

COMPTE RENDU IN EXTENSO DES DÉBATS DU 17 JANVIER 2019

(C/2024/3659)

PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN

SESSION 2018-2019

Séances du 14 au 17 janvier 2019

STRASBOURG

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COMPTE RENDU IN EXTENSO DES DÉBATS DU 17 JANVIER 2019

PREȘEDINȚIE: IOAN MIRCEA PAȘCU

Vicepreședinte

1. Ouverture de la séance

(Ședința a fost deschisă la ora 9.01)

2. Négociations avant la première lecture du Parlement (article 69 quater du règlement) (suites données): voir procès-verbal

3. Décisions concernant certains documents: voir procès-verbal.

4. Pétitions: voir procès-verbal

5. Dépôt de documents: voir procès-verbal

6. Intégration différenciée (brève présentation)

Președintele. – Următorul punct de pe ordinea de zi este prezentarea succintă a raportului Pascal Durand referitor la integrarea diferențiată (2018/2093(INI)) (A8-0402/2018).

Pascal Durand, rapporteur. – Monsieur le Président, je vous remercie, Madame la Commissaire, d'être présente, on se sent un peu moins seul et cela réchauffe un peu l'âme en ce matin. Je tiens en premier lieu à remercier, puisqu'ils sont là, les représentants de la commission des affaires constitutionnelles, tous ceux qui ont travaillé avec moi, et notamment M. - Jáuregui, qui a travaillé non seulement dans le cadre de ce rapport, mais également dans le cadre de son rapport.

Ce rapport sur l'intégration différenciée se situe dans la suite de la proposition de la Commission, à savoir les fameux cinq scénarios que le Président Juncker était venu présenter ici. Ce rapport s'inscrit dans la troisième proposition de la Commission, celle évidemment qui a la faveur du Parlement européen, à savoir une Europe qui progresse et une Europe qui permet à ceux qui veulent avancer de pouvoir avancer. C'est dans cette logique que nous présentons ce rapport.

Nous sommes dans un moment – je n'ai pas besoin d'insister sur cette question – très particulier pour l'Union européenne. Il y a le Brexit, il y a la difficulté à se faire entendre par les citoyens, mais il y a surtout le danger d'entrer dans une Europe à plusieurs vitesses: une Europe de première classe pour certains, une Europe de deuxième, voire de troisième classe pour d'autres. Nous devons arriver à garder notre unité, voilà le défi que nous essayons de relever ensemble.

Le rapport ouvre un certain nombre de pistes. Il ouvre des pistes à l'intérieur du traité et fait des propositions pour le futur. À l'intérieur du traité, nous insistons – et le Parlement insiste vraiment très fortement – pour que l'on mette en œuvre et qu'on utilise la clause «passerelle» afin de sortir de la logique de l'unanimité qui bloque les décisions.

Nous souhaitons également la fin des *opt out*. Il faut que le droit primaire soit le même pour tout le monde et que, si de nouveaux entrants veulent venir, soit ils acceptent l'intégralité du droit primaire, soit on passe par une logique d'accords de partenariat. Il est très important de faire en sorte que le droit primaire soit le même pour l'ensemble des pays, qu'il n'y ait pas différents niveaux de pays à l'égard du droit primaire. Cela est pour nous quelque chose de très important.

Nous souhaitons aussi que l'Union européenne puisse mettre très clairement ce socle des valeurs et des droits fondamentaux en vigueur et que nous n'ayons pas la capacité, dans une Europe différenciée, de reculer sur ces droits fondamentaux.

En dehors de cela, je terminerai sur les évolutions que nous pouvons avoir. Nous souhaitons vraiment mettre en place au sein de l'Union européenne un pilier des droits à la fois sociaux, environnementaux et économiques, qui permettrait de faire en sorte que cette Union européenne ait un véritable socle et qu'elle puisse avancer sur ces conditions-là. Voilà globalement les orientations que nous souhaitons. Monsieur le Président, j'insiste, il faut que nous fassions en sorte que cette Europe avance d'une seule voix et que nous n'ayons pas une Europe à plusieurs vitesses et à plusieurs classes, mais que, pour autant, ceux qui veulent avancer puissent le faire.

Interventii la cerere

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κατ' αρχάς, το θέμα που συζητούμε είναι ιδιαίτερα ενδιαφέρον, αλλά φυσικά δεν έχουμε την αναγκαία συμμετοχή. Η ολοκλήρωση, ούτως ή άλλως, είναι διαφοροποιημένη σε επίπεδο Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, διότι έχουμε τη Σένγκεν, στην οποία συμμετέχουν συγκεκριμένα κράτη μέλη, ή την ευρωζώνη. Ως εκ τούτου, λοιπόν, είναι κάτι το οποίο γνωρίζουμε. Δεύτερον, έχουμε ορισμένα κράτη που έχουν πάρει εξαιρέσεις με ειδικά πρωτόκολλα σε επίπεδο πρωτογενούς κοινοτικού δικαίου, όπως είναι η Δανία που εξαιρείται από συγκεκριμένες ρυθμίσεις, ή επίσης η Ιρλανδία. Θα έλεγα, λοιπόν, ότι η ρύθμιση για τις χώρες που επιθυμούν να προχωρήσουν προβλέπεται πάλι θεσμικά ως διαφοροποιημένη ολοκλήρωση και επομένως είναι κάτι το οποίο πλέον εξαρτάται πολιτικά ποιες χώρες πρέπει να αξιοποιήσουν και αν θέλουν να αξιοποιήσουν αυτό το ζήτημα για να προχωρήσουν σε μία συνεργασία σε θέματα κοινωνικά ή περιβαλλοντικά. Θα έλεγα, όμως, ότι πρέπει να δούμε και το εξής: ορισμένες χώρες λόγω ιδιαίτερων προβλημάτων, όπως είναι η Ελλάδα η οποία ήταν σε μνημόνιο όλα αυτά τα χρόνια, δεν μπορούν εύκολα να συμμετάσχουν επί ίσοις όροις με τους υπόλοιπους. Για αυτό ίσως πρέπει να προβλέψουμε εντός της συνθήκης ορισμένες εξαιρέσεις για χώρες, που έχουν μείνει πίσω, ένα ειδικό καθεστώς ευθύνης για ένα χρονικό διάστημα προκειμένου να μπορέσουν να ανακουφιστούν αυτές οι χώρες και να ακολουθήσουν τη διαδικασία ολοκλήρωσης στην πορεία.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η διαφοροποιημένη ολοκλήρωση είναι ένας ασαφής, συγκεχυμένος και, για τον λόγο αυτό, δυσνόητος όρος με τον οποίον ορισμένα κράτη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης αλλά και κύκλοι της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης προσπαθούν να συγκαλύψουν έναν επικίνδυνο στόχο που έχουν θέσει για το μέλλον της Ευρώπης. Δηλαδή, την κατάργηση της σημερινής δομής της Ευρώπης και τη δημιουργία της Ευρώπης των πολλών ταχυτήτων, στην οποία θα έχει καταργηθεί η αρχή της ισότητας και ορισμένα κράτη θα είναι πιο ισχυρά από τα υπόλοιπα. Τα υπόλοιπα κράτη θα μετατραπούν σε παρίες, θα τειθούν στο περιθώριο και, εάν τους επιτραπεί, θα συνεχίσουν την πορεία. Η όλη κατάσταση μου θυμίζει τη γνωστή φράση από το έργο του Orwell «Η φάρμα των ζώων» ότι όλα τα ζώα είναι ίσα αλλά ορισμένα είναι πιο ίσα από τα άλλα. Για να επιτευχθεί αυτός ο στόχος, πρέπει να καταργηθεί η αρχή της ομοφωνίας στη λήψη αποφάσεων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Με άλλα λόγια θα αποδυναμωθεί η ισχύς των κρατών και τα μικρά κυρίως κράτη δεν θα μπορούν να υποστηρίξουν τα συμφέροντά τους. Επειδή αναφέρθηκα στον Orwell θα κλείσω την παρέμβασή μου λέγοντας το εξής: εάν δεν αντιδράσουμε σε αυτή την επικίνδυνη μεθόδευση, τότε η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση είναι υποχρεωμένη να ζηήσει το «1984» του Orwell και φυσικά να καταστραφεί.

(Ο ομιλητής δέχεται να απαντήσει σε ερώτηση με γαλάζια κάρτα (άρθρο 162 παράγραφος 8 του Κανονισμού.))

Jo Leinen (S&D), Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“. – Herr Kollege! Sie sagen gerade: Alle Tiere sind gleich, aber einige Tiere sind gleicher. Sie spielen darauf an, dass es große Mitgliedstaaten und kleine Mitgliedstaaten gibt. Aber würden Sie denn zustimmen, dass wir bei 27, 28 Staaten nicht immer warten können, bis alle willens oder fähig sind, etwas zu machen? Würden Sie zustimmen, dass es möglich sein muss, dass einige Staaten vorangehen, wie das ja bereits auch passiert ist, und dass die Tür offen ist für alle? So sind alle Tiere gleich, aber einige Tiere sind schneller als die anderen, und einige sind langsamer. Das ist die Lage.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI), απάντηση σε ερώτηση με γαλάζια κάρτα. – Κύριε συνάδελφε, όπως γνωρίζετε, και όπως γνωρίζουμε όλοι, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση στηρίζεται σε κάποιες αρχές και σε κάποιες αξίες. Κάποιες από τις αρχές αυτές είναι η αρχή της ισότητας, η αρχή της αλληλεγγύης και η αρχή της συνεργασίας. Άρα, λοιπόν, πρέπει σε αυτή την Ένωση όλα τα κράτη να είναι ίσα και να συνεργάζονται μεταξύ τους. Δεν πρέπει τα ισχυρότερα κράτη να επιβάλλουν την θέλησή τους επί των υπολοίπων. Πρέπει να βρεθεί ένας τρόπος συνεννοήσεως και συνεργασίας. Υπάρχουν ορισμένα θέματα τα οποία αντιμετωπίζονται υπό το πρίσμα των συμφερόντων των μεγάλων κρατών και των ισχυρών κρατών. Αυτό δεν πρέπει να γίνεται. Τα μικρά κράτη δεν πρέπει να τειθούν στο περιθώριο.

(Înceierea intervențiilor la cerere)

Věra Jourová, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, this report is a welcome reaction to the Commission's White Paper on the future of Europe and to our shared discussion ahead of the Sibiu summit.

As Mr Durand noted, there are different views as to what differentiated integration means and whether it is a good thing or not. Whereas, in some Member States, it is perceived as a positive step towards more integration, other Member States consider it divisive.

The Commission in its White Paper on the future of the EU presented, as you know, five possible scenarios for discussion. Scenario three was an option for some to go further, creating a positive drive towards deeper integration whilst remaining open and inclusive to all who may wish to join. We have seen over the years how this dynamic can help address emerging challenges and drive integration. The euro, now in its 20th year, the EMU and Schengen are examples, and over the years we have seen that more and more Member States have been inspired and have wanted to join such cooperation.

I hope and trust that the same will be the case for the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) since Europeans, now more than ever, need to stand strong in the face of a changed international order.

There are also examples in the justice area, like the creation of the European Public Prosecutor's Office, where in 2017, 20 Member States out of 25 Member States – because three had opted out – agreed to engage in enhanced cooperation to establish this key factor to fight crimes against the EU budget. Since then, two more Member States have joined and I am sure that others will eventually follow.

But differentiated integration is only ever the second best. The normal Community method and standard legislative procedure are still the best way to guarantee the integrity and wellbeing of the Union as a whole. It must also remain open to all who wish to join. That is also why the Commission started, last year, and is now pursuing a debate about more efficient and democratic decision-making in specific policy areas by making use of the passerelle clauses foreseen by the existing EU treaties to allow the use of qualified majority voting in areas such as EU foreign policy, EU tax policy or environment.

This will avoid blockages and the need for recourse to enhanced cooperation where unanimity is not forthcoming in these areas and where EU action is close to citizens' wishes. The Commission looks forward to your support in this.

Președintele. – Acest punct de pe ordinea de zi a fost închis.

Votul va avea loc joi, 17 ianuarie 2019.

7. **Enquête stratégique OI/2/2017 de la Médiatrice sur la transparence des débats législatifs dans les instances préparatoires du Conseil de l'Union européenne (brève présentation)**

Președintele. – Următorul punct de pe ordinea de zi este prezentarea succintă a raportului Jo Leinen și Yana Toom referitor la ancheta strategică a Ombudsmanului OI/2/2017 privind transparența dezbaterilor legislative care au loc în cadrul grupurilor de pregătire ale Consiliului UE (2018/2096(INI)) (A8-0420/2018).

Jo Leinen, Berichterstatter. – Herr Präsident, Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, Frau Kommissarin! Die Bürgerinnen und Bürger erwarten, dass Entscheidungen und vor allen Dingen Gesetze nachvollziehbar und verständlich sind, das heißt, dass der ganze Entscheidungsprozess transparent ist. Das erwarten sie zu Hause bei uns in den Nationalstaaten, und sie erwarten es umso mehr von der Europäischen Union, weil Brüssel zwangsläufig immer weiter weg ist von den Menschen. Deswegen brauchen wir auch mehr Transparenz auf der europäischen Ebene als vielleicht auf der nationalen Ebene. Wir haben die Situation, dass dieses Parlament ein offenes Haus ist. Alles, was wir machen, kann nachvollzogen werden. Unsere Sitzungen werden im Web gestreamt, unsere Ausschusssitzungen sind offen, unsere Vorbereitungssitzungen sind offen. Also sind wir eines der transparentesten Parlamente der Welt, und darauf können wir stolz sein.

Nicht so ist das bei der anderen Gesetzgebungskörperschaft, beim Ministerrat der 28 Mitgliedstaaten. Der Ministerrat ist immer noch eine Blackbox, da geschieht vieles hinter verschlossenen Türen. Das hat sich zwar etwas gebessert, aber es ist weit von dem Standard entfernt, den wir verlangen. Und es muss gefordert werden, dass auch die zweite Kammer, der Ministerrat, volle Transparenz hat, nicht nur bei den Abstimmungen über Gesetze, sondern – und das ist der Punkt – auch bei den 150 Vorbereitungsgruppen, die es da gibt. Die sind nämlich völlig intransparent. Es war eine dankbare Aufgabe der Bürgerbeauftragten, sich dieses Thema vorzuknöpfen, und sie hat ja einen Bericht gemacht, auf den wir uns beziehen. Wir hier im Parlament fordern auch volle Transparenz in der zweiten Gesetzgebungskörperschaft, im Ministerrat. Er soll wirklich öffentlich tagen, und er soll die Vorbereitungssitzungen ebenfalls öffentlich machen.

Das geht einher mit einer anderen Praxis: der Geheimhaltung von Dokumenten. Die meisten Dokumente aus dem Rat haben den Stempel „Limité“, das heißt limitiert, wobei in Brüssel nichts limitiert ist. Wir wissen, dass jedes Dokument irgendwo das Licht der Öffentlichkeit erreicht; es ist also insofern eine eher antiquierte Konstruktion. Und der Ministerrat sollte viel sorgfältiger sortieren, was wirklich der Geheimhaltung bedarf und was eigentlich gar nicht geheim ist, sondern der Öffentlichkeit auch mitgeteilt wird.

Die Transparenz im Ministerrat ist auch deshalb notwendig, weil Minister oft aus ihren nationalen Hauptstädten kommen, in Brüssel etwas beschließen und dann zu Hause etwas ganz anderes erzählen. Und das können sie, weil niemand nachvollziehen kann, wie sie denn abgestimmt haben. Auch für uns Abgeordnete und für die Kolleginnen und Kollegen in den nationalen Parlamenten ist es ganz schwer zu sagen, wie denn die nationale Regierung gestimmt hat. Die können alle möglichen Storys erzählen, die man glauben kann oder nicht. Und von daher, glaube ich, ist Transparenz im Ministerrat auch ein Mittel, um den Verschwörungstheorien und den Unterstellungen entgegenzutreten. Wir haben so viele Populisten und so viele Nationalisten, die gerne irgendwelche Storys in die Welt setzen. Ich glaube, die Zeit ist reif, durch Transparenz ein gutes Beispiel zu geben und uns wirklich mit guter Regierungsführung auch beispielhaft für die Mitgliedstaaten selbst, aber auch für andere in der Welt, aufzustellen. Deshalb danke ich meiner Kollegin Toom und allen, die daran mitgearbeitet haben, dass wir über diesen Bericht hier heute abstimmen. Ich hoffe, dass wir um 12.00 Uhr im Plenum eine große Mehrheit bekommen.

Yana Toom, Rapporteur. – Mr President, first of all I would like to thank the Ombudsman for her work. Almost two years ago, she opened the inquiry on transparency in the Council. She concluded that the current practice in the Council constituted maladministration, especially when it comes to the failure of the Council to register the positions of Member States in the preparatory bodies.

The recommendations she made were very reasonable, but the Council did not answer. Can you imagine? They just did not answer her letter. Therefore, she turned to Parliament to ask for support. During our first meeting on the issue, the Austrian Presidency promised to address the problem, or at least to provide an explanation. But now the Austrian Presidency is over and they never answered either. Hopefully the Romanian Presidency will be different.

Transparency in the Council has been a topic of discussion for 25 years, yet not many things have changed. The small victories in this area, such as access to documents and public deliberations, were pushed for by Parliament and the Ombudsman. This underlines our role in this House as a catalyst for change. While the Council still holds on to the idea that their work is pure diplomacy, the role of the institutions has changed over time. The Council and the Parliament are co-legislators now. Therefore, their practices should be conducted in a similar way.

The Parliament has become more transparent. All committee meetings, as Jo Leinen mentioned just now, are open and all reports, minutes and amendments are available. The positions of absolutely each and every Member are clear. It is therefore a logical step that the same should apply to the Council, and the Coreper meetings in particular. It says clearly in the Treaties that decisions should be taken as close to the citizens as possible and, especially now during these turbulent Brexit times, we have to be open and we have to be as close to people as possible. This means that all institutions have the obligation to be open and transparent. It's crucial for accountability.

There is an imbalance between the co-legislators as, when the public is unhappy about an outcome, Member States can easily point their finger at Parliament because our decisions are known, but the public does not see that often the outcome is the result of a struggle between the Parliament and the Council. Perhaps a Member State has a very strong position, yet they blame Brussels. This is problematic for Parliament and also for the media and even national parliaments, who are informed too late about the decisions of their governments in the Council, if at all. Sometimes they are just not informed.

These are the points we have focused on in this report. I would like to thank Jo Leinen for his good cooperation in the committee. Finally, I would like to ask the Chamber to support this report and send the message that this House stands for transparent democratic process.

Intervenții la cerere

Caterina Chinnici (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la trasparenza del processo legislativo europeo è una componente essenziale per rafforzare la fiducia nel progetto europeo.

I cittadini devono poter esercitare pienamente il loro diritto all'informazione sugli sviluppi della legislazione europea e devono poter riconoscere le posizioni dei propri rappresentanti, eletti direttamente in questo Parlamento o indirettamente tramite i rispettivi governi, in Consiglio.

Bruxelles non è né deve poter essere raffigurata dai suoi detrattori come una *black box*, in cui occorrono opache mediazioni di interessi. Tale narrazione è indubbiamente falsa, ma il nostro impegno di legislatori per la trasparenza deve comunque essere massimo.

Parlamento e Commissione, come riconosciuto dallo stesso Mediatore europeo, hanno fatto in questi anni importanti passi avanti per garantire la massima trasparenza delle proprie attività preparatorie. È quindi importante che anche il Consiglio, quale colegislatore, si impegni per raggiungere nella propria organizzazione e nelle proprie prassi i più alti standard di trasparenza, secondo le raccomandazioni del Mediatore europeo, in particolare elaborando criteri chiari e ben definiti per la classificazione dei documenti cosiddetti «LIMITE».

