

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

2022. GADA 14. DECEMBRA DEBAŠU STENOGRAMMA

(2023/C 292/03)

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PRESIDENZA: ROBERTA METSOLA

President

1. Sēdes atklāšana

(The sitting opened at 09:04)

2. Sarunas pirms Parlamenta pirmā lasījuma (Reglamenta 71. pants) (turpmākie pasākumi)

President. – Good morning, everyone.

In relation to the decision by the LIBE Committee to enter into interinstitutional negotiations pursuant to Rule 71(1) on the European Union Drugs Agency file announced at the opening of the session on Monday 12 December, I have received no request for a vote from Members or political groups reaching at least the medium threshold. The committee may therefore start the negotiations.

3. Gatavošanās Eiropadomes sanāksmei 2022. gada 15. decembrī (debates)

President. – The next item is the Council and Commission statements on the preparation of the European Council meeting of 15 December 2022 (2022/2943(RSP)).

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, Madam President of the European Commission, honourable Members, tomorrow, leaders will meet in Brussels for the December European Council following a gathering today for the first commemorative EU-ASEAN summit. This is planned as a one-day European Council starting on Thursday morning with the usual exchange with the European Parliament President Metsola.

Leaders are expected to discuss the energy crisis and its consequences on households and the economy and Russia's escalating war of aggression against Ukraine. They will also discuss security and defence and are expected to have strategic discussions on Southern Neighbourhood and on transatlantic relations.

Russia is using winter as a weapon. The situation is serious in Ukraine, where Russia's ongoing campaign of systematic missile strikes against civilian targets, including energy infrastructure and utilities, inflicts terrible suffering on the Ukrainian people. Leaders will condemn these strikes as a crime for which there can be no impunity. And I expect it to call on Russia to immediately stop endangering the safety and security of civilian nuclear facilities.

Leaders are also expected to call for the provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance to Ukraine to be intensified and for assistance in restoring Ukraine's critical infrastructure to help the country get through the winter, following up also on yesterday's special conference in Paris. This includes stepping up our support for Ukraine's most urgent infrastructure needs, as well as working with the private sector to provide a sustainable supply of priority equipment to Ukraine.

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We also remain committed to providing political and military support to Ukraine. The European Peace Facility, as well as the newly launched EU Military Assistance Mission, are key tools in this respect. Ukraine's financial relief, resilience and long-term reconstruction will further be addressed by leaders. I would like to thank the European Parliament for your support and efforts to reach a timely solution on the MFA+ assistance file.

Leaders are also expected to speak about how to further increase collective pressure on Russia to end its war of aggression and to withdraw its troops from Ukraine. They will welcome the reinforcement of the EU's restrictive measures, including through the oil price cap. The aim is to have the new sanction package formally adopted ahead of the European Council, likely via a written procedure.

On energy and economy, the European Council will review progress in the implementation of its October conclusions. Steep energy prices touch all European citizens and businesses, and the issue has been very high on the agenda of the Czech Presidency of the Council. Leaders will continue to work on a coordinated approach to weather this crisis and minimise the social and economic fallout. They will discuss the impact of high energy prices and global developments on our industrial fabric and consider what should be done to maintain our global competitiveness and develop our technological leadership in the green transition whilst preserving the global level playing field.

Leaders will also take stock of progress on the latest energy measures proposed by the Commission and address the next steps. We need to make sure we continue to deal with the most immediate aspects of the current energy crisis, but also prepare for next winter and develop together a resilient system for the coming years. We must phase out our dependency on Russian energy exports, accelerate the green transition and ensure security of supply, which will require stepping up investment in infrastructure and interconnections, innovation, renewable energy and energy efficiency projects.

Turning to security and defence, leaders will follow up on their discussions in March and May, taking stock and providing further guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Compass and the Versailles Declaration. The EU is taking more responsibility for its own security and its capacity to act autonomously in defence matters. This includes strengthening the European defence and industrial base. Of course, the transatlantic bond, as reflected in the EU Strategic Compass and NATO's strategic concept, remains key.

The European Council is expected to call on the Council and the European Parliament to swiftly adopt the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act. The Council already adopted its position in early December under the lead of the Czech Presidency.

Regarding the EU's commitment to work with partners on security and defence, the European Council should underline the importance of instruments such as the European Peace Facility and is expected to welcome the agreement of the Council to increase EPF's overall financial ceiling by two billion into 2023.

The European Council will hold a strategic discussion on relations with the Southern Neighbourhood. Leaders are also expected to have a strategic discussion on transatlantic relations. On 6 December, the Western Balkans summit took place in Tirana. EU leaders and Western Balkans partners reconfirmed our strategic partnership. The Tirana Declaration reaffirms the EU's unequivocal support for the EU perspective of the Western Balkans. Yesterday, the Council adopted conclusions on the enlargement process, which the European Council is expected to endorse. As you can see, a very rich agenda.

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the Commission. – Madam President, Minister, honourable Members, it's exactly three years ago that I stood here in front of Parliament presenting the European Green Deal. Europe was the first continent to set out a path towards climate neutrality. Other countries had pledges. We had a plan.

Back then, we were concerned for our industry because of the unfair competition from heavy polluters. Today, only three years later, the competition we face has radically changed. A global green tech race has started. That is what we wanted. That is what we need. Because only when the most advanced economies compete for a net zero future will we reach our common goals: to limit global warming and to protect our children's future.

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But this new competition environment also calls for a rethink on our side as to how we support our industry's green transition and strengthen its global leadership. That is what we will discuss tomorrow at the European Council and it is what I would like to focus on today.

Let me first look at the challenging situation our companies are facing today. Global gas supply remains tight because of Russia's war of aggression. Russia has cut 80% of its pipeline gas supply to the European Union in the last eight months. But we have been able to compensate. We have diversified. We're saving energy. We have boosted the rollout of renewables. We're skimming off the super profits of energy-producing companies to take the money to support vulnerable households and vulnerable businesses. We agreed to buy gas together and we put forward a market correction mechanism to limit the spikes in gas prices. Our stores are filled. So we are, as a result, safe for the winter.

I think we can be very proud of what we have achieved despite the Russian blackmail. And I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Czech Presidency for what you have achieved in the last six months. This is great and thank you very much for that. Yes, indeed, you deserve applause.

Yet all this work we have done comes at a cost. Cheap supplies of Russian energy were part of the business model of many European industries. That model has been shattered by Russia's attack on Ukraine and the inconvenient truth is that that model will not come back. The International Energy Agency has just reminded us that, in the absence of Russian gas, Europe now faces structurally higher fossil fuel import prices.

So the only sustainable way for our SMEs and our industries is the transition to renewable energy. Renewable energy is not only affordable, but it's, of course, also home-grown and it creates good jobs here in Europe. But this transition will not happen overnight and global competition is getting tougher. Just look at the United States. They have recently approved a significant investment plan which also sets standards for green tech sectors, the so-called Inflation Reduction Act.

And let us be very clear. First of all, supporting the clean transition is the right thing to do – if you do it right, in a transparent manner, in a spirit of cooperation and in a way that ensures a level playing field. So it should be a race against time and not a race against each other. It should be a race to the top and not a race to the bottom.

Yet there is a risk that the Inflation Reduction Act can lead to unfair competition, and three aspects are particularly worrisome. First of all: the 'Buy American' logic that underpins large parts of the Inflation Reduction Act. Second: the tax breaks that could lead to discrimination. And third: the production subsidies that could disadvantage European companies.

We need to address these issues. We need to give our answer, our European Inflation Reduction Act, and I see four main strands of action. First of all, we have to adjust our own rules to facilitate national public investment in the transition. Second, we have to reassess the need for further European public investment in the transition. Third point: we have to work with the United States to address some of the most concerning aspects of this law. And of course, the fourth topic is that we have to further accelerate our transition to green energy.

So to my first point. We need to nurture the future generation of industrial production, our own green tech industrial base – this we have to strengthen. And we need to make sure that investment aid and tax credits reach the concerned sectors more easily and faster.

This is why we will, in January, put forward a new framework to accelerate the transition. It will make our state aid rules simpler and faster for the years to come. And it will close the existing gap to target the whole value chain of strategic green sectors, including large-scale deployment and access to raw materials.

This new framework will, for example, allow Member States to take into account global conditions – not only European – when providing aid for certain green tech manufacturing products. That means that for some greenfield investments, Member States can match the subsidies of third countries, and this will give an incentive to companies to continue to invest in the European Union – not to invest in the United States, but to be here, to stay here and to invest in the European Union.

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At the same time, we have to protect our single market from fragmentation and uncoordinated responses – our unity as a single market of 27. And we all know that not all Member States have the same capacity for large-scale investments in strategic sectors. The famous deep pockets: they are not everywhere.

And this leads me to my second point. We need a fair green transition in all of Europe. So to foster green tech across Europe, we need complementary European funding. And here REPowerEU is our tool. REPowerEU is the vehicle that supports SMEs and industries while they transition towards cheaper and cleaner energy. And in this context, I really want to congratulate you and I am very glad that REPowerEU was adopted this morning – late last night – and it enters into force at the beginning of next year. This is a big step forward. Many, many thanks for that. This is an enormous achievement here in Parliament.

It's good that we have REPowerEU now. I think, at the same time, the need for acceleration for renewables will also require a boost of REPowerEU so that we can properly address the new circumstances that have been created through the Inflation Reduction Act. This is in the short term.

In the medium term, however, I think we need a more structural solution because we want European industry to keep leading in the green transition. This is why I introduced the idea of a Sovereignty Fund. And I think the upcoming mid-term review of the MFF around summer will be a good opportunity to put forward our proposal in more detail.

The idea behind it is very simple. Europe is a continent full of strength. Our single market is unique. We have the largest single market worldwide. We have a highly skilled workforce. We have world-class universities. We have a tightly woven network of renowned research institutions. But we also need to galvanise our strong European industrial power in the global fight against climate change. And that calls for a common European industrial policy with common European funding.

I am speaking of beefing up the resources available for upstream research, innovation and strategic projects at EU level – just think of hydrogen, semiconductors, quantum computing, AI, biotechnologies. That's where we have to make the investments now. And for the first time we will also bring European funding to our successful important projects of common European interest, the IPCEIs. These are strategic investments to maintain our global leadership in the green tech sector.

My third point: we are working very closely with the Biden administration on the most concerning aspects of the Inflation Reduction Act, and we are discussing how to jointly strengthen our clean energy and industry basis. We need to make sure in these discussions that our respective incentive programmes will reinforce each other and that they do not come at the expense of each other.

Think, for example, of the topic of critical raw materials that are needed for green tech. Today – and we know all this – the production and processing of some of the most urgently needed critical raw materials are controlled by one single country, and that country is China. So we share the US concern about this strategic vulnerability that we have. And one of the possible solutions to overcome this monopoly that China has, without any doubt, would be, for example, to create a raw materials club with the United States and with other partners, with the aim of having reliability, transparency, fair conditions and value that stays in the country where these raw materials are being extracted. And we stand ready to work on all this hard-to-achieve joining of forces and to strengthen our industrial basis.

Finally, let us recall: all these actions serve as a bridge. It is the bridge for our clean tech industry to transform from today's costly fossil fuel energy into clean energy and affordable energy – the renewables. We need, therefore, this investment now – because these industries and our SMEs need the support now – until we have achieved an energy environment again that is affordable, that is clean and that is secure.

Honourable Members, let us never forget the bigger picture. A war is raging at the borders of our Union. Russia is escalating its attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and the brave people of Ukraine need all our help. Therefore, it is not the time for a trade war with our closest partners and allies. This is a time for our democracies to join forces even more to stand up for Ukraine. I am very glad that we have agreed now on the next round of our EUR 18 billion financial package, which will reach Ukraine in early January.

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Putin's war of aggression will fail, mainly for two reasons. The first one is, of course, the enormous bravery and the enormous courage of the Ukrainian people. But the second reason is the international community's remarkable unity. And therefore, let us stay strong. Let us stand up for Ukraine. Let us be united. *Slava Ukraini!* Merry Christmas and long live Europe.

Manfred Weber, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, Madam President of the Commission, Mr Bek, dear colleagues, today's subject is the preparation of the European Council. But before we go into this, as an institution, we are all still in shock about the corruption cases. Yesterday, we voted nearly unanimously that Vice-President Kaili cannot speak any more on behalf of the institution. That is how we show that we are ready to act; we will protect our institution. 99% of our colleagues here in this institution want to continue to work hard for the European citizens. We want to clean the table and we want to reform our working methods, and we will bring this to life in the upcoming weeks and months.

On the other hand, we must do our job, and that is what we are doing today; it's the preparation of the Council. The European Parliament was fighting hard for one fundamental idea, and that was the idea of conditionality when it comes to the funding of the European Union. The rule of law mechanism is our baby – it's Parliament's baby. We achieved this. Yesterday, when the Council for the first time agreed to block and to freeze money to Hungary, was a historic moment. We will, for the first time, use money as a tool to insist that rule of law must be implemented in the European Union.

Viktor Orbán will face problems now; that's obvious, and that is good. I want to underline this because, first of all, institutions on a European level are on the same page. We are united, and the European Parliament did it. We can be proud of this, and we will continue to fight for values. I want to mention today an international perspective.

On 13 September, 22-year-old Mahsa Amini was arrested by the Iranian morality police for improperly wearing her headscarf. Three days later she died. On 17 November, the 23-year-old Majidreza Rahnavard was arrested. On Monday, he was hanged from a crane in the city of Mashhad. 14 young people have died now in the last weeks in Iran. Their only fault is their desire for freedom. This is the Iranian reality.

We condemn the brutal killing of all these young people and all the people who fight for freedom, and here in the European Parliament we must show our support. We can consider, Madam President, that probably for the January plenary, we should also invite representatives from the Iranian opposition to this House to support them.

When we look inside the European Union, then it is about competitiveness, it's about jobs, it's about perspectives for our business, and we welcome this dimension. We support the ideas presented today by the Commission President on the IRA. That is a good answer. We don't need a war, a trade war, with our American friends. We need our solid answer with a position of strength, not being naive, but being strong. We have to strengthen our single market. For example, in the telecom sector, there is still a lot to do, and we need the main message of how can we strengthen competitiveness. There we are looking forward to the arrival of the Swedish Presidency.

I also want to mention the defence sector again, because our countries are now spending hundreds of billions of euros to buy weapons, and it is good that we are investing in our defence capacity in Europe. But Poland is buying tanks in South America and South Korea, and Germany is buying air fighters in the US. A lot of jobs are being created now, but outside of the European Union, because we are lacking a single market on the defence industry inside of the European Union, and I don't see initiatives on this. I don't see engagement on this. I have already mentioned this several times in this place. We have to speed up to build up a European defence pillar, as well as a cyber-defence brigade, a real European defence pillar inside of NATO.

For the European Council, migration linked to Schengen is also an issue to be discussed. Since 2015, we have been discussing migration, and I want to applaud and thank the Czech Presidency for all they did to achieve a solid position for the negotiations with Parliament on the migration pact. This is a big achievement. Thank you so much for this.

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The urgency is obvious: 280 000 illegal migrants arrived this year in the European Union. The reception centres are again full. That's why we have to speed up on this legislation, and we have to finalise it in the upcoming months.

The Schengen enlargement must also be an issue in this regard. The veto from Austria and from the Netherlands was wrong and was not fact-based, and that's why I hope that this will also return to the negotiation table in Brussels tomorrow and on Friday. We need fairness: Romanians and Bulgarians deserve the same treatment that all the other Europeans have. That's why the enlargement must come.

Finally, on the energy side. Madam President, you know that I have insisted several times here as to why you used Article 122 for doing the energy proposals. For our legislation where Parliament is involved, the RePowerEU, we finalised now, the legislation, and for the gas cap and for other proposals you made in an urgency procedure, we are still lacking any kind of progress. We see no progress at all on the Council side. That's why, next time, please involve the European Parliament again in the place where the democratic decisions must take place. So that is my first message.

On content, the Council must speed up. The Council must now deliver on the gas cap decisions. Putin is responsible for the high price, but we could much better answer this threat from the Russian side if we were united. That's why Mr Bek and Prime Minister Fiala, good luck for the negotiations to solve this last problem. Thank you so much. I wish you good luck for the Council and, for all of us, a peaceful Christmas.

Iratxe García Pérez, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, señorías, nos encontramos a las puertas del último Consejo de este año, con tal abanico de retos encima de la mesa que se nos demanda celeridad, tesón y contundencia en la toma de decisiones. La credibilidad de nuestro proyecto europeo nos exige que ni un ápice de duda pueda resquebrajar la confianza de la ciudadanía en sus instituciones. Porque debemos seguir siendo un modelo para la ciudadanía de la Unión y también referentes en el mundo, como hacemos con el Premio Sájarov. Hemos de ser un modelo creíble y honrado en todas nuestras acciones, también a nivel institucional y en la dimensión socioeconómica.

Empiezo con esta última. He hecho referencia en varias ocasiones a la urgencia en atajar los precios desorbitados en el mercado de la energía por culpa de la guerra de Putin. La Comisión presentó una serie de medidas de forma tan urgente que, aplicando el artículo 122, se excluyó al Parlamento de su negociación. La propuesta de la Comisión para limitar el precio del gas en el mercado es ridícula. Si se hubiera seguido un procedimiento legislativo habitual, el Parlamento habría podido proponer límites realistas y efectivos. Colegas, como ya dije: si este Parlamento actuó rápidamente con las vacunas de la COVID-19, ¿no vamos a hacerlo ahora para poder afrontar esta crisis energética?

Y es que la rapidez de acción nos apremia en una crisis social y económica galopante. No podemos esperar más. La ausencia de medidas sociales ambiciosas en el paquete legislativo para los años 2023-2024 es exasperante. Por eso, desde el grupo de socialistas y demócratas, hemos propuesto un bono energético europeo, identificando más de 100 mil millones de euros en el presupuesto europeo que pueden ser utilizados para ayudar de manera urgente a las familias de forma inmediata. Pero también para el próximo año, seamos claros, continuaremos necesitando una respuesta europea para hacer frente a la crisis.

Respecto al marco institucional, hay dos cuestiones esenciales para mi grupo político: Schengen y la condicionalidad del Estado de Derecho. Sobre la primera cuestión, miren, celebro, por supuesto, la inclusión de Croacia en el espacio Schengen. Es positivo. Pero no hacerlo, además, con Rumanía y Bulgaria es un error. Un error y una injusticia. Una injusticia que despierta recelos y da ceba a los movimientos antieuropeístas. Mi grupo propuso un debate sobre esta cuestión. Colegas, ¿cómo podemos mantener un debate sobre la ampliación de la Unión Europea y, en paralelo, fracasar en la inclusión en el espacio libre y común de Estados miembros que cumplen los requisitos para formar parte de ello? ¿Qué va a hacer la Comisión para corregir esta injusticia? Cuenta con nuestro apoyo para trabajar en esa dirección.

Y, en último lugar, con respecto a la condicionalidad del Estado de Derecho, por supuesto, ha sido una victoria de los que defendemos el Estado de Derecho y los valores comunes de la Unión el que pueda aplicarse el Mecanismo de condicionalidad y que se puedan plantear, reducir y congelar los fondos a aquellos países —en este caso a Hungría— cuando no están cumpliendo con el Estado de Derecho. Pero también reflexionemos sobre algo: lo que está haciendo hoy Orbán, planteando un chantaje en el Consejo, no puede ser permitido. Y eso nos debe hacer reflexionar sobre la necesidad de acabar con el principio de unanimidad en el Consejo.

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Las instituciones y el marco que hemos venido construyendo son nuestro patrimonio común. La confianza de la ciudadanía en ellas es la garante de poder seguir construyendo este proyecto común de paz, de libertad y de bienestar. Y lo debemos preservar. Volviendo al inicio de mi intervención: ante cualquier ataque que debilite la confianza de la ciudadanía en la Unión Europea —ya sea atacando nuestro Estado de Derecho o los valores de nuestra Unión— y ante cualquier caso de corrupción, firmeza y tolerancia cero.

Queridos compañeros y compañeras, os deseo un feliz final de año y espero que el próximo año estemos con las mismas energías para abordar todo el trabajo que tenemos por delante.

Stéphane Séjourné, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, l'ordre du jour de ce Conseil européen est moins chargé que prévu, et c'est une bonne chose. Les accords d'hier et d'avant-hier sont d'excellentes nouvelles. Je me permets de souligner que ce Parlement européen et notre groupe en particulier, Renew Europe, y sont pour beaucoup.

Sur la Hongrie, c'est historique. Le mécanisme de conditionnalité était une demande de mon groupe. Son activation par la Commission et son adoption par le Conseil ont été rendus possibles par la pression de ce Parlement européen. Monsieur Weber, vous disiez que ce mécanisme de solidarité et de conditionnalité était le bébé de ce Parlement européen. C'était avant tout le bébé d'un certain nombre de groupes politiques qui ont poussé cette démarche, mais nous le partageons volontiers aujourd'hui avec l'ensemble de ce Parlement.

Le taux minimum de taxe sur les multinationales, comme la taxe carbone aux frontières, sera bientôt une réalité conforme aux souhaits également de cette Assemblée. On doit s'en féliciter.

Bien sûr, ces dernières semaines ont aussi démontré que les vetos pourrissent la vie démocratique européenne. L'absurde décision de retarder l'entrée de la Roumanie et de la Bulgarie dans Schengen, l'incompréhensible attente des mesures sur le prix du gaz et les très inquiétants retards sur les sanctions russes... Tout cela devrait décider le Conseil à écouter ce que nous clamons depuis des mois et des mois: mettez fin à l'unanimité, passez à la majorité qualifiée, écoutez ce qu'ont dit les citoyens lors de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe. Ce sont des mots que vous avez souvent entendus dans cet hémicycle, Madame la Présidente, Messieurs les représentants du Conseil, et je pense que nous devrions aller plus loin sur cette question.

C'est une question d'efficacité et de modernisation de nos institutions, d'autant plus nécessaires que les défis gigantesques auxquels nous devons faire face sont énormes. Les décisions de nos amis américains et de nos adversaires chinois mettent en péril notre tissu économique. C'est une question majeure de souveraineté. Sans tissu productif sain, le pacte vert pour l'Europe est menacé et la cohésion sociale est en danger. C'est aussi une question d'unité. Vous l'avez dit, Madame la Présidente, assez justement: les asymétries des réponses nationales posent un vrai risque de fragmentation. C'est un danger pour le marché unique. Je demande à la Commission – vous avez fait quelques annonces – et surtout aux chefs d'État ou de gouvernement de soutenir ces trois idées.

D'abord, le Fonds européen – vous en avez parlé – pour que nous produisions plus sur notre sol, par exemple des énergies renouvelables et propres, et des biens essentiels.

Un test de souveraineté pour garantir qu'aucune législation européenne ne nuira à nos objectifs sur ce domaine-là. C'est ce que nous faisons déjà d'ailleurs, sur le volet environnemental et sur celui du pacte vert pour l'Europe.

Une loi de souveraineté pour libérer les énergies et notre continent. Nos règles entravent nos entreprises et nos PME, comme les délais de permis et les démarches interminables et inutilement complexes que nous vivons dans nos pays respectifs. Trois ans pour un projet européen sur l'hydrogène: il faudrait tout au plus trois mois. Les entreprises ne demandent qu'à produire et à créer des emplois. Ce sont les forces vives de notre continent et nous en avons besoin pour être la puissance économique de demain.

Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Ministre, je sais qu'une crise chasse l'autre. Après la COVID-19, la guerre et l'énergie, c'est désormais l'industrie qui est en haut de la pile de nos priorités. Nous n'avons pas le temps de repousser nos décisions. Nous devons innover politiquement pour bien négocier ce tournant économique du «made in Europe».

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Je vous souhaite à tous également de bonnes fêtes et un joyeux Noël. Nous espérons qu'en tout cas, ce Conseil sera productif pour notre économie et nos citoyens, et pour protéger nos citoyens européens de ces crises.

Philippe Lamberts, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, good morning, everyone, this time I think I'm going to speak English because I want first to thank Mr Bek and congratulate the Czech Presidency. It's the second time that your country is leading the work of the European Union for six months, and I must say that you have already brought quite a number of important pieces of legislation across the line and also helped not solving – because it is not solved – but at least moving forward on the conundrum posed by the Hungarian Government because indeed, a few weeks ago, I was afraid that indeed the Council would succumb to the blackmail of Viktor Orbán and this was not the case. Actually, in a subtle way, you reminded Viktor Orbán that we can circumvent his vetoes. Of course we didn't have to go there, but the threat was enough for him to basically bow, and indeed the funds put on hold have been reduced, but not by a significant margin.

Je voudrais juste dire à Stéphane Séjourné, qui a un art consommé de tirer la couverture à soi, que dans l'affaire hongroise, le président Macron n'était pas du côté de la rigueur; il était de ceux qui voulaient lâcher la bride à Viktor Orbán. Je pense qu'il faut aussi mettre au jour ce double langage.

Now I'd like to focus a bit on what you said, Madam President, because there's a lot I agree with on what you say, starting with the point that no, we Greens do not dream of a continental European Union deprived of industry. I'm an engineer by training. I think industry is a key part of our economy. But then again, everything will be in the execution, and in the details. Because what I hear from industry often times is 'Not too much pressure please! Not too much pressure and please, a lot of subsidies'. Why is that? Well because to be honest, when I look especially at large European companies, I see that we have moved from a capitalism of entrepreneurs to a capitalism of rent seekers, and they prefer to channel profits into bonus and dividends rather than into productive investment because these will generate profits down the line.

This is why we are saying, in order for European industry to lead the transition, we need to put them under pressure, and that's the targets that we adopt, that's the whole Fit for 55 package. We need serious pressure and that includes on the nature protection package because if you want innovation, you need pressure.

Then, if support is needed, I would just take up what you have said about support to the citizens with high energy bills – support must be targeted, targeted to the companies who really need it, who really need public support to bridge the transition because, yes, transition is difficult and requires investment. But, quite frankly, we have deep pockets in some Member States. We have very deep pockets in some corporations as well, and they don't need an inch, a cent of support.

So that's what I would urge you, is to find the right balance. But all in all, when I look at the architecture, your four points, I think that we can agree with that. So with that, I wish you also a good Christmas recess and look forward to continue working with you.

Jordan Bardella, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Madame la Présidente du Parlement européen, Madame la Présidente de la Commission européenne, Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants du Conseil, mes chers collègues, il ne fait pas bon, en ces temps, être une entreprise européenne. Non seulement nos entreprises subissent l'infamante hausse des prix de l'énergie, à laquelle vous n'offrez aucune solution pérenne, mais elles font maintenant face à un protectionnisme américain qui s'assume sans aucune fausse pudeur.

À l'approche du Conseil européen, voici en effet un nouveau sujet d'inquiétude pour nos entreprises: la loi sur la réduction de l'inflation, décidée par le président américain, Joe Biden. Sous couvert de lutte contre le dérèglement climatique, cette loi favorise les entreprises américaines à grands coups de subventions et de crédits d'impôts, que ce soit dans les domaines des panneaux photovoltaïques, de la voiture électrique ou encore des batteries.

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Stupeur chez les élites européistes, qui croyaient encore aux versets de la religion libérale et au bréviaire de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce! Les bras ballants, les yeux écarquillés, vous semblez enfin découvrir que toutes les grandes puissances du monde promeuvent leurs entreprises, protègent leurs travailleurs et défendent leurs intérêts. Toutes sauf une, l'Union européenne, qui se veut systématiquement la meilleure élève du libre-échange, et systématiquement à ses dépens.

Nous sommes le seul continent qui ouvre à ce point ses marchés publics sans réciprocité, là où les Américains achètent américain et où les Chinois achètent chinois. Nous sommes les seuls à ouvrir à ce point nos frontières à des produits qui ne respectent aucune de nos normes, qu'elles soient sociales ou environnementales. Plutôt qu'être les éternels naïfs du commerce planétaire, qu'attendons-nous, nous, Européens, pour acheter européen? Qu'attendons-nous pour protéger les normes sociales issues de nos démocraties, en évitant toute concurrence avec des pays qui font peu de cas des droits des travailleurs? Qu'attendons-nous pour définir et défendre nos intérêts stratégiques, pour bâtir une politique ambitieuse de croissance et pour protéger nos producteurs, nos consommateurs et nos salariés?

Les Européens n'ont pas fait l'Europe pour subir, mais pour agir. Réveillons-nous! Je vous remercie et je vous souhaite à tous, mes chers collègues, un très joyeux Noël.

Beata Szydło, w imieniu grupy ECR. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Przewodnicząca Komisji! Szanowni Państwo! Słuchając dzisiaj niektórych z Państwa, mam wrażenie, że żyjemy w alternatywnej rzeczywistości, ponieważ to wszystko, o czym Państwo tutaj mówicie, jest postawione w takiej sytuacji, jak gdyby nie było w Europie wojny. Ta wojna ciągle jest. Ta wojna jest za naszymi granicami, bezpośrednio za granicą Unii Europejskiej. Ukraina dzielnie się broni, ale potrzebuje wsparcia. Ja wiem, że są tacy politycy w Europie, którzy już zaczynają myśleć o innej rzeczywistości, i tak jak chociażby prezydent Francji domagają się gwarancji dla Rosji. Warto by było zapytać na Radzie Europejskiej, co pan prezydent Macron miał na myśli.

Naszym obowiązkiem jest wspierać Ukrainę, ale naszym obowiązkiem jest również myśleć, co zrobić, żeby uchronić państwa Unii Europejskiej, Europejczyków przed kosztami tej strasznej wojny i zadbać o ich bezpieczeństwo, również o bezpieczeństwo energetyczne. Pani przewodnicząca rozpoczęła swoją wypowiedź od refleksji sprzed trzech lat, kiedy zachwalała Zielony Ład i mówiła, że to jest szansa dla Europy. Dzisiaj można zastanowić się, jakie są koszty tego Zielonego Ładu. Narzekają przedsiębiorcy. Wysokie ceny energii dla Europejczyków. A my ciągle słyszymy o przyspieszaniu transformacji. Czas zacząć myśleć pragmatycznie. Dzisiaj Europa jest w poważnym kryzysie ze względu na wojnę na Ukrainie. I naszym obowiązkiem jest bronić przede wszystkim bezpieczeństwa i chronić Europejczyków przed ubóstwem. Tak, trzeba przeprowadzić transformację energetyczną, żeby nie popełnić takich błędów jak również i Komisja, i Parlament przed laty. Właśnie między innymi trzy lata temu, kiedy zaczynałam, kiedy pani przewodnicząca mówiła o Zielonym Ładzie. Przecież wtedy państwo popieraliście i Nordstream 2, i wspieraliście Rosję w tym, ażeby dominowała ona na rynku paliw i energetyki w Unii Europejskiej. Z tego trzeba wyciągnąć wnioski, ale trzeba to robić rozsądnie, myśląc przede wszystkim o Europejczykach. Ja dołączam się również do życzeń dla wszystkich państwa i chcę przypomnieć, że będziemy cieszyć się świętami Bożego Narodzenia.

Martin Schirdewan, im Namen der Fraktion The Left. – Frau Präsidentin! Im Winter des Jahres 2020 konnten über 35 Millionen Europäerinnen in der EU ihren Strom oder ihre Heizung nicht bezahlen, und diesen Winter werden es viele Millionen Menschen mehr sein. Noch immer streiten sich leider die Staats- und Regierungschefinnen und —chefs darum, wie wirklich wirksame Maßnahmen ergriffen werden können, wie die aussehen können, die den Menschen in dieser für viele existenziellen Krise über den Monat helfen können. Noch immer gibt es keine klaren Beschlüsse für einen Gaspreisdeckel, der den Menschen, dem Handwerk und den kleinen und mittelständischen Unternehmen das Leben erleichtert und die Zukunft sichert. Weil insbesondere – und das ist eine Kritik, gerichtet vor allem an die deutsche Bundesregierung – nationale Regierungen monatelang auf der Bremse gestanden haben und einen Egotrip nach dem anderen ausleben.

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Viele Menschen stehen angesichts der Inflation und der damit einhergehenden Lebenshaltungskrise jeden Tag vor der Frage, ob sie heizen, das Licht anstellen oder Nahrungsmittel kaufen können. Europäische Politik zeigt sich in dieser massiven sozialen Krise erneut zu unentschlossen, zu zögerlich und nicht entscheidungsfähig genug. Deshalb will ich an dieser Stelle, Minister Bek, die Mitgliedstaaten unbedingt dazu ermutigen, den Vorschlag der Europäischen Kommission aufzunehmen und über ein groß angelegtes gemeinsames europäisches Investitionsprogramm, das den Weg aus der Krise ebnen könnte, nachzudenken und das anzunehmen.

Wir gehen auf das Jahresende zu, deshalb auch einmal ein Lob in Ihre Richtung: Trotz der politischen Differenzen, die wir sonst immer haben, Frau von der Leyen, finde ich die Idee eines europäischen Souveränitätsfonds richtig. Ich glaube, die Zeit ist reif dafür, insbesondere auch als Antwort auf den *Inflation Reduction Act* der Biden-Administration. Allerdings hilft es da nicht – und da endet mein Lob dann auch schon wieder –, auf halber Strecke stehen zu bleiben. Dann müssen wir auch über eine gründliche Reform des Binnenmarktes nachdenken. Dann müssen wir darüber nachdenken, wie Investitionen auch in die öffentliche Daseinsvorsorge ermöglicht werden, wie die Schuldenregeln dann zu reformieren sein werden, damit diese Investitionen auch tatsächlich möglich sind. Und da müssen wir darüber nachdenken, wie wirklich Eigenmittel generiert werden, z. B. in Form einer europäischen Finanztransaktionssteuer.

Eine der Ursachen für den massiven Preisanstieg liegt im Angriffskrieg Russlands gegen die Ukraine. Dieser Krieg hält seit nunmehr zehn Monaten an. Die Zivilbevölkerung leidet unter den verbrecherischen Angriffen der russischen Armee auf die zivile Infrastruktur. Kälte, Dunkelheit, Hunger werden zu Waffen, vor allem gegen Kinder, Alte und Kranke. Dieser elende Krieg muss endlich beendet werden, und dafür braucht es auch eine konsequente diplomatische Offensive der Europäischen Union. Unter Aufsicht, in Zusammenarbeit mit den Vereinten Nationen sollte es gemeinsame Initiativen mit China und mit Indien geben, die Russland an den Verhandlungstisch bringen. Auf den Rückzug der russischen Truppen aus der Ukraine muss dann aber auch die Aufhebung der Sanktionen folgen. Kluge europäische Politik sucht jetzt den Weg aus der militärischen Logik hin zu einer Friedenslogik, deren Ziel am Ende natürlich auch der Ausbau und Aufbau einer nachhaltigen europäischen Friedensordnung sein muss. Und nein, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, das Einfordern von Friedensgesprächen und Diplomatie ist keine Parteinahme für Putin und seinen verbrecherischen Angriffskrieg.

Der Korruptionsskandal hat die europäischen Institutionen im Innersten erschüttert. Er ist nichts weniger als ein Schlag gegen die Glaubwürdigkeit europäischer Politik. Nun müssen auch Sie, Herr Bek, bitte dafür sorgen, dass die Transparenzregeln des Europäischen Rates verstärkt werden, denn sie sind noch wesentlich intransparenter als die des Europäischen Parlaments.

Liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Es ist noch ein bisschen früh, erholsame Feiertage zu wünschen – zumindest aus meiner protestantisch kommunistischen Ethik heraus –, aber wenn es dann so weit ist, wünsche ich auch Ihnen erholsame Feiertage.

VORSITZ: OTHMAR KARAS*Vizepräsident*

Tiziana Beghin (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, Presidente von der Leyen, io ho apprezzato molto il suo intervento, riconosco gli sforzi fatti e soprattutto condivido la sua affermazione che l'unica possibilità per contrastare la crisi energetica sia accelerare la transizione verso le rinnovabili.

Tuttavia non possiamo nasconderci dietro al fatto che oggi in Europa ci sono 95 milioni di persone a rischio povertà, anche a causa della crisi energetica, e per costoro l'aumento del prezzo del gas non significa abbassare il termostato, ma scegliere se mangiare o scaldarsi, ed è per questo che ritengo che il nostro ritardo nel fissare un prezzo al tetto del gas sia veramente ingiustificabile e il prossimo Consiglio europeo deve trovare un accordo.

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Vorrei ricordare che a inizio 2021 il metano costava 16 euro al megawattora e questo era il valore deciso dal mercato, a cui tutti i fornitori erano ben disponibili a rifornire l'Europa, non solo Gazprom. A giugno scorso si parlava di un *price cap* a 90 euro, per cui non capisco come la Commissione abbia pensato che fosse accettabile proporre una soglia a 2,75 e anche i 225, ora, della presidenza ceca sono troppo alti e rendono il provvedimento di fatto inutile e inapplicabile.

L'UE deve rappresentare tutti i cittadini, soprattutto quelli che non possono riscaldarsi. Deve chiedere per loro un tetto al prezzo del gas rapido ed efficace.

Siegfried Mureșan (PPE). – Mr President, President von der Leyen, Minister, dear colleagues, tomorrow's European Council comes at an end of a year in which we delivered together.

We, the European Parliament, together with the Commission and the Council, managed to support Ukraine throughout the year, managed to keep the European Union united, and we managed to sanction the aggressor.

Just in recent weeks, we managed to provide funding and herewith security for Ukraine for next year; EUR 18 billion which will allow Ukraine to pay salaries, to pay pensions, to keep schools, to keep hospitals ongoing and supporting the Ukrainian people.

And just this morning, we managed to agree on REPowerEU, which means that we will be able to reduce our dependency on Russian fossil fuels, accelerate the transition to the green economy; we will be able to improve our energy infrastructure and our energy efficiency.

But let us do more dear colleagues. Full support, President von der Leyen, for the ideas, which you expressed. Let us also act not only react. High energy prices affect people and enterprises. It negatively affects the competitiveness of enterprises; let us work together early next year on a competitiveness check to make sure that all legislation that we put forward at European level does not negatively affect the competitiveness of European enterprises, but it helps them and improves their competitiveness.

Elisabetta Gualmini (S&D). – Mr President, dear Minister, dear Commissioner, dear President of the European Commission, we are at the end of 2022 and we can say that it has also been an *annus horribilis* because we face a triple attack on democracy: an attack on democracy by Russia with the criminal invasion of Ukraine; an attack on our economy, our single market with the unacceptable blackmail on gas; and then – I do not want to escape – an attack on the democratic functioning and reputation of this institution by unimaginable criminal corruption.

But, at the same time, we have stood up and reached outstanding results. We have a more social Europe, a Europe for health, REPowerEU, finally the freezing of resources for Orbán and his despotic regime. So I really hope that the Council tomorrow will go on with the same determination, also by envisaging a revision of the MFF in the summer in the name of a permanent instrument of public support for people and for companies which are struggling with inflation.

I think that we will get stronger if we do this together. Thank you and Merry Christmas to all of you.

Guy Verhofstadt (Renew). – Mr President, dear colleagues, I have listened, Mr Bek, to the long list of items that you will discuss tomorrow and after tomorrow in the Council, but I have to tell you the most important items were not there. That is, in my opinion, the sanctions and the weapons that Ukraine needs to end this war the fastest as possible.

You can all talk about price caps on oil and gas, but the best way to end the energy crisis is to end the war. For that, Ukraine needs to win the war. There, for the moment, what we see is that weak sanctions create weak results. It's ten months and what we see is an escalation of brutality of Russia in Ukraine – rape, genocide, deportations of children in that country.

So what I want and expect of the European Council is that, first of all, you start a decision to give more weapons. These discussions about Patriots, about Leopards, of the European governments is a scandal! You need to send them, to transfer them to Ukraine so that they can win the war.

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The second item is on sanctions – there are still, dear colleagues, 11 oligarchs of the most important oligarchs not on the list of sanctions in Europe. In total, after the ninth package – remember you are already on the ninth package – there will be 1 400, 1 500 or maybe 1 600 on the sanction list and, in total, there are 6 000, 7 000 people that need to be on the sanction list, because they are the real backbone.

The same for Iran. Will you discuss, in fact now, sanctions for Iran? Can we still support Iranian diplomats on the territory of Europe, dear colleagues? We need to expel them the fastest as possible from Europe. That is what we need to do, and that is what I expect: sanctions and weapons for Ukraine and sanctions against Iran at the next European Council.

Rasmus Andresen (Verts/ALE). – Herr Präsident! Der ukrainische Winter ist brutal, und deshalb muss die wichtigste Botschaft sein, dass wir den vielen Ukrainerinnen und Ukrainern helfen, die seit Wochen bei Minusgraden ohne Strom und Wasser ausharren.

Putin zerstört ganz gezielt die Energieinfrastruktur der Ukraine, und die Ukraine braucht unsere Solidarität jetzt mehr denn je. Deshalb ist es gut, und da will ich mit einem Lob beginnen, dass die 18 Milliarden Euro Finanzhilfe für die Ukraine kommen. Orbáns Erpressung ist gescheitert, und das ist die gute Nachricht zum Jahresende.

Das demokratische Europa muss zusammenstehen. Wir brauchen mehr Möglichkeiten, um Vetos von Autokraten wie Orbán zu verhindern. Die Einstimmigkeit im Rat ist ein grundsätzliches Problem und muss überwunden werden. Wir brauchen mehr europäische Solidarität, Solidarität mit den vielen Millionen Europäerinnen und Europäern, die nicht mehr wissen, wie sie in diesem Winter ihre Rechnungen zahlen können. Wir brauchen eine europäische Gaspreisbremse, die Energiekosten für alle Menschen und für Unternehmen drosselt. Wir brauchen einen europäischen Investitionsfonds, um unsere Industrie zu stärken und grüne Zukunftsjobs zu schaffen. Wir brauchen eine europäische Antwort auf China und die USA. Es ist gut, dass die USA ihre Industrie emissionsfrei und innovativer machen wollen. Jetzt müssen wir nachlegen.

Frau Kommissionspräsidentin von der Leyen, es ist sehr gut, dass Sie hier heute noch einmal unterstrichen haben, dass Sie dazu bereit sind. Jetzt brauchen wir aber auch im Rat Bewegung. Wir brauchen Regierungschefinnen und Regierungschefs, die dazu bereit sind, mutige europäische Antworten zu formulieren und nationalistisches Kleinklein zu überwinden. Dieser Gipfel darf nicht ergebnislos enden.

Jaak Madison (ID). – Mr President, I wouldn't say this very often, but I couldn't agree more with Mr Verhofstadt, he was absolutely right that we need sanctions against Iran and we need to deliver more and more and in a faster way weapons to Ukraine to win the war. That's the only solution for peace and we all want to have peace, definitely.

Unfortunately, the President of the Commission has left – probably because this debate is too boring – but I was listening very carefully to her speech. She mentioned, of course, about the Green Deal, about climate change, that this will be like the main focus tomorrow in the meeting of the Council. I was thinking, when she said that we have to take care of the raw materials, that we can't accept a situation where we are relying on one country, on China, to have raw materials, and we have to take care of this.

And I was thinking, how? What would be the solution? Because, well, in fact most of the raw materials we're relying on are in China and in Africa, and in Africa very many industries are owned by the Chinese. We need cobalt for the batteries to drive our nice electric cars in the cities of Europe to feel very green. At the same time, most of the reserves of cobalt are in Congo and most of the resources are owned by Chinese in Congo. So how are we going to have this cobalt to drive our nice cars to feel very green? And how are we going to solve this? What's the solution? Are we going to kick out those Chinese from Congo or are we just maybe like following the absolutely crazy ideology where we are only about 6% of the population in the world and we are trying to save the planet? It's like the same thing, like the communist ideology in the Chinese in the sixties. I think there's no big difference.

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Robert Roos (ECR). – Voorzitter, wéér gaat het over energie en wéér is het gerommel in de marge. Het wordt volstrekt ongeloofwaardig voor de mensen thuis, de mensen die in de kou zitten, de mensen die de rekening niet meer kunnen betalen, de mensen die jullie je klimaatideologie opdringen, waardoor we nu energietekorten hebben.

In plaats van je in te zetten voor het welzijn en de veiligheid van deze mensen, wordt hier door de socialisten – de grootste klimaatideologen en Hongarijebashers – smeergeld aangenomen, nota bene afkomstig van oliedollars uit Qatar! Wat een ironie: met de ene hand de OneLove-band omdoen, en met de andere hand het smeergeld in de zak steken. U moet zich diep schamen.

Niet het eigenbelang, maar het belang van 450 miljoen EU-burgers moet vooropstaan. Dus, stop met de ideologie, stop met de Green Deal. Zorg dat er binnen de EU weer voldoende betrouwbare en betaalbare energie geproduceerd kan worden. REPowerEU kan op dit moment alleen met meer fossiele en kernenergie.

Ik wens u allen een zalige kerst.

Tamás Deutsch (NI). – Elnök Úr! Európában súlyos energiaválság van. Az energetikai szankciókkal Európa lábón lőtte önmagát. A harmadik negyedévben már 8 európai tagállamban esett vissza a GDP az előző negyedévhez képest, és 14 országban esett vissza az ipari termelés. A Német Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara felmérése szerint a német ipari szereplők 8 százaléka tervezi Európán kívülre áthelyezni a termelést az elviselhetetlenül magas energiaárak miatt. Az energiaválság miatt a gázár hatszorosa a hosszú távú átlagárnak.

