitorul Europei. Este exact emoția de care avem nevoie ca să dăm Europei un suflăt și un suflu nou. Pentru mine, sunt două învățăminte după acest exercițiu de democrație participativă. Primul este că este momentul să permanentizăm acest exercițiu de consultare directă cu cetățenii. Al doilea este că avem o datorie acum: să punem în aplicare aceste concluzii ale conferinței, inclusiv prin declanșarea imediată a unei convenții.

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, dear Commissioner, the Conference on the Future of Europe has been an interesting democratic experiment with promising results in terms of further European integration. It has provided a way for citizens, especially those randomly chosen for the panels, to lead the debate and to decide on recommendations for the future. However, it has failed to reach a wider audience and to have a relevant impact on public opinion, and we have to admit it as well.

Many of the proposals are an invitation to reform the Union through changes in the Treaties, increasing the Union's powers, putting in place better decision-making and allocating a stronger role for our Parliament, and that is good. But I regret that highly endorsed proposals in the digital platform, like the one on a clarity mechanism to apply the right to self-determination, have simply been ignored.

Now, the official ending of the conference should mean the beginning of a reform process, a reform that incorporates the lessons learnt during the last years and brings about a stronger, more federal European Union. Yes, let's honour the conference results with the convention. If not now, then when?

Alessandro Panza (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Commissaria, siamo giunti al termine di questo esperimento. Non saprei come altro chiamarlo. Un esperimento che aveva l'ambizione di portare le istituzioni dai cittadini, ma non ha fatto altro che portare i cittadini, o meglio una sparuta minoranza di cittadini, che non sappiamo scelti bene come, dentro il vortice delle istituzioni.

Un esperimento che da subito ha dato l'impressione di non guardare tanto al risultato, ma di fare, un fare compulsivo, disorganizzato e soprattutto senza chiari obiettivi e finalità. Ovviamente con queste premesse, il risultato non poteva essere che quello che oggi è sotto gli occhi di tutti. La montagna ha partorito un topolino. Un topolino fatto di raccomandazioni, in larga parte condivisibili, questo sì, ma che in altrettanto larga parte sono già oggetto di discussioni politiche e che quindi non hanno portato grosse novità.

Un topolino che ha fatto anche raccomandazioni chiaramente etero dirette come quelle sulle liste transnazionali. Se pensiamo che i cittadini europei le considerino una priorità, forse sarebbe meglio che si uscisse un attimo dalla *comfort zone* di palazzo e si andasse a parlare con la gente vera che in questo momento ha ben altri problemi, ben altre preoccupazioni.

Ammettiamolo, è stato un esperimento che ha completamente mancato il suo obiettivo, a meno che il suo obiettivo non fosse quello di dare una parvenza di legittimità popolare alle posizioni che sono molto ben radicate dentro il palazzo. Ma solo qui. Certo, non sapremo mai con esattezza quanto sia costato questo esperimento, ma ci auguriamo che la lezione sia che la politica torni ad avere il suo legittimo primato decisionale senza vergognarsene, pur coinvolgendo attivamente e concretamente tutti i cittadini, anche e soprattutto quelli più critici, che non hanno avuto alcuna voce all'interno di questa iniziativa, motivo in più per ritenere questo esperimento un fallimento. Peccato. Tutti ci abbiamo creduto, ma abbiamo, avete perso un'altra occasione per avvicinare veramente i cittadini europei a queste istituzioni.

Carlo Fidanza (ECR). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor Commissario, sabato scorso in quest'Aula ho annunciato a nome del gruppo ECR il nostro ritiro dalla Conferenza. L'ho fatto con la delusione sincera di chi in questi mesi ha partecipato attivamente ai lavori.

Ho parlato di un'occasione persa, ma in questi giorni ho dovuto ammettere a me stesso che chi ha ideato tutto questo, in realtà è stato bravo, perché ha puntualmente realizzato il proprio piano. Serviva un meccanismo di finta partecipazione con presunti rappresentanti dei cittadini che in realtà non rappresentano nessuno se non le ONG e le associazioni amiche che li hanno indicati.

Servivano il caos organizzativo e meccanismi decisionali non chiari. Serviva a impedire che rimanesse traccia perfino delle proposte di chi, come noi, ha un'idea diversa sul futuro dell'Europa, in modo che la passerella del 9 maggio potesse concludersi dicendo che c'era un consenso, quello stesso consenso che, per paradosso, volete eliminare dai trattati a colpi di maggioranza. In fondo a questo serviva questo costosissimo circo e ci siete riusciti. Fuori però da questa bolla ci sono centinaia di milioni di europei che non sono stati minimamente coinvolti e nemmeno rappresentati.

E concludo, Presidente, queste centinaia di milioni di europei hanno il diritto di esprimere il loro parere nelle loro democrazie nazionali se continueranno ad essere, nonostante tutto, nonostante voi, il sale della democrazia europea.

Pernando Barrena Arza (The Left). – Señora presidenta, en primer lugar, tenemos que estar agradecidos a los ciudadanos y ciudadanas que han invertido su tiempo en la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa, a los que participaron en los paneles de ciudadanos y en los plenarios y a todos los que dejaron su opinión en las aportaciones de la web multilingüe.

Estas personas nos han demostrado una vez más que la ciudadanía va por delante de las instituciones europeas, que son más flexibles y eficaces a la hora de detectar qué falla y cómo hay que solucionarlo. Por eso el resultado de la Conferencia, en general, ofrece una visión mucho más progresista que la composición, por ejemplo, de este Parlamento, lo cual es motivo de satisfacción.

En ese sentido, los ciudadanos respaldaron como segunda aportación más votada en la plataforma digital una iniciativa para solucionar conflictos de soberanía en la Unión Europea en base a la aplicación de un mecanismo de claridad que no ha sido incluida en el texto final de la Conferencia. Consideramos que es un error; Europa no puede reinventarse dejando fuera a las naciones sin Estado, e insistiremos en ello.

Por último, nuestro apoyo al llamamiento de la Convención Europea para una posible reforma de los Tratados. Será una oportunidad para separar lo que funciona de lo que no y poner de relieve la Europa de los derechos humanos, la Europa social y guardiana de los derechos de los pueblos, para poder decidir libremente su futuro.

Λευτέρης Νικολάου-Αλαβάνος (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η «διάσκεψη» αποτελεί επιχείρηση χειραγώγησης της δίκαιης ανάπτυξης των εργαζομένων, των νέων σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη, αλλά και ξεπλύματος της αντιλαϊκής Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης των μονοπωλίων, των ιμπεριαλιστικών επεμβάσεων και πολέμων, του διαχρονικού αντιπάλου των εργατικών συμφερόντων. Ανεξάρτητα από το αν θα σηματοδοτήσει ή όχι αλλαγή στις ευρωσυνθήκες, δεν μπορεί να κρύψει τις μεγάλες αντιθέσεις στο εσωτερικό της Ένωσης. Οι προτάσεις της επιδιώκουν να θωρακίσουν το αντιλαϊκό ευρωενωσιακό οικοδόμημα· πριμοδοτούν τα λεγόμενα ευρωκόμματα· θέτουν απαράδεκτα εκλογικά όρια, αλλοιώνοντας τα εκλογικά αποτελέσματα· θεσμοθετούν επιστολικές, διαδικτυακές εκλογικές διαδικασίες· κλιμακώνουν την παραχάραξη της 9ης Μάη, μετατρέποντάς τη από μέρα της μεγάλης αντιφασιστικής νίκης των λαών, εκτός από δήθεν ημέρα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, και σε ενιαία ημέρα διεξαγωγής ευρωεκλογών.

Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση δεν βελτιώνεται —μόνο πιο αντιλαϊκή μπορεί να γίνει. Το μέλλον των λαών, επομένως, δεν χτίζεται με ψευδεπίγραφες διασκέψεις στο ναρκοθετημένο έδαφος εξυπηρέτησης της καπιταλιστικής κερδοφορίας, αλλά με ισχυροποίηση της πάλης σε κάθε χώρα ενάντια στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση για αποδέσμευση από τις ιμπεριαλιστικές ενώσεις, με την εξουσία και την οικονομία στα χέρια των λαών, για τη συνεργασία των λαών, για την οικοδόμηση αμοιβαία επωφελών σχέσεων.

Eva Maydell (PPE). – Madam President, just in a couple of days on the 9th May, we will remember the visionaries who embarked on a project of peace, stability, growth, prosperity. We will also attempt on that day to be looking ahead towards our bright European future together. Today, our continent is struck by war. But we have seen that our freedom no longer lives in fear. And this is because of our unity and of our solidarity.

I hope that one day, very soon, we can offer the same European future to our Ukrainian friends. What this Conference did is to reaffirm those exact values and to root them into fresh ideas. I was one of many colleagues working within the Digital Transformation Working Group, and we have put concrete proposals that aim to make Europe's tech sector more vibrant, more innovative, safer and full of opportunities for the next generations to come.

I think citizens want a union that understand the needs of its towns, of its villages, of its cities, of its capitals, and that knows how to defend their rights and values on a global stage. A Europe that has the confidence to see itself as one, with pan-European candidates that are able to reflect those values. This is how I believe we are going to be building a European Union, by the citizens and for the citizens.

Katarina Barley (S&D). – Madam President, so the citizens have spoken and they have spoken very clearly. They want a more social, more sustainable, more democratic Union. Now, there are some in this House who don't like the results and I understand your frustration. I understand your frustration that there were not as many homophobic, nationalist, chauvinist people within these 800 as you would maybe like to have seen there. But now you were drawing a picture of these people that is simply not correct – and those few of you who were there should know better.

I'll just give you one example. We had a very strongly discussing Democracy Working Group, and we had a very prominent leader of this group who presented the results, who is the leader of the EPP Group. And these citizens said, no, we don't feel our proposals are reflected in this, please, let's do it again. So they were very confident. They were not at all kind of shying away of conflict with the big MEPs or national parliamentarians. They were very confident and they spoke out very clearly. And I actually wanted to give credit to my colleague, Gunnar Beck, which I don't very often do, because he was there and he was confronted by the citizens – I think he got about four blue cards. Colleague Mara Bizzotto was also there but she didn't take any blue cards unfortunately; she didn't confront herself to what they had to say. But Mr Beck did.

So look it up on YouTube and you see what happens to a far-right wing politician who gets confronted by normal citizens. It's really extraordinary. So the result of this was not only an exercise for them, it was an exercise *(The speaker was cut-off by the Chair)*

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card speech)

Niklas Nienäb (Verts/ALE), blue-card speech. – Thank you very much, Madam Vice-President. And to you, Madam Vice-President, and to the other Vice-President in the front.

The question is, you have mentioned the courage of the citizens during the Conference. Do you feel that this model is something for the future? Do you feel that this is something that we could take up also maybe in the convention that we are discussing now as a follow-up for the Conference on the Future of Europe?

Katarina Barley (S&D), blue-card reply. – Thank you for the question. It also gives me the opportunity to say that there were also people with very different points of view, also someone who defended the Russian aggression against Ukraine, by the way. And yes, I absolutely think that this is something that we should carry on doing to listen to the citizens. With this kind of exercise or a different one. I don't know exactly which format we should choose, but I am very convinced that it should be one where we come together, where it's not only digital, but where we come together. Because they gave us lessons too. I don't know how many of you participated.

They sent us a letter, by the way, saying, look, the way you discuss is odd. You come, you give your speech of a minute and then you disappear. And look, I mean, I addressed a few colleagues, none of them are there anymore. This is not how you make a debate. It's not only that, you know, they contribute something from a content point of view. They can also, I think, make us better parliamentarians.

Maite Pagazaurtundúa (Renew). – Señora presidenta, señorías, he asistido a todas las reuniones de la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa y esto, como a ustedes, me ha permitido escuchar, como nunca antes, a ciudadanos que se iban transformando, comprometiéndose al pensar en la política común.

Se ha abierto un camino que no se va a cerrar gracias a las nuevas tecnologías. Y esta nueva forma de participación ciudadana ha venido para quedarse y es muy interesante para todos nosotros.

Hemos podido extraer algunas conclusiones: que solo juntos podemos los europeos hacer frente a los desafíos y que los ciudadanos están pidiendo que seamos ágiles, que seamos eficaces.

Y lo podemos hacer porque la crisis lo ha demostrado: somos capaces de hacer las cosas rápido y hacerlas juntos, y no nos queda otra para el futuro que viene.

Hay una cuestión de la que se ha hablado aquí: se ha negado que exista una identidad europea. ¡Claro que existe una identidad europea! Existe una identidad democrática europea, la da esta Cámara. Entre otras cosas, la dan los Tratados.

Como todas las identidades de las que cada uno de nosotros se compone, se va modificando con el tiempo y se va mejorando. Por eso necesitamos la convención: para ir modificando y mejorando nuestra ciudadanía democrática europea, nuestra identidad democrática europea, nuestro futuro como europeos, nuestro futuro en general.

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, fellow Europeans, earlier today, Vladimir Klitschko, who is the mayor of Kiev, wrote that, for Putin, Ukraine is a provocation because it is a democracy. Democracy is a provocation for some people. And we can also see this, sadly, in this Chamber. So what do we have to do? We have to dare more democracy. That's exactly what they fear. Let us dare more democracy. I said this also on Saturday at the conclusion and I say it now after we voted positively on the transnational list, we need to dare more democracy.

If you look at the conclusions that all these citizens that actually dared more democracy came up with, you see that there's a lot of very positive stuff in there: abolishing the veto, making the Council more transparent, calling it a Senate to make it a real second chamber, and giving more rights and powers to Parliament, including the right of initiative, budgetary powers and so on.

So we need to seriously follow up on this. I am very happy that from the Constitution Committee we already requested to trigger Article 48, to trigger Treaty change, and I hope that the countries will follow up, but I also hope that we can follow up on all the other ideas that don't need Treaty change.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card speech)

Michiel Hoogeveen (ECR), blue-card speech. – Madam President, I thank Mr Boeselager for his explanation on how to dare more democracy. Now we have conducted a poll in the Netherlands, an independent poll amongst 2 400 people. And we conducted the poll on the recommendations of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Only 23% were in favour of transnational lists. 63% of the Dutch people were against European taxes, and 55% are not in favour of a European asylum policy. Just to give some examples.

Now, to give you a sense of that, it was representative. There was some slight majority in favour of more European climate policy. So you can have that. Are you willing to conduct the same poll in your home country?

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE), blue-card reply. – So I think it's very good that you made the effort to go out there. And I think it's also okay to have a different vision of how Europe should go, which is a vision of where prime ministers and chancellors sit in backroom deals and battle all the deals out on how Europe should work. I just believe that we should fight and I'm fighting for a Europe, where you have a parliamentary democracy, where we can have these debates and where we can fill the government that can then be dis-elected if people don't like it. I think this gives more voice to citizens also if they're critical about different policies. But I'm having these conversations and I'm happy to see your study results as well.

Mara Bizzotto (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, rivoluzionare questa Europa che oggi è un mostro burocratico e un nano politico per costruire una nuova Europa più moderna, più sicura, più democratica, capace di risolvere i problemi dei cittadini: questa era la grande sfida per cui era nata la Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa, una sfida che andava accolta con coraggio e lungimiranza e che invece è stata clamorosamente mancata.

La Conferenza è stata l'ennesima occasione sprecata, il solito esercizio di propaganda da parte dell'UE che ha coinvolto pochissimi cittadini. Basta citare un dato: solo 52 000 cittadini su 450 milioni di europei si sono iscritti alla piattaforma digitale della Conferenza.

Numeri che dimostrano tutta l'enorme distanza che esiste tra cittadini e palazzi di Bruxelles, che ancora una volta si sono arroccati per difendere un modello di Europa che non funziona. L'esempio lampante del fallimento e degli errori della Conferenza sono le famose liste transnazionali che i cittadini non hanno chiesto e che i soliti politici hanno imposto come un dogma. Liste transnazionali che non sono nemmeno citate nella mozione approvata dal Parlamento italiano e contro le quali si sono espressi i cittadini italiani ed europei pubblicamente e nel gruppo di lavoro sulla democrazia europea.

I cittadini non hanno bisogno delle liste transnazionali che servono solo a garantire la poltrona a qualche politicante. Il mondo è in fiamme. Stiamo vivendo una crisi economica devastante. Milioni di famiglie e imprese non sanno come pagare le bollette. Tornate con i piedi per terra, tornate a fare i conti con la realtà. Tornate ad ascoltare la gente che chiede di cambiare da cima a fondo questa Europa. I cittadini ci chiedono a gran voce il cambiamento, perché non hanno bisogno di più Europa, ma di un'Europa diversa, nuova, coraggiosa, che sappia costruire un futuro fatto di lavoro, sviluppo, benessere, libertà e democrazia per i nostri popoli.

(L'oratrice accetta un intervento «cartellino blu»)

Katarina Barley (S&D), blue-card speech. – Madam President, my only question would be, if you think that listening to citizens is so important – and I totally agree, why did you not accept any – I think it was three or four blue cards – that citizens gave you in the Conference plenary?

Mara Bizzotto (ID), risposta «cartellino blu». – Erano due cittadini italiani quelli che mi hanno chiesto il cartellino blu che conoscevo e che avevano la tessera di partito in tasca. Quindi, siccome non era quello il luogo, mi confronterò con loro in un altro momento.

Ho ascoltato un'altra cittadina italiana, invece, che ha parlato all'interno del gruppo Democrazia europea, che ha detto chiaramente che abbiamo discusso delle liste transnazionali, un punto scomodo che non ci trova d'accordo. Questa cittadina è Chiara Alicandro, eppure voi non l'avete ascoltata.

Miriam Lexmann (PPE). – Madam President, the Conference on the Future of Europe is an important opportunity to work together to find creative solutions to make Europe deliver for our citizens.

With the social, economic and geopolitical consequences of the pandemic, of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, and of the growing assertiveness of the Chinese Communist Party, we must ensure that Europe is capable of facing the many challenges ahead. That's why I find it essential that we return to the heart of the principle of subsidiarity, one of the founding principles of the European Union.

We need to use the conclusions of the Conference not only to focus on where the EU institutions should do more. Instead, we must discuss which levels, including local, regional and state level, can best contribute to addressing specific challenges and bring solutions.

This also means that the EU must not interfere into the exclusive competencies of the EU Member States. We must respect the division of competences between the different levels of governance, and make decisions as close to our citizens as possible, and thus ensure the unity, resilience and future of our Union.

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Damen und Herren, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich denke mir, diese Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas hat – abseits der Erwartungen – wirklich gute Ergebnisse gebracht, mehr als wir wirklich erwarten konnten, und auch die Diskussion mit den Bürgerinnen und Bürgern.

Die hunderten Vorschläge, die jetzt auf dem Tisch liegen, zeigen eines: Die Menschen, die Bürgerinnen und Bürger erwarten sich von Europa Lösungen für die Probleme der Zeit. Und das kann man jetzt nicht einfach so wegwischen und wieder erlauben, dass wieder mal ein Arbeitskreis tagt, wo die Ergebnisse versanden. Sondern es geht jetzt darum, auch diese Ergebnisse – diesen Schwung – mitzunehmen, um auch Europa handlungsfähig zu machen und das zu ermöglichen, was sich die Bürgerinnen und Bürger von Europa erwarten: nämlich weg mit den Blockiererinnen und Blockierern, hin zu Mehrheitsentscheidungen, weg von diesem Einstimmigkeitsprinzip, das in Wahrheit nur die Antieuropäer innerhalb der Europäischen Union weiter stärkt, eine Stärkung des Europäischen Parlaments als größere Stärke der Demokratie mit Initiativrecht und all dem.

Und es ist doch irgendwie schade und auch bezeichnend, dass es nicht möglich war, einen gemeinsamen Abschlussbericht dieser Konferenz zu schaffen. Aber es ist gut, dass das Europäische Parlament hier einen Abschlussbericht, eine Entschließung beschließt, nämlich nicht als Endpunkt der Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas, sondern als Startpunkt für eine echte Reform der Europäischen Union, die mit modernen Verträgen auch dann letztlich auf den Boden kommt.

Sandro Gozi (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Vice-présidente, chers collègues, nous avons défendu dès le début et avec force cette conférence proposée par Emmanuel Macron en mars 2019. Et pour cause! Pendant un an, nous avons fait l'Europe autrement, avec un exercice démocratique totalement inédit. Les citoyens demandent un changement radical car le monde a changé, la guerre est revenue sur notre continent, des empires menacent nos vies et nos valeurs.

Et moi, je voudrais dire à nos collègues de l'extrême droite d'être un peu plus respectueux. Mickey Mouse, un cirque! Vous me donnez l'impression d'être comme des enfants qui, lorsqu'ils jouent au foot...

(quelques réactions et applaudissements)

... Absolument, vous êtes de l'extrême droite, vous êtes de la Ligua, donc vous êtes de l'extrême droite. Vous me donnez l'impression d'être comme ces enfants qui jouent au foot, mais lorsqu'ils perdent, ils arrêtent le match, prennent le ballon et sortent du terrain. Votre attitude est exactement celle-ci! Les citoyens ont fait un travail sérieux, un travail respectueux, nous devons les respecter, et maintenant le Parlement est attendu au tournant. Nous avons voulu ce débat citoyen. Nous devons respecter nos engagements et donner suite à la conférence. Nous l'avons fait ce matin avec les listes transnationales, et encore une fois vous êtes de mauvaise foi, et encore une fois vous mentez, parce qu'elles avaient été clairement demandées par les citoyens, et nous devons le faire maintenant en activant la révision des traités sans réticences, sans tabous, en pleine transparence.

(L'orateur accepte de répondre à une intervention «carton bleu»)

Damian Boeselager (Verts/ALE), blue-card speech. – Apparently it's my democratic right to ask questions, so I will make use of that.

I wanted to ask you, if you, as an Italian running on a French list, believe there is something like a European identity?

Sandro Gozi (Renew), blue-card reply. – Yes, I will answer in Italian, so I hope she will understand better.

Sono convinto che ci sia un'identità europea. Sono convinto che come cittadini europei noi possiamo esercitare i nostri diritti in qualsiasi posto dell'Unione europea. È per questo che da italiano ho deciso di candidarmi in Francia e l'ho fatto esattamente per portare avanti questa idea di politica transnazionale, di democrazia transnazionale, che noi porteremo avanti insieme. Sono sicuro, caro Damian, attraverso le liste transnazionali, perché questa è l'Europa, questa è la democrazia che vogliamo.

Monika Vana (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, it has been a very long process from the first announcement of the conference to where we are today, with a concrete set of proposals together with the citizens and institutions for more Europe, but also for another Europe. And as a member of the working group, a stronger economy, social justice and jobs, I really think we can be proud of what we have achieved together and also of the strong role of the European Parliament in this process.

I am personally very impressed at how strong the wish of the European citizens is for a true social Union with a common Europe-wide minimum standards and a social feel to leave no one behind. Framework for minimum income and wages, guaranteeing gender equality and equal access for all to public services, minimum pensions, social housing, fight against youth unemployment, a ban of unpaid internships – and last but not least, of course, a strong focus on the green and sustainable economy and green jobs.

We now simply have to deliver on that, colleagues, we have to deliver on that. And the citizens have to and can count on us. We have to ensure these proposals we formulated together with the citizens must not disappear after the first round of applause on 9 May, and that they are taken seriously. And this is why we, as Greens, strongly support a convention as soon as possible, including Treaty changes, to move forward to a social Union, to a sustainable Union, and to a gender equal Union.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI). – Madam President, thank you very much, dear colleagues, despite the initial scepticism of some Eurosceptical governments, the Conference on the Future of Europe turned out to be a success, empowering participative democracy at its outmost and putting long-sighted proposals on the table.