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, το θέμα το οποίο συζητούμε είναι ιδιαίτερα σημαντικό. το 1993, εξέδωσα ένα βιβλίο με τίτλο «The European Ombudsman», στο οποίο είχα θέσει το ζήτημα της διαφάνειας και πώς ο Ευρωπαϊός Διαμεσολαβητής μπορεί να κάνει συγκεκριμένες παρεμβάσεις. Εδώ, λοιπόν, έχουμε ένα θέατρο του παραλόγου. Το Συμβούλιο έχει δύο ρόλους: είναι εκτελεστικό όργανο, αλλά ταυτόχρονα είναι και όργανο νομοθετικό. Και, όσο είναι όργανο νομοθετικό, πρέπει να υπάρχει διαφάνεια. Πρέπει να γνωρίζουμε όλα τα προπαρασκευαστικά έγγραφα, πρέπει να ξέρουμε κάθε κράτος μέλος τι λέει αναλυτικά, πρέπει να γνωρίζουμε τι ψηφίζει κάθε κυβέρνηση. Αυτό είναι σημαντικό για την άσκηση κοινοβουλευτικού ελέγχου, διότι ούτε οι βουλευτές και τα εθνικά κοινοβούλια δεν μαθαίνουν τι ψηφίζει η κυβέρνηση ή το περισσότερο να το γνωρίζουν οι πολίτες οι οποίοι στη συνέχεια θα κληθούν να ψηφίσουν τη συγκεκριμένη κυβέρνηση ή το συγκεκριμένο κόμμα ή να το καταψηφίσουν. Άρα, λοιπόν, η έκθεση ανοίγει συγκεκριμένους δρόμους. Η εργασία του Ευρωπαϊού Διαμεσολαβητή είναι πολύ σημαντική για να υπάρχει επιτέλους διαφάνεια στο Συμβούλιο, όπως υπάρχει διαφάνεια και στο Κοινοβούλιο, και να υπάρξει επίσης διαφάνεια και στο Eurogroup, διότι εκεί παίρνονται σημαντικές αποφάσεις που καθορίζουν την οικονομία και την πολιτική όλης της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE). – Hr. formand! Tak til ordførerne og tak til Ombudsmanden, ikke mindst, for en fremragende betænkning. Vi står her med selve kernen i det, der bliver kaldt det demokratiske underskud i EU. Det bliver normalt omtalt som en slags spøgelseshistorie: det er så langt væk, der er så mange, der er så mange sprog. Nej, det er lige præcis på dette punkt, vi kan finde det! De nationale parlamenter og den nationale presse kan ikke se, hvad deres egen regering laver – og slet ikke hvad de andre gør. Prøv at forestille jer, at jeres eget parlament blot nogle gange om måneden meddelte, at nu havde parlamentet vedtaget sådan og sådan – uden at I anede, hvilket parti der havde sagt hvad, hvordan diskussionen havde været. Det, vil jeg tro, ville de fleste synes, var ganske skrækeligt – men det er præcis sådan, Rådet arbejder. De arbejder, som om de var en mellemstatslig institution – ikke en EU-lovgivningsinstitution. Det er diplomater, ikke embedsmænd/fagfolk, der sidder og laver lovene. De tager næsten ingen afstemninger – tak, Ombudsmand, for at påpege det – og jeg håber virkelig, at vi ikke bare får god støtte til denne betænkning, men at I

også alle sammen gør det til en vigtig sag i valgkampen at få jeres regeringer til at støtte det her. Først da får vi bugt med det demokratiske underskud i EU!

(Taleren accepterer at besvare et blåt kort-spørgsmål (forretningsordenens artikel 162, stk. 8))

Maria Grapini (S&D), întrebare adresată în conformitate cu procedura „cartonaşului albastru”. – Stimată colegă, sunt total de acord că se ştie prea puţin şi, mai ales, prea corect – sau incorect, mai degrabă. În ţările membre, cetăţenii nu au informaţiile corecte despre ceea ce se întâmplă aici şi, de foarte multe ori, vina vine spre Uniunea Europeană, nu spre administraţiile naţionale sau spre parlamentele naţionale.

Cum credeţi dumneavoastră că am putea să îi informăm mai bine pe cetăţenii din ţările noastre legat de responsabilitatea la nivel european, la nivel naţional, la nivel local? Pentru că aici există, cred, confuzia şi eu cred că, de multe ori, e făcută intenţionat. Este o confuzie legată de subsidiaritate şi cred că sunt greşeli şi din partea instituţiilor europene în acest sens.

Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE), Blåt-kort-svar. – Hr. formand! Bare helt kort: Det er jeg naturligvis enig i. Det var stort set det, jeg prøvede at beskrive, men jeg tror, fru Grapini, at hvis vi virkelig læser Ombudsmandens beretning og den betænkning, vi har her, så har vi nogle meget, meget gode redskaber til at angribe det problem. I samme øjeblik den nationale presse og de nationale parlamenter kan følge med i, hvad deres regeringer laver, bliver de tvunget til også at se, hvad den anden side af lovgivningsprocessen – nemlig os – laver, og os har de let adgang til. De kan sagtens følge med i, hvad vi laver, så derfor er det jo ikke i sig selv problemet. Problemet er, at man har holdt hele det vigtige nationale lag ude af demokratiet, og jeg håber meget, at vi sammen kan bekæmpe det onde, og med Ombudsmandens beretning har vi et fremragende redskab til at gøre det.

Eleonora Evi (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, questa Europa è percepita spesso, troppo spesso, come lontana dai cittadini europei e, parlando con le persone, è evidente come ai loro occhi non sia per nulla chiaro chi decide che cosa, il Parlamento, la Commissione, il Consiglio.

Ed è vero, come hanno detto i colleghi, il Parlamento lavora con un buon grado di trasparenza, mentre invece come possiamo biasimare i cittadini europei? Perché una delle tre istituzioni, il Consiglio, ha sempre lavorato a porte chiuse, ha lavorato a porte chiuse e si comporta proprio come se stesse giocando una partita a poker, a carte coperte.

Il Consiglio lavora quindi in questa maniera e non abbiamo alcuna idea della posizione che tengono i giocatori, no pardon, quindi gli Stati membri. Peccato che su questo tavolo, su quel tavolo, si giochino partite importantissime per il futuro dei cittadini dell'Europa stessa. Tutto questo calpesta i principi di pubblicità e trasparenza e lede il diritto dei cittadini di avere piena conoscenza delle decisioni prese dai loro rappresentanti. Tutto questo non può che svuotare l'idea stessa di Europa.

Mi auguro che questa Europa non sia stata sfigurata in maniera irreversibile e me lo auguro di cuore.

(Înceierea intervenţiilor la cerere)

Věra Jourová, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, let me start with the comment that it is not for the Commission to comment in detail on the internal procedures of the Council. The Commission has however always been committed to enhancing the transparency of the legislative process in general, which is a shared responsibility.

The Commission came to office with a commitment to enhance transparency. For example, Commissioners, their cabinets and directors-general only meet with interest representatives who are in the transparency register. We have proposed to extend this principle the Parliament and Council and we still hope that the three institutions will all agree on this in order to make the transparency register mandatory for lobbyists.

We are also publishing information on these meetings and on Commissioners' mission expenses. We have adopted new rules on Commission expert groups with stronger transparency requirements and we have provided unprecedented levels of access to information on ongoing trade negotiations and also during the Brexit negotiations.

Based on the Commission's proposal, this Parliament and the Council agreed with us on new interinstitutional agreement on better law-making which includes a joint commitment to enhance the transparency of legislative procedures, including as appropriate trilateral negotiations and to improve communication to the public.

As your report notes, work is continuing between the services of the three institutions in developing the joint legislative portal, which we together committed to set up. It will be a user-friendly way for non-specialists to access information about ongoing legislative proceedings.

A lot of information is already available if you know where to look but this is not always easy to find for non-experts. This portal should change that.

If either the Parliament or the Council wish to publish additional information compared to what is presently made public, this would be a logical place to do so.

Președintele. – Acest punct de pe ordinea de zi a fost închis.

Votul va avea loc joi, 17 ianuarie 2019.

Declarații scrise (articolul 162)

Pirkko Ruohonen-Lerner (ECR), kirjallinen. – Päätöksenteon avoimuus on demokratian kulmakiviä. Se on erittäin tärkeää kansalaisten luottamuksen kannalta. Kansalaisten, tiedotusvälineiden ja sidosryhmien on voitava varmistaa, että kansalliset hallitukset toimivat asioiden valmistelussa julkisesti antamiensa lupauksien mukaisesti. Neuvoston valmistelukokoukset ja useimmat keskustelut käydään suljetuin ovin. Asiakirjojen julkisuutta rajoitetaan järjestelmällisesti. Avoimuusvaatimuksia ja demokraattista valvontaa kierretään myös valmistelemalla tärkeitä päätöksiä epävirallisissa yhteyksissä, kuten euroryhmässä ja eurohuippukokouksessa. Asioiden salailu lisää epäluuloisuutta, mikä on haitallista koko EU:n maineelle. Se ruokkii myös huhupuheita, valeutisia ja salaliittoteorioita. Neuvoston toiminnan tulisi olla nykyistä läpinäkyvämpää, ja kokousten olisi oltava avoimia. Avoimuutta koskevaa lainsäädäntöä tulisi soveltaa myös neuvoston epävirallisiin elimiin. Lisäksi kokousten pöytäkirjoihin olisi kirjattava yksittäisten jäsenvaltioiden kannat käsiteltäviin asioihin. Näin kansalaiset ja toimittajat voisivat käytännössä seurata sitä, että kansalliset hallitukset toimivat kokouksissa julkisuudessa antamiensa lupauksien mukaisesti.

8. Débats sur des cas de violation des droits de l'Homme, de la démocratie et de l'État de droit (débat)

8.1. L'Azerbaïdjan, notamment le cas de Mehman Huseynov

Președintele. – Următorul punct pe ordinea de zi este dezbaterea a șase propuneri de rezoluție referitoare la Azerbaïdjan, în special cazul lui Mehman Huseynov (2019/2511(RSP)).

Rebecca Harms, Verfasserin. – Herr Präsident, Frau Kommissarin, sehr geehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen, auch in Aserbaidschan, die diese Debatte möglicherweise, hoffentlich verfolgen! In der Internetzeitung Azeri Daily habe ich gestern einen Artikel gelesen, in dem ich und die Kollegen, die an dieser EntschlieÙung gearbeitet haben, quasi beschuldigt werden, wir seien an einem groß angelegten Komplott zur Vorbereitung eines Coups gegen die Regierung von Aserbaidschan beteiligt. Ich empfehle den Journalisten dieser Zeitung, mal mit uns zu sprechen, bevor sie so etwas schreiben. Und ich empfehle auch zum Beispiel meinen gewählten Kollegen aus Aserbaidschan in der parlamentarischen Versammlung EuroNest, mal mit mir zu reden. Das habe ich versucht, bevor wir diese EntschlieÙung auf den Weg gebracht haben. Es ist mir leider nicht geglückt. Mein ehemaliger Vorstandskollege bei EuroNest, Fuad Muradov, ist inzwischen Minister in der Regierung von Aserbaidschan, und er weiß sehr gut, dass mein Anliegen in der Arbeit bei EuroNest immer gewesen ist, gute Beziehungen, verlässliche Beziehungen auch gerade zwischen uns Abgeordneten zu gewährleisten.

Warum haben wir diese Dringlichkeit wirklich auf die Tagesordnung gesetzt? Wir sind besorgt über das Schicksal von Mehman Hüseynov. Mehman Hüseynov ist seit Dezember letzten Jahres im Hungerstreik, und zwar deshalb, weil er damit bedroht ist, vor Ende seiner Haft, zu der er für zwei Jahre verurteilt war, erneut angeklagt zu werden, und jetzt befürchtet, vor Ende seiner ersten Haftstrafe zu fünf bis sieben weiteren Jahren verurteilt zu werden. Diese Situation ist keine einmalige Situation, sondern das *Civil Society Forum* in EuroNest hat uns darüber informiert, dass dieses Muster sich jetzt zum fünften Mal wiederholt. Und dies und unsere Sorgen für das Wohlergehen von Mehman Hüseynov haben dazu geführt, dass wir diese Dringlichkeit auf die Tagesordnung gesetzt haben.

Wir appellieren mit allen Fraktionen dieses Hauses an die aserbaidische Regierung: Lassen Sie Mehman Hüseynov frei! Wir appellieren an die Richter, nicht wieder ein solches inszeniertes Verfahren gegen ihn aufzulegen. Mehman hat sich verdient gemacht um Aufklärung von Korruption im Europarat. Deswegen sitzt er jetzt im Gefängnis. Und er hat sich eben nicht nur mit Problemen in Aserbaidschan auseinandergesetzt, sondern auch mit Problemen von korrupten Politikern zum Beispiel in Deutschland und in Italien. Auch deshalb ist es richtig, dass das Europäische Parlament sich jetzt für seine bedingungslose Freilassung einsetzt.

Ignazio Corrao, *author*. – Mr President, it seems like there are no more boundaries for President Aliyev in his war against his opponents. The message of the despot is clear: no one must dare to publicly highlight the extensive corruption and abuses by Azerbaijan's rulers and officials.

The case of Mehman Huseynov is emblematic. The journalist and blogger has been repeatedly harassed by the police for years, tortured and jailed on fabricated charges. In addition, the new charges are clearly politically motivated. They are tailored to further silence a prominent human rights voice. As a matter of fact, instead of investigating the alleged mistreatment suffered by Mr Huseynov, he was accused of defamation of the same officials that tormented him. After all, what would you expect from a country that ranks 163rd out of 180 countries on the World Press Freedom Index? What do you expect from a country where independent journalists and bloggers are thrown in prison if they do not bend to harassment bribes, beatings and blackmail?

The European Union is now negotiating a new agreement with Azerbaijan which should be based on the rule of law, human rights, good governance and democratic reforms. I believe this principle should not remain only on paper. The future agreement of Parliament to such an Act should not be given unless the situation changes radically.

Azerbaijan's crackdown on dissidents must end immediately and the unconditional release of political prisoners must be a priority in EU-Azerbaijan relations. This is why I call on the Commission to use all its influence and pressure to ensure the Azerbaijani authorities drop the charges and release Mr Huseynov unconditionally, along with the ten other journalists jailed. If we fail on that, we will be giving up once again on our principles and values.

Charles Tannock, *author*. – Mr President, it is nearly two years since Mehman Huseynov was sentenced to a two year jail sentence on a trumped up charge of slander. As a well-known blogger that sought to shed light on the alleged corruption of those in power there, there's always been a strong suspicion that the case against him was politically motivated. With his release date fast approaching and the authorities now seeking to press further charges that could see him remain in prison for another five to seven years, those suspicions are fully justified.

Far from being an isolated case there are claims that only this month there been five similar cases in which new charges are being brought against those whose sentences are about to end. None of this however should come as a great surprise given Azerbaijan's terrible track record for press freedom, ranking 163 out of 180 countries according to the World Press Freedom Index. It is amongst the worst in the world in fact.

I'm pleased that we have been able to raise his case today in this House, particularly given his vulnerable health as he continues a partial hunger strike. I strongly support the calls in this resolution for his immediate release and for the authorities to bring no further charges in Azerbaijan, which is an Eastern neighbourhood country with which the European Union enjoys good relations.

Miguel Urbán Crespo, *autor*. – Señor presidente, en Azerbaiyán la corrupción no es un problema cualquiera, es un problema endémico, y quien se atreve a denunciarla termina encarcelado o torturado. Esta es la situación de la que estamos hablando aquí. Esta es la situación de Mehman Hüseynov, que cumple una sentencia de dos años y se enfrenta a nuevos cargos, por lo que puede estar encarcelado otros siete.

Antes de su arresto, en 2017, Hüseynov lanzó la campaña «Busca funcionarios corruptos», en la que exponía la corrupción cometida por la élite gobernante de Azerbaiyán. Esta élite montó una trama secreta para pagar a figuras europeas, comprar bienes de lujo y blanquear dinero. Según las denuncias, la cúpula política de Azerbaiyán, acusada de abusos sistemáticos contra los derechos humanos, corrupción generalizada y amaño de elecciones compró a políticos y periodistas europeos para frenar las críticas al presidente, silenciar las violaciones de derechos humanos y promover una imagen positiva del país. Es lo que se llamó la «diplomafia del caviar».

Una de estas autoridades europeas fue Pedro Agramunt, que tuvo que renunciar a su cargo como presidente del Consejo de Europa y como miembro de su Asamblea Parlamentaria tras este y otros escándalos. Pero como la corrupción parece que también es endémica en su partido —el PP—, sigue ejerciendo como senador todavía hoy en España. La corrupción también permea en los grandes proyectos de extracción de recursos naturales, pero Azerbaiyán es crucial como fuente de recursos para Europa en su ansia de buscar una alternativa a Rusia. Por eso no hemos hablado de esto tampoco en esta Resolución.

Azerbaiyán es el origen del gasoducto del Cáucaso Sur y del oleoducto BTC, 1 700 km de tubo que transportan petróleo hacia Occidente. Fue, por cierto, la corrupción del BTC, promovida por British Petroleum, hace diez años, la que impulsó la campaña de lavado de imagen en el Consejo de Europa de la que hablábamos antes.

Exigimos que se cancele toda participación europea en el corredor del Cáucaso Sur. Que se suspendan las negociaciones del Acuerdo de Asociación, dado que no hay ninguna voluntad de respetar la libertad de expresión, asociación y reunión de sus ciudadanos. Recordamos que hace unos meses esta Cámara aprobó condicionar el Acuerdo de Asociación a la liberación de presos políticos, a la apertura del espacio de trabajo de la sociedad civil. Seguimos esperando.

Solicitamos, como ya hicimos en 2017, una investigación por parte de las autoridades competentes en materia de lucha contra el fraude y blanqueo de dinero de la llamada «diplomafia del caviar». Y por supuesto, instamos a las autoridades españolas a utilizar todos los mecanismos a su alcance para investigar las denuncias contra el senador Pedro Agramunt y obligarle a renunciar a su escaño en el Senado.

Parece, una vez más, que cuando se trata de la política exterior de la Unión Europea hacia sus vecinos, los valores y los intereses, que están profundamente entrelazados en lugar de excluirse mutuamente, (*palabras incomprensibles*) llevan a tomar verdaderas disposiciones y medidas claras contra Azerbaiyán.

Marietje Schaake, *autor*. – Mr President, it is actually quite sad that we're here once again debating the deteriorating human rights situation in Azerbaijan under the leadership of President Aliyev and the vice-president, his wife. Human rights defenders and activists, such as Mehman Huseynov who are shedding light on corruption are being harassed, unlawfully detained and tortured. And although this crackdown on human rights, democracy and civil society is systematic, the European Commission signed a partnership agreement with Azerbaijan this summer.

I think we have to question the issue of conditionality and how we can best use it now. Certainly any partnership agreement with any country cannot become a reason to, or an excuse to, avoid addressing the human rights violations in the strongest possible terms.

In fact, and many colleagues have mentioned this, Azerbaijan is ranked 163rd among 180 countries in 2008 on the World Press Freedom Index. That is a shockingly low ranking and it is confirmed by the fact that 10 journalists are currently imprisoned, but there's also a number of websites and blogs that are blocked in the country. In fact some of the country's brightest minds have already left, because their freedom and safety was jeopardised and their families were intimidated.

This is the kind of thing we previously saw with the cowardly leaking of videos and the fining of Khadija Ismayilova of EUR 23 000, which is almost 10 times the annual per capita income of the country, and shows the extent of pressure and the diversity of pressure on press and journalists, but also on opposition figures, civil society leaders and others.

The overall situation concerning human rights and freedom is very dire: imprisonment, harassment, intimidation and fines. These are in direct violation of Azerbaijan's obligations stemming from its signing of the European Convention of Human Rights and also the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

So as we look to a new agreement between the EU and Azerbaijan, it is important that we confirm our commitment to the conditionality of this partnership agreement, depending on democratic reforms, respect for the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They must be at the core of the agreement and we should not brush over them. There are also conditions before the consent of this House can be given at a later stage.

So in the meantime we should look to a renewed partnership agreement and as these human rights defenders are being systematically harassed, we expect nothing less than the European Commission and the High Representative/Vice-President, Ms Mogherini to condemn the human rights violations in Azerbaijan in the strongest possible terms, and to join us in calling for the release of journalists, opposition figures and political prisoners alike.

Ana Gomes, author. – Mr President, when we talk about human rights and the rule of law being the basis of our action, and our action towards third countries, namely through the agreements that we have negotiated – that we are negotiating with Azerbaijan – it's not rhetoric. It's up to people like you, Commissioner Malmström, like Federica Mogherini, to indeed deliver, to make sure it happens.

It's not just perfunctory and the case of Azerbaijan is a scandal, what has been going on and, as the case of Mehman Huseynov demonstrates – but we could mention many other activists such as Khadija Ismayilova, Ilgar Mammadov and Afgan Mukhtarli, who was kidnapped in Georgia and brought to Azerbaijan to be tortured in jail. And why? Because these brave people dared to expose the corruption on which is based this regime of Aliyev. It's really horrendous that, despite all these principles, the people who are negotiating and were proposing to this Parliament to give its consent, in fact they do opposite. It's a shame. We expect you to deliver on these principles and indeed make a sound evaluation of what the situation is and the situation is what has been described by my colleagues who spoke earlier.

In the case of Mehman Huseynov, it shows the level of pressure and of torture that these people are being subjected to. This week, one of our colleagues, Norica Nicolai, distributed to all of us a letter that he eventually wrote – he was obviously forced to write – because if you read this letter it reminds me of the letters that people under the dictatorship in my country, under Salazar, and people in her country, under Ceaușescu, would write under duress to pretend that everything is alright, to try to prevent us from adopting the resolution that we are going to adopt today.

What is even more atrocious, as was mentioned by my colleague Miguel Urbán Crespo, is indeed the corruption that it has been fomenting inside the European Union, as the case of the Azerbaijani Laundromat demonstrates, with politicians, even in this Parliament, as we saw in 2013, in the elections in Azerbaijan bought by this regime. We cannot allow it to go on. It's not just about Azerbaijan, it's not about supporting those who fight against corruption and for human rights and the rule of law in Azerbaijan, it's about the EU.

Željana Zovko, autorica. – Poštovani predsjedavajući, uvažena povjerenice, na početku bih željela zahvaliti kolegama na detaljno obavljenim konzultacijama glede slučaja Mehmana Huseynova. Budući da sam izvjestiteljica u sjeni Europske pučke stranke za izvješće o Azerbajdžanu, a sada i EPP-jev pregovarač za ovu rezoluciju, smatram da se ovom rezolucijom naglašava značaj pitanja bilateralnih odnosa Europske unije i Azerbajdžana.