Ursula von der Leyen szerint jövőre akár 30 milliárd köbméternyi gázhiánnyal is számolhatunk Európában. Már nem csak az okoz súlyos gondot, hogy az egekben vannak az árak, hanem az is kérdés, hogy lesz-e egyáltalán gáz jövőre. Az Oroszországra kivetett szankciók nem hozták el az ukrajnai háború végét, az európai emberek szegényebbek lettek, az európai nemzetgazdaságok pedig lassan térdre kényszerülnek. Elérkezett az idő, a káros szankciókat el kell törölni.

Jens Geier (S&D). – Herr Präsident, Frau Vizepräsidentin, sehr geehrter Herr Minister Bek, verehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Herr Minister Bek, Sie haben uns die Tagesordnung des kommenden Europäischen Rates vorgetragen. Dafür bedanke ich mich ganz herzlich. Es ist gut, dass der Rat alle diese drängenden Probleme anfassen will. Das ist natürlich richtig. Aber wie? Und das hätte ich gern von Ihnen gehört: Wie beurteilen Sie denn die Perspektiven, dass Sie sich auch einigen?

Frau Präsidentin von der Leyen oder in Vertretung Frau Vizepräsidentin, ich möchte ausdrücklich Ihre Vorschläge hinsichtlich einer Überarbeitung der Regeln für die Staatsbeihilfen unterstützen. Wir befinden uns ja tatsächlich in einer Phase der grundlegenden Transformation unserer Industriegesellschaften. Sie findet einerseits unter den Bedingungen von weltweitem Wettbewerb statt und andererseits unter den Bedingungen des russischen Angriffskriegs. Bei mir zu Hause im Ruhrgebiet würden wir es so beschreiben: Wir müssen der Lokomotive in voller Fahrt die Räder wechseln. Das richtige Werkzeug dafür ist nicht eines, das nur geeignet ist, Monopole im europäischen Binnenmarkt zu verhindern.

Ich unterstütze auch den Vorschlag eines Souveränitätsfonds. Wer in diesem Haus im Haushaltsausschuss sitzt, weiß, dass der EU-Haushalt gerade mal doppelt so groß ist wie der von Nordrhein-Westfalen und nicht einmal halb so groß ist wie der Haushalt der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Deswegen brauchen wir ein neues Instrument wie den Souveränitätsfonds: Wenn die europäische Lokomotive neue Räder braucht, dann müssen wir sie auch kaufen können.

Sophia in 't Veld (Renew). – Mr President, dear colleagues, I think the importance of the decision to finally apply the rule-of-law conditionality cannot be overestimated, and I'll be a bit out of character, but I'll pay compliments to the European Commission here for doing the right thing and sticking to its guns. I also welcome the decision of the Council, and compliments to the Czech Presidency to largely endorse that decision. It was long overdue, because for over a decade kleptocrats could build their empires unhindered. But those days are over. Europe has entered a new era. This European Parliament will be very closely monitoring the full and sustainable implementation of the milestones.

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And finally, colleagues, I would like to state here for the record that I believe the government of my country made a strategic mistake and committed a grave injustice by blocking the Schengen accession of Bulgaria and Romania.

Paolo Borchia (ID). – Signor Presidente, signori Commissari, signor Ministro, onorevoli colleghi, anche il 2022 giunge alla sua conclusione ma purtroppo rimangono aperti tanti degli interrogativi che denunciavamo prima dell'estate.

Restano in primo luogo irrisolte tante incertezze sui prezzi dell'energia ed è solo di ieri l'ultima fumata nera da parte del Consiglio straordinario dell'energia svoltosi a Bruxelles.

Io avrei voluto dire alla Presidente von der Leyen, prima che abbandonasse l'Aula a dibattito in corso, che accelerare sulla transizione energetica significa non avere capito che il problema è la tabella di marcia del Green Deal, totalmente irrealistica.

La Presidente ha poi parlato di preservare il mercato interno, che va benissimo, ma è evidente che se intervengono soltanto i governi che hanno spazio fiscale, così facendo si spacca l'Europa.

Troppa filosofia, troppa ideologia e poca attenzione per competitività e per difesa dei posti di lavoro. Così non si va lontano.

Charlie Weimers (ECR). – Mr President, Commissioner Vestager, Mr Bek, the energy crisis is bad now, and it will get worse next winter. There isn't enough production, supply nor import capacity. You progressives fought for the shut-down of nuclear power, resisted the restart of reactors, refused extraction, and restricted the use of branches, tops and twigs from logging in bioenergy. You push for new, expensive climate legislation. You claimed renewables offered salvation. You refused to classify nuclear as sustainable in the EU taxonomy. How do you think it's working out?

Madam President, a price cap won't make up for zealotry. It won't resolve the underlying problem, which is lack of supply. Europe needs a moratorium on new climate legislation. It needs gas drilling, the restart to nuclear, and that we stop the mindless attack on Nordic bioenergy. It's time to take a stand for people who are losing their jobs and for the pensioners in Sweden calling helplines in desperation as they cannot afford to heat their homes.

Márton Gyöngyösi (NI). – Mr President, looking back at and evaluating the year 2022, it is fair to say that it will enter our history books as the year when, after eight decades of peace, Europe once again is engaged in an all-out war against autocratic regimes. This is the great challenge of our generation. We have to defend it at our borders in Ukraine against an authoritarian aggressor. But we also have to defend it within our ranks vis-à-vis, *par excellence*, hybrid regimes like Orbán's in Hungary.

The Commission and the European Parliament have acted with exemplary speed and determination in sanctioning Russia. Now, just the same way as corrupt bureaucrats or MEPs undermine the reputation of our institutions, so do authoritarian and corrupt governments of certain Member States. Why the double standards then? Why do we sanction one and not the other? If you will ever have the courage to sanction the representatives of the Orbán regime directly and have problems identifying the friends, relatives or cronies of Viktor Orbán, then please let me know. I'll be happy to help. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Paulo Rangel (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Ministro Mikuláš Bek, Vice-Presidente Margrethe Vestager, começo, naturalmente, por felicitar a Croácia pela sua adesão ao Espaço Schengen, mas também por dizer que é uma enorme desilusão, uma enorme injustiça saber que o governo da Áustria e o governo dos Países Baixos não aceitaram a entrada da Roménia e da Bulgária no Espaço Schengen. A Roménia e a Bulgária cumprem todas as condições para serem membros plenos do Espaço Schengen. Espero que o Conselho Europeu trate deste assunto e o resolva em tempo útil.

Para além disso, espero também que o Conselho Europeu dê o estatuto de candidato à Bósnia-Herzegovina. Será um sinal importantíssimo para este país, que precisa de incentivos. Será um sinal importantíssimo para os Balcãs Ocidentais.

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Queria também deixar aqui uma mensagem à Presidente da Comissão sobre as interconexões energéticas. Em Alicante, Emmanuel Macron, Pedro Sánchez e António Costa falaram do novo gasoduto, mas este não resolve os problemas. Não trataram da questão essencial para as renováveis na Península Ibérica, que são as interconexões elétricas nos Pireneus. Sobre isto nada se disse, sobre isto não há acordo. Trata-se de um impasse enorme na criação de uma nova ligação energética entre a Península Ibérica e o continente europeu.

Javier Moreno Sánchez (S&D). – Señor presidente, señorías, son tiempos convulsos para el Parlamento Europeo, pero son, sobre todo, tiempos difíciles para los ciudadanos y las ciudadanas. La inflación está llevando el hambre y el frío a muchos hogares europeos. Muchas pymes no pueden pagar la factura energética y tienen que cerrar. Al mismo tiempo, las compañías energéticas siguen especulando para enriquecerse de manera escandalosa.

Más que nunca, nuestros Gobiernos deben gobernar para la gente y poner la economía al servicio de los ciudadanos, y no al revés, con políticas directas para protegerles. La Unión Europea debe aprender de sus errores del pasado y, frente a la austeridad que fracasó en la crisis financiera, debe imponerse la defensa de la solidaridad y la cohesión social. Por eso hay que bajar los precios de la energía, proteger a los ciudadanos con un incremento del salario mínimo y garantizar una renta mínima para los más desfavorecidos. El Consejo Europeo de esta semana deberá adoptar medidas urgentes y los recursos financieros adecuados para ayudar a los que más lo necesitan. El frío no espera.

Dacian Ciolos (Renew). – Doamnă vicepreședintă domnule ministru, aș vrea să vă vorbesc astăzi despre un subiect care, din păcate, nu este încă pe agenda Consiliului, dar care nu văd cum poate fi evitat pentru că a devenit un subiect politic european. E vorba de aderarea României și Bulgariei la Schengen și de veto-ul nedrept prin care Austria a blocat acest proces. Din această cauză, în România foarte mulți oameni sunt furioși. Se vorbește despre boicotarea firmelor și produselor austriece, despre ochi pentru ochi, se inflamează discursuri naționaliste și antieuropene.

Oamenii, pe bună dreptate, nu înțeleg de ce le este blocat un drept.

Cred că Consiliul European poate mai mult decât să ridice din umeri sau să amâne rezolvarea acestui blocaj, care este unul eminamente politic, al guvernului austriac. De aceea, aștept de la șefii de stat sau de guvern o abordare politică, o viziune despre o Europă unită, o soluție pentru rezolvarea acestui blocaj.

Aș vrea să găsesc în concluziile acestui Consiliu o recunoaștere a unei realități. România îndeplinește toate condițiile de aderare la Schengen și o cale de urmat pentru a ieși din acest impas trebuie să rezulte din concluziile acestui Consiliu, un impas care lovește în inima unității și solidarității europene. Și avem nevoie de solidaritate și încredere în Uniunea Europeană și nu în a inflama spirite naționaliste și antieuropene.

Sylvia Limmer (ID). – Herr Präsident! Das ist das Resultat ideologisch verblendeter Energiepolitik. Das ist das Ergebnis grüner Politik, sozusagen gelebter *Green Deal*. Frieren zu Hause, im Büro und in öffentlichen Gebäuden. Aber Energieeinsparzwang und drohende Energierationierungen sind lediglich die unmittelbaren Folgen ihres CO₂-Tunnelblicks, lächerlicher, volatiler erneuerbarer Energien und einer Sanktionspolitik, die zuallererst uns selbst schadet.

Diese Energiepolitik ist die Rückabwicklung unserer gesamten modernen Zivilisationsgeschichte, sie ist sozusagen Ihre Antithese. Und Sie? Ah, Frau von der Leyen, hat offensichtlich den Rückzug in ihr – vermutlich warmes – Büro bereits angetreten. Und Sie, der Europäische Rat, Ihre nicht gewählte EU-Kommission mit Legislativbefugnis und leider auch eine Mehrheit im EU-Parlament und ihre Politik sind eine Zumutung für alle Bürger.

Carlo Fidanza (ECR). – Signor Presidente, signor Vicepresidente, signor Ministro, onorevoli colleghi, il prossimo Consiglio europeo è chiamato a fornire risposte risolutive. Il sostegno all'Ucraina deve continuare, è l'unica premessa per una pace giusta e duratura, ma famiglie e imprese non possono permettersi ulteriori ritardi o misure inefficaci.

L'istituzione di un *price cap* in contrasto alla speculazione sul prezzo del gas, riforma del mercato dell'energia elettrica, sicurezza degli approvvigionamenti, fuori dalla solita retorica: è su queste scelte che si misurerà il tasso di ambizione europea dei singoli governi ed è su questo che anche il nuovo governo conservatore italiano si spenderà.

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Allo stesso modo valutiamo con favore l'attenzione dedicata finalmente al Mediterraneo centrale con il nuovo piano d'azione richiesto dall'Italia e presentato dalla Commissione. È tempo di passare dalle parole ai fatti: protezione delle frontiere esterne, approccio europeo all'asilo e ai rimpatri, ripristino della legalità per le navi ONG, investimenti significativi per portare sviluppo in Africa.

È necessario, infine, un immediato riequilibrio delle nostre relazioni transatlantiche dopo il varo del piano di sostegno all'economia americana. Servono strumenti nuovi poiché, se la risposta fosse affidata alle sole capacità di bilancio nazionale, il trentennale che celebreremo a gennaio potrebbe essere l'ultimo compleanno del mercato unico.

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Mr President, tomorrow's Council meeting promises to be a historic one. Today is a historic date: 27 years ago the Dayton Paris Peace Accord was signed in Paris. If the leaders of the Member States follow the recommendation of the Commission and their own ministers on European affairs, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be granted a candidate status. That means Bosnia and Herzegovina is sailing towards permanent peace and stability. We forgot this country, but we were awakened with the terrible war in Ukraine and we have to really take care of Bosnia and Herzegovina to find permanent peace and stability, in changing electoral law and giving all their people chances to live and to be an anchor of stability for the Western Balkans.

This also takes us back with the discussion that the Council will tomorrow have on EU security and defence policy and the implementation of the strategic compass. The current security challenges and the ongoing conflicts in our wider neighbourhood are reminders that we need a more proactive and preventive diplomacy.

We can learn from the EU actions in the South Caucasus and avoid the mistakes made in conflict areas such as the Sahel and Afghanistan. Member States need to step away from their individual interests and start building a joint capacity in external security policy.

Dan Nica (S&D). – Domnule vicepreședinte Karas, doamnă vicepreședintă Vestager, domnule ministru Bek, ne așteptăm ca acest Consiliu să aducă mult-așteptata plafonare a prețurilor la energie electrică și la gaze, pentru ca și în Uniunea Europeană cetățenii și firmele să poată să aibă acces la energie electrică și la gaze care să fie bazate pe prețul corect, adică prețul de producție sau prețul de import, plus o marjă europeană medie de 10-12 % a profitabilității. Puneți capăt speculațiilor, pentru că această iarnă va fi grea și imposibil de trecut și de cetățenii europeni, și de firmele europene.

În al doilea rând, mă aștept ca acest Consiliu să poată să discute despre atitudinea pe care Austria a avut-o în privința aderării României la spațiul Schengen, o atitudine incorectă, ilegală, antieuropeană și mă aștept să-i spuneți foarte clar domnului cancelar Nehammer că este prezent acolo în calitate de șef al guvernului Austriei, o țară profund europeană și nu în calitate de prieten al domnului Putin și mă aștept ca această atitudine să fie reparată, acest vot nedrept care a umilit o țară și un popor.

Și, domnule vicepreședinte Karas, vreau să vă mulțumesc personal pentru poziția dumneavoastră foarte corectă în privința aderării României la spațiul Schengen. Aveți mulțumirile mele și ale românilor.

Harald Vilimsky (ID). – Herr Präsident, meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren! Sie debattieren hier die Ratssitzung für den 15. Dezember, und da steht auch die Frage Ukraine-Russland und die mögliche Hilfszahlung hier im Raum. Sie haben die Ungarn hier sehr kritisiert, die das blockiert haben, weil – so hat es geheißen – hier in Ungarn möglicherweise Korruption vorherrscht.

Ich habe das Gefühl, dass Sie bei der Debatte heute die aktuellen Vorwürfe komplett negieren, nämlich dass hier über 20 Durchsuchungen im Bereich der Sozialdemokraten stattgefunden haben, in Privatwohnungen, in Büros, dass hier über 1,5 Millionen Euro in diversen Plastiksackerln gefunden wurden, dass dieses Haus und Europa inmitten eines der größten Korruptionsskandale überhaupt steht. Das sollte hier Diskussion sein: die Glaubwürdigkeit, die völlig verloren gegangen ist. Auf der anderen Seite haben Sie es ja nicht nur bei den Sozialdemokraten, Sie haben es auch bei den Konservativen – Stichwort Pfizer, hier die Geheimhaltungspolitik der Kommission.

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Ich kann sagen, das, was diese Europäische Union hier noch in eine gute Zukunft führen kann: Ziehen Sie die Wahlen vor, gestalten Sie Europa in einer Art und Weise, dass all die Probleme, die wir jetzt haben, möglichst hinweggewählt werden können, und negieren Sie nicht das, was sich aktuell hier in der Europäischen Union an Skandalen manifestiert.

Daniel Caspary (PPE). – Herr Präsident, sehr geehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Wir haben in den letzten Tagen erlebt, was es bedeutet, wenn sich die Europäische Union für Rechtsstaatlichkeit einsetzt. Wir haben erlebt, dass der Rat, die Kommission, das Parlament gemeinsam standen, und deshalb haben wir hinbekommen, dass Gelder nach Ungarn nicht ausgezahlt werden.

Sehr geehrter Herr Kollege Vilimsky, das ist auch genau der Unterschied zu dem, was Sie gesagt haben: Bei uns im Europäischen Parlament arbeiten wir nämlich solche Vorwürfe auf. Wenn jemand etwas macht, dann ermittelt die Staatsanwaltschaft, dann ermitteln im Zweifel Polizisten, und das geht dann vor Gericht. Das ist auch der Unterschied zu Ungarn, wo eben Korruption stattfindet und diejenigen nicht angeklagt werden, nicht vor Gericht gehen und wir die Sorge haben müssen, dass dieser Missbrauch nicht geahndet wird. Genau deshalb ist es richtig, dass wir beides machen, nämlich hier im Haus die Vorwürfe aufgreifen und aufarbeiten, aber auf der anderen Seite auch sicherstellen, dass Länder, wo die Regierungen fragwürdig unterwegs sind – wie in Polen oder Ungarn –, die Gelder nicht bekommen. Nehmen Sie das doch bitte endlich mal zur Kenntnis.

Deswegen für das Wochenende: Ich wünsche mir, dass die Staats- und Regierungschefs bei diesem Weg weitergehen, dass die Vorschläge, die die Kommissionspräsidentin heute hier gemacht hat, bei den Staats- und Regierungschefs auch eine Mehrheit finden. Ich denke, wir sind damit auf einem guten Weg, unseren Kontinent in bessere Tage zu führen.

Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques (S&D). – No próximo Conselho as soluções energéticas e as respostas económicas têm que caminhar lado a lado. Precisamos de estender o mecanismo ibérico que já permitiu a Portugal reduzir as faturas da energia das famílias e das empresas, num valor de 360 milhões de euros face ao cenário sem este mecanismo.

Precisamos de pôr em prática aquisições conjuntas de gás para conseguir preços mais favoráveis e precisamos de acelerar a reforma estrutural do mercado de eletricidade que a Comissão tem prometido. São as famílias e as nossas economias que temos de defender, é a saúde dos nossos cidadãos, que depende do calor das suas casas que temos de preservar.

É por isso que o grupo dos socialistas e democratas está a propor um pacote de emergência energética, sinalizando verbas para o efeito no orçamento europeu. Desejamos que o resultado deste Conselho alivie o problema energético que estamos a viver, de modo a que cidadãos europeus possam iniciar o ano de 2023 com a esperança de dias melhores.

Ioan-Rareș Bogdan (PPE). – Excelențele voastre, membrii Consiliului au șansa de a repara mâine mizeria făcută României prin blocarea aderării la Schengen. Îi vor face, altfel, un serviciu cancelarului Karl Nehammer. Cancelarul Austriei riscă să piardă alegerile din țara sa pentru că valul de antipatie stârnit prin blocarea României se poate transforma în bumerang la alegerile din ianuarie.

Companiile austriece prezente în România, care asigură 7 % din PIB-ul Austriei, adică 32 de miliarde de euro, fac deja presiuni asupra guvernului de la Viena să revină asupra votului său, considerând votul profund nedrept. Întreaga presă austriacă: Die Presse, Österreichische Zeitung, Der Standard, Kurier, ORF, până și cea oficială critică în cor atitudinea profund antieuropeană a cancelarului austriac. Îl acuză că își izolează țara, că își pedepsește propriile companii, că distruge reputația Austriei. Și vă spun ceva, Herr Nehammer, nimeni nu a câștigat vreodată un război cu presa! Nimeni, niciodată!

Austria nu a respectat actele normative ale UE și, prin urmare, încalcă statul de drept. Cetățenii austrieci trebuie să știe că, din această cauză, țara sa se poate alege cu fonduri europene blocate.

Și încă ceva, Herr Nehammer: piatra lui David, căruia puțini îi dădeau o șansă, l-a nimerit, totuși, pe Goliat. Atenție la ce ați pornit cu țara mea !

Noi nu uităm, chiar dacă iertăm.

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În schimb, îi mulțumesc vicepreședintelui Othmar Karas pentru modul absolut european în care a procedat și pentru poziția pe care o are chiar dacă contrazice propriul președinte de partid.

Christel Schaldemose (S&D). – Hr. Formand! Ærede kolleger, kommissær! Vi har nu haft det indre marked i 30 år. Vi har formålet – med en åben økonomi – at få skabt en retfærdig ramme for konkurrencen. En lige konkurrence. Det har skabt arbejdspladser, og det har skabt vækst. Nu står vi i en ny global situation, hvor vi er udfordret fra Kina med deres statsstøtte og fra USA med ikke mindst den nye »Inflation Reduction Act«. Ursula von der Leyen talte også om det.

Min opfordring her i dag er, at være meget, meget varsom i de løsninger, der skal findes til rådsmødet og i Kommissionen. Vi har brug for at beskytte vores indre marked imod at blive fragmenteret. Det er et rigtig, rigtig vigtigt, men vi skal heller ikke opbygge for mange barrierer for en åben økonomi. Vi har virkelig brug for at sikre en ordentlig balance i det her.

Så når I arbejder med de her ting, så prøv at gøre det godt og retfærdigt og åbent og fremtidssikret. Og det handler simpelthen om, at vi skal undgå et fragmenteret indre marked. Jeg tror på I kan, men husk balancerne. Det er helt afgørende. Ellers kan vi ikke fejre de næste 30 år for det indre marked.

Dolors Montserrat (PPE). – Señor presidente, nos enfrentamos a grandes desafíos, como la crisis energética y económica, que merecen una respuesta coordinada en toda Europa. Pero también nos jugamos el prestigio de nuestras instituciones y la fortaleza de nuestras democracias.

Por eso, hoy pregunto al Consejo y a la Comisión: ¿comparten que se rebajen las penas a corruptos en el Código Penal, siendo esos mismos corruptos quienes lo están pidiendo? ¿Comparten que se supriman delitos que protegen al Estado frente a ataques a la democracia, porque los que la atacan así lo han pedido? ¿Comparten que, en lugar de fortalecer las instituciones y garantizar la independencia del Tribunal Constitucional, se cambien las reglas del juego para colocar a miembros de un Gobierno en él y que, así, influyan en sus decisiones?

Entiendo que no. Pues eso ocurre hoy en España con su Gobierno. Afrontemos juntos todos los retos y las amenazas que tenemos en Europa, por supuesto, pero no podemos callarnos cuando nuestras democracias se debilitan. Yo no lo haré.

VORSITZ: EVELYN REGNER

Vizepräsidentin

Spontane Wortmeldungen

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señor presidente en ejercicio del Consejo, señora presidenta de la Comisión, en las conclusiones de la Conferencia sobre el Futuro de Europa, hay una que coincide con una vieja aspiración del Grupo Socialista de este Parlamento Europeo: acabar con los vetos de la unanimidad en cualquier decisión que no concierna a los aspectos constitucionales, los valores comunes, la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea y la ampliación.

¿Tiene sentido la unanimidad en materia de energía? ¿Tiene sentido la unanimidad en materia de fiscalidad? Y, sobre todo, ¿tiene sentido la unanimidad para vetar el acceso al espacio Schengen de Bulgaria y Rumanía? Celebramos el acceso de Croacia, pero es una injusticia que se continúe impidiendo a Bulgaria y Rumanía el pleno disfrute del artículo 45 de la Carta de los Derechos Fundamentales de la Unión Europea: la libertad de circulación.

Y esa injusticia requiere una acción política. Y este Parlamento quiere apoyar cualquier acción política y judicial que quiera repararla porque, de otro modo, estamos alimentando exclusivamente el euroescepticismo y la eurofobia, actitudes antieuropeas, en dos Estados miembros. No puede ser que dos Estados miembros de veintisiete hayan vetado a dos Estados miembros que hace tiempo que cumplen los criterios técnicos y políticos que se les han requerido.

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Por tanto, es hora de reparar esa injusticia con cualquier acción política y judicial al alcance de la Comisión.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, opakovaně zde z různých stran zaznělo ocenění českého předsednictví a já bych se chtěla připojit. Bylo to upřímné a mě těší, že Česká republika v této těžké době pomohla nést břemeno Evropské unie.

Je jasné, že na všechna ta dnešní i zítřejší jednání se díváme očima dopadu ruské agrese proti Ukrajině. To, co denně vidíme, jak Rusové dále útočí, potvrzuje, že jsme se rozhodli správně a že je to jediná cesta pro nás, i když nás to dnes stojí mnoho. Ale v budoucnosti by nás to stálo mnohem více, kdybychom takto jednoznačně nereagovali. Z mnoha úkolů, které vás zítra čekají, si budete muset vybrat jen několik, a to těch zásadních, kterým občané budou rozumět. Pokud chceme zlepšit bezpečnost, je třeba přijmout Rumunsko i Bulharsko do Schengenu a pomoci jim bránit vnější hranice, zastropování cen dováženého plynu pro zlepšení energetické situace a podpora Ukrajiny nejen slovy, ale hlavně zbraněmi. Přeji Vám hodně sil do budoucích let.

Margarida Marques (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, queria felicitar o Conselho pelo acordo tardio de há dois dias. Ultrapassaram o veto da Hungria, podemos agora aprovar a taxa global e avançar com o apoio à Ucrânia em 18 mil milhões de euros.

Fizaram funcionar a condicionalidade do Estado de direito, obrigando a Hungria a fazer reformas, congelando o financiamento europeu à Hungria. Parabéns, Presidência. No entanto, não podemos continuar reféns do veto e temos que estar atentos à forma como este pacote é implementado.

É positivo ver o ponto das interconexões energéticas na agenda e, aqui, destaco o acordo Portugal-Espanha-França, tão importante para acabar com a ilha ibérica, tão importante para a promoção e para o aprofundamento do mercado interno da energia e da união para a energia.

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, doamnă comisar, stimați colegi, tema de astăzi: criza energetică și efectele, războiul, securitatea, relațiile transatlantice, toate duc efecte spre cetățean. Dar recunosc că sunt surprinsă că pe ordinea de zi a Consiliului din 15 decembrie nu apare și această problemă care trenează de 11 ani, și anume discuția legată de votul absolut aberant și neacoperitor juridic al Austriei, de fapt al cancelarului, nu al cetățenilor din Austria. De aceea, vă rog, doamna comisar, pe dumneavoastră, președinția cehă, insistați să se reia acest vot care nu este acoperit juridic și mulțumesc colegilor și președintelui Comisiei LIBE și tuturor colegilor care au semnat o scrisoare pe care am dorit să o transmitem Comisiei Europene ca semnal că trebuie să urgentați procedurile de modificare a Tratatului, să scăpăm de această unanimitate care blochează tot ce muncim noi aici, în Parlamentul European. Sper ca România și Bulgaria să intre cât mai rapid în Schengen și asta însemnând imediat ce începem anul viitor, pentru că este dreptul lor și piața unică nu este piață unică, este o piață fragmentată și, în acest context, nu putem avea competitivitate.

(Ende der spontanen Wortmeldungen)

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, it has been a very interesting debate. I think it has been comforting for everyone listening to hear the very, very sharp condemnation of the corruption. And I think it's really important that that is being said.

As speakers have said today, as a first sentence, showing the willingness to take action. Because people should know that this House is not a corrupt House, that the European institutions are not corrupt institutions. I think that is absolutely essential.

Also for voters, for citizens as such, to appreciate the results that have been achieved. It is really, really impressive how this House has answered the calls from all of Europe in order to pass legislation that will change reality on the ground.

So I want to congratulate you on these results in these last weeks and days before Christmas that the House shows we listen and we deliver.

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I also hear and feel the disappointment over the discussions over Schengen and the decisions taken there. As you will know from the Commission side, we were ready with a full recommendation, having followed very closely the preparation, the changes, the reforms in the countries that were ready to join.

Of course, we will keep working for a full result for a full Schengen Area that can serve European citizens as the Schengen Area should serve our citizens.

And maybe what I hope and what the President also presented in her speech, the focus on where we are as Europeans, because a lot of work this year has been dealing with the question of the energy crisis. And I do appreciate and share the empathy shown by so many speakers of the difficulties in some families to heat their homes.

The thing is that in everything we do to tackle the urgency, we need to make sure that we keep a direction for a Europe that is truly decarbonised, for a Europe that is truly competitive, for a Europe that is truly inclusive. And part of that is indeed the single market. I'm really appreciative of the mention of that. We are now celebrating 30 years first thing in the New Year. That single market needs to be continuously nurtured, tendered, cleaned-up, in order to make sure that every business, every citizen can make the most of it. The paradox, of course, is that even in crisis, even with our emergency measures, we need the fundamentals to work and the single market is part of our fundamentals.

And the second of our fundamentals is that Europe is the most preferred trading partner for 74 countries on this planet. And that openness has created prosperity for Europeans to build welfare states all over Europe for decades with no end. Things are changing, but we should not let go of the fundamentals, our ambitions when it comes to cleaning-up Europe, for the Green Deal to be our growth strategy, for the single market to help us out, for Europe to be a continent that work with others.

The changes that we are presenting, they are changes that build on those fundamentals but take, you know, the context into consideration because new measures are needed. We should make the most, and we will discuss that shortly, of the interpretation of the Inflation Reduction Act in order for European businesses not to be discriminated. We must make sure that businesses in the green sector that they can be supported in order to compete fair and square with the same sector in the US.

But since state aid depends on Member State discussions and Member State pockets and the depth of those pockets, it is really important that we press on for the third element, which is to have a truly European fund in order to support European industry for every Member State and every part of these supply chains, when it comes to green, to feel included.

And last but not least, to accelerate the Green Transition, because the only real promise that we can give to European industry is the promise of affordable, stable, decarbonised energy to be provided on this wonderful continent, and for that REPowerEU has just been agreed upon. For that, I want to thank you. This is a major step forward.

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, Vice-President of the Commission, honourable Members, thank you for your remarks and comments. I will convey them to the President of the European Council.

To conclude, leaders will be addressing key challenges facing us this winter with regard to our safety and security, our continued access to affordable energy supply, and the strength and resilience of our economy.

Some of you have expressed your frustration regarding the lack of agreement regarding the full application of Schengen to Romania and Bulgaria, mentioning the impact of national vetoes. We will have the opportunity to discuss the issue of vetoes later today, and I look forward to what will certainly be an interesting debate.

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Regarding Schengen, I should reiterate that completing the Schengen area with all Member States who fulfil the conditions was a priority of our Presidency and we are very pleased that Croatia was able to take this important step. Bulgaria and Romania fulfil the conditions for the full application of the Schengen acquis, and we commend both countries for all their achievements. The Council will continue to work hard to ensure that we can welcome them into the Schengen family soon.

Regarding the price cap, let me assure you that the Czech Presidency is working literally day and night, and we are confident that we will achieve results in the course of the next week.

As regards the need to support Ukraine with weapons, let me underline that Europe is doing its homework. A number of Member States have been providing military equipment to Ukraine since the very outset of the war, including my own country, which literally emptied its own stocks, and Czech factories are churning out ammunition for Ukraine at an exceptional rate.

On sanctions: the EU adopted the biggest and most ambitious ever set of sanctions today and will continue to work on more sanctions, as needed and as long as necessary. Beyond the sanctions, the EU will continue to support Ukraine with economic and military equipment. On this aspect, I should highlight again the important agreement reached at the Foreign Affairs Council on the reinforcement of the European Peace Facility, which will provide greater sustainability to this crucial instrument for supporting Ukraine's war effort.

On the international front in general, maintaining strong ties with our allies will be crucial, whether that is in our southern neighbourhood, across the Atlantic or in the Western Balkans. Here, I once again recall yesterday's Council's recommendation to the European Council to approve the candidate status of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Madam President, Vice-President Vestager, honourable Members, today is the last day that I have the privilege to address this plenary in my capacity as the representative of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and I would like to thank President von der Leyen, Mr Weber, Mr Lamberts and others for your words of appreciation. The Czech Presidency is not over yet and, indeed, we will continue together working hard until the very last moment to make it a success, and thereafter.

I would like to take this opportunity already now to thank you very much for the cooperation between our institutions. We have together achieved a lot, and it has been an honour and a pleasure indeed. As from next year, I will pass on the relay baton to my Swedish colleague, Jessika Roswall, whom I wish all the best.

Meanwhile, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and look forward to our other exchanges, which we will have today. Thank you very much, once again, for your attention.

Die Präsidentin. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Joachim Stanisław Brudziński (ECR), na piśmie. – Grudniowe posiedzenie Rady Europejskiej to ważna okazja, by zastanowić się nad najistotniejszymi wyzwaniami, przed którymi aktualnie stoją kraje Unii Europejskiej. Konsekwencje trwającej wciąż agresji Rosji na Ukrainę przekraczają granice Ukrainy, a wszyscy odczuwamy je coraz dotkliwiej. O ile Europa Zachodnia odczuwa ogromny wzrost cen energii, to sam naród ukraiński musi mierzyć się ze zniszczeniami dużo bardziej złożonymi: z brakiem ogrzewania, dostaw wody i energii elektrycznej w wyniku regularnych ataków na infrastrukturę krytyczną tego kraju. To wszystko, w dodatku w trakcie zimy, jest wyzwaniem dla obrońców niepodległości Ukrainy, dla nas wszystkich zaś wezwaniem do solidarnej pomocy.

Jednym z tematów spotkania Rady ma być kwestia energii i sytuacji ekonomicznej. Europejczycy płacą teraz rachunek za lata nieodpowiedzialnej polityki energetycznej, opartej na uzależnieniu od płynącego z Rosji gazu. Jak błędna była ta polityka, zrozumiała już chyba większość mieszkańców Europy. Trzeba jednak zrobić wszystko, by zdywersyfikować źródła dostaw energii, ustabilizować ceny, pomóc przetrwać najtrudniejsze zimowe miesiące najbardziej potrzebującym pomocy, by w końcu przemyśleć politykę energetyczną Wspólnoty. Ostrzegaliśmy przed projektem Nord Stream, następnie Nord Stream II, jednak głosu z Polski nie słuchano. To trzeba zmienić i wyciągnąć wnioski, by drugi raz nie powtarzać tych samych błędów.

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Ivan Štefanec (PPE), písomne. – Teší ma, že Európska rada má v pláne opätovne potvrdiť, že dôrazne odsudzuje útočnú vojnu Ruska proti Ukrajine a plne podporuje jej nezávislosť, zvrchovanosť a územnú celistvosť. Dobrou správou bude aj to, že EÚ poskytne v roku 2023 pomoc Ukrajine vo výške 18 miliárd EUR, ako aj zintenzívni poskytovanie humanitárnej pomoci a obnovu kritickej infraštruktúry krajiny. Tiež je nevyhnutné zabezpečiť účinné vykonávanie reštriktívnych opatrení, zabrániť ich obchádzaniu a opätovne vyzývať všetky krajiny, aby sa k nám pripojili. V kontexte riešenia energetickej krízy treba posilniť solidaritu prostredníctvom lepšej koordinácie nákupu plynu, cezhraničnej výmeny a spoľahlivých referenčných cien. S cieľom postupne ukončiť závislosť EÚ od fosílnych palív z Ruska a urýchliť zelenú transformáciu je nesmierne dôležité zvýšiť investície do inovácie, infraštruktúry a prepojení, a do projektov v oblasti energetickej efektívnosti.

4. ES reakcija uz ASV Inflācijas samazināšanas likumu (debates)

Die Präsidentin. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über die Erklärungen des Rates und der Kommission zu der Reaktion der EU auf das amerikanische Gesetz zur Senkung der Inflation (2022/2997(RSP)).

Mikuláš Bek, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, honourable Members, Vice-President of the Commission, the topic of possible repercussions of the US Inflation Reduction Act on the EU has been high on our political agendas in recent weeks and months. There are concerns in the Council that the discriminatory elements of the Inflation Reduction Act, which are designed to benefit US-based manufacturers without guaranteeing a level playing field, may have a negative impact on European companies.

The new US legislation, even if not in place yet, is already having an impact on the investment plans of our companies, and there is a clear potential for a more systemic impact on EU industry, in particular in sectors which are of crucial importance for our green transition. We are encouraged by recent positive statements of President Biden himself and the ongoing talks with the US administration. We will support any credible solutions that emerge out of these talks. But there is not much time left before the Inflation Reduction Act enters into force.

While the cooperation with our US partners in addressing the most concerning aspects of the Inflation Reduction Act will remain important, we will also need to consider in parallel what we can do at European level to support the competitiveness and resilience of our companies, the attractiveness of the EU as an investment location and reinforce our ability to step up our green transition in this crucial moment.

We will collectively need to consider the appropriate measures. For instance, regarding efficiency of State aid and industrial policy to decisively address the distortions created by the Inflation Reduction Act or any other future measures that put our companies and the European economy at a competitive disadvantage.

The US programme comes at a moment where high energy prices are already having a considerable negative impact on our industries and our competitiveness. The EU should be proactive and double the efforts already under way to extend trade opportunities for our companies and improve access to raw materials, in particular those which are of essential importance for the green transition. Europe has been very active on this front with key agreements under way or just concluded, like the very recent modernisation of the free trade agreement with Chile, thus showing Europe's continued engagement with partners on this positive agenda. Europe needs to act swiftly and the upcoming European Council will bring a timely opportunity to hold a dedicated debate on our transatlantic relations.

Finally, let me underline that while we are continuing engaging with the US on the Inflation Reduction Act, our strategic partnership remains stronger than ever as Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine shows the crucial importance of the transatlantic bond for our as well as global security. Thank you very much for your attention.

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, honourable Members, thank you for this opportunity to present the Commission's engagement with the US on the Inflation Reduction Act. The competitiveness of European industry faces a double challenge. First, Russia's war and the weaponisation of energy supply has led to an extraordinary increase in energy prices in Europe. As we just discussed, this is also hitting many households very hard. And also because of that the dramatic increase in the price differences between Europe and the US in particular.

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Second, the US Inflation Reduction Act provides generous incentives for investing in the US, including in some ways that are discriminatory against European companies and other companies as well. The EU has encouraged the US for a very long time to increase its climate action, to do more. The Inflation Reduction Act is an important initiative to deliver on this and the Commission is fully supportive of the climate goals that the US is trying to achieve with the Inflation Reduction Act.

So far for the good news. Because the Inflation Reduction Act discriminates against EU producers and exports. Many of the green subsidies come with local content, assembly, manufacturing requirements. The effect will be felt not only by EU manufacturers of key final products to enable the green transition, but also their suppliers of upstream components within the European Union, including highly specialised small and medium-sized businesses.

The Inflation Reduction Act is therefore a very strong pull factor to move investment and jobs to the US at the cost of partners and allies like the EU. This is counterproductive in terms of climate and sustainability outcomes. It's also a violation of international trade rules. But in a wider sense, it goes against the spirit of our transatlantic partnership. And we have made this clear with the Biden Administration.

Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis and I discussed this in clear terms during the Trenton Technology Council meeting with our counterparts, Secretary Blinken, Secretary Raimondo and Trade Representative Tai. It is fair to say that the Inflation Reduction Act was prominent in our discussions in Maryland last week. And as a result, we heard a clear statement from Secretary Blinken committing to address EU concerns, building on the comments by President Biden given a few days later.

But they also contended that any legislative changes would be difficult. So what we need to see now is that these political commitments made by the US, that they translate into concrete solutions in the implementation of the act to limit the damage as much as possible.

This is the aim of the task force which has been set up between the European Commission and the White House. It will continue working hard with the aim of seeing results by the end of this year, because that is also the timing for guidance of the US Treasury to implement the Inflation Reduction Act.

We already have war in Europe, the last thing we need is a trade war on top. Through the Trade and Technology Council, and in particular when you look at the work that we've been doing on semiconductors, well, we have shown that a collaborative transatlantic approach to industrial subsidies, that is possible. And this should be the guiding principles for these sectors, the green sectors, the clean-tech sectors that we are discussing as well.

While we keep working with our US partners to avoid negative consequences for Europe of the US Inflation Reduction Act, we need to continue pushing for Europe to become a decarbonised, low-energy-price continent. And for that to happen as soon as possible. The attainment of the Green Deal's objective for Europe to become a climate-neutral continent by 2050, that should not be put at risk.

The Green Deal is the European growth strategy, and we need to accompany our industries in meeting the ambitious targets. It is therefore of fundamental importance that the European Union stays an attractive place for innovation, for investment in sectors that are strategic to the green transition. Those are not all sectors. Those are specific sectors.

To facilitate this, just to face the energy crisis, as you well know, in March this year we put in place a temporary crisis framework. This enables Member States to help businesses that face extraordinary increases in energy prices, and we have been reviewing it constantly to ensure that it remains adapted to the needs of the business community. But in the current context, in the combination of huge price differences, the effects of the Inflation Reduction Act, we need to make sure that it is even simpler, even faster, even more targeted, while not losing sight of the need to preserve a level playing field to keep the single market together. And in this context, yesterday we launched a consultation of Member States in particular to seek their views on the following three issues.

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First, how to further simplify the granting of aid for the rollout of renewable energy. Second, how to further simplify the granting of aid to decarbonise production processes of industry. And thirdly, whether it is necessary to support certain types of productive investment in strategic sectors for the green transition.

If supported by the result of the consultation of Member States, targeted adaptations of our temporary framework could serve as a bridge to real European solutions in the medium term. The whole of the EU, and not only the richest regions and Member States, should be able to preserve a strong industrial base. And that is why we need a European fund to complement existing instruments and to help ensure a fair green transition in all of Europe.

Finally, public support cannot do it all. Europe urgently needs to become a decarbonised, low-energy-price continent. State aid can be a short-term solution to the current challenges, but to be competitive on the world stage, we must make further efforts to remove single market barriers – barriers that unfortunately still exist.

With the RepowerEU plan we have together given a new impetus to the rollout of renewables. But more work is ahead of us to make the decarbonisation of our energy system happen fast and to bring the benefits of a high share of renewables in the energy mix to consumers in a lasting way.

President. – Before we come to the list of the group speakers, I just would like to ask colleagues the following: we need to be very disciplined concerning speaking time; the next point on our agenda is the Sakharov Prize ceremony and everybody should speak in this round, otherwise we have some problems with the catch-the-eye, so really stick to your speaking time, please.

Esther de Lange, on behalf of the PPE Group. – Madam President, three years ago in this room the Green Deal was compared to putting a man on the moon. And indeed at the time we were afraid that others would wreck our launchpad through unfair competition. Now the US, with the Inflation Reduction Act, is building its own launchpad. And if we're not careful, they're beating us at our own game, with our approach, but better tools in their toolbox. And we shouldn't sit here and take it just because it's our friends, the Americans.

That's why the EPP welcomes the ideas put on the table by the Commission this morning. But we should do more. Rather than the immediate more-subsidies reflex, we should first redirect money remaining in existing funds to strategic infrastructure for key sectors. And this should be done cross-border – because let's be fair, this is what's lacking in the current funds. Our State aid and competition rules, it has been said, should become more strategic and more flexible, as should the upside process. And our budget, which is set in concrete for seven years, is of course not helping – there we need change and we urgently need own resources to address these new challenges.

And finally, if the talks that are ongoing and that are good with the US do not lead to results, we should not be afraid of standing up for more 'Made in Europe'. And on that note, Madam President, in time, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I am sure we will revisit this topic after the break.

Bernd Lange, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Madam President, Madam Executive Vice-President Margrethe, I guess, there's no doubt about it, we need a partnership with the United States in this time of trouble all round, on the green transition, on the war in Ukraine, as Margrethe said.

But, of course, partnerships need also trust. And my feeling at the moment, and I'm really sad about that, that the behaviour of the United States in the last two months is really a push away from a real good partnership.

'Might makes it right' might be the principle of some people in the United States, and this is really undermining our cooperation. Margrethe mentioned the very good cooperation at the TTC, but we need also good cooperation on the green transition and it should not lead to a substitute race. We should really stick to the international trading rules and we should defend this. We have a lot of tools in our toolbox to defend the rules-based trading system, and we should use them if the United States is not able to cooperate in a proper way.

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Stéphanie Yon-Courtin, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente, chère Vice-Présidente exécutive Vestager, chers collègues, la loi sur la réduction de l'inflation impose un constat sans appel: l'OMC est au point mort; nos partenaires commerciaux privilégient leur économie.

Nous avons besoin d'un réveil européen. Les crises successives nous ont montré notre dépendance en médicaments, en matériaux ou en gaz. Dans ce contexte, nos partenaires investissent massivement pour protéger leur économie et leurs emplois. Nous l'avons rappelé plusieurs fois au sein de cet hémicycle: il faut réindustrialiser, numériser et décarboner notre économie pour regagner notre souveraineté européenne et mettre fin à nos dépendances. Cela ne doit pas rester un vœu pieux. Nos citoyens européens et nos entreprises européennes ne valent pas moins que les autres. Avec la législation sur les marchés numériques – le DMA – et le règlement sur les subventions étrangères, nous avons posé les bases de la fin de cette Europe naïve. Il est temps de nous donner les moyens d'atteindre les objectifs que nous nous sommes démocratiquement fixés.