Now it is time to move forward, to achieve citizens' goals and hopes, turning them into concrete actions. And there is only one way to do so. We must open a new convention for discussing the much-needed deep revision of the Treaties towards a federal Europe. And as this would be a clear divide in the history of the European integration, there would be no better place than Ventotene Island, where everything began, to do so.

We are in front of a crossroads. We can move towards a genuine political union, a strategically autonomous union, moving to qualified majority, and thus growing into a real player at the global stage. Or we can remain divided, becoming the chessboard where other actors play their geopolitical games as is happening with the criminal aggression of Ukraine.

Only a new treaty of Ventotene can allow us to pursue the first option. And if the main road is the convention, we must also be prepared to cope with certain national reluctances or blockages, thus foreseeing back-up solutions, including the possibility to set up new forms of reinforced cooperations. Let's finally sit around the negotiation table. There will be an understanding of who wants to be on the right side of history and who does not. We stand for a Treaty of Ventotene, for a free, democratic, sovereign and federal Europe.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card speech)

Niklas Nienä (Verts/ALE), blue-card speech. – Madam President, thank you. Mr Castaldo, I have a question. You have mentioned that there are two possibilities to go forward with Europe. One, with a closer Union that will be in the geopolitical sphere, be stronger and have a voice, and the other one, which will be playing ball with the other bigger powers.

However, I would like your position on these two possibilities on the internal matters – which one do you think will improve the life of the citizens in Europe the best?

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI), blue-card reply. – Thank you, my answer is very clear in that regard. I stand for the strengthening of the European integration moving towards a federal Europe because I truly believe that, otherwise, facts will decide instead of us.

As is happening right now with the criminal invasion of Ukraine, as happened many times also with the multiple crisis we were experiencing in the last decades. And I must, of course, underline the fact that we did not always have all the tools we needed to face and tackle these crisis. Sometimes we have been a bit original and creative, we found an ambitious solution, like Next Generation EU, but I am calling for a permanent structural common European debt and a real federal budget to tackle the global challenges in front of us. So, for me, this is the main road that I am going to stand for and defend as well as you. But I also hope that it will be the outcome of the Conference and the Convention, because the citizens were very clear in that regard and their voice must be listened to. Otherwise, we will just fuel and foster frustration instead of more commitment towards European integration.

Daniel Buda (PPE). – Doamna președintă, Jean Monet spunea „Nu coalizăm state, noi unim oameni”.

Conferința privind viitorul Europei a demonstrat că Uniunea Europeană este formată din oameni care împărtășesc aceleași valori. Dezbaterile au primit o perspectivă clară ca urmare a experiențelor din ultimele decenii.

Din păcate percepția cetățenilor cu privire la *leadershipul* european nu a fost întotdeauna cea mai bună, iar acest lucru nu s-a datorat politicilor europene, ci faptului că nu am reușit să comunicăm cu aceștia, Brexitul fiind cel mai bun exemplu în acest sens.

Dezbaterile privind reformele necesare au fost consistente.

Dincolo, însă, de aceste dezbateri, avem preocupări ferme legate de ceea ce înseamnă accesul la un sistem de sănătate eficient care să crească speranța de viață a cetățenilor europeni sau la educație, care pot fi definite ca fiind priorități imediate pentru aceștia: combaterea schimbărilor climatice folosind în mod eficient resursele și ținând cont de particularitățile din fiecare țară ori accesul la alimente de calitate și la prețuri accesibile reprezintă, de asemenea, preocupări ferme ale cetățenilor.

Realitățile din jurul nostru s-au schimbat, însă, de la începutul dezbaterilor și până astăzi. Cu toții suntem martorii agresiunii Rusiei, iar Europa trăiește cea mai mare provocare la adresa securității și păcii de la încheierea celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial.

În același timp, cetățenii noștri au nevoie de garanții de securitate care pot fi oferite doar de către o Europă puternică.

Această conferință a demonstrat că Europa de mâine are viitor.

În toată Europa, cetățenii și-au făcut auzită vocea despre cum poate deveni Uniunea Europeană un loc mai bun pentru toți. Obiectivul nostru major este acela de a consolida o Europă a valorilor în care nimeni să nu fie lăsat în urmă. Acest lucru stă în mâna noastră, a tuturor, iar Conferința privind viitorul Europei ne-a arătat calea de urmat.

Dincolo de orice dispută, stimați colegi, nu uitați să iubiți Europa în fiecare zi.

Marc Angel (S&D). – Madam President, in the beginning the Conference on the Future of Europe was very abstract and very slow, and it only gained momentum because of the fantastic dynamic in the nine working groups, where finally all components came together to debate. Citizens from the European and national panels, colleagues from the national parliaments, MEPs, representatives of civil society, social partners, regional authorities, Council and Commission Members, all were able to join forces to reach compromise, to make Europe stronger, more resilient, more sustainable, and more social.

Yes, and these citizens represented all the citizens because there was a recent Eurobarometer poll where nine out of ten Europeans said they want a more social Europe, so they were representative of these citizens.

The dynamic of the working groups also translated later into the plenary and last Saturday we concluded this unique democratic process with this fantastic 56-page document containing 325 concrete proposals endorsed by all components.

Now action is needed. Of course, we must deliver on the citizens' requests, and this requires, of course, policy change, legislative acts and in a few cases also treaty change. And therefore we need to convene the Convention as this excellent joint resolution with debate suggests.

To conclude, I think we proved during one year that representative democracy and participatory democracy can go hand-in-hand, and we must continue this exercise.

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (Renew). – Madam President, Madam Vice-President of the European Commission, dear colleagues, I echo those colleagues, saying that the Conference was an enriching exercise of democracy. I couldn't agree more with that.

But a bigger question is what is next? What kind of change? Because we all mentioned the need for change. First of all, we would like to start with implementing the citizens' proposals. Certainly, we have to implement what the citizens have proposed us. There must be no excuses, otherwise we are simply leaving it to those on the extreme right and left to do it for us, and we don't want that.

Secondly, I think the Conference was clear: we need a change. We need a change on health union, on energy union. We have to abolish the unanimity rule. And for that, we need a new Convention.

Thirdly, the Conference was a model and should be a model – perhaps not at the same scale, but a continuous exercise involving citizens, bringing them together with the European institutions. What happens at European level has tremendous impact on people's lives. So for that reason, we need pan-European solutions for pan-European challenges.

Niklas Nienaaß (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, first of all, when I go to my constituency, yes, I agree. Not all of the citizens tell me we want to get rid of unanimity. Of course not. This is a highly technical question. The majority is just asking me: why is Europe not doing anything on this? Why don't we solve the migration crisis? Why aren't we helping people on the borders? Why aren't we getting support for the low income regions? Why aren't we getting help for everybody to have the same pension and the same minimal income? And then I have to explain to them – and maybe that's also a job for my colleagues as well – that there are a lot of proposals on the table, but they're just not being voted on because there's the rule of unanimity and that we need to get rid of it in order to be a more concrete European Union.

I think this has been the exercise that we did here. We asked citizens who were, some of them not at all involved in politics, to come here and make up their mind and propose ideas, what they think about the problems, where they see topics to be improved and everything. And then the outcome was, well, we need Treaty change.

One last sentence about this; I will make it brief. Just because we have a convention doesn't mean that everything that is proposed will come into law. I mean, the important thing is to bring people together and to talk about the society that we want to live in in the future. And that is what the Convention is there for. And if we stop this process from the start, then I think our society has no future.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card intervention)

Tomislav Sokol (PPE), blue-card speech. – So you said that people want us to resolve issues and problems. I agree with that. You said that people want to have bigger incomes, minimum pensions and things like that. I agree also with that. But why do think that unanimity will achieve that? Why do think that getting rid of unanimity will lead the Member States to actually share more powers with the smaller Member States and that they will be willing to resolve problems. Because I personally think if we have more qualified majority, the Member States will have more powers to decide what is in their interests and not to share the powers and responsibilities with smaller Member States. So why would people in, for instance, Croatia have better results if we get rid of the possibility for Croatia to have veto rights in the Council?

Niklas Nienaaß (Verts/ALE), blue-card reply. – Yes, thank you. I think it's an excellent question but also leads to the question of what we do exactly at the convention. I believe the power of democracy lies in compromises, lies in the fact that we don't have referenda where we just have yes or no.

And the same thing is true also for this question as regards unanimity. Of course, I do see the point that smaller Member States need representation and that they need a certain amount of power through the use of unanimity. However, at a certain point it gets *ad absurdum* and we are at the point where Member States, and we have seen that multiple times, are trying to force their opinion upon everybody else as a minority, which is not what we want in a democracy and bundle up together decisions that have nothing to do with each other.

So I think that we cannot continue with the prospect of unanimity, because it will not solve any problems, because every time your citizens say, for example, you say for your citizens, we want a stronger minimum wage. And then, I don't know, maybe Malta says, no, this is okay for us, but we want fishing rights here and there, and therefore we block everything on the question of? This is unfair.

So I think what we can come up with in the Convention is also a solution to that. So figure out what is the possible solution that gives the right to the smaller member states to be part of the discussion, but also that enables us to act. That is the strength that we need. Democracies can act, but we are just too slow because we are having too much unanimity.

Radosław Sikorski (PPE). – Madam President, I would grant the nationalist side of this debate that the process of the conference has not been perfectly democratic. But I'd just like to remind you that the whole idea of the conference was to open up the process to unelected people, to the kind of people that we don't normally talk to. So that was deliberate. And if your supporters were less active or less persuasive in that process, well, that is your mistake and your failure. But don't blame the process.

We've been through a lot as the European Union in recent years – the financial crisis, the refugee crisis, Brexit, the pandemic and now war. And some of you have argued – correctly, in my view, that we need to take a strong stance. We need energy transformation and financial help for energy transformation. We need strong sanctions on an aggressive power, on Mr Putin. That we need energy security, including a gas Union, purchasing of gas together.

And at the same time, you say the EU should go back to being a Union of fatherlands, a free trade area – some of your supporters have even asked for abolishing this Parliament. I have to tell you, these ideas are not compatible. You have to choose, if you will the ends you have to will the means.

Personally, I want a Union strong enough that can not only stand up to Putin, but send him to hell. And therefore, I believe we need not a superstate, but a super power. And therefore, these proposals should be considered seriously.

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card intervention)

Bogdan Rzońca (ECR), wystąpienie zasygnalizowane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Chciałem powiedzieć, że oczywiście zawsze dialog jest lepszy niż odwracanie się tyłem do siebie i dyskusja jest zawsze warta dyskusji po prostu. Ale chciałem Pana zapytać, ponieważ był pan ministrem i sformułował Pan kiedyś taki zarzut w stosunku do Niemiec, że Niemcy za mało robią, są zbyt bierne w Unii Europejskiej. Później pański kolega z PPE Donald Tusk powiedział, że rządy niemieckie były błogosławieństwem w Unii Europejskiej pod przywództwem kanclerz Angeli Merkel.

Mam pytanie zatem do Pana: Czy po tej reformie, którą Państwo proponują po tej Konferencji, nie ma Pan obaw, że ta Unia będzie popełniać takie same błędy, jakie popełniła? Bo mamy wojnę, z tym się zgodzimy wszyscy. Mamy wielki dramat wojenny. Ktoś jest winny tej wojnie. Czy nie ma Pan takich obaw? Albo niech Pan wskaże jakiś mechanizm, który pozwoli zapobiec tego typu dramatycznym błędom.

Radosław Sikorski (PPE), blue-card reply. – I would like to thank the honourable Member for recalling my speech in Berlin in 2011, where I indeed said that I feared German power less than I feared Germany's inactivity. And you know what? It seems to fit the current attitude of the German coalition to the war in Ukraine. No human institution will be perfect, but when the facts change, I change my view. What do you do? Therefore, we need institutions that would protect people's identity but enable us to work more effectively together. I think some of those proposals do that.

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D). – Madam President, thank you, Vice-President, for your presence in the debate and also for what you have done by co-chairing this conference with these very good outcomes. They are clearly pointing to the need to improve the competencies, the capabilities of the European Union to act in very important fields, but also to improve the degree of democratic legitimacy, and the participation of citizens in the European project.

Many things have been said. I made them my own. Also, what Prime Minister Draghi said this morning about pragmatic and ideal federalism.

Now, I would like to address you directly, because you have been saying, and I understand that as a positive thing, that you believe that the Commission should play an honest broker role in this process. But I believe that maybe the Commission can also join Parliament. Parliament has made clear the position in this resolution about the next step, the convention and the reform of the treaties. And also, by the way, as you very well know, we approved today with a large majority the electoral law, including the union-wide constituency. Why doesn't the Commission and the Parliament join together? Because we know the Council, they are good guys, but not particularly the vanguard of the European Union. So, the Commission and Parliament working together, what do you think?

(The speaker agreed to take a blue-card intervention)

Mara Bizzotto (ID), intervento «cartellino blu». – Sì, assicuro che difenderò gli interessi dell'Italia anche con le liste transnazionali. Mi chiedo, invece, se un suo collega, un mio collega Gozi, che è stato sottosegretario del governo Renzi, sottosegretario del governo Gentiloni e quindi ha avuto accesso a carte molto particolari e che poi è passato alla corte di Macron, essendo consulente e ora parlamentare, può dire la stessa cosa, di difendere gli interessi degli italiani o dei francesi? Vorrei capirlo. Chiedo la sua opinione.

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D), risposta «cartellino blu». – Io conosco, mi chiede Lei, per l'onorevole Sandro Gozi che ho davanti a me, che è un caro compagno e un caro amico e io so che è assolutamente possibile. Lui lo ha fatto: lavorare per l'Europa quando era in Italia e lavorare per l'Europa quando è in Francia.

Claudia Gamon (Renew). – Frau Präsidentin! Die Konferenz kommt jetzt zu einem Ende, und das sollte der Start sein für echte Reformen in der Europäischen Union. Ich spreche hoffentlich für alle, wenn ich einmal Danke sage: allen Bürgerinnen und Bürgern, die hier teilgenommen haben, die sich dafür Zeit genommen haben und wirklich sehr leidenschaftlich diskutiert haben und – was ich gemerkt habe – bei vielen Kollegen auch etwas bewegt haben, bei ihnen etwas ausgelöst haben, nachdem man wirklich spüren konnte – was lange schon meine Vermutung war –, dass die Bürgerinnen und Bürger der Union oft schon viel weiter voraus sind, als es ihnen manche Politikerinnen und Politiker zutrauen würden.

Ich denke, dass man das auch jetzt ein wenig gehört und gespürt hat, dass doch sehr viele der extremen Rechten in diesem Haus, die immer sagen: „Wir sind das Volk“ jetzt ein bisschen schockiert sind, wenn das Volk herkommt und auf einmal etwas anderes sagt, als man eigentlich gemeint hat. Es muss wirklich frustrierend, enttäuschend sein. Okay, aber es ist nun einmal so.

Die Bürgerinnen und Bürger wollen nämlich ein Europa, das funktioniert, das für sie funktioniert. Und dafür muss Europa stark sein. Und dafür muss auch die Europäische Union gestärkt sein. Und dafür werden wir neue Verträge brauchen.

François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE). – Madame la Présidente, la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe devait être l'événement marquant de la mandature de ce Parlement. Elle est restée malheureusement trop ignorée du grand public, car elle a été étouffée à la fois par la pandémie et par la faible implication des gouvernements et des partis politiques. Elle a été affectée aussi, malheureusement, par une certaine volonté d'en limiter le contenu.

Cependant, un débat est lancé, et il doit continuer. C'est essentiel pour l'avenir de l'Europe. Parmi les questions cruciales ignorées dans les conclusions adoptées, il y a le droit des peuples à décider démocratiquement de leur avenir. Cette question est posée par exemple en Catalogne ou en Écosse. Elle se pose aussi de façon dramatique en Ukraine, depuis les dernières semaines.

Sur la plateforme numérique qui permettait l'expression libre des citoyens, la proposition de débattre d'un mécanisme européen de clarté démocratique pour contribuer à la résolution d'éventuels conflits de souveraineté a été la deuxième proposition la plus soutenue, mais elle a été écartée des conclusions de la conférence finalement publiées.

Si l'Europe n'a pas le courage de formuler des propositions démocratiques pour résoudre les conflits de souveraineté, y compris contre la volonté d'États membres nostalgiques du siècle dernier, elle prend le risque d'être affectée par des crises politiques graves à l'avenir. Pour ce qui nous concerne, nous continuerons à soutenir une telle proposition. L'Europe doit faire en sorte de contribuer à l'avenir de tous ses citoyens et de contribuer à l'avenir aussi de tous les peuples qui la composent, en leur assurant la possibilité d'exercer leur droit à l'autodétermination, qui est un droit fondamental. Ce droit ne peut être bafoué par le veto opposé par les États membres. Il doit être ouvert à tous les peuples d'Europe qui le désirent.

Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE). – Madam President, I hope we all remember that before the conference started, at the beginning, we committed ourselves to deeply engage in it and also to deliver on its outcome. And now we simply need a good plan to transform its conclusions into a real change. And I have two major takeaways from this unprecedented public dialogue, which might be useful.

First, on the value of the process itself, let me say that the more citizens are engaging also emotionally, the more ambitious, courageous and future-oriented were the ideas about the future of Europe. One can also say that the long awaited European demos has been born and it must not be lost. I think participatory democracy worked.

And my second takeaway is that during this conference, citizens have called for 'more' Europe. And I read it as a demonstration of the trust and faith in us, as an expectation that the Union that was brought closer to them, thanks to the conference, will remain close and caring. The conference, through well-structured, thoughtful conclusions, prepared a core of reform packages. And European institutions, Parliament, I hope the Commission, Madam Commissioner, also the Council will work now on their implementation. We could see during the last plenary the commitment of all institutions in this regard.

The conference, through the way it worked and the conclusions it provided, paved the way towards European Convention in the meaning of Article 48. And that implies that we need to take the conclusions and start working on potential treaty change content and do what is our right and duty within Article 48. So I trust we learned from this conference how to build the future of Europe in the most participatory way possible.

Victor Negrescu (S&D). – Madam President, I have attended the Conference on the Future of Europe and citizens have clearly underlined that they want to contribute more to the European project. Contrary to what has been said, their ideas and proposals are valuable. And also we have to acknowledge the fact that important parts of them go beyond the current treaty framework.

I am particularly happy to see that citizens want the European Union to help them get access to quality education and health services and several of our proposals, even of my proposals, have been included in the conclusions.

The pandemic and the war in Ukraine show that we need a European Union that protects its citizens and its Member States, and for that it needs the means and the instruments to act by including even a stronger social dimension.

We therefore call for a convention and the activation of the procedure for the revision of the treaties according to Article 48 of the Treaty of the European Union. And as a member of the Constitutional Affairs Committee, I support the need to start working on this immediately.

Dear colleagues, in these uncertain times, we need to revise the Treaties in order to build a Europe that offers certainty, security and the perspective of a sustainable future for everyone.

Pascal Arimont (PPE). – Sehr geehrte Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Kommissarin! Zukunft wird aus Mut gemacht. Diese 56 Seiten, diese 353 Schlussfolgerungen der Konferenz haben Stärken und Schwächen. Sie haben aber eine Stärke, und diese Stärke ist, dass sie bestehen und dass sie von ganz vielen Leuten zusammen ausgearbeitet worden sind. Das ist die ursprünglichste Idee der Europäischen Union.

Ich stelle daher drei Fragen an die Vertreter der Mitgliedstaaten, die leider heute hier nicht vertreten sind – aber ich stelle sie dennoch. Erstens: Wollen Sie ein Europa, das seine Bürger zum Beispiel im Gesundheitsbereich besser schützt? Zweitens: Wollen Sie erreichen, dass Europa auf internationaler Ebene ernster genommen wird? Drittens: Wollen Sie ein demokratischeres Europa, in dem dieses Parlament stärker wird, zum Beispiel mit einem Initiativrecht?

Wenn Sie das möchten, dann müssen Sie Veränderungen von Verträgen zustimmen, zum Beispiel im Gesundheitsbereich. Ohne eine Änderung der EU-Verträge bleibt es so, dass die EU nahezu keine Möglichkeit hat, zum Beispiel eine Pandemie effektiv und effizient zu bekämpfen. Glauben Sie mir: Ich komme aus einer Grenzregion und habe dort sehr eigenartige und fast schwachsinnige Situationen erlebt, wenn das eine Land die eine Regel macht und das andere Land genau die entgegengesetzte.

Oder die immer noch notwendige Einstimmigkeit der Mitgliedstaaten in bestimmten Politikbereichen: Sie trägt wesentlich dazu bei, dass wir in ganz wichtigen strategischen Fragen, wie zum Beispiel der Außen- oder der internationalen Steuerpolitik, einfach nicht vorankommen.

Diese 56 Seiten geben uns einen ganz klaren Auftrag: Wir müssen jetzt die Verträge in einigen wichtigen Punkten ändern. Liebe Mitgliedstaaten, seien Sie für einen Konvent, seien Sie für gezielte Vertragsänderungen, seien Sie mutig!

Peter Pollák (PPE). – Vážená pani predsedajúca. Na jednej strane nás musí tešiť, že napriek kovidu sa podarilo do konferencie o budúcnosti zapojiť množstvo ľudí z celej Európy. Na druhej strane nás nemôže tešiť to, že sa nám nepodarilo vo väčšej miere zapojiť do tejto aktivity najchudobnejších a najzraniteľnejších.

Na jednej strane nás môže tešiť to, že obrovské množstvo ľudí, ktorí sa zapojili do konferencie o budúcnosti, sa cítia byť Európanmi. Na druhej strane si musíme priznať, že v Európe je početná skupina ľudí, ktorí sa necítia byť ani plnohodnotnými občanmi svojich vlastných krajín, nie to ešte Európanmi.

Na jednej strane nás môže tešiť posun a vízie v oblastiach, ako je digitalizácia, umelá inteligencia alebo životné prostredie. Na druhej strane, povedzme si pravdu, obrovské množstvo chudobných ľudí v Európe nemá prístup k pitnej vode.

Ľudia chcú mať istoty, akými sú kvalitné vzdelávanie, dobre zaplatená práca, dostupné bývanie či kvalitná zdravotná starostlivosť. Európania túžia, aby Európa bola spravodlivejšou, demokratickejšou, aby bola bezpečným územím, kde má každý priestor na svoju realizáciu, na plnenie svojich snov.

Dnes je našou najdôležitejšou úlohou, aby sme všetky závery z Konferencie o budúcnosti Európy pretavili do reality. Aby každé dieťa, každý mladý človek, mal možnosť rozvíjať nielen seba, ale aj svoje okolie.

Máme pred sebou mnohé z odporúčaní, dožadujúcich sa rozsiahlych reforiem. Nemôžeme si dovoliť ich odignorovať. Európania chcú Európu sociálnejšiu, dôstojnejšiu, Európu, kde teda ľudia žijú v blahobyte a nie v chudobe.

Catch-the-eye procedure

Tomislav Sokol (PPE). – Poštovana predsedavajúca, Konferencia o budúcnosti Európy potvrdila je da građani žele veće ovlasti Europske unije u području zdravstva, stvaranje europskog podatkovnog prostora koji će omogućiti razmjenu zdravstvenih podataka i olakšati prekograničnu zdravstvenu zaštitu, ostvarivanje strateške autonomije Europske unije u proizvodnji lijekova te bolji sustav odlučivanja o uvjetima velikih zdravstvenih prijetnji, prioriteti su europskih građana.