Veliku važnost trebamo pridati novom sporazumu o partnerstvu između Europske unije i Azerbajdžana, a poštivanje vladavine prava, ljudskih prava i temeljnih sloboda mora biti u središtu novog sporazuma.

Mehmet Huseynov je antikorupcijski bloger i ravnatelj Instituta za slobodu i sigurnost, osuđen na kaznu zatvora u trajanju od dvije godine jer se javno žalio na iskustvo koje je imao s policijom i na loš tretman i mučenje u policiji nakon što je kritizirao javne dužnosnike objavivši podatke o njihovom neprijavljenom bogatstvu. Dva mjeseca prije puštanja na slobodu, zbog navodnog napada na zatvorskog čuvara, prijati mu produženje kazne zatvora na dodatnih 5 do 7 godina. Rezolucija poziva na hitno oslobađanje gospodina Huseynova i pružanje profesionalne medicinske pomoći ističući važnost demokratizacije društva i zaštite ljudskih prava. Cilj je poslati poruku kako Europska unija ne namjerava prekinuti vezu i suradnju s Azerbajdžanom već ima za cilj, kao znak potpore, pomoći u pronalaznju rješenja i modela u ostvarivanju transformacije Azerbajdžana u demokratsko i tolerantno društvo.

Europska unija trenutno jedina ima autoritet da dijalogom pomogne zemlji u jačanju navedenih prava. Ovim putem pozivam na puštanje na slobodu svih zatvorenika savjesti. Europa se mora držati principa na kome je utemeljena, a to je sloboda mišljenja i govora u zemljama s kojima surađuje. Ovdje posebno ne navodim Azerbajdžan nego sve treće zemlje s kojima Europa surađuje bez selektivnih primjenjivanja istih principa, kako Europske unije, tako i ovog Parlamenta. To pravo koje je temelj deklaracije o ljudskim pravima ne smije biti selektivno korišteno. Ova rezolucija je dobra u tome što upozorava i na položaj Azerbajdžana u slobodi govora, a to je, nažalost, 163. zemlja od 183 zemlje. Tragično.

Slučajevi korištenja fondova za kupovinu utjecaja kod političara, novinara i onih koji mogu svojim bivšim političkim vezama kreirati javno mnijenje u Europi i u centrima političke moći odlučivanja, to je zabrinjavajuće.

To mora prestati. Očekujem žurnu pomoć Huseynovu, njegovo puštanje na slobodu i adekvatnu medicinsku pomoć. Puštanje na slobodu, također, svih političkih zatvorenika i zatvorenika savjesti jer to je nedopustivo u 21. stoljeću. Prijateljstva sa zemljama partnerima moraju se graditi na uzajamnim vrijednostima. Naše su: zaštita najslabijih i sloboda govora. To, gospodine predsjedavajući i uvažena povjerenice, s tim se ne trguje. S pravima se ne trguje, zaštita najslabijih mora biti temelj europske vanjske politike i temelj na kojima ćemo graditi veze sa svim trećim zemljama, bez obzira iz kojeg područja oni dolazili. Za to se moramo zalagati u ovom Parlamentu i za to ću se boriti dokle god sam zastupnica.

Jaromír Štětina, za skupinu PPE. – Pane predsjedající, důrazně požadují propuštění Mehmana Huseynova, který drží v Azerbajdžanu hladovku proti bezpráví. Spolu s ním v azerbajdžánských věznicích trpí řada dalších vězňů svědomí. Za všechny připomínám případ Afgána Muchtarliho uneseného tajnými službami ze sousední Gruzie. Postih kritiků režimu ze strany Baku se neomezuje jen na území vlastní země.

Upozornuji na expanzi vlivu azerbajdžánského režimu mimo jeho hranice. Export vlivu a nátlaku probíhá různými způsoby. Například cestou únosu jako v případě Muchtarliho. Další způsob pronásledování oponentů režimu je zneužívání Interpolu pro extradici těch, kteří režimu utekli a hledají azyl a ochranu mimo svůj domov.

Zneužívání Interpolu Čínou či Ruskem je stále častější. Interpol se pokusím o vydávání politických oponentů brání. Opírá se přitom o článek 3 své vlastní konstituce, která říká, že se Interpol nevměšuje do věcí politického charakteru. O tento článek se Interpol opíral, když před časem odmítl požadavek Baku zatknout tři poslance EP. Hledejme cesty, jak zabránit pronásledování svobody slova, myšlenek a vyznání v Azerbajdžanu. Jedna z cest by mohla být podpora nevládních evropských organizací, které se Azerbajdžánem zabývají.

Soraya Post, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Mr President, this is about the third urgency resolution we have had on human rights abuses in Azerbaijan during this mandate. It is really time for the Government of Azerbaijan to take our demands seriously.

I demand the immediate and unconditional release of Mehman Huseynov and all other human rights defenders like lawyers, youth activists, political opponents, anti-corruption activists, independent journalists and bloggers in Azerbaijan. These people have been arrested and are being tortured and imprisoned for exercising their freedom of expression and for criticising their Government. That is not a crime. To the Azeri officials, I would like to say that it is a right. Some of these people are serving prison sentences for ten years just because they have investigated, or protested against, corruption in the Government.

The EU cannot stay silent while the media and free speech is being repressed in Azerbaijan. We cannot accept the random arrest, harassment, torture and ill treatment of LGBTI people, human rights defenders and political prisoners. If these demands are not met, the EU should take measures such as sanctions against the responsible Azeri officials. The European Commission and financial bodies should suspend all financing for Azerbaijan state structures, enterprises and joint ventures.

Sajjad Karim, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, in my capacity as Chair of the delegation for relations with the South Caucasus, we have seen a marked change in our relations with Azerbaijan. Month after month, year after year, the progress that has been made in ensuring that a strong partnership between the EU and Azerbaijan emerges can be measured in leaps and bounds.

The European Union as a champion of democracy, human rights and free speech across the globe should not, and must not ever, turn a blind eye to the mistreatment of any individual by any government. No matter how exciting and no matter how extensive the progress in international agreements may be, we must not abandon the individuals they are designed to benefit.

With these individuals in mind, there is much in the resolution that is in front of us today that our Parliament must reinforce in its message by calling on the Commission, on the European External Action Service to seek, and indeed Azerbaijan to provide, adequate protections for those accused of these crimes, guarantees of medical assistance, access to legal counsel.

Family visits must be found as a priority for all individuals listed in this resolution. Indeed, the strong relationship that we have built with Azerbaijan has already paid dividends here, and the granting of access to the EU delegation to visit Mr Huseynov is a positive precursor to resolving the situations flagged in this resolution.

Finally, our relations must always reflect our values, but equally they must always have respect for all of our partners.

Norica Nicolai, *în numele grupului ALDE*. – Domnule președinte, în calitatea mea de raportor al Parlamentului pentru Azerbaidjan, aș dori să fac următoarele precizări: este adevărat, suntem în prezența celei de a treia rezoluții care semnalează derapaje în ceea ce privește drepturile omului, dar, așa cum spunea domnul Karim, relațiile dintre Uniunea Europeană și Azerbaidjan au evoluat de o manieră pozitivă. Ne pregătim să încheiem acest acord de parteneriat și cred că este un bun prilej să avem o discuție foarte serioasă cu privire la efectul demersurilor Parlamentului European asupra unor state terțe.

Atunci când toți am lucrat cu bună credință, în încercarea de a avea dialoguri constructive cu autoritățile, am avut și am realizat succesul de a elibera un om, vă rog să vă amintiți, un proeminent deținut politic – mă refer la domnul Mammadov – ca urmare a demersurilor noastre, dar făcute de o manieră neconflictuală, de o manieră decentă.

Tot în același an, anul trecut, prin aceleași demersuri ale Parlamentului European, realizate într-o diplomatie și într-un dialog coerent, am reușit și am pus în libertate 146 de persoane. Eu cred că este foarte important ca acest tip de acțiune să continue.

Domnul Huseynov: am văzut foarte clar cum au pornit aceste alegații și am văzut demersul radioului Europa Liberă. În același timp, am primit de la Baku – pentru că vă mărturisesc că am cerut explicații în legătură cu acest incident – o declarație oficială a Departamentului de Control al Administrației Penitenciarelor, în care mi s-a spus că, într-o ambuscadă, a fost agresat unul dintre inspecții și toate persoanele implicate în această ambuscadă au fost sancționate. Am văzut de asemenea că domnia sa a ieșit din greva foamei, ceea ce contrazice o serie de afirmații.

Eu cred, stimați colegi, că, atunci când redactăm o rezoluție care vizează drepturile omului într-un stat terț al Uniunii Europene, trebuie, în primul rând, să ne documentăm foarte clar, să ascultăm toate părțile, pentru că asta înseamnă spirit democratic, și să nu privilegiem o sursă de informare, pentru că există riscul, într-o lume în care dezinformarea și știrile false sunt regulă, ca această regulă să ni se aplice și nouă și să riscăm demersuri diplomatice care pot avea consecințe grave.

(Vorbitorul a acceptat să răspundă unei întrebări adresate în conformitate cu procedura „cartonașului albastru” (articolul 162 alineatul (8) din Regulamentul de procedură))

Ana Gomes (S&D), blue-card question. – Ms Nicolai do you agree that it is absolutely unacceptable that the regime in Azerbaijan buys European politicians such as Mr Pedro Agramunt, who is now a senator in Spain, without any investigation into this ongoing corruption?

Do you agree that it is tremendously damning to the credibility of European politicians and European action if politicians allow themselves to be bought by the regime such as that of President Aliyev?

Norica Nicolai (ALDE), răspuns la o întrebare adresată în conformitate cu procedura „cartonașului albastru”. – Mulțumesc, Ana. Sunt absolut de acord cu tine. Nu știu care este situația politicianului spaniol. E prima dată când aflu acest lucru. Sper ca lucrurile să fie clarificate și să nu fim doar în prezența unor alegații care țin de comportamentul unor oameni politici, dar este clar: este de neacceptat și trebuie să privim cu obiectivitate.

Însă, în același timp, te rog să înțelegi demersul meu constructiv. Eu cred că este bine ca acești oameni să fie liberi, să nu fie în continuare în închisoare și supuși abuzurilor, pentru că, în felul acesta, noi, ca Parlament European, dovedim că am făcut ceva în mod concret pentru cetățeni.

Heidi Hautala, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – Mr President, this very important and proud South Caucasian nation celebrated one hundred years of its short independence less than a year ago. What happened was that, in the flanks of this ceremony four organisers of an independent independence rally were detained. Is this a republic that is newly created and wants to become an important player in the international community and have ever-closer ties to the European Union? Is this a country that, as a republic, is also entitled to protect the freedoms and rights of its citizens? This doesn't always seem to be the case to me. I feel that we have a very special relationship with this country because our own grandmother was born in Baku 1916. She will be 103 years old in January and she tells wonderful stories about her childhood and about Azerbaijan.

We have to be aware that, at the same time as the EU is strengthening its contractual relationship with Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan is unfortunately turning away from its international commitments in the Council of Europe and the OSCE. It is not in vain that the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media are seriously concerned about the situation at the moment, notably about Mr Huseynov's situation.

As the European Parliament, we really must call on the Commission and the External Action Service to do their utmost: if the Azerbaijani Government wants to have an ever-closer relationship with the EU, they must, unconditionally and immediately, free the political prisoners, including Mr Mehman Huseynov.

Jacques Colombier, au nom du groupe ENF. – Monsieur le Président, dans nos séances du jeudi matin, dites de bonne conscience, vous évoquez le cas du journaliste Mehman Huseynov. En effet, celui-ci vient de subir une peine de deux ans d'emprisonnement pour avoir dénoncé le régime autoritaire d'Aliyev. Oui, ce régime est autocratique, mais qu'a fait l'Union européenne vis-à-vis de ce régime?

Je rappellerai que, le 16 novembre 2016, le Conseil a confié à la Commission un mandat en vue de la négociation d'un accord global avec l'Azerbaïdjan. Le 7 février 2017, des négociations ont commencé après la visite du président Aliyev à Bruxelles. Le 11 janvier 2018, de nouvelles priorités de partenariat ont été adoptées: il est notamment prévu d'assouplir le régime des visas.

Nous savons que les dirigeants de l'Union européenne n'ont qu'une obsession: entraîner les nations et les peuples européens dans une nouvelle guerre froide contre la Russie. Ce faisant, comme toujours, les petits commandités de la politique des cénacles mondialistes visent à fragmenter le continent européen. Pour ce faire, ils n'hésitent pas à nouer, comme je viens de l'évoquer, des relations de plus en plus étroites avec le régime de Bakou.

Nous savons qu'un gazoduc est actuellement en construction entre l'Azerbaïdjan et les pays membres de l'Union européenne, alors que notre sécurité d'approvisionnement en hydrocarbures devrait plutôt passer par des accords avec la Russie. Pour l'Union européenne, donneuse de leçons, l'odeur des hydrocarbures l'emporte sur le droit de la personne.

Je voudrais savoir ce que notre collègue Norica Nicolai, rapporteure du rapport du Parlement européen sur ce nouvel accord européen avec l'Azerbaïdjan, pense de cette affaire. Si j'en crois le quotidien français *Libération*, elle aurait refusé de s'exprimer sur un autre cas précédent de violation des droits de l'homme en Azerbaïdjan, celui de Yunis Safarov, en renvoyant vers un article de l'Agence de presse azerbaïdjanaise, laquelle n'est rien d'autre, bien sûr, qu'un organe officieux du régime. Qu'en pensent les membres du groupe ALDE surtout prêts à nous donner, en général toujours, des leçons de démocratie?

Pour notre part, n'oublions pas le martyre du peuple arménien du Haut-Karabagh provoqué par le régime de Bakou. Pour nous, le véritable partenaire et ami des peuples européens dans le Caucase, c'est le peuple arménien. Alors, dépassons et dépassez le stade de la bonne conscience et mettez fin à ce rapprochement avec ce régime.

Csaba Sógor (PPE). – Mr President, along with endemic corruption, human rights abuses constitute a sad reality in Azerbaijan. According to Amnesty International, there are currently more than 100 political prisoners in the Southern Caucasus country, where the regime also holds a tight grip over the media.

According to the brother of the imprisoned blogger and human rights activist on hunger strike, 'all well-known human rights defenders and journalists spend at least one or two years in prison'.

This practice is compounded by a common trend whereby Azeri authorities press new charges against political prisoners whose prison sentences are ending. We know that this is the fifth such case in recent months alone.

Azerbaijan has long tried to shield itself from Western criticism by using its strategic position as a regional ally in the war against terrorism as well as an important country for Europe in its quest to reduce its dependency on Russian gas. But it is also known that it uses lavish gifts and foreign trips for Western officials in an attempt to tone down criticism against the regime.

The EU should give a clear signal that it takes the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Azerbaijan seriously and should place these issues at the heart of the new EU-Azerbaijan agreement.

At present, it is vital that we ask for Mr Huseynov to be immediately and unconditionally released and that Azerbaijani authorities drop all new charges against him. We must also clearly call for the immediate and unconditional release from jail of all political prisoners, journalists, human rights defenders and other civil society activists.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, doamnă comisar, stimați colegi, de la bun început vreau să spun că moțiunea era necesară. Este o atenționare a statului Azerbaïdjan legat de devierile de la respectarea principiilor drepturilor omului și altele.

Doresc să menționez, în același timp, importanța menținerii dialogului cu Azerbaïdjan, nu numai în domeniile încălcării drepturilor omului, dar și în domenii precum: antiterorism, stabilitate regională, combaterea manipulării.

Moțiunea, de fapt, dorește să atragă atenția privind cazurile concrete de abateri de la principiile democratice la care s-a angajat Azerbaïdjanul ca membru al Consiliului Europei. Am putut constata că există îngrijorări și din partea reprezentanților OECD, din partea reprezentanților mass-media.

Trebuie să spunem că Azerbaïdjanul, ca membru al Adunării Parlamentare Euronest, are obligații. Fac parte din Adunarea Euronest și cunosc ce se cere tuturor țărilor din Parteneriatul estic. Noua președinție a Consiliului European își propune dezvoltarea Parteneriatului estic, dar, pentru aceasta, toate statele care fac parte din acest parteneriat trebuie să înțeleagă importanța însușirii cerințelor moțiunii de astăzi. Este o moțiune echilibrată, sunt prevăzute în textul rezoluției și lucrurile bune care s-au întâmplat: eliberarea din ultimii ani a mai multor personalități, apărători ai drepturilor omului, jurnaliști, activiști.

Cred foarte mult că drumul Azerbaidjanului trebuie să fie european, dar, pentru aceasta, evident, reprezentanții statului – și subliniez, reprezentanții statului, pentru că nu cetățenii de acolo au vreo vină – trebuie să coopereze și să respecte obligațiile din Convenția europeană a drepturilor omului. Anul trecut a existat o întâlnire, Comisia parlamentară de cooperare de la Baku, și s-au pus în discuție aceste teme. Eu cred că acordul UE-Azerbaidjan început în 1996 trebuie să continue.

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR). – Voorzitter, commissaris, ik stap niet mee in de redenering van sommigen van onze collega's hier die proberen om schending van universele mensenrechten te relativiseren of te verbloemen met het argument dat er toch ook veel vooruitgang is, of vooruitgang is geweest. Kijk, Azerbeidzjan wordt 's werelds hofleverancier van vervolgte bloggers. Dat is een weinig benijdenswaardig exportproduct, maar dat lijkt de minste zorg van president Aliyev. Zo'n 150 politieke tegenstanders en journalisten zitten achter de tralies.

Vandaag roepen we op tot de vrijlating van een jonge activist. Mehman Huseynov heeft een kritische pen en houdt met zijn veelbesproken bijdrages via sociale media het regime een spiegel voor. Die biedt een allesbehalve fraai beeld. Want terwijl het volk van Azerbeidzjan worstelt met economische terugval en armoede, feest de politieke elite rond president Aliyev.

De prijs die Mehman betaalt voor zijn journalistieke werk is erg hoog. Op basis van verzonnen aanklachten zit hij al bijna twee jaar opgesloten. In maart moet hij vrijkomen. Dat dit niet naar de zin van dat regime is, blijkt uit nieuwe aanklachten die kunnen leiden tot extra celstraf tot zeven jaar.

Het is belangrijk dat de relatie tussen de EU en Azerbeidzjan versterkt wordt. Maar dat kan niet zonder extra aandacht te vestigen op het fundamentele belang van mensen- en burgerrechten, vrije media, enzovoort.

Margot Parker (EFDD). – Mr President, a free and vibrant press is a necessary component of any properly functioning democracy. When politicians are able to act without the scrutiny of such an important part of public life, a distance grows between the politicians and the people that they represent. Corruption can inherently follow.

Azerbaijan's record in this area is poor. They are ranked 163rd in the World Press Freedom Index. Mehman Huseynov's case is a saddening humaniser of what that statistic means in reality for those that attempt to lift the lid on corruption in Azerbaijan and open up politics to its people. In prison for nothing more than picturing luxury houses alleged to have been gained through corruption, Reporters Without Borders are warning he could die in prison as he goes on hunger strike on trumped up charges that continue to be brought up against him. Many more have joined this hunger strike.

It is time for the politicians to listen to the people and to begin to address the failures in democracy and to allow the development of a proper true free press for this country.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, I too condemn the current situation in Azerbaijan regarding the government's violation of fundamental rights and freedoms of the press. The enforcement of censorship prohibiting criticism of the government is contrary to these freedoms and must be condemned. I also denounce the fact that political activists and journalists have repeatedly found themselves faced with new charges as they near the end of their prison sentences in a ploy to detain them for longer.

Azerbaijan's participation in the EU's Eastern Partnership and the commitments made in its membership of the Council of Europe are undermined by the actions of the Azerbaijani authorities. I therefore call on the Azerbaijani Government to fulfil its international obligations and comply with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in guaranteeing these rights and releasing those wrongly imprisoned, particularly Mr Huseynov, who has been referred to already by other speakers, and who has been on dry hunger strike since December 2018 in protest.

The practice of selective criminal prosecution must be ended and the censorship rules prohibiting criticism of the government removed. There is no place for such measures in a country that has committed itself to the rule of law, democracy and the protection of human rights, and wants to have closer relations with the European Union.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, the EU's position on Azerbaijan needs to be much firmer. Civil society is operating in an extremely hostile environment. NGOs are closing down and independent voices are either imprisoned or forced to go into exile. Mehman is now on his 23rd day of hunger strike and his situation is very worrying. Having been subjected to torture several times, he is in a serious situation.

Over the past few months, there has been a worrying increase in the number of hunger strikes around the world: Leyla Güven, in Kurdistan and Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Narges Mohammadi in Iran, for instance. All are forced to take desperate measures.

High Representative, the urgency of the situation calls on you to make a public statement and urge the Azerbaijani authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Mehman. The EU must name and shame any country that blatantly violates its human rights obligations, regardless of the economic ties it might share with the country. I also call on the EU and the Member States to impose sanctions, not only on the President, but also on its ministers who, until now, have not been targeted.

Intervenții la cerere

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Mr President, Mehman Huseynov, blogger and director of the Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety was jailed due to criticism of his country's regime and criminal justice system.