Chers collègues, face au contexte actuel et aux réponses apportées par certains de nos partenaires étrangers, nous devons nous aussi protéger notre économie, nos emplois et nos ménages. Loin de nous recroqueviller sur nous-mêmes, redonnons à l'Union européenne sa place sur la scène des grandes puissances! L'Europe, ce marché de 460 millions de citoyens qui a su réagir, uni et en temps voulu, à la crise de la COVID-19 et à l'invasion en Ukraine, n'est pas une variable d'ajustement.

C'est mon souhait pour Noël: agissons ensemble d'urgence. Joyeux Noël!

Ernest Urtasun, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, the US Inflation Reduction Act has caught the EU unprepared and has also exposed the limitations of our economic policy. Times are changing and we know that the building-up of a new green and social contract will require greater involvement of public authorities in investment and market intervention. But, on the other hand, we need to size well the risks that the US measures pose for the EU in terms of competitiveness. The US wants to accelerate the Green Transition and this is most welcome, but we should also urge the US to respect fair economic cooperation. Unless we react, this package can make the US out-compete European players in the new economy.

The EU should reflect, then, firstly on how to build its own industrial push through a genuine European package. That should include, as has been mentioned this morning: a reform of state-aid rules – we are very much looking for that; the establishment of new investment instruments – and that is why we want to reiterate our call for a new EU Sovereignty Fund to accelerate the Green Transition; and also a swift adoption of the reform of our fiscal rules with a view to establishing a permanent fiscal capacity.

The EU, however, should also have the ambition of pushing this package in cooperation, not competition, with our global partners. That is why we believe that the EU should engage in the framework of the G20 in a coordinated investment push that would avoid – because this is also important – an endless round of WTO disputes.

Gunnar Beck, *on behalf of the ID Group*. – Madam President, the US Inflation Reduction Act is a misnomer. The Federal Reserve is taking care of inflation and, unlike the ECB, appears to be succeeding.

The act itself is promoting new energies, including nuclear energy. But, above all, it is a protectionist measure to promote US industry and to attract foreign and especially EU investment because soaring inflation and energy costs weaken EU-based producers.

The EU's response has been predictably weak. EU leaders are appealing to the US not to put America first, while they are putting Europe last. The EU is using COVID-19 and the Ukraine war to accelerate its own self-destructive climate change and pro-migration policies, which make us a laughing stock of the whole world. The Chinese even have a word for it, *baizuo*, Europe's 'woke' ideology, which compulsively draws us to self-destruction in the way a moth is drawn to and consumed by the flame.

Europe has recovered from two World Wars, but we will not recover from *baizuo* unless we face the reality of our decline and put our economic interest and our own people first. For, as Immanuel Kant said, 'ought implies can' and, as Machiavelli noted before, we often have to make tragic choices between saving ourselves or others: it is called the truth.

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Geert Bourgeois, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, mevrouw de vicevoorzitter, ik heb aandachtig naar u geluisterd. Ik heb gisteren ook uw opinie gelezen in onder andere de Vlaamse krant De Tijd. Succes met de taskforce die opgericht is. Ik hoop dat u er werkelijk in slaagt om de discriminatie van Europese bedrijven weg te werken.

Maar we hebben inderdaad ook Europees huiswerk. Akkoord met staatssteun voor zover die is gericht op innovatie, op hernieuwbare energie, op excellentie of bij marktfalen.

Maar uw tijdelijk crisiskader schept heel grote problemen, haalt het gelijke speelveld onderuit. Lees in dezelfde krant De Tijd de noodkreet van grote Vlaamse bedrijven, zoals Unilin, zoals Kronos, Aluminium Duffel. Zij kunnen niet concurreren tegen grote bedrijven uit grote lidstaten die genieten van massale staatssteun, en zij dreigen met sluiting geconfronteerd te worden.

Het vertrouwen in de EU zakt op die manier weg. Herstel het snel.

Helmut Scholz, *im Namen der Fraktion The Left*. – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Vizepräsidentin! Im Unterschied zu vielen Meinungen hier oder in der europäischen Industrie, die einen Wirtschaftskrieg heraufziehen sehen und irgendwie von der US-Regierung tief enttäuscht sind, meine ich: Wir sollten dem im September 2022 beschlossenen Gesetzespaket zur industriepolitischen Erneuerung unsere Anerkennung zollen, auch wenn ich den Grundsatz „America first!“ mehr als fraglich finde.

Worum geht es? Die Democrats haben es endlich geschafft, ein großes Investitionspaket für mehr Klimaschutz und erneuerbare Energien durch den Kongress zu bringen. Um das zu erreichen, musste die Regierung Biden/Harris die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen und den Klimaschutz in Einklang bringen – übrigens eine Kernforderung der Linken weltweit.

Die große US-amerikanische Verbraucherinnen- und Verbraucherschutzorganisation PublicCitizen, die Gewerkschaften und viele andere klatschen. Wer die Industriebrachen in der USA gesehen hat, der versteht, dass das ganze Land eine nachhaltige Reindustrialisierung benötigt. Die soll nun angeschoben werden, und zwar mit gewaltigen Mitteln und in genau jenen Technologiebereichen, die auch wir in Europa für die nachhaltige Transformation unserer Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft benötigen.

Wir müssen deshalb selbst in der EU Geld in die Hand nehmen und investieren, statt zu jammern und zu fordern, auch europäischen Unternehmen freien Zugang zu Subventionen aus dem Geld amerikanischer Steuerzahlerinnen und Steuerzahler zu gewähren. Im Kern geht es doch um die Neuaufstellung von Industrie- und Wirtschaftspolitik, und zwar mit Blick auf globale Notwendigkeiten. *Greening economies* – gute Arbeit, also *just green transition*.

Es ist richtig und notwendig, Klimapolitik mit Industriepolitik zu verbinden. Die 430 Milliarden scheinen gut investiert und sollen den USA eine Chance eröffnen, bei der Entwicklung entscheidender Technologien einen Spitzenrang zu erringen. China investiert in gleichem Maße. Wir sollten ihnen nacheifern und deshalb ebenfalls sofort einige 100 - Milliarden Euro in die Entwicklung von Technologien und endlich auch in Europa in deren Marktreife und Produktion investieren.

Milan Uhrík (NI). – Nikdy nezabudnem na ten smutný pohľad, keď americký prezident Biden z Bieleho domu oznámaval, že Amerika nedovolí Európe postaviť plynovod medzi Ruskom a Nemeckom, plynovod Nord Stream. Nemecký kancelár Scholz tam vedľa neho vtedy len ticho stál a šúchal nohami. Priatelia, toto bol pohľad na obraz zrazenej Európy. Američania nám povedali, aby sme prijali energetické sankcie. Európa vykonala, poslúchla a trpí. Potom Američania povedali, že nám budú predávať trojnásobne drahý LNG plyn. Európa poslúchla a platí. Teraz Američania povedali, že budú zvýhodňovať domácich výrobcov, vlastných amerických, a znevýhodňovať tým pádom európskych. A Európa sa len ticho prizera a mlčí. Pripájam sa k výzvam kolegov, aby vedenie Európskej únie konečne rázne a rozhodne podporilo európsky priemysel. To, že mnohí v Bruseli slúžia americkým záujmom, to už všetci vieme. Ale teraz je naozaj najvyšší čas postaviť sa konečne aj za tú našu Európu, za náš európsky priemysel.

Christophe Hansen (PPE). – Madam President, Executive Vice-President, Minister, the Inflation Reduction Act could have the unintended consequence of increasing our dependency on China as our companies might turn to less reliable alternatives if they are cut out of the American supply chains. This is a reality that President Biden and his administration also needs to acknowledge.

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But we have alternatives to a subsidy race to shore up the competitiveness of our industry and ensure access to critical raw materials needed for the green transition in Europe. We need to deliver – and we need to deliver now – on free trade agreements that are ready to go, and work on strategic partnerships quicker than ever. The most efficient way to react to the Inflation Reduction Act is to conclude and to ratify, during this legislative term, the agreements with Mexico, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, and not forgetting about Mercosur.

A trade war or a harmful race to the bottom in subsidies, picking winners or losers, is a recipe that has never worked before and is not the way forward. It would weaken our alliances and make our enemies only rejoice.

Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D). – Madam President, dear Commissioner and Minister Bek, it's overwhelmingly positive that finally the USA is also investing in climate change and engaging for these actions in the Inflation Reduction Act, just as we debated with the colleagues ten days ago in the Congress. Also we see that the third TTC Ministerial was also positive on its concrete outcomes, on digital infrastructure and charging point standardisation among others, and also the new labour dialogue.

However, the unintended consequences of this act, the Inflation Reduction Act, undermine this good work. The Inflation Reduction Act design seriously risks drawing investments away from Europe to the USA, and it violates US international trade commitments. If there is no satisfactory solution very soon, the EU response must be swift and it must at the same time respect the principles of our single market, the most powerful tool for our economy and global standing, with the right balance and targeted support for future-proof industries, we should establish retail and supply chains with like-minded allies and lay down the foundation of our own strategic autonomy, alongside – and not against – transatlantic allies.

Dita Charanzová (Renew). – Madam President, Madam Executive Vice-President, while the US and Europe are like-minded partners, both as democracies, but also economically, the Inflation Reduction Act threatens to undermine this partnership. Even if we don't have a trade agreement with the US, which I wish we had, we have many national and sectoral agreements. European vehicles must be seen as equivalent to American assembled vehicles. But the Inflation Reduction Act has larger consequences. It's a protectionist step which will launch a subsidy spiral between nations.

Less than 30 years ago, we created the WTO to ensure disputes were settled by discussions instead of trade wars. Yet here we go. However frustrated we are in this moment, it should not blind us to the value that free trade brings to Europe, that free trade brings to the European citizens. Let us not join the race to the bottom without thinking first.

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, Executive Vice-President, Minister, the protectionist way in which the United States is pushing the dearly-needed green transition of their own economy hurts our interests. Our friends and partners in the United States are deviating important investment from the European to the US markets, thus effectively promoting European deindustrialisation somewhat, even if unintended. That runs counter to our shared interest, also to their own. And it has effects beyond just the economic dimension because it contributes to a creeping crisis of trust.

Of course, I wish you well, Executive Vice-President, with the talks that you have ahead of you, but I will still reserve judgment as to what can effectively be done in the negotiations. So we have to focus on what we can do ourselves. I certainly support the reform of state aid rules. I think we should invest together, as Ernest Urtsun has emphasised, in a smart, fair and WTO-compatible way. And we should also go back to looking at the fragmentation that still exists in the single market and try to overcome that. One thing we should not do: we should not retaliate against protectionism with our own protectionism.

Zdzisław Krasnodębski (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Ja się zgadzam, że przedsiębiorstwa amerykańskie w Europie powinny być traktowane tak jak europejskie przedsiębiorstwa w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Konkurencja powinna być fair, ale czy konkurencja fair jest także zagwarantowana w samej Unii? 370 mld pomocy państwa w USA nam przeszkadza, 200 mld w Niemczech, te „Doppelwumms” Olafa Scholza – już nie. Czy nie jest to naruszenie zasady równości konkurencji wewnątrz Unii?

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Troska o dezindustrializację Europy jest jak najbardziej uzasadniona. Ale czy to niebezpieczeństwo jest tylko wynikiem amerykańskiego aktu zwalczania inflacji, czy też wieloletniej polityki Unii, błędnej polityki energetycznej oraz faktu, że cała gospodarka została podporządkowana zbyt wyśrubowanym celom klimatycznym?

Jérôme Rivière (NI). – Madame la Présidente, dans cette assemblée, où le mot *protectionnisme* est banni au point d'être considéré comme une grossièreté, on s'étonne qu'un pays, les États-Unis en l'occurrence, puisse protéger son industrie, ses emplois et ses habitants. C'est pourtant la mission première d'un État.

Comme à chaque fois, l'Union européenne idéalise la relation transatlantique, alors que l'approche américaine est avant tout pragmatique. Le président français, Emmanuel Macron, s'est rendu aux États-Unis pour dire à Joe Biden tout le mal qu'il pensait de cette loi sur la réduction de l'inflation. Naïveté ou jeu d'acteur? Un échec, en tout cas.

Nous sommes une fois de plus traités sans considération. L'Union européenne, ayatollah isolé du libre-échange immodéré, expose ainsi nos entreprises à une concurrence déséquilibrée, fragilisant notre tissu économique, nos emplois et le niveau de vie de nos concitoyens. Le fonds de souveraineté européen que veut mettre en place Thierry Breton est un leurre qui ne protégera pas suffisamment nos économies nationales.

Il est temps d'en finir avec ce dogme du libre-échange incontrôlé. Protégeons nos économies. Retrouvons le chemin d'un protectionnisme, que nous sommes le seul espace économique à avoir abandonné sur la planète.

Markus Ferber (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen, liebe Kollegen! Die europäische Wirtschaft steht vor enormen Herausforderungen. Kurzfristig sind es natürlich die hohen Energiekosten und die unterbrochenen Lieferketten, langfristig die Transformation hin zu einem kohlenstofffreien Wirtschaftsmodell.

Wir hätten in Europa also auch ohne das US-Anti-Inflations-Gesetz bereits genug zu tun. Deswegen können wir es nicht akzeptieren, wenn durch hohe Subventionen und eine *Buy-American*-Klausel das Fundament unserer europäischen Wirtschaft untergraben wird. Was können wir tun? Ich denke, wir sind uns einig, dass wir einen Handelskrieg derzeit nicht gebrauchen können. Deswegen sollte eine Lösung auf dem Verhandlungsweg angestrebt werden, möglichst schnell, Frau Vizepräsidentin.

Eine WTO-Klage oder Strafzölle sollten wir aber nicht ausschließen. Alle Optionen müssen auch auf den Tisch gebracht werden. Eins ist aber klar: Die Antwort auf das US-Anti-Inflations-Gesetz kann nicht in einem neuen EU-Souveränitätsfonds bestehen. Was so unschuldig daherkommt, ist nichts anderes als ein neuer Schuldentopf, auch wenn die Kommission das vielleicht anders sieht. Durch neue Schulden werden wir nicht souveräner.

Aurore Lalucq (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Vice-Présidente exécutive, il aura fallu seulement trois lettres pour faire trembler l'Europe: IRA [*Inflation Reduction Act*]. Trois lettres pour que notre continent perde ses repères; trois lettres pour que le continent du pacte vert pour l'Europe, dans un premier temps, condamne l'ambitieux plan de transition écologique de l'une des économies les plus polluantes du monde; trois lettres pour que l'Europe panique, s'affole et pleurniche, allant même demander aux États-Unis de modifier leur plan.

Pardon, mais respectons-nous un peu. Déjà, au lieu de pleurnicher, réjouissons-nous que les États-Unis souhaitent réduire leurs émissions de gaz à effet de serre de 50 % d'ici 2030. En fait, si nous paniquons, c'est parce que nous nous rendons compte, finalement, que l'Union européenne s'est fondée sur un logiciel pseudo-économique qui est en train de mourir de sa belle mort, et que, certes, il faut avoir une politique de défense vis-à-vis de la concurrence, mais que, pour faire de la politique industrielle et de la transition écologique, il nous faut des subventions, il nous faut de la planification, il nous faut des pouvoirs publics forts et il faut parfois protéger ces industries.

Alors, certes, l'Europe a un deuil à faire, mais qu'elle le fasse vite, car la politique industrielle et la transition écologique n'attendent pas.

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Eva Maria Poptcheva (Renew). – Madam President, Executive Vice-President Vestager, Minister Bek, the US Inflation Reduction Act is good news and bad news at the same time. It's good news that the world's largest economy joins the EU in investing in the green transition. It is bad news though that it does so by breaching the principles of the World Trade Organization and breaking the bonds of trust between two strong partners.

Many now propose doing the same here in the European Union, but we need to stop reacting to what the US is doing and take the lead ourselves and do it our way. We need to develop a smart strategy which avoids fragmentation of the single market, and I would propose a legislative package based on three main aspects.

First, we should make our economies more competitive by creating a favourable environment for business and innovation, and there are a lot of concrete things that we can do there. Second, we must invest in strategic sectors where the EU can still achieve a competitive advantage by fostering research and innovation. Third, we must defend free trade and diversify our trading partners. Colleagues, it is not about reacting to the Inflation Reduction Act. It's time for our own strategy towards a European competitive advantage.

Bas Eickhout (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, and also thank you very much Commissioner for your very clear outline on the response of Europe to the American Inflation Reduction Act. And I very much agree with your point that we need a decarbonised, low energy price continent, that that is the aim, and also very much how much there also investments are needed for that, we have to look at state aid.

But this also means homework for all of us. Homework certainly also for the Council. Tomorrow you are meeting together with the heads of state, so you have now finally to discuss a European fund because this is one of the responses that we need and this should be high on the agenda now of the European leaders. But also, more close to home, this also means that, for example, the Council should move towards a much bigger innovation fund when we are talking about revenues coming from the ETS. We will have a final trilogue maybe on Friday, Saturday, maybe Sunday. What is the Council going to do? Is it going to lower the innovation fund again? That's going against the will of more investments.

But there is also homework for the Commission. If you are afraid that we in the end do not have enough public money, then you also need to come up with more proposals on ending fossil subsidies. You have to come forward with proposals on the taxonomy, also looking at the non-sustainable investments and not only green investments. And if you are afraid that the money will go from households to shareholders, do come up with a reform of the corporate governance moving away from shareholder capitalism. That's homework for the Commission as well.

Alexandr Vondra (ECR). – Paní předsedající, my několik let přemlouvám Spojené státy, aby si udělaly taky *Green Deal*. Konečně to udělaly a nám se to nelíbí, protože to udělaly po svém, více kapitalisticky, daňovými odpočty, které snižují cenu, nikoliv regulacemi a příkazy, které cenu zvyšují, jak se to děje tady. V Čechách tomu říkáme: když se dlouho chodí se džbánem pro vodu, tak se ucho utrhne. Nám se to samozřejmě nelíbí, protože to porušuje pravidla WTO, ale když tady roky upozorňujeme, že CBAM, který tady chystáme, porušuje pravidla WTO taky, a když upozorňujeme na to, že Američanům se to nelíbí, tak tady máme výsledek. Zase v Čechách říkáme: jak se do lesa volá, tak se z lesa ozývá. Čili ano, zabraňme obchodním válkám, na kterých nikdo nevydělá, ale musíme začít především sami u sebe.

Tiziana Beghin (NI). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, sono stata a Washington una settimana fa e, insieme a molti colleghi, abbiamo ripetutamente evidenziato ai nostri interlocutori americani che la nuova legge statunitense sull'inflazione viola le regole dell'OMC e avrà impatti gravissimi sulle imprese europee.

Molte delle sovvenzioni verdi che saranno introdotte in America discriminano pesantemente le industrie europee più virtuose e avanzate: parlo delle nostre case automobilistiche, dei costruttori di sistemi per le energie rinnovabili, di chi fabbrica batterie, di altre industrie ad alta intensità energetica dell'Unione europea, ma soprattutto parlo di migliaia di posti di lavoro europei in pericolo.

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Non solo questa legge mette le aziende europee in una posizione di svantaggio rispetto alle rivali a stelle e strisce, ma le norme sugli aiuti di Stato vigenti da noi, nella normativa nella sua forma attuale, impediscono ai paesi membri di fare altrettanto e di offrire agevolazioni fiscali ugualmente generose alle proprie aziende. Quindi, oltre al danno, la beffa.

Dobbiamo avere il coraggio di dire agli americani che questo non è aiutare l'industria interna, ma fare vera e propria concorrenza sleale, per giunta a un alleato storico come l'Europa, e dobbiamo far capire loro che questo alleato non intende stare a guardare e, su questo, mi auguro che veramente non stia a guardare.

Christian Ehler (PPE). – *(start of speech off mic)* ... the Inflation Reduction Act is a systematic challenge for the Green Deal. It's an alternative to the Green Deal because we never delivered on the deal part of the Green Deal. We are regulating our industry. We are co-creating the regulation. This House is part of that exercise, but we are not investing to ensure in the business case for the transition. That's what the Inflation Reduction Act is doing. The Inflation Reduction Act creates a business case for a sustainable transition. It offers an industry a deal, and our only possible reaction to it is to become furious about the deal part of the Green Deal.

Madam Commissioner, we thought you to be too intelligent to announce yet another fund. I think we have to have a better understanding of the complex transnational, sectoral ecosystems of the industry affected by the Inflation Reduction Act. We need to step up investment in innovation and develop real transition pathways for our industries. We need to mobilise all unspent cohesion funds from the previous MFF to invest in our industrial transition. We need to invest more in energy and mobility infrastructure and deepen our European market. We have to care about the deal and not steer towards America. Let's get serious about the deal part of the Green Deal.

Dan Nica (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, doamnă vicepreședintă Vestager, domnule ministru Bek, vreau să vă spun că este nevoie, după ce am văzut cu toții care pot fi consecințele războiului dus de către Rusia în Ucraina, de acțiuni pe care trebuie să luăm în Uniunea Europeană.

Am văzut cât de rău ne este când am constatat că ne lipsesc elemente esențiale din partea industriei Uniunii Europene, cum ar fi: nu avem cipuri, nu avem suficiente capacități de producție pe regenerabile.

Avem o nevoie de a păstra industria europeană a oțelului, a aluminiului, pentru că, atunci când avem nevoie de ele, am constatat că toate aceste lucruri lipsesc. Răspunsul Uniunii Europene trebuie să fie unul simplu: avem nevoie de un fond de suveranitate, avem nevoie de bani ca să putem să păstrăm industriile esențiale, strategice, critice în Uniunea Europeană.

Avem nevoie să continuăm acest proces *fast permissivity*. Nu o să putem concura pe cipuri nici cu Statele Unite, nici cu China, la câți bani aruncă și câți bani alocă ei. Dar, în schimb, putem să le spunem: veniți în Uniunea Europeană că avem un climat de afaceri prietenos, vă dăm permisele de construcție foarte repede, vă dăm acele ajutoare de stat în condiții foarte rapide, în conformitate cu legea, pentru că înțelegem nevoia de a supraviețui și noi, ca Uniunea Europeană, și toți cei care lucrează în industria Uniunii Europene.

Vă mulțumesc și succes, doamnă vicepreședinte !

Spontane Wortmeldungen

Henna Virkkunen (PPE). – Madam President, President of the Council, Vice-President, I need to say that I am very concerned over the competitiveness of European industry. We have been far too dependent on energy supplies from outside of Europe, and now the energy crisis and increased energy prices are placing a heavy burden on our industry. At the same time, we know that the population of the EU is ageing and companies are struggling to have access to a skilled workforce. The Green and Digital Transition require a new type of skills. For that reason, we need to invest in education and skills as well as in research and development, much more than we have done.

At the same time, we need to ensure that our regulations are encouraging innovations and investments in Europe. I am expecting the Commission to take this matter seriously and to abstain from introducing any new legislation that increases the administrative burden and costs for European industry and for our SMEs.

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Mick Wallace (The Left). – Madam President, the US Inflation Reduction Act is essentially a protectionist package attempting to rejuvenate the US manufacturing industry by drawing companies to the US with subsidies and tax breaks, and giving existing US companies an advantage over the EU and others.

I'm surprised that the EU is surprised. America has been engaging in protectionism for over the last hundred years and they use it to their advantage as they see fit. And they've used the IMF and the World Bank to make sure that others don't engage in it when it damages US interests. Now, I think we're a bit taken aback by it because we're already suffering from America taking advantage of the war. We're supporting a US-NATO proxy war. They're charging us four times more for their gas than they're charging their own. And they're giving themselves another advantage there.

Henry Kissinger once said, 'America doesn't have friends or enemies. It has interests.' And it's about time that the EU copped on to themselves and started living a more independent existence from the US.

Enikő Győri (NI). – Elnök Asszony! Ez a törvény egy újabb oldalvágás Európa felé, és senkinek ne legyen illúziója, az USA-val szövetségesek vagyunk, de gazdasági versenytársak is. Az Unió vezetői végre ismerjék fel, hogy az energiahelyzet, a szankciók és az amerikai gazdaságpolitika mind a mi versenyképességünket rontja. Mára egyértelmű, hogy az USA nem fogja megváltoztatni a törvényt, nem fogja mentesíteni az európai cégeket. Lehetőségeink korlátozottak, ha nem akarunk kereskedelmi háborút. Importvámot bevezetni nem lenne összhangban a WTO-val, pereskedni időigényes, és a cégeink, mire jogorvoslatot kapunk, már rég áttelepültek az USA-ba.

A tagállami szubvenciók egyenlőtlen helyzetet teremtenének az EU-ban a gazdagok és szegények között. Mit kell tenni? Végre hozzuk tető alá a függőben levő szabadkereskedelmi egyezményeket, gondoljuk újra az Unió állami támogatási rendszerét. Nehézkes és lassú szabályok helyett beruházásbarát környezetre van szükségünk.

Végezetül pedig, ha a Bizottság egy új alapot akar létrehozni, remélem, azt nem adósságból kívánja megteremteni. És nagyon fontos még, hogy megszabaduljunk a saját bürokrácianövelő, kkv-kat megnyomorító szabályainktól.

Massimiliano Salini (PPE). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la decisione di non ridimensionare le ambizioni europee in materia di sostenibilità e in materia anche di fair play commerciale a livello globale sono comprensibili, nonostante l'affronto ricevuto dalle misure destinate alla riduzione dell'inflazione proposte dagli Stati Uniti d'America.

Ma la condizione per cui noi ci si possa permettere di non ridurre le nostre ambizioni è che, al contempo, l'Europa decida di proteggere non in termini protezionistici, ma in termini reali, economici, i propri prodotti sui mercati globali. Possiamo rimanere ambiziosi, ma al contempo non dobbiamo lasciare da soli i nostri imprenditori nella sfida globale.

Per questo è molto sbagliato che sulla CBAM si decida di non occuparsi di export e per cui è auspicabile che nei negoziati sugli ETS, che si concluderanno venerdì, il tema dell'export entri nelle misure su cui l'Europa, che tiene le proprie ambizioni alte, deve decidere di non tenerle solo a tutela dei politici che le raccontano, ma anche delle imprese che esportano.

Clare Daly (The Left). – Madam President, the worst is yet to come, so said the IMF in October. Europe's economies are being decimated by sanctions. Millions of Europeans are going to have to decide between heating and eating this winter. People in Poland are burning rubbish to keep warm and the lights are winking out in German industry.

The Russians are laughing at us. The Americans are laughing at us. And I wouldn't blame them, because when Europe decided to go to war, it ended up cutting its own throat. And then we have the Inflation Reduction Act – a coup de grâce from the US to a Europe that it knows is bleeding. So much for our like-minded partners. They're doing what they always do: putting America first. That's the business they're in.

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But what is the response of the EU? Nothing. We're too busy shooting ourselves in both feet, failing to try and secure an end to the war while the US charges us four times the price for energy, having made us dependent. In a modern war, the only winner is global capital; ordinary people always lose. We should remember that the next time we talk about peace being treason.

Henrike Hahn (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, on both sides of the Atlantic we need green transition and a green, decarbonised economy. And we neither want a trade war over the Inflation Reduction Act nor a subsidy race. And yes, the WTO can check the Inflation Reduction Act, but what we need especially is a transatlantic climate alliance and quick decisions to strengthen the green European industry.

Therefore, let's talk about carbon contracts for difference. The first German CCfD will be granted in 2023, and we need those instruments at EU level as well. For that, we have to increase the ETS Innovation Fund and shift its focus from technology innovation to technology diffusion.

And let's talk about state aid. We need simpler rules and faster procedures for companies, but not at ecological costs or risking the integrity of the internal market. So Europe's industry needs can, of course, profit from the first-of-a-kind add-on to existing state rules, and we are currently working on the EU Chips Act.

And let's talk about the Sovereignty Fund. We need a European coordinated approach to support private and public investment in green industries. But if we want an EU Sovereignty Fund, we also need to speed up the introduction of EU own resources because we need sufficient revenue sources.

(Ende der spontanen Wortmeldungen)

Margrethe Vestager, Executive Vice-President of the Commission. – Madam President, thank you very much for the discipline, and thank you all so very much for a debate that has, I think, covered basically every corner, every possible idea, every possible view of Europe. I've heard Europe described as waning, as weak, as without focus, as with no targets. So please allow me to tell how I see it.

We have in Europe set a direction. We know where we want to go. We want to be a green, decarbonised continent. We want to use digital solutions to create societies where people feel at home. We have set a direction. In my opinion, we have done that together. Because one can go nowhere without knowing where you want to go. And this is, of course, why we have done so many things in order to get there.

We have survived the pandemic. And not only that, we have for the first time created a gigantic facility. We have taken steps together. The Recovery and Resilience Facility, with the plans of every Member State of investing in green and in digital transition – that is part of the answer. Next year will be a year of skills, hopefully as fast as possible because, as said by some today, we need that. Without the knowledge, without the skills, without knowing what to do, Europe will not be able to achieve where we want to go.

We have Horizon Europe, the biggest, most ambitious research programme on this planet that can take us to where we want to go in basically every field. And also in the most emerging technologies: what comes beyond 5G and 6G? Where will we want to go in quantum? The most amazing research projects translating into innovation, into businesses.

And the thing is, we know where we want to go, now circumstances are changing. And the good news is that someone wants to join us in fighting climate change. And when circumstances change, we adapt. We do not change, we do not shiver, because we know where we want to go. And I think that adaptation is really important.

And the thing that we can do on a very, very short-term basis is not to reform what we believe in when it comes to state aid, but to adapt to give Member States clear options to support strategic sectors and to do it really fast. And really fast is not after long, long, long processes. Really fast is to get it started by mid-January.

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And the reason why this is so important is that investment decisions, they are taken now. That is why this signal – that Member States want to stand up to ensure that it is as attractive to invest in Europe, to stay in Europe, to be part of the supply chains in Europe that create millions and millions of jobs – that is of the essence.

But obviously, this is not enough because Member States are different. I completely agree that we should look at every fund we have. What is not being used can be reused for strategic investment. That is a prudent approach to taxpayers' funding. But the reason why the adaptation of state aid rules must be temporary is that state aid is a direct transfer from taxpayers to shareholders, and that is 100% legitimate if there is something in it for the taxpayer – here, greening of our economy, greening of our society, jobs to maintain in Europe.

But in the long term, obviously European industry should be competitive by itself. And this is why the fund is important. This is why the greening is important. This is why the celebration of the 30 years of the single market should be a *tour d'horizon* of our competitiveness – to see that there are more adjustments that we need to make in order to be fully competitive. But the starting point of competitive European industry is a well-functioning single market and competition that drives innovation so that everyone knows that it's not the taxpayers picking up the bills; it's taxpayers investing where there is a strategic sector that needs that investment.

That is the important thing. That is the plan that we have laid out. That is a plan that can be triggered with a very, very short time horizon. And that is important to ensure that when we achieve our strategic targets, we do that with sufficient flexibility to adjust to a change of circumstance around us so that we will fight climate change, but we will do that by also enabling our industrial strategy.

And that industrial strategy has set the aim for European industry to be leaders when it comes to green and when it comes to digital. That is not a Europe that is weak. That is a Europe that builds on its strengths and does that with partners and with allies, because this is our interest and this is how we serve Europeans.

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, honourable Members, Vice-President of the Commission. Thank you for this debate.

Europe needs to reflect on how we can act collectively and reflect on all the possible tools we can display to make sure we remain resilient and competitive.

The European Council will have a very timely opportunity to give political guidance on possible actions. Serious efforts for finding credible solutions are underway. We must keep engaging with the US at many levels and allow the ongoing talks with our US partners to run their course

In parallel, however, we also need to do our homework. We will need to be ready to react if necessary once the Inflation Reduction Act is in place at the beginning of next year, while putting a strong emphasis on avoiding a trade war with the US at this particularly delicate geostrategic moment.

President. – Thank you very much, personally and on behalf of this House, for your committed work during the presidency.

Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Marek Belka (S&D), *in writing*. – The Inflation Reduction Act was presented in a positive way in the US – it is supposed to curb inflation, deal with taxation and focus on green energy. Nevertheless, one can perceive that the Inflation Reduction Act is based on unfair cooperation with America's partners – such as the EU. I will name only few examples of how the Inflation Reduction Act might undermine the European-American friendship.

First, the US ties its subsidies and tax breaks exclusively to the production of raw materials, intermediate products and complete production in the US or in North America, undermining the WTO agreements. Second, the minimum tax of 15%, deviates from the international OECD negotiations. It weakens the deal by not being a truly effective tax rate, giving a wrong example and making more countries adopt tax credits or engage in aggressive competition to grant subsidies to companies to 'compensate' for higher effective tax rates. This is not what we all fought for. True friendship is about transparency, cooperation and facing challenges together. I call on the Commission to take steps in the discussions with the US. I hope that soon we will not have to quote yesterday's birthday child Taylor Swift when discussing US-EU relations: 'So take a look at what you've done. Now we've got bad blood.'

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Marc Botenga (The Left), par écrit. – Chers collègues, pourriez-vous maintenant sortir de la naïveté vis-à-vis des États-Unis d'Amérique, à qui vous faites généralement aveuglément confiance? Parce qu'à un moment où la guerre sévit sur le continent européen, les États-Unis non seulement en profitent pour nous vendre leurs cargaisons de gaz GNL à des prix absolument ridicules, avec jusqu'à 200 millions de dollars de profits par cargaison, mais en plus... ils adoptent une loi qui a clairement comme objectif d'affaiblir l'économie européenne. Ce n'est pas le comportement qu'aurait un véritable allié. Alors comment réagir? Les solutions libérales sont «has been». Obsolètes. Qui peut encore croire qu'en inondant le secteur privé d'argent, nous allons nous en sortir? Face à l'échec des libéralisations européennes, qui ont échoué à garantir des prix de l'énergie bas, échoué à garantir la transition climatique sociale, échoué à garantir l'emploi, il est temps de changer les règles du jeu, de garantir que le profit des grandes multinationales ne soit plus le fil conducteur des décisions politiques européennes. Acceptons que certains secteurs sont trop importants pour être laissés dans les mains du marché. Prenons en main publiquement des secteurs stratégiques comme l'énergie, le transport, les médicaments, le numérique, etc. Faisons le switch.

(Die Sitzung wird um 11.53 Uhr bis zur Verleihung des Sacharow-Preises für einige Minuten unterbrochen.)

PRESIDENZA: ROBERTA METSOLA

President

5. Sēdes atsākšana

(The sitting resumed at 12:06)

6. Saharova balvas pasniegšana (svinīgā sēde)

President. – Dear Laureates of the 2022 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, dear Ambassador Chentsov and Ambassador Tarasyuk, dear Oleksandra, Yuliia, Ivan, Oleksandr, Stanislav and Yaroslav, representing the brave people of Ukraine, dear 2022 Sakharov Prize finalists, dear colleagues, it is my privilege to welcome you all to the European Parliament for the 2022 Sakharov Prize Award ceremony.

Since 1988, the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought has paid tribute to people and organisations that fight in the name of freedom around the world. A fight that is synonymous with the legacy of scientist and Russian dissident, Andrei Sakharov, after whom this prize is named. Andrei Sakharov firmly believed in a world of open, free and democratic societies. The same belief that underpins our way of European life.

It was Andrei Sakharov himself that once said: 'A country which does not respect the rights of its own citizens will not respect the rights of its neighbours.' This is a message that remains as relevant as ever. That is why in 2020, this European Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize to the Belarusian democratic opposition represented by the leader of the Belarusian democratic movement, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and political activist Veranika Tsapkala.

To this day, Belarus holds the appalling record of having the highest number of Sakharov Prize laureates in prison. This is also why, in 2021, the European Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize to Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny for his fight against the Kremlin's abuse. And here again, I take the opportunity to call for his immediate and unconditional release.

(Applause)

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Our message is that we will not forget them. We will not forget any of our Sakharov Prize laureates who are still paying the price for freedom. This year, we meet to honour our 2022 Sakharov Prize laureates: the brave people of Ukraine represented by their President, elected leaders, and civil society. Ukrainians who have already fought hard and sacrificed so much for their freedom and our values.

And so as an introduction to this award ceremony, I invite you all to watch a short video on the laureates of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

(A video was shown in the Chamber)

Dear friends, today marks the 293rd day of war in Ukraine. We have witnessed the inspiring resistance of ordinary citizens making the ultimate sacrifice to delay a column of tanks. Senior citizens standing up to face down Russian troops with nothing but pride as their weapons. Brave women forced to give birth in underground metro stations.

To these people, the message from Europe has been clear: we stand with Ukraine. We will not look away. The Ukrainian people are not just fighting a war of independence but fighting a war of values – the values which underpin our life in the European Union and that we have long had the luxury of taking for granted each and every day.

We often speak about democracy, freedom, liberty as if they were some abstract concepts that do not really translate into much in practice. But the ability to vote for who we believe in, to read independent journalism, to assemble and to say what we want to say, to disagree and dissent, to pursue whatever gives us the most happiness in life, to live and love as we choose without consequences, these are what democracy, freedom, liberty mean. And the Ukrainian people deserve to have that too.

(Applause)

This is why I went to Kyiv, to assure President Zelenskyy and everyone in the Verkhovna Rada that this European Parliament will stand alongside Ukraine in this fight. This is why we sent financial, humanitarian and military aid to Ukraine and why we will continue to send more. This is why we adopted eight – and soon nine – hard-hitting packages of sanctions against Putin and his enablers and continue to amplify your calls to have Russia pay for its war crimes. This is why we granted Ukraine EU candidacy status, and defied every cynic who thought our unity would not hold.

And dear friends, this is why today, we are awarding the European Parliament's most prestigious prize for freedom and human rights to the brave people of Ukraine, represented by their President, elected leaders, and civil society. Because once again, we mean it when we say that we will stand in Ukraine's corner.

And I know that we will have to continue doing more. But let today's award serve as a reminder of our unwavering support. And let it be dedicated to all those brave Ukrainian women and men on the ground. To all those we have welcomed with open hearts into our homes. And to all those who have lost their beloved family and friends. I know that the brave people of Ukraine will not give up, and let me assure you that neither will we.

Slava Ukraini!

(Loud and sustained applause)

It is now my immense honour to give the floor to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine. – *(The following is a transcription of the interpretation of the original speech from Ukrainian into English)* Madam President, thank you, dear Roberta, dear friends. I greet you on behalf of all our people. It is a great honour. I greet you on behalf of those who are fighting, who are working for the sake of Ukraine and for the sake of freedom – for the sake of something without which it is impossible to imagine all of us, life, Europe. It is impossible to imagine Europe without Ukraine and without freedom – not only because it would simply be untrue, but also because any attempt to deprive Europe of Ukraine or freedom is always a crime, and we see such a crime taking place now in Russia's terrorist war against Ukraine and Europe.

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This has also happened in the past, when tyrannies tried to conquer Ukrainians and deprive all Europeans of their freedom. However, when we win now – Ukrainians and all Europeans – we will win in such a way that there will never again be attempts to deprive Europe of Ukraine and freedom. We will win in such a way that there will never again be attempts to apply genocidal policies against our people, both in Ukraine and throughout Europe.

We must create – and we will create – a new and effective security architecture for global freedom and international law and order. I believe this is part of our moral duty. Look at how the Russian army is advancing: the occupiers are burning everything in front of them with artillery and missiles, bombs and drones, mines and unexploded ammunition that remain in our land. The occupiers are destroying cities and villages, and all vital infrastructure. It happened in Mariupol. You all saw it. It was the same in Volnovakha – another city left completely destroyed after the Russian offensive. More than 20 000 people lived there before this war. Now it is entirely in ruins.

The Russian Army is doing the same with Bakhmut, another city in Donbas where Russian strikes leave behind nothing but rubble. More than 70 000 people used to live there until recently, last year. Now it is in ruins. Perhaps only after the end of this war, when we liberate all of our land and are able to find all the graves of the victims of Russian terror, will we be able to say how many lives tyranny has taken this time.

We know now the names of thousands of the victims. Unfortunately, there may be many more. I ask you all to observe a minute of silence in memory of all Ukrainian men and women, all adults and children, all military and civilians, whose lives were taken by this deplorable war.

(The House rose and observed a minute's silence in memory of the victims of the war in Ukraine)

Thank you very much.

Dear friends, we must act now, without waiting for the war to end, to bring to justice all those who unleashed it and to prevent any repetition of the aggression. This will be the most effective way to protect freedom, human rights, the rule of law and other common values, which are particularly represented by this award from the European Parliament – the Sakharov Prize.

I am grateful to everyone who investigates and helps to investigate the crimes of the occupiers of Ukraine, who is looking for information about Russian murderers and terrorists. I am grateful to the International Criminal Court, which closely cooperates with Ukrainian prosecutors and has a clear intention to bring justice for the crimes committed by the occupiers on the territory of our state. I am grateful to all leaders and states, all politicians and international organisations that work together with us and make every effort to establish a tribunal for the crime of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. I call on all of you, your parties and states, to effectively support this work. The tribunal must start its work.

The European Parliament has already supported this idea. It is necessary to make it a reality as soon as possible, in particular, through the adoption of a separate European Parliament resolution in support for the establishment of the tribunal, through your support, and through the support of the relevant UN General Assembly resolution by your countries. The cities and villages destroyed by Russia, the destroyed, broken and massacred lives, should be reflected in the sentences, not only for those who directly committed all this, but also for those who organised and started this aggression.

When the principle of the inevitability of punishment is applied to the crime of aggression against Ukraine, we will be able to make the appropriate institutional basis of justice permanent. When any potential aggressor knows that punishment for a criminal war is inevitable, this will be the most effective tool for preventing war.

My final point is about historical responsibility. Evil always has a motive to return when the history of evil is not fully written.

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Dear Members of the European Parliament, I know that tomorrow you will be considering the issue of recognising the Holodomor, a crime against the Ukrainian people, as genocide. I urge you to support such recognition with the maximum majority of votes in order to bring justice. Europe must give the strongest possible signal that there will be no gap in the history of tragedies on our continent, in the history of crimes against humanity committed in our land. I believe that this will happen.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for supporting our struggle and for this award. Thank you personally, Roberta. You came to Kyiv at a difficult and dangerous time. Thank you for supporting us, for supporting our reforms, for supporting our European aspirations, and for really helping. Thank you.

Glory to all our soldiers! Glory to each and every one who defends freedom and our people! Glory to Ukraine!

(The House rose and accorded President Zelenskyy a standing ovation)

(The sitting was suspended briefly.)

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. PINA PICIERNO

Vicepresidente

7. Sēdes atsākšana

(La seduta è ripresa alle 12.33.)

8. Balsošanas laiks

L'ordine del giorno reca il turno di votazioni.

(Per i risultati delle votazioni e altre dettagli che le riguardano: vedasi processo verbale)

8.1. Instruments “makrofinansiālā palīdzība +” atbalsta sniegšanai Ukrainai 2023. gadā (C9-0373/2022) (balsošana)

8.2. Eiropas Savienības Solidaritātes fonda izmantošana: palīdzība Vācijai, Beļģijai, Nīderlandei, Austrijai, Luksemburgai, Spānijai un Grieķijai (A9-0282/2022 - Henrike Hahn) (balsošana)

8.3. Atjaunojamo energoresursu direktīva, Ēku energoefektivitātes direktīva un Energoefektivitātes direktīva: grozījumi (“REPowerEU”) (A9-0283/2022 - Markus Pieper) (balsošana)

— Dopo la votazione sulla proposta della Commissione:

Markus Pieper (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Ich glaube, wir haben heute mit den schnelleren Genehmigungsverfahren für erneuerbare Energie eine sehr gute Abstimmung erreicht, und ich bitte, dass wir jetzt gemäß Artikel 59 Absatz 4 zurück in den Ausschuss gehen, um dann auch die interinstitutionellen Verhandlungen einzuleiten.

(Il Parlamento accoglie la richiesta)

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8.4. Gada ziņojums par ES un Gruzijas asociācijas nolīguma īstenošanu (A9-0274/2022 - Sven Mikser) (balsošana)

— *Prima della votazione sull'emendamento 27:*

Sven Mikser (S&D). – Madam President, in light of the information that has become available since the deadline for plenary amendments, namely a statement that was made by the outgoing Public Defender of Georgia on 7 December, I propose to amend the text and add the following text: 'Takes note of the statement of the Public Defender of Georgia on 7 December 2022, which calls on the President of Georgia to make use of the pardon mechanism concerning Nika Gvaramia as the case lacks justification and does not correspond to the fundamental principles of criminal law.'

(Il Parlamento accetta di porre in votazione l'emendamento orale)

8.5. Izredzes panākt divu valstu risinājumu attiecībā uz Izraēlu un Palestīnu (RC-B9-0552/2022, B9-0552/2022, B9-0553/2022, B9-0554/2022, B9-0555/2022, B9-0556/2022, B9-0557/2022) (balsošana)**8.6. Jaunas Eiropas darba kārtības kultūrai un ES Starptautisko kultūras sakaru stratēģijas īstenošana (A9-0279/2022 - Salima Yenbou) (balsošana)**

Si conclude così il turno di votazioni.

(La seduta è sospesa per qualche istante)

9. Sēdes atsākšana

(La seduta è ripresa alle 13.10.)

10. Iepriekšējās sēdes protokola apstiprināšana

Presidente. – Il processo verbale e i testi approvati della seduta di ieri sono stati distribuiti.