To su problemi koje države članice doista ne mogu same rješavati te je zajedničko djelovanje nužno sukladno načelu supsidijarnosti. Drago mi je zato da stvaranjem europske zdravstvene unije već pozitivno odgovaramo na ove zahtjeve. S druge strane, Konferencija je dala naslutiti da bi se jednoglasnost u odlučivanju trebala skoro u potpunosti zamijeniti odlučivanjem kvalificiranom većinom. Tu treba biti jasan. Pravo veta koristan je instrument koji osigurava državama članicama da zaštite svoje interese u određenim strateškim područjima poput poreza, socijale, vojnih pitanja i slično. To je posebno važno za manje države članice koje, i u zajedničkoj Europi, imaju pravo čuvati vlastita prava i identitet.

Zbog toga se suzdržimo eksperimenata koji mogu jedino i isključivo stvoriti štetu.

Sunčana Glavak (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, prije svega željela bih zahvaliti potpredsjednici Šuici na njezinom angažmanu i gospodinu Verhofstadtu, hvala vam lijepa.

Međutim, ono na što bih željela skrenuti posebno pozornost je svakako ovaj proces koji nam je pokazao da građane nije uvijek lako zainteresirati za ovakve procese i za politička pitanja ili izravnu participaciju kakvu smo imali u proteklih godinu dana. Ukoliko institucionalnim radom na 325 usvojena zaključka uspijemo unijeti promjene i ukoliko ispunimo očekivanja građana, stvaramo preduvjet trajnijeg jačanja povjerenja zapravo u institucije i političke procese. Uvjereni sam kako će to biti jedan od važnijih doprinosa Konferencije o budućnosti Europe i za budućnost europske demokracije. Svjesni smo da se naša demokracija suočila s mnoštvom izazova proteklih godina ne samo u Uniji, bilo da se radi o rastućem ekstremizmu, o dezinformacijama, manipulativnim informacijama ili o slabljenju vladavine prava. U ovom trenutku važno je objektivno procijeniti koliko prijedloga zaista možemo usvojiti u područjima i koja su u nadležnosti Europske unije.

Završit ću: dinamika globalnih odnosa i promjena je brza a mi ako želimo odgovoriti na njih ne možemo gledati u prošlost jer ono što je u prošlosti ne možemo promijeniti ali ove inicijative znak su da nešto u budućnosti moramo mijenjati.

Sandra Pereira (The Left). – Senhora Presidente, eu gostaria de recordar que, há cerca de 20 anos, foi iniciado um processo semelhante a este que agora termina, até no nome, a chamada Convenção sobre o Futuro da Europa. Esse processo acabou por resultar numa dita Constituição Europeia que consagrava as políticas de cariz neoliberal, federalista e militarista da União Europeia e que foi rejeitada em referendos.

E o que fez a União Europeia? Impôs o Tratado de Lisboa contra a vontade dos povos. Recuperaram agora uma nova Convenção para, uma vez mais, insistirem no aprofundamento das suas políticas que, na verdade, estão na origem das desigualdades sociais, das assimetrias de desenvolvimento entre países ou de relações de domínio *versus* dependência no seio da União Europeia.

Com a mesma receita, os resultados não serão diferentes. A resposta aos problemas dos trabalhadores e dos povos passa pela rutura com estas políticas e por uma Europa que defenda a soberania e a democracia, os direitos, possibilitando caminhos alternativos de futuro, justiça, progresso e paz.

(End of catch-the-eye procedure)

President. – Thank you, Ms Pereira. Now for this specific debate, we accepted all blue-cards and all the catch-the-eye requests, I believe maybe we had a record today, but it's a most important and lively debate and it's well-deserved as we discuss the future of Europe. I really want to thank our Vice-President, Ms Dubravka Šuica, for staying and listening to the whole debate in the European Parliament from so many colleagues staying with us, and also our Vice-President, Mr Margaritis Schinas, who also stayed and followed all the debate.

I have received also three motions for resolutions to wind up this debate and now the debate is closed.

The vote will be held tomorrow.

Thank you colleagues, we may proceed to the next item.

Written statements (Rule 171)

Sara Cerdas (S&D), por escrito. – Chegou ao fim o marco histórico representado pela Conferência sobre o Futuro da Europa, desbloqueada pela Presidência Portuguesa do Conselho da UE. Foi um processo baseado naqueles que são os valores desta União: democracia, igualdade, Estado de Direito e solidariedade, que uniu a sociedade civil, parlamentos nacionais, instituições da UE e parceiros sociais, e que assumiu ainda mais significado com a celebração do Ano Europeu da Juventude em 2022, colocando os jovens na linha da frente na construção do projeto europeu.

Reconheceu-se a necessidade de mais coordenação, seja política, económica ou social, de forma a tornar a Europa mais resiliente a atuais e a futuros desafios, seja de conflitos armados, alterações climáticas, desigualdades sociais, entre tantos. É, para isso, vital assegurar que esta Conferência não fica presa na História e que tem resultados concretos na reforma europeia, incluindo a convocação de uma Convenção para se proceder às alterações necessárias aos Tratados. É, assim, desapontante que as Conclusões da Conferência não tenham referido, em parte alguma, as especificidades das regiões ultraperiféricas, que assumem um estatuto especial nos Tratados.

É nossa responsabilidade assegurar que somos uma Europa que chega a todos e que não deixa ninguém para trás.

Klára Dobrev (S&D), in writing. – The EU has faced unprecedented challenges in the recent decade: an economic crisis; a refugee crisis; a health crisis, and now it is witnessing a war in its immediate neighbourhood. The EU has always managed to find solutions and overcome the challenges. Throughout the year, citizens, civil society, politicians and EU institutions came together to dream: to dream of a shared future for the European Union, a way forward. More than 40 proposals and 300 measures were put down on the table. Citizens want a more social, secure EU based on solidarity, where the rule of law prevails. Our duty now is to translate these proposals into action and be brave and open the Treaties where needed.

Elżbieta Kruk (ECR), *na piśmie*. – Konferencję w sprawie przyszłości Europy można było postrzegać jako szansę na prawdziwie paneuropejską debatę, w której wyrażone zostaną różne wizje przyszłości Europy, w tym te przeciwne dalszemu zwiększaniu władzy Brukseli kosztem uprawnień państw narodowych. Szybko jednak okazała się ona narzędziem politycznym w rękach europejskich federalistów. Nie służy jako platforma wymiany pomysłów na przyszłość Unii, a jest narzędziem manipulacji mającym na celu forsowanie programu zwiększenia uprawnień instytucji unijnych i większej centralizacji władzy w UE oraz ograniczenia roli państw członkowskich.

Celem Konferencji jest legitymizacja programu politycznego dla scentralizowanej, federalnej Unii bez zmiany Traktatów, a więc z ominięciem demokratycznych procedur, a co za tym idzie ominięciem demokratycznej woli obywateli. Nie da się pogodzić zasad zapisanych w traktatach założycielskich UE, w tym pomocniczości, proporcjonalności, delegowanych kompetencji i demokracji przedstawicielskiej, z taką inżynierią społeczną, którą w Europie Wschodniej znamy aż nazbyt dobrze z czasów komunizmu. Nie można się zgodzić z tą wizją przyszłości Europy. Przekazywanie coraz większej władzy na poziom europejski jeszcze bardziej oddali Europejczyków od instytucji unijnych, zamiast zbliżyć Unię do obywateli.

Dlatego Grupa ECR wycofała się z Konferencji w sprawie przyszłości Europy. Udział w jej pracach prowadziłby do legitymizacji jej niepokojących założeń.

PREDSEDÁ: MICHAL ŠIMEČKA

podpredseda

13. Delegated acts (Rule 111(6)) (action taken)

Predsedaajúci. – Než prejdeme k ďalšiemu bodu, tak by som chcel povedať, že pokiaľ ide o to odporúčanie na rozhodnutie predložené výborom AGRI nevzniesť námietky voči delegovanému aktu, ktoré bolo oznámené na začiatku včerajšieho rokovania, neboli v lehote 24 hodín vznesené žiadne námietky. Podľa článku 111 ods. 6 sa preto odporúčanie považuje za schválené a uverejní sa spolu s prijatým textom.

14. EU preparedness against cyber-attacks following Russia's invasion of Ukraine (debate)

Predsedaajúci. – Ďalším bodom programu je vyhlásenie Komisie o pripravenosti EÚ na kybernetický útok v nadväznosti na ruskú inváziu na Ukrajinu (2022/2649(RSP)).

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, honourable Members, I would like to thank you all for putting this important point on the agenda.

As we speak, cyber-warfare is going on in our neighbourhood. It has started weeks before the Russian invasion and it continues. It is striking Ukraine's most critical infrastructure and networks with a double aim to further destabilise the country and demoralise its people.

Ukrainian websites have experienced a tenfold increase in attacks since the Russian invasion and on the day of the invasion itself, a cyberattack against the Viasat and KSAT satellite network used by the Ukrainian military and police caused disruption to thousands of customers that use these connectivity services. While, in the meantime, Ukraine is being targeted by Russian-aligned criminal ransomware gangs, which can only add to the volatility of the situation.

We are doing our utmost, together with my colleagues, to support Ukraine's cyber-resilience. The Commission and the European Action External Service have been coordinating with Member States and the private sector with the provision of technical assistance, equipment, software and relevant services, as per the needs of the Ukrainian Government.

Let me tell you that the case of Ukraine is not an isolated one. Over the last months and the year, our Member States have also been hit by waves of largescale cyberattacks targeting their most critical sectors from healthcare to telecom operators, to public administrations, to wind energy companies and health.

This is, unfortunately, the new reality of today's world. This is what we must face, and I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to set out our work to rise to this challenge.

Shielding our critical infrastructure against both physical and digital threats is our top priority. And let me put something very clearly up front in front of this House. It is more urgent than ever to adopt the revised Network Information Systems Directive, the so-called NIS2, together with our proposal for the renewed and modified Critical Entities Resilience Directive. These two proposals are two sides of the same coin. What is the point of putting all our efforts in protecting the networks of a nuclear power plant, if you can disrupt it by simply attacking its structures? I know that the negotiations on these two texts are progressing well, and I count on you to have them adopted as quickly as possible. They are needed now more than ever before.

I also take today's opportunity to make a very solemn plea for the scope of these proposals, to stay at the level of ambition that we envisaged with our original proposal of the Commission. It would be greatly inconsistent if we take public administration out of the scope of these pieces of legislation, because public administration would need to have it to maintain high security standards. Shielding our Union against cyber-threats also requires shielding our Single Market. We need to make sure that the digital products in our Single Market are sufficiently resilient against cyber-threats. This is why President von der Leyen announced in this House a few months ago a new Cyber Resilience Act, which will be presented by the end of this year.

We have put a lot of efforts into building EU preparedness. This has even inspired our like-minded partners on the other side of the Atlantic to step up their own approach. But clearly the key question is will we, the European Union, be able to react in the event of a large-scale cyberattack? Let me share with you my conviction that, yes, we can.

In the past years, we have set up a number of tools and mechanisms to ensure effective coordination, both at technical and operational levels. The so-called cybersecurity 'Blueprint' sets out how to make the full use of existing cybersecurity entities to facilitate cooperation between Member States and the EU institutions in responding to such incidents and crisis.

We also have set up at technical level an EU network of National Computer Emergency Response Teams, the CSIRT network, which, together with our own institutional CERT-EU network, perform a central role in ensuring the sharing of technical information on network incidents in line with a blueprint. Early this year, this network was put in partial activation mode.

We also have the Cyber Crisis Liaison Organisation Network (CyCLONe), which brings together national cyber-agencies where the Commission participates as an observer. As I was telling you a few minutes ago, the proposals aiming and revising the NIS Directive and the Critical Entities Resilience Directive could be also essential to present the Commission as a full member of CyCLONe, in order to represent the overall EU interest.

What we now need is to continue building precisely on this culture of sharing information and expertise between Member States and across the cybersecurity constituencies, to bring together our best cybersecurity experts and response teams to work together and coordinate our action at operational level and, where necessary, help those that need it the most. And this is precisely the purpose that should serve the Joint Cyber Unit which, together with my colleague, Thierry Breton, we have announced should be operationalised as soon as possible.

Any operation at EU level will also benefit from the additional firepower and brainpower that the expertise of our agencies bring. We are working closely with ENISA, which now has years of experience in threat identification, and with Europol's EC3, which is also working closely to counter malicious activities on the ground.

This is a true example of breaking the silos between the different strands of security to capitalise on all the knowledge and expertise available across the services and across Europe. This is precisely what our concept of an EU security union means – one single roof for all security-related policy action to be aligned far beyond and across vertical fiefdoms and vertical constituencies.

Another element that is of relevance to this debate is, of course, the heightened hybrid threat that is linked to disinformation. We have been urging, together with our External Action Service colleagues, the main platform signatories of the Code of Practice, to implement swiftly the Ukrainian-related sanctions and take further action to address the spread of war propaganda, lies and harmful disinformation related to the war.

All online platforms swiftly moved to suspend the transmission of Russia Today and Sputnik in the EU and to delist them from search engines. There are encouraging signs that the platforms have strengthened their monitoring and intervention tools to deprioritise disinformation content, remove the accounts of known disinformation purveyors, increase cooperation with fact checkers, and cut disinformation websites from advertising revenues. We shall keep monitoring progress in all these areas, and we will continue to push for more actions in our regular meetings with all major platforms.

Honourable Members, let me conclude by saying that the invasion of Ukraine has shown us a new side of war. From now on, war takes place not only on the battlefield but also in our information space, whether disinformation or cyberattack. These incidents have real life consequences for individual businesses, critical infrastructure, our society at large, and our democracy. Malicious cyber-activities, whether driven by political or criminal motives, not only threaten our economies, but also our model of society – what we stand for, our way of life, our freedoms and our values.

So now is the moment for a genuine step change in our collective response to these common threats. I am sure that you share with us the sense of urgency for greater efficiency and responsiveness of our mechanisms.

Eva Maydell, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, I believe cyberattacks are just another front in Putin's all-out attack against democracy and against democratic states. Every government, every company, every individual stands on the frontline of that war, of Putin's war.

I'm very proud that this Parliament is currently working to deliver on the NIS2 Directive, which could offer a real opportunity for Member States and industry to be able to collaborate. Of course, businesses will need the resources and the scale to tackle those very complex and hybrid tricks. The same applies to institutions and to agencies that assist at both national but also European level.

If cybercrime costed the world USD 1 trillion back in 2020 alone, well, I believe it's only common sense to significantly make sure that we increase investment in our critical infrastructure and, most importantly, digital defence. We simply have to wargame the various scenarios together with the Internet service providers, together with the telephone companies, to make sure we can repel potential attacks and make sure we can restore basic functions at an unprecedented speed. We also have to make sure we build greater resilience among our populations. And this we could do with more cyber and media literacy efforts.

This item has to be very high on the agenda of the European Council and during its next meeting in June. I am actually surprised that we do not see the Council present here today. European leaders should stop shying away from topics related to tech and cyber – because the effects of a cyberattack can be instant, can be devastating, and they could be very far-reaching, knowing no borders. So this is why there is no time to waste for us to increase our resilience.

Alex Agius Saliba, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, in the new digital world, we are facing new forms of aggression, taking the shape of hybrid and cyber warfare. We have witnessed destructive wiper attacks on hundreds of systems in the Ukrainian Government from IT, energy, financial organisations, nuclear plants, telecommunications to broadcasting companies. During the conflict, malicious cyberattacks have been a prominent component of Russian cyber operations, strongly correlated and sometimes directly timed with kinetic military operations, targeting services and institutions which are crucial for civilians, whether it is to steal data from nuclear plants or to cause chaotic disinformation in the environment, disrupting citizens' access to reliable information and critical life services, shaking confidence in the country's leadership.

All these cyberattacks are sparking concerns of more significant consequences and catastrophic effects that could also affect and target directly our European Union, our Member States. Every Member State, every EU organisation, large or small, must be prepared to respond to these disruptive incidents. Being prepared will ultimately protect civilians from attacks that can directly affect their lives and access to critical, important services.

Nathalie Loiseau, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Monsieur le Président, la guerre en Ukraine nous a ouvert les yeux. Dans nos relations avec la Russie, il y a un avant et un après le 24 février, date de l'agression militaire russe. Tant que Vladimir Poutine n'aura pas retiré ses troupes d'Ukraine et renoncé à menacer la sécurité de l'Europe, nous ne pourrons plus faire comme avant, plus faire comme si de rien n'était.

Quand je dis «nous», je pense d'abord à nos institutions européennes et en priorité à notre Parlement, dont nous sommes directement responsables. Je tiens à remercier notre présidente Roberta Metsola, qui s'est résolument engagée à renforcer la cybersécurité de notre Assemblée. Il était plus que temps: les cyberattaques nous ciblent sans répit, mais l'effort est engagé, et il faut l'encourager.

Ayant dit cela, je voudrais vous interpellier, chers collègues et en particulier les présidents de nos groupes politiques: nous devons prendre la sécurité de notre institution beaucoup plus au sérieux. Au moment où nous appelons à renforcer les sanctions à l'encontre de la Russie et l'aide à l'Ukraine, est-il normal que travaillent dans ce Parlement des doubles nationaux russes liés au pouvoir en place? Est-il raisonnable de traiter de sujets confidentiels en ligne sans savoir qui est connecté? Comment espérons-nous exercer un meilleur contrôle sur des sujets aussi importants que la défense européenne sans renforcer au préalable notre culture de sécurité?

Nous ne pouvons plus ignorer ce sujet. Renforcer notre sécurité, c'est renforcer notre crédibilité, notre efficacité, notre capacité à contrôler le travail du Conseil et de la Commission. C'est l'affaire de chacun d'entre nous, mais il est plus que temps de nous emparer du sujet et de comprendre qu'il n'est plus question de faire comme on a toujours fait, parce que vraiment on n'a pas fait assez.

Rasmus Andresen, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident! Bevor Kriegsverbrecher Putin am 24. Februar seine brutale Invasion in die Ukraine begonnen hat, wurde ukrainische Satellitenkommunikation von Hackergruppen angegriffen. Angriffe auf internationale Flughäfen, das finnische Verteidigungsministerium oder aber auch auf deutsche Windanlagen: Putins fürchterlicher Angriffskrieg findet seit Jahren auch online statt.

Es ist das erklärte Ziel von putintreuen Hackergruppen, unsere Infrastruktur anzugreifen und Desinformation zu verbreiten. Moderne Kriegsführung findet auch online statt. Wenn unser Stromnetz ausfällt oder Sicherheitsbehörden lahmgelegt werden, werden wir handlungsunfähig. Zur Wahrheit gehört auch, dass IT-Sicherheit bei öffentlichen Behörden und vielen Unternehmen eine zu geringe Rolle spielt.

Unsere kritische Infrastruktur in der EU ist extrem verwundbar. Es ist nur eine Frage der Zeit, bis Cyberattacken uns große Probleme bereiten werden. Als Schattenberichterstatter für die NIS-2-Richtlinie stelle ich auch während der aktuell laufenden Verhandlungen immer wieder fest, dass die Mitgliedstaaten nicht bereit sind, ausreichend aktiv zu werden.

Und ich bin auch Ihnen, Herr Kommissar, sehr dankbar dafür, dass Sie es gerade eben noch einmal deutlich gemacht haben und auch kritisiert haben, dass beispielsweise öffentliche Administrationen aus dem Anwendungsbereich herausgenommen werden sollen.

Wir brauchen einen besseren europäischen Austausch von Informationen bei Cyberattacken, verpflichtende Sicherheitsstandards für kritische Infrastruktur und Privatunternehmen und für Systeme wie Smart Home.

Anna Bonfrisco, *a nome del gruppo ID*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Vicepresidente Schinas, il tema della preparazione dell'Unione europea contro gli attacchi informatici a seguito dell'invasione russa in Ucraina è influenzato principalmente dal diverso livello e grado di preparazione degli Stati membri.

Stati membri forti fanno un'Unione forte, ma questo vale in tutti i campi, in tutti i settori e in tutti i domini. Anche l'attuale governo italiano ha aumentato la propria capacità, dando avvio all'Agenzia per la cibersicurezza nazionale, unificando tutte le attività di protezione dalle minacce informatiche, contribuendo così alla sicurezza dell'Unione europea. La cibersicurezza garantisce la difesa nazionale, la difesa dell'Unione europea, la stabilità socioeconomica, l'ordine democratico degli Stati, la coesione della società, il fatto che i cittadini possano contare su informazioni affidabili e rimanere psicologicamente integri, ovvero non perdano fiducia nella leadership dei loro paesi. Non solo, i cittadini europei devono contare su servizi vitali critici e devono essere difesi da spionaggio e disinformazione.

Nella guerra ibrida che si sta consumando in Ucraina abbiamo le prove degli attacchi letali della Federazione Russa. È nostro dovere aiutare il popolo e le organizzazioni ucraine a proteggersi. È nostro dovere estendere questo ombrello protettivo e capacitivo a tutti coloro che sono a noi affini e continuare nell'approfondimento con la NATO delle esercitazioni.

Ecco perché il mio appello permane perché si ponga fine alla disinformazione che affligge l'Unione europea perché forse troppo dimenticata da tutti noi.

Adam Bielan, *w imieniu grupy ECR*. – Panie Przewodniczący! W czasie obecnego bestialskiego ataku Rosji na Ukrainę Kreml nasilił jednocześnie taktykę wojny hybrydowej, w tym zakrojonej na szeroką skalę kampanii dezinformacyjnej. To po raz kolejny dowodzi, jak niezwykle ważną rolę zaczęła odgrywać technologia cyfrowa. Nikt nie ma już chyba wątpliwości, iż obecny reżim rosyjski, dążąc znowu do zmiany granic i odebrania suwerenności kolejnym krajom, zagraża stabilizacji i bezpieczeństwu już nie tylko w państwach sąsiednich, ale na całym kontynencie. Unia Europejska nie może już dłużej przyrywać oczu na to zagrożenie.

Dlatego również chciałbym wyrazić rozczarowanie absencją francuskiej prezydencji przy tak ważnej debacie. Czyżby po wyborach prezydenckich nie trzeba było się już starać? A właśnie w tej chwili potrzebujemy nie kolejnych telefonów do Putina, ale zdecydowanych działań na rzecz zwiększenia zdolności zapobiegania zagrożeniom hybrydowym płynącym z Rosji w obszarach takich jak terroryzm państwowy, cyberataki czy bezpieczeństwo energetyczne. Potrzebne są także dalsze kroki w celu umacniania współpracy Unii Europejskiej i NATO w zwalczaniu masowych ataków grup hakerskich. Wierzę, że wspólnie z naszymi sojusznikami będziemy w stanie przeciwstawić się totalitarnym zapędom Putina.

Özlem Demirel, *im Namen der Fraktion The Left*. – Herr Präsident! Mit jedem technologischen Fortschritt der Kriegsführung steigt die Zerstörungsgewalt, und es droht der Rückfall der Zivilisation.

Ein Cyberkrieg bedeutet, dass per Knopfdruck kritische Infrastruktur, Krankenhäuser etc. zerstört werden können. Dagegen muss man sich schützen können. Aber vor allem muss klar sein, dass diese Technologien nicht zur Kriegsführung eingesetzt werden dürfen – um unkontrollierbare Eskalationsspiralen zu verhindern. Denn was Eskalation statt Entspannungspolitik bedeutet, das sehen wir gerade in der Ukraine: ein zu verurteilender brutaler Angriffskrieg Russlands, für den es keine annehmbare Begründung gibt, dessen Ursachen aber im Vorfeld nicht abgebaut wurden.