Unfortunately this is not an isolated case. The authoritarian Government of Azerbaijan has virtually closed space for independent anti-corruption activism, critical journalism and opposition political activities, through prosecution, arbitrary arrests and unjust convictions.

This is not the first time we pass a resolution on Azerbaijan in this House, and I believe it is time to say 'enough is enough'. It is now time for us to demand the government of Azerbaijan to end its persecution of civil society, to allow independent media to operate within the country and immediately to release Mr Huseynov and all other political prisoners and activists.

The EU has to take a clear stance here and stick to the principle of freedom of speech and respect for civil liberties, which stand at the very foundations of the EU itself. Human rights, Madam Commissioner, are not to be bargained and until this oppression and violation stops the EU must suspend all financial aid to the oppressive regime of Azerbaijan.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Pane předsedající, paní komisařko, já se chci připojit ke všem kolegům, kteří zde vyzývají k tvrdému postupu vůči Ázerbájdžánu v kauze uvězněného pana Hüsejnova.

Ale jako bývalý ministr spravedlnosti chci také dodat, že je třeba kritizovat Ázerbájdžán v širších souvislostech. A k tomu, jak nefunguje právní stát v této zemi, chci dodat, že v roce 2017 proběhla reforma právnických profesí v Ázerbájdžánu, která zabránila devíti z deseti právníků vykonávat advokátní profesi. Víceméně v Ázerbájdžánu nefunguje nezávislá advokacie, což je mimořádně důležitá, a političtí vězni tak nemají právní zastoupení u soudů. I toto bychom měli vnímat, protože součástí právního státu nejsou jenom nezávislé soudy, ale také nezávislá advokacie na státu, která hájí klienty i proti státní moci. A to bohužel v této zemi není, takže prosím, při debatě s ázerbájdžánskými představiteli kritizujme i reformu v roce 2017, která bourá nezávislou advokacii.

(Încheierea intervențiilor la cerere)

Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, thank you for this possibility to discuss again the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. We have been following very closely, like you all have, this situation and the recent developments in the case of Mehman Huseynov. This came to our attention already in 2017. We made a statement then, and let me use this opportunity to tell you what we have been doing in recent days.

Following the demarche by the delegation of the European Union in Baku, and thanks to cooperation by the Azerbaijan authorities, the EU delegation, together with five Member States missions, visited Mr Huseynov in prison. The visit at the end of last week allowed us to establish that his life was not at immediate risk. He is receiving medical care and he has stopped his hunger strike.

Nevertheless, we do believe, like you, that the new charges against him for allegedly assaulting prison staff lack credibility and should be dropped. We are aware, as some of you raised, of other hunger strikes by activists. We are following up here with contacts with a lawyer and the prison services and I know that they had been visited by the Red Cross.

Over the past years the EU has placed considerable emphasis on the human rights situation in Azerbaijan. We do so in our political dialogue with the country, including high-level meetings at the EU Azerbaijan Subcommittee on Justice Affairs and Human Rights. The joint partnership priorities, as agreed in July last year, underscore that the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are key in our relationship. The new EU-Azerbaijan agreement currently being negotiated will have democratic reforms, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms at its core.

We remain all too aware of the considerable challenges relating to the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Azerbaijan. We believe that we should work on addressing them through dialogue, including through the negotiations on the new agreement. We need to have channels of communication to build mutual trust and engagement to effectively pursue our values and interests in Azerbaijan. While pursuing our engagement with the authorities, we are continuing to work closely with civil society organisations, independent media and human rights defenders to follow up on their concerns. We will continue to raise the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all our dialogues and most notably during the upcoming meeting on justice affairs and human rights in Baku on 5 February. We will closely follow the developments in the case of Mehman Huseynov and other human rights defenders and journalists, including, for instance, Khadija İsmayilova, and will continue, of course, a close dialogue with all of you on this issues.

Președintele. – Dezbateră a fost încheiată.

Votul va avea loc la sfârșitul dezbaterilor.

8.2. Le Soudan

Președintele. – Următorul punct pe ordinea de zi este dezbateră a șase propuneri de rezoluție referitoare la Sudan (2019/2512(RSP)).

Charles Tannock, autor. – Mr President, with inflation rates of 122% and the government cutting fuel and food subsidies, the mass protests seen across Sudan during the past few weeks are of little surprise. It's clear that what began as a manifestation of protest against bread queues and a wider cost of living concern, has now morphed into a broader anti-government, anti-regime movement with support across the oppositional divide.

Furthermore, as President Omar al-Bashir looks to abolish presidential term limits in a bid to extend his already 30-year grip on power, we have witnessed an increasingly brutal response from the government in Khartoum to the continuing protests. That response has already resulted in up to 40 civilians losing their lives – the government itself has admitted to a figure of 24 – and some 2 000 to 3 000 people being arrested and detained.

It's clearly time for al-Bashir to relinquish power, being a man that possesses the dubious title of being the only current head of state anywhere in the world with two outstanding arrest warrants issued against him by the International Criminal Court. As the protests continue, we must remain vigilant of further escalation, particularly given the security challenges that already are present in that region of Africa.

Marie-Christine Vergiat, auteure. – Monsieur le Président, nous avons déjà adopté nombre de résolutions sur le Soudan. La dernière en date, en mars 2018, concernait l'arrestation de Salih Mahmoud Osman, notre prix Sakharov 2007, de nouveau arrêté, visiblement par le NISS, le triste service de sécurité soudanais. Ses proches craignent pour sa santé, notamment parce qu'il est diabétique. Un parmi tant d'autres, malheureusement, une fois encore. Les organisations de défense des droits de l'homme parlent d'au moins 2 000 personnes arrêtées depuis le 19 décembre dernier, de dizaines de morts, sans parler des tortures.

Depuis septembre 2013, des manifestations ont lieu de façon récurrente, principalement à Khartoum. Jusqu'à présent, elles reposaient sur la crise économique, à la suite de la perte des ressources pétrolières après la partition du Soudan, avec une inflation record – on parle effectivement d'un taux de plus de 120 %, le deuxième du monde – et, en conséquence, une augmentation constante des prix des produits de première nécessité dans un pays en situation de pénurie. Sans parler d'un budget consacré à 70 % aux dépenses militaires, au détriment du reste, notamment la santé et l'éducation.

En décembre, après le triplement du prix du pain, les premières manifestations ont commencé hors de la capitale et ont gagné l'ensemble du pays comme une traînée de poudre, y compris au Darfour où règnent pourtant toujours en maître les ex-janjawid et la répression qui va avec. Très vite, les mots d'ordre ont pris une tournure politique. «Liberté, paix et justice» demandent les manifestants, ainsi que la fin du régime.

Omar el-Béchir n'en est pas à une provocation près et veut effectivement changer la constitution pour se représenter, alors qu'il est au pouvoir depuis 29 ans, sous le coup de plusieurs mandats de la Cour pénale internationale. La répression frappe tous azimuts: défenseurs des droits de l'homme, universitaires, étudiants, journalistes, responsables de l'opposition, et notamment ceux du Parti populaire du congrès et du Parti communiste soudanais, qui a osé prêter ses locaux pour une réunion de toutes les parties prenantes des manifestations.

L'Association des professionnels soudanais vient d'appeler à une semaine de soulèvements, dont le point d'orgue doit avoir lieu aujourd'hui, à Khartoum et dans les grandes villes: une grande marche pour la paix et le changement.

Nous avons ici dénoncé à de nombreuses reprises les accords liant l'Union européenne et le Soudan via les politiques migratoires ou la lutte contre le terrorisme. Comment peut-on coopérer avec les autorités répressives de ce pays, y compris en leur demandant de venir ici identifier leurs ressortissants dans des centres de rétention, ou leur livrer des équipements qui pourront être utilisés contre la population soudanaise, y compris au Darfour. Tous les financements européens doivent être revus pour arrêter cette hypocrisie.

Enfin, je veux exprimer, au nom de la GUE/NGL, ma totale solidarité avec ceux qui vont manifester aujourd'hui dans les rues soudanaises au péril de leur vie.

Bodil Valero, *författare*. – Herr talman! Jag tänkte dela upp mitt inlägg i tre delar.

Den första: Fredliga protester måste vara tillåtna. Det är naturligt och i högsta grad förståeligt att protester sprider sig när regeringar drastiskt ökar priset på baslivsmedel och när den ekonomiska situationen i landet försämras på grund av dåligt styre. I det här fallet har protesterna spridits från landsbygden in till huvudstaden Khartoum. Det måste också vara tillåtet att protestera för att president Omar al-Bashir, som suttit vid makten i 29 år, ska släppa fram en efterträdare. Internationella organisationer som arbetar med mänskliga rättigheter i landet rapporterar 45 dödsfall hittills. Det är människor som protesterat och som dödat av polis.

Den andra frågan är säkerhetstjänstens metoder. Det är helt oacceptabelt att sådant övervåld, mot människor som protesterar och mot politiska opponenter, används av Sudans säkerhetstjänst NISS. NISS mandat och metoder måste självklart följa internationell standard och det är i dag inte fallet. Internationell standard vad gäller arresteringar bör självklart också följas av NISS. Det rapporteras till exempel att NISS använt skarp ammunition mot obehäpnade människor och att tortyr uppges ha förekommit i landets fängelser. Det kan aldrig accepteras, inte i något land.

Det tredje är att valkalendern bör respekteras. Enligt landets konstitution kan inte den sittande presidenten ställa upp i presidentvalet 2020. Men precis som i så många andra länder försöker presidenten nu ändra konstitutionen så att han får ställa upp ändå i valet 2020, och till sin hjälp har han en grupp rättsexperter som står honom nära. Tjugotvå politiska partier i opposition till den sittande presidenten har krävt att makten ska tas över av en övergångsregering och att ett datum för demokratiska val omedelbart ska utlysas.

Eftersom jag har tid över tar jag också upp en fjärde fråga. Den här resolutionen har ju sin grund i aktuella och oacceptabla händelser i Sudan, men om vi lyfter blicken och funderar lite mer över läget i Sudan är det omöjligt för mig som grön att inte också se hur klimatpåverkan och dess konsekvenser haft en förödande inverkan på utvecklingen sedan ett par decennier tillbaka. När förutsättningarna att odla försämras och när människor tvingas fly från sina marker ökar spänningarna och därmed också konflikterna, och det är Sudan ett tydligt exempel på.

PRZEWODNICTWO: ZDZISŁAW KRASNODEBSKI

Wiceprzewodniczący

Urmaz Paet, author. – Mr President, in spite of weeks of anti-government protests in Sudan and calls for the resignation of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, the ruling party in Sudan has nominated Bashir for a new term in the elections that are to be held in 2020.

The ruling party National Congress Party (NCP) has stated that the country's leadership will only be changed through elections. That remains to be seen. But the fact is that Bashir is the only sitting head of state wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity and war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing in Darfur. Yet he remains free to continue his crimes, and he is welcomed by so many states with open arms – states like China, India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and many others that continue to allow Bashir into their countries, welcome him and support him, instead of arresting him.

It is also their inaction that enables Bashir to continue his crimes with impunity, attacking civilians. This is also why we are witnessing Bashir's latest actions, whereby at least 37 people have lost their lives, more than 800 have been arrested, and there is ongoing violence and oppression by the authorities.

Mass arrests and killings – targeting activists, human rights defenders, lawyers, doctors, teachers – Bashir and his accomplices must face charges. Those responsible for the crimes of the past in Sudan, as well as those committed during the latest protests must be brought to justice.

It is time for Sudan to focus on ending the repression of human rights and resolve the economic crisis and start healing society.

Cécile Kshetu Kyenge, Auteur. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, al centro della nostra attenzione è tornato il Sudan, uno dei paesi africani più estesi.

Le recenti notizie dal Sudan si sono confermate pessime. Mentre gran parte del mondo era impegnato ai festeggiamenti di fine anno, i sudanesi si sono riversati nelle strade e nelle piazze, protestando per il calo del potere d'acquisto. All'origine della protesta i rincari prima della benzina, poi del pane di cui si è triplicato il prezzo per decreto. Nel paese sono partite le contestazioni, che mettono a repentaglio il fragilissimo equilibrio sociale raggiunto e confermano purtroppo la precarietà della vita dei cittadini. La congiuntura economica non è favorevole per il paese, nonostante sia dotato di molte risorse.

Il Sudan va avanti, alternando periodi di relativa calma con altri periodi particolarmente duri per i cittadini, colpiti dalla fame e dagli effetti nefasti del governo, che spesso degenerano in conflitti sociali a forte valenza repressiva, da parte delle forze dell'ordine. A pagare il prezzo dei disordini non solo i cittadini sudanesi contestatari, bensì anche gli esponenti dell'opposizione. Il Sudan conferma in questo modo la triste realtà della repressione politica sulle libertà di espressione, di fonte a reclamazioni legittime di cittadini esasperati.

Al governo di Khartoum dobbiamo sempre ricordare che gli incombe provvedere con priorità e celerità allo sviluppo del proprio paese. Solamente attraverso lo sviluppo delle attività economiche nel paese e l'installazione di un clima politico sano, possono essere placati i movimenti di contestazione. In questo senso, è importante sottolineare il ruolo del dialogo politico che vorremmo vedere praticato, specie dopo la formazione della nuova coalizione dei partiti di opposizione.

Occorre dunque procedere alla scarcerazione del premio Sacharov, Salih Mahmoud Osman e di tutti i liberi pensatori, professori dell'Università di Khartoum, giornalisti e difensori dei diritti umani, per un Sudan più democratico.

Tunne Kelam, *author*. – Mr President, Sudan has now been independent for 63 years. Almost 30 years ago, Colonel Omar al-Bashir came to power, suspended political parties and introduced an Islamic legal code at the national level and appointed himself President in 1993. So, Sudan became a one party state under the National Congress Party. Later in the 1990s, Sudan was listed as a state sponsor of terrorism by several countries. Six years ago, President al-Bashir promised not to seek re-election, but ran again in 2015, while the opposition boycotted the elections. As for press freedom, Sudan ranks as one of the last ones, taking the 174th position on the list of 180 countries. Last December, massive demonstrations erupted, first as a protest against price increases but then expanded as a broadly based movement against the authoritarian regime calling for the President al-Bashir to resign. He has now been in power, as said, almost 30 years. The current death toll has reached almost 50, with hundreds of people arrested and tortured – especially Sakharov Prize winner Salih Mahmoud Osman, he's a human rights lawyer, who was once again arrested only nine days ago. His whereabouts are unknown.

Furthermore, Sudan is classified as the fourth-worst country to be a Christian in last year's watch list by Open Doors International. We condemn state-endorsed persecution of Christians and the closing and demolition of churches. Muslims who convert to Christianity faced the death penalty for apostasy. One very serious fact to keep in mind, which was mentioned just a few minutes ago, is that al-Bashir is the only incumbent head of state wanted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region. He should be seen and treated as an international pariah.

The European Parliament strongly condemns excessive use of force against popular protests and asks for the immediate release of Salih Mahmoud Osman and all human rights defenders, journalists and protesters. We ask to end restrictions on access to the internet and provide for freedom of press. We call on the Commission and the High Representative to publicly condemn the intolerable situation in Sudan, and to use all means to convince the government there to end the ongoing violence, to stop mass arrests and killings. We also call for an EU-wide ban on exports, update and maintenance of any form of security equipment, which is being used for internal repression, including Internet surveillance technology. We ask the EU and Member States to strengthen financial support for human rights defenders and civil society organisations under the European Development Fund.

Tomáš Zdechovský, *za skupinu PPE*. – Pane předsedající, Súdán by byl krásná země, pokud by v této zemi nevládla diktatura. To jsou slova klasika interpretovaná na tuto zemi. Tuto zemi v tomto sále my neřešíme poprvé. Tato země je opravdu plná různých nespravedlností a musel bych opakovat každou z těchto nespravedlností a byl bych tu hodně dlouho, kdybych je měl zmínit.

Náboženská svoboda v této zemi je totální utopie. To, že jsou stovky, možná tisíce důkazů o tom, že jsou mučeni vězni: nedávno jsme hovořili v Evropském parlamentu o případu českého humanitárního pracovníka Petra Jaška, který byl rok ve vězení. Jeho vyprávění o tom, jak vězni, kteří jsou nemuslimského vyznávání, jsou podrobováni tak zvanému *waterboardingu* a dalším mučícím metodám, je naprosto skandální a myslím si, že musíme jako Evropská unie na tyto věci poukazovat.

V řadě zemí se nám podařilo právě dialogem s občanskou společností a podporou humanitárních pracovníků nastolit situaci, že v těchto zemích opravdu začalo se klima postupně ve společnosti měnit. Bohužel, Súdán je jeden z případů, kde se nám to nedaří, a já si myslím, že je dneska čas na to, aby vysoká představitelka Evropské unie poslala jednoznačný vzkaz do Súdánu, že Evropská unie nebude nikdy tolerovat to bezpráví, které je páčáno na obyčejných občanech, že Evropská unie nebude nikdy tolerovat žádného politika a představitele země, která systematicky porušuje lidská práva a zabíjí své občany, že Evropská unie nikdy nebude podporovat to, že řada prominentů súdánského režimu má peníze v jiných zemích.

Myslím si, že bychom měli dát i ostatním zemím poměrně jasně najevo, že Súdán je nejhorší diktatura v Africe, která je stále u moci, a ten, kdo ji podporuje, není pro Evropskou unii žádný partner.

Andi Cristea, în numele grupului S&D. – Domnule președinte, începând cu luna decembrie a anului trecut, au avut loc demonstrații pașnice pe străzile mai multor orașe din Sudan, care s-au răspândit în întreaga țară, inclusiv în capitala Khartoum, cetățenii protestând în mod legitim împotriva creșterii prețurilor, a deficitului de alimente și lipsei de combustibil. Forțele naționale de securitate au intervenit, folosind forța excesivă, pentru a dispersa protestatarii neînarmați.

Dreptul la libertatea de întrunire pașnică este un element esențial al democrației. Guvernul din Sudan are datoria să răspundă cu soluții la nemulțumirile legitime ale poporului sudanez și nu să recurgă la violențe, care au dus la uciderea a 40 de persoane, inclusiv copii.

Arestările arbitrare ale unui număr necunoscut de protestatari, inclusiv studenți și activiști politici, sunt acțiuni care trebuie să înceteze. Autoritățile sudaneze trebuie să elibereze acei deținuți, să efectueze investigații imparțiale, iar persoanele vinovate să fie aduse în fața justiției și să se asigure că forțele de securitate naționale vor răspunde protestelor în conformitate cu obligațiile internaționale ale țării în domeniul drepturilor omului. Lipsa accesului avocaților și membrilor familiei deținuților, precum și folosirea torturii și a altor forme de rele tratamente împotriva deținuților dau naștere unor îngrijorări serioase cu privire la siguranța acestora.

Facem un apel la guvernul din Sudan să pună capăt oricărui tip de hărțuire, violență, inclusiv la nivel administrativ și judiciar, împotriva tuturor avocaților și apărătorilor drepturilor omului și să garanteze dreptul la un proces echitabil.

Mark Demesmaeker, namens de ECR-Fractie. – Voorzitter, vorige week publiceerde *The Economist* zijn jaarlijkse “Democracy Index”. Sudan bungelt als autoritaire staat helemaal onderaan die ranking. Het land lijkt nog niet van ver op een democratie. Er is geen functionerende, zorgende overheid, burgerlijke vrijheden zijn quasi onbestaande. De internationale gemeenschap schreef al ontelbare rapporten over de mensenrechten in het land en er verandert bitter weinig.

Wat wel nog functioneert, zijn de gewelddadige veiligheidstroepen en de milities van dictator Al-Bashir. Die schieten met scherp op burgers die de straat opgaan als antwoord op honger, economische onzekerheid en de hardhandigheid van het regime in Khartoem. Bij recente demonstraties vielen tientallen doden en honderden gewonden. Tal van mensenrechtactivisten, journalisten en oppositieleiden zitten opgesloten. Bekende methodes van een regime dat angst heeft voor de straat en een vrees die terecht is. Of we nu buiten protesteren of binnen verhongeren, dood gaan we toch, weerklinkt het in de straten.

Dit Parlement moet een kant kiezen en zijn steun uitspreken voor de activisten, voor het middenveld dat zich steeds meer mobiliseert, voor het volk van Sudan, dat lijdt onder het regime van iemand die omwille van mensenrechtenschendingen thuishoort achter de tralies. Bouwen aan een betere samenleving doe je niet met de heer Al-Bashir.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, a nome del gruppo EFDD. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il popolo vuole la caduta del regime, è il canto di protesta che risuona per le strade di Khartoum, tra il rimbombo degli spari e il rumore metallico che accompagnano i gas lacrimogeni.

A intonar lo migliaia di cittadini sudanesi, scesi in piazza il 19 dicembre per chiedere un cambiamento vero per il loro paese, a partire dalle dimissioni del loro presidente. Da quel momento solo il caos. Non solo forze di polizia, ma addirittura servizi di intelligence e squadre paramilitari, sguinzagliate brutalmente contro manifestanti e semplici cittadini. Il bilancio è tragico: 45 morti, 816 le persone arrestate in sole tre settimane.