Vi sono osservazioni?

(L'aula non esprime osservazioni)

Il processo verbale è approvato.

Passiamo ora alle discussioni.

Onorevoli colleghi, vi chiedo però di far silenzio, perché così è veramente difficile. Chi non è interessato è pregato di uscire dall'Aula e chi è interessato è pregato di prendere posto e di fare silenzio.

11. Risinājumi dzīves dārdzības krīzes mazināšanai: atalgojuma palielināšana, peļņas aplikšana ar nodokli, spekulāciju pārtraukšana (diskusija aktualia tema)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione su tematiche di attualità (articolo 162 del regolamento) – Far fronte alla crisi del costo della vita: aumentare i salari, tassare gli utili, frenare la speculazione (2022/3003(RSP))

Ricordo agli onorevoli deputati che per questo punto non è prevista la procedura «catch-the-eye», né saranno accettate domande «cartellino blu».

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Manon Aubry, *auteure*. – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire, chers collègues, j'ai le plaisir aujourd'hui d'introduire, au nom de notre groupe de la gauche au Parlement européen, notre initiative pour un débat sur l'inflation et ses conséquences en Europe sur les plus précaires.

Ce choix a en effet un sens politique pour nous. Dans ce Parlement, on parle beaucoup de choses assez théoriques, mais on parle finalement assez rarement de la vie quotidienne des gens, des galères qu'ils rencontrent et de leur quotidien. C'est précisément cette réalité que nous voulons faire entrer au Parlement européen aujourd'hui.

Je ne pourrai jamais, personnellement, me résoudre à la froideur des chiffres et des agrégats économiques qu'on lit dans les journaux. D'ailleurs, nous ne devrions pas dire que l'inflation atteint 10 % en moyenne dans la zone euro, ni que les pâtes et l'huile ont augmenté de 20 %. Nous ne devrions pas dire que les salaires réels ont baissé de 2,4 % au premier semestre dans l'Union européenne. Nous devrions plutôt égrener la longue liste des enfants qui ne mangent pas à leur faim. Nous devrions décrire la détresse des étudiants ou des travailleurs précaires qui sautent des repas et peinent à se réchauffer. Le nombre de vies chamboulées, de rêves brisés, de projets non réalisés: voilà la réalité dont nous devrions parler dans ce Parlement.

Toutefois, pendant que certains galèrent, d'autres, eux, prospèrent. Il faut aussi mettre des mots sur l'autre facette de ce modèle économique défaillant. Depuis deux ans, les records des bénéfices et des dividendes versés aux actionnaires ne cessent de tomber les uns après les autres: près de 30 % d'augmentation en un an de dividendes pour les grandes entreprises européennes, et l'année qui se termine s'annonce encore plus fructueuse. Idem pour les rémunérations des grands patrons, qui repoussent sans cesse les frontières de l'indécence.

Bref, les riches s'enrichissent, les pauvres s'appauvrissent, et c'est là la conséquence directe de choix politiques. En effet, ce choc de l'inflation serait autrement moins brutal si les salaires avaient été indexés partout en Europe. Vous devriez vous en rendre compte, Monsieur Gentiloni, mais peut-être que les commissaires européens et les ministres sont bien trop à l'abri, au chaud avec leurs salaires mirobolants, pour s'apercevoir que, partout dans l'Union européenne, des gens galèrent et ne parviennent pas à finir leurs mois.

On nous assène que l'augmentation des salaires nourrirait l'inflation. C'est pourtant faux. Même le FMI, que notre groupe de la gauche n'a pas l'habitude de citer ici à cette tribune, démontre le contraire. C'est la spéculation et l'appétit des actionnaires qui font gonfler artificiellement les prix, pas les salaires des travailleurs. Et que faites-vous face à cela? Alors oui, il y a bien une microtaxe sur les superprofits, et des promesses – jamais tenues – de blocage des prix.

Vos choix ont des conséquences: tout ce que vous ne prenez pas aux plus riches ou aux multinationales, vous le prenez aux plus pauvres, qui en paieront le prix, qui en paient même déjà le prix, avec les hausses de TVA et l'abandon des services publics. Comme si cela ne suffisait pas, la Banque centrale européenne est en roue libre: elle augmente, en parallèle, brutalement ses taux directeurs, au risque de provoquer une récession généralisée et une explosion du chômage en Europe.

Il y avait pourtant des solutions évidentes, qui ont été systématiquement balayées d'un revers de la main par vous, Monsieur Gentiloni, et par l'ensemble de la Commission européenne. De contrôle ciblé des prix il ne sera pas fait mention: ne touchons surtout pas aux tabous libéraux! Taxer plus fortement le patrimoine des plus riches pour redistribuer? Une hérésie, que d'en discuter! Toutes ces mesures seraient pourtant bien plus efficaces que n'importe quelle augmentation des taux directeurs, et bien plus durables que n'importe quelle prime ou n'importe quel chèque énergie. De la même manière, soustraire certains biens publics de l'emprise du marché, là aussi: chut! Surtout, n'en parlons pas. Au lieu de cela, la Commission et ses alliés libéraux organisent le grand retour de l'austérité. Plutôt que de taxer les riches, vous préférez purger les services publics, démanteler méthodiquement la protection sociale et attaquer les systèmes de retraite, comme Emmanuel Macron en France.

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Alors, pour conclure, chers collègues, dans ce temple du consensus qu'est le Parlement européen, il est de bon ton de noyer les divergences politiques dans la culture du compromis. Néanmoins, je le dis à toutes celles et à tous ceux qui portent une responsabilité dans le désastre en cours, y compris à certains groupes politiques ici ainsi qu'à vous, Monsieur le Commissaire Gentiloni: cessez de vous cacher derrière vos poncifs libéraux éculés pour justifier votre guerre contre les plus pauvres, parce que, derrière les chiffres, des vies sont en jeu. Ne soyez pas les experts-comptables du malheur des peuples.

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, Commissioner, honourable Members, thank you very much for inviting the Council to take part in today's debate on this recurring and crucial topic, which I have had the opportunity to address at a number of recent plenaries.

Russia's illegal and criminal war of aggression has come at a high human cost. We think first and foremost of the innocent victims in Ukraine and the millions of displaced Ukrainians. But Putin's war comes also with a human and economic cost for Europe. Soaring inflation and high energy prices have been a severe blow to household purchasing power and business costs.

Allow me to focus my intervention on some of the most recent developments and decisions of the Council to tackle what is clearly a main concern of EU governments.

In November, the Council adopted the guidelines for employment and social policies of Member States for the coming months and year. These guidelines react to key employment and social challenges of the last year and this year. Following that, the Commission adopted its autumn package for the Semester of Economic Governance 2023.

The cost of living crisis was one of the topics discussed last week by ministers at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council. The Council discussed the European Semester autumn package, where the Commission listed the main challenges caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Historically high energy prices, high inflation rates, supply shortages, increased debt levels and rising borrowing costs are affecting business activity and eroding households' purchasing power.

All the Ministers welcomed the autumn package and the priorities set out therein, tackling the immediate difficulties that people and businesses are facing while pursuing effective labour market policies that drive the twin transition in a fair way and deliver on our climate objectives.

Given different national contexts, Member States respond differently to the situation. Some governments provide for direct support to vulnerable households or use tax reductions on certain commodities, whereas others focus on job insertion schemes or the green transition. Many Ministers stressed also the needs of upskilling and reskilling of both unemployed and employed people, including for the twin transition.

At the same EPSCO Council meeting, the Ministers adopted a political agreement on a recommendation on adequate minimum income, ensuring active inclusion. This recommendation contains several measures for further work on areas such as the adequacy of income support, access to inclusive labour markets, ensuring access to essential services, or the effectiveness and governance of social safety nets. Furthermore, Member States are recommended to ensure that all persons lacking sufficient resources are covered by a minimum income set by law.

Let me also mention other important instruments adopted at last week's EPSCO Council. They are the recommendation on long-term care and the recommendation on early childhood care and education – the Barcelona Targets for 2030, a principal instrument of the European care strategy. Both instruments promote social fairness and intergenerational solidarity while leading to the creation of jobs. They also unlock labour resources for other sectors by alleviating the family care burden.

Another measure to tackle the cost of living is the Directive on minimum wages that we adopted together earlier this year. It is worth to remind that this directive aims to help to achieve decent working conditions and a decent standard of living for employees in Europe.

I look forward to listening to your views on what can be done to alleviate the burden of the crisis on the people in Europe. Thank you very much for your attention.

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Paolo Gentiloni, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, Minister, thank you for this timely debate, which is, of course, very, very important.

We know that, as a result of the war of aggression against Ukraine, we had further factors, elements, of crisis after the pandemic. And so families and businesses face a global surge in food prices and energy prices. And, of course, lower income households are worst hit. For the poorest households in the EU, electricity and gas absorbs a large share of their total spending, being the second spending item after food. Inflation has soared in the past year, mainly in light of rising energy and commodity prices, a tendency that has been reflected in a more general increase in prices. And businesses are also affected by rising energy costs, higher financing costs and lower consumer confidence. And this is particularly relevant for energy intensive sectors. But, all in all, we are surely facing a cost of living crisis that requires appropriate responses.

The Commission, starting with the energy, emphasised the need to address the impact of inflation on the more vulnerable citizens through targeted measures. As you know, not all measures that were taken or announced are indeed targeted to the most vulnerable but most of these measures now expire by the end of the first quarter of 2023. So I think we have now an opportunity to act in a more coordinated way.

We would therefore recommend that these support measures that are taking a large part of national budgets be first targeted to the most vulnerable, second fiscally affordable – and the two things are connected, of course – and third they preserve the price signal to maintain incentives for reducing energy consumption as set out in our proposed euro area recommendation.

We also need to acknowledge that public finances can benefit from windfall profits from certain energy companies. As you know, the Commission has proposed a price cap on market revenues for inframarginal producers and the solidarity contribution from the fossil fuel sector. This will allow Member States, together with national measures when they are taken, to channel very large profits, extraordinary profits towards who need support the most.

Addressing the cost of living crisis requires also restoring the purchasing power of wages. The attention to low-income workers is reflected in the Directive on Adequate Minimum Wages in the EU, which entered into force one month ago.

Besides providing relief to the most vulnerable, we need to secure alternative sources of supply to reduce our energy demand, accelerated with the clean energy transition, because you know that energy is now the main driver of this increase of the cost of living and of inflation.

The additional resources from REPowerEU – and I congratulate for the agreement reached tonight – will incentivise Member States to modify and amend their plan to accelerate the necessary investments and to address energy poverty. We need to be flexible in our reply to the crisis, learn from the lessons and the experience of these years, taking into account the examples of recent years' success, such as the SURE mechanism. Thank you, and I look forward to the debate.

Lídia Pereira, *em nome do Grupo PPE*. – Senhora Presidente, o aumento do custo de vida é uma realidade indelmentável. Os números históricos da inflação são evidentes, mas é fundamental olharmos para as pessoas que esses números representam.

As famílias, sobretudo as mais jovens, deparam-se com uma escalada dos preços da alimentação, uma instabilidade significativa nos preços da energia e com uma subida tremenda do crédito à habitação. Sabemos que, invariavelmente, as famílias mais pobres são as mais afetadas e as soluções não podem, por isso, fazer-se esperar.

O combate à inflação na Europa é uma prioridade política, uma urgência económica e uma emergência social. Todos têm de fazer a sua parte. Na União Europeia, o Banco Central Europeu, independente, lidera a política monetária e a Comissão tem o dever de garantir que os seus fundos, os fundos que aqui aprovamos todos os anos, chegam às pessoas e que a concorrência é livre e leal dentro do mercado interno.

Perder tempo na crítica fácil à Europa não é sério. É um expediente próprio de quem não tem soluções para apresentar no seu país. Infelizmente, é essa realidade que vemos em algumas capitais da Europa, em particular no meu país, em Portugal.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Este combate não se faz com mais impostos sobre os contribuintes, que já vivem estrangulados. Faz-se com o bom uso dos fundos europeus para gerar emprego e investimento, com orçamentos nacionais responsáveis e ambiciosos e com mais seriedade no discurso político. O tempo que vivemos não é para justificações, é, sim, para decisões.

Gabriele Bischoff, *im Namen der S&D-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin! 2022 wird ein Jahr sein, das in den Geschichtsbüchern eine besondere Erwähnung finden wird, unter anderem bei der Frage, ob es ein entscheidendes Jahr für die Stabilisierung der Demokratie ist oder für die Schwächung.

Wir können sehen, dass steigende Energiepreise und die steigende Inflation einfach dazu führen, dass viele Menschen weniger Geld in ihrer Tasche haben und dass die Gespräche vor Weihnachten sich darum drehen: Wo kann man sparen, wo kann man sich einschränken? Am härtesten trifft es natürlich arme Familien, die vorher schon jeden Euro umdrehen mussten und sich fragen, ob essen oder heizen.

Wir sehen, wenn wir die Lebensmittelpreise angucken, dass sie stärker steigen, als die Energiepreise das eigentlich hergeben. Deshalb ist es offensichtlich, dass wir hier tätig werden müssen und dass wir eben nicht zulassen, dass Unternehmen sich hier bereichern und auf Kosten der Menschen tatsächlich nur ihre Profite mehren.

Deshalb ist es wichtig, wie der Kommissar gesagt hat, dass wir die Übergewinne abschöpfen müssen und dass wir viel stärker als bisher die vulnerablen Gruppen unterstützen müssen – die, die es am meisten brauchen – damit sich diese Krise nicht zu einer Krise der Demokratie ausweitet.

Das bedeutet auch, dass wir die Löhne stärken müssen. Aber zusätzlich zu steigenden Löhnen brauchen wir unterstützende Maßnahmen für diese Gruppen, weil man das allein damit gar nicht schaffen kann. Deshalb ist es wichtig: Wir brauchen eine Initiative, dass die Richtlinie über den Mindestlohn, die zwei Jahre Umsetzungszeit hat, früher umgesetzt wird, damit wir wirklich gerade denen, die es am meisten brauchen, auch mehr Geld in die Tasche geben. Tun wir's!

Billy Kelleher, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Madam President, with temperatures plummeting across Europe this week the cost of keeping warm is very much at the forefront of our minds. We need to take fast and meaningful action to protect the most vulnerable in our societies and make sure no one has to make the choice between heating and eating.

The EU acted decisively when imposing a tax on excessive profits of energy companies, and there should be no unnecessary profiteering from this crisis.

But I am deeply disappointed to hear that the EU ministers are now dragging their feet on imposing a cap on gas price. I would urge them to get around the table again to have a deal by the end of this year.

Taking a step back and looking at the cost of living at the moment, there is no doubt we are in a crisis. Inflation across Europe is still around 10%. In my own country it is at 8%.

But we should also be conscious that we should not go chasing inflation. Our actions need to be measured and effective. The ECB economists have already said and indicated that we are reaching or have reached the peak of inflation. We now need to prioritise and shield the most vulnerable in our societies and use any flexibility in our national EU budget to do so. And clearly what we need now, Commission and Member States, is not to go chasing the inflation, but to target the vulnerable groups, the vulnerable cohorts out there that are finding it hard to make ends meet. Certainly, we do need flexibility around national budgets to do that, but at the same time, it would be remiss of us if we just blindly started chasing inflation as it stands.

I said already, I am deeply disappointed by the Member States in the Council that they couldn't agree on a gas price cap. It is clearly evident that there is profiteering by some energy companies, but we have to break the fundamental link between gasping the price setter of electricity across Europe, and that has to happen very, very quickly, otherwise we will continue to have energy inflation feeding into the rest of the broader economy and damaging vulnerable cohorts and the standard of living of people who most need our support.

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Claude Gruffat, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur Gentiloni, chers collègues, 30 %. En un an, les prix de l'alimentation ont augmenté de 30 %. Ce n'est plus de l'inflation, c'est de l'hyperinflation. Mais ces 30 % ne sont pas que le résultat de la guerre en Ukraine et des manœuvres de Poutine; ils sont aussi le fait de profiteurs de guerre et de spéculateurs qui font de l'argent sur les produits vitaux.

Voilà le résultat de ce monde hyperfinanciarisé que les politiques libérales s'évertuent à construire: des produits aussi vitaux que le pain ou les céréales sont fixés par les traders derrière leur ordinateur. Quand ces traders décident d'augmenter les prix pour payer leurs profits, ce sont nos concitoyennes et nos concitoyens qui sont obligés de les financer, sans avoir été consultés, évidemment. On revient toujours à la même chose: l'enrichissement de quelques-uns sur le dos et à la sueur du plus grand nombre.

Qu'est-ce que ce monde-là? Est-ce vraiment le sens de notre mandat ici? Est-ce vraiment pour cela que les électeurs nous ont fait confiance? C'est pourquoi je suis venu le dénoncer aujourd'hui devant vous. C'est pourquoi je veux vous appeler à l'action. Les prix ne peuvent être joués à la roulette des traders.

La crise alimentaire existait déjà avant la guerre en Ukraine. Le marché des céréales est dominé à 90 % par quatre entreprises majeures, qui ont enregistré des bénéfices de 10,3 milliards en 2021. Cette guerre a mis en lumière les très grandes limites de ce marché ultra-mondialisé tenu par des mastodontes financiers. Cela doit cesser. Une large partie de nos concitoyennes et de nos concitoyens européens avait déjà du mal à boucler les fins de mois, et maintenant ils ont tout simplement du mal à se nourrir.

Alors, face à cette situation, c'est bien simple, il n'existe qu'une seule solution: la spéculation doit être encadrée. Ce sont nos paysannes et nos paysans qui doivent nous nourrir, pas l'agrobusiness. Un encadrement qui doit être décidé par nous, maintenant.

France Jamet, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Madame la Présidente, mes chers collègues, Dieu se rit des hommes qui pleurent sur les conséquences des causes qu'ils chérissent – à moins que l'Union européenne ne tente de nous faire accroire qu'elle combat de bonne foi ce qu'elle a édifié avec tellement de persévérance.

En effet, qui a favorisé le modèle économique qui a permis ces dérives? Qui a donné tout pouvoir à la spéculation, en faisant toujours plus pour les banques et la haute finance face à l'économie réelle? Qui a fait pression à la baisse sur les salaires, en instituant un dumping social avec le travail détaché, l'immigration incontrôlée et l'escroquerie du libre-échange? Qui a laissé prospérer un système d'évasion fiscale et corruptif au sein même de l'Union européenne?

Le pire reste à venir: avec le sacrifice de notre filière nucléaire et cette Union européenne qui sanctionne, tandis que les États-Unis subventionnent, c'est l'évasion et la fuite de nos emplois et de nos entreprises. C'est un protectionnisme intelligent dont nous avons besoin, mais vous le refusez. Ce sont des coopérations entre États qui le souhaitent sur des sujets pertinents et le fruit d'une volonté politique commune dont nous avons besoin, mais vous le refusez. Ne cherchez pas ailleurs la solution. Le problème, c'est vous.

Nicola Procaccini, *a nome del gruppo ECR*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, per far fronte alla crisi del costo della vita provocata dall'aumento del costo dell'energia, c'è una soluzione facile facile: fare il contrario di quanto stiamo facendo fino ad ora.

Innanzitutto bisogna fermare la speculazione sul prezzo del gas, da cui dipende il costo dell'energia elettrica in generale per famiglie e imprese. Purtroppo, nonostante la maggioranza degli Stati europei si sia espressa, già diversi mesi fa, sulla necessità di stabilire un tetto al prezzo del gas, ci sono pochi governi, ma evidentemente molto influenti, che stanno impedendo l'adozione di una misura così importante.

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Questi governi costringono sé stessi e tutti gli altri dell'Unione europea, a bruciare miliardi di euro prelevandoli dai propri bilanci nazionali. Una scelta assurda, inspiegabile, che sta regalando enormi profitti agli speculatori che agiscono indisturbati sul mercato TTF di Amsterdam e, nello stesso tempo, questo blocco costituito da Germania, Olanda e Ungheria garantisce a Putin di aumentare le proprie entrate dalla vendita di gas all'Unione europea, in modo da poter finanziare i propri armamenti pur producendo meno gas.

Un'ora fa abbiamo onorato la resistenza del popolo ucraino. Ditemi che coerenza ci può essere in tutto questo, perché io proprio non lo capisco.

Sira Rego, *en nombre del Grupo The Left*. – Señora presidenta, el problema del aumento del coste de la vida se debe fundamentalmente a un hecho contrastado: las multinacionales, la banca y el sector financiero son unos parásitos. Me explico.

Las seis mayores empresas de España —por supuesto, energía y banca— tuvieron beneficios históricos este año: 25 000 millones de euros. Han crecido siete veces más que los salarios. Esto significa que han aprovechado la crisis para especular y hacer caja de forma oportunista, saqueando los bolsillos de las familias. Por si fuera poco, los incompetentes que dirigen el Banco Central Europeo suben los tipos de interés, asfixiando con las hipotecas, aumentando los beneficios de la banca y empujándonos a la recesión. Pero esto no es inevitable.

Mire, señor Gentiloni, le doy alguna sugerencia: hagan el favor de exigir al Banco Central Europeo que baje inmediatamente los tipos de interés; impulsen de una vez la reforma del mercado marginalista —es la única forma de contener el precio de la energía—; y, sobre todo, por favor, trabajen la empatía. Hay mucha gente en Europa sufriendo por sus malas decisiones.

Luděk Niedermayer (PPE). – Madam President, dear colleagues, dear guests, let me contribute to this debate by adding some economic points that I consider important.

So, first and foremost, high inflation is evil. It increases the cost. It reduces the value of savings. We should support ECB and national central banks in getting inflation under control. Fiscal policy should not undermine this support.

Second, fiscal policy should be targeted to the most vulnerable and firms most affected. In order to deliver this result, it should not undermine the disinflationary policy. Data showing that only a small fraction of the support is targeted are not good.

On energies, two factors should be carefully considered. First of all, subsidies to energy prices should not undermine our main goal; our main goal is to provide security of supply to our households and the firms. If we reduce price too much, there is a risk that we will run out of the gas.

The second, we should not undermine fair competition on the single market. The single market is the most precious economic asset of the European Union, and we must make sure that it functions properly.

I believe we can manage this bad crisis caused by Vladimir Putin. It should not lead to a deep recession. It should not hit the most vulnerable badly. To reach this result, the policies must be implemented in a smart and targeted way, and should not undermine each other and also should not undermine significant risks that we are avoiding.

Jonás Fernández (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, ciertamente estamos atravesando momentos complicados. Los efectos económicos y sociales en el conjunto del continente europeo de la guerra de Putin en Ucrania están presentes. Y están presentes también en las dificultades para llegar a fin de mes y en las dificultades para pagar los costes energéticos o los costes alimentarios de nuestros ciudadanos.

Y yo creo que la Comisión ha trabajado bien. Celebramos el acuerdo sobre el plan REPowerEU y celebramos las contribuciones sociales sobre el sector energético, pero también vemos a los Estados miembros respondiendo con distintas medidas, con poco orden, con poca organización, con casi cada uno buscando soluciones particulares. En algunos casos recuerda a los primeros meses del impacto de la pandemia, cuando los Gobiernos intentaban resolver pero faltaba una respuesta comunitaria.

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Es importante que la revisión de las ayudas de Estado esté bien controlada por parte de la Comisión. Corremos el riesgo de poner en juego el mercado único y necesitamos un instrumento, como el SURE, para armonizar las políticas frente a esta crisis energética en la Unión Europea y acelerar, por cierto, la reforma del mercado eléctrico.

Ivars Ijabs (Renew). – Godātā prezidentes kundze, *Gentiloni* kungs! No visiem risinājumiem dzīves dārdzības krīzē es vēlētos uzsvērt galveno principu, proti, mērķētu atbalstu neaizsargājamiem. Bet tas prasa veidot mūsu atbalsta sistēmas tā, lai būtu iespējams skaidri ieraudzīt un ātri sasniegt šos cilvēkus bez liekas birokrātijas un kavēšanās. Tās ir tās visievainojamākās iedzīvotāju grupas kā vientuļie sirmgalvj, ģimenes ar vairākiem bērniem, cilvēki ar īpašām vajadzībām.

Es esmu pārliecināts, ka tieši mērķēta palīdzība trūcīgākajiem izmaksu ziņā ir labāks risinājums nekā nodokļu samazinājumi vai arī tādas visaptverošas subsīdijas enerģijas, īpaši fosilās enerģijas, cenā. Tātad labākie atbalsta instrumenti visiem eiropiešiem ir tie, kuri veicina ilgtspēju un mazina enerģijas patēriņu, piemēram, lētas biļetes sabiedriskajā transportā, atbalsts ģimenēm, pāreja uz zaļāku enerģiju, jau šobrīd un ar Eiropas fondu atbalstu.

Un, runājot par dzīves dārdzību, ir vērts atcerēties, cik dārga Eiropā šobrīd vispār ir dzīvība. Es runāju, pirmkārt, par ģimenēm Ukrainas pilsētās un ciemos, kurām noziedzīgais Putina režīms ar savām raķetēm mērķtiecīgi atņem siltumu, elektrību, ūdeni un pamatvajadzības. Bez uzvaras pār Putinu nebūs uzvaras pār šo dzīves dārdzības krīzi!

Sara Matthieu (Verts/ALE). – Voorzitter, de temperaturen dalen stevig. Tegelijkertijd blijven de prijzen voor energie extreem hoog. Dit is precies waar we begin dit jaar al voor hebben gewaarschuwd: mensen moeten kiezen tussen eten of hun woning verwarmen.

Nochtans zijn die op hol geslagen levenskosten niet zomaar een onoverkomelijk feit. We kennen de oplossingen om die prijzen onder controle te houden, maar ze laten veel te lang op zich wachten. We hebben nog altijd geen Europees prijsplafond op gas, en ondertussen blijft de speculatie doorgaan. We hebben een Europese wet voor hogere minimumlonen. Alleen blijven de lidstaten talmen om deze onmiddellijk toe te passen. We hebben nog altijd geen afdwingbaar leefloon boven de armoedegrens. Nochtans kan Europa dit betalen.

Ik begrijp dat mensen gefrustreerd en radeloos zijn. Ik denk dat we nu snel een aantal maatregelen moeten doorvoeren: een basisrecht op energie, een verbod op uithuiszettingen, een verbod op het afkoppelen van energie – zelfs als je de factuur niet kan betalen. Als we er nu geen werk van maken, dan duwen we mensen nog verder de armoede in.

Gunnar Beck (ID). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar! Die EU ist in der Stagflation: null Wachstum bei EU-weit rund 10 % Inflation und in einigen Regionen über 20 % Inflation. Deshalb sollen die Löhne erhöht, Profite stärker besteuert und Spekulation – so sagen Sie – beendet werden. Allerdings: Spekulation können Sie gar nicht beenden! Höhere Löhne brauchen wir gewiss, aber sie beflügeln bekanntermaßen auch die Inflation, und Profite sollten höchstens mehr besteuert werden, wenn Preise stärker als die Kosten steigen.

Die EU gibt vor, der Ukrainekrieg sei schuld an allem. Tatsächlich sind es Ihre Klimapolitik und die sogenannte Geldpolitik der EZB. Denn die Preise stiegen schon vor Kriegsausbruch stark an. Dass nun kaum mehr russisches Gas fließt, ist nicht Schuld Russlands, sondern die Schuld Ihrer Sanktionen und der Sabotageakte gegen die Nord-Stream-Pipelines, die Sie nicht untersuchen wollen, sondern verschleiern. Und die höchsten Strompreise der Welt hatte Deutschland bereits vor einem Jahr. Ferner erhöhte die EZB unter Draghi und Lagarde die Geldmenge um mindestens 70 %. Jeder Vorschüler weiß, dass die Preise steigen, wenn die Zentralbank zu viel Geld schafft.

Deshalb: Beenden Sie ihre sinnlose Klimapolitik, deren Einfluss auf das Weltklima bei einem EU-Anteil von 8 % an den weltweiten Emissionen null ist. Bändigen Sie die EZB, die die Eurozone nur noch durch Inflation zu retten weiß, und beenden Sie die Wirtschaftssanktionen gegen Russland, die uns mehr schaden als Wladimir Putin. Anders gesagt: Machen Sie alles anders als seit zehn Jahren, und machen Sie nichts so wie bislang!

Jorge Buxadé Villalba (ECR). – Señora presidente, el aumento de precios no es cosa de ahora. Los españoles llevan sufriendo un incremento de precios de forma dramática desde la desastrosa gestión de la pandemia. La gasolina, la calefacción, la cesta de la compra, los productos básicos... todo ha subido, mientras los salarios de los españoles —y del resto de europeos— se mantienen intactos, cuando no van para abajo. Ya era hora de que este Parlamento le dedicara un minuto a debatir este asunto y dejara de hablar de sus profecías climáticas, de las extremas derechas, del peligro de Polonia o Hungría, o de los setenta y dos géneros.

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En VOX llevamos denunciándolo desde que estamos aquí, desde que decidieron cerrar negocios mientras rendían honores a Greta Thunberg. ¿Quieren bajar el coste de la vida? Bajen los impuestos. ¿Quieren acabar con la inflación? Dejen de imprimir dinero como locos. ¿Quieren abaratar el precio de la energía y de los alimentos? Renuncien al fanatismo climático. ¿Quieren que suban los salarios? Dejen de importar mano de obra barata con el tráfico de inmigrantes ilegales e invirtamos en nuestra industria. ¿Quieren mejorar la vida de la gente? Digan adiós a la Agenda 2030.

Señor comisario, señora presidente, todos: feliz Navidad y gloria a Dios en el pesebre.

Kateřina Konečná (The Left). – Paní předsedající, od Evropské komise neustále za poslední rok slyšíme, jak se musíme usklonnovat, abychom si pak v tisku přečetli, o kolik zase nejbohatší zbohatli – krize nekrize. A vaše řešení? Přenést ekonomickou zátěž na občany, kterým letos poklesne v mnoha případech zásadně životní úroveň. V České republice klesnou reálné mzdy nejvíc za posledních třicet let a také nejvíce ze zemí OECD. Přitom zdroje k tomu, aby krize opět nedopadla na ty nejzranitelnější, přece jsou. Trpíme tady odliv kapitálu do zahraničí i v rámci samotné Evropské unie, díváme se na daňové ráje a nadnárodní giganty si z nás dělají prostě dobrý den, protože je nikdo nereguluje.

Kdy už konečně seberete odvalu a postavíte se za ty, pro které byste tady měli být, pane komisaři? A kdy EU přestane problémy vytvářet a začne je řešit? Dost bylo slov. Posloucháme to tady téměř rok a nic se neděje. Lidem se žije hůř a hůř. Chce to něco konkrétního, co pro ně konkrétně uděláte.

Maria Angela Danzi (NI). – Signora Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, l'inflazione in ottobre ha segnato un più 10 %, ma gli stipendi e le pensioni sono rimasti pressoché fermi. Nei prossimi mesi aumenteranno povertà ed esclusione sociale. Rischiamo un disastro. Le imprese europee pagano oggi il costo dell'energia sette volte di più delle concorrenti americane e asiatiche.

Chiedo a tutti voi: fino a quando potranno resistere sul mercato globale? Davanti a una crisi strutturale, la risposta europea è carente o addirittura dannosa, dato che l'aumento del costo del denaro da parte della BCE non ha abbassato l'inflazione, ma aumenta il rischio di recessione e di dipendenza energetica.

Per combattere l'aumento dei prezzi bisogna fermare la speculazione. Non è tollerabile che imprese pubbliche maturino più profitti, specie nel settore delle reti termiche e, a tal proposito, segnalo una mia interrogazione alla Commissione.

Per il Movimento 5 Stelle bisogna porre un tetto al prezzo del gas, bisogna effettuare acquisti unici europei e mettere un divieto alle imprese in controllo pubblico di produrre utili sui servizi di interesse generale, nonché un *recovery fund* energetico, che rilanci gli investimenti nel settore delle energie rinnovabili.

Isabel Benjumea Benjumea (PPE). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, señor ministro, claro que es una prioridad. Y debe ser nuestra prioridad hacer frente a la escalada de precios que afecta de una manera tremendamente cruel a muchísimos hogares europeos, pero también a empresarios, a autónomos, a emprendedores y a pymes europeas que están haciendo unos verdaderos esfuerzos, inmensos, para salir adelante, para seguir creando puestos de trabajo, para seguir creando riqueza.

No me canso de decir que la Unión Europea ha puesto en marcha un mecanismo espectacular, que es el mecanismo de los fondos Next Generation EU, que precisamente de lo que habla es de inversiones y de reformas.

La pregunta que yo le hago a la Comisión es si está la Comisión ejerciendo su labor, su responsabilidad de vigilar que se están acometiendo las reformas necesarias, que estas reformas están teniendo el impacto que se buscaba y si, además, se están ejecutando los fondos con la agilidad y la rapidez que se necesita en este momento. Estamos pendientes de grandes inversiones. Por ejemplo, en mi país, en España, llevamos un retraso inmenso.

Tenemos un gran instrumento que son los fondos Next Generation EU y yo apelo a la Comisión a que, con esa responsabilidad, se preocupe de garantizar que se ejecutan rápido los fondos y se acometen las reformas necesarias.

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Agnes Jongerius (S&D). – Voorzitter, mensen krijgen de kosten voor hun kiezen voor duurdere boodschappen, voor de hogere energierekening en voor een flink hogere huur. Zo spreken we dus van een echte koopkrachtcrisis. Niet alleen blijven de lonen al jarenlang achter bij de stijgende productiviteit, ook de inflatie wordt al jarenlang niet bijgehouden. Dat moet dus echt anders.

Het minimumloon moet sneller omhoog. Ik wil van de Commissie een oproep aan de Raad en de lidstaten om de richtlijn betreffende minimumlonen snel in te voeren. Ons Nederlands kabinet heeft liever een kluwen aan toeslagen en bijslagen waar mensen zich doorheen moeten worstelen, dan een minimumloon op een echt toereikend niveau. Maar je zou niet afhankelijk moeten zijn van toeslagen wanneer je werkt.

Nu ik hier toch sta, grijp ik dit moment ook aan om de volgende oproep te lanceren. Het is tijd om terug te duwen. Sluit je aan bij een vakbond. Het loont om samen in actie te komen.

Engin Eroglu (Renew). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrter Herr Gentiloni, sehr geehrter Herr Bek! Seit Monaten sehen wir die Preissteigerung, das ist klar. Aber es ist ja wichtig, jeden Monat darauf zu schauen, wie die Preissteigerung sich verändert.

Nun ist speziell in diesem Monat November ganz klar zu sehen, dass die Inflation in den Mitgliedstaaten, die den Euro haben, durch die hohen Lebensmittelpreise sehr hoch gehalten wird. Das heißt, wir müssen diesen Monat vor allem die Lebensmittelpreise in den Fokus der Diskussion nehmen und uns sozusagen in der Diskussion auch verändern und nicht ewig an alten Themen festhalten.

Herr Gentiloni, mir ist dabei aufgefallen – ich habe mir die Sache mal angeschaut –, dass die Kommission selber sagt, dass 10 % der Lebensmittel in der Europäischen Union weggeworfen werden. Das heißt, wir müssen jetzt nicht ewig diskutieren, was wir ständig erhöhen und verändern können, sondern wir müssen doch ganz klar jetzt vorhandene Strukturen verändern und zusehen, dass wir nicht mehr 10 % dieser Lebensmittel wegwerfen.

Das wäre eine Diskussion zum Beispiel darüber, dass beim Mindesthaltbarkeitsdatum von Lebensmitteln die Haftung verändert wird. In Deutschland ist es zum Beispiel so, dass bis zum Haltbarkeitsdatum der Hersteller haftet und ab dem Ablauf der Verkäufer. Hier müssen wir eine Diskussion der Fachpolitiker hinbekommen und gegebenenfalls die Haftung verändern, damit die Lebensmittel nicht mehr von den Unternehmen weggeworfen werden.

Henrike Hahn (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin! Hohe Energiepreise, hohe Lebensmittelpreise, Rekordinflation – das ist schwer für die Menschen und die Unternehmen in Europa.

Die EU-Mitgliedstaaten tun viel dafür, um diese Auswirkungen der Inflation abzumildern. Auch das Programm REPowerEU, die Anpassung an die Erneuerbare-Energien-Richtlinie und das Energieeffizienzgesetz, beschleunigt jetzt die grüne Transformation, bringt die Energiepreise hinunter und arbeitet damit gegen die Inflation.

Wir müssen auch etwas gegen die Marktmanipulation auf den Energiemärkten tun und die Aufsicht der nationalen Behörden und die europäische Aufsichtsbehörde ESMA stärken. Energielieferanten unterstehen nicht der gleichen Finanzaufsicht wie traditionelle Banken, und es ist eine gute Sache, dass die EZB jetzt beschlossen hat zu prüfen, ob der weitgehend unregulierte Finanzhandel von Energieunternehmen ein Risiko für das Finanzsystem darstellen kann.

Wir müssen jetzt mit aller Kraft gegen die hohen Energiepreise kämpfen und gegen die Inflation, die jetzt in Europa das Leben so vieler Menschen schwer macht.

Isabella Tovaglieri (ID). – Signora Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, la speculazione sui prezzi dell'energia sta letteralmente mettendo in ginocchio cittadini e imprese, ma purtroppo l'Europa non sembra rendersene conto.

Oggi abbiamo insignito qui, al Parlamento europeo, il popolo ucraino del più alto riconoscimento europeo, appunto il Premio Sacharov, ma non ci rendiamo conto che se l'Europa non intraprenderà a breve azioni concrete ed immediate a favore dei cittadini europei, questo significherà rendere molto presto impopolare il sostegno che l'Europa sta accordando all'Ucraina.

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Non possiamo, infatti, continuamente chiedere sacrifici ai nostri cittadini, già piegati da due anni di pandemia, senza offrire loro delle soluzioni concrete per il contenimento della bolla speculativa e, soprattutto, prospettive di uscita dalla crisi energetica.

A quasi un anno dall'inizio del conflitto, infatti, è giunto il momento che l'Europa si attivi per evitare vergognose speculazioni sulla guerra e, al tempo stesso, riveda però tutte quelle posizioni ideologiche che sono incompatibili con lo scenario economico che ci troviamo di fronte.

L'inflazione generata dalle scelte *green* fuori dalla realtà, volute fortemente dalle sinistre europee, sta affossando la già difficile ripresa economica post-pandemica, colpendo soprattutto le fasce più deboli della popolazione e le piccole e medie imprese.

Oggi che la credibilità di questo Parlamento è fortemente minata dai gravi scandali politico-giudiziari, l'unico modo per recuperare la fiducia dell'opinione pubblica è dare risposte concrete ai drammatici problemi con cui i cittadini si confrontano ogni giorno, anche se questo può significare mettere da parte l'ideologia o rinunciare a difendere qualche lobby.

Senza iniziative coraggiose ed efficaci il futuro di questa istituzione rimane appesa a un filo.

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Szanowni Państwo! Związane z inflacją rosnące koszty utrzymania to dzisiaj największy problem społeczny w Europie. Zwiększenie się obszarów biedy jest zjawiskiem, którego dawno nie oglądaliśmy w Europie. Pojawiło się pod koniec kryzysu Covid-19, a wzrosło znacząco w czasie rosyjskiej inwazji na Ukrainę. De facto europejska gospodarka stoi w obliczu recesji, co z całą pewnością doprowadzi do jeszcze większego wzrostu bezrobocia, do zwiększających się obszarów biedy. Przyczyną gwałtownego wzrostu inflacji są nie tylko konsekwencje rosyjskiej agresji na Ukrainę, ale i konsekwencje wdrażania nierozważnej, nieroztropnej polityki klimatycznej, odchodzenia od paliw kopalnych, a także konsekwencje fałszywej transformacji prowadzącej do uzależnienia Unii Europejskiej od Rosji.

Chciałabym zwrócić uwagę na temat naszej dyskusji – zatrzymać spekulację. Zatem chciałam zapytać Pana Komisarza, dlaczego do tej pory nie wykluczono innych instytucji finansowych z rynku handlu uprawnieniami do emisji. Przypomnę w 2017 r. tona uprawnień do emisji CO₂ kosztowała pięć euro, w lutym 2022 r. – 100 euro. Proszę Państwa, lewa strona jest taka wrażliwa na tę biedę. Rzekomo jesteście wrażliwi, bo popieracie tą horrendalną, idiotyczną politykę klimatyczną, która prowadzi do wzrostu ubóstwa energetycznego. Czas zredefiniować politykę klimatyczną. Czy w obliczu rosnącej biedy Komisja Europejska odpowie tym ludziom, którzy nie mają na ogrzewanie, na opłatę rachunków, na zakupy niezbędne do życia, że musimy realizować ideę zielonego ładu? Tym ludzie mają napełnić swoje żołądki, tym mają się ogrzać? Czas się zastanowić i zreflektować. I podjąć działania realne, rozsądne i niezbędne do tego, by zwalczać ubóstwo.

José Gusmão (The Left). – Senhora Presidente, depois de uma resposta à crise pandémica, que parecia indiciar que a Europa tinha aprendido a lição da crise financeira, voltamos a caminhar para uma recessão e uma crise económica autoimpostas.

O Banco Central Europeu, contra as suas próprias análises, responde à inflação com o aumento das taxas de juro. A Comissão lamenta as consequências da especulação na finança, na distribuição e na energia, mas nada faz para travar essa especulação, e governos como o meu congelam salários e pensões, impondo um corte definitivo a todas as pessoas que viveram ou vivem do seu trabalho, ao mesmo tempo que oferece benesses fiscais aos rendimentos do capital.

A recessão económica em 2023 não é inevitável. Sabemos quais são as soluções que funcionaram e sabemos também quais foram as soluções que falharam no passado. É preciso inverter o rumo da política orçamental e da política monetária na União Europeia, caso contrário teremos que responder perante os nossos cidadãos por termos provocado, consciente e deliberadamente, uma nova crise económica no espaço europeu.

Κώστας Παπαδάκης (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και οι κυβερνήσεις πασχίζουν να συγκαλύψουν τις αιτίες της καλπάζουσας ακρίβειας που βασανίζει τον λαό, όμως αυτές δεν κρύβονται: μισθοί και συντάξεις πείνας με αυξήσεις που αποτελούν μειώσεις· ο εκτιναγμένος πληθωρισμός από τα ταμεία ανάκαμψης και την επεκτατική πολιτική της πράσινης και ψηφιακής στρατηγικής της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και των κυβερνήσεων, με άφθονο χρήμα για το κεφάλαιο, που ακριβοπληρώνει ο λαός με «πράσινα χαράτσια» στην ενέργεια, στα καύσιμα, τα τρόφιμα, τα ενοίκια· ο κλιμακούμενος πόλεμος ΝΑΤΟ-Ρωσίας και οι αλληπάλληλες κυρώσεις που τον συνοδεύουν· όλα αυτά, μεταξύ άλλων, σημαδεύουν τον πραγματικό ένοχο, το εκμεταλλευτικό σύστημα. Δεν πρόκειται λοιπόν για αισχροκέρδεια όπως ισχυρίζονται, αλλά για τις ίδιες τις νομοτελίες της καπιταλιστικής αγοράς. Απέναντι στην κοροϊδία των καλαθιών εξαθλίωσης, της «ψιχουλομαχίας» ανάμεσα σε φιλελεύθερους και σοσιαλδημοκράτες, πρέπει να δυναμώσει τώρα η οργάνωση της λαϊκής πάλης για πραγματικές αυξήσεις σε μισθούς και συντάξεις, κατάρ-

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γηση έμμεσων φόρων σε καύσιμα, ενέργεια και τρόφιμα, χειραφέτηση του λαού σε ρήξη με τις δεσμεύσεις της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και τη διαχρονική στρατηγική των κυβερνήσεων που υπηρετούν το κεφάλαιο.

Herbert Dorfmann (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Inflation, die wir derzeit erleben, hat im Grunde zwei Ursachen: Energie und leider auch Lebensmittel. Und die zwei hängen ganz eng zusammen.

11 % der Kosten in der Landwirtschaft sind im Schnitt Energiekosten. Dazu kommen derzeit hohe Düngerpreise, die auch teilweise Folge der hohen Energiepreise sind. Die Folge ist, dass viele Menschen leider versuchen, billige Lebensmittel zu finden, und der Premiumsektor – qualitativ hochwertige und nachhaltig produzierte Lebensmittel – und auch die Biolandwirtschaft leiden unter dieser Situation.

Das ist genau das, was wir nicht wollen. Deswegen müssen wir wieder vermehrt darauf schauen, dass nicht Spekulanten solche Zeiten ausnützen. Es kann einfach nicht sein, dass viele unserer Bürger bei der Ernährung sparen müssen, während sich Energiekonzerne, Lebensmittelhändler und Düngerproduzenten die Bilanzen aufbessern.

Die Menschen wissen nicht, wie sie ihre Rechnungen bezahlen sollen, und wir reden hier über Besteuerung von Sonderprofiten. Irgendwas läuft da nicht ganz richtig. Deshalb brauchen wir im Grunde drei Dinge: Wir brauchen eine klare Preisobergrenze bei der Energie, wir brauchen wieder einen funktionierenden Düngermarkt, und wir brauchen auch keine neuen Gesetzesinitiativen, welche Lebensmittelsicherheit und Versorgung in Europa gefährden.