Ja, Russland muss sofort raus aus der Ukraine. Aber mittlerweile ist unübersehbar, dass die NATO diesen widerlichen Angriffskrieg für eigene Geopolitik verwertet: zum Beispiel um hier massiv aufzurüsten oder mit Waffenlieferungen den Krieg in die Länge zu ziehen, um den Preis für einen imperialen Rivalen in die Höhe zu treiben. Es ist und bleibt ein innerimperialer Machtkampf, der mit dem Blutzoll der Ukrainer, aber auch auf dem Rücken der Völker weltweit ausgegossen wird. Die Gefahr eines Flächenbrandes steigt weiter.

Die große Politik entscheidet sich für Krieg. Aber es sind selten die Söhne und die Töchter der Eliten, die in diesen Kriegen bluten. Deshalb sage ich deutlich: Kehrt endlich zurück an den Tisch der Diplomatie, damit nicht noch mehr Menschen sterben und entheimatet werden! Stoppt diesen Krieg! Und das geht nur am Verhandlungstisch.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (NI). – Mr President, according to some analysts, after the Russian criminal invasion of Ukraine, cyberattacks against the EU and its Member States have increased by 1000%. It goes without saying that these numbers must represent a wake-up call for us.

The number one priority must be to pursue strategic autonomy and technological serenity, pledging adequate resources to this end. In particular, a shift of approach is really required. We can no longer focus only on hardware capabilities, but we need to include ambitious projects on the research and development of specific software. Otherwise, we will always remain dependent on third parties.

Second, we should insist on those success stories which already exist, such as ENISA, whose role should be further enhanced. At the same time, and even more in line with the prerogative of our House, we need to streamline cyber diplomacy with the final aim to create a safe, reliable and open cyberspace worldwide. The cyber domain represents the apotheosis of interconnection among EU Member States and, even more than in other fields, there are no individual countries that can boast a satisfactory and independent level of security. Let's make this field the pilot for further European integration.

Tom Berendsen (PPE). – Voorzitter, de dreiging van cyberaanvallen op onze kritieke infrastructuur en op onze economie is toegenomen. Cybercriminelen hebben bijvoorbeeld ons energiesysteem in het vizier en we weten dat daar een politieke agenda achter zit. Daar moeten we ons beter tegen wapenen en ik dank dan ook de commissaris voor de voorstellen die hij op dat gebied gedaan heeft. In het cyberdomein zijn aanvallers altijd op zoek naar zwakke plekken. En als verdediger moet je alles goed doen, terwijl je als aanvaller maar één zwakke plek nodig hebt. Daarom moeten we veel strategischer nadenken over welke partijen we in onze kritieke infrastructuur toelaten om het risico op mogelijke cyberaanvallen te verminderen.

Ik vind het ontzettend naïef dat we Chinese scanapparatuur gebruiken in Europese havens en op Europese luchthavens om mensen en goederen te controleren die onze grens passeren. Ik vind het naïef dat we Chinese communicatietechnologie gebruiken in onze kernnetwerken. Dit zijn domeinen waar we risico's moeten uitsluiten en de Europese industrie juist zouden moeten stimuleren. We zijn te lang naïef geweest in het beschermen van onze Europese ideeën, technologie en data. Economische veiligheid is niet alleen de verantwoordelijkheid van bedrijven zelf, het is een publiek belang. We zijn te kwetsbaar en laten we in Europa samenwerken om dat te verminderen.

Łukasz Kohut (S&D). – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! Chcesz pokoju, przygotuj się do wojny. Stare, ale jakże aktualne. Polityka obronna Unii Europejskiej to musi być teraz nasz priorytet. Mieliliśmy wiele szczęścia, prezydent Stanów Zjednoczonych jest demokratą z krwi i kości i podjął się trudnej roli koordynatora i lidera w czasach rosyjskiego ataku na Ukrainę. Ale nie zawsze tak będzie. Musimy sami jako Unia Europejska być gotowi na wyzwania i ataki tak wojskowe, jak i cybernetyczne. Putin czy inny dyktator wcale nie musi napadać zbrojnie, by siać zamęt i niszczyć Unię Europejską czy poszczególne kraje.

Kampania brexit, afera Cambridge Analytica, niejasne powiązania Ordo Iuris. Wiele wskazuje na to, że za tym wszystkim stoi Kreml i jego cybernetyczne macki. Pamiętajmy także o fabrykach trolli, które odpowiadają za dezinformację, hate speech i szkalowanie wartości demokratycznych. Musimy być gotowi na te wyzwania i pułapki. Musimy stworzyć system reagowania na te zmasowane cyberataki i rosyjski trolling w internecie.

Morten Løkkegaard (Renew). – Hr. formand! Som om Putins aktuelle krig med tanks, bombardementer og myrderier i Ukraine ikke var slem nok, så har krigen i cyberspace været en ødelæggende realitet allerede længe. Her gælder krigen ikke kun kritisk infrastruktur i Ukraine. Der rettes faktisk angreb mod virksomheder i Europa hvert 11. sekund, mine damer og herrer, hvert 11. sekund! Krigen i cyberspace afslører jo, at vi i Europa står svagt. Derfor er vi nødt til at skærpe vores cyberforsvar på flere planer.

Først og fremmest skal vi opdatere EU's regler for cybersikkerhed, så vi styrker virksomhedernes og myndighedernes forsvar. Det sker lige nu i den såkaldte Nice II-lov, som flere kolleger har omtalt – jeg har selv været med til at forhandle den – og nu kører trilog-forhandlingerne på fuld tryk mellem Rådet, Kommissionen og Europa-Parlamentet, og vi har da visse forventninger til resultatet, kommissær. Det er helt afgørende, at medlemslande og virksomheder accepterer, at vi er nødt til at stille strengere krav. Dernæst er vi nødt til at afskrække lande som Rusland fra at angribe os. Derfor har vi brug for at kunne vedtage fælles sanktioner mod lande uden for EU, som angriber medlemslandene i cyberspace. Endelig skal vi have et helt anderledes tæt samarbejde om at spore cyberangreb meget tidligere. Det er min klare forventning, at vi vil se initiativer fra Kommissionen om et tættere samarbejde inden længe.

Markéta Gregorová (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, I've seen many, many people cheer on the 'hactivist' group Anonymous when they wage their own war against Russians. When some of my friends travelled to Ukraine to help Ukrainians flee the country, others sit down behind a computer and show their heroism through ones and zeros. The same goes to other entities.

Ukraine built resilient cyber defence capabilities. The UK and US support Ukraine with their cyber mission teams. We are, however, nowhere to be seen in this field, even though each day I open the news, I see several new cyber attacks in Europe.

That brings the question: will our citizens have to hope that Anonymous will have the capacities to cover them too? Or are we prepared to protect our critical infrastructure, data and information space? My friends are nice and I am sure they will help if needed, but this is our political responsibility as long, as we support democracy that is.

Marco Dreosto (ID). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, le azioni e i preparativi dei cyber attacchi russi erano iniziate un anno prima dell'invasione in Ucraina, a conferma che il conflitto era stato pianificato con largo anticipo. È ora chiaro che vi sia un'attività sinergica delle attività di guerra cibernetiche russe, destinate a destabilizzare alcune infrastrutture sensibili e strategiche di un territorio che la Russia aveva intenzione di colpire.

Un'espansione a Occidente, fuori dai confini ucraini degli attacchi cyber è uno dei possibili scenari dello sviluppo del conflitto e sapendo che queste azioni sono state preparate nuovamente da Mosca con grande anticipo, è necessario evidentemente non trovarsi impreparati. Non è il caso di aspettare ulteriori tensioni con la Russia per predisporre un piano di risposta e contenimento di questi attacchi.

È necessario invece individuare immediatamente una strategia per alzare al massimo le nostre difese. Dobbiamo anche avere una visione di prospettiva, una visione che combatta la guerra cibernetica, che non finirà con la fine del conflitto in Ucraina, anzi probabilmente verrà inasprita.

È necessaria una maggiore cooperazione non solo tra gli Stati europei dell'Occidente intero, evidentemente, ma anche un rafforzamento di quella che è la cooperazione con gli storici alleati, gli Stati Uniti, ma anche il Regno Unito e le organizzazioni internazionali come la NATO. Solo con l'unità dell'Occidente potremo fronteggiare queste minacce ibride e difenderci così e difendere soprattutto le nostre infrastrutture sensibili e strategiche, poiché quando si parla di *cybersecurity* non si parla solo di sicurezza informatica in senso stretto, ma di una vera e propria sicurezza nazionale.

Witold Jan Waszczykowski (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Musimy odejść od marzeń, iż możemy budować bezpieczeństwo europejskie wraz z Rosją, z Rosją taką, jaką jest. Jeśli z Rosją, to oczywiście ze zmienionym demokratycznie reżimem. Pytam, czy mamy więc odwagę zmienić reżim w Rosji. Tak jak wielu tutaj ma odwagę i chęć zmienić rząd w Polsce. Musimy mieć zdolność właściwego odczytania intencji i polityki rosyjskiej. Po Czeczenii, Gruzji, Krymie większość Europy nie potrafiła rozpoznać zamiarów rosyjskich.

Potrzebujemy więc zdolności technicznej, ale przede wszystkim woli politycznej i realistycznego spojrzenia na Rosję. I wiedzy. Wola polityczna, wiedza, to potrzeba wiedzy o caracie, komunizmie i obecnej Rosji. Ulegamy często *fake newsom*, propagandzie, również tu na tej sali. Zdolności techniczne. Nie trzeba inwencji, by wynajdować koło czy proch, wystarczy powielić doświadczenia: Radia Wolna Europa, Radia Swoboda czy Voice of America.

Κώστας Παπαδάκης (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η ένταση των ανταγωνισμών ανάμεσα σε Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες, NATO και Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση με τη Ρωσία τρέφουν την κλιμάκωση της ιμπεριαλιστικής σύγκρουσης στην Ουκρανία και μέσα από τον λεγόμενο κυβερνοπόλεμο, που συνοδεύεται από τον πόλεμο προπαγάνδας και τη λογοκρισία και από τις δύο πλευρές. Η δήλωση του Επιτρόπου Σχοινά, στα εγκαίνια της νέας έδρας του Οργανισμού της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για την Κυβερνοασφάλεια στην Αθήνα, ότι ο πόλεμος δεν γίνεται μόνο στους δρόμους της Μαριούπολης, αλλά έχει ήδη ξεκινήσει και στο διαδίκτυο —το επανέλαβε και εδώ—, μαρτυρά ότι η Ελλάδα με τη συμβολή και όλων των ελληνικών κυβερνήσεων εμπλέκεται μέχρι τον καιρό στον πόλεμο.

Εκτός από το τεράστιο δίκτυο αμερικανονατοϊκών βάσεων-ορμηκτηρίων του ιμπεριαλιστικού πολέμου στην Ουκρανία, την αποστολή όπλων και στρατιωτικών δυνάμεων, όπως και τις κυρώσεις, από τη στιγμή που αποτελεί βασικό κυβερνοκέντρο της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, μπορεί να αποτελέσει εν δυνάμει και κυβερνοστόχο αντιποίνων, όπως για παράδειγμα έχει διακηρύξει η Ρωσία σε ανύποπτο χρόνο. Ενάντια στους επικίνδυνους ιμπεριαλιστικούς σχεδιασμούς, πρέπει να δυναμώσει η αυτοτελής πάλη του λαού, ώστε να απεμπλακεί η Ελλάδα από τον ιμπεριαλιστικό πόλεμο.

Othmar Karas (PPE). – Herr Präsident, meine Herren Vizepräsidenten, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Wir spüren es doch: Es ist Zeit aufzuwachen. Cyberkriegsführung beherrscht zunehmend unseren Alltag. Cyberattacken finden nicht nur gegenüber Ländern im Krieg statt. Bisher wurden 40 Cyberattacken Russlands registriert: gegen das Stromnetz, die Trinkwasserversorgung, die Wasserversorgungssysteme, militärische Koordinierungseinrichtungen und gegen kritische Infrastruktur in vielen anderen Ländern.

Wir benötigen aus diesem Grund eine gemeinsame EU-Cyberabwehr. Ich trete für eine gemeinsame Cyber-Defence-Einheit der EU ein. Und um konsequent und schnell gegen hybride Attacken und illegale Inhalte vorgehen zu können, braucht es eine Kompetenzerweiterung der Europäischen Union in diesem Bereich, eine Stärkung der Kapazitäten des Europäischen Zentrums für Cyberkriminalität von Europol und eine verbesserte Zusammenarbeit nationaler Sicherheits- und Nachrichtendienste.

Gleichzeitig müssen wir mehr in die Aufklärung und digitalen Kompetenzen unserer Bürgerinnen und Bürger investieren. Es geht darum, von klein auf zu lernen, unabhängig zu beurteilen, ob eine Information vertrauenswürdig ist oder nicht. Wir haben viel zu tun – gemeinsam.

Javi López (S&D). – Señor presidente, señor comisario, la guerra en Ucrania es una muestra más de cómo los ciberataques se han convertido en elementos del campo de batalla. Y, lamentablemente, van a formar parte del paisaje de las tensiones internacionales durante los próximos años.

Por eso, con buen criterio, la Brújula Estratégica nos explica cómo la ciberseguridad y los ciberataques son una de las principales amenazas a las que se enfrenta Europa. Una amenaza para su prosperidad, pero también una amenaza para su seguridad nacional e incluso para su democracia.

Por eso, tenemos que aprender a combatirlos con contundencia y determinación como europeos.

Aprender, ¿a qué?

Aprender, en primer lugar, a responder, teniendo herramientas claras para poder responder frente a los ciberataques. En segundo lugar, a resistir, que quiere decir proteger infraestructuras críticas y nuestros sistemas electorales. Y, en tercer lugar, atribuir claramente quién está detrás para luego poder aplicar sanciones.

Resistir, responder, atribuir. Todo ello para convertirse también en un actor geopolítico en el ámbito digital.

Ivars Ijabs (Renew). – Mr President, when Vladimir Putin plans a so-called ‘special military operation’, he probably hoped for a quick and victorious war. However, Ukrainian resistance turned out to be fierce and Western support for them is helping Ukrainians to fight back so heroically.

It is obvious now that Russia is going to use all possible non-conventional means to hurt Ukraine and its allies, and the increased intensity of cyber is clearly a case in point. They are affecting our critical infrastructure, water and electricity supply, transport, medicine and our supply chains. We shouldn’t be naive, as violent, cynical and inhumane as Putin’s regime is in a physical war, it is also going to be in the cyberspace.

What we need in Europe is to proceed swiftly with a new cyber resilience act. Let me emphasise two elements here. First, strengthening the cooperation between computer security incident response teams in the Member States, in identifying the threats timely, not being ‘behind’ the hackers.

Second, the development and coordination of offensive – not just defensive – capacities among Member States. It is very often crucial not just to block and prevent an attack. You have to be capable to seek out and to disrupt the malignant activities. This is what is needed to neutralise Putin’s army of cyber criminals.

Viola Von Cramon-Taubadel (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, before Russian bombs fell on Kyiv, Odesa and Mariupol, there were Russian cyber-attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure. Microsoft alone documented over 200 such attacks. In 2015, the Russian military intelligence hacker group, Sandworm, shut down critical infrastructure and triggered a power cut for thousands of Ukrainians. The Kremlin tried to repeat that trick two weeks ago but, thanks to the US, the attack could be prevented.

In times of hybrid warfare, the EU faces a new threat. We cannot always rely on the help of our allies or on the incompetence of our adversary. As we phase out Russian oil and gas, Putin will only intensify cyber-attacks on our energy sector.

The continent, Europe, of prosperity and highly educated people has all the resources needed to bolster European defence against cyber-attacks. However, we also need more political will and leadership. It is time to grow cyber-capabilities at home and not to outsource the development of hardware and software abroad.

Patryk Jaki (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! Trzeba przede wszystkim walczyć z dezinformacją na temat państw, które najbardziej pomagają Ukrainie, takich jak Polska. I to charakterystyczne, że atakujecie Polskę akurat w święto Konstytucji 3 Maja. I to jest wręcz niesamowite, jak historia lubi się powtarzać. Wtedy Zachód przestraszył się, że Polska z nową konstytucją i wolnością – której nie było nigdzie w Europie tyle ile w Polsce – bardzo szybko będzie coraz silniejsza, i postanowił razem z Rosją ją zniszczyć, oczywiście z pomocą swoich przekupnych Polaków z Targowicy.

Dzisiaj, 231 lat później, znów denerwują Was wolnościowe aspiracje Polaków. No i oczywiście to, że ciągle upominamy się o Ukrainę. I znów z pomocą swoich Polaków ku uciesze Rosji wprowadzacie kolejne projekty osłabienia Polski. Dlaczego? Bo chcecie powrotu do biznesu z Rosją. I to nie jest tak, jak tutaj mówiliście, że wszyscy chcemy tego samego. Nie. Wy chcecie, żeby ta wojna szybko się skończyła, a my chcemy, żeby Ukraina wygrała. To są dwie różne rzeczy. I jeszcze jedno: nie będziecie Polaków pouczać, Polaków, którzy dla Europy stworzyli pierwszą konstytucję, nie będziecie pouczać, czym jest wolność i czym jest praworządność. To od nas możecie się jej uczyć. Wiwat trzeci maj. Wiwat Konstytucja 3 maja.

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Mr President, cyberattacks are a fast-growing criminal activity. While the Russian invasion in Ukraine is mostly an offensive on the ground, experts warn for increasing cyberattacks as a countermeasure against our sanctions.

The EU has to be prepared. We cannot allow a reactive approach. We need a proactive cyber-defence. I regret to learn that the Court of Auditors recently concluded that the European Union bodies and agencies are insufficiently secured. A few days ago, the head of EU Cybersecurity Agency said that its incident reporting system is too bureaucratic and does not work.

I call on the negotiators of the update to the EU Directive on the security of network and information systems to address these issues and to provide the blueprint for a better-secured European Union. Digitalisation is crucial for our economic well-being, but the more we digitalise key infrastructures and critical sectors, the more vulnerable we get for cyber-criminality. We have called for a stronger European defence, and cybersecurity is an essential part of it.

Marina Kaljurand (S&D). – Lugupeetud istungi juhataja!

Venemaa hübriid-, info- ja küberrünnakud ei ole midagi uut, Venemaa on neid aastakümneid kasutanud oma poliitiliste eesmärkide saavutamiseks ning Ukraina on aastaid olnud Vene küberrünnakute katsepolügooniks. On igati tervitatav, et Euroopa Liit reageeris juba enne 24. veebruari agressiooni ning lähetas Ukrainasse küberreageerimise rühma. Ukraina abistamist tuleb jätkata. Samas ei tohi unustada Euroopa Liidu enda ja liikmesriikide kübervõimekust ja küberkaitset. ENISA, Euroopa Liidu strateegiline kompass tunnistavad puudusi nendes valdkondades, selles kontekstis tahaksin rõhutada kolme punkti. Esiteks, küberjulgeolek peab saama poliitiliseks prioriteediks koos selleks vajalike rahaliste ja inimressurssidega. Teiseks tuleb parandada infovahetust ja koostööd NATOga ja kolmandaks, Venemaa rünnakud ei tohi jääda vastuseta. On oluline neile reageerida, alustades rünnakute avalikustamisest ja omistamisest ning lõpetades ühiste vastumeetmetega.

Anna Júlia Donáth (Renew). – Tisztelt Elnök úr! Gyakran éri az Európai Uniót az a kritika, hogy túl lassú, túl bürokratikus, ezért döntésképtelen és gyenge. Ha volt is alapja ezeknek a kritikáknak és vádaknak, az Ukrajna elleni orosz agresszió sok negatív sztereotípiát elfeledtetett. Európa ugyanis megmutatta, hogy milyen az, amikor félreteszi a túlzott bürokráciát és nagyhatalomként kezd el viselkedni. Ez azért is kritikusan fontos, mert egy egységes, az orosz befolyástól megszabaduló Európától ma talán jobban tart Putyin, mint a NATO-tól. De 2022-ben ideje lenne a kibertérben is egy egységes nagyhatalomként fellépniünk. Ennek érdekében közösen kell felépítenünk egy digitális pajzsot Európa köré, és gyorsan kell lépniünk. Pár hete ugyanis kiderült például, hogy Putyin évek óta benne van a magyar külügyminisztérium összes digitális rendszerében, még a legtitkosabb információkhoz is hozzáférnek. Mindezt a magyar kormány tudta, ami mind Európa mind a NATO biztonságát aláássa. Éppen ezért a 21. században nem kevesebb, hanem több Európára van szükség. Szabadítsuk meg Magyarországot és Európát az orosz befolyástól és végre viselkedjünk nagyhatalomként a modern háborúk legújabb színterén, a kibertérben is.

Kosma Złotowski (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! Szanowni Państwo! Rosja toczy wojnę w cyberzestrzeni przeciwko Unii Europejskiej od wielu lat. Agresja na Ukrainę była poprzedzona atakami hakerskimi na instytucje publiczne, urzędników państwowych i infrastrukturę krytyczną w wielu państwach członkowskich, także w Polsce. Budowanie odporności na konflikt, który toczy się w internecie, to kwestia fundamentalna dla naszego bezpieczeństwa. Warto wykorzystać w tym celu potencjał zaawansowanych technologii, w tym także sztucznej inteligencji.

Mamy europejskie firmy, które mogą dostarczyć odpowiednich narzędzi z obszaru cyberbezpieczeństwa w kontekście militarnym, jak i cywilnym. Ale musimy im stworzyć odpowiednie warunki rozwoju. Projekt AI Act, nad którym właśnie pracujemy, to doskonała okazja, aby to zrobić i ułatwić prowadzenie badań i inwestowanie w środki służące do ochrony przed cyberatakami.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – A Uachtaráin, cyber-attacks from Russia did not start on 24 February, nor will they end when the war ends in Ukraine. Europe must be prepared for the war to expand online, with critical infrastructure at risk. As technology advances and becomes further intertwined into our economies and infrastructure, we must be aware that cyber-threats are also rapidly evolving in nature and sophistication.

The EU and all Member States need a digital security architecture to defend us robustly against cyber-attacks. Ireland is a neutral country. Yet in May 2021, our health-care systems suffered the biggest cyber-attack in the history of the State. This affected most of the country's health services, including coronavirus testing, maternal care services, cancer care, COVID-19 tracking and routine referrals for secondary care at a time when the whole system was under pressure.

This, it appears, was at the hands of Russian hackers and criminals. This has led to a shift in thinking in Ireland, as we've seen that neutrality per se doesn't mean that you're exempt from Russian attacks. We have to take our defence much more seriously, within the confines of neutrality. Cyber-defence should be a priority, which means investment. That is what we must do.

Pina Picierno (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, in questo tempo inedito, complesso, difficile, abbiamo imparato che sono tante le cose che noi possiamo classificare come guerra, dai missili che stanno colpendo in questi minuti Leopoli – e da quest'Aula vorrei che giungesse la solidarietà al sindaco, alla popolazione colpita esattamente in questi minuti, mentre noi discutiamo.