Tutto questo per difendere un unico uomo, un dittatore sanguinario, al potere da oltre trent'anni, Omar al-Bashir. Ma c'è di più, quest'uomo, sulla cui testa pende un mandato di cattura per genocidio e crimini contro l'umanità in Darfur, sta cercando di emendare la Costituzione per togliere ogni residuo limite al suo mandato, in vista delle prossime elezioni del 2020.

Chiediamo al governo sudanese di rilasciare in modo incondizionato tutti i manifestanti, Salih Osman, premio Sacharov del 2007, e i 23 giovani studenti universitari di origine darfuriana, arrestati il 23 dicembre. All'Alto rappresentante, a tutta l'Unione chiediamo di utilizzare veramente ogni forma di pressione economica, commerciale e politica per fare quindi la giusta pressione che serve a fermare questo ignobile massacro.

Marie-Christine Arnautu, au nom du groupe ENF. – Monsieur le Président, un billet paru en 2012 dans *La Règle du Jeu*, revue du pseudo-philosophe va-t-en-guerre bien connu des Français Bernard-Henri Lévy, affirmait sans honte que les idées du Front national étaient celles appliquées au Soudan. Permettez-moi d'être un brin provocatrice et de comparer l'actualité.

Selon la presse, les autorités soudanaises ont arrêté 800 personnes en marge des récentes manifestations antigouvernementales. C'est moins que les 5 000 gilets jaunes placés en garde à vue en France depuis le début de la contestation contre l'arrogance du président Macron. On compte, selon les bilans, entre 20 et 40 victimes décédées au Soudan. En France, les médias font état d'une centaine de blessés graves parmi les manifestants. La répression du ministre Castaner sait aussi être efficace. Si le Soudan applique la charia et persécute les chrétiens, en Europe, les islamistes ne cessent de gagner du terrain.

Alors, je m'étonne parfois, chers collègues, des leçons de morale. Il serait temps que le Parlement examine d'abord ce qui se passe sous son nez avant de s'occuper des droits de l'homme sur d'autres continents.

Krzysztof Hetman (PPE)... – anie Przewodniczący! Utrzymujące się w Sudanie od blisko miesiąca protesty stają się coraz krwawsze, a sytuacja w kraju coraz bardziej napięta. Dlatego nie możemy beczynnie przyglądać się przelewowi krwi i łamaniu praw człowieka.

Ogromna większość Sudańczyków żyje w skrajnym ubóstwie, utrzymując się za równowartość poniżej dolara dziennie, dlatego zrozumiałe jest, że rosnące ceny oraz niedobory żywności wyprowadziły Sudańczyków na ulice. Zrozumiałe jest też, że Sudańczycy nie chcą się zgodzić na zmiany w konstytucji, które pozwoliłyby na utrzymanie prezydenta Baszira – oskarżonego przez Międzynarodowy Trybunał Karny o zbrodnie przeciwko ludzkości, zbrodnie wojenne oraz ludobójstwo – u władzy po zakończeniu obecnej kadencji.

Tym samym uważam, że obowiązkiem Unii Europejskiej jest domagać się od władz Sudanu, aby zaprzęstały użycia siły podczas pokojowych demonstracji, uwolniły niesłusznie aresztowanych obrońców praw człowieka, dziennikarzy oraz przedstawicieli opozycji, a także zaprzęstały prześladować chrześcijan i przedstawicieli innych religii. Bardzo niepokojące są też informacje dotyczące ograniczania wolności słowa, a w szczególności zaś restrykcje w dostępie do internetu oraz cenzura prasy. Dlatego opowiadam się za unijnym zakazem eksportu do Sudanu wszelkiego rodzaju urządzeń, które mogłyby być wykorzystywane do tego celu.

Julie Ward (S&D)... – r President, last week, Marwa Elhaj, a Sudanese journalist living in Liverpool in my constituency, contacted me because of her concerns about the situation in her country. She tells me that the civil population faces unprecedented levels of violence in the margins of the protests against al-Bashir's oppressive regime, including random shooting. She has documentary evidence.

I'm particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defender and blogger Yasir Elsir Ali, who was shot by a sniper in Khartoum at the end of December and spent 10 days in intensive care. Two days later he was abducted from his home by Sudanese security forces and he is now being held incommunicado in inhumane conditions. I'm very concerned for his health and well-being and I call on the Sudanese authorities to immediately release him and ensure he is given appropriate medical care abroad.

The authorities must also inform his family and lawyer of his place of detention and allow them immediate access to him. His case is very worrying and Sudanese human rights organisations are gravely concerned, as are we. High Representative, please take all the necessary steps to urge Sudanese authorities to immediately release him.

Meanwhile, I want to thank the people of Liverpool for standing with the Sudanese community in these difficult times. We will never surrender to Theresa May's hostile environment regarding refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Seán Kelly (PPE)... – r President, once again we are discussing the deteriorating situation in Sudan in respect of fundamental freedoms. Popular unrest in response to austerity measures has evolved into anti-government movement. The violation of the right to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly through arbitrary restrictions and the use of lethal force against unarmed protesters is deplorable.

I also strongly condemn the detention, in an undisclosed location, of human rights lawyer Salih Mahmoud Osman – a strong advocate of legal reform in Sudan – and call for his immediate release. Other activists facing similar violations must also be released.

Furthermore, I call for an end to the state-endorsed persecution of Christians, and this is a very important point for us in the EPP, the Christian Democrat Group. A free, independent and impartial press fuelled by open debate is a pillar of democratic society. The EU must therefore escalate its promotion of freedom of expression through its external policies, including in Sudan, and continue its support of human rights advocacy by civil society organisations.

In addition to this, the EU must continue to work for the protection of girls' and women's human rights in Sudan, as highlighted by the Commissioner in May 2018. I therefore demand that the Sudanese authorities fulfil their international obligations and respond to our request.

Wajid Khan (S&D)... – r President, the recent political developments in Sudan are deeply concerning. We must respond with sanctions until the oppression stops. It began as a riot over steep hikes in bread prices caused by the government's cut in wheat subsidies. It has escalated into widespread unrest with daily rallies against President Omar al-Bashir's 29-year-old regime.

It will not surprise you that the government, led by a war criminal, have met the protests with excessive force by its security forces. Dozens have been killed. Tear gas has given way to live ammunition being used against the crowds. Security forces have arrested and beaten hundreds of journalists, medics, students and political leaders. Despite all this, the demonstrations have shown little sign of abating. The situation could grow bloodier as Bashir intends to hold onto power at any cost.

The deadly use of force must stop, as well as the harassment and intimidation of those of Darfuri origin. The right to freedom of assembly, association and expression must be guaranteed, in accordance with international law. We urge the government to immediately release all those detained and investigate all allegations of ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and excessive use of force and to hold those responsible to account.

The international community should take measures against the actions of President Bashir. Let us remember that he is still subject to an International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

I am pleased with the EU statement that actions of the government of Sudan will have an impact on our bilateral phased engagement; however, this is not enough. The international community must stop turning a blind eye to human rights violations by the Sudan regime in order to stem migration flows.

And finally, Mr President, it is high time to impose EU targeted sanctions against those responsible for grave abuses and we should review our bilateral cooperation

Doru-Claudian Frunzuliță (S&D)... – r President, last but not least, even though some progress has been made in legislative and institutional reforms, considering the recent events which employed massive and deadly use of force, the overall democratic transformation of Sudan is very precarious, continuing to deny fundamental rights and freedom.

I share the opinion that the EU and the Member States need to play a greater role in the region and to investigate these violations of human rights and humanitarian law. Moreover, every effort should be made to improve access by international humanitarian agencies to provide humanitarian aid to those in need. The EU should also intensify its efforts to promote freedom of expression through its external policies and instruments and to further strengthen financial support to human rights defenders and civil society organisations in Sudan, mainly under the European Development Fund. We should even have to take into account cutting funds to Sudan when necessary if these funds are used in an appropriate manner.

Last but not least, complete transparency needs to be ensured concerning the projects in the security field with Sudan, including all planned activities and beneficiaries of EU and EU Member State funding.

Zgłoszenia z sali

José Inácio Faria (PPE)... – r President, since massive protests started nearly a month ago sparked by price hikes but tapping the deeper reservoir of discontent, government forces have shot dead scores of protesters and detained hundreds of courageous Sudanese who courageously protested against the regime's brutality, incompetence and corruption. As the Khartoum protests engulfed the whole country, the Sudanese Government continued to perpetrate its old tactics of arbitrary detentions and arrests, extra-judicial killings, assaults, excessive use of force and many more violations against activists, journalists and ordinary citizens.

The European Union must stick to its core values and strongly condemn these persecutions and terror campaigns, and call on President Omar al-Bashir to hold those responsible to account and stop brutal confrontation against demonstrators, release all detainees, including Sakharov Prize laureate Salih Mahmoud Osman, and allow the people of Sudan to exercise their constitutional rights, including the right of peaceful assembly.

Once again, Madam Commissioner, the EU has to act now, not later, and must impose strong action against the government of al-Bashir, namely suspending all financial aid.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D)... – r President, Commissioner Malmström, over the past mandate of the European Parliament I was given the chance, the opportunity, to be a member of an electoral observation mission in Sudan and it was compelling to see live and first-hand the massive exercise of democratic will of the Sudanese people through a long day of voting and scrutiny.

So, it's only sad that again we see ourselves here in the European Parliament discussing massive violations of fundamental rights in Sudan under the pressure of President Bashir who has just been prosecuted by the International Court of Justice and promoting a constitutional reform, which leads to illegal detentions of those activists who care about the rule of law in Sudan.

So the usual thing is that we have these discussions with High Representative Mogherini, but it makes sense that it is you Commissioner Malmström, the one in charge of trade, who secures that there will be sanctions to this kind of behaviour, which is completely unacceptable for the international community and for the values of the European Union and what it stands for.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR)... – ύριε Πρόεδρε, η καταπίεση είναι στην ημερήσια διάταξη στο Σουδάν με την περίφημη Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών και Ασφαλείας να συλλαμβάνει, να ασκεί βία, να βασανίζονται οι ακτιβιστές, οι σπουδαστές, και όσοι τολμούν να διαδηλώσουν. Όλα αυτά έχουν ενταθεί, βεβαίως, μετά την οικονομική κρίση η οποία υπάρχει. Παρότι το Σουδάν είναι μια πλούσια χώρα, στην πράξη ο λαός αγωνίζεται για ένα κομμάτι ψωμί και, φυσικά, ο Πρόεδρος ο Αλ Μπασίρ, ο οποίος θα πρέπει κανονικά να παραπεμφθεί στο Διεθνές Ποινικό Δικαστήριο, προσπαθεί να επεκτείνει τη θητεία του, γιατί μόνο έτσι νομίζει ότι θα γλιτώσει από την διεθνή ποινική δικαιοσύνη. Απαιτείται, λοιπόν, να ληφθούν μέτρα, να επιβληθούν κυρώσεις, να καταλάβει ο Αλ Μπασίρ και η παρέα του ότι δεν μπορεί να εφαρμόζει τον ισλαμικό νόμο, δεν μπορεί να εκδιώκει τους αντιφρονούντες, δεν μπορεί να εκδιώκει τους χριστιανικούς πληθυσμούς, και πρέπει, κυρία Malmström, να έχουμε άμεσα μέτρα και κυρώσεις κατά του καθεστώτος του Σουδάν.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE)... – ane předsedající, já samozřejmě souhlasím s návrhem rezoluce, kterou dnes budeme hlasovat. Vnímám tu situaci v Súdánu stejně jako moji kolegové. Pouze konstatuji smutný fakt, že situaci v Súdánu se zde zabýváme opakovaně. Opakovaně hovoříme o potlačování lidských práv v této africké zemi a bohužel ta situace se stále zhoršuje.

Nevím, jestli je nějaké řešení, to je dotaz na Vás, paní komisařko. Je třeba zpřísnit sankce vůči této zemi, zastavit pomoc režimu prezidenta Bašira, jeho lidem, zmrazit asi jejich konta, více je ekonomicky takto poškodit. To je asi jediný způsob, jak nějakým způsobem alespoň tlačit na tento šílený politický režim, ale obávám se, že to úplně nevyřešíme. I tak přijetí těchto usnesení mají významnou symbolickou hodnotu a já doufám, že Komise tu symbolickou hodnotu přemění do konkrétních činů a kroků, které režim pana Bašira podlomí.

Carlos Iturgaiz (PPE)... – señor presidente, en primer lugar, hay que hacer un análisis de lo que está ocurriendo en ese país africano, en Sudán: desigualdad, violencia, falta de recursos en la población, falta de derechos humanos, ausencia de libertad de prensa, etcétera, etcétera.

Esta es una radiografía, señor presidente, de lo que ocurre en muchos países de África. Pero en Sudán el actual panorama político y social es cada vez más preocupante, porque la oposición está siendo reprimida con violencia y el Gobierno no permite manifestaciones, ya que usa la fuerza para disolverlas y hay más de cuarenta, muertos sin contar los heridos y los detenidos.

Sudán está a las puertas de unas elecciones —en 2020— que, me temo, visto lo que está ocurriendo en ese país, van a derivar en más represión a las fuerzas políticas de la oposición y que también se va a perseguir a los que no bailan al son que marca el macabro presidente Al-Bashir. Y se va a perseguir, no lo olvidemos, a todo aquel que es cristiano y que no puede libremente hacer uso o gala de su fe.

Por eso pido a las instituciones de la Unión Europea que tomen medidas para sancionar a Sudán por las injusticias que ese Gobierno está infligiendo injustamente a su pueblo.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, the situation of human rights in Sudan is a continuous worry for the European Union. Our main areas of concern include freedom of expression, assembly and association, as well as the shrinking space for civil society. We have witnessed these fundamental rights being undermined in recent weeks by the response of the Government of Sudan to the widespread protests sparked across the country last December because of the rising cost of living and shortages.

The Sudanese security forces have responded by using force, at times live ammunition, tear gas, intimidation and arbitrary arrests. Reportedly, as you mentioned, more than 40 people have lost their lives and more than 800 people remain detained. Several media outlets, including newspapers, have been seized. Social media and the internet have been partially cut to suppress news and prevent coordination among protesters. The European Union has been alarmed by reports of the use of tear gas against medical personnel and patients in hospital.

As emphasised in the most recent EU statements on the ongoing protests, we expect the Sudanese Government to release all journalists, members of the Opposition, human rights defenders and other protesters arbitrarily detained. We also expect the Government to conduct a thorough investigation into these recent deaths and abuses. It is vital that those responsible are held accountable for their actions. Furthermore, all sides should exercise restraint and abstain from any further violence in order to de-escalate the situation.

The European Union calls upon the Government of Sudan to allow the Sudanese people to exercise their constitutional right to express their views without fear of reprisal. We also call on the Government to implement much needed political and economic reforms to address the grievances expressed by the population about the challenges the country is facing. I would like to assure you that the EU will continue to stand for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sudan, as well as to support civil society work and human right defenders by different means at our disposal.

As you know, our relations with Sudan are affected by the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant against President Bashir and subsequent decisions by Sudan not to ratify the revised Cotonou Agreement. That means that Sudan is not eligible for programme funds from the European Development Fund. However, as you know, the country is in a very dire economic and humanitarian situation. Widespread conflict and insecurity transcend borders and negatively impact the wider region. With that in mind, two years ago we made available a special measure for Sudan worth EUR 1 million for the benefit of the population. It does not mean that we are endorsing the political leadership. This money is channelled through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa and it aims to improve the situation of the most vulnerable groups.

We will continue to raise concerns in our engagement with the Sudanese authorities at all levels. We will also show our continued support through the use of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and this has already provided funds, for instance, to several projects on press freedom, as well as civic and human rights and education in Sudan.

Thank you very much for this debate.

Przewodniczący. – Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się po zakończeniu debat.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 162)

Czesław Hoc (ECR), na piśmie. – Jesteśmy świadkami ogromnego kryzysu mającego miejsce w Sudanie. Nie możemy stać biernie, gdy do stłumienia narastających protestów obywateli używa się ostrej amunicji i gazów łzawiących. Niszczy się kościoły, brutalnie morduje się chrześcijan. Masowo głodują kobiety i dzieci, a sytuacja w kraju zmierza ku jednemu z największych kryzysów humanitarnych w historii ostatnich dekad. W świetle wielu niepokojów na kontynencie afrykańskim musimy w wymierny sposób przeciwdziałać eskalacji tego kryzysu, wspierać demokratyczne zmiany w kraju autorytarnego reżimu, by obywatele Sudanu nie zostali pozostawieni sami sobie. Wykorzystajmy wszelkie możliwe środki perswazji, by wpłynąć na poprawę sytuacji Sudańczyków.

Rolandas Paksas (EFDD), raštu. – Sudane, kaip ir bet kurioje pasaulio valstybėje, turi būti gerbiamos žmogaus teisės. Smurtas ir agresija yra visuomenę griaunantys veiksniai. Valstybė privalo užtikrinti savo gyventojų gerovę, sudaryti palankią terpę ekonomikos klestėjimui. Esminė viešojo funkcija – gyventojų apsauga. Labai raginu Sudano viešosios valdžios institucijas imtis neatidėliotinų veiksmų gerinti žmogaus teisių padėtį šalyje. Pirmiausia užtikrinti prieigą prie būtiniausių maisto, medicinos ir higienos prekių. Padėti pažeistų, neramumų alinamų teritorijų gyventojams atsistatyti, pavyzdžiui, užtikrinti prieigą humanitarinei pagalbai įgyvendinti. Tvarka ir teisingumas įsivyras tik tokiu atveju, jeigu bus nemažai dėmesio skirta policijos, teisminių institucijų formavimui. Tik teise ir taisyklių laikymusi grindžiamas valdymas yra efektyvus. Žmogus ir jo gerovė privalo būti valstybės prioritetu.

Κωνσταντίνος Παπαδάκης (NI), γραπτώς. – Εδώ κι έναν μήνα εξελίσσονται πολύμορφες μαζικές εργατικές – λαϊκές κινητοποιήσεις εκατομμυρίων Σουδανών ενάντια στο αντιλαϊκό καθεστώς της χώρας εξαιτίας του νέου κύματος ακρίβειας και ελλείψεων σε ψωμί, βασικά τρόφιμα και καύσιμα. Αυτές αντιμετωπίζονται με σκληρή καταστολή χρησιμοποιώντας ακόμα και πραγματικά πυρά κατά των διαδηλωτών κι έχουν προκαλέσει τον θάνατο αρκετών δεκάδων διαδηλωτών, τον τραυματισμό και τις συλλήψεις πολλών εκατοντάδων. Τα μεγάλα γεωπολιτικά συμφέροντα ιμπεριαλιστικών κέντρων στα οποία εμπλέκεται μεταξύ άλλων και η ΕΕ και οι ανταγωνισμοί των μονοπωλίων στην Αφρική και την ευρύτερη περιοχή του Σουδάν τα πληρώνουν ακριβά οι λαοί της περιοχής που παλεύουν για τα δικαιώματά τους. Το ΚΚΕ καταδικάζει την αιματηρή καταστολή του αντιλαϊκού καθεστώτος του Σουδάν. Εκφράζει την αλληλεγγύη του στο σουδανικό ΚΚ και τους εργατικούς – λαϊκούς αγώνες, που αναπτύσσονται για οικονομικά, κοινωνικά και δημοκρατικά δικαιώματα. Απαιτεί να σταματήσει η καταστολή και να αφεθούν ελεύθεροι οι συλληφθέντες.

(Posiedzenie zostało zawieszona do rozpoczęcia głosowań)

IN THE CHAIR: MAIREAD McGUINNESS

Vice-President

9. Reprise de la séance

(The sitting resumed at 12.01)

Kati Piri (S&D)... – adam President, this morning Dutch journalist, Ans Boersma, was unexpectedly expelled from Turkey, and the question is whether we are dealing here again with another example of how journalism is silenced in Turkey.

I would like to request that President Tajani contacts the Turkish authorities to ask for the reasons for her expulsion since no other reason was given than vague security concerns and links to terrorist organisations, and to once again highlight the concerns of this House when it comes to press freedom in Turkey.

President. – Ms Piri, you have the support of the House and as a former journalist, I also support your calls. We will convey your message to the President.

Steven Woolfe (NI)... – adam President, just as we are supposed to be raising points of order before this House and indicate which point of order it is, which paragraph, and in order that we don't delay proceedings. We're told this on a regular basis, just because I have similar interventions like the previous speaker, could the House indicate to me what rule of point of order that previous speaker spoke on so that I'm able to use the same in future?

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI)... – ani Przewodnicząca! We wtorek pani Bilbao Barandica dopuściła się niestosownej wypowiedzi tutaj na tej sali. Powiedziała, że sześciu mówców wypowiadających się w sprawie euro było mężczyznami. Chciałem zwrócić pani uwagę, żeby nie szufladkowała pani ludzi po wyglądzie. Być może oni czują się kobietami i teraz jest im przez panią przykro. Proszę wstać i przeprosić tych ludzi i powstrzymać się na przyszłość od takich szowinistycznych wypowiedzi. Proszę nie mówić ludziom, kim mają być.

10. Heure des votes

President. – The next item is the vote.