Paul Tang (S&D). – Madam President, it is collective action that is essential to face the challenges of our time. Together, we stand. Divided, we fall.

The war in the Ukraine, extremely high energy prices, the impact of the pandemic, the consequences of climate change – what we needed and what we need is collective action to protect people and small businesses from the disruptive effects of these challenges on normal life.

What we need is a strong government. What we don't need is austerity. Europeans have lived through austerity before and they say not again. But be realistic: a strong government needs solid funding. And this holds especially true in times of inflation. Budgetary deficits only contribute to inflation.

The IMF, the ECB and a bunch of other economists all say it's taxation, stupid. Indeed, we need to break with the taboo of taxation. No, do not raise taxes on labour. But yes, do raise taxes on profits, wealth and pollution. Level the playing field between capital and labour, between workers and investors. Wealth in Europe is wildly undertaxed. However, it's better to let money work than to work yourself.

Colleagues, let's their four stand together, allow for a strong government, break with the taboo on taxation. The need in our era of high energy prices is compensation for the many, taxation for the few.

Valter Flego (Renew). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, poštovane kolegice i kolege, na kraju smo jedne teške godine, teške 2022. godine.

U ovo isto vrijeme, naime, pred godinu dana s optimizmom smo gledali na ovu 2022. godinu i planirali ju i nadali se potpunom oporavku nakon korona pandemije i boljim danima. Nažalost, te su se nade ugasile 24.2. kada je krenuo ovaj nesretni rat u Ukrajini i kad je krenulo divljanje cijena energije i inflacije posljedično. Pokazalo se, naime, da Europa nije bila spremna za tako brutalni energetska rat. Nažalost, i uz sve mjere Europske unije najveću cijenu plaćaju naši građani i gospodarstvo kojima nije nimalo lako.

Zato, poštovani povjereniče Gentiloni, smatram da u sljedećoj godini prioritet rada Komisije treba biti zaustavljanje inflacije, jačanje obnovljivih izvora energije i pojednostavljivanje papirologije za građane i gospodarstvo te daljnja pomoć i subvencije Komisije i država članica najugroženijim skupinama. Mnoge, naime, investicije mogu pričekati, ali ovo o čemu pričam nikako ne, ako želimo jednu bolju, sretniju i ugodniju 2023. godinu.

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Ana Miranda (Verts/ALE). – Senhora Presidente, os aumentos consecutivos dos preços no consumidor, nomeadamente em produtos como os combustíveis e os produtos alimentares, estão a contribuir para o aumento da taxa da inflação. Sabe o Comissário, quanto custam os ovos, batatas, o leite, o peixe, a carne e a luz?

Os bens de primeira necessidade são um luxo para muitas famílias, para famílias grandes, para famílias monoparentais, para estudantes, para pessoas com baixos rendimentos. Vivemos uma emergência social. Os trabalhadores e as trabalhadoras ganham menos e vivem pior, os salários não aumentam. Os trabalhadores por conta própria e os produtores? Sobrecarregados. Os agregados vulneráveis? Sobrecarregados. E a Comissão quer voltar à austeridade.

No meu país, a Galiza, a pobreza aumentou. A crise dos preços está a ter um impacto sem precedentes nas classes mais baixas, agravada pela dependência dos setores produtivos, pesqueiros e agrícolas e agravada pela falta de apoio dos governos. Trata-se novamente de uma grande fraude contra as populações. Os ricos cada vez mais ricos e as multinacionais cada vez com mais lucros. Isto tem que acabar, porque muita gente fica pelo caminho.

Agora a Comissão deveria baixar os tipos de interesse. Precisamos de mudanças estruturais na economia. Quem tem mais, que pague mais. No domingo, nas ruas de Santiago de Compostela, a manifestação pela crise dos preços dirá novamente que precisamos de alternativas.

Jean-Lin Lacapelle (ID). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, face à la crise, établissons en premier lieu les responsabilités. Dans l'immédiat, il s'agit de la guerre en Ukraine et aussi des sanctions écervelées sur l'énergie, dont tout le monde savait quel désastre économique elles allaient provoquer. Plus anciennement, il s'agissait du néolibéralisme, du libre-échange, du mondialisme et de son cortège de délocalisations et d'inflation financière. Mais tout cela, chers collègues, c'était la politique de l'Union européenne bien avant 2022.

À présent, la première solution est, au contraire de ce que fait Ursula von der Leyen, de ne plus entretenir le dramatique conflit en Ukraine. Plus vite la paix sera trouvée, mieux cela sera. Il est également urgent de corriger un régime de sanctions absurdes, qui ne nuit qu'à l'Europe et aux Européens.

Parlons ensuite des salaires. Par l'immigration de masse, à l'image du projet de loi de régularisation massive qui se dessine en France, les gouvernements européens entretiennent délibérément une pression à la baisse sur les salaires. Il faut y mettre fin. Depuis longtemps, le Rassemblement national propose une revalorisation du salaire réel de 10 %, en contrepartie d'une exonération de charges. Il propose également d'aider les ménages dans le besoin, en abaissant la TVA à 5,5 % sur les énergies et en la supprimant sur cent produits de première nécessité.

S'il faut, enfin, faire cesser la spéculation, alors oui, attaquons-nous aux spéculateurs qui jouent sur les cours des matières premières, mais aussi à ceux qui, tel George Soros, deviennent multimilliardaires en spéculant sur le cours des monnaies, entraînant les pays dans l'austérité et les peuples dans la pauvreté. Il est vrai que Soros et ses réseaux infestent les institutions européennes, dont l'actualité nous montre que la corruption y sévit. Alors, augmentons les salaires, mais arrêtons aussi l'immigration de masse et traquons les profiteurs de crise!

Michiel Hoogeveen (ECR). – Voorzitter, de kosten voor het dagelijks levensonderhoud rijzen de pan uit. Inflatie heeft zich breed verankerd in de economie. Nu worden hier hogere lonen en uitkeringen geëist. Om dat te betalen, staan velen hier te roepen: "Laten we de kleine man redden door bedrijven te belasten!"

Jullie zijn er nog steeds niet achter dat belasting op het bedrijfsleven uiteindelijk wordt betaald door de klant, aan de kassa – een soort verborgen omzetbelasting. Extra overheidssteun, zoals een prijsplafond, is ook een heilloze oplossing. Daarmee wakker je slechts de vraag aan, waardoor de prijzen hoog blijven. Laat de energiemarkt gewoon zijn werk doen en investeer eindelijk in extra aanbod van betrouwbare én betaalbare energie.

Waar de EU en de lidstaten wél kunnen helpen? Snij in het eigen vlees. Kies voor een kleinere overheid, een kleinere EU. Want méér EU is niet de oplossing voor onze problemen, maar juist de oorzaak van onze problemen.

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Eugenia Rodríguez Palop (The Left). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, el coste de la vida sube y los gobiernos tienen que actuar, que para eso están. En España ya lo estamos haciendo. El tope a la subida de los alquileres, el apoyo a los hipotecados más vulnerables, la subida de las pensiones, la solución ibérica al tope del gas, la gratuidad en el transporte ferroviario y el descuento de los carburantes son medidas que ya alivian la situación de hogares, trabajadores y pequeñas empresas.

Todo esto se acompaña de medidas fiscales, como los gravámenes a la banca y a las eléctricas y la presión a los grandes patrimonios para que contribuyan o a quienes obtienen enormes beneficios con cada crisis. Se trabaja, además, para contener el precio de la cesta de la compra y, a pesar de la oposición empresarial, se baraja una subida del salario mínimo que pueda igualar a la del IPC.

Son medidas que están sirviendo de ejemplo en Europa y que deberían seguir quienes hoy se oponen a poner un tope al gas. Lo que está claro es que subir los tipos de interés no es la solución.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – A *Uachtarán*, Putin's unjustified invasion of Ukraine continues and, consequently, Europe is grappling with the unprecedented increase in the cost of living. Households across all Member States are struggling to stay warm this winter and to pay their bills.

We are at a crisis point and the reality is that without immediate action, the situation will continue to worsen. The EU must ensure that concrete measures and supports are put in place to protect businesses and households from inflation. We cannot allow Putin to weaponise our energy supply.

It is imperative that we are pragmatic in our approach to tackling the crisis. I previously expressed my support for the introduction of windfall policies, but we should keep emergency interventions such as price caps separate from the overall market design. We can provide investor certainty and protect consumers by incentivising long term contracts such as contracts for difference and power purchase agreements. This both removes the risk for investments and also protects consumers from price spikes. Of course, in the long term we must prioritise our transition away from fossil fuels and the swift deployment of renewable energy.

Aurore Lalucq (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire, 2,4 %: c'est d'après l'Organisation internationale du travail la baisse des salaires réelle en Europe au premier semestre de 2022. Derrière ce chiffre, il y a des vies, des milliers de familles, et évidemment ce sont les plus pauvres et les plus précaires qui, du point de vue social et environnemental, sont les plus touchées. Cela, c'est la réalité.

En toute logique, il faudrait recommander d'augmenter les salaires, mais c'est sans compter sur une peur, toute théorique cette fois-ci, qui s'appelle la «boucle prix-salaires», et qui engendrerait un emballement de l'inflation. Pourtant, même le Fonds monétaire international nous dit qu'une telle boucle n'existe pas. Il nous dit même, d'ailleurs, qu'elle n'a jamais existé dans pareil contexte.

Il faut donc recommander aujourd'hui d'augmenter les salaires, mais aussi, comme l'a parfaitement dit Paul Tang, de trouver de l'argent pour mieux assurer un soutien, avec des politiques budgétaires généreuses. Je sais que la Commission européenne, et vous en particulier, Monsieur Gentiloni, êtes très ouverts sur ce sujet. On peut peut-être laisser de côté la TTF si cela ne fonctionne pas et passer à une taxation sur les produits financiers, et taxer surtout le patrimoine et les plus riches. Pourquoi ne pas faire comme les Américains, en taxant les rachats d'actions?

Anna Cavazzini (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, Herr Minister! Die Energiekrise und die Krise der Lebenshaltungskosten treffen Menschen unterschiedlich hart. Das haben heute schon viele Kolleginnen und Kollegen gesagt. Verbraucherinnen und Verbraucher, die es besonders schwer haben, die besonders vulnerabel sind, sind am stärksten betroffen.

Und auch wenn schon viele Maßnahmen von der Kommission, von den Mitgliedstaaten auf den Weg gebracht wurden: Strom und Heizkosten werden für einige diesen Winter unbezahlbar, und immer mehr Menschen sind von Stromsperrungen bedroht. Es ist wirklich eine schreckliche Vorstellung, wenn wir Menschen in diesem Winter buchstäblich im Dunkeln lassen. Aber an all die Rechten, die jetzt hier sagen, der Green Deal oder die Klimakrise oder die Klimapolitik seien daran schuld, denen sage ich: Ruft doch euren Freund Putin an und beschwert euch bei ihm!

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Der Green Deal ist die Lösung unserer Probleme der Abhängigkeit von den fossilen Energien. Und wir in der EU sind außerdem zu Recht stolz auf unseren hohen Verbraucherschutz. Gerade jetzt brauchen die vulnerabelsten Verbraucherinnen und Verbraucher Regeln, die sie schützen.

Es ist gut, dass die Kommission diese Deklaration zwischen Verbraucherschutzverbänden und Energiefirmen fazilitiert hat. Aber all das ist weder bindend noch langfristig gedacht. Deshalb brauchen wir jetzt ein EU-weites, verbindliches Moratorium, um Stromsperren zu verhindern.

Im Binnenmarktausschuss haben wir außerdem bei der Reform der Gasrichtlinien ein Abschaltverbot für besonders verwundbare Verbraucherinnen und Verbraucher beschlossen, und diesem sollten sich die Mitgliedstaaten in den Verhandlungen unbedingt anschließen.

Filip De Man (ID). – Voorzitter, de oorzaak van inflatie en dalende koopkracht is de op hol geslagen energieprijis. Dat komt ervan als men bijvoorbeeld in Frankrijk desinvesteert in kerncentrales, terwijl dat land vroeger 75 % van zijn elektriciteit uit kernenergie haalde. Men waarschuwt nu in Frankrijk zelfs voor elektriciteitspannes, in het land dat dus vroeger driekwart betrok uit kernenergie. Of nog stupider, in België, waar de regeringen – ook met N-VA – de kernuitstap steevast bevestigden, zodat we nu duur gas moeten verbranden om de goedkope elektriciteit van onze kerncentrales te vervangen. Hoe gek kan je het bedenken. Nog sterker, daardoor hebben we straks te weinig gas om onze woningen en onze industrie te bevoorraden.

Natuurlijk beweren de andere partijen hier dat de oorlog in Oekraïne de oorzaak is, maar bij mijn weten hebben de Russen niet de kernuitstap beslist. Dat hebben jullie gedaan. Het resultaat van dit alles is dat we nu om dure lpg moeten gaan bedelen in Qatar bij de vrienden van de socialisten. Bravo!

Patryk Jaki (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Chcecie walczyć z powodami wysokich kosztów życia i inflacji – bardzo dobrze. Ja uważam, że powinniście zacząć od popatrzenia w lustro.

Jaki jest najważniejszy składnik inflacji? Wysokie ceny energii. A skąd one się wzięły? Skąd się wzięły wysokie ceny energii? Z tego, że od lat zmuszaliście wszystkich absurdalnym prawem do rezygnacji z węgla i do stawiania na gaz. I co się nagle stało? Putin wam zakręcił kurek i nie ma. Inflacja skoczyła do góry i węgiel trzeba ściągać z egzotycznych krajów, pomimo że mamy go w Europie bardzo dużo, szczególnie dużo jest go w Polsce.

Ale wy zamiast myśleć, jak mądrzejsi wam podpowiadali, że uzależnianie się od Putina tak się właśnie skończy, zajęci byliście czymś innym, mianowicie szukaniem rzekomego łamania praworządności w Polsce. I tak bardzo szukaliście tego łamania praworządności w Polsce, że nie zauważyliście reklamówek z Kataru we własnych szeregach. Tak się właśnie kończy takie postępowanie.

I zamiast wyciągać wnioski z tego, co robiliście, wy dalej robicie to samo. Właśnie Holandia – Panie Komisarzu, to jest coś dla Pana – właśnie Holandia: parędziesiąt nowych zwolnień dla rosyjskich firm. A co wy z tym robicie? A pomoc niemieckiej gospodarce, 200 miliardów, dlaczego jest na to zgoda? W czym to ma pomóc? To ma pomóc w walce z inflacją? Co to są za podwójne standardy?

I dalej blokujecie pomoc dla Polski, bez której Ukraina już by dawno upadła. To tak chcecie wyciągnąć Unię Europejską z kryzysu? To jest droga donikąd. Dalej robicie to samo i liczycie na inne efekty.

Marc Botenga (The Left). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, la revue *The Economist* – votre revue, la revue libérale et capitaliste de l'Union européenne et de l'Europe, que vous lisez tous – a calculé que, cet hiver, jusqu'à 185 000 personnes de plus pourraient mourir de froid, non pas uniquement à cause du froid, mais aussi à cause de votre inaction.

Votre inaction sur le blocage des prix de l'énergie: on vous demande un blocage du prix du gaz depuis un an. Comment est-ce que vous voulez que les gens fassent confiance à l'Union européenne, s'ils doivent attendre un an et potentiellement crever à la maison parce qu'ils ne savent pas payer la facture?

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Votre inaction sur les surprofits des multinationales: ah, taxer vos potes les multinationales, c'est toujours trop compliqué, même quand ils font des surprofits et même quand les gens ne s'en sortent plus. Mais est-ce que vous n'avez pas honte de laisser faire cela? Ne soyez pas surpris quand les gens sortent dans la rue, font grève et se mobilisent pour vous mettre devant vos responsabilités. Parce que c'est cela qu'il faut faire aujourd'hui, vous mettre la pression, sinon vous n'écoutez jamais.

Tomislav Sokol (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, povjereniče, kolegice i kolege, inflacija koja je u bitnom uvjetovana energetsom krizom i poremećajima u opskrbnim lancem lancima zbog rata u Ukrajini uvelike utjecala na kupovnu moć građana u Europskoj uniji.

Za isti iznos novca, potrošač u EU-u danas može kupiti 10% manje artikala nego u istom razdoblju lani. Jedan od uzroka energetske krize su i pogrešne političke odluke država koje su prije desetak godina odlučile zamijeniti jeftinu i pouzdanu nuklearnu energiju ruskim plinom i to treba jasno reći. U takvim okolnostima, upravo se diverzifikacija energetskih izvora, izgradnjom LNG terminala pokazala jednim od rješenja. Također, kao srednjoročno rješenje potrebno je jačati zajedničku nabavu energenata na svjetskom tržištu.

Međutim, kao dugoročno rješenje potrebno je u punom smislu izgraditi jedinstveno europsko energetske tržište pod strogim nadzorom kako bi se spriječio špekulacije. Samo energetske izgrađena Europa može pružiti sigurnost građanima i poduzećima u uvjetima krize.

Kim Van Sparrentak (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, Commissioner, Minister, people in Europe are suffering. They're sitting in ice-cold rooms, are unable to feed their families and are increasingly at risk of becoming homeless. If we want to be a Union that works for people, our response to the energy crisis has to go further than security of supply and the necessary reforms of the energy market. We need to take action for the people. And that's why I call upon the European Commission to use its competence to urgently present a proposal for emergency legislation that bans energy disconnections for everyone in Europe this winter.

But I also call upon you to ban home evictions this winter because our European goal to end homelessness by 2030 has never seemed further away. We need to take action to help people who can't pay their rent, food or energy bills. We have to help them get through this winter. Please show that you are here for the people and not just for businesses.

Jean-Paul Garraud (ID). – Madame la Présidente, la hausse des prix que nous subissons est particulièrement cruelle, car elle touche avant tout des biens de première nécessité: l'énergie et l'alimentation. Les prix de l'énergie explosent à cause des règles absurdes du marché européen de l'électricité et du sabotage délibéré de la filière nucléaire, qui nous garantissait une énergie bon marché. La fuite en avant dans la mondialisation, qui nous a conduits à renoncer à produire notre nourriture chez nous, rend notre approvisionnement alimentaire dépendant de l'étranger et nous met à la merci d'un conflit extérieur, comme celui qui a éclaté en Ukraine.

Face à cette situation dramatique, l'Union européenne étale son impuissance. Depuis plus de un an, la réforme du marché européen de l'électricité est une arlésienne qui ne verra jamais le jour. La proposition de la Commission de plafonner le gaz à un prix stratosphérique est un affront fait à nos concitoyens, qui vont souffrir du froid cet hiver.

Cette situation exceptionnelle n'appelle pas d'interminables conciliabules bruxellois, mais des mesures d'urgence à l'échelle de chaque État. Les pays qui ont fait le choix d'agir de leur côté parviennent à protéger leur population. L'Espagne et le Portugal paient leur électricité trois fois moins cher que les autres pays de l'Union européenne. Les Italiens, les Néerlandais, les Allemands et les Polonais peuvent respirer un peu, grâce à la baisse de la TVA sur l'énergie.

Les solutions immédiates et efficaces existent. Elles ne demandent qu'un peu de courage politique. Il faut baisser les taxes sur l'énergie et les produits alimentaires de première nécessité. Il faut en finir avec la stagnation des salaires, en proposant un pacte gagnant-gagnant aux entreprises, qui doivent être exonérées de charges lorsqu'elles augmentent leurs salariés. Toutes ces mesures sont finançables par la taxation des superprofits qui découlent directement de l'explosion des prix. Il n'est pas acceptable que quelques-uns s'enrichissent par la spéculation généralisée sur des produits vitaux, tandis que se nourrir correctement et se chauffer deviennent un luxe pour beaucoup.

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Beata Kempa (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Szanowni Państwo! Europa niestety stała się ofiarą unijnej polityki energetycznej, fatalnie zaplanowanej i z uporem, naprawdę, prowadzonej przez Komisję Europejską i wiernych zielonej ideologii eurokratów. Przez lata walczyliście z węglem, z energetyką opartą na węglu, a dzisiaj ten węgiel bardzo pilnie sprowadzacie z egzotycznych krajów. Otwieracie nowe kopalnie, wygaszone elektrownie przywracacie do życia. A byliście przez lata głusi na argumenty tych, którzy głośno mówili, że unijna polityka energetyczna prowadzi Europę nad przepaść finansowej zapaści. Teraz wielu obywateli krajów Unii Europejskiej, również w moim kraju – Polki i Polacy – płaci koszty tych błędów. Płacą niestety koszty zgniłych gazowych deali z Putinem i z Rosją. Inflacja napędzana astronomicznymi cenami energii drenuje rodzinne budżety i wykańcza wszystkie nasze firmy. Jak mają podnosić pensje własnym pracownikom, kiedy z powodów kosztu energii muszą zamykać swoje zakłady pracy? W tym szalenie ciężkim okresie pozostaje nam jedno rozwiązanie: pilne zawieszenie obowiązywania zapisów pakietu klimatyczno-energetycznego i rezygnacja z pakietu „Fit for 55”. Jest zbyt ambitny i nie na te czasy.

Sandra Pereira (The Left). – Senhora Presidente, em Portugal, os produtos alimentares aumentaram 18.9%, o gás de botija aumentou 19.5% e os produtos energéticos 27.6%. Assiste-se a um aumento brutal das rendas de casa, 9.2 % em Lisboa e 6% no Porto. A prestação da casa vai subir entre os 100 e 150 euros e cinco famílias são despejadas diariamente.

Estima-se que mais de 2 milhões de pessoas engordarão os números da pobreza. Esta é a realidade dos trabalhadores portugueses. Enquanto isso, o grande capital da distribuição, da energia, da banca, tem lucros recorde conseguidos à custa da especulação dos preços dos produtos e dos serviços, dos baixos salários, da precariedade, do aumento da exploração do trabalho e do empobrecimento dos povos.

O aumento geral dos salários e das pensões é, por isso, uma emergência. Não podem ser os mesmos de sempre a pagar. É uma emergência, porque é a única forma de as pessoas fazerem face ao constante e gravoso aumento do custo de vida. É uma emergência, porque dinamiza a economia, travando o desemprego e evitando uma crise maior e é uma emergência, porque é uma forma de redistribuir de forma mais justa a riqueza produzida. Não há desculpas para adiar o aumento geral dos salários e das pensões.

VORSITZ: KATARINA BARLEY

Vizepräsidentin

Estrella Durá Ferrandis (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, mientras hoy debatimos acerca de qué medidas deben abordarse para frenar la tendencia inflacionista al alza, no hay palabras que puedan paliar el sufrimiento de muchas personas y familias que deben elegir si pagar el gas, la luz o el comer. No hay tiempo para más palabras. Nuestra reflexión debe transformarse en urgente actuación.

Necesitamos mecanismos permanentes y vinculantes que autorregulen las fluctuaciones del mercado y garanticen la sostenibilidad y supervivencia de nuestro sistema de bienestar social. Debemos introducir un procedimiento de vigilancia y corrección de los desequilibrios sociales en los Estados miembros en el marco de la revisión de las reglas fiscales; combatir el sinhogarismo y capar el alto precio de los costes en la vivienda; implantar medidas que aseguren empleos estables y de calidad; y convertir el SURE en mecanismo permanente. Y necesitamos una directiva sobre rentas mínimas que ayude a millones de europeos a llevar una vida decente, a salir de situaciones de pobreza.

Porque esta es la clave del modelo social europeo que debemos defender.

Thomas Waitz (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin, geschätzte Kommission! iPEs Food schätzt, 20 bis 40 % der gestiegenen Lebensmittelpreise sind auf Spekulation zurückzuführen. Gestern hatten wir hier den slowenischen Ministerpräsidenten, vormals ein sehr erfolgreicher Energiehändler, der uns hier klar gesagt hat: Ein guter Teil der Energiepreise ist auf Spekulation zurückzuführen. Er weiß, wovon er spricht.

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Wir haben derzeit die Möglichkeit, in der Überprüfung zur Regulierung von Marktspekulationen, von diesem Gesetz, Verbesserungen herbeizuführen. Die Vorschläge der Kommission sind immer noch nicht weitreichend genug. Derzeit haben wir einen lascheren Umgang als die USA. Wir müssen endlich Reformen angehen, um Lebensmittelpreise und Energiepreise nicht der Spekulation zu überlassen!

Die Europäische Kommission und EU-Agenturen wie die Europäische Wertpapier- und Marktaufsichtsbehörde sind aufgefordert, endlich amtlich zu überprüfen, wie groß der Spekulationsanteil ist. Denn es kann nicht sein, dass EU-Bürgerinnen frieren und hungern, während sich einige Spekulanten ein großes Einkommen machen.

Dem müssen wir etwas entgegensetzen! Ich bitte Sie, endlich zu handeln.

Denis Nesci (ECR). – Signora Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, la crisi pandemica prima e le conseguenze del conflitto russo-ucraino ucraino dopo hanno generato una spirale inflazionistica con tassi a doppia cifra, che non si vedeva da tempo ormai nel nostro continente.

È il momento di soluzioni rapide e urgenti, che diano risposte e supporto a consumatori, famiglie e imprese, a partire dal contrasto dell'incremento dei prezzi energetici sul quale ci auguriamo decisioni già al prossimo Consiglio europeo per fermare la speculazione.

Da mesi, ormai, le quotazioni del prezzo del gas sul mercato europeo, oltre che dalle conseguenze dell'azione criminale di Putin, rispondono a logiche puramente speculazionistiche. Viste le circostanze, ancora una volta, serve la vera solidarietà dell'Europa da parte di chi, in questi mesi, ha accumulato profitti extra.

Infine, alla luce dello scenario economico attuale con i tassi di interesse in salita, credo che occorra un segnale concreto dell'Unione europea e degli Stati membri per agevolare le esigenze di consumatori, famiglie e imprese attraverso una proroga delle moratorie per imprese e mutui. Su questi temi non servono rinvii, ma decisioni.

Özlem Demirel (The Left). – Frau Präsidentin! Offiziell ist jeder Vierte in der EU von Armut bedroht. Im Schnitt stiegen die Preise um 11,5 %, die Löhne aber nicht. Im EU-Schnitt 3 % Reallohnverlust.

Wir können heute also über Armut trotz Arbeit, Kinderarmut, Altersarmut, Wohnungslosigkeit und horrend hohe Mieten sprechen. Wir können aber auch über die Kehrseite, über Superreiche und Aktionäre, sprechen. Die zehn reichsten EU-Bürger besitzen laut Forbes ungefähr 539 Milliarden Euro. Während das normale Volk den Gürtel enger schnallen soll, bauen sie ihre Macht und Ihren Einfluss aus.

In jeder Krise machen sie aus ihrem Geld noch mehr Geld. Doch Geld arbeitet nicht, sondern die Arbeitenden schaffen die Reichtümer. Aber die Arbeitenden und ganz Armen kommen nicht mehr über die Runden: Heizen, Butter, Brot, Gemüse – alles wird teurer. Superreiche spekulieren auf all das und noch mehr in ihrem Börsencasino. Damit muss Schluss sein.

Wir brauchen ein Verbot von Spekulation auf Lebensmittel, ein Verbot der Geschäftemacherei mit Wohnen, ein Verbot der Steueroasen für Superreiche. Es geht nicht um Weihnachtsgeschenke oder Almosen für die Armen und Arbeitenden, sondern um ihr Recht.

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (S&D). – Ačiū, pone Pirmininke, pone Komisare. Nežmoniškai išaugusios maisto ir energetikos kainos tiesiog stumia mažas ir vidutines pajamas gaunančius žmones į skurdą ir socialinę atskirtį. Tačiau būtini sprendimai labai vėluoja. Nesuprantu, kodėl kai kurios valstybės narės iki šiol netaiko lengvatinio PVM tarifo net būtiniausiems maisto produktams, o tuo tarpu įmonių akcininkų godumas yra nepateisinamas. Pagaliau nesuprantama, kodėl kompensaciniai mechanizmai taikomi vienodai tiek gaunantiems mažas ir vidutines pajamas, tiek netgi ir dideles pajamas. Privalome užtikrinti, kad ši sunki kainų infliacijos našta nebūtų uždėta ant pažeidžiamiausių ir mažiausias pajamas gaunančių mūsų žmonių. Labai gaila, tačiau net ir Europos Sąjungos lygmeniu nėra solidarumo ir politinės valios susitarti dėl sprendimų energetikos srityje. Vakar matėme energetikos ministrų fiasko susitarti dėl viršutinės dujų kainos.

Bronis Ropė (Verts/ALE). – Ačiū, Pirmininke, gerbiamas Komisare, gerbiamas Ministre, kolegos. Akivaizdu, kad laisva rinka nesugeba subalansuoti kainų kriziniais laikotarpiais. Vienas procentas žmonių kontroliuoja pusę pasaulio turto. Pandemijos metu šie žmonės uždirbo rekordinius pelnus ir dar labiau padidino socialinę nelygybę. Tai norima pakartoti dabar, pasinaudojant Rusijos sukeltu karu. O ką daro politikai? Mes tik kalbame. Kada pradėsime riboti pelnus maisto sektoriuje? Be maisto žmonės neišgyvens. Trečdaliu padidėję maisto kainos yra katastrofa, kurios nenorima matyti, nes vis dar giname turtinguosius. Komisare, kur mūsų veiksmų planas? Jis turėjo būti patvirtintas dar pavasarį. Kviečiu baigti kalbas ir imtis konkrečių darbų.

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Cristian Terheş (ECR). – Madam President, dear Commissioner, Minister, emissions must have a price that changes our behaviour. This is what Ursula von der Leyen said in this plenary in 2019 in her opening statement as a candidate for President of the European Commission. Three years later, we see and feel the effect of our newly envisioned European Union, an EU where prosperity is replaced with poverty, where respect for fundamental rights is replaced with more state control, where governmental transparency is replaced with secrecy to protect private or corporate interests, where decisions based on reason are replaced with those based on ideology – all with a clear intent to change our behaviour.

The current crisis that is affecting all of us is mainly being caused by this decision of the European Commission, which is more focused on changing people's behaviour than serve them. While people got poorer and small businesses closed down, especially during the pandemic, some big businesses made huge and untaxed profits. EU needs pragmatic, reasonable, common sense solutions based on facts, not neo-Marxist ideology, which is trying to change the reality to fit its argument.

Commissioner, people cannot eat or burn carbon credits. I call on the European Commission to stop blocking the use or any investments in coal, nuclear or gas power plants, so we can keep up with the demand for energy and produce affordable energy.

Ilan De Basso (S&D). – Herr talman! Idag slog inflationen nya rekord i Sverige och det är Putin som bär huvudansvaret. Men energikrisen är också ett europeiskt misslyckande. Marknaden fungerar helt enkelt inte.

Detta kräver mer radikala lösningar, en fundamental reform av EU:s elmarknad. Alla våra förslag kommer att syfta till att sänka elpriserna. Samtidigt måste vi också stödja hushållen. Den svenska regeringen har med sitt haveri försatt många svenska hushåll i en omöjlig situation. Därför vill vi svenska socialdemokrater införa en elräkningsakut och hjälpa hela Sverige att klara elkostnaderna i vinter. Till skillnad från regeringen förstår vi att folk norr om Dalälven också har det tufft. Vi socialdemokrater blundar inte för de misslyckanden som marknaden nu visar. Vi ska agera kraftfullt när våra medborgare pressas.

Paolo Gentiloni, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, honourable Members, I think that this debate was very useful to share and to give us the sense of a social emergency that we have to address.

Very important, in my view, first to understand where this social emergency is coming from. I am not referring to, of course, our historical problems of social inequalities, but I am referring to the recent social emergency. And I think that the reason is not on the green transition. The reason is not on sanctions. The main reason is the Russian aggression in Ukraine and the consequences of this Russian aggression on prices, energy, food, inflation.

How to face this challenge? I think several good points came out of this discussion. I will only stress three things.

First, the emergency. So our social safety nets, the contribution that we can give at European level to those social safety nets. Important I think that we reached an agreement on the recommendation on the minimum income and ensuring active inclusion. Important the Minimum Wages Directive. Important to address the windfall profits both at EU and national level.

Second is energy. We have some good news: tonight we reached the agreement of this new tool, RePowerEU, but we know that further steps are needed to address the problems for the reform of the electricity market.

And third is what kind of reaction we are giving overall to this. I don't think that the same old recipes are those that we are supposed to use now.

We have new tools. This NextGenerationEU recovery plan is the basis for investing on the resilience of our societies. We are proud of our social model, but we want to strengthen this social model also with the common resources of NextGenerationEU.

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And then we need to invest more in the European competitiveness because we have to avoid that the social crisis which is already there in the purchasing power becomes gradually also an unemployment crisis, which is not there at the moment. But of course, if we lose competitiveness, if we don't invest in our competitiveness, the risk is there. So I think that also this part of the response is very, very important.

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Madam President, honourable Members, Commissioner, thank you again for this debate. It is indeed very timely given the precarious situation of our most vulnerable citizens and businesses; the cohesion of our societies is at stake.

We are all well aware that there will be a price to pay for all of us as a result of Russia's actions. We need to make sure the burden is fairly distributed. The issues debated remain at the core of the Council agenda, as demonstrated by last week's discussions on the European Semester and the European Care Strategy, this morning's agreement on REPowerEU and many others. As I said here earlier today, the Czech Presidency is working hard to find a solution regarding gas price caps, and I am cautiously optimistic that we could still achieve results in the days to come.

Difficult times require determination, solidarity and the right policy response. This means finding the right balance between the economic, employment and social dimensions of the Semester. Our debate in the Council, and this one here today, and our continuous endeavours give me confidence that, despite all the difficulties, we are all working for the same goal – helping our citizens to go through this multidimensional crisis.

Die Präsidentin. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

Schriftliche Erklärungen (Artikel 171)

Victor Negrescu (S&D), *în scris*. – Inflația galopantă, prețurile crescute la energie și erodarea puterii de cumpărare sunt provocările curente pe care trebuie să le adresăm de îndată cu măsuri concrete, cu impact pozitiv imediat în viața cetățenilor. Oamenii nu trebuie să poarte povara economică a acestui context și nu putem lăsa pe nimeni în urmă.

Situația este cu atât mai gravă cu cât creșterea costurilor are un impact semnificativ în primul rând asupra categoriilor vulnerabile, familiilor cu venituri mici sau vârstnicilor care se confruntau deja cu multe dificultăți.

Este important să folosim fondurile disponibile în mod eficient, dar și să identificăm acele resurse noi care să ne permită implementarea soluțiilor necesare. Un prim pas este să oprim specula de pe piața energiei, identificată de experții în materie, și să îi taxăm pe cei care au obținut profituri uriașe.

Implementarea salariului minim european, demers pentru care grupul nostru politic și PSD au depus eforturi semnificative, poate să asigure salarii decente pretutindeni în Europa, iar lucrătorii să fie plătiți mai bine.

Totodată, în perspectiva Anului european al competențelor, trebuie să ne axăm și pe măsuri legate de calificare și recalificare, pentru a spori șansa lucrătorilor pe piața muncii. Sunt multe de făcut, însă soluțiile nu pot aștepta. Doar împreună putem trece cu bine peste aceste provocări.

Guido Reil (ID), *schriftlich*. – Ja, die Lebenshaltungskosten sind spektakulär angestiegen. Und jetzt stellt die EU sich als das soziale Gewissen vor. Mit höheren Löhnen und noch mehr Umverteilung sollen die steigenden Lebenshaltungskosten bekämpft werden. Auch die zunehmende sozialpolitische Regulierung – die Vorschläge zu einem EU-Mindestlohn und Lohntransparenz – wird als soziale Gerechtigkeit vorgestellt. In Wirklichkeit ist hauptsächlich die EU selbst schuld.

Mit der katastrophalen Geldpolitik der EZB und ihrer Klimapolitik. Mit ihrer Klimapolitik führt die EU eine Politik der sozialen Kälte. Sozialpolitik geht um den Schutz der Schwächeren in unserer Gesellschaft. Die EU-Elite tut genau das Gegenteil. Sie hat Energie zur wichtigsten sozialen Frage des 21. Jahrhunderts gemacht. Und jetzt versucht sie dies zu verschleiern.

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12. Eiropas Savienības aizsardzība pret dalībvalstu veto tiesību ļaunprātīgu izmantošanu (debates)

Die Präsidentin. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgen die Erklärungen des Rates und der Kommission zur Verteidigung der Europäischen Union gegen den Missbrauch einzelstaatlicher Vetos (2022/3013(RSP)).

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council.* – Madam President, honourable Members, Commissioner, this presidency, we have experienced, like many others before us, many difficult discussions in the Council.

But experience shows that diplomacy and perseverance pay off since, in the overwhelming majority of cases, we manage to find solutions to overcome our differences and break the deadlock. True, this takes countless hours of talks and efforts to understand each other's positions. Translating sometimes into late night or early morning compromises like we have been experiencing these days.

But this is how the Union works. The number of files which remain blocked over prolonged periods of time is rather insignificant, statistically speaking. Our swift reaction to the recent crisis shows our unity and capacity to find agreement in the interest of us all.

I would like to recall that unanimity is a voting modality provided by the treaties, albeit currently an exception from the rule, which is qualified majority voting, unanimity is typically applicable to decisions in the common foreign and security policy area. Well, treaties require the Council to act unanimously; the Act can only be adopted when Member States vote in favour. But, importantly, the treaty provides that abstentions do not prevent the act from being adopted.

In the area of the common foreign and security policy, there is also the so-called constructive abstention, which allows a Member State that uses this possibility not to apply the adopted decision while permitting the Union to go forward. This is what has been successfully used in the context of the European Peace Facility.

While there is a lot we can do through discussions and persuasion, a Member State remains free when expressing its vote in the Council, and this is a fundamental element of our European democracy. After all, Council members are responsible towards their citizens and their national parliaments for the action, including how they vote in the Council.

Treaty change would, of course, be one of the possible avenues that may also be considered to bring more areas under qualified majority voting. However, as you know, it is a very heavy procedure. This possibility has been discussed in the follow up to the Conference on the Future of Europe. More importantly, in many areas, it is possible to switch from unanimity to qualified majority voting without modifying the treaties. Indeed, the treaties contain one general and the six specific so-called passerelle clauses. They allow the European Council or the Council also acting by unanimity, but through a simple procedure, to switch to a qualified majority in the Council.

As a follow up to the Conference on the Future of Europe the Council has started discussing the possible use of passerelle clauses to switch to qualified majority. The Czech Presidency has notably initiated exploratory discussions on this issue, focusing on the common foreign and security policy.

I look very much forward to hearing your views. I will have to leave the room for a short while as I have a duty to sign several legislative acts together with President Metsola. But my colleagues will be here and report to me afterwards. My personal and friendly advice to honourable Members would be to, instead of attacking the Council as the institution, rather focus the energy on reaching out towards national parliaments, as these are the bodies that national governments are accountable to.

Paolo Gentiloni, *Member of the Commission.* – Madam President, Minister, honourable Members, we all know that the Lisbon Treaty extended the system of qualified majority voting to a large number of policy areas on which the Council used to take decisions by unanimity. For instance, in the area of justice and home affairs.

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The Lisbon Treaty also added the new so-called pastoral clause – which the Minister was referring to – giving the Council or the European Council the possibility to move from unanimity to qualified majority voting in certain areas for certain acts. However, unanimity still applies under the current Treaties in a number of policy areas, and the pastoral clauses remain unused – also because you need unanimity to deliver the pastoral clause.

The Commission has long been pushing to move towards more qualified majority voting. This was also called for in this Commission's political guidelines from July 2019. Policy fields that would benefit from this change are energy, taxation, or some aspects of the common foreign and security policy such as sanctions and human rights.

In the Conference on the Future of Europe, citizens also called for moving from unanimity to qualified majority voting in some policy areas. Today, I can only confirm that the Commission fully supports the call for moving away from unanimity in some policy areas. This can already be done under the rules of the current Treaties.

We stand ready to engage with both Parliament and the Council on this matter, and the Commission will always be on the side of those who want to reform the EU to make it work better.

Monika Hohlmeier, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, lieber Herr Kommissar, lieber Herr Minister, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich bin nun seit dem Jahr 2009 hier in diesem Europäischen Parlament, und mir fällt über die Jahre hinweg immer wieder auf – lieber Kollege Verhofstadt, du bist noch länger hier als ich –, dass es bei bestimmten prekären Dossiers immer wieder zu nationalen Vetos kommt und dass es immer wieder zu langen, langen, langen Verzögerungen kommt, weil ein Mitgliedstaat sich querstellt.

Außenpolitisch ist das außerordentlich prekär, wenn ich mir anschau, dass wir jetzt den Fall Ungarn gehabt haben, das, um für sich selbst im Land inadäquat den Konditionalitätsmechanismus außer Kraft zu setzen und die Standards, die die Kommission zu Recht einverlangt, unterlaufen zu können, versucht, den Rat zu erpressen, dass er seine Hilfen für die Ukraine nur dann bekommt, wenn die Ungarn entsprechend sozusagen weniger rechtsstaatliche Standards walten lassen müssen.

Ich muss sagen: Ich kann meiner Empörung gar nicht genug Ausdruck verleihen, dass ein Mitgliedstaat der Europäischen Union und Viktor Orbán dies überhaupt versuchen, weil schlicht und einfach die Hilfe für die Ukraine zwingend notwendig ist und interne haushälterische Fragestellungen und Fragestellungen zur Rechtsstaatlichkeit nichts mit außenpolitischer Handlungsfähigkeit zu tun haben dürfen.

Gratulation an die tschechische Ratspräsidentschaft, dass Sie es geschafft haben, in einem schwierigen Drahtseilakt zum ersten Mal überhaupt den Konditionalitätsmechanismus einzusetzen und trotzdem eine Lösung zu finden.

Wir werden noch viele Fragen zu beantworten haben. Außenpolitisch brauchen wir endlich eine Handlungsfähigkeit, ohne dass wir Einstimmigkeit brauchen.

VORSITZ: OTHMAR KARAS

Vizepräsident

Domènec Ruiz Devesa, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señor presidente Karas, señor presidente en ejercicio del Consejo, señor comisario Gentiloni, he tomado nota, por supuesto, de lo que han señalado. Se puede hablar mucho de las pasarelas, pero sabemos que para activar las pasarelas hace falta la unanimidad. Por tanto, creo que no podemos obviar que es absolutamente necesaria actualmente una reforma de los Tratados para poder resolver este tema.

Pero creo que incluso antes de plantear eso es muy importante que, sobre todo desde la Comisión, señor Gentiloni, se tomen más en serio el encontrar maneras de superar el uso —como dice el debate— abusivo del veto nacional. Porque el Consejo no lo va a poder hacer. Acabamos de ver lo que ha pasado con Hungría, no es la primera vez. El Gobierno del señor Orbán —la enésima vez que utiliza el veto como instrumento de chantaje político— dice: paraliza los 18 000 millones de ayuda a Ucrania y paraliza el acuerdo del impuesto mínimo de sociedades de la OCDE hasta que no se me dé, en este caso, una rebaja. Es verdad que no ha sido muy grande, pero, en cualquier caso, ha obtenido una rebaja sobre los fondos que se le habían congelado por razón de falta de respeto del Estado de Derecho.

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¿Cómo puede ser eso posible? Que haya un acuerdo político que relativice una sanción por no respetar el Estado de Derecho. Pero es que, además, había una salida, que ustedes la habían apuntado —y también el Consejo, por cierto—. Luego, no sé por qué, la cambiaron. Consistía en encontrar una manera de resolver el paquete de ayuda a Ucrania a 26. Además, tenía usted también —y eso le afecta, comisario Gentiloni— una solución para el impuesto de la OCDE, que era el artículo 116. ¿Hasta cuándo la Comisión no va a tener la valentía de activar de una vez ese artículo, que permitiría resolver la cuestión de la fiscalidad por mayoría cualificada y terminar de una vez con el chantaje político de Orbán?

Guy Verhofstadt, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Mr President, so it's not only a question of, 'Ah, finally we find a solution, even with the unanimity', it's the time we lose. That's even a more important problem. So it's not only a question of saying, 'Yeah, but finally, in the European Union, after six months, nine months, one year, two years – the migration package is already seven years but OK, that's only an exception maybe – we find the solution. No, it's not about that. It's also about the time you lose. How you manage Europe in the modern world if you need seven years to agree on a migration package. If you need six months to agree on some sanctions in the case of a war against Ukraine, that's the problem.

And that, apparently, Mr Bek and the Czech Presidency and the whole Council doesn't want to understand. Now they are saying, 'Look, it's going better because the last packages prove that it is working'. Some people are even waxing lyrical about the agreement that has been found in the beginning of this week. In fact, what is happening is that two evident files with no contestation – the 80 billion loan to Ukraine and a minimum tax on multinationals – are traded against two disputable concessions to Orbán: the approval of his recovery plan on the one hand, and then lowering the frozen amount from 6.3 to 5.8 billion. Well, I predict you something. I predict to you this at this moment that this is not the end, Mr President, of this file. What Orbán will do is to continue every new file in 2023 or to lower that amount, or to escape completely on the rule-of-law mechanism. This is not the end of the blackmail. It's only the start of the blackmail, the agreement that you have found.