Ai vecchi strumenti di propaganda, di disinformazione, agli stivali nel fango delle invasioni della fanteria, che abbiamo riscoperto esistere in questi mesi, fino alle minacce di cui discutiamo stasera che corrono lungo le fibre del mondo, la cosiddetta guerra ibrida. Abbiamo imparato a conoscerla in questi mesi, e nonostante il fatto che la natura di questo conflitto sia articolata, complicata, le risposte delle nostre istituzioni devono essere unitarie e forti, dall'alleanza sempre più strutturale tra gli Stati membri, fino a strumenti inediti di difesa contro le aggressioni ingiustificate e brutali di Putin. E su questo ci faremo trovare ancora una volta pronti.

Petras Auštrevičius (Renew). – Mr President, Russia's military and hybrid aggression against Ukraine only confirms the global nature and importance of cybersecurity. Russia's direct and indirect attacks against Ukraine have also increased the impact of the ongoing 'Cold hybrid war' on the West.

Detering cyber threats emanating from Russia and its allies, such as Belarus – don't forget that – requires immediate attention to strengthening the EU's cyber resilience. We need to reassess existing threats and take the necessary decisions to protect our critical infrastructure and, more importantly, our people.

We need to understand that cyber threats are here to stay and can have serious consequences if not properly addressed. We must pay particular attention to protecting our information space and our people from Russian trolls and attempts to interfere in our democratic processes by manipulating public opinion.

With Russia waging a brutal war against democracy and freedom in Ukraine, we no longer have the luxury of talking about action. Now it's time to act and ensure the EU's and our partners' cybersecurity.

Tonino Picula (S&D). – Mr President, we are all aware that wars are not limited to traditional types of warfare. The Russian invasion on Ukraine is just an evident example. The Kremlin started testing its tactics in Ukraine many years ago, targeting even a power grid. Disinformation examples are well-known, and particularly Russia disseminated 70% of all disinformation and fake news lately.

Russian state-sponsored hackers and cybercriminals are still increasing their presence. They are very keen to target critical infrastructure.

Those are basically the same actors, with the same intentions, that launched cyberattacks during the COVID pandemic, on hospitals or our Medicines Agency.

That's why it is of utmost importance to be prepared. These attacks may have unimaginable repercussions and our unity is a prerequisite for safety. Therefore, EU cybersecurity needs to be shown in practice. We absolutely have to support our Agency for Cybersecurity to strengthen the capacities of our Member States. With enough efforts and enough resources. Otherwise, we risk too much.

Vlad Gheorghe (Renew). – Domnule președinte, în 2022, cu război la graniță, ne întrebăm dacă suntem pregătiți pentru atacuri cibernetice. Deși pandemia ne-a arătat exact ce vulnerabili suntem, ne-a costat enorm că nu aveam deja o Uniune a Sănătății, că nu am digitalizat suficient, că nu am digitalizat integral.

Digitalizarea înseamnă deschiderea statului pentru oameni, înseamnă transparență, rapiditate, debirocratizare, mai puțină corupție, dacă digitalizăm cum trebuie, nu doar să bifăm niște indicatori. După doi ani de *online*, instituțiile naționale, dar și europene, tot cer dosar cu șină.

Suntem pregătiți pentru atacurile Rusiei? Cu siguranță nu. Dar de ce? Discutăm de zeci de ori până luăm o decizie. Stăm ani de zile cu propuneri la sertar. Negociem după interese de partid sau de grup, nu ale tuturor europenilor. Ascultăm politrucii din birouri, nu profesioniști din teren. De asta nu suntem pregătiți. Nu vom fi până nu schimbăm ceva, modul de lucru, iar cetățenii ne vor spune la vot până înțelegem.

Adriana Maldonado López (S&D). – Señor presidente, señor comisario, la ciberseguridad es una cuestión de democracia. Ahora mismo, la guerra que vivimos, que afecta a niños, mujeres y hombres, tiene rostros, pero también el rostro de la informática. Por ello, la Unión Europea tiene que estar a la altura de las circunstancias.

Ucrania se está enfrentando a ciberataques nunca antes vistos al ministerio de Defensa y también a la banca.

La Unión Europea tiene el reto de actualizar su Estrategia de Ciberseguridad. Es importante, y lo decía el comisario, actualizar la Directiva sobre Ciberseguridad.

Necesitamos estar a la altura de las circunstancias, pero también debemos hacer un análisis más profundo de qué consideramos infraestructuras críticas. Ya no se trata de las infraestructuras tradicionales, las centrales nucleares, las cadenas de valor o, por ejemplo, las centrales eléctricas, sino que ahora también entre esas infraestructuras críticas figuran la digitalización, los sistemas bancarios y también los sistemas electorales.

La Unión Europea tiene que ser capaz de dar una respuesta coordinada y proteger su mercado único. La guerra y la ciberseguridad cada día también están más de la mano. La Unión Europea debe ser más digital y proteger su ciberseguridad.

Andreas Schieder (S&D). – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, sehr geehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Hiermit schon ausreichend gehört: die Cyberattacken Russlands, und Europa ist nicht genügend vorbereitet. Ich möchte aber eine andere, zusätzliche Frage stellen, nämlich: Sind wir als europäische Demokratie, als freie Welt in der Lage, der russischen Zivilbevölkerung die Wahrheit zu übermitteln?

Wir kennen den Informationskrieg, den Krieg und Angriff auf die Demokratie, auf die Ukraine in Europa, aber auch auf die Pressefreiheit in Russland, die das erste Opfer von Putins Diktatur geworden ist. Wir kennen die tausenden Demonstrantinnen und Demonstranten, die in Russland gegen den Krieg demonstriert haben und dafür von Putins Polizei eingesperrt wurden.

Und was wir auch brauchen, sind Kanäle, digitale und Informationskanäle, die die unverfälschte Lage – die Wahrheit, wenn man so will – in die Wohnzimmer der Russinnen und Russen bringen. Weil auch das ist notwendig, damit die Zivilbevölkerung in Russland aufwachen kann.

Isabel Santos (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, a guerra na Ucrânia e os ciberataques que a precederam e a acompanham mostram a necessidade de a Europa aumentar a sua capacidade de proteção das infraestruturas críticas e de resposta a este tipo de ataques.

A Rússia tem mostrado capacidade de levar ataques altamente disruptivos e verdadeiras campanhas de desinformação, causando problemas não só à população ucraniana, mas também aos Estados-Membros da União Europeia e às nossas democracias.

Tal como no campo militar, também na cibersegurança a União Europeia necessita de criar mecanismos comuns de defesa e resposta a ciberataques e de aprofundar o diálogo com os nossos aliados. Só juntos, mobilizando os Estados, a administração pública, as empresas, os especialistas, seremos capazes de proteger as nossas infraestruturas e o nosso modelo de sociedade.

Temos de fazer mais e investir mais. Não podemos adiar.

Pierfrancesco Majorino (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la terrificante guerra di Putin porta con sé un carico di violenza e morte che si presenta ogni giorno di fronte ai nostri occhi.

Siamo però davanti – ed è bene esserne fino in fondo consapevoli – ad una guerra multidimensionale che è giocata anche su campi meno visibili, assumendo quindi anche la forma di una guerra informatica, ibrida, cibernetica.

Su questo terreno già da diversi anni, per la verità, assistiamo ai tentativi stranieri di condizionare i processi democratici dell'Unione europea. E dobbiamo aprire gli occhi di più. Occorre un investimento enorme per aumentare rapidamente capacità e competenze strategiche in questo campo, con un'attenzione particolare alle infrastrutture critiche. Ciò deve essere parte integrante di un progetto comune di sicurezza e difesa e di una controffensiva – come diceva giustamente l'onorevole Schieder – riguardanti il sostegno attivo alle voci libere in Russia.

Noi dobbiamo sostenere anche su questi terreni chi si oppone in Russia alla terrificante guerra di Putin.

Vystúpenia podľa postupu prihlásenia sa o slovo zdvihnutím ruky

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, avansul tehnologic ne-a adus oportunități extraordinare și ne-a schimbat mult viața în bine, însă vedem că atunci când state precum Federația Rusă utilizează instrumentele moderne pentru a ataca state, pentru a ataca entități, pentru a pune în pericol democrația europeană, acest lucru necesită un răspuns rapid și unit.

Este esențial ca Uniunea Europeană să își creeze o unitate de cibernetică comună pentru că avem nevoie de apărare comună pe acest teren extrem de periculos. Zilele trecute, mii de atacuri cibernetice au fost îndreptate împotriva României și cred că este absolut esențial să înțelegem că acest inamic pe care îl avem, acest imperiu condus de un criminal devine din ce în ce mai periculos și avem nevoie de instrumente moderne pentru a ne apăra zi de zi valorile și democrația.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señor presidente, vicepresidente Schinas, el vertiginoso suceso de la guerra de Putin contra Ucrania ha venido a cambiarlo todo, desde lo local a lo global.

Leemos mucho estos días y escuchamos mucho acerca de la conducción de la guerra en el plano militar, por tanto, en el plano bélico, pero hay otras guerras de Putin donde se libra una batalla en la que Rusia es una superpotencia como en lo nuclear, principalmente en la desinformación y en la manipulación. Porque Putin controla autocráticamente los medios de comunicación públicos y privados, sin contrapesos y, por supuesto, da la batalla del relato, como vimos en la comisión que pusimos en marcha sobre la manipulación e injerencia de Rusia en los procesos democráticos y electorales en la Unión Europea, que arrojó algunas lecciones concluyentes: la necesidad de legislar a nivel europeo, la necesidad de proteger a la ciudadanía europea frente a las *fake news* y a las *deep fakes*, también la transparencia en los algoritmos, sanciones eficaces y disuasorias, pero, sobre todo, una inversión suficiente en materia de ciberseguridad que proteja los valores y la seguridad europea frente a los ataques a sus infraestructuras críticas y a sus procesos democráticos.

Clare Daly (The Left). – Mr President, I think if we are worried about cybersecurity, then it's a mistake to think of it solely in terms of cyber defence. Not all cybersecurity threats are state actors. Some are purely engineering problems. Some are problems with how our economy works. And we're approaching everything as a defence issue. We may overlook this and undermine our actual cybersecurity.

We have allowed a thriving private sector to enrich itself on cyber-surveillance technology. We've seen an offence of hacking software proliferating. This has led us to Pegasus and so on. We've seen Western intelligence agencies tasked with cyber defence who, instead of reporting bugs in software, stockpiled them and they are then released afterwards to criminal gangs. And this is a good example because Vladimir Putin is no more responsible for the hack on the Irish health service than the Irish Prime Minister is for the criminal actions of the Kinahan crime gang. This was an attack on a weak system, with basic IT security practices, no updating of systems, no updating of software. If we allowed the depletion of this vital infrastructure, devoid of public infrastructure, it would be open to public attack by criminal gangs and we must protect ourselves better.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, i já se připojuji k volání svých kolegů po nepřijatelnosti těchto útoků a samozřejmě po zvyšování odolnosti našeho kybernetického bezpečí. Bohužel, tak trochu vidíme naši slabost a evropskou kybernetickou bezpečnost v praxi. Určitě každý členský stát EU podléhá zranitelnosti a viděli jsme tyto útoky v praxi. V mé zemi to nejsou jenom útoky na vládní úřady, ale jsou to dokonce útoky na nemocnice, na dopravní společnosti. Musíme si uvědomit, jak vážnou hrozbu tyto útoky přinášejí i našim členským státům a jejich občanům, firmám a institucím. Zároveň bychom měli budovat odolnost našeho systému a připravenost na tyto útoky a také změnit naše směrnice, jak o tom hovořili naši kolegové. Kybernetická bezpečnost je součástí naší kritické infrastruktury. A měli bychom také pomoci Ukrajině, protože já skutečně vnímám to, že my máme agenturu EU pro kosmický program, ale internet na Ukrajině zachraňoval Elon Musk. Myslím si, že bychom se měli nad tím vážně zamyslet.

(Ukončenie vystúpení podľa postupu prihlásenia o slovo zdvihnutím ruky)

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the Commission. – Mr President, thank you for this rich debate. This is a defining moment for a Europe that protects. We are now at a crossroads.

What is happening in Ukraine and in our neighbourhood is not isolated. It is a sign of things to come. It prefigures what modern warfare will be like. Cyber-security is no longer a side tech issue of concern to the specialists. It is a fundamental pillar of the security of our economies, of our societies and of our democracies. It has nothing to do with industry. It has a lot to do with democracy.

We have no time to lose if we want our Union to be prepared, resilient and able to respond to these threats. The perpetrators will not wait for us. We need to work together, now more than ever, and put in full motion what we have already identified and announced in our 2020 EU cyber-security strategy. The whole lot leads to critical infrastructures, the Cyber Resilience Act, the cyber-security skills gaps and, of course, investment. These are the foundations of our European cybersecurity shield.

But, even more importantly, this is now the moment to move from a cyber-shield to an actual cyber-defence capability, and I am sure that we will be able to rise to this challenge.

Let me conclude with a final point. Members of the European Parliament, Mr Waszczykowski and Mr Papadakis, after thousands of dead, after bombarding the innocent and the vulnerable, after five million Ukrainian refugees that have been kicked out of their homes, in today's debate suggested that we should be 'realistic' with Russia. That's their assessment of what needs to be done

Well, with all respect, I think it's not us that have to be realistic with Russia. It's Russia that has to be respectful to us, and they should stop warfare now, be it with bombs, cannons or with computers. The best moment to stop is now.

Predsedajúci. – Rozprava sa skončila.

15. Impact of Russian illegal war of aggression against Ukraine on the EU transport and tourism sectors (debate)

Predsedajúci. – Ďalším bodom programu je vyhlásenie Komisie o vplyve nezákonnej agresívnej ruskej vojny proti Ukrajine na odvetvie dopravy a cestovného ruchu EÚ (2022/2643(RSP)).

Ylva Johansson, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, honourable Members, the Commission would like to thank Parliament – in particular the Transport and Tourism Committee for having tabled this important and most timely resolution. Unfortunately, Commissioner Vălean was unable to be here this evening, so on her behalf please allow me to begin by putting this resolution into context.

Through its unprovoked and unjustified military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and undermining European and global security and stability. The loss of life and human suffering is difficult to comprehend. The Commission condemns this aggression in the strongest possible terms. The transport sector and the individuals that keep it running are among the many victims of this needless violence. Ukraine's airports are barely functioning. Its ports are blocked, impeding the delivery of food and grain in particular. And railway lines continue to be the targets of attack. Commercial maritime vessels have also been bombed.

At the same time, we can be proud of the way that our EU transport sector has responded to the crisis, carrying supplies to Ukraine while ferrying Ukrainians to safety, often for free. Transport operators and workers have shown us the meaning of the word solidarity. Commissioner Vălean herself witnessed the great efforts of our transport community during her visit to the Polish Ukrainian border on 11 March.

The Commission has fully supported these actions. We have applied maximum flexibility to road transport legislation, lifting toll obligations and relaxing driving- and rest-time rules. We have also issued guidelines on simplifying border checks for individuals such as transport workers, if the conditions allow. We are also recommending special lanes for lorries and we will need to ask the road transport sector to help Ukraine again, along with the rail and inland waterways sectors. With most of Ukraine's sea ports out of bounds, we need to find other ways for Ukraine to export its goods into the EU. We are working in close collaboration with the Ukraine Support Group and Member States to identify how best to redirect freight transport, and we have already asked the Council for a mandate to negotiate an agreement with Ukraine and Moldova on the transport of goods by road.

This is a first step and we are confident that we will be able to start negotiations with both partners quickly. The agreement will also address EU recognition of driving licences and professional certificates issued in Ukraine. The Commission calls on the European Parliament to give its consent swiftly. We need the agreements to be in place within weeks, for our friends in Ukraine and for food security elsewhere.

When considering the many impacts of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the people of Ukraine must always be first and foremost in our minds, as well as the very serious effect on the transport sector. Rising fuel costs are a very visible and direct impact on most transport modes and their users. But let us not forget: for the services that previously crossed Ukraine, the Black Sea, Russia, Belarus, rerouting also pushes costs upwards, and we are also seeing disruptions in our supply chains, including for food. It is clear that the war is having an impact, but for the time being, it's difficult to quantify that impact. The Commission is closely monitoring the situation for transport and tourism and is working around the clock to mitigate the impacts. Asking slot coordinators to provide air carriers with sufficient flexibility to re-time their slots for routes affected by the war is just one example.

The tourism ecosystem has been among the most impacted by COVID and now faces further uncertainties due to the Russian aggression on Ukraine. While we have rather reassuring evidence for the upcoming summer seasons showing an overall strong demand for travel within the EU, you rightly mention in your resolution that Member States bordering Ukraine are facing particular difficulties due to the perceived risk of the military activities expanding. Nevertheless, the governments and businesses of these countries have shown particularly strong solidarity with Ukraine by hosting Ukrainian refugees and facilitating their employment and integration. In this context, the Commission has provided a number of measures to urgently redirect EU funds in support of these efforts to help Ukrainian refugees and to provide relief for businesses due to rising energy costs, in particular the temporary state aid crisis framework in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the 'Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE)', allowing flexible and speedy relocation of available funding to such emergency support. Hotels and other accommodations can benefit from this support.

The Commission is committed to continue its support to the EU tourist ecosystem by addressing the lasting impacts of the pandemic and of the Russian war, as well as facilitating recovery and transformation of the sector towards increased sustainability and resilience to the future shocks through the implementation of the transition pathway for tourism.

While our transport and tourism sectors are certainly feeling the effects of Russian aggression, the impact is even greater for Russia. International Russian civil aviation connections have been drastically reduced. And closer to home, there are now no flights operated over EU territory by Russian or Belarusian registered aircraft. We are also working on securing the same conditions for aircraft registered in third countries, but under Russian ownership.

In road transport we are watching closely to ensure that the current situation is being observed by all parties. The same applies to maritime transport for both access to EU ports and export restrictions on certain vessels and marine equipment.

In rail transport Russian railways have been added to the list of legal entities and bodies subject to financial restrictions. And if the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate, I can assure you that the Commission will not hesitate to introduce additional measures.

So let me conclude again by thanking you very much for this opportunity to address you on this crucial issue. I very much look forward to your comments and questions.

Pablo Arias Echeverría (PPE). – Mr President, thank you very much. We have problems with the Spanish translation. So it's coming and going and we cannot follow the debate without the translation. In English it's still fine, but if somebody else is going to use other languages, we have problems with that. If you can fix it, please.

Marian-Jean Marinescu, în numele grupului PPE. – Domnule președinte, transportul european se luptă încă cu efectele pandemiei COVID-19, suportă cu greu presiunea schimbărilor cerute de *Green Deal* și, în același timp, trebuie să facă față consecințelor sancțiunilor împotriva Rusiei care, în pachetul al cincilea, vizează semnificativ transportul aerian și maritim.

Trebuie să acționăm rapid pentru a sprijini transportul, atât pentru a menține mobilitatea în Uniune și funcționarea economiei la nivel normal, cât și pentru a putea continua să ajutăm Ucraina.

Sper ca acest război să se încheie cu victoria Ucrainei și cu acceptarea noii realități. Rusia nu mai poate fi acceptată drept partener al Uniunii în niciun domeniu.

Comisia trebuie să reconfigureze programele astfel încât să îmbunătățim conectarea cu estul Europei. Trebuie să extindă rețeaua TEN-T către Republica Moldova, Ucraina și Georgia și să redeseneze hărțile de transport către estul Europei. EIB trebuie să propună un program de investiții pentru Ucraina, Moldova și Georgia.

Trebuie să creștem bugetul alocat mobilității militare, prin Facilitatea de conectare a Europei, buget redus drastic de Consiliu și care acum se dovedește a fi o mare greșală. Se pot utiliza fondurile din pilonul II al RRF, care nu sunt utilizate în acest moment.

Petar Vitanov, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Mr President, in today's unprecedented crisis, transport is a strategic tool for the EU to provide solidarity and support to Ukraine and its suffering people, in terms of logistics, humanitarian aid and refugees' evacuation and mobility.

Moreover, the rising fuel prices following the pandemic have been further exacerbated by the economic sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation. Higher prices for fuels and products will impact households and possibly lead to increased energy and transport poverty, but they will also have an impact on transport workers. And our reaction needs to show solidarity between all EU Member States, to our citizens, workers, families and vulnerable groups.

Proactive and preventive measures are crucially needed to support our citizens through the transition, including key incentives or direct support to keep their jobs, change their vehicles, make their homes efficient, and their fuels affordable. Our transition to climate neutrality is our transition to energy independence, which is now needed more than ever.

However, the transition can be called sustainable only if it shields the humble and vulnerable.

José Ramón Bauzá Díaz, en nombre del Grupo Renew. – Señor presidente, señora comisaria, está claro que la guerra de Putin no solo se libra en Ucrania y que la Unión Europea dispone de mecanismos más que suficientes para debilitar más al régimen de Moscú: sanciones, sanciones y más sanciones.

Pero no debemos olvidar que todo ello tiene un coste y que puede situarnos al borde del abismo económico y también suponer el colapso de nuestro propio sistema energético.

Las sanciones, que son absolutamente necesarias, tienen consecuencias para nuestra red logística, para nuestra cadena de suministro y para nuestro transporte. Cada día incrementan más y más el precio del combustible y del gas, de manera desorbitada.

Señorías, acabemos de una vez por todas con la dependencia del gas y del petróleo ruso, pero también, preparémonos para el almacenamiento de ese gas y de ese petróleo a medio y largo plazo, especialmente en el invierno.

Para ello existe una solución, una solución alternativa viable, 100 % europea y estratégica, que también contrarresta los cortes de suministro de Putin y que nos permite acabar con la dependencia del gas ruso. Esa solución es España.

España cuenta con una capacidad de almacenamiento de gas y de petróleo única en Europa, de gas y de regasificación, capaz de importar gas natural licuado de cualquier otro mercado y de convertirse en la puerta de entrada del gas a Europa. Tiene seis plantas gasísticas únicas en Europa.

Sin embargo, existe un cuello de botella: la falta de conexión más allá de los Pirineos en lo que es el Sistema Central Europeo de Conexión. Lo que se necesita se llama «proyecto Midcat».

Señorías, en momentos de crisis hace falta voluntad política, y de igual modo que pedimos sanciones, que son absolutamente necesarias, no podemos tener la osadía de pedir sacrificios innecesarios a los ciudadanos europeos, sobre todo si no hemos hecho todo lo humanamente posible para que eso sea así.

Señorías, en este caso aún no lo hemos intentado todo. Precisamente esa oportunidad para España y para Europa es el proyecto Midcat.

Señorías, ahora ya no podemos echar la culpa a los demás. Depende de la voluntad política y depende de nosotros.

Ciarán Cuffe, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, I want to pay tribute to the transport workers who risk their lives to keep transport in Ukraine running, without which millions of refugees would not have been able to flee Putin's aggression, without which goods and supplies would not be able to go to where they are needed most, without which countless more lives would have been lost.

Putin's armed forces have cruelly targeted transport vehicles and infrastructure, with tragic loss of human life. Almost one third of Ukraine's infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, at a cost of EUR 100 billion. Bridges, highways, railways, airports and ports have been devastated. And that is why the European Union must provide a new Marshall plan to rebuild Ukraine and boost renewables.

We can help keep the Ukrainian transport sector intact and operating, but we need to help it rebuild from the damage caused and maintain open links with the European Union. These vital arteries are needed to help keep people alive.

So I repeat: the European Commission and Member States need to come forward with a new Marshall plan to rebuild Ukraine, to boost renewables, to wean us off oil and gas, and specifically Putin's oil and gas, now and forever to protect Ukraine and the planet. Glory to Ukraine.