(For the results and other details of the vote: see Minutes)

10.1. L'Azerbaïdjan, notamment le cas de Mehman Huseynov (RC-B8-0056/2019, B8-0056/2019, B8-0058/2019, B8-0059/2019, B8-0061/2019, B8-0063/2019, B8-0064/2019, B8-0066/2019) (vote)

— *Before the vote:*

Rebecca Harms, author. – Madam President, we had a very good negotiation on this resolution among colleagues from all the groups who signed all together the resolution but I have to present to you two oral amendments which are technical amendments, but we want this resolution to be correct. I was expecting to get the floor for Point B and Point C of our resolution but I can present, if you agree, both technical amendments now.

I would like you to agree with the following changes to Point B of the resolution: Mehman Huseynov, who is due to be released in March 2019, has been facing a possible additional five to seven year prison sentence on charges, not under the Article 315(2) but only under the Article 317(2). This is my first oral amendment and I would like you to support it.

My second oral amendment concerns the visit of the EEAS delegation to the prison where Mehman Huseynov is. This visit took place, not on 10 January, but on 11 January and after the Commissioner said in the debate that, according to EEAS, Mehman Huseynov has finished his hunger strike, the hunger strike being one of the reasons for our debate and resolution, I must say here also that family and lawyers cannot confirm that he has finished his hunger strike. Thank you for your attention and I ask you to support the technical changes.

(The oral amendments were accepted)

- 10.2. Le Soudan (RC-B8-0053/2019, B8-0053/2019, B8-0054/2019, B8-0055/2019, B8-0057/2019, B8-0060/2019, B8-0062/2019) (vote)**
- 10.3. Programme d'assistance au déclassement de la centrale nucléaire d'Ignalina en Lituanie (A8-0413/2018 — Rebecca Harms) (vote)**
- 10.4. Rapport annuel sur le contrôle des activités financières de la Banque européenne d'investissement pour 2017 (A8-0479/2018 — Georgi Pirinski) (vote)**
- 10.5. Demandes transfrontalières de restitution des œuvres d'art et des biens culturels volés au cours de pillages perpétrés en période de conflit armé et de guerre (A8-0465/2018 — Pavel Svoboda) (vote)**
- 10.6. Transformations, fusions et scissions transfrontalières (A8-0002/2019 — Evelyn Regner) (vote)**
- 10.7. Mise en place d'un plan pluriannuel pour les pêcheries exploitant des stocks démersaux en Méditerranée occidentale (A8-0005/2019 — Clara Eugenia Aguilera García) (vote)**

— *Before the vote:*

Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, ponente. – Señor presidenta —tranquilos, les va a encantar escucharme—, tenemos la oportunidad, votando «sí» al mandato, de tener por primera vez un plan de gestión pesquera para el Mediterráneo occidental. Por eso pido el mandato.

Hemos hecho un gran esfuerzo con los acuerdos en los compromisos, hemos aprobado veinticuatro compromisos, hasta el último minuto... Aplazamos la votación de la Comisión para conseguir un mayor acuerdo. Lo hemos conseguido.

Con su voto afirmativo vamos a tener la posibilidad de sacar adelante, por primera vez en la población pesquera del Mediterráneo, un plan de gestión global.

Esta es una gran oportunidad. Si decimos que no al mandato, no habrá plan de gestión en el Mediterráneo.

- 10.8. Protection du budget de l'Union en cas de défaillance généralisée de l'état de droit dans un État membre (A8-0469/2018 — Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Petri Sarvamaa) (vote)**

— *Before the vote:*

Petri Sarvamaa, Rapporteur. – Madam President, one of the most important and crucial things needed to sustain democracy in any Member State is the rule of law. Undermining the rule of law is always dangerous because it clears a way for weakening other democratic elements of the state. This is why we are voting on this report.

Let me emphasise that this regulation has its legal basis in the financial regulation. Article 322 of the Treaty, not in Article 7. This is about protecting the EU budget from generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law.

Another very important thing to understand about this report and proposal is that it has to be, and will be, the same budgetary consequences for every Member State that would undermine the rule of law.

— Before the vote on Amendment 41:

Petri Sarvamaa, Rapporteur. – Madam President, the oral amendment reads: ‘the prevention and the sanctioning of tax evasion and the proper functioning of authorities contributing to administrative cooperation in tax matters’ – that is deleting words ‘and tax competition’ because tax competition is in the competence of the Member States and therefore does not belong in this report.

(The oral amendment was not accepted)

— After the vote on the Commission proposal:

Eider Gardiazabal Rubial (S&D)... – Madam President, thank you for the big support. In line with the Conference of Presidents decision for MFF related files, I would request that Parliament refers the matter back to the committees responsible for institutional negotiations in accordance with Rule 59A.

(The request to refer the matter back to committee was approved)

10.9. Établissement du programme «Fiscalis» aux fins de la coopération dans le domaine fiscal (A8-0421/2018 — Sven Giegold) (vote)

— After the vote:

Sven Giegold, Rapporteur. – Madam President, I didn’t ask for the floor. But of course it has to be referred back to the interinstitutional negotiations.

(The request to refer the matter back to committee was approved)

10.10. Établissement du programme «Droits et valeurs» (A8-0468/2018 — Bodil Valero) (vote)

— After the vote:

Bodil Valero, Rapporteur. – Madam President, I would like that the matter be referred back to committee for interinstitutional negotiations, pursuant to Rule 59(4).

(The request to refer the matter back to committee was approved)

10.11. Instrument européen en matière de sûreté nucléaire complétant l’instrument de voisinage, de coopération au développement et de coopération internationale (A8-0448/2018 — Vladimir Urutchev) (vote)

10.12. Lutte contre le retard de paiement dans les transactions commerciales (A8-0456/2018 — Lara Comi) (vote)

10.13. Rapport annuel sur les activités financières de la Banque européenne d’investissement (A8-0415/2018 — Barbara Kappel) (vote)

10.14. Intégration différenciée (A8-0402/2018 — Pascal Durand) (vote)

10.15. Enquête stratégique OI/2/2017 de la Médiatrice sur la transparence des débats législatifs dans les instances préparatoires du Conseil de l'Union européenne (A8-0420/2018 — Jo Leinen, Yana Toom) (vote)

President. – That concludes the vote.

11. Explications de vote

11.1. Établissement du programme InvestEU (A8-0482/2018 — José Manuel Fernandes, Roberto Gualtieri)

Oral explanations of vote

John Howarth (S&D)... – adam President, when I meet people who participate in European Union programmes they talk about the need for simplification. Well, we have some simplification. As a result of this report, we've got a reduction in the acronym soup that we have to deal with. We have a single regime of governance and we have 13 services being brought together in a single point of contact.

That simplification also provides some flexibility. It provides the flexibility to look for a programme that doesn't necessarily fit into what was there before. GBP 38 billion of the budget guarantee and another 9.5 billion from national regional partners are just a start. The prize is the investment that that will leverage – EUR 650 billion is the Commission's estimate. It's a fund providing investment that direct commercial investment cannot. InvestEU brings together public and private investment in a genuine partnership for the future of economic growth.

Monica Macovei (ECR)... – oamnă președintă, în prezent nivelul și protecția de investiții nu acoperă nevoile de investiții structurale ale Uniunii și nu susțin o creștere pe termen lung. Schimbările tehnologice, competiția globală și provocările societății cer un sprijin permanent și susțin, de aceea, Fondul InvestEU, pentru că acesta este obiectivul lui: finanțare și investiții care să contribuie la dezvoltarea cercetării, inovării și digitalizării. Sigur că asta duce la ocuparea forței de muncă și la creștere economică și atingerea obiectivelor Acordului de la Paris privind schimbările climatice. E foarte important să investim în știință, tehnologie, cultură, educație și formare profesională.

Un beneficiar important al acestor fonduri poate fi România și trebuie să fie România, care are o resursă umană puternică în toate aceste domenii.

11.2. Rapport annuel 2017 de la Banque centrale européenne (A8-0424/2018 — Gabriel Mato)

Oral explanations of vote

Emmanuel Maurel (GUE/NGL)... – adame la Présidente, nous venons de fêter les 20 ans d'existence de la zone euro, et il est bien de faire un bilan critique des politiques mentionnées dans le dernier rapport 2017 de la Banque centrale européenne.

S'il est évident que la politique d'assouplissement quantitatif a eu un rôle déterminant pour maintenir l'intégrité de la zone euro et pour offrir un bol d'air aux pays du sud de l'Europe qui ont été durement éprouvés, la vérité est que les politiques menées ne sont toujours pas suffisantes. Pire, loin d'en appeler à des politiques expansionnistes, faites d'investissements qui permettraient de faire converger les pays de la zone euro, le rapport qui nous est proposé reprend finalement la doxa classique sur les réformes structurelles qu'il faudrait mener, et dont on sait qu'elles dévastent les pays européens et des territoires tout entiers.

J'aurais pu voter ce rapport s'il avait mis en avant des solutions au phénomène d'eurodivergence, s'il avait parlé d'investissement, d'union de transfert, de mise hors de marché des dettes d'État par la BCE. Il n'en est rien, et cela est dommage, car je crois que l'Europe mérite mieux que cela.

11.3. Mise en œuvre du pilier commercial de l'accord d'association avec l'Amérique centrale (A8-0459/2018 — Reimer Böge)

Oral explanations of vote

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI)... – ani Przewodnicząca! Żeby powiedzieć dlaczego głosowałem przeciwko temu sprawozdaniu, to przeczytam tylko jedno zdanie (przypomnijmy, że jest to sprawozdanie na temat handlu, porozumienia handlowego z Ameryką Środkową) „przypomina się o zobowiązaniu się Unii Europejskiej i innych sygnatariuszy do włączenia aspektu równości płci do polityki handlowej; wzywa się strony do zaakceptowania aspektu płci w układzie oraz do promowania i wspierania włączenia w ramach przyszłego przeglądu specjalnego rozdziału poświęconego płci...”.

Ja mam nawet tytuł na ten rozdział dla Państwa, nazwijmy go: „Handel jest kobietą”, podobnie jak kobietą była Kopernik, jak kobietą była Galileusz i kobietą była Newton.

Jan Zahradil (ECR)... – aní předsedající, já jsem v tomto hlasování tuto zprávu podpořit nemohl, jakkoliv samozřejmě podporuji hodnocení implementace všech obchodních dohod včetně těchto, ale vadí mi tam jedna věc, je tam jeden element, který sice není ničím novým, ale z principiálních důvodů ho podpořit nemohu, a to je uvažování o zavedení sankcí během toho revizního mechanismu.

Já myslím, že sankce nejsou efektivním nástrojem ke zlepšení implementace, samozřejmě musíme se starat o to, jak vypadá situace třeba v oblasti lidských práv v těchto zemích nebo v oblasti ochrany životního prostředí, ale to se nevyřeší sankcemi, na to existují jiné nástroje, a já jsem vždycky jako místopředseda Výboru pro zahraniční obchod byl proti zavádění sankcí, proti uplatňování sankcí, a proto jsem tuto zprávu podpořit nemohl.

Daniel Hannan (ECR)... – adam President, the European Union's approach to Central America shows an organisation that is as concerned with exporting its ideology as any revolutionary regime – Jacobin France or Bolshevik Russia or any other new organisation that wants the rest of the world to copy it. Because all of the EU's treaties with the Central American region have been based on the principle that there must be regional integration everywhere else, that it needs to be bloc-to-bloc and that they don't want to do trade or aid deals with individual nation-states.

Central Americans have been pushed into forming supranational associations, including Parlacen, a supranational parliament. I can understand why this has happened. I'm sure people here genuinely think that regional associations are the way forward and that is valid to try and push the world in that direction. And yet, the awkward truth remains that the flow is the other way. In the 1950s when the EEC was set up there were 80 countries now there are 200.

(The President cut off the speaker)

11.4. Union bancaire — rapport annuel 2018 (A8-0419/2018 — Nils Torvalds)

Oral explanations of vote

Emmanuel Maurel (GUE/NGL)... – adame la Présidente, dix ans après la crise financière qui a dévasté l'économie mondiale, l'union bancaire n'est toujours pas achevée. Les banques de taille systémique n'ont toujours pas été démantelées et menacent toujours nos sociétés par leur instabilité chronique. On sait qu'en cas de nouvelle crise, les États seraient obligés de mettre la main à la poche pour socialiser les pertes de la finance, comme cela a déjà été le cas en 2008. Par conséquent, les promesses sur les réponses à apporter à la crise de 2008 ont été trahies, et cet énième rapport sur l'état de l'union bancaire n'est pas vraiment rassurant. D'une certaine façon, il solde l'échec de dix ans de politiques d'économie néolibérale.

Je pense qu'il faut de vraies réponses à cette situation. Il faut séparer les banques de dépôt et les banques d'investissement. Il faut évidemment rompre avec l'austérité budgétaire. Il faut bien sûr réglementer davantage le *shadow banking*, qui est devenu une source de déstabilisation de l'économie mondiale. Franchement, nous ne sommes pas à la hauteur de l'enjeu et si nous n'y arrivons pas, la crise est devant nous, et elle arrive vite.

11.5. Situation des droits fondamentaux dans l'Union européenne en 2017 (A8-0466/2018 — Josep-Maria Terricabras)

Oral explanations of vote

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE)... – aní předsedající, já bych ráda vysvětlila, proč jsem tuto zprávu nemohla podpořit. Všem nám jde o dodržování lidských práv v Evropské unii.

Přestože země Evropské unie jsou demokratické, dodržují základní práva, nesmíme usnout na vavřínech a usilovat o naplňování těchto práv. Ovšem tato zpráva bohužel jde mnohem dál. Já prostě nesouhlasím s doporučením ohledně ratifikace Istanbulské úmluvy, protože to je svrchovaným právem členských států. Odmítám tvrzení, které bylo ve zprávě schváleno, že odpírání služeb týkajících se sexuálního a reprodukčního zdraví a reprodukčních práv včetně bezpečného legálního přerušování těhotenství představuje jednu z forem násilí páchaného na ženách.

Andrejs Mamikins (S&D)... – adam President, for me and for the Socialists and Democrats the high point of 2017 was certainly the establishment of the European social pillar, and EU citizens' basic human rights is one of the most important values. This is also one of the first things that foreigners point out when they speak about EU foreign policy.

But in our home things are far from perfect. What I find really alarming in the second report of our Fundamental Rights Agency on minorities and discrimination is that discrimination is still a reality for many people in the EU. Illegal hate speech online puts the well-being of too many Europeans at risk. Inefficient integration policy brings vulnerability to migrants on our soil. I realise that in order to address such issues, the FRA need a larger mandate, but it is also true that this subject is still mainly in the hands of the Member States. But of course I voted in favour.

Alex Mayer (S&D)... – adam President, we were too slow to act on Hungary and now the Council must urgently follow up on the Article 7 procedures, because our shared European values of liberal democracy matter. So let us say it like it is: a university has been forced out and academic freedom is no more, the independence of the judiciary has been threatened, minorities mistreated.

Morally and strategically we must not tolerate the far-right populists, for if we do not act, we become complicit in moving the centre of gravity of politics. We saw it in the language used about refugees swamping Europe, which was tolerated. It moved from the extremes to normal public discourse taking opinion and policy with it. We see it in our history too and the ultimate horrors of World War II. Appeasing those whose principles that we despise never has worked and never will.

11.6. Programme d'assistance au déclasséement de la centrale nucléaire d'Ignalina en Lituanie (A8-0413/2018 — Rebecca Harms)

Oral explanations of vote

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR)... – -жо Председател, гласувах против доклада на колегата, не защото не трябва да се дават пари за извеждането от експлоатация на реакторите в Игналина, а защото така гласувам срещу двойния стандарт в Европейския съюз и срещу силовото налагане на решения въпреки мненията на гражданите му.

Свободата, демократичността и правото на хората сами да вземат решения за своята съдба е най-голямата ценност и тя трябва да бъде наложена и в този Съюз. Заставам зад онези над 1 милион човека, които преди 10 години отхвърлиха брукселския диктат и гласуваха за запазването на своята атомна централа. Така както ние в България се борихме и продължаваме да се борим за запазването на нашите напълно безопасни ядрени мощности в АЕЦ „Козлодуй“.

Европейският съюз по един не много демократичен начин наложи на България, Литва и Словакия да затворят работещи атомни централи, които произвеждаха евтин ток. Отлично знаеше, че спирането и извеждането от експлоатация на тези атомни централи в Козлодуй, Игналина и Бохунице преди да им изтече ресурсът, е глупаво и икономически необосновано решение. Все пак Съюзът наложи затварянето на тези централи. Литва, която разчиташе за 70% от своето потребление именно на този АЕЦ, днес е най-големият вносител на ток от АЕЦ.

José Inácio Faria (PPE)... – enhora Presidente, votei a favor deste relatório porque o encerramento da central nuclear de Ignalina, na Lituânia, é especial por vários motivos. É especial por ser um desmantelamento pioneiro e irreversível dos dois núcleos de reator de grafite, tipo RBMK, herdados da tecnologia soviética e em tudo semelhantes aos utilizados em Chernobyl.

Este momento constitui uma oportunidade única de aquisição de conhecimento para a União na área do desmantelamento de instalações nucleares e de gestão de resíduos radioativos, pelo que se justifica o investimento separado previsto no documento e em especial também por ser um caso excecional ao princípio do poluidor-pagador para os casos dos resíduos radioativos. Porquê? Porque este investimento na energia nuclear foi imposto ao território da Lituânia pela então União Soviética, destinando-se a servir uma região muito mais vasta, e desproporcionado face à dimensão e à capacidade financeira da Lituânia.

O encerramento da central nuclear levou à necessidade de se aumentarem as importações de energia para servir a região e, por isso, a Lituânia suporta há anos custos de energia muito elevados. Por isso, entendo que o cofinanciamento da União seja feito acima do planeamento dos acordos da Euratom e espero que este caso possa servir de exemplo ao desmantelamento previsto e em curso noutros Estados-Membros.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE)... – aní předsedající, já jsem podpořil tento návrh, považuji za správné rozhodnutí, že se odstavila nebezpečná jaderná elektrárna sovětského typu, je to v zájmu nejen Litevců, ale i občanů Evropské unie.

Jako dítě jsem zažil v Československu, když vybuchl jaderný reaktor v Černobylu, a ty následky byly i na našem území. Takže zpochybňovat toto rozhodnutí je podle mého názoru nesmyslné a je správné, že Evropská unie se podílí na odstranění této elektrárny finančně, a jsem rád, že jsme odhlasovali zachování původního poměru peněz, které Evropská unie posílá do Litvy právě na rozěbrání této nebezpečné jaderné elektrárny. Je v tom vidět jednoznačně pozitivní přínos Evropské unie, která z jasných bezpečnostních důvodů při vstupu Litvy do Evropské unie dohodla odstranění tohoto zařízení, je to v zájmu Evropanů, Litevců a jsem rád, že ten návrh byl schválen.

11.7. Protection du budget de l'Union en cas de défaillance généralisée de l'état de droit dans un État membre (A8-0469/2018 — Eider Gardiazabal Rubial, Petri Sarvamaa)

Oral explanations of vote

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE)... – aní předsedající, se základním cílem tohoto nařízení souhlasím. Upozorňuji, že je třeba, aby Evropská unie měla nástroj, pomocí kterého bude moci sankcionovat ten systém, tu zemi, kde vlivem systémových nedostatků v soudnictví a ve státní správě hrozí poškození finančních zájmů Evropské unie. Já sice nesouhlasím s některými aspekty navrhovaného procesu, ale myslím, že to je možné ještě v detailech dopracovat v rámci dialogu. Přes jisté výhrady tedy, které mám, tak považuji za důležité, aby Evropská unie měla tento nástroj, a proto jsem pro zprávu hlasovala.

Monica Macovei (ECR)... – oamă președintă, regulamentul protejează banii europeni, iar riscul furtului din bani europeni este mai mare în statele care nu respectă statul de drept, acolo unde independența justiției este în pericol, acolo unde deciziile sunt arbitrare sau ilegale – inclusiv cele luate de autoritățile publice – și nu sunt corectate și nu sunt sancționate și acolo unde drepturile și libertățile oamenilor sunt restrânse, cum ar fi și libertatea presei. Recunoaștem în aceste cazuri multe din deciziile luate, din păcate, în România, de guvernul PSD-ALDE.

Acum, în aceste țări unde statul de drept nu este respectat, sigur că banii europeni sunt în pericol și, ca atare, regulamentul prevede că pot fi suspendați, înghețați, reduși. În cazul acesta, statul respectiv va trebui să facă plăți, dar din bugetul propriu, și nu va primi finanțare, până când nu va remedia dificultățile.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR)... – -жо Председател, гласувах убедено против настоящия доклад, тъй като не смятам, че предложението на Комисията за нов регламент върху съществуващата вече процедура, уредена в член 7 от Договора за Европейския съюз, би могло да постигне нещо повече, освен излишна административна тежест. Налагането на финансови наказания за незачитане на т.нар. „ценности на Съюза“ често служи за постигане на нелегитимни политически цели и борба с политически опоненти в държавите.

Не съм съгласен, че гражданите на Европейския съюз трябва да плащат цената, тъй като те са крайните потребители на представената от Брюксел финансова помощ. Лицемерно е да се нарушават суверенните правила на държавите членки. Примерите с Унгария и Полша през последните години са красноречиви. Европейският съюз не би трябвало да налага своите интереси над страните и интересите на страни като Франция и Германия, за сметка на страните от Централна и Източна Европа, каквито виждаме, между другото, в пакета „Мобилност“. С налагането на финансови глоби няма да се постигне нищо, освен скептицизъм и разпадане на съществуващата система.