So, I think it's high time to abolish vetoes. We have done, you have done, President Metsola has done a request based on Article 48. What I ask for is a little bit of respect of the Council towards the Parliament. If the Parliament – based on the Treaties, on Article 48 – is asking for a convention, at least that they have respect for the Parliament and answer that request, and are saying yes or no. For me it's the same. Say no, say no against the citizens of the European Union, who in the Conference on the Future of Europe asked for such a convention and abolishing unanimity, but at least show respect for the only democratically chosen institution of this continent.

Daniel Freund, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, dear colleagues, if Vladimir Putin had designed the European Union, I think he would have given Viktor Orbán a veto because it makes it so easy for him to paralyse us, because he only needs to turn one person in the room – blackmail, bribery, cheap gas, I don't know what, but this is a threat for us.

Of course, back in the days maybe this might have served to protect the interest of the smallest Member State. But I think today in a Union of 27 the reality looks very different. It's no longer to protect minorities, it's a tool for extortion and blackmail. We managed this time, luckily, we have overcome the veto on the Ukraine aid. But we'll be back at the same point in the beginning of February when we have to prolong the Russia sanctions. It will be exactly the same.

So if Viktor Orbán wants to do the deeds of Vladimir Putin, that's his choice. But for all of us other ones that want to help Ukraine, you know, this should not be the obstacle for us to do it. In times of war, veto on essential decisions is a security threat for the European Union. So let's not keep talking about it. We have discussed this for years in the conference, there is an overwhelming majority of citizens that want this. There is the national parliaments that want this. We here in the European Parliament have been very clear we want this. We have taken a vote with a large majority. Let's call a convention, answer to our vote and our proposal under Article 48 and let us put an end to national vetoes in the European Union.

Gilles Lebreton, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, l'unanimité est un principe fondamental de la construction européenne. Elle est l'arme qui permet à chaque État membre de l'Union de bloquer une décision qui porterait atteinte à ses intérêts vitaux.

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Le général de Gaulle l'a rappelé, au nom de la France, en 1965, quand il a pratiqué la politique de la chaise vide pour contraindre l'Europe à renoncer à lui imposer une réforme dont il ne voulait pas. Sa résistance victorieuse a débouché sur le compromis de Luxembourg de janvier 1966, toujours en vigueur, qui consacre ce pouvoir de veto national.

L'unanimité est encore inscrite dans les traités européens. Elle est requise pour les décisions du Conseil européen et pour les décisions les plus importantes du Conseil. Je condamne donc sa remise en cause par le président Macron et par le débat d'aujourd'hui.

La majorité de ce Parlement reproche à la Hongrie d'avoir opposé son veto à l'aide à l'Ukraine pour protester contre le gel de ses subventions. J'estime au contraire que la Hongrie a eu raison de le faire. Sa fermeté vient d'ailleurs de lui permettre de trouver un arrangement avec l'Union. Protégeons l'unanimité, car c'est le seul principe qui permet aux États membres de conserver leur souveraineté au sein de l'Union.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, dear colleagues, many want to abolish the veto to make things easier, not really better. Democracy should be fair and honest, not easy – and easy for whom? Democracy is difficult. Autocracy is easy. It should remain the basic right of Member States, as it is the last rampart of defence for the small, weak and vulnerable against the strong, big and bullish. It is rooted in the tradition and history of EU. It is a normal procedure in the EU, and big Member States use it on a regular basis.

It is an expression of the wisdom of the founding fathers, whose wish was to create a balanced community of equals. Since Lisbon, the few vetoes left remain the only way for small and medium-sized Member States to protect themselves against the diktat hegemony of bigger states and their directorates. The veto serves the vital interests of the abused, the weapon of the weak meant to establish the balance when they face a risk of being bridled and abused.

Removing the veto would also put in danger the cohesion of the EU. The EU is about consensus, not divisions. To those who demand the cancellation of the veto, do it yourselves first. Be the example by giving up the veto for your countries through a solemn declaration not to use it; create an enhanced avant-garde. Do not practice hypocrisy. Germany declared that it would veto enlargement if the veto were not removed from the Treaty. It is Kafkaesque and grotesque. To those who demand the cancellation of the veto, do it yourselves first. Solemnly declare not to use it. Good luck.

Kinga Gál (NI). – Elnök Úr! Elfogadhatatlan a vétókérdéssel kapcsolatos kettős mérce az Európai Unióban. Súlyosan hipokrita magatartás, hogy miközben Magyarországot – igaztalanul és alaptalanul – az európai egység szétverésével és vétózással vádolják, amikor bátran kiáll álláspontja és értékei mellett, addig a régi tagállamok következmények nélkül megtehetik ezt sokkal súlyosabb ügyekben. Ezeket az eseteket csak az egyetértés hiányának lehet nevezni és sosem vétónak. A mai vita címe is már ezt az elfogultságot tükrözi. Politikai célból félrevezető. Amit itt a balliberális mainstream vétónak nevez, az nem más, mint az alapszerződésekben rögzített egyhangú döntéshozatal, ami a jóhiszemű együttműködés alapja.

Az európai integrációt a tagállamok hozták létre, ők a Szerződések urai. Az alapítók épp ezért garantálták azt a jogot, hogy nélkülük a számukra fontos kérdésben ne lehessen dönten. Az egyhangú döntéshozatal eltörlése a tagállamok szuverenitását szüntetné meg, a brüsszeli centralizáció kiteljesedése lenne. Ellehetetlenítené a máshogy gondolkodást, az egyet nem értést, és aláásná az európai egységet. Az Unió nem válhat a föderalista érdekeket kiszolgáló Európai Egyesült Államokká.

Der Präsident. – Zu der Kollegin und zu den Vorrednern möchte ich schon sehr klar sagen: Die Position dieses Hauses ist sehr klar, genauso wie jene der Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas. Wir wollen eine demokratischere Europäische Union. Veto ist Veto!

Das Veto bedeutet Blockade, und das Veto ist undemokratisch. Das Veto ist keine Frage von Groß oder Klein. Das Veto ist eine Frage von Zukunft oder Blockade. Daher, glaube ich, sollten wir das auch in dieser Deutlichkeit sagen: Der Prozess der Europäischen Union war immer, dass die Integration begleitet wurde von einer Demokratisierung und die Demokratisierung von einer Parlamentarisierung. Einstimmigkeit passt nicht zu einer parlamentarischen Demokratie. Sie ist unparlamentarisch und undemokratisch.

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Diese Kritik richtet sich nicht nur an Ungarn, sondern wir haben auch andere Länder in dieser Woche gehabt, mein eigenes oder die Niederlande, die ebenfalls ihr Veto eingelegt haben.

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (ECR). – Mr President you just abused your right as Chair of the meeting.

Der Präsident. – Nein, das tue ich deshalb nicht, weil ich nur wiederholt habe, was die Mehrheitsposition dieses Hauses ist und was die Mehrheitsposition der Konferenz zur Zukunft Europas ist.

Dass der Demokratisierungsprozess immer mit einem Parlamentarisierungsprozess Hand in Hand geht, das hat nichts damit zu tun, dass wir hier unterschiedliche Meinungen haben. Aber es geht doch auch um die Klarstellung der Mehrheitsposition dieses Hauses.

Vladimír Bilčík (PPE). – Mr President, Commissioner, colleagues, the past days have been difficult times for our House. I am convinced, however, that the best remedy to European problems is a clear, strong and unified European answer. Whether it concerns a massive corruption scandal, or Russia's attack against Ukraine, European unity is what keeps our continent going forward.

The European Union has lived through many political crises in the past decade – financial and debt crises, security crises, migration crises, Brexit, the pandemic and Russia's war of aggression. The common denominator of our successful answers to this crisis has been our unity. Unity in purchasing vaccines, adopting sanctions on Russia, fully standing behind Ukraine and protecting our fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

This House, too, is strongest when united across party lines. Yes, this means that European unity is fiercely fought over and, at times, comes through after complicated negotiations and public disagreements. The ultimate goal of political leaders, those from Member States, from the European institutions and from this House, must be, however, to find common ground and remain united, especially in times of war and crisis.

National vetoes have to be the absolute nuclear option, not a tactical weapon, and they should not undermine the common European interests of the rest of the Union. I find vetoes that weaken us in times of war and that question our fundamental freedoms counterproductive and dangerous.

Dear colleagues, indeed unity is what keeps our Union capable, powerful and attractive, and unity based on common European interest is the only meaningful answer to the EU's Schengen enlargement and to Europe's resolute support for Ukraine's European future.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il veto all'istituzione di un debito comune europeo; il veto al tetto del prezzo del gas; il veto all'ingresso di alcuni paesi nell'area Schengen; da ultimissimo, l'ennesimo veto ricattatorio, poi revocato, di Orbán ai 18 miliardi di aiuti all'Ucraina e alla *minimum tax* europea sul fatturato delle multinazionali.

Un'Unione europea preda di nazionalismi ed egoismi di turno non funziona.

Ecco perché, per mettere fine ai bracci di ferro tra Bruxelles e gli Stati membri, e fra loro, serve finalmente abolire il diritto di veto e costruire una vera democrazia sovranazionale. I cittadini europei, oggi, ci chiedono di decidere rapidamente sui temi più importanti, ovvero completare un'unione energetica, aumentare sicurezza sociale e salari, difendere lo Stato di diritto, dare vita a una difesa comune europea.

La Conferenza sul futuro dell'Europa e la risoluzione votata da questo Parlamento nel giugno scorso indicano, in tal senso, la strada maestra: l'istituzione di una convenzione per la riforma dei trattati che dia vita a una vera integrazione europea. Io dico anche costruendo diversi livelli di integrazione, permettendo a chi vuole di fare di più senza impedirlo da parte di chi vuole fare meno insieme.

Gli Stati che vogliono andare avanti devono poterlo fare, un'Europa unita può fare di più, meglio e più velocemente. Ascoltiamo le richieste dei cittadini europei e non mettiamo il veto al futuro delle nuove generazioni.

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Sandro Gozi (Renew). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, l'Europe des vetos, c'est l'Europe de l'inaction, des retards, des chantages et des déceptions. C'est grotesque. Encore récemment, lors de la conférence sur l'avenir de l'Europe, les citoyens ont demandé une défense européenne, une union de l'énergie et une puissance globale. Tout cela est aujourd'hui nié par les vetos des uns et l'hypocrisie des autres. La Hongrie d'Orbán en est l'exemple criant, bien sûr – Budapest en use et abuse –, mais ce n'est pas le seul.

Le problème est bien plus profond, car la pratique du veto pollue les esprits et dérègle les systèmes. Cette dérive se joue notamment au Conseil européen, qui absorbe toutes les décisions importantes et étend de facto la pratique du consensus, et donc du veto, bien au-delà de la lettre des traités. L'immigration en est l'exemple flagrant. On pourrait prendre pas mal de décisions à la majorité, mais on s'enfonce depuis plusieurs années dans une impasse. Moins d'efficacité, moins de démocratie et moins de transparence.

Si vous lisez les traités, chers collègues, le rôle des ministres – il n'est pas là – est considérable. Si vous regardez la pratique, depuis que le président du Conseil européen est permanent, c'est la «sherpacratie» qui dispose. Ce sont les sherpas, et pas les ministres. Ce devrait donc être un problème aussi pour le Conseil des ministres. Cette année, nous célébrons les trente ans du marché unique. Eh bien, si nous avons gardé les vetos, nous serions encore en train d'attendre la première décision sur la liberté de circulation.

Je l'ai dit au Conseil: vous ignorez toutes nos demandes; vous ignorez la demande sur la loi électorale européenne; vous ignorez la demande sur la modification des traités; vous ignorez la demande sur l'activation des clauses-passerelles; vous ignorez la demande sur la révision du principe des partis politiques européens. Vous devez apprendre à respecter un peu plus le Parlement européen et avoir le courage de dire oui ou non à nos demandes.

(l'orateur accepte de répondre à une intervention «carton bleu»)

Ladislav Ilčić (ECR), intervencija zatražena podizanjem plave kartice. – Poštovani kolega, dakle, vi biste branili Europsku uniju od zemalja članica?

Pa Europska unija je sastavljena od zemalja članica, bez zemalja članica nema Europske unije. I vaš kolega je u uvodu rekao da je Europski parlament jedino demokratski izabrano tijelo. Pa što je s Vijećem? Pa tamo su predstavnici legalno izabranih, demokratski izabranih nacionalnih vlada i to na izborima na kojima izlazi dvostruko više ljudi nego na izbore za Europski parlament. Dakle, oni imaju dvostruko veći demokratski potencijal od ove kuće.

Dakle, vi ne branite Europsku uniju nego branite svoje pozicije i politike koje želite nametnuti od naroda koji te politika ne želi.

Sandro Gozi (Renew), blue-card reply. – I am not sure I have seen a question here, but I will try to give an answer. I never said that the Council, the European Council or the Council of Ministers is less legitimate than the European Parliament, I said the European Parliament plays a role, but no, I didn't say that.

But I don't understand why we should not apply the Treaty. And at the moment we are not applying the Treaty because this shift, that push towards the European Council, prevents the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament from doing their job according to the letter of the Treaty. That is the first question.

The second question I mean, who did say that deciding by majority is less democratic than deciding by unanimity? Who said the opposite?

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, dear smaller Member States, by size or by population, I know you have always fought fiercely for national vetoes and I simply do not understand it. We have all witnessed recently how national vetoes have dramatically been to the advantage of the few bad guys in the room. National vetoes have been used in bad faith against European interests.

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They have been an instrument to pressure you against your own will when you were deciding on essential European policies together. They have made your efforts to find common ground more fragile and all of this has threatened our security. It has also allowed the misuse of the money of European citizens. And some important files became simple pawns in a cynical gambling game.

And why? Smaller Member States should not fear the end of unanimity, Europe has grown and changed. You can protect your interests through qualified majority, and you have proven that you are good at finding these majorities when needed.

Throughout this term, I have had the most respect for the Czech Presidency, the Finnish Presidency, the Portuguese Presidency. You were the ones that brought everyone around the table to talk about difficult topics and try to make progress. And you were the ones that engaged sincerely with Parliament. Do not fear the end of unanimity.

(The speaker agreed to respond to a blue-card speech)

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR), *blue-card speech*. – So you said ‘bad guys’ use the veto. Well recently two countries – Austria and Netherlands – stopped, vetoed Bulgaria and Romania, for 11 years now, for their own reasons: because of the economy, because of transportation, because of their economical reasons. So please tell me, are these countries bad guys, Netherlands and Austria? Please, I want to hear you.

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE), *blue-card reply*. – No they’re not because they did it with good faith. I’m serious! I’m serious! When vetoes are used when the country is not interested in the real content of the policies and it’s just using it to have deals on another topic, that is very problematic. That’s why I think that those that are using it in good faith are weakening their own work, and that’s why I’m saying that they are good enough now to find majorities and they would not need it. They could do without it because they can find majorities.

Jaak Madison (ID). – Mr President, I think the previous speaker exactly showed how this Parliament is ridiculous and full of hypocrisy. The bad guys are all in Hungary and Poland. But if it is the Netherlands and Austria, they are good guys because they have good faith. It doesn’t matter that they just blocked for 11 years the basic right to free movement. But they are good guys.

And that is the problem here in this House. Also Mr Karas announced several times how the Conference of Europe had announced that we have to progress our federalism and globalism. 800 people said, ‘yeah, we would like to have an empire of EU’. It is 0.0001% of the population of the EU who said ‘yeah, we like federalism’.

That’s why it’s a ridiculous House and I will never ever trust to give more power to the EU and I will trust more our own national parliaments. Is it in Hungary or in Estonia or in the Netherlands? I don’t care. Please follow the Treaties. And by the Treaties you have very limited power in this House. You are not in the superstate where you can control everything. And that’s the biggest problem with the EU.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-н Председател, радвам се, че започнахте да спазвате правилника, това е добре. Когато си говорим за вето на национални държави, да виждаме (между другото г-н Верхофстад, а тук е) граждани на Нидерландия да говорят срещу вето е лицемерие. Защо е лицемерие? 11 години без никакъв повод Холандия и Австрия спират България и Румъния за членство в Шенгенската зона заради икономическите си интереси и сега са седнали да ми говорят за правото на вето.

Ние разбираме какво искате вие обаче, уважаеми колеги. Да говорите вие за върховенство на закона е все едно представители на социалисти и демократи да говорят срещу корупцията, лоши неща и неверни, защото, уважаеми, за вас върховенството на закона е диктат на вашето мнозинство, което вие имате сега тук, в тази зала. И да, г-н Председател, Конференцията за бъдещето на Европа не е нищо различно от една сбирка на приятели, които са единомишленици. И да, те наистина са 0,000001% от населението на Европейския съюз. Върховенството на закона означава спазване на националните законодателства, означава защитаване на интересите на националните държави, за да не може неизбирани от никой хора да диктуват на други как да си управляват държавите и как да си управляват семействата и обществата.

(The speaker agreed to respond to two blue-card speeches)

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Guy Verhofstadt (Renew), *blue-card speech*. – Mr President, I find the attitude of countries like Austria and the Netherlands, who are using their veto to block two countries who are fully fulfilling the conditions to enter Schengen, as deplorable as the attitude of a country like Hungary using their veto in that case.

The only thing that you have to do, Mr Dzhambazki, is say 'yes, I agree with you'!

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR), *blue-card reply*. – Thank you, but there was no question here. This is some kind of violation of rules here in this room. But still, there is no question. Can I answer something or just think something? I don't know. But yes, Mr Verhofstadt, the national states need their rights to defend the interests of their citizens against the bureaucratic system in Brussels.

Katalin Cseh (Renew), *blue-card speech*. – Just a very quick question to you, colleague. Do you know where Mr Verhofstadt is from?

You said that he is a Dutch citizen and he is not a Dutch citizen.

Angel Dzhambazki (ECR), *blue-card reply*. – OK, he's from Belgium. If you want to discuss geography, we can of course. But still, Mr Verhofstadt is very patient to defend Brussels, not the national states. That's why we are political opponents. But geography is geography, yes.

José Manuel Fernandes (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Caras e Caros Colegas, Senhor Comissário e Senhor Ministro, representante do Conselho, a União Europeia precisa de verdadeiros líderes ou, na sua ausência, de bons governantes. Infelizmente, temos aqueles que usam a unanimidade para a chantagem e para outros casos, como o veto à entrada da Roménia no Espaço Schengen, por razões meramente internas, por razões populistas.

O problema não está, portanto, só na unanimidade. Até porque a unanimidade às vezes funciona e, em alguns casos, até se justifica, nomeadamente na questão dos recursos próprios e na questão dos impostos. Repare-se que para constituir o NextGenerationEU foi preciso alterar a decisão sobre os recursos próprios. Isso implicou uma dupla unanimidade, ou seja, uma unanimidade no Conselho e também nos parlamentos nacionais. E conseguiu-se essa unanimidade.

Para além de se falar na unanimidade em alguns casos, e nesses justifica-se, é preciso também acelerar os procedimentos. A rapidez é essencial. Se agora discutimos só a unanimidade, que depois passa para a maioria qualificada, não nos podemos esquecer que se há hoje um ou outro que veta, no futuro até poderemos ter mais do que dois ou três ou quatro que podem formar essa maioria qualificada. Aquilo que os cidadãos da União Europeia deviam exigir é governantes de qualidade que não adulterem as regras existentes.

Aurore Lalucq (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, je ne sais pas si vous connaissez ce film avec Bill Murray qui passe souvent dans cette période de Noël et qui s'appelle *Un jour sans fin* ou *Le Jour de la marmotte*, où un personnage vit et revit toujours le même jour, sans cesse, encore et encore. Je dois avouer que, quand nous avons un débat sur le veto et l'unanimité, c'est un peu ce que je ressens. J'ai l'impression qu'on va revivre à peu près le même débat, avec à peu près les mêmes conclusions et à peu près les mêmes demandes. Je me demande même parfois ce que je vais tenter de pouvoir dire de nouveau, parce que j'essaye de dire des choses nouvelles de temps en temps, et je me dis: «Mais qu'est-ce que je peux dire de nouveau?»

Malheureusement, je dois avouer qu'aujourd'hui il y a pas mal à dire, parce que le Parlement vous avait expressément demandé, cher Conseil et chère Commission, de ne pas transiger avec la question de l'état de droit et de ne pas céder au chantage du gouvernement hongrois sur la question de la taxation des multinationales. Or, que voyons-nous? Un paquet de mesures et surtout un pacte faustien.

Je me demande comment on va s'en sortir, d'ailleurs, parce que cette fois-ci, ce n'est pas du chantage vis-à-vis d'une directive sur la taxation, c'est bien plus grave, c'est sur l'aide à l'Ukraine. Voilà, c'est donc un précédent de plus. En fait, cette fois-ci, je crois que vous nous avez suffisamment entendus. C'est nous qui avons besoin de vous entendre, parce que vous avez des comptes à nous rendre.

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Alin Mituța (Renew). – Domnule președinte, veto-ul Austriei împotriva aderării României la Schengen a creat o undă de șoc și de frustrare în țara mea. Un șoc pentru monumentul de nedreptate făcută și o frustrare pentru că Uniunea Europeană, în care aveau încredere, a permis așa ceva.

Unanimitatea este o reminiscență anacronică a începuturilor Uniunii care nu are cum să funcționeze în 27 de țări. Sau, mai precis, nu are cum să funcționeze în beneficiul Uniunii, ci al populiștilor și șantajistilor. Pentru că, da, să fie clar, unanimitatea înseamnă că agenda Uniunii e ținută ostatică de cel mai puțin interesat de interesul nostru comun, așa cum am tot văzut în ultima vreme. Nu mai avem cum să tolerăm așa ceva. Unanimitatea nu e democrație. Democrația înseamnă majoritate. Haideți să modificăm tratatele pentru a elimina acest abuz al veto-ului de care Uniunea este bolnavă.

Charlie Weimers (ECR). – Mr President, every Treaty transferred more and more powers to Brussels. Every Treaty increased the number of decisions taken by QMV (qualified majority voting). National vetoes have been abolished in area after area.

Today, Member States can be steamrolled by the majority in most policy areas. Sweden recently had minimum wage, pay transparency and gender quota directives imposed on us against our will. EU centralists now have their sights set on the final areas Member States retain veto over: taxes, spending, foreign policy and enlargement, and changes to the Treaties – the rules of this club.

Here in Strasbourg, most want to abolish these last vestiges of national sovereignty, but you lack the consent of the people. Swedes don't want to transfer more power to the EU – it's one of the most unpopular policy ideas around. Swedes want to retain the right to say no to your new taxes and your new spending sprees.

Jan Olbrycht (PPE). – Panie Ministrze! Panie Komisarzu! Debata na temat weta ma oczywiście dwie strony. Z jednej strony mamy państwa, które boją się tego, że zostają przegłosowane. I to nie chodzi tylko o małe państwa, ale również chodzi o duże państwa. Z drugiej strony jest obawa przed użyciem weta jako metody szantażu. Trzeba brać pod uwagę różne punkty widzenia, ale trzeba przede wszystkim zastanowić się nad skutecznością funkcjonowania Unii Europejskiej. Skuteczność wymaga szybkości decyzji.

Jest czas, żebyśmy rozmawiali, które z polityk europejskich wymagają jednomyślności, a w których trzeba jednak zdecydować się na odejście od jednomyślności w imię sprawczości i lepszej efektywności. Przykład: wieloletnie ramy finansowe są po stronie Rady decydowane jednomyślnie. Parlament po raz kolejny jutro będzie głosował nad tekstem, w którym zwraca się do Rady o to, żeby jednomyślnie upoważniła wszystkie rządy do głosowania większością głosów po to, żeby można było przyspieszyć pewne procesy dotyczące budżetu, dotyczące zarządzania Unią. Zwracam się w związku z tym do przedstawiciela Rady właśnie o to, żeby rozważyć taką możliwość, ponieważ codzienne decyzje wymagają szybkości, sprawności, żebyśmy podejmowali je w takim momencie, kiedy jest to naprawdę potrzebne. Dlatego też prawo weta ma swoje różne strony. Zwracam uwagę na skuteczność działania Unii Europejskiej.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señor presidente, señor comisario Gentiloni, llegará un día en que la Unión Europea se atreva de una vez a hacer una unión más perfecta como soñamos los europeístas, y en que los vetos nacionales sean una antigüalla y una reliquia del pasado.

La unanimidad puede tener sentido para cuestiones constitucionales y para la ampliación de la propia Unión Europea. Pero la experiencia prueba claramente que los vetos nacionales se han erigido en un freno, un obstáculo, cuando no una posibilidad de que un solo Estado miembro ejerza derechos sin obligaciones. Y el derecho consiste en impedir que pueda funcionar la maquinaria de toma de decisiones y legislativa de la Unión Europea. Y, por tanto, impedir que la Unión Europea pueda responder. Bloqueo, atasco en un tiempo vertiginoso que exige respuestas tan rápidas como eficaces.

¿Es admisible mantener indefinidamente el veto en recursos propios? ¿En las grandes cuestiones financieras? ¿En el marco financiero plurianual? ¿Es admisible que se pueda ejercer el veto para impedir el acceso a la libre circulación y al espacio Schengen a dos Estados miembros por parte de un solo Estado miembro de la Unión Europea? La respuesta es simplemente no.

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Y por eso es urgente que se revise la regla del veto, que en la experiencia significa que la Unión Europea pueda quedar como un gigante, no ya de paso lento, sino congelado en el tiempo, cuando todo el mundo alrededor le está exigiendo respuestas para que la Unión Europea dé prueba de su voluntad de ser, sí, una unión más perfecta.

Ojalá nuestros ojos lo vean. Y de lo que estoy seguro es de que muchos de los corazones que palpitan en este Parlamento Europeo se alegrarán con ello.

Billy Kelleher (Renew). – Mr President, let's be clear and honest: what we are discussing here today is the abuses of national vetoes, the use of the veto in a manner that is malicious and spiteful, that does not consider the proposal on its merits, but instead uses it as a pawn in a larger political game.

This is against the spirit of the Treaties and undermines the genuine arguments for sovereignty and the purpose of unanimity voting procedures. Unanimity voting allows the voice of each Member State to be given equal weight on sensitive issues, regardless of size. These are matters that go to the very heart of sovereign states, for which there needs to be direct accountability for any decisions made.

So let's focus our efforts on finding a genuine solution to tackle the abuse of the veto and not allow this debate to slide into an attack on unanimity in every area of policy. Much of the solutions relies on the goodwill of Member States and some peer pressure amongst leaders.

But one practical solution would be to address the voting mechanism of Article 7 procedures for when Member States have breached the core values of the EU. As it stands, suspending voting rights of Member States that have breached these fundamental values requires a unanimous vote in the Council. This is akin to asking turkeys to vote for Christmas. These Member States should not be allowed to breach our core values and then use any commitments to remedy this as leverage for other votes. So we do need to address Article 7 at the very least.

Patryk Jaki (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! Potępiacie nadużywanie, jak wy to mówicie, weta narodowego, które przecież jest prawem zapisanym w traktatach. Wam po prostu przeszkadzają traktaty. Wam przeszkadza prawo. Wy chcielibyście robić wszystko tępą siłą. Takim jesteście demokratycznym ciałem. Co więcej, dzielcie weta na lepsze i na gorsze, według narodowości. Polska nie może, ale Holandia i Austria to już są lepsze weta, jak ostatnio w sprawie Schengen. Co to jest, jak nie rasizm? Dokładnie to samo, co w sprawie praworządności. Są państwa, gdzie politycy mogą wybierać sędziów, i są takie, gdzie nie mogą. Co to jest, jak nie rasizm? I do czego to prowadzi?

Wy chcecie powiedzieć, że zawsze większość ma rację? A czy większość miała rację w sprawie Nord Stream i uzależnienia Europy od gazu? To większość miała wtedy rację? A czy rację miała większość wtedy, kiedy większość państw sprzedawała Rosji broń i części amunicji? To też większość wtedy miała rację? Czy jednak mniejszość? Czy jednak lepiej, żeby w takich sprawach było prawo weta? Dlatego, Szanowni Państwo, jeżeli naprawdę wam zależy na praworządności i na traktatach, to zacznijcie od tego, że zaczniecie przestrzegać te traktaty. I wtedy wszystkim będzie lepiej.

Pascal Durand (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, vous avez dit tout à l'heure – et je vous en remercie très vivement – que le principe du veto était contraire aux principes démocratiques. Vous avez eu raison de le rappeler, parce que le principe du veto vient de loin dans notre histoire. Il était souvent aux mains des monarques, qui essayaient de s'opposer au pouvoir des parlements et à l'expression de la volonté générale.

Je voudrais tout simplement me tourner vers le Conseil. Je ne vous demande pas d'être d'accord avec moi, Monsieur Bek, parce que votre fonction vous l'interdit, mais tout simplement de réfléchir à ce que nous avons appris sur la séparation des pouvoirs. Nous avons tous appris qu'on ne peut pas confondre dans les mêmes mains le législatif et l'exécutif.

Le problème que nous avons dans cette démocratie européenne en devenir, c'est que le Conseil agit à la fois en colégislateur, c'est à dire qu'il se permet de voter les lois à la majorité, et en même temps, comme un tenant de l'exécutif qui a la capacité de bloquer les votes de l'expression générale du Parlement européen.

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Ce n'est pas possible. Aucune démocratie au monde ne peut fonctionner avec un pouvoir de veto entre les mains d'un État, alors que la majorité des États veulent intervenir comme colégislateurs, comme le Parlement. Soit vous êtes législateur, soit vous êtes exécutif. Si vous êtes le représentant de l'exécutif du Parlement, dans ce cas-là, vous devez respecter les votes du Parlement. Ce que je demande, et c'est vraiment la conclusion, c'est que le Conseil agisse comme un véritable législateur et vote à la majorité quand il n'est pas d'accord, comme tous les législateurs dans tous les parlements du monde.

Gilles Boyer (Renew). – Monsieur le Président, dans le pacte fondateur de l'Union européenne, les États membres ont décidé librement des domaines dans lesquels les compétences étaient transférées, quelles compétences ils partageaient et quelles compétences ils conservaient. En l'état des textes applicables, l'utilisation du droit de veto dans certains domaines est donc légitime, pour la préservation des intérêts vitaux, mais pas comme monnaie d'échange ou de prétexte. Je rappelle, comme dernier exemple, que la Hongrie avait d'abord signé l'accord de l'OCDE sur la taxation des multinationales, avant de revenir sur sa parole et de bloquer le processus durant plusieurs mois, dans un dossier très important, pour obtenir une monnaie d'échange.

Le vote à l'unanimité ou à la majorité qualifiée n'est pas une mesure technique. Cela a été rappelé avant moi. C'est une décision qui est éminemment politique et qui révèle, au fond, l'idée que nous nous faisons de l'Union européenne. Le monde change, et nous devons changer pour être au diapason. Face aux défis du monde, notre Union doit parler d'une seule voix et agir ou réagir rapidement. Nous devons renoncer à l'unanimité, qui monte les États membres les uns contre les autres, alors que nous devons faire front.

Michiel Hoogeveen (ECR). – Mr President, many here say that vetoes should disappear because they create a so-called 'gridlock' in EU decision making. May I remind you that the Member States created the EU, not the other way around? Moreover, it is only logical and legitimate that Member States are and remain in the driving seat.

The problem is not the veto. The problem is that you believe it is possible to make one-size-fits all policies for 450 million people living in 27 vastly different countries. Your problem is that Member States choose to do what is best for their people and not merely submit to an EU decree.

That problem, federalist colleagues, is called sovereignty. Mr Verhofstadt, we do not live in a new age of empires. Member States are not provinces of a European empire. They are sovereign democracies, members of an intergovernmental organisation called the EU.

Katalin Cseh (Renew). – Mr President, allowing national vetoes to block European foreign policy decisions is a security threat. Full stop. Viktor Orbán's vetoes have been a gift to the Kremlin, which has a vested interest in an EU that is divided and weak. Just remember that earlier this year a sanction package was halted because the Hungarian Government wanted Patriarch Kirill off the list. The EU looked just laughable, just like Vladimir Putin wanted.

And the question is this: whose interests do these vetoes serve? Surely not Hungary's. We are members of the EU. We are members of NATO. Our security is guaranteed by these institutions. Undermining them also undermines Hungary's security.

So let's get rid of the unanimity rule in foreign affairs. This is a dysfunctional and anti-democratic setup that makes the EU look weak and ridiculous in crucial moments of crisis. In short, shifting to qualified majority will not be easy. But the EU has demonstrated over and over again that it is capable of reform. We need this reform drive. We need it once again. And we need this Parliament for it.

Helmut Scholz, im Namen der The Left-Fraktion. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, Herr Minister! Oft muss ich daran denken, wie das Flüchtlingslager Moria in Flammen aufgegangen ist und deutsche konservative Politikerinnen und Politiker immer noch die Ausrede einer europäischen Lösung vorgeschoben haben, einzig und allein, um sich der nationalen Verantwortung für europäische Politik zu entziehen. Seitdem hat sich aber nichts wirklich getan. Und ohne die Abschaffung des Vetos einzelner Mitgliedstaaten wird es auch nie zu einer gemeinsamen europäischen Asylpolitik kommen, die diesen Namen verdient.

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Das Gleiche gilt für Steuerfragen. Es braucht endlich mehr Zusammenarbeit, und vor allem braucht es endlich eine europäische Finanztransaktionssteuer. Ich bin deshalb selbstverständlich dafür, in noch mehr Politikbereichen mit einer qualifizierten Mehrheit im Rat abzustimmen. Generell aber bedarf es bei der Aufgabe des Einstimmigkeitsprinzips zugleich der Einführung der vollständigen legislativen Mitentscheidung des Europäischen Parlaments. Denn z. B. bei der Entsendung von Truppen aus Deutschland in einem Krisenfall muss der nationale parlamentarische Vorbehalt weiter gelten. Deshalb kann man sich nicht über die Souveränität der Mitgliedstaaten hinwegsetzen. Wir müssen uns gemeinsam auf diese Reform der Abstimmungsverhältnisse im Interesse der Handlungsfähigkeit europäischer Politik verständigen.

Spontane Wortmeldungen

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, stimați colegi, dacă mai trebuia demonstrat că dreptul de veto este anacronic, ne gândim la votul din 8 decembrie, când Austria, în mod abuziv, a folosit acest drept de veto. În mod abuziv pentru că nu a avut niciun argument juridic prezent în regulamentul Schengen și, iată, ține aproape 40 de milioane de oameni în afara dreptului, prevăzut în tratat, de liberă circulație a cetățenilor în spațiul Uniunii Europene. Am semnat același tratat și România, și Bulgaria. Cetățenii din țara mea și din Bulgaria au aceleași drepturi cetățenești. Cum să vorbim de libera circulație ? Cum să vorbim de competența firmelor din cele două țări când stau 48 sau chiar mai mult la graniță tirurile ? Domnule comisar, am transmis o scrisoare către Comisie. Vă mulțumesc colegilor care ați semnat și vor mai semna că mai avem un termen. Vă rog imediat să recurgeți la modificări, la demersul pentru modificarea tratatului și eliminarea abuzului prin dreptul de veto al statelor membre.

Clare Daly (The Left). – Mr President, we're here today talking about defending the European Union against abuse of national vetoes. But to be honest, I'm much more interested in talking about defending national vetoes from the European Union. There is a sustained and deliberate campaign in this Parliament to undermine the right enshrined in the treaties to veto Council decisions, the very basis of the EU.

Let me be clear: when it comes to foreign and defence policy, we should never, ever give those who dream of an imperial Europe what they want and abolish the veto. You can't talk about a union of equals with the one breath and steamroll over small states with the next. Every Member State has its own interests, its own priorities, its own concerns. Of course, it might be difficult at times to find a solution that suits everyone. Sometimes states might use the veto as leverage, that's politics.

Talking about aid to Ukraine being blocked by the veto is nonsense. If Member States wanted to give macro-assistance they could give it, just not in the name of the Union. It's time to stop this moral outrage, we're not the United States of Europe.

Mick Wallace (The Left). – Mr President, we're talking about defending the European Union against the abuse of national vetoes. If you want to defend the European Union, how about giving some power back to the people? Because with the Lisbon and Nice Treaties – which we in Ireland voted against on both occasions, but we got the wrong answer and we had to vote a second time – in those Treaties, power was taken from the people and given to the institution, and neoliberalism was enshrined in the European Union.

People talk about good actors and bad actors and the abuse of the veto. Who's going to decide who's a good actor? Who's going to decide who's the bad actor? What's going on here? When we signed up to the European Union, when we joined it, we understood that we weren't going to be corralled into being completely dominated by the others. We were going to have a say; we were going to retain our sovereignty. It's one of the reasons we joined. And listen, you are undermining the European Union by trying to make one big Union? The European Union is not a country; it's a group of countries. And stop trying to make an imperial power out of it.

(Ende der spontanen Wortmeldungen)

Paolo Gentiloni, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, the Commission would like to thank the European Parliament for this intense debate, which confirms the strong wish of a majority of this Parliament to move away from unanimity and to take decisions faster on some important topics in a Union with 27 Member States.

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I hope that the three institutions can continue engaging with each other on this issue, to improve the way we jointly take decisions. The Commission stands ready to fully play its role in this process.

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, honourable Members, Commissioner, judging from most interventions at today's debate, it is clear that the issue of unanimity in Council decision-making is a passionate topic for this Parliament, but also far from consensual. To those who spoke so fervently in favour of abolishing unanimity as the solution for the stalemate in EU decision-making, let me tell you that the reality is a lot more nuanced. I have got quite a lot of experience in that field over the last semester.

Although qualified majority voting is the rule, the EU remains an institution that favours unity, consensus and compromise over division and isolation. When the willingness to work together is present, unanimity requirements are not an issue, as many decisions taken this year in reaction to the war in Ukraine have shown. Conversely, the fact that the qualified majority voting applies to a certain policy area is not a synonym for progress. Mr Verhofstadt spoke of the asylum reform as an example of blockage and vetoes. But migration and asylum is a policy area where the Council decides by qualified majority, on asylum policy, and yet progress has been painstakingly slow, so even qualified majority does not necessarily bring speed.

Some of you have also mentioned taxation policy. Let me remind you that the Council has achieved much in recent years. Examples of these achievements are numerous in all areas of tax policy: the Anti-tax Avoidance Directive; a number of significant improvements in administrative cooperation in the field of direct and indirect taxation; and numerous amendments to the VAT Directive.

We should also not assume that it is only small or medium-sized Member States that use the veto. Big Member States do as well, as we have seen on a number of occasions in the past.

Therefore, honourable Members, allow me to conclude on a positive note. While the risk of blockage in our decision-making is a reality, one should nevertheless look at the global picture. The EU finds a way to take decisions in the great majority of files. The EU is highly present and relevant on the international scene, bringing responses and relief where it's needed and leading by example in most areas of global action. We managed to achieve all this by overcoming our national divergences. Thank you very much once again for your attention.

Der Präsident. – Die Aussprache ist geschlossen.

13. Demokrātijas aizsardzība pret ārvalstu iejaukšanos (debates)

Der Präsident. – Als nächster Punkt der Tagesordnung folgt die Aussprache über die Anfrage zur mündlichen Beantwortung an die Kommission über die Verteidigung der Demokratie gegen Einflussnahme aus dem Ausland von Raphaël Glucksmann im Namen des Sonderausschuss zu Einflussnahme aus dem Ausland auf alle demokratischen Prozesse in der Europäischen Union, einschließlich Desinformation (INGE 2) (O-000048/2022 – B9-0032/22) (2022/2910(RSP)).

Raphaël Glucksmann, *auteur*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, chers collègues, serons-nous capables de préserver les joyaux dont nous avons hérité? Saurons-nous puiser en nous-mêmes la force de défendre la démocratie et la construction européenne? Ou allons-nous laisser la corruption et l'indolence conduire nos cités à la ruine? La corruption, ce n'est pas simplement des valises de billets. C'est plus largement l'effacement de l'intérêt général devant les intérêts particuliers, le triomphe du confort sur la vertu, la victoire des habitudes sur le courage.

Bercées par le mythe de la fin de l'histoire, convaincues de ne plus avoir d'ennemi, certaines du caractère inéluctable de la démocratie libérale, nos élites ont trop longtemps baissé la garde. Or, quand les gardiens de la cité s'assoupissent, les corrompus vendent les clefs de la maison et les ennemis s'en emparent. Avec la commission spéciale sur les ingérences étrangères, nous sonnons l'alarme depuis plus de deux ans. Le temps est venu, aujourd'hui, de prendre notre balai collectif et de nettoyer les écuries d'Augias.

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Chers collègues, en un mois et deux séances plénières, vous avez vu la matérialisation de tout ce que nous dénonçons et de tout ce que nous analysons depuis le début de nos travaux. Fin novembre, notre Parlement a été la cible de hackers russes. Maintenant, ce sont les valises de billets du Qatar. Nous devons montrer que notre scène politique n'est pas un marché sur lequel Doha, Bakou, Moscou ou Pékin peuvent venir faire leurs emplettes.

Ces hommes et ces femmes qui ont été au pouvoir dans l'Union et se sont mis au service de tyrannies étrangères sont des traîtres. Comment a-t-on pu tolérer cela? Comment a-t-on pu tolérer, par exemple, que ceux qui ont décidé de la politique énergétique allemande, si favorable à la Russie, se vendent ensuite à Gazprom? Comment a-t-on pu accepter que tant de nos chefs d'État ou de gouvernement, de nos ministres et de nos députés, venus de tous les pays et de tous les partis, voient leurs retraites payées par le régime de Poutine? Que dire de tous ces anciens responsables politiques européens qui servent aujourd'hui les intérêts chinois? Que dire de toutes ces conférences grassement rémunérées à Doha, ou de ces activités de conseil à Bakou? Il ne s'agit pas ici de morale, mais de politique. Je ne vous parle pas de grands principes, mais de souveraineté bafouée.

Monsieur le Commissaire, notre question orale a été rédigée avant le scandale qui nous ébranle, mais elle résonne terriblement avec l'actualité. Le 14 septembre dernier, à cette tribune, la présidente de la Commission a annoncé l'adoption d'un pacte de défense de la démocratie. L'objectif, a-t-elle dit, est de mettre en lumière l'influence étrangère et les financements obscurs. Je continue à citer M^{me} von der Leyen: «Nous ne laisserons pas les chevaux de Troie des autocraties attaquer nos démocraties de l'intérieur.» C'est le cœur du sujet. Les chevaux de Troie européens des autocraties doivent être mis hors d'état de nuire.

Nous voulons donc en savoir plus sur le contenu de cette initiative et sa chronologie. Dans la guerre hybride qui est menée contre l'Union européenne, comment ce pacte nous permettra-t-il de disposer d'armes efficaces pour protéger nos démocraties contre toutes les formes d'ingérence étrangère, depuis les financements d'activités politiques jusqu'aux campagnes de manipulation de l'information ou aux investissements hostiles dans nos secteurs stratégiques?

Dans son discours, la Présidente de la Commission a promis solennellement d'éradiquer la corruption à l'intérieur de l'Union. Comment le renforcement annoncé des règles anticorruption sera-t-il lié à ce pacte de défense de la démocratie? Les nouvelles règles promises prendront-elles en compte le cas de tous ces dirigeants européens partis servir les intérêts de puissances étrangères?

Comme vous le savez, le 16 septembre 2021, ce Parlement a adopté une résolution appelant à la création d'un organisme européen indépendant chargé des questions d'éthique. Qu'en est-il de cette demande? Le temps presse.

Nous le savons tous: dans la lutte contre la corruption et les ingérences étrangères, nous n'avons pas le droit à la faiblesse ou à la tergiversation. Chaque mesure audacieuse trouvera donc ici un appui déterminé. Chaque rupture avec l'indolence passée ou présente trouvera un soutien fervent. Ensemble, nous devons montrer que la démocratie, lorsqu'elle se réveille et cesse de dormir, est belle et puissante.

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, honourable Members, thank you first for the oral question on a matter whose urgency is emphasised by the recent events and developments. You have already held a debate on suspicions of corruption from Qatar and the need for transparency and accountability in the European institutions yesterday.

In answering your questions of the documents shared with us earlier this year, I will present to you some elements of the upcoming Defence of Democracy package which the Commission President announced, and it was referred to already, but also in this very room, in this year's State of the Union address. The Defence of Democracy package is scheduled for adoption in the second quarter of 2023 and the following elements are currently considered.

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First, a legislative proposal to protect our democracies from third-country entities exercising activities in the Union that may impact public opinion and the democratic sphere. Second, a review of actions under the European democracy action plan. Third, measures on secure and resilient elections, including, among others, cybersecurity measures in electoral processes. Fourth, the Commission is in the process of gathering additional information to refine the scope of the measures to be included in the package. The Commission is gathering information with the study, is organising consultations with relevant stakeholders and we are following carefully the work of the INGE II Committee.

The new measures will tie in with numerous existing initiatives such as the Digital Service Act and the revised code of practice on disinformation, as well as initiatives which still need to be adopted by the co-legislators, such as the proposal on the transparency and targeting of political advertising, on strategic lawsuits against public participation and the recast of the regulation on the statute and funding of European political parties and foundations and the Media Freedom Act. In this regard, the Commission would also like to call on the support of the European Parliament to finalise the legislative procedure for the adoption of these proposals.