Danilo Oscar Lancini, *a nome del gruppo ID*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ferma restando la condanna unanime dell'invasione da parte della Russia e la necessità di intervenire con i mezzi pacifici a nostra disposizione al fine di fermare questa dannosa guerra, appare evidente che il continuo invio di armi all'Ucraina stia evidenziando che non si accorciano i tempi per la pace, ma si allungano solo le file dei morti.

Se l'invio di armi è volto a indebolire la Russia, allora la pace è lontana. L'escalation dei toni nei rapporti diplomatici con la Russia fa il gioco dei guerrafondai che stanno a 10 000 chilometri di distanza dal conflitto, quegli stessi che non rischiano alcuna penalizzazione energetica, ma che stanno di certo facendo il loro interesse economico e geopolitico sulle spalle di migliaia di morti.

L'Europa con coraggio deve cominciare a vivere ed esistere in autonomia, senza subire influenze di alcun tipo da chicchessia. Noi invece, continuando con l'attuale atteggiamento, rischiamo di compromettere anche gli obiettivi che con ambizione ci siamo prefissati con il *New Green Deal*. La carenza di fonti energetiche necessarie alla transizione non accelera di certo il processo, ma lo mina irreversibilmente, perché acquistare gas liquefatto dall'America con costi maggiori del 30 per cento e soprattutto maggiori emissioni inquinanti di trasporto e di estrazioni non solo rappresenta un affare per gli USA e un cerotto per l'Europa, ma va nella direzione opposta rispetto agli obiettivi prefissati in tema ambientale.

Roberts Zīle, *ECR grupas vārdā*. – Priekšsēdētāja kungs! Godātā komisāres kundze! Noteikti transporta jomā Eiropas Komisija un dalībvalstis kopš kara sākuma ir izdarījušas daudz vairāk kā, piemēram, enerģētikas jomā. Taču neapšaubāmi ir vairāki jautājumi, kas ir ārkārtīgi svarīgi tuvākajā laikā transporta politikā vidējā termiņā. Mēs pašlaik pārskatām TEN-T revīziju, un tāpēc ir jādod neatgriezeniskas ģeopolitiskas izmaiņas šajā TEN-T koridora projektā, svītrojot no tā jebkura veida koridora ieguldījumus, kas attiecas uz Krievijas vai Baltkrievijas virzienā, un aizvietojo to ar Ukrainas, Moldovas un Gruzijas virzieniem.

Otrkārt, mobilitātes budžets un MEF ir kļūda, ko Eiropadome pieņēma, četrreiz samazinot militārās mobilitātes budžetu, ir jālabo, jo nodrošināt militāro mobilitāti visā Eiropā ir svarīgāk nekā veidot kādu Eiropas armiju nākotnē.

Un ir ātrie praktiskie soļi. Vispirmām kārtām Eiropas Komisijai vajadzētu panākt to, ka dzelzceļa, iekšējo ūdeņu un autoceļi var vismaz daļēji aizvietot Ukrainas spēju eksportēt graudkopības un citu veidu lauksaimniecības produktus. Jūras ostas ir slēgtas un droši vien būs slēgtas tuvākajā laikā.

Otrkārt, dzelzceļa jomā sankcijas tomēr Krievijas dzelzceļam būs, manuprāt, jāievieš un ieskaitot ir nepieciešams apturēt Krievijas pilnvaras Organizācijā Dzelzceļa sadarbības jomā. Un aviācijā neapšaubāmi mums jāizmanto ir Krievijas pārstāvju vēlēšanu boikots ICAO padomes sēdē — ICAO padomes vēlēšanās — šī gada četrdesmit pirmajā ICAO Ģenerālajā asamblejā, kas būs precīzi mērķēti sāpīgi ātrtermiņa soļi, kas parāda mūsu nopietnību transporta politikas sankcijās.

Έλενα Κουντουρά, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας *The Left*. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, ο τουρισμός αντιπροσωπεύει πάνω από το 10% του ευρωπαϊκού ΑΕΠ και στηρίζει εκατομμύρια θέσεις εργασίας σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη. Οι επιχειρήσεις και οι εργαζόμενοι που εξακολουθούν να αγωνίζονται για την επιβίωσή τους, μετά από δύο χρόνια καταστροφικής πανδημίας, σήμερα απειλούνται από τον αντίκτυπο του πολέμου στην Ουκρανία και την οξυτάτη ενεργειακή κρίση. Τα κόστη λειτουργίας έχουν εκτοξευθεί, όπως και το μεταφορικό κόστος, ενώ ο πληθωρισμός εξανεμίζει το διαθέσιμο εισόδημα των Ευρωπαίων και συρρικνώνει τον ταξιδιωτικό τους προϋπολογισμό. Δεν υπάρχει άλλος χρόνος για συζητήσεις και διαβουλεύσεις. Ο τουριστικός κλάδος χρειάζεται στήριξη τώρα για να μη χαθούν και άλλες χιλιάδες θέσεις εργασίας. Οι προτάσεις μας είναι συγκεκριμένες και πρέπει να εφαρμοστούν άμεσα από Επιτροπή και κυβερνήσεις.

Πρώτον, δημιουργία σχεδίου δράσης για τη στήριξη του κλάδου τουρισμού από τις επιπτώσεις της πανδημίας και του πολέμου με επαρκείς πόρους· δημιουργία Ευρωπαϊκού Μηχανισμού Διαχείρισης Κρίσεων στον τουρισμό· στήριξη της ρευστότητας των μικρομεσαίων επιχειρήσεων με επαρκείς πόρους από τα ευρωπαϊκά χρηματοδοτικά εργαλεία· φορολογικές ελαφρύνσεις για τον τουριστικό κλάδο, ώστε να μπορέσει να ανταποκριθεί στα αυξανόμενα ενεργειακά και επισιτιστικά κόστη, και ιδιαίτερα για τις μικρομεσαίες επιχειρήσεις που αγωνίζονται να επιβιώσουν μετά από δύο χρόνια πανδημίας· και τέλος, μεταθέσεις των προθεσμιών οικονομικών υποχρεώσεων των επιχειρήσεων προς το Δημόσιο.

Mario Furore (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, prima la pandemia, adesso la guerra in Ucraina, il settore dei trasporti e quello del turismo sono di nuovo in uno stato di grave sofferenza e con l'aumentare dei costi energetici che si riflettono sull'aumento del prezzo dei biglietti anche viaggiare sta diventando impossibile per molte famiglie. L'inflazione galoppante nei trasporti e nel turismo rischia di creare nuove forme di povertà e solitudini che noi dobbiamo impedire.

Per questo noi reiteriamo alla Commissione europea la richiesta di istituire un fondo ad hoc sul turismo per sostenere le imprese turistiche che danno lavoro a milioni di cittadini in tutta Europa. E desidero lanciare anche un altro appello: le giuste sanzioni che hanno colpito la Bielorussia per il suo coinvolgimento nella guerra in Ucraina hanno avuto un effetto boomerang. Migliaia di bambini bielorussi in riabilitazione non possono raggiungere l'Italia e i paesi europei. Bisogna intervenire consentendo voli umanitari e proteggendo tutti i minori che desiderano ricongiungersi con le loro famiglie in Europa. Apriamo gli occhi sulle macerie che sta provocando questa guerra.

Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! Pokój, wolność, bezpieczeństwo i demokracja są bezcenne, i wojna w Ukrainie jest tego najlepszym przykładem. Ofiarą wojny i koniecznych sankcji, o czym mówiła tutaj pani komisarz, jest między innymi sektor transportu. Dlatego konieczne jest przeprowadzenie ekonomicznej i społecznej oceny oraz wzmocnienia i odpowiedniego wsparcia finansowego tego sektora, aby zapewnić jego sprawne funkcjonowanie na rynku wewnętrznym Unii Europejskiej, ale także równie ważne jest wsparcie sektora transportu w Ukrainie.

Kolejną ofiarą wojny, o czym nie możemy zapominać, jest sektor transportu. Turyści rezygnują z podróży do niektórych państw członkowskich w obawie przed skutkami wojny, jak na przykład do Polski, Rumunii, Słowacji, Bułgarii czy krajów bałtyckich. Pomimo tych problemów i pomimo Covidu, który odcisnął się również na tej branży, branża turystyczna aktywnie wspiera uchodźców z pogrążonej w wojnie Ukrainy i robi to, co potrafi najlepiej, czyli organizuje transport, zapewnia noclegi i wyżywienie setkom tysięcy obywateli Ukrainy.

Dlatego z tego miejsca apeluję do Komisji Europejskiej o finansowe wsparcie i sektora transportu, i sektora turystyki, ale także o bezpośrednie finansowe wsparcie dla jednostek samorządu terytorialnego, zwłaszcza w Polsce, bo ten samorząd terytorialny kosztem swoich dochodów wspiera i pomaga uchodźcom z Ukrainy. Jest to olbrzymie obciążenie dla budżetów samorządów i nie mają one tak naprawdę znikąd wsparcia i pomocy finansowej.

Ismail Ertug (S&D). – Herr Präsident, sehr geehrte Frau Kommissarin, sehr verehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Dieser furchtbare Krieg dauert schon seit 69 Tagen an, und alle Transportmodi sind beeinträchtigt, fünf verschiedene Sanktionspakete bereits eingeleitet worden. Die leidenden Menschen in der Ukraine, denen gilt unsere volle Solidarität und auch unsere Unterstützung.

Eine der vorrangigsten Maßnahmen dürfte die Stärkung des Modus Schiene sein, um den Menschen in der Ukraine weiterhin schnell und vor allem besser helfen zu können. Hierfür bedarf es einer breiten Unterstützung, insbesondere auch der finanziellen Art.

All die Zerstörung wird nach dem Krieg wieder aufgebaut und repariert werden müssen. Und wenn wir die Ukraine gemeinsam aufbauen wollen, dann so, dass es ein Vorzeigeland im Bereich des Green Deal wird. Dafür bedarf es eines klaren Plans. Kollege Cuffe hat einen Marshallplan angesprochen. Wir sollten den Vorschlägen von Frans Timmermans als zuständigem Kommissar für den Green Deal folgen. Und gerne können wir diesen Plan auch Timmermans-Plan nennen.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (Renew). – Señor presidente, comisaria, la logística europea es una de las víctimas de la invasión ilegal que sufre Ucrania. Están afectados todos los sectores del transporte, tanto por el impacto de la subida del precio de la energía como por los problemas operativos que afectan a todos los modos de transporte y a las personas que trabajan en el sector.

Aplaudo el contenido de la Resolución propuesta por la Comisión de Transporte y Turismo y animo a que se prioricen tres aspectos: la atención directa a las personas que ven en riesgo sus empleos, el apoyo a las empresas que en esta terrible situación se vuelcan en el apoyo a las personas que huyen de la invasión y la revisión de los planes de inversión incluidos en la RTE-T para cumplir tres objetivos: fortalecer la conexión de los países fronterizos con Ucrania, encontrar alternativas al plan ruso para controlar las principales líneas de exportación y abastecimiento de Ucrania y mejorar infraestructuras de doble uso que atiendan las necesidades de movilidad militar. Apoyo, finalmente un plan de choque para compensar al sector del turismo, que pierde clientes en todos los países fronterizos.

Karima Delli (Verts/ALE). – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Commissaire, mes chers collègues, l'agression de l'Ukraine par la Russie depuis la fin du mois de février a mis les transports au premier plan de l'actualité, que ce soit pour l'acheminement du matériel humanitaire, des vivres de première nécessité, notamment par le biais des ports maritimes, ou encore le transport et l'évacuation des personnes réfugiées. Les transports de fret et de passagers sont au cœur de la résistance des Ukrainiennes et des Ukrainiens face à l'invasisseur russe.

Les travailleuses et les travailleurs du transport accomplissent un travail héroïque sur place depuis plus de deux mois et demi. Elles et ils font preuve d'un courage sans faille pour permettre aux personnes encore en Ukraine de vivre et pour permettre aux personnes désirant fuir d'être en sécurité. Je tiens donc, en tant que présidente de la commission des transports et du tourisme, à remercier chaleureusement toutes ces personnes.

Et là où l'Ukraine souffre et ne peut plus assurer seule l'organisation de la chaîne logistique ou le transport des réfugiés, l'Union européenne se doit d'être à la hauteur, se doit de pleinement assumer son rôle et de faire prévaloir les valeurs de solidarité et de fraternité qui nous sont chères. J'appelle donc les autorités de l'Union européenne, de nos États membres et de nos régions à tout mettre en œuvre au niveau européen pour que oui, entre l'Union européenne et l'Ukraine, on puisse accueillir dignement les personnes dans le besoin et acheminer les vivres nécessaires.

Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Szanowni Państwo! Pani Komisarz! Ja jestem posłem z Podkarpacia, regionu bezpośrednio graniczącego z Ukrainą. Podkarpacie to dzisiaj wschodni europejski hub, przez który przemieszczają się miliony uchodźców.

Pomimo iż jest to region bezpieczny i wolny od agresji barbarzyńskiej Rosji, to wojna odciska na nim swoje piętno, zwłaszcza na gospodarce tego regionu, i doświadczany jest ten region przez wiele perturbacji związanych właśnie z tą wojną. A one się przejawiają tym, że właściciele pensjonatów, różnego rodzaju obiektów turystycznych, po prostu stoją przed obliczem bankructwa.

Potrzebna jest zdecydowanie pomoc Unii Europejskiej w tym obszarze, dlatego że wojna w sposób taki bardzo wyraźny odciska właśnie na tej branży turystycznej swój bardzo wyraźny ślad.

Dlatego chciałbym z tego miejsca zaapelować do Pani Komisarz, do Szanownych Kolegów, Koleżanek o to, abyśmy wspólnie zastanowili się, czy nie warto stworzyć funduszu, uruchomić jakiejś specjalnej linii budżetowej dedykowanej właśnie małym i średnim przedsiębiorcom, zwłaszcza na Podkarpaciu, którzy będą mogli skorzystać z tej pomocy po to, żeby ochronić miejsca pracy i móc dalej się rozwijać.

Bardzo o to apeluję i liczę na rzetelną dyskusję i na wsparcie Komisji Europejskiej w tym temacie.

João Pimenta Lopes (The Left). – Senhor Presidente, responder aos impactos e aproveitamentos da guerra nestes setores exige colocar como primeiro objetivo estabelecer a paz, pôr fim a uma guerra que não devia ter começado, através de um cessar-fogo imediato e de uma solução política do conflito, respondendo aos problemas comuns de segurança na Europa, no respeito pelos princípios da Carta da ONU e do Direito Internacional, em particular, da Ata Final da Conferência de Helsínquia.

Não será na opção pela escalada de sanções ou na via do aprofundamento militarista da UE, com a centralidade na mobilidade militar que a resolução promove, que se encontrarão respostas aos problemas identificados.

Opções que os povos e trabalhadores já estão a pagar e que contribuirão para impactos severos no setor dos transportes e do turismo, com o aproveitamento especulativo dos grupos económicos para engrossar lucros, impondo o aumento dos preços da energia e combustíveis, o aumento do custo de vida e da inflação, visando o aumento da exploração também dos refugiados ucranianos no setor do turismo.

Andor Deli (NI). – Tisztelt Elnök úr! Biztos asszony! A fuvarozók mozgatják Európa gazdaságát. Az elmúlt két évben súlyos veszteségeket okozott a koronavírus, most pedig itt az újabb válság, amit az orosz agresszió okoz, megszakítva a már bejáródott szállítási láncokat és útvonalakat. Egy ilyen hatványozottan nehéz helyzetben kell az Európai Unió fuvarozóinak megfelelniük a mobilitási csomag követelményeinek, amely békeidőben is egy rendkívül megosztó jogszabálysomagnak számított. A jelenlegi válságos időszakban pedig nem csupán megosztó, hanem tovább nehezíti a fuvarozóágazat egyébként is súlyos helyzetét. A fuvarozók helytállását ne csak szavakkal méltassuk, hanem mielőbb tegyünk is a helyzetük javítása érdekében. Ezért arra kérem a Bizottságot, hogy sürgősen vizsgálja meg a mobilitási csomag már hatályba lépett, és a még hatályba lépés előtt álló rendelkezéseit, ezek életszerűségét, betarthatóságát, és tegyen javaslatokat a körülmények javítására, mert az európai fuvarozóknak konkrét, kézzelfogható segítségre van most szükségük.

Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Comissária, vivemos no momento presente um período conturbado da nossa História. A Europa, ainda a reerguer-se de uma crise pandémica, enfrenta uma guerra impensável e injustificável em pleno século XXI.

Obviamente, a perda de vidas humanas é o principal ónus do conflito, mas, a esta catástrofe humanitária, juntam-se os efeitos económicos que começam a fazer-se sentir em vários setores. Empresas e famílias sentem na sua gestão financeira as dificuldades de uma escalada de preços.

A subsistência de milhões de pessoas na Europa depende muito dos transportes, do turismo e viagens. Agências de viagens, companhias aéreas, cruzeiros têm demonstrado uma enorme preocupação.

Aprovámos um conjunto de sanções sem precedentes à Rússia. Era imperioso fazê-lo numa demonstração clara de apoio à Ucrânia e na defesa da liberdade e da democracia que tanto custaram a conquistar.

Como legisladores, urge não ficarmos por aqui. O risco também de pobreza nos transportes é real. Há famílias que não irão aguentar os preços elevados de bens e serviços.

Senhora Comissária, que mecanismos estamos a pensar criar? Que instrumentos iremos pôr em prática? Como pensa mitigar o impacto da indústria na aviação? Tem noção que o setor dos transportes, além de lidar com os efeitos da pandemia e da guerra, tem agora um desafio hercúleo para atingir as metas ambiciosas e exigentes a nível ambiental? Tem noção que há regiões ultraperiféricas que dependem quase exclusivamente do transporte aéreo e marítimo em matéria de mobilidade de pessoas, bens e serviços?

Termino neste debate com um apelo. Trabalhemos na aplicação de medidas de apoio extraordinárias, apoios a curto prazo e apoios às medidas da *task force* do turismo no Parlamento Europeu: a agência europeia, uma linha de financiamento para o turismo, o mecanismo europeu de gestão de crises.

Termino, Senhor Presidente, mais sanções à Rússia, mais auxílio aos ucranianos e mais medidas de apoios concretas aos transportes e ao turismo.

Marianne Vind (S&D). – Hr. formand! Kommissær! Vi ved, at transport af mennesker og varer over landegrænser er en vital grundsten for ethvert land. Transport er en forudsætning for, at samfund kan udvikles og trives. I krisetider bliver denne kendsgerning endnu mere tydelig. Vi så det senest under covid-19. Her gik vitale forsyningskæder i stå, og menneskers forbindelser til omverdenen blev lukket ned. Det er konsekvenser, som verdenssamfundet stadig lider under. EU's transportsektor er hjertet, der holder verdenssamfundet i gang. Vi har brug for, at transporten til lands, til vands og i luften stadig fortsætter. Vi har dedikerede ansatte i branchen, der hver eneste dag pumper liv i selv de mindste afkroge.

Mens jeg står her fortsætter Putin sin ulovlige angrebskrig nogle få tusinde kilometer herfra, på territorier, vi stadig håber at kunne kalde Ukraine i morgen. Jeg opfordrer derfor til, at EU skal fortsætte med at ramme Putins Rusland lige i hjertet. Kun ved at blokere for de vitale transportveje i EU og lukke ned for Ruslands forbindelser til omverdenen kan vi gøre os forhåbninger om at få stoppet hans ulovlige angrebskrig i Ukraine.

VORSITZ: RAINER WIELAND

Vizepräsident

Valter Flego (Renew). – Poštovani predsjedavajući, poštovane kolegice, poštovana povjerenice, znamo da su najpogodniji sektori u Covid pandemije bili i jesu transport i turizam.

Nažalost, situacija se ponavlja sada zbog ovog nesretnog rata u Ukrajini. Naime, strah od putovanja zbog neizvjesne sutrašnjice, zbog inflacije, zbog divljanja cijena energenata snažno pogađa oporavak europskoga gospodarstva a posebice sektor transporta i turizma. I jasno je da ako gospodarska situacija nije dobra naši građani neće putovati na godišnje odmore. Zato želim da se odmah reagira, prvenstveno zakonodavno, ali i poreznim rasterećenjima i to isključivo u suradnji sa sektorom, dakle s transportnim i turističkim sektorima i državama članicama. Upravo ti sektori, transporta dakle i turizma, jako dobro znaju što ih muči i gdje možemo mi pomoći, kojim mjerama i kojim aktivnostima.

I zato, molim Vas povjerenice, učinimo to.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-н Председател, войната в Украйна, предизвикана от руската агресия, предизвика формални обстоятелства във всички сектори. Безспорно такива сектори са транспортът и туризмът. Цените на горивата разбиват рекорди, вече има недостиг на суровини и всичко това се отразява на транспортните връзки и на транспортните отношения. В този смисъл особено тревожна е ситуацията, в която се намира днес Украйна, при положение че нейните морски и речни пристанища са блокирани и това пречи на износа и търговията на тази държава.

В тази зала обаче някои колеги правят всичко възможно да възпрепятстват транспортния бранш, въвеждайки непрекъснато нови и нови регулации и рестрикции, както направиха с пакета „Мобилност“.

Искам да обърна внимание на още един сериозен проблем. Ясно е, че както руският, така и украинският пазар ще останат затворени в обозримо бъдеще. Затова се обръщам към Европейската комисия да направи постъпки в посока осигуряване не само на доставките на газ на европейско ниво, но и на доставките на суровини за всички сектори на Европейския съюз. Особено внимание трябва се обърне на факта и на сферата на индустриалното производство, осигуряването на достатъчно количество евтина стомана за строителния сектор и, разбира се, достъп до евтини горива.

В заключение, трябва да направим така, че тази безумна война да свърши час по-скоро и да осигурим максимална стабилност на тези сектори в нашите общества.

Андрей Новаков (PPE). – Г-н Председател, г-жо Комисар, колеги, аз мисля, че нещо трябва да се промени. Ако искаме повече хора да се включват да гледат дебати от Европейския парламент вкъщи и ако искаме повече хора да вярват във и на Европейския съюз, трябва по време на криза да забравим, че – цитирам – „ще изразяваме загриженост, ще следим с тревога и остро ще осъждаме“. Това, което трябва да правим по време на криза, е да сме плътно до хората повече от всеки друг момент. Нека ви дам пример. Вече 70 дни пристанищата в Украйна са блокирани, десетки кораби не могат да напуснат тези пристанища. Сред тях е и българският „Рожен“, който е блокиран на пристанището в Черноморск. Част от моряците са евакуирани, другата част са на борда на корабите и оцеляват с това, което е останало в трюмовете. Колкото повече време минава, толкова повече мини биват изсипвани във водите около пристанището, което прави извеждането на корабите почти невъзможно. И ако питате мен какво трябва да направим, аз ще ви отговоря. Незабавно, ама веднага делегация от европейските институции с план за действие под ръка заминава в Украйна и се връща с последния кораб, който плава под европейски флаг там. И тогава, скъпи колеги, от телевизорите Европейският съюз ще се премести в сърцата на хората.

Sara Cerdas (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Comissária, Colegas, os transportes e o turismo são dois setores já altamente impactados nos últimos dois anos pela pandemia e agora por esta guerra na Ucrânia.

Como se isso já não fosse suficiente, as perturbações nas cadeias de abastecimento e a exponencial subida dos preços dos combustíveis afetam especialmente os mais vulneráveis, além de que também põem em causa a conectividade da União Europeia, sobretudo as ligações com regiões mais remotas, como as regiões ultraperiféricas, também elas mais dependentes do transporte e do turismo para o seu desenvolvimento socioeconómico.