Европейският съюз трябва да бъде реформиран, защото предлагането на тези двойни стандарти няма да доведе до нищо добро.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE)... – aní předsedající, já jsem dlouho váhal, zda podpořit tuto zprávu nebo se zdržet. Nakonec jsem se zdržel. Na jedné straně já velmi vítám, že Evropská unie chce více hájit evropské hodnoty, mezi něž patří právní stát. To je důležitá věc. Ale ten konkrétní návrh mi nepřipadá jako úplně šťastný a jsou tam některé sporné věci, jak tady upozorňovala i právní služba Evropské rady, a mám pocit, že i přes určitou snahu najít kompromis tady stále zůstává otázka právního základu tohoto návrhu. Takže já budu dál sledovat, jak se debata nad tímto návrhem bude ubírat, ale je třeba mít jistotu, že přijímáme návrh, který opravdu vychází z právního základu primárního evropského práva, a nejde o nějakou extenzi, která může být vnímána jako rozšíření mimo zakládací smlouvy Evropské unie.

Anna Záborská (PPE) Vážená pani předsedající, tento návrh má tri zásadné nedostatky. Po prvé, Komisia nie je apolitická. Keď nedávno Francúzsko oznámilo, že prekročí výšku povoleného rozpočtového deficitu, Komisia rozhodla, že mu udelí výnimku. Nemáme záruku, že pri posudzovaní právneho štátu bude Komisia pristupovať rovnako napríklad k Francúzsku a Poľsku. Po druhé, všeobecné formulácie v texte umožňujú, aby sa časom menila ich interpretácia. Je možné použiť ich aj proti legitímnym krokom politických oponentov. A po tretie, o sankciách má rozhodovať Rada Európskej únie obrátenou kvalifikovanou väčšinou.

To znamená, že sankcie navrhnuté Komisiou by mali byť automaticky prijaté, pokiaľ kvalifikovaná väčšina nerozhodne inak. Rada by tak mala len úlohu odvolacieho súdu, pred ktorým by uspel len málokto.

11.8. Établissement du programme «Fiscalis» aux fins de la coopération dans le domaine fiscal (A8-0421/2018 — Sven Giegold)

Oral explanations of vote

Monica Macovei (ECR)... – oamă președintă, aranjamentele fiscale prin care, tehnic, nu se încalcă legea, au generat pierderi la bugetul Uniunii și la bugetele naționale, numai în 2015, de 200 de miliarde de euro. Frauda, evaziunea fiscală, spălarea de bani sunt infracțiuni transfrontaliere, de aceea programul Fiscalis 2020 permite autorităților naționale în domeniu să schimbe informații și expertize, tocmai pentru a duce la prinderea celor care au comis aceste infracțiuni și la recuperarea banilor. Recuperarea banilor este cel mai important lucru, pentru că, altfel, sursa de infracțiuni continuă.

Combaterea evaziunii fiscale, a fraudei, spălării banilor trebuie să rămână în continuare prioritară. Dacă nu se întâmplă asta, se ajunge la sancțiuni, așa cum s-a discutat și în raportul Sarvamaa mai devreme. Se ajunge la sancțiuni, pentru că statul de drept nu este respectat și politicienii aflați la putere în statul respectiv sunt sancționați, pentru că acționează împotriva intereselor oamenilor.

11.9. Établissement du programme «Droits et valeurs» (A8-0468/2018 — Bodil Valero)

Oral explanations of vote

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR)... – -жо Председател, не подкрепих доклада на колегата Валеро относно създаването на програма „Права и ценности“, тъй като смятам, че целта на този инструмент е да служи за политическа борба и намеса във вътрешните работи на суверенни държави членки. Всички бяхме свидетели на една недопустима, недемократична намеса в суверенните дела на Полша и Унгария и започналите скандални наказателни процедури срещу тях.

Смятам предложението за добавяне на нова конкретна цел, която да се отнася до демокрацията, основните права и принципите на правовата държава и в рамките на която да се финансират съответните действия на местно, национално, регионално и наднационално равнище, за лицемерно и за намеса в суверенни права.

Не мога да подкрепя никой доклад, който прави препратки към скандални документи като Истанбулската конвенция, която съвсем очевидно е политически инструмент, имайки предвид влиянието на т.нар. ЛГБТИ лоби върху текстовете ѝ. В програмата за права и ценности няма място за подобни скандални и двусмислени документи.

Rory Palmer (S&D)... – adam President, the political chaos of this week leaves two groups of people with continued and real uncertainty about their futures, EU citizens who live and work in the UK and UK citizens who live in other Member States. These people are doctors and nurses, builders and plumbers, teachers, academics, public servants, business owners and entrepreneurs. They are also mums and dads, grandparents, brothers and sisters, students and school-children. These are real people. This is not an abstract set of issues, so I call upon this house, the European Union and the UK Government to resolve this to safeguard these people's rights without delay.

11.10. Lutte contre le retard de paiement dans les transactions commerciales (A8-0456/2018 — Lara Comi)

Oral explanations of vote

Lucy Anderson (S&D)... – adam President, I voted for this report, along with a large majority of the European Parliament, and was glad to do so. Late payment for their goods and services is a major problem for smaller companies in practice. According to the Federation of Small Businesses in the UK, up to 85% of small businesses report that they are sometimes paid late. Seventeen per cent say that late payment happens even after the 60-day default position in the Late Payment Directive.

This is completely unfair and a serious business risk for those negatively affected. Our report highlights the failure of the Late Payment Directive adequately to tackle the issue. Loopholes in the directive unfortunately allow for late payment to continue.

So I welcome that we're calling today for legislative action where necessary and appropriate to take a firmer approach against those who do not pay in time, and to pay particular attention to procurement and other processes so that smaller businesses promptly get the money they are owed from public-sector organisations.

11.11. Intégration différenciée (A8-0402/2018 — Pascal Durand)

Oral explanations of vote

Jasenko Selimovic (ALDE)... – adam President, the idea of differentiated integration is nothing new, we already have it. The area of banking union is not the same as Schengen, it is not the same as EU, but now after all these crises we've been surviving, some are proposing that we should have a differentiated integration. Some countries should integrate more and be allowed to remain outside of that cooperation.

As somebody who cares about the EU despite its obvious big problems, I would warn against that idea because first being a member of the European Union is to learn how to make compromise. Of course you're not satisfied every time, but this gives us the strength to act together against the problems that we have. It is to respect the fundamental values that we in principle that we have in this Union and it is learning to solve the global problems together because without having all these countries we will never be able to cope with these global problems.

Момчил Неков (S&D)... – -жо Председател, понятието „диференцирана интеграция“ не е политически неутрално и смятам, че не може да се разглежда като такава. Това е евфемизъм, който цели да легитимира Европа на две скорости. Това е политически коректното понятие, което разделя Европейския съюз на център и периферия, на първокласни и второкласни държави членки, на две категории европейски граждани. Отново става дума за своеобразна форма на двоен стандарт – тема, която е особено болезнена за моите съграждани.

Изглежда нелогично да се борим срещу двойния стандарт при храните, а в същото време България и Румъния да бъдат извън Шенген или да бъдат приемани само частично. Ако гражданите на този Съюз не се чувстват равни, то това би се отразило негативно и на бъдещето на европейския проект като цяло. Говоренето за Европа на няколко скорости в навечерието на европейските избори неминуемо ще се отрази на избирателната активност, която традиционно не е много висока. Това трябва да ни кара да се замислим.

José Inácio Faria (PPE)... – enhora Presidente, votei a favor por considerar que a diferenciação reflete a ideia de que a Europa não funciona numa abordagem única para todos os que têm capacidade de se adaptar às necessidades e aos desejos dos cidadãos europeus.

A diferenciação deve ser um instrumento constitucional que assegura a flexibilidade, sem comprometer todo o sistema político e a igualdade entre os cidadãos. Normalizar a diferenciação é garantir que trabalhamos com as capacidades dos Estados-Membros para que possam prosseguir com as políticas de desenvolvimento da União sem criarmos uma Europa a duas velocidades, nem europeus de primeira e de segunda.

É preciso harmonizar o processo de diferenciação, acabando com as práticas de autoexclusão e derrogação do direito primário da União que conduzem a uma diferenciação negativa, distorcem a homogeneidade do direito europeu e comprometem a coesão social da União.

Mas o que não podemos fazer é abrir mão dos valores fundamentais da União e, por isso, as suas perdas angulares não devem estar abertas à diferenciação. Um futuro quadro institucional europeu não pode deixar de incluir inevitavelmente os pilares europeus de direitos políticos, económicos, sociais e ambientais. Não se admitem pausas na liberdade e democracia ou no combate às alterações climáticas.

11.12. Enquête stratégique OI/2/2017 de la Médiatrice sur la transparence des débats législatifs dans les instances préparatoires du Conseil de l'Union européenne (A8-0420/2018 — Jo Leinen, Yana Toom)

Oral explanations of vote

Eleonora Evi (EFDD)... – ignora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la chiave per dare nuovo senso a questa Europa è scritta nella relazione che abbiamo votato oggi: si chiama trasparenza.

Il Consiglio non può più permettersi di lavorare a porte chiuse e di secretare i documenti e vietarne l'accesso ai cittadini. La Corte di giustizia dell'Unione europea ha ribadito, nella sentenza De Capitani del 2018, che i principi di pubblicità e trasparenza devono essere assicurati in tutte le fasi delle procedure legislative dell'Unione, in quanto ad essi inerenti.

Se c'è una speranza concreta per questa Europa di diventare la casa comune di tutti i cittadini europei, che abbia tra le sue fondamenta la tutela dei diritti e l'interesse collettivo, la giustizia sociale e la lotta alle disuguaglianze, lo sviluppo di una società resiliente e che sia in armonia con il pianeta, questa speranza è quella di rendere finalmente questa Europa un palazzo di vetro, limpido e trasparente.

12. Corrections et intentions de vote: voir procès-verbal

(The sitting was suspended at 12.57)

VORSITZ: RAINER WIELAND

Vizepräsident

13. Reprise de la séance

(Die Sitzung wird um 15.01 Uhr wieder aufgenommen.)

14. Approbation du procès-verbal de la séance précédente: voir procès-verbal

15. Protection du riz européen (débat)

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über die Anfrage zur mündlichen Beantwortung an die Kommission über den Schutz von in der EU angebautem Reis von Czesław Adam Siekierski im Namen des Ausschusses für Landwirtschaft und ländliche Entwicklung (O-000128/2018 – B8-0004/2019) (2018/2957(RSP)).

Момчил Неков, автор. – Г-н Председател, г-жо Комисар, Европейският съюз е най-големият търговски блок в света. Това е успех за самия блок, но разбира се, той нямаше да бъде възможен без неговите граждани през всички тези години.

Позицията на водещ търговски блок идва и с отговорности към останалите страни. Затова Общата схема с преференции е правилен подход, който дава възможност на трети страни да генерират икономически ръст и подем, а защо не и един ден да бъдат равен икономически партньор.

Разбира се, трябва да се вземе предвид, че в немалко случаи разходите за производство са доста по-ниски от тези в Европейския съюз. Изискванията за производство на селскостопански продукти продължават да бъдат сред най-високите, ако не и най-високите в целия свят, което неимоверно има своето отражение върху икономическата привлекателност на селското стопанство в Европа.

Производството на ориз в Европейския съюз е концентрирано в няколко държави. Оризопроизводителите от Италия, Испания, Португалия, Гърция, Франция, Унгария, Румъния и, разбира се, страната, която познавам най-добре – България, за съжаление са тези, които усетиха доста силно и на собствен гръб част от ръста на двустранната търговия между Съюза и двете страни от Югоизточна Азия.

На първия форум на Европейския съюз за ориза, който се проведе преди близо 3 години в Милано, както знаете и Вие, г-жо Малмстрьом, представители на различни браншови организации от седем държави –членки на ЕС, се обединиха около това, че е необходим нов подход за оризопроизводството в Европейския съюз.

Не трябва да забравяме, че оризопроизводството ангажира ресурси, като водата, например, за която има изисквания; работната ръка, за която също има изисквания; техника за която също има изисквания. Всичко това оскъпява производството в Европейския съюз. Тук в Европейския парламент заставаме зад тези изисквания, за да има и плодородни почви, и чисти води за бъдните поколения. Не съм сигурен обаче, че търсенето просто на по-евтин внос е правилният подход. Защото ресурсите в другите краища на света, също като в Европа, трябва да бъдат опазвани. Логично е оризът, който се предлага и внася в Европейския съюз от трети страни, да отговаря на тези социални и екологични изисквания.

В случая и на Мианмар, и на Камбоджа, икономическият ефект от прилагането на Общата схема с преференции е значителен. Търговският стокообмен между двете страни, от една страна, и Европейския съюз, от друга, за периода 2015-2017 г. има значителен ръст, което означава, че подходът е правилен. За съжаление обаче някои европейски сектори усещат този ръст на свой гръб повече от други, и то доста негативно. Един от тези сектори е и оризопроизводството.

В тази връзка днес, от името на комисията по земеделие и развитие на селските райони, с грижа бих желал да инициирам въпрос и дебат относно вноса на ориз от трети страни, и по-конкретно от Мианмар и от Камбоджа.

Радвам се, че точно Вие, г-жо Комисар, сте тук с нас и заедно можем да изпратим положителното послание към европейските оризопроизводители. Най-сърдечно аз, а сигурен съм и другите мои колеги, приветстват решението, взето от Европейската комисия, считано от утре, 18 януари 2019 г., да се въведе нов режим за вноса на ориз от тези две страни.

Днешната публикация в Официален вестник на Европейския съюз е резултат на много труд и усилия и от страна на оризопроизводителите, и на Европейската комисия, разбира се.

Проведеното проучване относно вноса на полубланширан и бланширан ориз „Indica“ с произход от Камбоджа и Мианмар за периода 2012-2017 г. очертава тенденциите, които вече са познати на сектора в Европа. Внесените количества от двете страни, разглеждани заедно, се удвояват за този период, но бих желал да обърна внимание на огромния ръст на вноса от Мианмар, който от 2 000 тона през 2012 г., до 2017 г. стига близо 63 000 тона. Този ръст от 3 000% е огромен и не би било справедливо да остане непроменен.

Ниските разходи за производство в Камбоджа и Мианмар са един от факторите, които свиват европейското производство с близо 40% само за 4-5 години. Това няма как да не буди притеснение и сред най-големите привърженици на свободната търговия.

Трябва да се вземе предвид и тенденцията на намаляване на потреблението на ориз в Европейския съюз, което, освен друго, може да се дължи и на промяна на диетата на европейеца.

Със съжаление се информирах за забавянията в комуникацията с партньорите от Югоизточна Азия. Вярвам, че сътрудничеството с тях трябва да продължи, но силно приветствам предложеното въвеждане на мита за ориз през следващите три години. Вярвам, че прогресивното намаляване на тези мита ще даде възможност на европейските оризопроизводители да се съвземат и да продължат да произвеждат качествен продукт. Европейската индустрия също вече изпрати силни послания на подкрепа за предложената мярка. Радвам се, че макар по някои въпроси ние тук в Европейския парламент да имаме различни виждания от Комисията, то в този случай днес и оттук успяваме да изпратим силен сигнал за подкрепа на европейското оризопроизводство.

Приветствам и решението на „...“ (*председателят отнема думата на оратора*)

Cecilia Malmström, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, Cambodia and Myanmar are beneficiaries of the 'Everything But Arms' arrangement and that grants least developed countries duty and quota free access to the European market. This is one important pillar of our Generalised Scheme Preferences (GSP) tariff reduction scheme for developing countries. Nevertheless, under the rules of the general scheme of preferences of the regulation, the Commission may, temporarily, reinstate the common customs tariffs duties to shield a particular sector if products are imported in volumes or at a price that are causing serious difficulties to EU industries.

Upon the request of eight rice producing Member States, the Commission initiated a safeguard investigation regarding imports of indica rice from Cambodia and Myanmar. The findings of these investigations confirm that there is indeed a surge of imports of rice that has caused economic damage to the rice sector in the EU. The imports of indica rice from Cambodia and Myanmar have increased significantly over the he last year. Imports from Cambodia have increased by almost 100 000 tonnes and Myanmar by 60 000 tonnes and this represents a significant increase of market share – from 15% to 25% for Cambodia and from zero to 6% from Myanmar. Import prices were much lower than the EU prices and, as a result, the EU industry lost a significant volume of production and market share.

Therefore, it is warranted that safeguard measures are imposed and the Commission will reinstate the common customs tariff duty. The tariff duty will be EUR 175 per tonne in year one, EUR 150 per tonne per in year two and EUR 125 per tonne in year three. These measures will therefore be in place for three years and they can only be extended in duly justified circumstances.

The measures will give breathing space for the EU rice sector to allow them to adopt to the new market conditions. We have, from the Commission, adopted the implementing regulation yesterday and the decision has been published this morning.

Norbert Erdős, *a PPE képviselőcsoport nevében.* – Elnök úr! Hazámban, Magyarországon, az Európai Unió rizstermelő övezetének északi határán a rizstermesztés fontos szerepet tölt be, hiszen a többi szántóföldi növénytermesztési ágazathoz képest jóval nagyobb az élőmunka igénye. Így a munkanélküliség által leginkább érintett területeken megélhetést biztosít a helyben élőknek. Emellett a rizs termesztése környezetvédelmi és talajhasználati szempontból is hasznos.

A többi mezőgazdasági ágazathoz hasonlóan az Unió rizstermesztőinek is tisztességes versenyhelyzetet kell biztosítanunk a harmadik országokból érkező növekvő importtal szemben. A kambodzsai és a mianmari indica rizs dömpingszerű importja a jelentős károkozás mellett sérti a tisztességes nemzetközi kereskedelmet. Ezért teljes mértékben támogatom a parlamenti kérdésben leírtakat, és kérem az Európai Bizottságot, hogy az általános vámkedvezményrendszerről szóló rendelet 22. cikke értelmében indítson azonnal védintézkedési vizsgálatot az ügyben. Köszönöm szépen, hogy meghallgattak.

Andrejs Mamikins, *on behalf of the S&D Group.* – Mr President, rice imports from South-East Asia, namely from Cambodia and Myanmar, have become a sensitive issue for the EU in the last two years. I noted that European rice producers have become more and more vocal on human rights and labour standards violation in Cambodia and Myanmar, linking these issues to the GSP+ provisions. We all know that the general scheme of preference (GSP) has three objectives, to contribute to poverty eradication by expanding exports from countries most in need. Secondly, to promote sustainable development and good governance and ensure that the EU's financial and economic interests are safeguarded.

I agree that if we produce a human rights clause into our trade agreements, it has to be respected and GSP+ can be revoked in case of non-compliance. But don't you see a moral issue in the fact that we start to point the finger at labour standards in Asia only after the economic interests of European companies get affected? Personally I do.

The 'Everything but Arms' (EBA) arrangement is a preferential arrangement, and we need to keep in mind that granting tax exceptions for imports is our right but not our obligation. Therefore, I suggest that the European Commission has a very close look on how our EBA agreements are applied. Human rights promotions and protection is the flagship of the EU activity and we cannot discredit our international engagement in human rights by giving preferences to those sources who blatantly abuse workers. This makes the EU inconsistent in the eyes of the world and weakens our credibility.

I can understand that revoking a preferential status after it has been granted is a politically painful act that we all would like to avoid, but that is why I want to underline once more the Commission's duty of oversight, so that EBA preferences are given only if our partner has a concrete strategy for human rights improvement.

On 16 March 2018, the Commission decided to initiate a safeguard investigation to clarify the impact of indica rice imports. We in the European Parliament here are waiting for the results to have some predictability for our rice industry. The stakes are high. Only in case of Italy, we are speaking about 4 265 farms and more than 100 rice companies generating annual turnover of more than EUR 1 billion euros. These companies are heavily jeopardised now.

Concluding, I want to say that the revocation of the GSP+ can bring about a positive change in the markets of South Asia. It will lead them to rely less on exports to the EU, develop more added-value products and raise the standards of working conditions.

Ангел Джамбазки, *от името на групата ECR*. – Г-н Председател, г-жо Комисар, позволете ми първо да поздравя колегата, който е поставил този въпрос, колегата Неков. Разчитам неговия въпрос като дължимата грижа, която всеки един от нас трябва да изразява за защитата на нашите производители, без значение дали са от една или друга държава – членка на Европейския съюз. Тези хора, които работят, създават брутен вътрешен продукт, плащат данъци и в края на краищата издържат държавите и Съюза като такъв.

Да, безспорно, внасянето на каквито и да било стоки отвън, включително стоката, за която се говори – в случая оризът – трябва да се осъществява само и единствено при условия, които не биха застрашили, не биха поставили в риск местните производители. А в случая говорим точно за това. Внасянето на големи количества ориз от тези държави, които са споменати в устния въпрос, застрашава местните производители.