The European External Action Service, in close cooperation with the European Commission, has continued its work on foreign information manipulation and interference and disinformation, which has been considerably strengthened through the European democracy action plan and the Strategic Compass, as well as other initiatives such as the revised code of practice on disinformation or the European Digital Media Observatory.

Now coming to the question of protection of critical infrastructure, there's a separate framework and work stream dealing with this matter of security of critical infrastructure, and the Council discussed this only recently. With regard to election-related infrastructure, the Commission stated in the European democracy action plan that marking electoral processes or aspects of their administration as critical infrastructure could render more effective efforts to address specific threats.

The Commission considers that cooperation among Member States to ensure resilient electoral processes is essential, and we will continue to use the European cooperation network on elections to deliver on its commitments on election-related matters. Specific measures at EU level will be taken to protect election infrastructures against cyberattacks, such as the update of the compendium on cybersecurity of election technology and practical exercises to explore risks and preparedness.

The honourable Members also ask whether the new measures will tackle the issue of former European officials working for hostile foreign entities. On this topic, the package that aims to provide more transparency regarding covert foreign influence will build on a solid framework of rules on the specific issue of former European officials. There are a number of provisions in place which regulate already the activities of former staff, such as the Staff Regulations and more detailed administrative provisions for the staff of each institution.

As confirmed by a recent audit from the European Court of Auditors and the inquiry of the European Ombudsman on the 'revolving doors' phenomenon, the Commission has a robust ethical framework in place. With regard to members of other EU institutions, the Court of Auditors, the Court of Justice and the European Central Bank have adopted rules on post-mandate activities applicable to their former members.

For officials in place, the Commission would like to refer to its existing regulations, which provide for basic requirements for recruitment and obligation for officials to conduct themselves solely with the interests of the Union in mind. Any signs of conflict of interest or activities are reported and duly followed up at the appropriate level. Staff members are also obliged to follow a course of ethics, which alerts staff members to potential risks, especially in certain directorates-general which are more exposed to links with third countries.

As Commissioner Johansson mentioned at this place yesterday, we must criminalise all forms of corruption in all Member States. That is why next year we will propose a new law that will impose tougher penalties for bribery, trafficking and influence, embezzlement and abuse of power.

Regarding the issue on the extent to which the package includes a whole-of-society approach, we have taken this approach already in the European democracy action plan. All sectors need to be involved and accountable: public authorities and politicians, media and civil society, industry and also online platforms. Civil society in particular will benefit from the elements of the package in several ways by supporting the development of tools to address covert influence through funding by third countries. We will help civil society to better understand where different actors are coming from. As part of the review of the European democracy action plan, the Commission will also look at actions which involve civil society, including by developing civic space and citizens' participation to bolster democratic resilience from within.

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Regarding funding itself, the Commission is currently providing a number of funds to civil society, researchers and practitioners. For instance, under Horizon Europe or citizenship equality rights in various programmes.

Finally, I would like to address the question inquiring whether the Commission will use the INGE report as the basis for drafting the Defence of Democracy package. I would like to thank the honourable Members and the special committee, as well as the rapporteur, Ms Kalniete, for this very broad and exhaustive document. We have carefully read the report and followed with a written reply on 30 August 2022. I hope that the detail in the reply shows how we found the report to be very rich and stimulating. We are following and actively participating in the works of the INGE II committee. These fruitful exchanges, the report and all related documents will help us to the development of the Defence of Democracy package and help identify the most relevant issues that need to be addressed. In particular, the issue of defence of the EU democratic sphere from covert foreign influence.

Vladimír Bilčík, za skupinu PPE. – Všetkým je nám zřejmé, akú dôležitú prácu sme začali pred niekoľkými rokmi v osobitnom výbore pre zahraničné zasahovanie do demokratických procesov vrátane dezinformácií. Chamtivosť niekoľkých našich kolegyň a kolegov doslova v priamom prenose ukazuje, že demokracia a demokratické rozhodovanie je úsilím, ktoré nikdy nekončí. Prestávka v demokracii neexistuje. Čelíme útokom na demokraciu zvnútra i zvonku. Nestojím tu však preto, aby sme si zúfali. Stojím tu preto, aby sme podčiarkli, že boj za čisté, spravodlivé, demokratické rozhodovanie je jediná cesta, aj keď sa na nej niekedy objavia prekážky. Prekážky však budeme riešiť ako Európania, postavíme sa im čelom a spoločne nájdeme spôsob, ako lepšie vzdorovať hrozbám. V tomto Parlamente ukazujeme, že vieme a chceme bojovať proti nekalým vplyvom. Dovoľte mi však povedať to, čo považujem za najdôležitejšie. Kam má skutočne smerovať naša pozornosť? Nebojím sa, že by si Európsky parlament neporadil s korupciou. Nič z toho, čo riešime v týchto dňoch, však neznesie porovnanie s tým, čo zažívajú statoční obyvatelia Ukrajiny už takmer rok. Absolútne nič. Pamätajme, že ruská agresia nesmeruje len voči Ukrajine. Mieri voči našim obyvateľom, obyvateľom nášho blízkeho susedstva, ale aj proti nášmu Parlamentu. Chcem preto vyzvať Európsku komisiu, pán komisár, k čo najrýchlejšom postupu pri príprave opatrení na posilnenie našej demokratickej odolnosti. Autokratické zahraničné zasahovanie sa neobjavilo v našej práci včera. Nerobme si nádeje, že zmizne. Naopak, bude čím ďalej premyslenejšie, perfidnejšie a nebezpečnejšie. Európske inštitúcie a naši občania musia byť na túto realitu pripravení.

Andreas Schieder, im Namen der S&D-Fraktion. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Ereignisse der letzten Tage, des letzten Wochenendes lassen uns alle fassungslos zurück. Auch ich habe, obwohl schon seit 25 Jahren in gesetzgebenden Körperschaften auf den verschiedenen Ebenen aktiv, noch nie so etwas erlebt. Aber es macht gleichzeitig auch so eindrucksvoll und traurig klar, dass wir ein *Defense of Democracy Package* ganz dringend brauchen.

Institutionen werden angegriffen, von innen und von außen. Ich erinnere nur an den Hackerangriff nach der Russland-Entscheidung der letzten Plenarwoche. Der Korruptionsskandal, die russischen Angriffe und andere folgen alle einem klaren und eindeutigen Ziel, nämlich der Destabilisierung von Europa, dem Angriff auf eine freie, offene und lebendige Demokratie.

Die vorgeschlagenen Regulierungen der Kommission alleine zu politischer Werbung, zur Parteienfinanzierung, zur Ausweitung der Wahlrechte sind gut. Aber wir müssen gerade den aktuellen Anlass noch einmal reflektieren, ob wir weit genug gehen oder ob wir nicht noch mehr brauchen, nämlich ein besseres Verständnis der Auswirkungen von sogenannter *covert financing*, also verdeckter Finanzierung, und ihren Auswirkungen auf politische Aktivitäten und darauf, wie autoritäre Staaten versuchen, sich hier in Europa einzukaufen.

Der INGE-Ausschuss – wie schon erwähnt – hat ja die Vorgänge untersucht und auch bereits mehrmals im Bericht festgehalten: Es muss illegal sein, sich an verdeckten Aktivitäten zu beteiligen, die von ausländischen Akteuren finanziert werden und darauf abzielen, den Prozess der europäischen und nationalen Politik zu beeinflussen. Dafür müssen wir die Schlupflöcher in unserem Regelwerk gerade jetzt wieder schließen, überprüfen und demokratie- und angriffssicher machen. Daher ist jetzt auch die Zeit, die aktuellen Ereignisse als Befreiungsschlag zu erkennen und als Chance, unsere Demokratie und unsere Regeln sauber, transparent und angriffsfest zu gestalten.

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Nathalie Loiseau, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, cette maison est prise dans le vent mauvais du Qatargate, mais il n'y a pas que cela. Depuis des années, nous subissons avec consternation des discours prorusses à l'extrême droite et à l'extrême gauche de cet hémicycle. Depuis le 24 février, ces discours se parent d'un pseudo-pacifisme, qui ne fait qu'aider l'agresseur et réclamer la capitulation de l'agressé.

Cependant, l'ingérence russe n'est pas la seule à laquelle notre maison est exposée. Depuis le début de mon mandat, j'ai découvert avec stupéfaction l'entrisme d'associations islamistes proches du Golfe et de la Turquie, mais aussi d'évangélistes américains, hostiles les uns comme les autres aux droits des femmes, et qui sont pourtant reçus en grande pompe dans ce bâtiment. Le constat est sans appel: des intérêts étrangers essaient de nous manipuler et, depuis quelques jours, nous savons qu'ils sont parfois prêts à y mettre le prix.

C'est donc à balayer devant notre porte que je vous invite, ainsi qu'à faire toute la lumière sur tous les manipulateurs et tous les manipulés. Interrogeons-nous: ceux qui décrivent le Qatar comme un phare des droits de l'homme, ceux qui refusent de voir que la Russie soutient le terrorisme, ont-ils seulement des convictions, ou bien surtout des comptes en banque? Nous devons agir pour trouver la réponse à cette question, agir et non plus subir, enquêter et non plus seulement dénoncer. C'est une guerre qui est menée contre nos démocraties pour les influencer et les affaiblir. Dans cette guerre, nous devons apprendre à rendre coup pour coup, quel que soit l'auteur et quel que soit l'instrument des manipulations qui nous visent.

Face à la désinformation, il est plus que temps d'agir et plus seulement de déplorer le mal que l'on nous fait. Il est temps que l'Union européenne se dote d'une communication stratégique digne de ce nom. Face au pouvoir exorbitant des réseaux sociaux – si Twitter, par exemple, devient l'égout à ciel ouvert de la haine et des fausses nouvelles –, ne tremblons pas et faisons appliquer nos règles. Apprenons à nous faire respecter. Nous avons été des rentiers de la démocratie et de l'état de droit. Il est temps que nous en devenions les guerriers.

Markéta Gregorová, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Mr President, dear colleagues, Commissioner, foreign interference in all democratic processes, including disinformation. That is what our name INGE (Special Committee on Foreign Interference in all Democratic Processes in the European Union, including Disinformation) stands for. Now Europe shakes in its core due to these issues.

The Chinese police stations in our Member States are yet to become a huge scandal. We have among us people corrupted by hostile foreign powers. Attacks on our infrastructure are increasing, not that any of this is surprising. It would be surprising if authoritarian, non-democratic regimes did not try to exploit our openness. What is quite terrifying, though, is that, especially at the outset of the European elections, there is still not enough action against foreign interference, against disinformation.

I hoped that, when disinformation during COVID killed people, there would finally be a legislative proposal. I hoped that, when Russia attacked Ukraine, we would be eager to strengthen our resilience. I still hope now that, when so much foreign influence emerges, we will see a strong plan – no package, no codes without obligations. No offence to those activities.

I would like to hear where the problem is. Is it the Commission? Is it some Member States, digital corporations, lobbyists? What exactly needs to happen so that there is some enforceable, clear measure that will make it urgent for you, if dead people, politicians in prison and cyber-attacks are not enough?

Anna Bonfrisco, *a nome del gruppo ID*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, grazie per i contributi che ho potuto ascoltare con attenzione, ma le domande di questa sessione di interrogazioni orali di oggi potrebbero essere poste da tutti i cittadini europei dopo i fatti del Qatargate.

Essi sono una dura sentenza della storia, della democrazia e della nostra libertà. Abbiamo scoperto, quindi, che non solo la Cina, per esempio attraverso le stazioni di polizia cinese infiltrate sul nostro territorio, non solo la Russia, attraverso la disinformazione, mirano a indebolire la nostra libertà e a violare la nostra sovranità.

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Per questo motivo aveva senz'altro ragione l'Alto rappresentante Borrell, caro Commissario, nella sua metafora sulla giungla e il giardino; il giardino, quello che noi dobbiamo difendere.

Pertanto un nostro approccio diverso rispetto a quell'ambiente difficile e turbolento nel quale viviamo oggi è necessario. È questo il messaggio lapidario che l'Unione europea e i suoi Stati membri devono diffondere ai cittadini europei per dare loro sicurezza sulla tenuta della nostra democrazia, perché la realtà è che questa nostra democrazia viene messa in discussione dalle azioni malevole di Stati terzi che mirano a indebolire le fondamenta dell'Unione europea.

E siamo coscienti del pericolo che corre lo svolgimento corretto e libero delle prossime elezioni europee, ad esempio, ma è semplice quello che ci resta da fare.

Dobbiamo fare passi avanti significativi rispetto ai nostri avversari in ogni campo della conoscenza e del sapere e cercare di mantenere un ampio vantaggio competitivo, il più a lungo possibile; dobbiamo proteggere i nostri talenti scientifici e le nostre società; dobbiamo affermare con forza che non c'è alternativa all'ordine internazionale e alle regole europee.

Ангел Джамбазки, *от името на групата ECR*. – Г-н Председател, разкритията и подозренията за корупция в редиците на социалистите и демократите са огромен позор и петно върху Европейския парламент. Оказа се, както винаги, вярна поговорката на мъдрия български народ „Крадецът вика дръжте крадеца“. Разбира се, тази корупция трябва да бъде разследвана докрай. Трябва да бъдат разследвани тези синдикални, неправителствени организации, които вероятно влияеха върху Европейския парламент, за да бъде приет лобисткият пакет „Мобилност“, който крадеше бизнес от източните държави.

Всички вие добре знаете, че Кремъл и Белград влияят на Балканите през собствените си НПО-та и оттам следва в Скопие, в Босна и Херцеговина, в Черна гора, в Албания и в Косово антиевропейска, антибългарска пропаганда. Трябва да бъде разследвано тези НПО-та канили ли са европейски представители, т.е. евродепутати, както обичат да се наричат някои колеги, кои са тези европейски депутати, били ли са платени техните участия като институти, като IFIMES например?

Това са важни въпроси, защото ако Катар може да дава пари насам, и Кремъл, и Белград рушат европейското единство през Белград, в Скопие и затова много хубаво трябва да се погледне дали няма колеги, които са се изкушили да бръкнат в меда и там. И те трябва да бъдат показани, следвани и разследвани, защото корупцията е лошо нещо, не забравяйте от лявата страна на залата, от левицата.

Clare Daly, *on behalf of The Left Group*. – Mr President, we tried to include in this question an explanation on how fundamental rights would be safeguarded in the Commission's disinformation package, particularly in light of the zeal for using sanctions against organisations and individuals accused of disinformation.

Sanctions are tools of international law, not domestic law. Fundamental rights protections in our legal system don't apply in international law. Sanctions are imposed by governments, not courts. So the burden of proof and the standard of evidence are lower. Sanctioned individuals don't have the right to hear or challenge the accusations against them.

Surely to any democrat the proposal to use sanctions to tackle disinformation has to be seen as an end run around due process and undermining the rights of the accused. It threatens to do serious harm to the rule of law and freedom of expression, the very cores of democracy. It will inevitably lead to a deprivation of rights, as the UN counter-terrorism sanctions regime has done also. So I would ask the Commission: what steps is it taking to safeguard fundamental rights?

Laura Ferrara (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, i gravi sospetti di corruzione dal Qatar riguardanti membri e assistenti del Parlamento europeo hanno reso ulteriormente evidente la vulnerabilità delle istituzioni europee alle ingerenze straniere.

Abbiamo un urgente bisogno di contromisure in grado di proteggere la nostra democrazia da interferenze esterne. La concessione di denaro e *benefits* provenienti da attori stranieri sono una pratica diffusa per comprare la benevolenza di singoli soggetti, di gruppi o di intere forze politiche e per interferire nei processi democratici e decisionali.

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Come Movimento 5 Stelle abbiamo sempre denunciato i fenomeni di *élite capture* e cooptazione da parte di entità straniere che reclutano chi ha o ha avuto cariche politiche e ruoli istituzionali apicali, col fine di trarne vantaggio a discapito degli interessi dei cittadini dell'UE e degli Stati membri.

La Commissione europea presenti allora al più presto un pacchetto di proposte seguendo le raccomandazioni della relazione finale della commissione INGE; consideri prioritario uno specifico regime sanzionatorio e dei nuovi reati come l'ingerenza straniera dolosa per prevenire e contrastare le interferenze dei paesi terzi.

Lukas Mandl (PPE). – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen, meine Damen und Herren! Ich danke Kommissar Johannes Hahn für die klaren Worte, mit denen er diese Debatte eingeleitet hat. Kein Jahr vor diesem Jahr hat deutlicher gezeigt, wie gefährlich Desinformation sein kann und wie angreifbar eine entwickelte Zivilisation wie unsere ist, wenn von außen Desinformation in unsere Gesellschaft hineingetragen wird.

Wir müssen auch bekennen: Keine Woche hat so sehr gezeigt wie diese Woche, dass gerade auch das politische System eine Angriffsfläche für die ausländische Einflussnahme, für Desinformation, für die Destabilisierung unserer Gesellschaften, ja sogar für die Infragestellung von Demokratie und Rechtsstaatlichkeit, für die Infragestellung unserer Werte ist.

Deshalb kann ich unserer Präsidentin Roberta Metsola, unserem ersten Vizepräsidenten Othmar Karas darin nur zustimmen, dass die Charakterlosigkeit, die hier zum Ausdruck gekommen ist, zurückzuweisen ist, dass es rechtliche Konsequenzen braucht, dass es politische Konsequenzen braucht, ja, und dass es selbstverständlich das braucht, was in einer Demokratie eigentlich der Maßstab ist, nämlich auch Konsequenzen in der Entscheidung der Bürgerinnen und Bürger über ihre Vertretung bei Wahlen.

Das gilt es zu transportieren: Abgeordnete müssen unbestechlich sein, und Abgeordnete müssen immer transparent sofort die Motive dafür nennen können, wofür sie eintreten. Im Wort Verantwortung steckt auch das Wort „antworten“, und darauf müssen wir alle antworten können.

Christel Schaldemose (S&D). – Hr. Formand! Korruption. Indblanding i europæiske beslutningsprocesser. Folkevalgte, der ikke lever op til den tillid, vælgerne har vist dem. Ja, det er jo noget af det, vi har set i denne uge i den største skandale nogensinde her i Parlamentet. Det hører ikke til i et demokrati. Det hører ikke til i EU, og det hører selvfølgelig ikke til i dette parlament. Autokratiske regimer har alt for længe angrebet vores demokrati, men de er i gang med at opruste yderligere, blandt andet på sociale medier med desinformation og med korruption i vores parlament. Men også på andre områder. Men altså at se tasker fyldt med penge i bytte for at støtte fjendtlige magters modbydelige interesser, er så problematisk. Vi skal have gjort noget ved det. Der er mange ting, vi skal gøre.

For det første skal vi sørge for, at vi folkevalgte lever op til vælgernes tillid. Det kræver nye regler i huset, men det kræver også en forandring af vores kultur. For det andet skal vi blandt andet have gjort op med den desinformation, vi ser finde sted online, og som udelukkende har til formål at destabilisere vores samfund. Vi har med forordningen om digitale tjenester taget et stort skridt i forhold til kampen mod desinformation online, og det er rigtig godt, men jeg tror, at der skal mere til. Vi skal have sat hårdt ind over for både de magter, der udefra forsøger at ødelægge vores demokrati og de folkevalgte, der indefra gennem korruption også forsøger at ødelægge vores demokrati. Vores demokrati er under angreb, og det kræver, at vi tager en lang række initiativer, ikke bare over for desinformation, men også i forhold til cybersikkerhed osv. Der er stadigvæk rigtig lang vej, men vi bliver nødt til at gøre det. Der er kun en måde, vi kan sikre vores egne interesser på, og det er, at vi har et ordentligt demokrati.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

PRESIDÊNCIA: PEDRO SILVA PEREIRA

Vice-Presidente

Bart Groothuis (Renew). – Mr President, whatever significant progress we make as humanity, our human nature will not change. So for those who say the problem with foreign interference is the poor, bad, moral or ethical judgment of some individuals, I advise them to re-read the Book of Genesis. It was mankind eating the apple, and mankind will continue to be tempted. The real problem is, of course, that a permissive security environment exists in Brussels and in Strasbourg, where our adversaries operate in the heart of our democracy in order to interfere with it.

Until recently, we had a China friendship group with a secretary-general from China who acted, paid by this House, and was authorised to work here. Similar groups exist for Qatar and other states. Russian interns walked the floors of this House. We still allow MEPs to travel to third countries, irrespective of who pays the bills. Our IT systems are vulnerable for espionage, and therefore external pressure on Members. Our security organisation is under-equipped, Commissioner, and hardly staffed to the level we need.

Yes, justice must have its way with individuals and corrupt individuals must be punished, but this House urgently needs to create a non-permissive counter intelligence environment so that our adversaries don't even dare to interfere with us.

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, we already knew about the terrible influence of China in our universities. A Senate report in France has clearly documented it. Chinese student spies or some officials are monitoring research to impose their narrative on the issues of the Uyghurs or Taiwan. Some researchers were even pressured by the heads of the universities to delete criticism towards the Chinese Government and to use alternative wording in certain publications or conferences.

But now we know that even worse is happening. There is proof that there is a far-reaching network of overseas Chinese police stations established in many of our Member States – in France, in Spain, in Greece. Chinese citizens who found refuge in these countries are tracked by the Chinese police and forced into returning back to China.

This is also happening in the Netherlands and Ireland, which have launched investigations, and this is happening in Hungary and Serbia. But both of these countries are denying these allegations and are not preventing this from happening.

That is how bad the level of foreign interference has become in the European Union and in neighbour countries.

Aurélia Beigneux (ID). – Monsieur le Président, pendant des années, ce Parlement s'est défoulé en toute impunité contre notre groupe politique, forçant le discours de l'ingérence étrangère sans apporter le moindre élément tangible. Les seules armes à disposition des Glucksmann et autres Loiseau ont été d'enchaîner les accusations à la limite de la diffamation, en oubliant que, si les électeurs plébiscitent notre parti depuis cinquante ans, c'est justement parce qu'il ne défend qu'une seule nation, la France.

Malheureusement pour eux, lorsque des institutions sérieuses comme la justice décident de prendre les choses en main, c'est vers votre groupe socialiste qu'elles se dirigent. Pour noyer vos responsabilités et nous inclure dans un scandale qui ne concerne que vous, vous appelez cela une attaque étrangère contre la démocratie et ce Parlement européen. En réalité, il s'agit tout simplement d'un scandale de corruption du groupe socialiste.

Je demande donc que la commission ING2, qui a préféré attaquer notre groupe à chaque réunion, sans voir la corruption qui avait lieu dans ces mêmes bureaux, d'ailleurs, soit immédiatement suspendue, que son président rende des comptes et que tous les députés qui ont porté des accusations fallacieuses balayent enfin devant leur porte.

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Beata Szydło (ECR). – Szanowny Panie Przewodniczący! Szanowny Panie Komisarzu! Szanowni Państwo! Pewnie jeszcze kilka dni temu ta debata wyglądałaby zupełnie inaczej. Rozmawialibyśmy przede wszystkim o rosyjskiej ingerencji w demokratyczne systemy w naszych państwach członkowskich, w Unii Europejskiej. Ale dzisiaj nie sposób przejść do porządku dziennego nad tym, co się stało, nad aferą korupcyjną, w której główną bohaterką była wiceprzewodnicząca Parlamentu Europejskiego z grupy socjalistów. I wierzę w to głęboko i mam nadzieję, że nie skończy się tylko na rezolucjach i debatach, i tym, że sobie tutaj porozmawiamy, tylko rzeczywiście zostanie cała sprawa dogłębnie zbadana.

Parlament Europejski bardzo dużo rozmawia i lubi rozmawiać o praworządności, o ingerencji w demokrację. Bardzo chętnie zajmuje się praworządnością w krajach członkowskich, w tym atakując demokratycznie wybrane rządy, tak jak na przykład w Polsce. Być może, gdyby więcej refleksji poświęcono tutaj temu, co dzieje się w instytucjach europejskich, właśnie w Parlamencie Europejskim czy w innych instytucjach, uniknęlibyśmy tej sytuacji. Niewątpliwie ta debata musi zakończyć się konkluzjami, które będą skutecznie respektowane w instytucjach europejskich, bo zaufali nam Europejczycy. Jesteśmy winni im tego, ażeby to wszystko wyjaśnić, by więcej takie wydarzenia nie miały miejsca.

Jérôme Rivière (NI). – Monsieur le Président, alors qu'un grave scandale met au jour une ingérence étrangère par corruption au sein du Bureau du Parlement européen, la retenue et la décence ne sont décidément pas ce qui caractérise notre assemblée. Alors que la Commission s'érige en gardienne d'un ordre qui serait incriticuable, et passe son temps à réprimander les États membres qui refusent de s'aligner, ses scandaleuses ingérences dans les affaires intérieures des États membres sont passées sous silence. Dans le feuilleton sur l'état de droit en Hongrie, elle vient de confirmer la retenue financière sur les fonds de cohésion hongrois, au titre de la conditionnalité à l'état de droit. Sans mandat électif direct, sans consultation des peuples, elle définit seule le bien et pousse toujours plus loin son programme fédéraliste et destructeur des nations et des identités.

Philippe Muray, dans son essai *L'Empire du bien*, dénonçait l'instauration d'un totalitarisme doux, sucré et gentil, dont cette assemblée est le parfait exemple. Il écrivait: «Le bien grandit rapidement, bouche peu à peu toutes les issues et interdit les échappées.» La Commission, tel un axiome, brandit sa conception de l'état de droit pour imposer sa vision globale et ses conceptions économiques et sociétales. C'est de ces ingérences illégitimes, qui mettent aussi en danger le processus démocratique, que nous devrions débattre aujourd'hui.

Salvatore De Meo (PPE). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, in questi giorni difficili la Presidente Metsola lo ha detto, «la democrazia europea è sotto attacco» e, io aggiungo, che non lo è da venerdì sera.

Sono anni che le forze straniere tentano di infiltrarsi nei nostri processi decisionali per influenzare o cambiare le sorti della nostra Unione e non è un caso se abbiamo istituito una commissione speciale proprio per analizzare i tentativi di queste interferenze. Lo abbiamo visto con la demagogia diffusa in occasione della Brexit, oppure con i tentativi da parte di Russia o Cina di minare i nostri valori fondamentali.

In questo scenario di rischi, non dobbiamo sottovalutare il collegamento tra le ingerenze straniere e la nostra autonomia energetica, alimentare o finanziaria: è evidente che ci sono alcuni regimi che per motivi economici o energetici, per esempio, cercano di limitare i nostri principi e la nostra democrazia.

A questi tentativi dobbiamo rispondere con strategie che portino la nostra Unione a essere sempre più autonoma per fronteggiare qualsiasi minaccia esterna che tenti di indebolirci.

Purtroppo, oggi, assistiamo a un grave caso di corruzione all'interno della nostra casa e mi auguro che i responsabili di queste condotte, se accertate, non restino impuniti ma, soprattutto, che si faccia subito chiarezza per evitare di distruggere la credibilità della nostra istituzione.

Una credibilità costruita con impegno, sacrificio e tante lotte. Una credibilità che forse fa paura a qualcuno.

E allora, in questo momento più che mai, dobbiamo reagire per difendere la credibilità delle nostre istituzioni e di tutta l'Unione europea non solo verso l'esterno, ma soprattutto verso i nostri cittadini che ci chiedono un'Europa forte, vicina e credibile.

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Tonino Picula (S&D). – Mr President, dear colleagues, our identity is under attack and some wrongdoings will have serious consequences for institutions' reputations. Probably the most expected outcome of the latest corruption allegations is that the ones who profoundly threaten democracy within the EU, and from outside, will use this case as an alibi.

So far, we have been more focused on the pride of holding the torch of democracy globally. Unfortunately, we did not complete secure management of democracy internally. As some Member States and officials within the EU showed, democracy can be effectively suppressed even after it was once established.

Besides that, our immediate neighbourhood is in many cases a playground for autocratic regimes. Attacks on our democratic structures often have a foreign imprint. But for it to succeed, they are provided by internal allies. To defend our democratic standards we have to address both urgently. We need to build a resilient system that goes beyond simple codes of conduct, increase transparency regarding our meetings and introduce improved clearance of everyone working at and representing our institutions.

Immediate course of action should be to set clear rules on lobbying, as well as strong protection of the whistleblowers. To strengthen the confidence in democracy we have to lead by example.

Jordi Cañas (Renew). – Señor presidente, ¿cómo podemos defender nuestra democracia de injerencias extranjeras? Pues no permitiéndolo, no amparándolo, no legitimándolo. Porque durante demasiado tiempo hemos permitido, amparado y legitimado que Rusia e Irán, Venezuela y otros países financien e impulsen movimientos políticos extremistas en diferentes países europeos y también en esta Cámara. Porque hemos permitido, legitimado y amparado que países como Rusia apoyaran a movimientos separatistas en Europa para debilitarla y romperla, como en Cataluña —como bien sabe nuestro querido diputado Puigdemont—. Porque hemos permitido y amparado que países paguen a algunos diputados para que algunos de los temas que les conciernen no se traigan a esta Cámara o se defiendan de alguna manera. Y eso es sabido por todos.

Por lo tanto, ¿cómo defenderlo? No permitiéndolo. Y, sobre todo, no abriendo las puertas de nuestra democracia y sus instituciones a los caballos de Troya de nuestros enemigos.

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel (Verts/ALE). – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Wir verdienen zugegebenermaßen im Europäischen Parlament nicht schlecht. Warum ist das so? Warum gewähren uns die Steuerzahlerinnen diesen relativ großzügigen Betrag? Damit wir unbestechlich sind und uns nicht mit Geldern Dritter über Wasser halten müssen.

Unbestechlichkeit ist ein hohes Gut in der Politik. Vertrauen in Politikerinnen ist die Basis für unsere Mandate, das Fundament unserer Arbeit für unsere Bürgerinnen und unsere Wählerinnen. Aber wenn die Europäerinnen hier sehen, dass ihre direkte Demokratie von außen bedroht, bestochen und beschämt wird, ist dieses Vertrauen gebrochen.

Wir sprechen hier in unserem Ausschuss schon lange über Korruption und die Versuche von Ländern wie Russland, China oder Katar, unsere demokratischen Prozesse zu beeinflussen. Erneute Versuche sollten uns eigentlich nicht überraschen. Genau dafür haben wir doch den INGE-Ausschuss ins Leben gerufen. Aber dass diese erneuten Versuche erfolgreich sind, das schockiert. Das darf nicht passieren. Wir müssen uns intern besser wappnen. Wir müssen als Institution ein Zeichen setzen. Und wir sollten meines Erachtens den Sonderausschuss INGE 2 als permanenten Ausschuss konstituieren und damit wirklich unsere Aufklärungs- und Untersuchungsarbeit auch in der nächsten Legislatur fortsetzen.

Silvia Sardone (ID). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, per anni abbiamo assistito a prediche, a ridicole *fake news*, a lezioni di superiorità morale da sinistra sulle ingerenze straniere.

Avete creato una commissione per le ingerenze con l'unico scopo di attaccare Matteo Salvini, sul quale però non avete trovato nulla. Però non avete visto, o non avete voluto vedere, quello che accadeva a casa vostra; ora l'enorme scandalo della corruzione del Qatar svela la vostra gigantesca ipocrisia. In cambio di denaro nella sinistra italiana ed europea c'è chi avrebbe chiuso gli occhi sulla violazione dei diritti umani.

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C'è inoltre un enorme problema ONG. Dagli interrogatori scopriamo che le ONG servono per far girare i soldi; è chiaro che, con la scusa dei diritti umani e del sostegno ai più deboli, si siano create strutture parallele che tradivano quegli ideali e che sono state utilizzate solo per fare soldi.

L'Europarlamento deve intervenire severamente e la sinistra deve spiegare e chiedere scusa.

Marcel de Graaff (NI). – Voorzitter, commissaris, de Twittertop verhulde de corruptie van de familie Biden vlak voor de Amerikaanse presidentsverkiezingen. Capital Research onthulde de geldstromen van de Open Society Foundations naar ngo's om verkiezingen in de EU te ondermijnen. E-mails tonen aan dat het World Economic Forum de Nederlandse regering opdroeg de WEF-agenda uit te voeren zonder dat het parlement of de kiezer hiervan wisten. Qatar kocht leden van het Europees Parlement om. Ursula von der Leyen verbergt nog steeds de communicatie met Pfizer over de miljardendeals voor de COVID-nepvaccins. Het moet verborgen blijven dat de VS achter de aanslag op de gasleidingen van Rusland naar Duitsland zat. De burgers betalen de prijs voor deze oorlog en corruptie, en dus moeten de burgers de leugens blijven geloven.

De Europese Commissie en het Europees Parlement stoppen hun leugens, verkiezingsfraude, omkoperij en corruptie in de doofpot en maken zich hard voor censuur op social media. Al deze lieden moeten gearresteerd en veroordeeld worden.

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Mr President, dear Commissioner, I had a speech prepared but I was shocked with the speeches here. I think it was Churchill who said that if you don't want to solve a problem, you create a commission – and we have a huge problem here and a new commission will not resolve this problem, which is the problem of democracy and the truth.

The Foreign Affairs Committee has all these sub-committees that are dealing with the truth – the DROI Committee, and we are now shocked at what is going on there. Our urgency resolutions – in two days, via civil societies, they are trying to change the order of the truth and the facts and none of us here is able to fight this I would say closed circle of friends who are still unable to face the truth.

15 years ago in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they introduced a law to stop this NGO being financed by foreign interference, and the European Union with its own democracy is not able to face the truth and see that NGOs – doubtful NGOs – that are using the names and reputation of some honourable persons are being used as laundromats and that we are being here influenced by these people.

It doesn't matter which autocracy, it is still not a democracy. So we should face the truth and finally start dealing with it, because without that we will lose our reputation and our credibility forever.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la lotta alle ingerenze esterne e alla disinformazione, oggi più che mai, deve essere la priorità per questo Parlamento, evidentemente sotto attacco da attori esterni che cercano di destabilizzare le nostre istituzioni democratiche.

Dobbiamo reagire, la nostra democrazia non è in vendita.

Quanto annunciato dalla Commissione europea, un piano di difesa delle democrazie europee, è un segnale di consapevolezza che però deve essere implementato con azioni concrete e coraggiose. Non è più tempo di raccomandazioni facoltative.

Ecco, l'Unione europea però non parte da zero. Grazie al lavoro svolto dalla commissione INGE – penso in particolare, tra gli altri, al lavoro del collega Majorino e al lavoro del collega Glucksmann, che hanno identificato i punti deboli su cui dobbiamo lavorare.

Penso alla necessità dell'organismo europeo indipendente per l'etica pubblica, alla trasparenza dei rapporti con i portatori di interessi, a tutti i rischi connessi alle azioni di ogni tipo che svolgono le realtà dei paesi stranieri, in particolare dei paesi autoritari e molte questioni sono state ricordate anche negli interventi precedenti.

La credibilità dell'Europa è in gioco e anche la credibilità del Parlamento europeo, che non è assolutamente poca cosa, nell'essere difensore dei diritti umani. Questi anni, ottenendo con questo impegno anche risultati importanti, non devono essere sporcati da una vicenda e da una storia disgustosa.

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Petras Auštrevičius (Renew). – Mr President, Commissioner, dear colleagues, foreign interference and attacks on our democracy's fundamentals should be treated as hybrid attacks and crimes, which must be punished accordingly. We must understand that such attempts are primarily directed against our citizens and their democratic and free choice. Therefore our response should include, among other measures, sanctions against third-country institutions, persons or entities that carry out such malign attacks.

I therefore call for EU sanctions mechanisms to be complemented by measures that give due weight to interference in the internal affairs of Member States and the Union and ensure democratic stability. We must act effectively to deter future attacks against our societies.

Alexandra Geese (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, Commissioner, colleagues, foreign influence has many faces, and one of the most shameful ones we experienced in this week in this House by people who haven't understood what it means to be Members of this House.

But the most powerful one is still social media, where Russian and Chinese actors deliberately target democracies with misleading content to influence the public opinion. And the Digital Services Act, which we approved in this House, will give us some instruments to tackle this. And social media networks should be preparing but, unfortunately, they are not.

Elon Musk just readmitted some super-spreaders of disinformation on Twitter, abolished the disinformation policy of the company on COVID and slashed the workforce by half, in particular focusing on content moderation and integrity experts. Facebook cut its workforce by 13%, and that means an increase in disinformation and a decrease in trustworthy information. And that means that almost half of Ukrainian independent local news publishers are restricted on Facebook.

So it's the brave people of Ukraine, to whom we awarded the Sakharov Prize, that is paying the price for disinformation for foreign influence two times with a hybrid war being waged against them, and with not even being able to access information on digital platforms. This is a scandal and we have to address this.

Gilles Lebreton (ID). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, la découverte par la justice belge d'un système de corruption organisé par le Qatar discrédite le Parlement européen. Ce «Qatargate» devrait nous inciter à prendre trois décisions.

D'abord, exiger la démission de M. Raphaël Glucksmann de la présidence de la commission d'enquête sur les ingérences étrangères. Aveuglé par ses préjugés, il m'a accusé nommément et sans preuve, à cette tribune, d'être au service de la Russie, pendant que la vraie corruption prospérait sous son nez chez ses amis socialistes.

Ensuite, enquêter sur l'étrange étourderie de l'OLAF et du Parquet européen, qui ont préféré regarder ailleurs plutôt que de se pencher sur la corruption massive par le Qatar, que la rumeur publique dénonçait depuis longtemps.

Enfin, cesser immédiatement de vouloir renforcer le Parlement européen et la Commission, dont on voit qu'ils sont les proies des lobbies les plus détestables. Faisons plutôt confiance au Conseil, seul représentant légitime des États membres au sein de l'Union.

Profitons du «Qatargate» pour redresser la barre et remplacer l'Union des groupes de pression et des puissances de l'argent par une Europe des nations.

Antoni Comín i Oliveres (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, con l'interferenza esterna contro la democrazia nell'Unione europea ci riferiamo al fatto che, da decenni, i mercati finanziari globalizzati sovvertono la volontà dei governi democratici.

Ditelo al popolo greco, che dodici anni fa ha subito un piano di salvataggio solo per salvare alcune banche europee a costo di distruggere il loro sistema di protezione sociale e adesso è stata la Commissione che ha dovuto chiedere scusa al popolo greco.

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Tuttavia capisco che oggi non è questo il dibattito, ma quello che riguarda l'interferenza dei paesi autocratici contro l'Unione europea come paradigma di libertà, democrazia e Stato di diritto. È inevitabile, in questo caso, citare il *Qatargate* e altri esempi, come la Russia di Putin e le sue pericolose amicizie con i partiti di estrema destra nell'Unione europea, che ha finanziato in modo non disinteressato.

Por cierto, basta ya de *fake news* sobre las relaciones entre Putin y el independentismo catalán. Por favor, basta ya.

Quando si parla di democrazia straniera la riflessione è ovvia: come vogliamo proteggerci da chi viola lo Stato di diritto se guardiamo dall'altra parte quando queste violazioni sono commesse nell'Unione dagli stessi Stati membri?

Non ci stancheremo di ripeterlo, la violazione dei diritti civili e politici in Spagna a causa del conflitto catalano ci lascia disarmati di fronte a tutti i Putin e a tutti gli autocrati del pianeta, vengano essi dal Golfo o da altrove.

Isabel Wiseler-Lima (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, que dire aujourd'hui sur l'ingérence étrangère mettant en danger la démocratie? Nous nous concentrons désormais – *enfin*, je dirais – sur la désinformation par des organes étrangers, sur l'influence démesurée prise par la Chine sur nos économies et nos infrastructures, et sur l'influence démesurée prise par la Russie au niveau économique et politique, avec son soutien actif à des partis ou sa prise d'influence dans des élections.

Nous devons nous protéger et détecter les failles dans notre système qui permettent ces prises de pouvoir, que je qualifierais de souterraines. Notre ouverture sur le monde, nos libertés d'expression, de la presse et bien d'autres, ces valeurs qui nous sont si chères contiennent en elles les risques qui, parfois, nous empêchent de nous protéger. Or, nous devons absolument trouver le moyen de contrer ces attaques et d'empêcher avec détermination la désinformation de circuler, tout en protégeant nos libertés. Oui, c'est bien une guerre de la désinformation qui est menée. Le but est la fragilisation de notre démocratie. Maintenir nos libertés en empêchant l'ingérence étrangère: tel est le défi.

Aujourd'hui, il faut bien évoquer la corruption, qui fait des dégâts qui, eux aussi, ébranlent la confiance dans la démocratie. Quand une puissance étrangère en use, c'est de l'ingérence étrangère. La corruption est illégale, nos lois la punissent. Nous avons confiance en la justice chez nous, là où l'état de droit est instauré.

Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro (S&D). – Señor presidente, el Parlamento no es una burbuja impenetrable. Existen amenazas reales de quienes quieren imponerse frente al Estado de Derecho y la democracia. Sabemos que emplean fórmulas sofisticadas y otras más burdas para penetrar en las instituciones, condicionar la opinión pública, blanquear gobiernos tiranizados y alterar la voluntad de los ciudadanos en procesos democráticos.

Vivimos tiempos de conmoción y de vergüenza que tienen que hacernos reaccionar con toda la contundencia y fortaleza que requiere la situación. El peso de la ley tiene que caer siempre sobre los corruptos y los corruptores. Y este Parlamento, el más democrático del mundo, tiene que redoblar los esfuerzos para blindar la democracia. Desde la Comisión Especial sobre Injerencias Extranjeras en Todos los Procesos Democráticos de la Unión Europea se han hecho propuestas en esta dirección y se acogió con buenos ojos el anuncio por parte de Ursula von der Leyen sobre ese paquete de defensa de la democracia para protegernos frente a la injerencia extranjera encubierta.

Y la pregunta es: ¿para cuándo? ¿para cuándo esa autoridad ética independiente? ¿para cuándo la ley europea contra el tráfico de influencias y la corrupción, que se anunció ayer por parte de la señora Johansson y hoy con el comisario Hahn? La pregunta es: ¿para cuándo?

Hagamos una Unión Europea absolutamente impermeable a estos ataques de nuestra democracia, que son verdaderamente reales.

Ramona Strugariu (Renew). – Democrația europeană este fragilă și suferă. Crește extremismul, avem ingerințe externe în alegeri, dezinformare, amenințări fără precedent la adresa jurnaliștilor. Rănilor democrației noastre au crescut exponențial odată cu agresiunea Rusiei împotriva Ucrainei și se adâncesc. Kremlinul seamănă propagandă împotriva valorilor europene la noi în casă și în vecinătate. La Chișinău, protestatari plătiți încearcă să schimbe alegerea pro-europeană a țării. Qatarul cumpără lideri din instituțiile europene. Ce facem, renunțăm atât de ușor? Punem punct unui capitol din cea mai liberă și mai civilizată istorie europeană? Mai mult ca niciodată, nu. Dar pentru asta trebuie curaj. Pentru asta e nevoie de răspunsuri instituționale puternice și de oameni cu viziune. Pentru asta e nevoie de integritate. Fiecare dintre noi e la fel de responsabil. Democrația se apără cu sancționarea iliberalismului, cu educație, cu presă liberă, cu alfabeti-

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zare media, cu vot informat. Democrația se apără cu o Europă unită. Dacă vrem să facem ceva și aici, și acasă, asta e de făcut.

Alice Kuhnke (Verts/ALE). – Herr talman! EU ska vara en fristad. En gemenskap där alla vi som lever här ska kunna uttrycka våra åsikter, engagera oss, vara högljudda i våra protester och kraftfulla i demonstrationer, utan åsiktsregistrering eller andra påföljder. Så är det inte idag. Inte för alla.

Vi vet att utländska agenter förföljer EU-medborgare här i EU. Ett faktum och ett förtryck som bland annat den iranska diasporan levt med i årtionden. Den islamistiska regimen i Iran vill inte enbart skrämma folket i Iran till tystnad och lydnad, utan förföljer också våra medborgare här.

EU måste sätta stopp för Irans agenter. De ska ställas inför rätta, de ska dömas och de ska utvisas. Ingen är fri förrän alla är fria.

Matteo Gazzini (ID). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, recenti indagini svolte all'interno degli Stati europei hanno portato alla luce l'esistenza di un sistema di controllo da parte della polizia cinese, volto a monitorare i connazionali considerati dissidenti e a esercitare pressioni fino a forzarli al rientro in patria. Un'ingerenza incompatibile con gli ordinamenti dei singoli Stati, lesiva del principio di libertà e dei valori fondamentali dell'Unione europea.

Non sono da meno gli episodi di corruzione per favorire Qatar e Marocco, che hanno visto coinvolta anche l'ex vicepresidente socialdemocratica Kaili. Questa macchia per le istituzioni e per la credibilità del nostro organo democratico arriva proprio da quel gruppo politico che ha sempre avuto l'arroganza di ritenersi portatore di superiorità morale, da quelle ONG che agiscono nell'ombra, mascherandosi sotto nobili intenzioni.

Si è detto che la corruzione non ha colore politico. Non è vero! Il colore c'è ed è il rosso delle sinistre del gruppo socialista. Questo Parlamento dovrebbe iniziare a essere meno ipocrita e assumere posizioni forti, per evitare che l'Europa continui a essere considerata il parco giochi del mondo, dove ognuno può fare ciò che vuole senza pagarne le conseguenze.