Apelo, assim, à Comissão para que apresente medidas a implementar para mitigar todos estes impactos negativos, incluindo um mecanismo que torne o setor do turismo mais resiliente a futuros choques e crises.

Nicola Danti (Renew). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Commissaria, l'invasione russa in Ucraina ha devastato la vita di milioni di persone a cui va il nostro sostegno e la nostra profonda solidarietà, ma le conseguenze di questa guerra si fanno sentire anche in Europa, in particolare per settori come trasporti e turismo, già segnati in modo significativo da due anni di pandemia.

Ci avviciniamo alla stagione estiva con un aumento indiscriminato dei prezzi dei carburanti, il caro energia e l'inflazione che riducono la disponibilità economica dei cittadini europei. Anche quest'anno viaggiare e andare in vacanza sarà difficile per molte famiglie. Per questo sarà importante adottare gli strumenti che questa risoluzione mette in evidenza, a partire dal meccanismo europeo di gestione delle crisi e dal sostegno finanziario a breve termine.

L'Europa deve esserci per i suoi cittadini, per le micro e piccole imprese che popolano il comparto turistico e per quei territori che, per vicinanza al teatro di guerra o per la storica prevalenza di turisti russi e ucraini, saranno maggiormente penalizzati.

Ladislav Ilčić (ECR). – Poštovani predsjedavajući, poštovane dame i gospodo, uz konkretnu pomoć Ukrajini u obrani od agresora, trebamo donositi jasne mjere kojima će se europsko gospodarstvo zaštititi od nepovoljnih učinaka rata.

U energetici i nekim drugim granama već smo krenuli, no i turizam kao grana izravno pati budući da turističke aktivnosti nisu esencijalne za život, pa se u krizi upravo na turističkom sektoru najbrže osjeti pad potrošnje.

Ja dolazim iz Hrvatske, države u kojoj turizam čini iznimno važan dio gospodarstva i ima značajan udio u BDP-u. Smatram važnim da, pored nacionalnih vlada, i Europska komisija aktivno potiče građane na odmor u članicama Unije te pomogne osigurati dodatne prometne linije za dolazak turista iz ostatka svijeta u Europu.

Svijet polako ulazi u recesiju, rat dodatno doprinosi nesigurnosti, i ne možemo dopustiti da turistički sektor se sam s time nosi.

Tomasz Frankowski (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! Już od ponad dwóch miesięcy trwa nielegalna masowa inwazja Federacji Rosyjskiej na suwerenne terytorium Ukrainy. Przez ten czas widzieliśmy przerażające ludzkie cierpienie oraz zniszczenia w miastach i we wsiach. Rosyjska agresja nie może zostać przemilczana, dlatego pięć przyjętych przez Unię Europejską pakietów sankcji, także uderzających w rosyjskie sektory turystyki i transportu, powinno wejść w życie jak najszybciej. Niestety wojna ta również mocno uderza w europejską gospodarkę, a szczególnie w państwa i regiony graniczące z Rosją, Białorusią oraz Ukrainą.

Cieszę się, że w rezolucji, która będzie głosowana, znalazło się wiele odniesień dotyczących sektora turystyki, który szczególnie ucierpiał podczas dwóch lat pandemii. Dlatego nawołuję do jak najszybszego wdrożenia planów pomocy finansowej, aby pomóc europejskim firmom szczególnie dotkniętym kryminalną agresją Rosji na Ukrainie oraz wywołanym przez Łukaszenkę kryzysem migracyjnym na granicy z Białorusią.

Dziś jak nigdy wcześniej wschodnia część Polski, skąd ja pochodzę, która codziennie oferuje pomoc napływającym uchodźcom z Ukrainy, potrzebuje natychmiastowego wsparcia finansowego.

Milan Brglez (S&D). – Gospod predsednik! Spoštovane, spoštovani. Letalstvo se že sooča s posledicami agresije Ruske federacije na Ukrajino. Prišlo je do zaprtja zračnega prostora. Prav tako iščemo alternativne in daljše letalske poti. Vse to je privedlo do povečanja stroškov v letalstvu na eni strani. Po drugi strani se je podražilo tudi gorivo, ki ga žal zopet uvažamo iz Ruske federacije.

Breme vseh teh stroškov bodo nosili evropski potniki, zaposleni v letalski industriji in povezanih dejavnostih ter seveda okolje. Zaradi tega se bodo povečale izpusti CO₂ pa tudi onesnaženje zraka.

Zato je ključna rešitev v letalstvu pravzaprav zelena tranzicija ali prehod, moramo čim prej sprejeti zakonodajni okvir na evropski ravni, za to zagotoviti tudi zadostna finančna sredstva, da bomo prešli v to tranzicijo z ustrežno socialno dimenzijo, ki bo solidarna in pravična, ter ki bo zagotovila razvoj trajnostnih letalskih goriv ter brezogljene letalske tehnologije. Zato si bom prizadeval kot poslanec in poročevalec.

Pablo Arias Echeverría (PPE). – Señor presidente, señora comisaria, la guerra de Ucrania está teniendo consecuencias nefastas en nuestra economía, también en los sectores del transporte y el turismo. La Unión Europea no va a ser la misma después de esta guerra, cuyas consecuencias se suman a los estragos de la pandemia. Vemos escasez de suministros, disrupciones en el sector logístico y elevados precios de la energía. El sector del automóvil, por ejemplo, sufre una escasez de componentes electrónicos y muchas de estas empresas han paralizado su actividad.

Europa necesita una industria competitiva y no solo ser un proveedor de servicios. Para esto es fundamental el sector del transporte. Tenemos que remangarnos y buscar cómo mantener la competitividad europea. Debemos apostar por la digitalización para optimizar la cadena logística en el transporte aéreo, marítimo y terrestre. Hay que ser conscientes de la situación, de los retos que enfrentamos y de las amenazas que existen, y repensar cómo queremos afrontarlos para mantener una Europa en paz, próspera y competitiva.

Para mantener la cadena logística, el sector del transporte es clave. Asimismo, el turismo lo es para proteger y promover nuestros valores y nuestro estilo de vida.

Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D). – Mr President, among the devastating effects of Russia's criminal aggression against Ukraine, there are those on tourism – which accounts for 10% of GDP in Europe – a sector which has already suffered a lot during the pandemic.

We are facing naturally a loss of Russian and Ukrainian tourists all over Europe, and the costs of energy, foodstuff and fuel are growing fast. An explosive mix. We ask for financial assistance for big and small touristic companies within the internal market programme, together with a full crisis management action plan.

Putin has invaded a peaceful country in mainland Europe. This is crystal clear. We have to do our part and support the Ukrainian people in the right to choose their own destiny. Why should a country surrender to the arrogance of a despotic leader? Why should a country submit to the invaders' will?

Putin will respond for his crimes in front of the history, but for now, we have to work for peace. And we have to relieve the most damaging humanitarian, economic and social effects of war, united as ever.

Victor Negrescu (S&D). – Domnule președinte, doamnă comisară, dragi colegi, războiul din Ucraina a creat o presiune suplimentară asupra turismului și transporturilor, grav afectate de pandemie, pentru care trebuie să găsim soluții.

În țara mea, România, aflată la frontiera cu Ucraina, au existat costuri importante în aceste două domenii. Am cunoscut o scădere a turismului internațional, turiștii externi fiind speriați de ce se întâmplă în regiune. De aceea avem nevoie de noi instrumente europene de sprijin și am cerut o linie bugetară dedicată.

În ceea ce privește transportul, România a trebuit să preia din ceea ce se transporta în Ucraina. După începerea războiului, traficul de mărfuri în portul Constanța a crescut cu 8 %, de la 33 de nave pe zi, la 50.

Ministerul Transporturilor din România a alocat fonduri suplimentare pentru aceste noi nevoi pe zona de transport, însă este nevoie de sprijin european. Nu doar marfa este importantă. Trebuie soluții și pentru marinarii sau transportatorii ucraineni care nu mai au unde să se întoarcă.

Avem nevoie de mai multă flexibilitate din partea Comisiei Europene și de resurse suplimentare pentru a asigura fluxurile de transport necesare atât Ucrainei, cât și țărilor din estul Europei, de care depind reziliența și stabilitatea comercială a întregii Uniuni.

Spontane Wortmeldungen

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Domnule președinte, doamnă comisar, am fost în Ucraina în ultimele două luni de cel puțin patru ori. Am fost acolo pentru a fi alături de oamenii care trec prin clipe extrem de complicate. Am văzut oameni care sunt speriați de război, am văzut oameni care și-au părăsit pentru totdeauna locuințele care nu mai există. Însă este esențial să înțelegem că, pe lângă acest război declanșat de un criminal care temporar se află la Kremlin, pentru că nu este veșnic și viața noastră va reveni la normalitate, trebuie să facem ceea ce este necesar pentru a ajuta economiile europene puternic afectate. Unul dintre segmentele cele mai vulnerabile în aceste clipe, pentru că pe lângă această criză generată de război, avem și criza energiei, este turismul. Din acest punct de vedere, cred că este esențial să se creeze resurse necesare, sprijin necesar și politici care trebuiesc implementate imediat, astfel încât să ajute acest segment vital pentru Europa.

Clare Daly (The Left). – Mr President, we acknowledge the devastation of the horrible illegal war, but what I found shocking is that there's not a single sentence in this motion designed to assist in ending it. Instead, we see this transport sector subordinated to the war effort and nothing for the 11 million transport workers who are already reeling under the impact of COVID.

We see in this new EU war fever that the Commission has selected 22 projects which will receive EUR 339 million to ensure the transport sector is acceptable for military use, but no transparency around it whatsoever. I couldn't even get answers to it. We see the celebration of more sanctions, but not a single word about how workers will be assisted in dealing with the impact of those sanctions: the platform workers dealing with the cost of food; the seafarers stuck on ships; the air crew seeing their working hours lengthened, and so on. I applaud the efforts of the workers who have tried to halt the action in the war. That's a far better contribution than anything we're doing.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, já jsem si se zájmem vyslechl projev paní komisařky a jsem velmi rád, že si je vědoma výzev, kterým zrovna tyto dva sektory našeho hospodářství čelí. Je nepochybně nutné nasměrovat naše TNT sítě i směrem právě k Ukrajině, k posilování našich tras a samozřejmě přeshraničního styku v rámci dotčeného prstence regionů kolem naší vnější hranice s Ukrajinou. Zároveň je důležité uplatňovat sankce na letecké společnosti, železniční společnosti z Ruska. A nepochybně také potřebujeme podporovat investiční projekty i v rámci naší Evropské investiční banky. To, že turismus bude nadále postižen nedostatkem přílivu turistů z Ruska, to je asi po dvou letech pravda. Myslím si, že už jsme si na to zvykli, ale turismus ukazuje příležitosti pro nové regiony, kde bychom mohli rovněž čerpat podporu i z naší kohezní politiky. Je to nová příležitost.

(Ende der spontanen Wortmeldungen)

Ylva Johansson, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President. Thank you very much for this interesting debate and for your strong commitment to help our Ukrainian friends and to mitigate the effects of the war for European citizens and for the transport and tourism businesses, and for your strong support for the tourists or the transport workers. In the context of helping Ukraine, I would also like to remind you of the ongoing revision of the TEN-T Regulation. Given the importance and need to improve connections between the EU and Ukraine, we might also consider extending European transport corridors to Ukraine as well as to Moldova. This should be discussed in the context of the current TEN-T revision. The aim is to further integrate Ukraine into our transport network and help guide the reconstruction of the transport system after the war.

The Commission also seeks your cooperation in making quick progress on other legislative proposals already on the table, such as on sustainable aviation fuel and on fuel, maritime alternative fuels, infrastructure, single European sky and intelligent transport systems. They all will greatly improve the resilience of the EU transport sector. As you know, the Fit 55 package is key to reducing our dependency on Russian fossil fuels.

President, Honourable Members, thank you once again for your support, for your contribution and for this opportunity to address you on this crucial issue.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist damit geschlossen.

Die Abstimmung findet am Donnerstag, 5. Mai 2022, statt.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Josianne Cutajar (S&D), *in writing*. – Whilst I welcome the new sanctions imposed on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine, I strongly support the call being made by this resolution to adequately assist the transport and tourism industries, industries which were already hardly hit by the pandemic and are again being negatively impacted by the war in Ukraine. To mention one example, air restrictions are expected to have a major impact on international flights and the tourism industry. The re-routing of flights above Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus are affecting flight length, which in turn leads to higher fuel prices, affecting also employees' working hours, and ultimately tourists. We definitely need further coordination at the European level to ensure the least possible impact on the already struggling industries, industries on which a lot of workers, families and European citizens depend. That is why I highlight the call for the establishment of a European Crisis Management Mechanism for the EU tourism sector in order to respond adequately and swiftly to current crises and future shocks. Building up our resilience is a must.

16. Strengthening Europol's mandate: cooperation with private parties, processing of personal data, and support for research and innovation (debate)

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über den Bericht von Javier Zarzalejos im Namen des Ausschusses für bürgerliche Freiheiten, Justiz und Inneres über den Vorschlag für eine Verordnung des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates zur Änderung der Verordnung (EU) 2016/794 in Bezug auf die Zusammenarbeit von Europol mit privaten Parteien, die Verarbeitung personenbezogener Daten durch Europol zur Unterstützung strafrechtlicher Ermittlungen und die Rolle von Europol in Forschung und Innovation (COM(2020)0796 – C9-0401/2020 – 2020/0349(COD)) (A9-0290/2021).

Javier Zarzalejos, *rapporteur*. – Mr President, in my capacity as rapporteur I am particularly honoured to address the Plenary on the new Europol Regulation. This Regulation, the new mandate for Europol, marks a substantial, I would say, leap forward in the capabilities of the Agency, in its ability to support Member States, in the governance framework and, last but certainly not least, in the enhanced system of safeguards that we have put in place.

This Regulation is the result of a shared concern about the need to have a better and more efficient instrument to support Member States in a security landscape with evolving and increasingly complex threats.

Let me underline that the Parliament has been at the forefront in promoting the Europol recast. I'd like to commend and express my appreciation for the work done by my colleagues, the shadow rapporteurs, from the very beginning of this process following the presentation of the legislative proposal by the Commission on 9 December 2020. We have dealt with sensitive issues from different views but we have been able to create an atmosphere of real cooperation and open exchange. No concern has been overlooked and no contribution has been disregarded. And let me add that in the best spirit of compromise even those outside the majority consensus can see some of the contributions reflected in this regulation.

We have established a sound legal basis for the analysis and processing of large and complex data sets, and accordingly, there will be extended information sharing and enforcement rights for the EDPS on Europol planned data processing operations.

Under the new mandate, Europol will cooperate effectively and directly with private parties for establishing jurisdiction. And will be allowed to exchange data with private parties directly in online crisis situations related to the massive dissemination of terrorist content and in the fight against child sexual abuse material online.

Europol will be able to support Member States in the use of emerging technologies and in developing common technological solutions. And under the new mandate, it will be possible for those projects to include the processing of personal data for the sake of security, subject to very tight safeguards.

The new mandate also provides for the capacity of Europol to propose Member States the entry of information alerts in the interest of the Union in the Schengen Information System, based on information received from third countries or international organisations.

The new mandate clearly improves and widens the scope of the cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

Europol and EPPO should conclude a working arrangement setting out the modalities of their cooperation, taking due account of their respective competences.

The increase of the capacities should ultimately be matched by adequate resources for Europol. But more importantly it will be accompanied by more transparency, parliamentary oversight, greater democratic accountability and a wide array of safeguards that guarantee full respect for data protection. That is a major political achievement of the Parliament and it shows our ability to reach reasonable and workable compromises, first among us, the political groups represented in this Parliament, and then with the Council. And I have to commend the role the Commission has been playing.

I think that the Parliament has delivered on its duty. We have taken into account the new operational requirements of law enforcement, the necessary balance with the basic responsibilities of Member States, which remains in the hands of Member States, the conditions for an enhanced police cooperation and the safeguards and democratic oversight that go along these developments.

A better governance, an efficient system of oversight and controls proportionate to the new capabilities that we place on the Agency will only result in a better and more efficient Europol which is fit for the challenge. That is exactly what this regulation is all about.

Ylva Johansson, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, let me start by warmly thanking the rapporteur, Javier Zarzalejos, for excellent and constructive work done on this file on the new Europol mandate, together with all the shadow rapporteurs. I think your common work really made it possible for us to have constructive negotiations in the trilogue and a swift agreement.

Since the Commission proposed Europol's new mandate, the unthinkable happened. We did not expect war crimes committed in Europe. The Ukrainian prosecutor-general identifies thousands of suspected Russian war crimes – looting, murder, torture and rape.

A joint investigation team will collect evidence. Europol is ready to support a joint investigation team and work with Eurojust when needed and when requested. We did also not expect millions of Ukrainian refugees coming into the EU. Millions of women and children exposed to the danger of trafficking.

To fight this threat, Europol has set up a special task force to fight trafficking in human beings. Its new mandate will help Europol to step up the fight against these new threats, against all threats and against potential threats. Europol can help to organise a law enforcement response to major cross-border cyber attacks and help to prevent infiltration by foreign fighters.

The compromise you found allows Europol to propose to Member States to issue alerts on suspected terrorists into the Schengen database. What we did expect when we put forward Europol's new mandate was the need to fight crime in a digital age.

In a digital age, the clues to solving crimes are in the cloud, clues that can save lives and stop criminals, terrorists or child abusers, on services in data centres, often across national borders.

Europol will soon be able to get data directly from private companies and analyse it to identify which Member States should open an investigation.

The political agreement that you reached is very important. It makes sure Europol can continue to process large volume of data. That's one of the main reasons I proposed to boost Europol's mandate in the first place. Europol must have legal clarity because processing big data is key to solving almost all serious organised crimes.

Just one example. In October 2017, a Maltese journalist was murdered when a bomb went off in her car. Daphne Caruana Galizia, honoured by you, by this House, by the European Parliament, with a special prize for journalists awarded in her name. Europol supported the investigation, helping to compare data from telecom masts with billing information, with the suspects' smartphones, laptops and storage devices.

These proceedings have taken years and are not yet over. One killer has been convicted. Other suspects are still in custody. And that's why it's important that the new mandate makes clear there is no doubt Europol can analyse and store information while an investigation continues, while national authorities are authorised to use the data. This is Europol's core task, to support national law enforcement in their investigations.

If processing big data is key to fighting crime, artificial intelligence is the only way to analyse big data. In the Encrochat case alone, French and Dutch police captured 120 million text messages.

Europol has 536 people working in its operational department. They can't process that without technology. That's more than 200 000 messages each. And the clock is ticking. Delays cost lives. So Europol built an artificial intelligence tool to support the Encrochat investigation, to look for key words hinting at violence and murder in different languages, even in slang, allowing police to investigate these crimes and to stop murders from happening.

With its new mandate, Europol can greatly step up on research with a stronger role in advising on priorities of the EU security research agenda and an increased research staff – almost ten-fold to 33 – and with budget for innovation projects increased to EUR 45 million and with a strong legal basis to develop IT tools of artificial intelligence, not only limited to specific operations like Encrochat, but also to develop general law enforcement tools, for example, tools to fight child sexual abuse more effectively.

Europol must keep on file all information on IT tools and algorithm for defence lawyers to access if needed. This is unique in the world, a model of transparent and responsible law enforcement innovation. A stronger mandate for Europol comes with stronger safeguards. A reinforced data protection network, a new fundamental rights officer – that was a strong wish of the European Parliament – and greater powers for oversight for the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group on Europol.

Protecting security and upholding fundamental rights go hand in hand. Values are at the heart of the new mandate. Europol will soon be able to propose Member States to investigate crimes without a cross-border element, crimes that don't cross national borders but do violate other boundaries – our common Union interests and our fundamental values.

Now we need to take the next step to get a new mandate fully operational. When you vote on this mandate tomorrow, it will be a bad day for criminals and a good day for Europol. Thank you for your support, for your excellent work on this important proposal.

Jeroen Lenaers, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Mr President, Europeans rightly expect a high level of security in the European Union, and this is why a strong Europol has always been and will always be a key priority for our group. And this is also why this new mandate is such a good thing, because the threats of today and tomorrow are not the same as those of yesterday, and so must be our response.

Crime is becoming ever more digital, and we need to ensure that law enforcement can rely on the right tools to take on these criminals. The mandate that we are voting on tomorrow does exactly that. First, through direct cooperation with private parties, by being able to receive data from them directly, the agency can tap into an important source of relevant information, and it can make sure that that information gets to the right authority in the right Member State. Law enforcement in the EU as a whole will be better equipped to fight sexual abuse, terrorism and serious crime.

Second, through its improved capacity to process large and complex data sets, Europol was already the expert in this field and will become even more so. And thirdly, through research and innovation, Europol is perfectly placed to monitor emerging technologies and to develop ways of using them to keep our citizens better protected. These very important steps amend the central role of Europol in the European security architecture, and it does so in a very European way by also matching it with increased safeguards.

So the only thing I would like to add is to add my congratulations to rapporteur Zarzalejos for this excellent work.

Paul Tang, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, as someone said, this debate is scheduled at the end of today's plenary agenda – the graveyard shift – not because of the wonderful contributions by all the speakers, but because this debate revolves around one of the most difficult questions we face again and again in this Parliament, a question that is relevant to all citizens and thus to all parliamentarians: what is the right balance between protecting fundamental rights and the public interest?

In the Netherlands, we have seen an awful example of where this balance tipped over. Central to the child benefit scandal was a blacklist of potential fraudsters that turned innocent citizens into defenceless victims through the abuse of data.

Indeed there is a thin line between risk-based objective investigations and unfair prosecutions and trials. To prevent us from crossing this thin line, we need safeguards. We need effective redress methods, independent audits and strict data retention periods.

Of course, let me be clear, cooperation of law enforcement agencies across national borders is inevitable to be effective against international crime. There's no doubt about that. However, the provisional agreement we are discussing lacks the safeguards that I've been looking for and, at the same time, also opens the door to real-time biometric recognition. The agreement may very well cross the thin line between risk-based investigations and unfair prosecution. It should worry parliamentarians, and most certainly EU citizens.

Dragoș Tudorache, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Mr President, Commissioner, criminals do not stand still. In fact, they are often faster, more agile, more innovative in deploying new technologies for criminal purposes. In the real world this translates into innocent people being trapped into fraud, children being exploited for sexual purposes and terrorists achieving their goals. We therefore need law enforcement that is competitive in the digital age, law enforcement able to innovate and leverage cutting-edge technology to fight crime, to enforce law and to keep our societies safe.

And that is what we as legislators have well understood and have diligently done with this new mandate that we entrust tomorrow to Europol. We have also strengthened democratic oversight, safeguards, transparency because the rights of our citizens and the values of our Union come first. But as we act responsibly and diligently as legislators, so too Europol must understand that their new mandate is not a blank cheque. They hold vast amounts of data which they now must manage with utmost responsibility and in full alignment with EDPS. They receive new investigative powers for which they are accountable in terms of respecting procedural rights. For that, they'll have a human rights officer in their ranks who must be given the space and the resources to perform his or her role properly.

I therefore call on Europol and on the Commission as the guardian of our rules in the EU to take these new functions very seriously, to internalise the duty of care they have towards our European citizens and the scrutiny they owe towards this Parliament that represents them.

Saskia Bricmont, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Monsieur le Président, Europol est-elle en passe de devenir la NSA européenne: analyse illégale de données personnelles, développement de la reconnaissance faciale, mise à l'écart du protecteur européen des données, surveillance de masse, fichage de militants politiques, coopération avec des États-tiers qui nous espionnent?