Условията на труд в тези държави, спазването на човешките права, за които говореше и колегата Маикинс, съвсем очевидно не са на нивото, на което ние поставяме условия пред нашите производители. Всяка седмица тук разглеждаме десетки доклади, засягащи точно тези две държави – Мианмар (Бирма) или Камбоджа. Едновременно поставяме тези въпроси, обсъждаме ги, приемаме резолюции, но същевременно с това приемаме и техните стоки, които обаче застрашават и нарушават правата на нашите производители. Затова, уважаемо г-жо Комисар, абсолютно задължително е да избегнем този двоен стандарт по отношение на благодетелствани трети страни и да настояваме за това, тези производители да спазват поне минималните стандарти, които ние налагаме на нашите производители. В противен случай, ние финансираме производители от други страни и обричаме нашите производители на много затруднения. Те трябва да спазват всички европейски стандарти и същевременно не могат да се конкурират с по-евтината стока, внесена отвън. Задължително е въвеждането на тези мита.

(Ораторът приела да отговори на въпрос „синя карта“ (член 162, параграф 8 от Правилника за дейността)

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI), *pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki*. – Chciałem Pana zapytać: te standardy, na które się Pan powołuje, to ta sama argumentacja, na którą przeciwko krajom Europy Wschodniej powołują się kraje Europy Zachodniej, kiedy na przykład chcą wprowadzić ten pakiet mobilności, zapobiegać konkurencji, jak to nazywają „dumpingowi socjalnemu”. Czy nie uważa Pan, że powoływanie się na to jest jednak hipokryzją? Nie rób drugiemu, co tobie niemiłe.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR), *отговор на въпрос, зададен чрез вдигане на синя карта*. – Съгласен съм, уважаеми колега, че има двоен стандарт и лицемерие, когато говорим вътре в Съюза. Но в случая разговорът е за това да защитим интересите на унгарските производители, на полските производители, на българските производители. В този случай ние трябва да бъдем обединени около това да пазим нашите работни места вътре в държавите си. Иначе сте прав по отношение на двойните стандарти в Съюза.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, *en nombre del Grupo ALDE*. – Señor presidente, señora comisaria, tras las decisiones adoptadas el miércoles es especialmente oportuno utilizar un dicho castellano para felicitar a la Comisión Europea. Bruselas ha impedido que «se nos pase el arroz». Esta expresión se emplea en castellano, en muchos ámbitos, para subrayar lo peligroso que es no tomar decisiones a tiempo. Atendiendo a la denuncia de los productores, se ha reaccionado rápido y con contundencia. Se ha hecho uso de la soberanía europea para proteger un producto agrario europeo no transformado de la competencia desleal ejercida desde países terceros al abrigo del régimen de preferencias generalizadas.

Así se combate el euroescepticismo: demostrando en la Albufera de Valencia, en el Delta del Ebro, Lombardía o Piamonte, entre otros, que Bruselas, que Europa es útil; explicando que esta cláusula de salvaguardia es contundente, duradera y además, eficaz; destacando que, solo como Unión, hemos podido enfrentar el desafío de unas importaciones que se han multiplicado por cuarenta en cinco años, lo que ha afectado claramente a la cuota de mercado de los productores europeos, la producción y los precios. Esta reducción ha oscilado, según zonas de cultivo europeas, en porcentajes que oscilan entre el 10 % y el 30 %, lo que ha repercutido en el empleo y la rentabilidad. Y la existencia de un efecto negativo sobre estos parámetros es precisamente la condición que exige el Reglamento para activar este tipo de medidas.

Así se construye Europa. Pero también dedicando todos los esfuerzos a que nuestros agricultores sigan ganando posiciones en la cadena de valor de sus producciones. Y eso requiere ayudarles a asociarse, a innovar, a participar en la industria de la comercialización, la distribución y la transformación.

En estas condiciones, este tipo de operaciones de importación, propias de las lógicas que maneja la gran distribución, serían menos habituales. Saludemos, pues, esta medida. Y combatamos el euroescepticismo difundiendo, valorando y animando y ayudando a nuestros productores a asociarse, y fomentando la formación, innovación y otras cadenas de comercialización que integren nuestros valores de sostenibilidad medioambiental, social y económica.

William (The Earl of) Dartmouth (EFDD)... – r President, it's not very crowded this debate and many speakers here, of whom I'm not going to be one, have spent a lot of time on their speeches. May I perhaps, on behalf of the peoples of Europe, request that you be less aggressive with the hammer on reducing people's time? It's really not necessary today, really not necessary and you should know better.

Der Präsident. – Herr Kollege, ich versuche, die Sitzung immer möglichst gleich zuleiten. Ja, ich mache gelegentlich Kompromisse. Aber wenn die Fraktionen und die Konferenz der Präsidenten es für richtig gehalten hätten, dieser Aussprache längere Zeit einzuräumen, dann hätten sie es getan.

Wir haben einen bestimmten Zeitrahmen, der vorgesehen ist. Die Redezeiten wurden auf die Fraktionen verteilt. Es ist auch eine Frage der Kollegialität, dass man sich darauf einstellen kann, wie viele Minuten man redet und wie viele Minuten man drankommt.

Es kann auch nicht sein, dass Abgeordnete drei Minuten Redezeit haben, sich auf acht Minuten vorbereiten und dann bin ich trotzdem streng, oder sie bereiten sich auf drei Minuten vor und dann lasse ich es zehn Minuten laufen. Und dann sind immer diejenigen bevorteilt, die, wenn man sie noch nicht unterbricht, morgen früh noch reden würden. Solche Kollegen gibt es nämlich auch.

Aber wir können darüber sicher keine Aussprache führen. Sie können mich nachher gerne darauf ansprechen.

André Elissen, namens de ENF-Fractie. – Voorzitter, vandaag wordt eens te meer de onmetelijke hypocrisie van de Europese Unie duidelijk. Een grote meerderheid van dit Parlement stemde voor de vrijstelling van douanerechten zodat rijst uit Zuidoost-Azië goedkoop naar Europa kan worden geïmporteerd. Waarschuwingen van producenten uit bijvoorbeeld Italië werden genegeerd. En wanneer vervolgens Aziatische rijst de Europese markten overspoelt, schreeuwt men moord en brand.

Dit is een treffend voorbeeld van het schijnkapitalisme van de Europese Unie. In plaats van het stimuleren van onderlinge handel, een oorspronkelijke doelstelling van de naoorlogse Europese samenwerking, brengt de Unie met dit soort douanevrijstellingen grote schade toe aan de eigen agrarische ondernemers.

Ik zou tegen de commissaris willen zeggen: stop daarmee. Stop met het voortrekken van allerlei zogenaamde ontwikkelingslanden. Stop met het tegenwerken van Europese boeren. Hou op met het opleggen van allerlei Europese wet- en regelgeving en geef de macht terug naar waar ze thuishoort: de lidstaten.

Ik heb het maar wat korter gehouden en ik ben het eens met de collega dat het hamertje best mag tikken vanwege discipline, maar als iemand slechts tien seconden over zijn spreektijd heen gaat en de bezetting een handvol parlementariërs – het zijn er nog niet eens tien – dan zou u iets flexibeler kunnen zijn.

Der Präsident. – Ich bin ja auch nicht streng. Ich versuche nur, die Dinge einigermaßen gleich zu handhaben, und Sie waren ja jetzt auch frei, früher aufzuhören. Trotzdem hat sich der Kollege Jakovčić gemeldet. Gestatten Sie eine Frage von Herrn Jakovčić?

(André Elissen ist damit einverstanden, eine Frage nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“ gemäß Artikel 162 Absatz 8 der Geschäftsordnung zu beantworten.)

Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE), *Domanda «cartellino blu»*. – Ha parlato di ipocrisia qui in questo Parlamento, poco fa: va bene, vi capisco! Ma non vi pare che l'ipocrisia esiste nel vostro gruppo politico, dove i membri della Lega, la signora Beghin del Movimento 5 Stelle, che sono al governo italiano, oggi non ci sono. Nessuno parla in nome dei produttori del riso d'Italia. Come mai? Non vi pare che anche questa sia un'ipocrisia politica?

André Elissen (ENF)... – ank voor die vraag. Wat vooral hypocriet is, is dat u die vraag stelt. Kijk, van de 751 - Europarlementariërs zijn er minder dan tien aanwezig en als u goed geluisterd heeft, heb ik het net wel opgenomen voor de Italiaanse boeren, dus de Italiaanse boeren zijn hier prima verdedigd. En de hypocrisie? Ja, dat kon ik ook 100 000 keer herhalen: het is zo hypocriet als de pest hier en dat is niet alleen met betrekking tot de rijst. Dat is überhaupt zo als het gaat om, zeg maar, de regeldrift vanuit de Europese Unie en de bemoeizucht die we kennen. Ik denk dat de lidstaten prima in staat zijn om zelfstandig bilateraal of multilateraal allerhande broodnodige overeenkomsten af te sluiten zonder dat daar een paraplu boven komt te hangen, die nooit voor iedereen passend kan zijn. Dus laat het vooral over aan de lidstaten.

Dobromir Sośnierz (NI)... – anie Przewodniczący! Samo to, że rozmawiamy o ryżu, już zakrawa na jakiś absurd. No dlaczego? A może w lutym porozmawiamy o kaszy, a w marcu o makaronie? Dlaczego zajmujemy się pojedynczymi produktami? Dlaczego ryżu miałyby dotyczyć inne zasady, niż dotyczą innych produktów? Nie ma żadnego powodu, żeby tak było.

Mówicie, że naszym obowiązkiem jest chronić producentów. Nie! Naszym obowiązkiem jest chronić konsumentów przede wszystkim. To konsumentów jest więcej, konsumenci są we wszystkich 28, a nie tylko w 7 krajach. I to konsumenci będą musieli zapłacić drożej za ryż, tylko dlatego, że ktoś się uparł hodować ryż w Europie drożej niż w Azji. Jeśli ktoś produkuje ryż taniej i ja chcę od niego kupić, to jest moja sprawa, między mną a nim. A producent ryżu nie ma prawa z tego powodu stawać między nami i mówić, że jemu się coś należy, bo on chce hodować ryż tutaj. Jak mu się to nie opłaca, niech hoduje coś innego. To, co robicie, jest jak zwykle... Jesteście dobrzy na cudzy koszt, na koszt konsumentów. Jak producenci uważają, że mogą takie rzeczy robić, to niech wezmą widły i niech sami może wyganiają producentów z granic, bo to się niczym moralnie nie różni od tego, co tutaj proponujecie. A czym mają biedne kraje handlować? I to socjaliści tutaj, tacy wrażliwi, chcecie zagłodzić Kambodżę, żebyśmy... (*Przewodniczący odebrał mówcy głos*)

Der Präsident. – Herr Kollege Sośnierz! Auch wenn ich mir da jetzt auch wieder Kritik einfange: Ich meine, 15 Sekunden sind bei einer Minute Redezeit 25 %. Das ist einfach nicht in Ordnung. Es gehört auch zu meiner ständigen Praxis, dass ich Kollegen, denen ich wegen Überschreitung der Redezeit das Wort entziehe, nicht Gelegenheit gebe, durch eine blaue Karte noch mehr Redezeit zu bekommen.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE)... – ane předsedající, to je velmi zajímavá debata, jakým způsobem má Evropská unie zaujímat postoj k producentům rýže ve třetích státech. Já jsem velmi pozorně poslouchal paní komisařku, rozumím tomu, že se nakonec Komise rozhodla pro uvalení dovozních cel. Je třeba určitým způsobem chránit pěstitelé v Evropě, zvláště pokud pěstitelé v třetích státech nemusí plnit pracovněprávní, zákonné, bezpečností a jiné limity. Tím jsou ve zcela jiné pozici než evropské pěstitelé. Tomu já rozumím, na druhou stranu moc prosím, aby bylo takovéto opatření velmi citlivě váženo, protože už to zde bylo zmíněno, jsou zde potom samotní spotřebitelé, kteří by neměli na ochranářskou politiku dopláct. To znamená, opravdu je třeba mít jasné důvody pro to, když Evropská komise užije takovéto ochranářské opatření.

To, co já považuji za větší problém a proč jsem se do debaty přihlásil, je to, nakolik země, které poruší lidská práva – a vy víte, že jsme tady opakovaně v tomto roce řešili otázku Rohingů v Myanmaru, toto velké politické téma v rámci debaty o lidských právech –, mají mít volný přístup při distribuci svých produktů do Evropy. A já tedy jsem pro to omezení ne z důvodu protekcionismu, já podporuji volný trh, ale spíše z důvodu právě doktríny ochrany lidských práv. My zde hovořili několikrát o tom, jak vůči Barmě zasáhneme, jak vůči Myanmaru zasáhneme, protože naše usnesení o tom, aby byli chráněni Rohingové, statisíce lidí vyhnaných z domova, tak Barma/Myanmar si z toho nic nedělá a naše opatření, naše usnesení nebere vůbec vážně.

A tady si myslím, že je právě prostor, kdy je možné Barmě jasně říci, chováte se k lidským právům takovýmto způsobem, my tedy omezíme vaši možnost exportovat vaše výrobky, tedy v tomto případě rýži, do Evropy. To je myslím jasný konkrétní příklad. Takže já to rozhodnutí Komise schvaluji, ale prosím velmi opatrně do budoucna, abychom nepřerostli do umělého protekcionismu.

(Řečník souhlasil s tím, že odpoví na otázku položenou zvednutím modré karty (čl. 162 odst. 8 jednacího řádu))

Andrejs Mamikins (S&D), *zilās kartītes jautājums*. – Liels paldies, godātais priekšsēdētāja kungs, par to, ka devāt man iespēju uzdot jautājumu kolēģim. Es tā arī īsti nesapratu jūsu pozīciju. No vienas puses, jūs teicāt, ka patērētāja tiesības ir svētas – ja mums vajag rīsus, tad vienalga, kur tie ražoti, mēs vienalga pieņemsim bez importa nodevām. No otras puses, vai jums tiešām vienalga, kādos apstākļos rīsi vai kaut kāds cits produkts tiek ražots? Ja cilvēktiesības nav ievērotas, ja minimālie standarti nav ievēroti, vai tiešām mums ir pienākums Eiropas Savienībā pieņemt šos produktus par spīti mūsu augstākajām vērtībām, ko mēs proklamējam relatīvi sen?

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE), *odpověď na otázku položenou zvednutím modré karty*. – Já jsem neřekl, že práva spotřebitelů jsou posvátná. Komise má hledat kompromis mezi právy výrobců, v tomto případě pěstitelů a spotřebitelů. A v každém konkrétním případě, tedy v případě rýže z Myanmaru a Kambodže, zkoumat, nakolik pěstitelé rýže v těchto dvou státech dodržují podobné standardy, jako musí dodržovat pěstitelé v Evropské unii. V případě, že nedodržují, jsou v zásadě zvýhodněni, a pak takovéto clo má svou logiku. Každá kauza má být posuzována individuálně a Evropská komise je zde od toho, aby našla kompromis mezi právy pěstitelů a právy spotřebitelů.

Момчил Неков (S&D)... – -н Председател, селското стопанство е консервативен и чувствителен сектор и ние трябва да го защитим. Радвам се, че повечето колеги от различни политически групи сме на еднакво мнение – да защитим нашите производители независимо от сектора и да запазим високите стандарти в Европейския съюз.

Отделно от това оризопроизводството в Европейския съюз има хилядолетна история. Културата играе важна част в диетата на европеца и нейното отглеждане създава работна ръка за хиляди души. В тази връзка смятам възможността, която съществува в сегашния програмен период, държавите членки да могат да предоставят обвързана подкрепа за подпомагане на производителите на ориз, за логична и необходима.

Последните развития в сектора ясно показват, че секторът е чувствителен и е под риск. Поради тази причина се надявам и в следващия програмен период, и по-конкретно чрез новата Обща селскостопанска политика, да може да се подпомага този сектор. Подпомагането гарантира заетост и, разбира се, местни продукти, които са полезни както за потребителите, така и за местната икономика най-вече в селските райони.

Бих искал да изразя огорчението на българските оризопроизводители, че за периода 2014-2020 г. оризът не получи допълнително подпомагане под формата на обвързана подкрепа. Това доведе до разораване на много от оризищата в региона, където, забележете, от 600 години се е отглеждало ориз. Тези площи бяха засети с малък брой от така наречените монокултури, които след това биват изнасяни. Така не се гради конкурентоспособност.

Въпреки малката тенденция на спад в консумацията в Европейския съюз, европейският пазар има още потенциал да расте що се касае до консумацията на европейски ориз. Количествата на внос доказват това.

Затова от тази трибуна призовавам и българското правителство да защити българските оризопроизводители и преработватели, като им предостави обвързана подкрепа най-късно от началото на следващия програмен период.

И г-жо Малстръм, благодаря за положителните новини за митата.

Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE)... – oštovani predsjedavajući, želio bih izraziti podršku svim govornicima koji su se jasno izrazili da trebamo zaštititi europsku proizvodnju riže i europske proizvođače, u svakom slučaju, protiv jedne vrste neobjavljene konkurencije. Treba učiniti sve da njihova proizvodnja bude konkurentnija.

Ono što želim naglasiti, jer poznajem jako dobro situaciju u Italiji, upravo stanje među talijanskim proizvođačima riže i njihove inicijative koje su išle upravo prema Komisiji, je da Komisija donosi ovakve odluke, koje doživljavam pozitivnima i koje doživljavam upravo u smjeru rješavanja ovog problema. Zato sam izrazio svoje veliko žaljenje i razočarenje da ovdje nema nikoga od talijanskih zastupnika, onih koji su na vlasti iz Cinque Stelle i Lege, ali na žalost niti iz opozicije. Mislim da je to zaista nešto što treba jasno reći, da kada Komisija napravi nekakav dobar posao, onda oni koji su, jednostavno rečeno, populistički ne žele biti prisutni jer ne žele reći istinu. Ono što je istina, proizvođačima riže u Italiji treba reći istinu, a to je da je ovaj put Komisija u cijelosti dala šansu da se spasi proizvodnja riže i u Italiji.

Cecilia Malmström, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, I welcome this debate, even if it comes a little bit late. Some of you have asked the Commission to start an investigation to see whether there is a surge in imports of rice from Cambodia and Myanmar. Well, we have done that, and we have stated that yes indeed, there is a surge in imports and yes indeed there has been damage to the European rice industry, and that is why we have decided to activate the safeguards, and there will be a reinstatement of these tariffs.

We have listened to the European Parliament. The 'Everything But Arms' scheme gives tariff-free access to the EU market for some of the poorest countries in the world, apart from arms and ammunition. This has been an important driver for many countries in their economies, including Cambodia and Myanmar, and their economic growth over the last years.

But there are safeguards in-built here and there are conditions. We think that the measures that we now have decided upon represent the right balance between defending our interests, but we are also saying that we still have a commitment to help the poorest countries through trade.

The human rights issue that many of you raised has a parallel track to this. This is not to punish the two countries for breaching human rights. There are indeed severe concerns on human rights, both in Myanmar and Cambodia and we are looking at this. The Commission has initiated the procedure for possible withdrawal of these preferences in Cambodia, and we have notified Myanmar that it might happen there as well. But that is an investigation and that is a procedure that has a separate track, and I'll be happy to report upon that development to the European Parliament.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

16. Approbation du procès-verbal de la présente séance et transmission des textes adoptés: voir procès-verbal

17. Calendrier des prochaines séances: voir procès-verbal

18. Levée de la séance

(Die Sitzung wird um 15.37 Uhr geschlossen.)

19. Interruption de la session

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

Ich wünsche allen einen guten Nachhauseweg und bedanke mich bei den Diensten für die Arbeit in dieser Woche.

Légende des signes utilisés

*	procédure de consultation
***	procédure d'approbation
***I	procédure législative ordinaire, première lecture
***II	procédure législative ordinaire, deuxième lecture
***III	procédure législative ordinaire, troisième lecture

(La procédure indiquée est fondée sur la base juridique proposée par le projet d'acte.)

Significations des abréviations des commissions

AFET	commission des affaires étrangères
DEVE	commission du développement
INTA	commission du commerce international
BUDG	commission des budgets
CONT	commission du contrôle budgétaire
ECON	commission des affaires économiques et monétaires
EMPL	commission de l'emploi et des affaires sociales
ENVI	commission de l'environnement, de la santé publique et de la sécurité alimentaire
ITRE	commission de l'industrie, de la recherche et de l'énergie
IMCO	commission du marché intérieur et de la protection des consommateurs
TRAN	commission des transports et du tourisme
REGI	commission du développement régional
AGRI	commission de l'agriculture et du développement rural
PECH	commission de la pêche
CULT	commission de la culture et de l'éducation
JURI	commission des affaires juridiques
LIBE	commission des libertés civiles, de la justice et des affaires intérieures
AFCO	commission des affaires constitutionnelles
FEMM	commission des droits de la femme et de l'égalité des genres
PETI	commission des pétitions
DROI	sous-commission «droits de l'homme»
SEDE	sous-commission «sécurité et défense»

Significations des abréviations des groupes politiques

PPE	groupe du Parti populaire européen (Démocrates-chrétiens)
S&D	groupe de l'Alliance Progressiste des Socialistes & Démocrates au Parlement Européen
ECR	Conservateurs et Réformistes européens
ALDE	groupe Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe
GUE/NGL	groupe confédéral de la Gauche unitaire européenne/Gauche verte nordique
Verts/ALE	groupe des Verts/Alliance libre européenne
EFDD	groupe Europe de la liberté et de la démocratie directe
ENF	groupe Europe des Nations et des Libertés
NI	non-inscrits