Venue légaliser les pratiques illégales, la réforme de l'agence de coopération policière européenne, présentée comme technique, a été proposée sans évaluation ni étude d'impact, alors qu'elle étend considérablement les pouvoirs de l'agence. Les impacts des missions d'Europol sur les droits fondamentaux sont pourtant bien réels, et en tant que législateur, il nous revient de les protéger efficacement.

Certes, nous avons obtenu la mise en place d'un officier des droits fondamentaux et d'un forum consultatif. Ce sont là des évolutions positives, mais largement insuffisantes pour garantir le respect des droits fondamentaux des citoyens en Europe et ailleurs.

Dans une démocratie, le contrôle démocratique des activités d'une agence en charge de la coopération policière est indispensable. En cette Journée internationale de la liberté de la presse, voir mon propre pays, la Belgique, reculer de douze places dans le classement de Reporters sans frontières parce que les journalistes y sont victimes de violences, notamment par la police, me confirme que nous n'appréhendons pas les questions de sécurité par le bon bout.

Chers collègues, j'ai la conviction profonde que cette réforme n'est pas la bonne et que nous ne pouvons certainement pas prendre le risque qu'Europol sombre dans les mêmes travers que la NSA.

Rob Rooken, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – *(begin van de redevoering naast de microfoon)* ... van Europol. Tot op heden voerden lidstaten de gegevens over de verdachten in het Schengeninformatiesysteem in. Als u hier allen instemt met dit voorstel, geeft u Europol het recht om ook zelf gegevens in te voeren, zelfs voor mensen die nooit veroordeeld zijn. Dat is weer een stap dichterbij een federale EU-politiemacht. Daartegen heb ik precies dezelfde bezwaren als tegen veel andere federale agentschappen: ver van de burger, niet transparant en niet afrekenbaar. De Europese Toezichthouder voor gegevensbescherming concludeerde in januari nog dat Europol jarenlang illegaal gegevens van niet-verdachte personen heeft opgeslagen. In plaats van daarmee te stoppen, vragen ze nu u en mij om de verruiming van hun bevoegdheden om op deze manier dit gedrag wit te kunnen wassen. Dit is niet een EU die we willen. De Commissie heeft nota bene altijd de mond vol van de *rule of law*. Staan deze EU-agentschappen boven de wet? Wat mij betreft niet. Ik reken op u, geachte collega's, stem dit voorstel weg.

Clare Daly, *on behalf of The Left Group*. – Mr President, I can honestly say that it was an absolute pleasure to work with our incredibly capable rapporteur. He is inclusive, diligent and I have no hesitation in saying that the legislation has been improved under his stewardship and it has the stamp of the European Parliament on it for sure, and we can take some pride in that.

But for us, the legislation, unfortunately, has a number of shortcomings which won't enable us to support it. It empowers Europol to gather unlimited and uncontrolled amounts of data, including from private parties such as social media and content from hacked phones and computers. And as we all know, data is power. Whoever holds it has control over our identities, our movements, our freedoms. And for one, opaque policing service to harvest large quantities of it in the name of enhanced security is, frankly, for us, terrifying. Greater security can't align with the degradation of our right to personal privacy or the violation of human rights.

And Europol intends to use this newly acquired big data to feed into research projects on AI and data driven policing. The Parliament has been clear on this before that practices such as mass data harvesting, automated surveillance, predictive identification entails high risks for discriminatory policing, which would be targeted against the most vulnerable – migrants, refugees and so on who've already been at the receiving end.

So, we have to be careful once we set something in motion, the technologies are here for good.

Frances Fitzgerald (PPE). – Mr President, we know that criminal networks extend across borders. In Ireland, in recent weeks, we have seen the effectiveness of cross-border cooperation in tackling international gangland crime and ensuring that no lawbreaker is untouchable.

Europe must take the same approach to cross-border crime. The security of our citizens should be our number one priority. I know from experience as Minister for Justice the tireless work done by Europol and by our police forces, and I want to pay tribute to them. It is vital that they are fully supported by the political systems in their work.

This is why today's debate on Europol is so important because Europol exists to tackle cross-border crime in Europe by working with national justice systems. We must ensure it has the resources and the technologies, as the Commissioner has said, to do its job effectively. Today's proposal will make it easier for Europol to process complex data, as they must, to initiate effective investigations, as they must, use information to tackle online terrorist content, and cooperate on cases more effectively with non-EU countries.

I also welcome the creation of a Fundamental Rights Officer within Europol to ensure that data is not misused. It is very important that innocent people's rights are protected and that citizens can have confidence in the administration of justice. Critical for our democracies, it is not only important that people are safe, but that they feel safe. There should be no safe haven for lawbreakers.

Evin Incir (S&D). – Herr talman! Den organiserade brottsligheten och terrorismen riskerar att splittra sönder våra samhällen. Den tar livet av våra barn och unga. Det gör ont i hjärtat och jag fylls av ilska varje gång jag läser att en ung människa har mördats eller kvinnor utsatts för trafficking. Vi måste därför göra allt vi kan för att knäcka den grova brottsligheten.

70 procent av de grova organiserade gängen är aktiva i fler än tre länder. När brottsligheten inte ser några nationsgränser måste politiken säkerställa att vi bekämpar dem gemensamt. Allting annat vore naivt. Samarbete är nyckeln.

När vi bekämpar brott måste vi dock säkerställa att vi inte riskerar att underminera våra grundläggande fri- och rättigheter och kränka rättsstatens principer. Det är helt avgörande att vi har skyddsåtgärder på plats för att förebygga missbruk och skydda oskyldiga människors integritet. Jag välkomnar detta förslag om att stärka Europol's mandat, men jag är besviken, måste jag säga, över just bristen på tillräckligt starka skyddsåtgärder. Vid inhämtandet av stora mängder personuppgifter uppkommer nämligen också stora risker för missbruk.

Jag hade också önskat starkare skydd för att säkerställa att det nya mandatet inte riskerar att utsätta människor för rasism och diskriminering, som redan idag sker. Den grova brottsligheten ska bekämpas och måste bekämpas med full kraft. Men jag är samtidigt fullt övertygad om att vi hade kunnat göra det med ett ännu bättre förslag med ännu starkare skyddsåtgärder.

Lena Düpont (PPE). – Herr Präsident! Wenn wir uns die Geschichte der europäischen Innenpolitik, des Raums der Freiheit, der Sicherheit und des Rechts anschauen, haben wir gleichzeitig einen kurzen und einen langen Weg hinter uns. Es ist eines der jüngsten Politikfelder, tief in der Souveränität der Mitgliedstaaten verankert, gleichzeitig ein Feld mit nicht nur enormem Potenzial in der Zusammenarbeit, sondern auch eines, in dem das Vertrauen der Mitgliedstaaten untereinander auf eine neue Ebene gehoben wird, in dem das Vertrauen der Bürger in das Sicherheitsversprechen die Richtschnur unseres Handelns ist. Damit hängen Erwartungen zusammen, Hoffnungen, Lehren, Erwartungen an die Sicherheit, Hoffnung auf Schutz vor Kriminalität, vor Terror, vor Cyberkriminalität, Lehren aus der richtigen Balance zwischen Datenschutz und Sicherheit.

Denn im digitalen Zeitalter verändert sich das Bedrohungsumfeld rasant. Terroristische Gruppen, kriminelle Netzwerke treffen sich nicht mehr in dunklen Hinterhöfen. Sie kommunizieren über verschlüsselte Kanäle. Sie begehen Verbrechen über das Internet und finanzieren ihre Aktivitäten über internationale Finanzströme.

Mit der Mandatsreform geben wir Europol die nötigen Instrumente an die Hand, um die wachsenden Anforderungen auch in der virtuellen Welt wirksam zu erfüllen. Dank der exzellenten Arbeit meines Kollegen Javier Zarzalejos ist es gelungen, die Agentur entscheidend zu stärken, unsere Kampfansage an kriminelle Strukturen zu unterstreichen, eine gute Balance im Sinne der Grundrechte zu finden.

Europol ist eines unserer Flaggschiffe im Kampf gegen Verbrechen, gegen die Verbreitung von Missbrauchsdarstellung, organisierte Kriminalität, Terror, Geldwäsche und vieles mehr.

Hat Europol alle Instrumente in der Hand, die es dafür braucht? Aus meiner Sicht noch nicht. Aber in dieser Woche wird ein entscheidendes, ein enorm wichtiges Instrument dazu kommen.

Spontane Wortmeldungen

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, já jsem přesvědčen, že potřebujeme pevný právní základ pro nakládání s takto citlivými osobními údaji, a proto tento návrh nařízení a i zprávu zpravodaje vítám. Je jasné, že čelíme celé řadě kybernetických útoků, ostatně jsme o tom mluvili již v předchozí debatě, a musíme reagovat na nové teroristické výzvy. Těch možností, jak reagovat, je samozřejmě celá řada. Od té spolupráce se soukromými společnostmi, samozřejmě rozšiřování, varování před teroristy, to jsou všechno osobní údaje, s nimiž pracujeme. Zároveň bych ale rovněž chtěl vyzdvihnout potřebu jasných právních garancí nezneužití těchto údajů a postupování podle přesně daných právních pravidel, tzn. transparentnost v tomto postupu, parlamentní dohled a samozřejmě i určitý bezpečnostní mechanismus. Myslím si, že můžeme budovat lepší a bezpečnější Europol, ale s jasnými garancemi.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, comisaria Johansson, lo ha oído usted con claridad, el Parlamento Europeo es bien consciente de que en los años de pandemia se ha producido un incremento exponencial de la cibercriminalidad —como el *phishing* o el abuso sexual en línea— que requiere un refuerzo del mandato de Europol para manejar *big data*, pero hacerlo de manera siempre consistente frente a la globalización y la revolución tecnológica y con el estándar europeo de protección de derechos fundamentales, que es el más alto del mundo.

Es por eso que ha escuchado usted con insistencia el mensaje de que es imprescindible salvaguardar, en este refuerzo del mandato de Europol para cooperar con terceros Estados, con actores privados, en el manejo de *big data* y en su capacidad de luchar contra la criminalidad grave transnacional, el estándar europeo de protección de los derechos fundamentales.

Creo que este es el mensaje que surge con claridad de este debate y es por eso que es importante que en el Reglamento se contemple la incorporación del agente de derechos fundamentales, que es lo que hemos exigido en la renovación de cada agencia que responde ante el Parlamento Europeo y, en particular, la Comisión de Libertades, Justicia e Interior.

(Ende der spontanen Wortmeldungen)

Ylva Johansson, Member of the Commission. – Thank you and thank you very much for the debate. Europol was created to facilitate police cooperation and support national law enforcement investigations. When terrorist and organised criminal groups are becoming more violent, more international, more digital and deeply involved in corruption, the tools for law enforcement must develop. And to be able to deliver on its core task for Europol to facilitate police cooperation and support national law enforcement investigations, Europol really needs this new mandate. Hopefully it will get it, thanks to the excellent work by the rapporteur Javier Zarzalejos and together with the shadow rapporteurs have been working very constructively together with the Council to find this good compromise.

Many of you here in the debate have raised the very important issue of safeguards and transparency, especially when it comes to handling personal data and big data. I should say that thanks to the constructive works in the trialogue, we have that now in place in the new mandate. Europol will represent a model of transparent and responsible law enforcement innovation. And I'm proud of that.

Javier Zarzalejos, rapporteur. – Mr President, Madam Commissioner, at this time of the evening I think that it is not the support some of you have expressed, but your physical presence in the hemicycle that I really have to thank you for.

Let me just say that Europol's record is a success and we have to prolong and to strengthen that success, that I am aware of the doubts and the criticism that has been expressed from some groups and some Members. I regret to say that some of them stem from an utterly inaccurate representation of what the regulation says. For example, Europol is not allowed, and won't be able, to enter alerts from the Schengen information system on its own, and certainly not on persons who have no relation with any criminal activity. That is simply false.

But let me stress that, once the regulation is in place, we will all have a different and a new role. There will obviously be a new role for Europol – a new mandate, new responsibilities, new capabilities. There will be a new role for the Commission, of course. Some of the new duties brought back about the development and implementation of the Europol regulations are, and will be, very important. There will be a new role for the EDPS in reinforced intervention in the activity of the agency. And there will be a new role for Parliament and the instruments that we have placed in the hands of Parliament to increase and strengthen democratic oversight.

I think that if we all use the instruments that the new regulation places in our hands, Europol will be better and all these doubts will simply disappear.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist damit geschlossen.

Die Abstimmung findet morgen, Mittwoch, 4. Mai 2022, statt.

17. Explanations of vote

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgen die Erklärungen zur Abstimmung. Wir haben zu einigen Abstimmungen, die heute stattgefunden haben, die Bitte, eine Stimmerklärung abzugeben.

Wir beginnen mit dem Bericht des Kollegen Domènec Ruiz Devesa vom Ausschuss für konstitutionelle Fragen zum Thema des Vorschlags für eine Verordnung des Rates über die allgemeine unmittelbare Wahl der Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments sowie zur Aufhebung des Beschlusses (76/787/EGKS, EWG, Euratom) des Rates und des diesem Beschluss beigefügten Akts zur Einführung allgemeiner unmittelbarer Wahlen der Mitglieder des Europäischen Parlaments (2020/2220(INL) (A9-0083/2022).

Es beginnt Frau Kollegin Stegrud für jeweils eine Minute wie alle Redner.

17.1. Election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage (A9-0083/2022 - Domènec Ruiz Devesa)

Mündliche Stimmerklärungen

Jessica Stegrud (ECR). – Herr talman! Sällan har det pratats så mycket om demokrati och folkstyre och samtidigt gjorts så mycket för att minska den. Maktförskjutningen från medborgarna till Bryssel pågår konstant och nu föreslås det att i valet till Europaparlamentet ska det finnas en särskild lista med 28 fristående kandidater som medborgarna kan rösta på. Man vill ha ledamöter som inte ska representera sina hemländer, utan Bryssel.

Om förslaget genomförs så kommer listan i praktiken att fyllas av EU-vurmande federalister, elitister utan känsla för och samhörighet med de enskilda medlemsstaterna. Ledamöter utan ansvar. På vilket sätt skulle de värna Sverige och svenska medborgares intressen? Inte alls. Som Sverigedemokrat har jag självklart röstat nej till denna avdemokratisering.

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Domnule președinte, alegerile europene reprezintă baza democratică a Uniunii Europene. Constituirea Parlamentului European reprezintă și ar trebui să reprezinte în continuare voința cetățenilor europeni care conferă întreaga legitimitate proiectului european. Asta înseamnă că tinerii trebuie să fie încurajați să se exprime politic în chestiunile care îi interesează, să poată vota inclusiv de la 16 ani. Asta înseamnă că principiile de egalitate electorală și egalitate de șanse, în special între femei și bărbați, trebuie să fie întărite. Asta implică și ca succesul proiectului european să se contureze încă de la nivelul național, de la nivelul fiecărui cetățean, tocmai de aceea am votat împotriva.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, k reformě volebního systému pro volby do Evropského parlamentu jsem uplatnil i určité výhrady, nicméně začnu pozitivně. Oceňuji řadu konkrétních posunů, sjednocení základních podmínek pro výkon volebního práva jak pro kandidáty, tak pro evropské politické strany, rovněž pro voliče. Například to, že budou znát své kandidáty v pevně stanovém termínu, to si myslím, že jsou zcela konkrétní pozitivní posuny. Rovněž volební kvóty, kde dnes jsou poslanci voleni v různých schématech volebního prahu, někde je to 3,5 %, někde je to 5 %. Boj proti dvojímu možnému hlasování voličů, to si myslím, že je rovněž pozitivní posun, stejně tak korespondenční volba. Výhrady jsem uplatnil zejména proti transnacionálním kandidátním listinám, což se objevilo na sjetině mého hlasování.

17.2. Amending Annexes IV and V to Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 on persistent organic pollutants (A9-0092/2022 - Martin Hojsík)

Mündliche Stimmerklärungen

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, já jsem tuto zprávu podpořil. Myslím si, že tato zpráva představuje pozitivní posun v ochraně zdraví občanů Evropské unie. Tyto perzistentní organické látky mají negativní vliv na lidské zdraví a rozšíření změny těchto dotčených příloh IV a V nařízení Evropského parlamentu a Rady (EU) 2019/1021 jsem přivítal. Naším cílem by mělo být chránit lidské zdraví. Tyto látky patří k nejnebezpečnějším chemickým látkám na světě, uvedu např. bisfenol. Mají dramatický dopad, např. na vývoj lidského plodu. Jsem rád, že jsme šli cestou rozšíření a předběžné opatrnosti na základě vědeckých poznatků o rozšíření tohoto seznamu v těchto přílohách. Myslím si, že to je dobrý posun a dobrá zpráva pro evropské občany, že v ochraně jejich zdraví nepolevujeme.

17.3. A sustainable blue economy in the EU: the role of fisheries and aquaculture (A9-0089/2022 - Isabel Carvalhais)

Mündliche Stimmerklärungen

Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ho votato a favore della relazione sull'economia blu in Europa.

Siamo riusciti ad inserire, grazie ai nostri emendamenti, tutele effettive dell'ambiente marino, tra cui la necessità di vietare le attività industriali estrattive dannose per l'ambiente, incluse le trivelle, nelle aree marine protette. Purtroppo non siamo riusciti a mantenere il testo originale con cui per la prima volta il Parlamento chiedeva di vietare la pesca a strascico nelle aree marine protette.

Sono comunque felice che questa relazione sottolinei l'importanza della piccola pesca costiera, riconoscendo la necessità di tutelare il segmento e promuoverne lo sviluppo anche attraverso l'assegnazione di una fetta più ampia delle possibilità di pesca. Il testo insiste sulla garanzia di condizioni di lavoro dignitose, sicurezza sociale e rappresentanza nelle organizzazioni e nei processi decisionali.

Il testo, inoltre, riconosce il ruolo delle donne nella pesca e nell'acquacoltura, ma è necessario aumentarne la visibilità e assicurare la parità di accesso all'occupazione. La relazione è sicuramente quindi un passo in avanti verso un'economia blu sostenibile ed inclusiva.

Stanislav Polčák (PPE). – Pane předsedající, tuto zprávu jsem rovněž podpořil, protože se jasně vymezuje proti škodlivým rybolovným praktikám, ať jsou to unášené sítě nebo vlečné sítě pro lov při dně. Tyto škodlivé praktiky musíme nepochybně omezit a stává se to tedy touto zprávou i v naší legislativě. My máme již zcela mrtvá území našich moří, kde není prakticky žádný život. A právě dosavadní třeba regulace rybolovu, která je již aplikována na základě i mezinárodních úmluv, také ukazuje, že přináší dlouhodobé výsledky, obnovení populací, přenesení biodiverzity do těchto mořských území. Myslím si, že se musíme soustředit na selektivní rybářské metody než na průmyslové druhy lovu a potřebujeme nepochybně obnovit zdraví a biodiverzitu našich moří, což i tato zpráva nepochybně umožňuje.

17.4. EU action plan for organic agriculture (A9-0126/2022 - Simone Schmiedtbauer)

Mündliche Stimmerklärungen

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Domnule președinte, avem nevoie să mâncăm mai bine și mai sănătos. Calitatea vieții noastre depinde în mod indiscutabil de protejarea mediului înconjurător și de o agricultură centrată pe binele consumatorului. Deci avem nevoie de o agricultură ecologică. Cu toate acestea, momentan riscăm să ne confruntăm cu o criză alimentară mondială cauzată de războiul declanșat de Rusia condusă de Putin, fapt care a perturbat masiv producția de alimente și a mărit și mai mult prețurile în Europa. Înainte de orice, trebuie să discutăm astăzi despre securitatea alimentară în Europa. Sunt esențiale creșterea productivității agricole în Europa, acordarea de mai multe subvenții directe fermierilor, de reducere a TVA pentru alimente indispensabile și de măsuri ambițioase de încurajare a producției sustenabile. Am susținut acest raport.

Rosa D'Amato (Verts/ALE). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ho votato a favore del piano d'azione dell'Unione europea per l'agricoltura biologica. Questa relazione sostiene in maniera inequivocabile lo sviluppo dell'agricoltura biologica.

Dopo rinunce ambientali della nuova PAC e mentre la guerra in Ucraina ci ricorda l'urgenza di uscire da un modello agricolo basato sugli idrocarburi per i suoi fertilizzanti e pesticidi, il Parlamento europeo ha preso la posizione giusta sul piano d'azione per l'agricoltura biologica, settore chiave anche per il mio paese, l'Italia.

Il nostro modello intensivo ha superato i limiti consentiti dall'ambiente ed è urgente cambiare il nostro modello alimentare, produrre meglio e non necessariamente di più. Questa relazione è un ulteriore passo per raggiungere gli obiettivi della *farm to fork*, definendo l'agricoltura biologica economicamente sana per gli agricoltori e salutare per i consumatori, sostenendo inoltre una produzione locale e le filiere corte. Questa è la direzione che dobbiamo seguire per la nostra salute e quella del pianeta.

17.5. EU strategy to promote education for children in the world (A9-0058/2022 - David Lega)

Mündliche Stimmerklärungen

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Domnule președinte, vorbim numai despre crizele acute care se confruntă umanitatea, însă nimeni nu vorbește despre o criză silențioasă care distruge în mod tacit stabilitatea și prosperitatea pe termen mediu și lung a statelor: criza educației la nivel mondial. Unul din trei copii în lume încă nu are acces la internet. Prea mulți copii nu au acces la educație, trăiesc în sărăcie sau participă la o școlarizare care nu duce la învățare. 617 milioane de copii nu reușesc să dobândească competențe minime la citire și matematică, chiar dacă două treimi dintre ei merg la școală. Uniunea Europeană, în calitate de cel mai mare donator de asistență pentru dezvoltare, are responsabilitatea de a avansa și finanța o strategie care să promoveze educația în țările partenere. Nu putem continua să periclitàm viitorul a generații întregi de copii. Am susținut acest raport.

18. Corrections to votes and voting intentions: see Minutes**19. Action taken on Parliament's resolutions****20. Approval of the minutes of the current sitting: see Minutes****21. Agenda of the next sitting**

Der Präsident. – Soweit die Stimmerklärung zum Bericht des Kollegen Lega. Etwaige weitere Erklärungen zur Abstimmung können schriftlich eingereicht werden oder werden möglicherweise morgen Abend nach den Aussprachen behandelt.

Die Sitzung ist geschlossen und wird morgen, Mittwoch, 4. Mai 2022, um 8.30 Uhr mit der Aussprache zu einem Schwerpunktthema mit den Erklärungen des Rates und der Kommission betreffend die Auswirkungen des russischen Krieges in der Ukraine auf die Gesellschaft und die Wirtschaft in der EU und betreffend die Stärkung der Handlungsfähigkeit der EU (2022/2653(RSP)) wieder aufgenommen.

Die Tagesordnung wurde veröffentlicht und ist auf der Webseite des Europäischen Parlaments verfügbar.

Wir sind am Ende der heutigen Tagesordnung angelangt. Ich danke allen für ihre Mitarbeit und wünsche allen eine gesegnete Nachtruhe. Die Sitzung ist geschlossen.

22. Closure of the sitting

(Die Sitzung wird um 22.19 Uhr geschlossen.)

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
Verts/ALE	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
ID	Identity and Democracy Group
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
The Left	The Left Group in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL
NI	Non-attached Members