Di quali strumenti pensa dunque di dotarsi l'UE, di concerto con gli Stati membri, per far rispettare quei principi democratici che da sempre millanta di proteggere?

Ivan Vilibor Sinčić (NI). – Poštovani predsjedavajući, obrana demokracije od vanjskog uplitanja je današnja tema, o njoj se puno puta raspravljalo i uvijek je bila festival licemjerja.

Služila je najviše za obračun briselskog establišmenta s neistomišljenicima unutar Parlamenta, zemalja članica, ali i van država Unije. Čim netko misli drugačije i ne misli kako bi trebalo, odmah se na njega gleda kao na nekakvog agenta. Ako izbori ili referendum ne prođu kako treba, traži se ponavljanje, od onog za lisabonske sporazume pa do drugog referenduma za Brexit. Čim bude izabrana neka vlada koja nije 100% poslušna, počinje se govoriti o vanjskim utjecajima, pa čak i o namještenim izborima. Korupcija odjednom postane tema i problem u toj zemlji.

Kritizira se odavde mađarska vlada, poljska vlada, a po novome i švedska i talijanska vlada, jer imaju neke vlastite stavove, ali nikada poslušne vlade poput hrvatske. Iz hrvatske Vlade u zadnjih šest godina morale su otići desetine ministara zbog korupcijskih skandala, a još bi toliko trebalo otići da imaju minimum savjesti i integriteta. Ali to ništa nema veze jer premijer Plenković je poslušan, diže ruku kada treba i nedaj Bože da iskoristi veto.

Vladajuća stranka u našoj zemlji pravomoćno je osuđena zločinačka organizacija odlukom Vrhovnog suda Republike Hrvatske. Žalbe na tu odluku nema, ali ni to nema veze jer je poslušna Bruxellesu. Poruka koja se šalje je sljedeća: „Nema veze ako si korumpiran, dok god si poslušan”.

Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE). – Pane předsedající, pane komisaři, dámy a pánové, pokud půjdete spát v demokracii, probudíte se jednou v diktatuře. A toto heslo, které říkal vždycky můj otec, mě provází celým mým životem. My nemůžeme usnout. Je tady nějaká kauza, která se řeší, ale těch kauz může být neskutečně mnoho, pokud dovolíme, aby do našeho demokratického systému někdo vcházel bez toho, aniž bychom ho pozvali. Kolikrát jsme řešili, že v Íránu není demokracie? Kolikrát jsme kritizovali Rusko? Kolikrát upozorňujeme na lidská práva v Číně? A když si vezmeme rezoluce nebo si vezmeme i různé materiály, naše poziční dokumenty, tak kolikrát tam je kritika našich partnerů všude na světě? Já si myslím, že pokud nebudeme mít odvahu pojmenovat ty věci, že ta korupce nepřichází pouze skrze státy, ale ty státy užívají i některé neziskové organizace, které působí na půdě Evropského parlamentu, tak nikdy nebudeme schopni proti těmto způsobům ovlivňování dění nejenom v Evropě, ale i všude na světě bojovat. Já si myslím, že bychom měli spolupracovat. Měli bychom se daleko více zaměřit opravdu na původ toho, kdo nás ovlivňuje,

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a měli bychom chtít tyto lidi, kteří nerespektují naši demokracii, vypudit z našich domů a z našich míst, protože to je největší ohrožení našich hodnot.

Maria-Manuel Leitão-Marques (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, ainda nos lembramos todos bem de escândalos em campanhas políticas como a do Brexit ou a campanha de Trump. Estiveram ligados a interferências estrangeiras, mas também a novas formas, sobretudo digitais, de fazer campanha.

Com a regulação da publicidade política na qual estamos a trabalhar aqui no Parlamento podemos, de uma só vez, ajudar a corrigir estes dois problemas. Queremos proibir o financiamento de publicidade política por parte de atores estrangeiros na União Europeia.

Queremos aumentar a transparência das campanhas, exigindo informação sobre quem paga e quanto paga pela publicidade política e criando repositórios de anúncios políticos que permitam a jornalistas, investigadores e a autoridades públicas detetar mais facilmente as interferências estrangeiras.

E queremos, por fim, restringir o direcionamento da publicidade política que, nas famosas campanhas que citei, foi usado para polarizar e radicalizar muitos eleitores, manipulando as suas emoções com informação distorcida ou até completamente falsa.

Num tempo em que a democracia está sob ataque, temos de ser corajosos no remédio. Acreditem que é o que estamos a fazer.

Γεώργιος Κύρτσος (Renew). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, μετά την εισβολή της Ρωσίας στην Ουκρανία, απέκτησε ακόμη μεγαλύτερη σημασία η ευρωπαϊκή άμυνα κατά της ξένης διείσδυσης που έχει στόχο την αποσταθεροποίηση. Η επιθετική ξένη διείσδυση στο διαδίκτυο και την κοινή γνώμη είναι μέρος του υβριδικού πολέμου και στην περίπτωση της Ρωσίας προετοίμασε την εισβολή στην Ουκρανία. Η βαρβαρότητα του Πούτιν έχει εκμηδενίσει την αξιοπιστία του προπαγανδιστικού του μηχανισμού. Αντιμετωπίζουμε όμως προβλήματα εξαιτίας του πολέμου, τα οποία προσπαθεί να εκμεταλλευτεί η Ρωσία. Πρέπει λοιπόν να είμαστε σε εγρήγορση και να είμαστε αποτελεσματικοί στις αντιδράσεις μας.

Υπάρχουν και άλλοι που επιχειρούν τη διείσδυση στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση με μεθόδους πιο προωθημένες και πιο μακροπρόθεσμες από αυτές που χρησιμοποίησε η Ρωσία. Πρέπει λοιπόν να συντονιστούμε καλύτερα σε ό,τι αφορά την επαλήθευση των πληροφοριών που δημοσιεύονται και την άμεση αντίδραση σε περίπτωση ψευδών ειδήσεων.

Bernhard Zimniok (ID). – Herr Präsident! Jedes Mal steht Russland im Fokus, wenn es um das Thema „Beeinflussung von außen“ geht. Wieso hat niemand ein Problem mit anderen Akteuren? Wieso hat niemand ein Problem mit den sogenannten Denkfabriken wie der Atlantikbrücke, in der Journalisten quasi aller deutschen Leitmedien Mitglied sind?

Hier wird Einfluss auf angeblich objektive und neutrale Medien ausgeübt. Das ist eine Schande für die Demokratie und müsste zwingend verboten werden. Oder was ist mit Erdoğan, der allein in Deutschland über 1 800 DITIB-Moscheen gebaut hat und unterhält? Hier kann er seine zentralen Botschaften in den Moscheen verkünden und damit die Gläubigen direkt steuern. Das fällt unter den Begriff „hybride Kriegsführung“.

Was ist mit Katar, das offensichtlich sogar eine Vizepräsidentin im EU-Parlament mit enormen Summen kaufen kann? Dass auch NGOs in diesen Skandal involviert sind, zeigt, dass wir auch deren Finanzierung untersuchen müssen. Eine Auslandsfinanzierung, wie bei den Klimaterroristen von „Letzte Generation“, muss verboten werden. Wer die Einflussnahme von außen beenden will, muss alle Akteure unvoreingenommen untersuchen.

Ernő Schaller-Baross (NI). – Elnök Úr! Az egyesült magyar baloldalt a magyar választási kampányban Európán kívüli érdekcsoportok finanszírozták 3 milliárd forintnak megfelelő dollár összegben. Eközben itt a Parlamentben az európai baloldalhoz tartozó politikusok – a büntetőeljárásban felmerült gyanú alapján – ugyancsak Európán kívülről kaptak pénzt azért, hogy politikai álláspontjuk Unión kívüli érdeket szolgáljon.

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Miközben az európai baloldal tagjai a végletekig elkötelezettnek tüntetik fel magukat a jogállamiság és a dolgozó emberek védelmében, a korrupció elleni harcban, és Magyarországot napi rendszerességgel vádolják hazugságaikkal, úgy tűnik, hogy a valóságban álláspontjuk megvásárolható. Mindez azt mutatja, hogy a baloldal megpróbálja félrevezetni a választópolgárokat, és ideje lenne végre, hogy magukba nézzenek, erkölcsi, politikai önvizsgálatot tartsanak.

Radosław Sikorski (PPE). – Mr President, I wish to thank the Commissioner for his introduction. Foreign interference in democracies is, of course, a very broad subject. In that sense, the scandal that we are dealing with is easy because taking cash from people is illegal under any rules. But I agree with my colleague Mr Auštrevičius when he says that we should not only punish those who've been corrupt, but also the corruptors. Qatar should – if it indeed was Qatar – come to regret what they've tried to do.

I also agree with my colleague Ms Geese that attacks on social media are troubling, and what's happening at Twitter is no good. We have also tolerated the activities of Russia Today or Sputnik for far too long. I have personally been targeted by the Russian Fancy Bear organisation, and Pegasus can, of course, be used not only by governments among Member States, but also by external entities.

But I think what is crucial is what Mr Groothuis said, that we need an ecosystem here that is non-permissive. Therefore I call on Roberta Metsola, who promised me when she was canvassing for votes, that we would create a dedicated unit here in the European Parliament that would be dedicated to vetting and to counter-intelligence. Let us do this before we have another crisis and another scandal on our hands.

Leszek Miller (S&D). – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! Koleżanki i Koledzy! Dotychczasowe dyskusje dowodzą, że demokracja nie nadąża za rozwojem technologii, co stanowi zagrożenie dla jej niezależności. Komisja INGE identyfikuje te zagrożenia, ale sądzę, że instytucje unijne powinny znacznie przyspieszyć wprowadzanie rozwiązań legislacyjnych umożliwiających skuteczną obronę przed ingerencją obcych reżimów w procesy wyborcze, ich wyniki i w końcu w sytuację polityczną w państwach członkowskich. Sytuacja Wielkiej Brytanii jest znamienym przykładem. Także i ostatnie, jakże dla nas bolesne, wydarzenia związane z korupcją pokazują, że wiemy, kto wziął pieniądze, ale nie wiemy, kto dał pieniądze. A przecież ta druga strona jest równie odpowiedzialna jak ta pierwsza.

W moim kraju, w Polsce, borykamy się z atakowaniem opozycji za pomocą programu Pegasus. Jest niewyjaśniony problem wycieku maili z rządowych skrzynek pełnych poufnych informacji o stanie państwa. Przy polskiej granicy toczy się otwarta wojna, ale także inna wojna toczy się w zaciszu gabinetów, w przestrzeni internetowej, na którą autorytarne reżimy wydały od 2020 r. blisko 300 mln dolarów. W tej cichej wojnie stawką jest wolność, swoboda i niezależność europejskiej demokracji. Nie ma tu miejsca na naszą porażkę. Nasze zwycięstwo jest naszym obowiązkiem.

Sandro Gozi (Renew). – Monsieur le Président, je ne sais pas si pour nous, cela sera comme les travaux d'Héraclès, auxquels Raphaël Glucksmann faisait référence. Ce qui est sûr, c'est que je suis d'accord avec lui: les ingérences et la corruption sont les cancers de nos démocraties. Le Parlement, avec le Qatargate, en fait d'ailleurs les frais aujourd'hui. Oui, cette assemblée a fait un travail énorme depuis 2019 — je pense par exemple à la législation sur les services numériques –, mais ce scandale montre que nous devons faire beaucoup plus et beaucoup mieux pour préserver l'intégrité de nos démocraties libérales face à toute forme d'ingérence, que ce soit de la Russie, de la Chine ou des pays du Golfe.

Dans l'immédiat, il est fondamental d'introduire de nouvelles mesures pour garantir la transparence de notre institution et mieux défendre nos processus démocratiques. Adopter rapidement, par exemple, le règlement sur la publicité politique irait sans doute dans ce sens. Toutefois, nous devons aussi regarder où sont vraiment nos vulnérabilités, car parfois elles se trouvent là où on ne le pense pas. Le sport, par exemple, est devenu un lieu d'ingérences, d'influence politique, de corruption et de violation du droit européen. Le Qatargate en est un exemple et, là aussi, il est temps que l'Union assume pleinement toutes ses responsabilités.

Patricia Chagnon (ID). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, nous sommes tous, députés européens, ébloués par un scandale de corruption d'une dimension inédite, avec des pratiques dignes des républiques bananières les plus minablement corrompues.

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Une multitude d'enquêtes sont en cours, mais il y a aussi, rappelons-nous, des milliards d'euros d'argent public qui ont été mis pour la fabrication de vaccins. Il y a là matière également à soupçons d'influences financières de la part de lobbies pharmaceutiques. Il faut lever le doute sur les conditions dans lesquelles ont été négociés et attribués les contrats pharmaceutiques.

Mais où est l'OLAF, l'Office européen de lutte antifraude? Pourquoi ne s'est-il pas encore saisi pour enquêter sur les conditions d'achat des vaccins, alors que cela semblerait être son rôle? Pourquoi est-ce que la police belge enquête sur la corruption présumée des députés européens par le Qatar? Ces deux scandales présumés, je précise, se déroulent dans le silence assourdissant des organes de contrôle interne du Parlement. La question qui nous interroge, c'est: pourquoi?

Eugen Tomac (PPE). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, nu mai e un secret pentru nimeni atunci când discutăm despre dezinformare, despre corupție, despre încercarea unor actori statali de a se implica activ în campaniile politice din Europa. Toate acestea se întâmplă de mult timp și evident că este binevenită și această dezbatere și îmbunătățirea legislației. Însă, până când nu vom crea instrumente eficiente prin care să combatem Rusia și alți actori statali care interferează în procesele noastre democratice, evident că aceste probleme vor exista. Tocmai de aceea invit Comisia să creeze un set de criterii extrem de clare prin care să impunem o linie roșie peste care să nu poată trece nimeni, astfel încât să putem apăra valorile pe care le avem, astfel încât să putem apăra democrația, astfel încât să le transmitem un mesaj foarte ferm celor care cred că Europa este slabă și poate fi expusă acestor provocări continuu. Este inadmisibil să avem partide politice care sunt finanțate de către actori statali interesați să slăbească jocul democratic în Uniunea Europeană. Este inadmisibil ca actori statali să finanțeze presă care să submineze proiectul european. Pentru toate acestea trebuie să avem răspunsuri extrem de ferme, clare și rapide.

Ivars Ijabs (Renew). – Dārgais prezidenta kungs, dārgais komisāra kungs! Mūsu šodienas debates notiek vienlaikus ar Beļģijas tiesas sēdi un tajā lemj par apsūdzību mūsu kolēģiem, kuri tiek turēti aizdomās par līdzdalību šādā nelikumīgā ietekmēšanā no ārvalstīm. Tas viss liecina, ka demokrātijām ir jābūt ar zobiem. Un es domāju, ka Temīdas zobens joprojām ir svarīgākais instruments mūsu demokrātijas aizsargāšanā pret naidīgiem autoritāriem režīmiem kā Krievija, kā Irāna. Un šis nav jautājums tikai par noziegumu atklāšanu un sodīšanu, bet arī par nelikumīgas ietekmes novēršanu un atturēšanu no tās.

Mums nāksies atjaunināt Eiropas Savienības dalībvalstu likumus, lai varētu efektīvi atklāt, krimināltiesiski vajāt un sodīt nelikumīgas iejaukšanās īstenotājus. Bet mums Eiropas Parlamentā un citās Eiropas institūcijās ir jāsāk paši ar sevi.

Mums nāksies pārskatīt Parlamenta personāla procedūras, it īpaši pirms pieņemšanas darbā, lai novērstu šādu ārvalstu iefiltrēšanos mūsu likumdevējā. Otrām kārtām, mums ir nekavējoties jāpaplašina lobistu reģistra tvērumu, iekļaujot tajā arī kontaktus ar ārvalstu pārstāvjiem. Un trešām kārtām, mums ir nepieciešama neatkarīga ētikas komisija, kas noskaidrotu, kā ārvalstu ietekme varēja tik nekaunīgi ietekmēt mūsu parlamenta darbu, šādi novēršot apkaunojumu atkārtosanos nākotnē.

Λουκάς Φουρλάς (PPE). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Επίτροπε, μιλάμε για παρεμβάσεις και είμαι από τους ανθρώπους που δεν μασάω τα λόγια μου. Νιώθω ντροπή και θυμό με όσα έχουν έρθει στο φως τις τελευταίες ημέρες. Οι καταγγελίες για εξυπηρέτηση συμφερόντων ξένων δυνάμεων που καμία σχέση δεν έχουν με τις ευρωπαϊκές αρχές και αξίες, είναι άκρως ανησυχητικές και προσβλητικές. Η αξιοπιστία των θεσμών έχει πληγεί σε τεράστιο βαθμό και αυτό είναι ξεκάθαρο. Οφείλουμε να κινηθούμε άμεσα και αποτελεσματικά. Είναι πολιτική και ηθική μας υποχρέωση να ξεμπερδέψουμε μια και καλή με τους Δούρειους Ίππους που προσπαθούν με κάθε βρώμικο τρόπο να εισβάλουν στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και να την αμαυρώσουν. Ο στόχος τους είναι ένας: η προώθηση των συμφερόντων τους με κάθε μέσο και με κάθε κόστος. Λοιπόν, δεν θα τους περάσει. Το μήνυμα όμως πρέπει να είναι ένα και να είναι ηχηρό. Απευθύνεται προς όλους. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο είναι ενωμένο απέναντι σε κάθε μορφή παρέμβασης, εξαγοράς και δωροδοκίας. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση δεν είναι για πούλημα, δεν είναι για ξεπούλημα.

Barry Andrews (Renew). – Mr President, Commissioner, I just wish to make one point. Freedom House has pointed out that democracy has been in decline across the world for the last 17 years consecutively. And it doesn't happen dramatically, like we saw last Friday; it happens incrementally.

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We've seen over the last month – it's easy to forget – we had a sophisticated cyberattack on this Parliament just last month. It's easy to forget that. It's easy to forget about Predator and Pegasus spyware and how that's attacking journalists and MEPs. And the only way we know about these things is because of investigative work being done by journalists.

And we had a European Court of Justice ruling earlier this month which undermined the registers of beneficial owners of companies, the very tool that journalists are using to shine a light into the dark corners of the corporate world in Europe. Even in my own country, in my own Member State, we have a Russian Embassy which is widely recognised as a listening post for the entirety of Europe. There are 28 registered diplomats in the Russian Embassy in Dublin for a tiny country, almost the exact same as in the UK.

So we have to stop being naive about this. We have to stop allowing a permissive environment for foreign interference in our democracy. If it's worth having, it's worth defending.

Liudas Mažylis (PPE). – Dėkoju, Pirmininke. Trečiųjų šalių kišimasis į Europos demokratinį procesą yra akivaizdus ir pakankamai rezultatyvus. Tematinės erdvės, kuriose užsienio šalys neteisėtai siekia paveikti Europą, yra plačios ir dar plečiasi nuo dezinformacijos skleidimo Kovid-19 pandemijos metu iki propagandos ir faktų iškraipymo dėl Rusijos vykdomo karo Ukrainoje. Neabejotinas ir tiesioginis Rusijos bei kitų trečiųjų valstybių kišimasis į politines ir visuomenines kampanijas. Apie greitai pasiekiamus ir funkcionuojančius instrumentus užkardančius skleidžiamą propagandą bei neleistiną užsienio šalių kišimąsi ne kartą kalbėta. Dokumentų rinkinys, skirtas demokratijos gynimui, tebešmėkščioja ateityje. Tačiau griežtesnių priemonių reikia imtis greit. Investuoti į sąmoningumo didinimą. Šviesti visuomenę, neatidėliotinai taikyti jau egzistuojančius teisinius instrumentus, kurie ne kartą minėti. Dar tebesama veikiančių žiniasklaidos kanalų, teisinančių Rusijos veiksmus, o juk ją paskelbėme terorizmą remiančią valstybę. Tai ir būkime nuoseklūs, atskleiskime finansavimo šaltinius ir uždarykite tuos kanalus. Ir dėl Kremliaus draugelių atsakomybės. Visi Europos Sąjungos piliečiai, dėl nelegalaus pasipelnymo tarnaujantys užsienio subjektams bei tokių subjektų finansuojami politiniai judėjimai turi būti išaiškinti, paviešinti ir sustabdyti.

Радан Кънев (PPE). – Г-н Председател, катарският скандал, който всички тези дни естествено обсъждаме, но ако се върнем назад и Брекзит, и най-вече руската агресия в Украйна, надявам се, са ни научили един много прост и очевиден урок и той е, че всяка външна намеса в отделна европейска държава засяга целия Съюз, че всеки пробив в сигурността е заплаха за всяко общество, за всеки гражданин на Европа. Че всяка политическа партия, финансирана от Кремъл, всяка пропагандна медия, всяка тролска фабрика в интернет, всеки лобистки енергиен проект, който се развива на отделна европейска територия, засяга всички нас.

Ние видяхме, че Северен поток и Турски поток направиха възможна войната в Украйна, но кой пострада? Корумпирани политици в Германия, България и Италия ли? Не, всички украински граждани, но икономически и всеки гражданин на Европейския съюз, всеки европейски бизнес от Португалия до Финландия.

Но мисля, че е време да говорим за решенията на тези много тежки проблеми. И боя се, че решенията не са толкова прости, колкото си ги представяме в този дебат, и не се свеждат до изграждането на различни тела, които да разследват етиката на отделни депутати. Това, което ни е необходимо, е разширяване и утвърждаване на мандата на Европейската прокуратура и изграждане на европейски органи за разследване, да не кажа европейски служби за сигурност. Нищо по-малко от това.

Tomislav Sokol (PPE). – Poštovani predsjedavajući, povjereniče, kolegice i kolege, učestala vanjska uplitanja u demokratske procese u Europi imaju za cilj ugroziti temeljne vrijednosti i destabilizirati europsko društvo.

Jedan od najočitijih primjera predstavlja izmjena zakona o predsjedniku koji antieuropske, prosrpske i proruse snage žele iskoristiti da na protuustavan način dođe na vlast u Crnoj Gori, zemlji kandidatkinji za članstvo u EU-u. Nažalost, protivno preporukama Venecijanske komisije, glasanjem o zakonu u Skupštini Crne Gore, ova je država zapala u ustavno-pravnu krizu bez presedana. Stoga nije bilo izbora nego otkazati sjednicu Parlamentarnog odbora za stabilizaciju i pridruživanje između Europske unije i Crne Gore koja je bila zakazana za ovaj tjedan u Strasbourgu. Prostor jugoistočne Europe pod sve većim je obavještajnim, medijskim i gospodarskim utjecajem stranih autoritarnih režima, što može destabilizirati i samu Europsku uniju.

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Poseban problem predstavlja politika Srbije koja uporno pokušava sjediti na dvije stolice, održavajući vojnu i gospodarsku suradnju s Rusijom te odbijajući uvesti sankcije Moskvi. Srpska prorуска i hegemonistička politika, nažalost i te kako doprinosi destabilizaciji susjednih država i cijelog zapadnog Balkana.

Zato je sada za Europsku uniju važnije nego ikad aktivnije se uključiti političke procese u ovom dijelu Europe jer bi posljedice naše pasivnosti mogle biti pogubne.

Gheorghe Falcă (PPE). – Domnule președinte, domnule comisar, doamnelor și domnilor, acțiunea Rusiei împotriva democrațiilor europene nu se poate întâmpla fără sprijin din interior. Rusia finanțează politicieni, jurnaliști, ONG-uri și partide din Uniunea Europeană. Este un fapt cum lupta unora împotriva energiei nucleare, de exemplu, a avut ca efect creșterea dependenței noastre de gazul rusesc. Vocea Moscovei se face auzită constant și agresiv în interiorul Uniunii Europene. Așa a fost și la votul din JAI de săptămâna trecută, când, în pofida rezoluțiilor repetate din partea Parlamentului European, un guvern din UE a blocat aderarea României la Schengen pe baza unor minciuni care duhnesc a dezinformare rusească. Doamna comisar Johansson spunea aseară, citez: „Cu toții am pierdut prin votul de săptămâna trecută. Există un singur câștigător, iar acesta locuiește la Kremlin. Știu că decembrie este luna cadourilor, dar eu spun: fără cadouri pentru Putin”. Închei citatul. Din acest motiv, solicit Comisiei să ne comunice cum va lupta împotriva celor care ajută Rusia din interiorul Uniunii Europene.

Sunčana Glavak (PPE). – Poštovani predsjedavajući, poštovani povjereniče, vidim da ste online, pazite što surfate, kolegice i kolege, namjerni pokušaji manipulacije informacijskim okruženjem i javnim diskursom od strane stranih aktera nipošto nisu nova pojava.

Rusko korištenje informacijske manipulacije i uplitanje u pripremu i izvođenje agresorskog rata protiv Ukrajine to pokazuje i pokazuje kako takva aktivnost čini sastavni dio suvremenog ratovanja. Isto kao što moderna tehnološka dostignuća mogu biti alat za jačanje naših demokracija, istodobno su kanal kojim na mala vrata građane izlažemo riziku od vanjskog uplitanja i manipulacije. S tim na umu, ne mogu dovoljno naglasiti važnost medijske pismenosti kao najsigurnijeg i najsnažnijeg štita naših građana.

Paket za obranu demokracije treba pružiti okvir kojim će se države članice voditi kako bi se potaknulo demokratsku participaciju i uključivanje građana u procese odlučivanja i izvan izbornih ciklusa. Naše demokracije ne smijemo i ne možemo uzimati zdravo za gotovo. Jedino jačanjem demokracije iznutra možemo postići otpornost na vanjska uplitanja. Konferencija o budućnosti Europe takav je primjer jačanja naše demokracije. Osposobljavanjem i podizanjem svijesti jačamo ulogu građana u komunikacijskom procesu.

Međutim, nemojmo zaboraviti, postoje novi suvremeni oblici ugroze. Oni zahtijevaju transformaciju sigurnosne politike u svakom pogledu, u medijskom, političkom i gospodarskom. Na nama je da preuzmemo tu odgovornost. Samo obrazovani i educirani građani snažni su građani Europske unije.

Catch-the-eye procedure

Mick Wallace (The Left). – Mr President, sometimes I actually feel sorry for the Commission, having to listen to MEPs, appeal to them as to what they're going to do about Russian interference in the European Union.

Now, do Russia and China interfere in matters of European affairs? Yeah, they do. Do they engage in propaganda? Yeah, they do. But you know what? Neither of them were any good at it because we could actually see through most of what they had to say and do. But do you know who is much better at it? I mean, the Americans are way ahead of them, but we don't seem to have a problem with that.

I go to meetings here – committees and delegations – and the lack of balance in the people being brought before us to give us their words of wisdom is shocking. I witness people coming in on a regular basis to promote and defend US imperialism, and there's no one brought in to question them. I've witnessed people coming in to tell us how wonderful things are in the Gulf States, and no one being brought in to question them.

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Why don't we start asking who is bringing these people in? Who's deciding who comes before our committees? Who decides what people should inform us about what's really going on. This place is a bit of a joke sometimes, and my heart does go out to the Commission.

(End of catch-the-eye procedure)

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, honourable Members, first of all, thank you for the conversation with us. But I would like to thank, more in general, all of you for today's opportunity to present the very first sketch of what we will be the Defence of Democracy package.

Your contributions will serve as a reflection of the Commission and the work of my colleague Věra Jourová, who unfortunately could not be here today. We are at the early stages of preparation of our upcoming proposals, which we aim to adopt, as already announced in my introduction, in spring 2023.

We will continue our very fruitful cooperation with the Parliament and, in particular, with the INGE 2 Committee, which will contribute to shape this package and indeed will strengthen democracy in Europe.

President. – The debate is closed.

14. Komisijas ziņojumi par žurnālistu stāvokli un ietekmi uz situāciju tiesiskuma jomā (debates)

Presidente. – Segue-se o debate sobre as declarações do Conselho e da Comissão sobre os relatos da Comissão sobre a situação dos jornalistas e as implicações em matéria do Estado de direito (2022/3002(RSP)).

Mikuláš Bek, *President-in-Office of the Council*. – Mr President, Commissioner, honourable Members, media freedom is an indispensable pillar of our democratic societies, and journalists are its guardians and keepers. There is no democracy where there is no freedom of speech and where people fear for their life every time they are critical. This is the reason why freedom of expression, media freedom and pluralism are guaranteed in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These freedoms must be protected by all governments. It is an absolute priority for all democracies to protect journalists from financial or political pressure. Journalists must never be threatened for simply doing their jobs.

The Council recently reaffirmed its commitment to the protection and safety of journalists in its conclusions of June 2022. It acknowledged that obstacles to freedom of expression and freedom to inform are on the rise in Europe and in the world. In addition, the Council is also working on protecting and promoting a common rule-of-law culture amongst Member States. For example, the General Affairs Council holds country-specific discussions as part of the annual rule-of-law dialogue. The one held in April covered Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands and Austria, and the latest one, which took place yesterday, focused on Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden. On these occasions, media freedom is regularly highlighted as a key enabler of the rule of law.

The Council is also committed to advancing work on key legislative proposals currently on the table, namely the proposed Media Freedom Act and the SLAPP Directive. The Commission proposal for a directive against strategic lawsuits against public participation aims to avoid judicial harassment, especially against journalists. Since its adoption on 27 April 2022, work in the Council has been advancing quickly. For the Council, it is crucial to find the right balance between the right to freedom of expression and the right of access to justice, and to ensure that the safeguards provided in the proposal will be adequate and efficient in protecting SLAPP targets. These crucial aspects were especially debated and highlighted last week by Justice ministers.

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The Council is also actively examining the proposed Media Freedom Act, which aims to support the proper functioning of the internal market for media services. In the current geopolitical situation, where autocratic regimes try to suppress independent information and media pluralism, we must defend our democratic model and our fundamental rights. This includes the effective exercise of the freedom of expression and information. We will continue our work for those rights to thrive in the Union. Thank you very much for your attention.

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, Minister, honourable Members, thank you for your proposing this statement to the agenda of this day.

Journalists continue to face threats and obstacles to their work, including physical attacks reported in Europe. Three hundred and eleven media freedom violations were recorded in the first six months of this year by the Media Freedom Rapid Response project. Verbal attacks, including harassment and threats, were the most common types of violation, followed by legal incidents and physical attacks.

While private individuals remained the main source of attacks on journalists and media workers, police and state security and government and public officials were also sometimes behind these attacks. The challenge over the last few years was to deepen our analysis of the current media environment and to better understand the influence of the digital environment on media production, distribution and consumption.

It's for all these reasons and to answer these challenges that the Commission adopted the recommendation on the safety of journalists in September 2021 and proposed an anti-strategic lawsuit against public participation, better known as the so-called 'SLAPP package', in 2022 and, finally, the Media Freedom Act in September of this year.

The recommendation provides a catalogue of practical measures that could be applied at the national level. While it does not include any legal obligations for Member States, its rationale is to propose a set of practical and operational voluntary steps that could be taken by them. In the anti-SLAPP package we tackle the use of lawsuits by abusive claimants in bad faith to silence and harass journalists and human rights defenders and not to gain access to justice.

The Commission considers that the most efficient way to fight against SLAPP and prevent it from growing roots in the Union is a solid combination of legislation by way of a proposal for a directive and a recommendation. The recommendation is designed to build awareness and expertise among the targets of lawsuits, legal professionals and other groups. It will ensure that support is available for those facing punitive legal actions and promote a more systematic monitoring of SLAPP.

The proposed directive provides for targeted civil procedural safeguards against SLAPP in cross-border situations and provides for a careful balance of fundamental rights. And, finally, the European Media Freedom Act complements this proposal. It will be an important cornerstone for safeguarding the integrity of the internal market for media services, bringing more legal certainty for providers and users of such services.

The objective of the European Media Freedom Act is also to ensure that no journalist should be spied on for doing his or her work. In the same vein, the proposed rules clarify that journalists should not be prosecuted for protecting the confidentiality of their sources. Each Member State will have to appoint an independent authority to handle complaints by journalists.

It's very commendable that some Member States have taken or stepped up existing measures to improve the safety of journalists. For example, in France, the legislation recognises the role of journalists in demonstrations. A liaison committee between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the press enables permanent dialogue on safety in demonstrations. Increased threats and physical attacks have been frequently reported, and the government has recently agreed a memorandum of understanding on the protection of journalists.

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We also note that criminal trials continue in the cases of journalists murdered in the Union. In Malta, an alleged mastermind of the assassination of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia has been indicted on charges of complicity in murder and criminal association and criminal proceedings are ongoing. In Slovakia, the trial related to the assassination of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kusnirova is going on. In the Netherlands, the trial related to the murder of journalist Peter de Vries has started. And in Greece the murder of journalist Giorgos Karaivaz in April 2021 is under investigation.

For these reasons, we address a series of recommendations to Greece, Croatia, Slovenia and Slovakia specifically on this issue in the rule of law report of this year. We will follow them when preparing the fourth rule of law report scheduled for July next year.

Jeroen Lenaers, *namens de PPE-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, onafhankelijke en vrije media zijn cruciale pijlers van een functionerende democratie. Journalisten zijn waakhonden van onze rechtsstaat. Die moeten we koesteren en beschermen. Toch zien we in de praktijk – ook in Europa – dat journalisten het steeds moeilijker krijgen. Ik zie het in mijn eigen land. Journalisten worden bedreigd, geïntimideerd, auto's worden van de weg geduwd, brandbommen door de brievenbus gegooid en we zien zelfs verslaggevers die hun logo af moeten dekken uit angst voor geweld.

Er zijn journalisten in Europa die hun werkzaamheden met hun leven hebben moeten bekopen: Daphne Caruana Galizia, Ján Kuciak, Peter R. de Vries. Laten we aan deze namen blijven herinneren en laten we hun nalatenschap levend houden. Want de dreiging is een veelkoppig monster dat niet alleen bestaat uit criminelen.

In toenemende mate zijn het juist politici die media afschilderen als de grote vijand. Rechts-populisten en Trumpwannabe's in heel Europa hebben er een sport van gemaakt om hun achterban tegen journalisten op te zetten, met alle risico's van dien.

Daarnaast zien we in Europa dat regeringen invasieve spionagesoftware als Pegasus gebruiken om journalisten af te luisteren, terwijl we juist dankbaar moeten zijn, want zonder goede onderzoeksjournalistiek zouden we ook op dat vlak nog steeds volledig in het duister tasten.

De vele slachtoffers die we gesproken hebben, hadden stuk voor stuk diep indrukwekkende verhalen over het verwoestende effect van dat soort invasieve privacyschendingen op de uitoefening van hun vak.

Daarom is het goed dat we ons hier gezamenlijk sterk maken voor betere bescherming van journalisten. We verwelkomen de voorstellen met betrekking tot de mediawet en de anti-SLAPP-richtlijn, en we moeten deze waar mogelijk nog veel sterker maken. Als we onze rechtsstaat en onze democratie willen beschermen, dan begint dat bij de bescherming van onze journalisten.

Sylvie Guillaume, *au nom du groupe S&D*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, mes chers collègues, la Fédération européenne des journalistes rapporte la mort de douze journalistes en Europe en 2022, dont beaucoup en Ukraine. Cent vingt-quatre journalistes sont emprisonnés.

Ces chiffres consternants sont malheureusement l'arbre qui cache la forêt, car les attaques à l'encontre des journalistes s'avèrent nombreuses et multiples (menaces en ligne et hors ligne, litiges abusifs, harcèlement judiciaire des journalistes ou utilisation de logiciels espions pour identifier les sources, pour ne citer que quelques exemples), tout particulièrement quand leur travail touche à des faits d'abus de pouvoir, de corruption, de violations des droits de l'homme ou d'activités criminelles.

Les rapports de la Commission sur l'état de droit ne s'attellent pas suffisamment à la question à mon goût. Le climat général d'insécurité pour les journalistes est extrêmement préoccupant, car ces menaces contribuent à inhiber la liberté d'expression. Elles peuvent conduire à l'autocensure. Elles sapent le journalisme comme pilier de nos démocraties et de l'état de droit. Un journalisme indépendant, pluraliste, fiable permet la distinction entre les faits et les idées, de même qu'il permet de contrer la désinformation, de révéler ce qui ne doit pas rester caché et de garantir les contre-pouvoirs.

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C'est pourquoi nous devons protéger les journalistes et le journalisme face aux tendances délétères que l'on peut observer aujourd'hui. L'Union européenne peut enfin concrétiser ses ambitions en matière de politique des médias et évaluer scrupuleusement la situation du pluralisme des médias et de la transparence sur la propriété des médias en Europe.

Fabienne Keller, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire – cher Johannes Hahn –, Monsieur le Ministre représentant la Tchéquie, une démocratie, la démocratie, ne fonctionne pas sans ses contrepouvoirs. Les journalistes libres et indépendants en sont des acteurs essentiels. Ils informent les citoyens, ils vérifient les faits et ils combattent les *fake news*. En bref, ils sont les garants de notre liberté d'expression et d'opinion.

Pourtant, à l'heure du numérique, où le buzz prime sur l'information vérifiée, à l'heure où la presse est rachetée pour mieux contrôler nos opinions, nos journalistes ne sont pas suffisamment protégés. Le soutien aux médias libres est nécessaire dans l'ensemble des pays de l'Union européenne. La loi antibâillon est bien sûr une bonne chose, mais je veux aussi plaider ici pour des financements publics plus forts, pour pallier les prises de contrôle des médias et leur concentration.

Je voudrais aussi saluer, Monsieur le Commissaire – cher Johannes Hahn –, une décision historique, cette semaine: la suspension des 12,1 milliards d'euros de fonds européens à la Hongrie, qui ne respecte pas l'état de droit et qui ne respecte pas la liberté de la presse. En quelques années, Viktor Orbán a mené une vraie chasse aux médias libres, aujourd'hui quasiment inexistantes. Voici dix-huit mois, la dernière radio indépendante, Klubrádió, a cessé d'émettre à la suite d'une suspension de licence par le régulateur d'État.

L'Europe, chers collègues, doit s'armer pour protéger nos valeurs démocratiques et notre modèle de société. Ce combat continue.

Saskia Bricmont, *au nom du groupe Verts/ALE*. – Monsieur le Président, Reporters sans frontières dénonce le sombre quotidien de nombreux journalistes en Europe: agressions physiques, lois liberticides, poursuites-bâillons, intimidations, censure, manque de pluralisme et d'indépendance, concentration des médias et surveillance. La liberté de la presse est en danger dans 22 États membres sur 27, selon la Commission européenne. Autant de menaces pour la liberté de la presse et pour son travail, qui provoquent d'insoutenables formes d'autocensure, alors que les journalistes dénoncent souvent la corruption, les violations de l'état de droit et les injustices commises par les puissants et les dirigeants européens.

Daphne Caruana Galizia à Malte, Ján Kuciak en Slovaquie, Giórgos Karaiváz en Grèce, Peter de Vries aux Pays-Bas: ces reporters d'investigation sont morts pour leur travail, assassinés sur le territoire européen. D'autres, à l'origine des révélations sur l'utilisation illégale par nos gouvernements et par nos services secrets de logiciels espions tel Pegasus, souvent à leur propre encontre, sont aujourd'hui poursuivis et intimidés dans nos États. Julian Assange, qui figurait parmi les finalistes du prix Sakharov du Parlement européen, risque actuellement 175 ans de prison aux États-Unis pour son travail de lanceur d'alerte. Où est passée la sacro-sainte liberté de la presse? Les médias, avec la justice, sont des contre-pouvoirs indispensables à nos démocraties et à nos États de droit.

Le scandale du Qatargate, qui secoue notre institution, rappelle que certains se laissent corrompre aux dépens de la démocratie et que les ingérences étrangères dans les affaires européennes visent elles aussi à amoindrir nos démocraties. Ce scandale a été révélé grâce à l'existence de contre-pouvoirs. Face à une presse de plus en plus muselée, nous ne nous taisons pas, et nous rappelons l'enseignement de Montesquieu: «Pour qu'on ne puisse abuser du pouvoir, il faut que, par la disposition des choses, le pouvoir arrête le pouvoir.»

Protégeons les journalistes, protégeons ce qu'il y a de plus cher à nos démocraties, et sanctionnons celles et ceux qui s'autorisent à espionner ces contre-pouvoirs, celles et ceux qui empêchent une presse libre et indépendante de fonctionner!

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Nicolaus Fest, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar, verehrte Kollegen! Letzte Woche war ich in der Konferenz der Präsidenten, und Kommissar Šefčovič trug dort unter anderem zu den Problemen mit Großbritannien vor. Gefühlt 50 Mal fiel der Begriff „Rahmenabkommen“. Herr Kommissar Hahn, das geht an Ihre Adresse und bitte geben Sie es an Ihren Kollegen Šefčovič weiter: Unser Rahmenabkommen mit europäischen Staaten sind die Grundrechte und auch die Pressefreiheit, und danach sollten Sie endlich handeln.

Julian Assange sitzt seit drei Jahren in einem britischen Hochsicherheitsgefängnis, zusammen mit den schlimmsten Kriminellen. Aber Julian Assange ist nicht verurteilt. Es gibt noch nicht einmal einen Prozess. Wenn seine Frau und seine beiden kleinen Kinder ihn besuchen wollen, muss sie sich und die Kinder auch den entwürdigendsten Leibesvisitationen unterziehen. Herr Kommissar Hahn, haben sich Ihre Frau und Ihre Kinder schon mal vom Gefängnispersonal durchfummeln und von Hunden abschnüffeln lassen?

Assange hat das gemacht, was Medien machen müssen. Er hat publiziert, was andere Leute nicht lesen wollen. Assange ist kein Krimineller, sondern er ist Publizist und Chefredakteur. Wenn das, was mit Assange seit Jahren passiert, in Polen oder Ungarn passieren würde, wäre hier Großalarm – und zwar völlig zu Recht.

Assange ist unser Rahmenabkommen. Sein Fall ist wichtiger als Zollschränken oder Fischrechte. Deshalb setzen Sie die Freilassung von Julian Assange endlich auf Ihre Agenda. Ansonsten sollten Sie, wenn es um Journalistenrechte geht, hier auch nichts beklagen.

Assita Kanko, *namens de ECR-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, de EU is de moraalridder van de planeet, maar ook hier staat de rechtsstaat enorm onder druk. Wegens corruptie bijvoorbeeld. Daphne Caruana Galizia sneuvelde in Malta door een bom die in haar auto was geplaatst. Wegens misdaad. De Nederlandse misdaadjournalist Peter R. de Vries werd op straat doodgeschoten in Amsterdam. Wegens islamisme en te veel tolerantie voor intolerantie. De cartoonisten van Charlie Hebdo werden in één klap neergemaaid tijdens hun redactievergadering in Parijs. Steeds meer journalisten moeten onderduiken als ze een lijntje schrijven over de islam. Het begint met censuur, intimidatie en bedreigingen, en eindigt vaak met geweld of zelfs moord.

Maar de bedreiging voor onze rechtsstaat komt niet alleen van buitenaf. Ze komt ook van binnenuit en ligt bijvoorbeeld in de verleiding om niet meer na te denken, om vooringenomenheid en de *pensée unique* de overhand te laten nemen. Journalisten moeten feiten tegen het licht houden en zich nooit laten domineren door militantisme. Anders wordt het activisme en is het geen journalistiek meer. Dan gaan onze medeburgers de traditionele media steeds meer wantrouwen, zich ervan afkeren en vatbaarder worden voor desinformatie en populisme. Ook dat ondermijnt onze rechtsstaat.

Een deel van de pers moet daarom dringend zelfkritisch worden om weer aansluiting te vinden bij onze medeburgers. Geen cancelcultuur, geen wokisme, geen zelfcensuur uit angst, maar vrijheid. “De plicht om te informeren. De vrijheid om te denken.” Dat was het motto van de krant van mijn mentor, onderzoeksjournalist Norbert Zongo, die bruut vermoord werd in Burkina Faso in 1998 omdat hij onderzoek deed over corruptie. Ik voel nog steeds woede en verdriet als ik eraan denk, maar ik ben ook trots op hem. Hij was in zijn eentje de vierde pijler van een democratie die lag te sterven.

Zonder vrije pers is er geen democratie. We hebben niet alleen de scheiding der machten nodig, waarvan Montesquieu sprak, maar ook de kracht van de vierde macht. Deze vierde macht: een kritische en onafhankelijke pers.

Κωνσταντίνος Αρβανίτης, *εξ ονόματος της ομάδας The Left*. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, (απευθυνόμενος στον Επίτροπο Johannes Hahn) αυτό το μνημόνιο συνεργασίας δεν το κατάλαβα ακριβώς για την Ελλάδα, αν μπορείτε στη δευτερολογία σας να μας το εξηγήσετε, γιατί δεν κατάλαβα αν η Ελλάδα είναι κράτος υπό ένταξη ή είναι μέλος. Θα σας εξηγήσω γιατί το λέω αυτό. Ποια είναι τα βήματα μετασχηματισμού μιας φιλελεύθερης δημοκρατίας σε ανελεύθερη, σταδιακά απολυταρχική; Δημοσιογράφος ήμουν. Έχω απολυθεί ουκ ολίγες φορές για θέματα δημοκρατίας.

Το σκάνδαλο των παρακολούθησεων στην Ελλάδα, το οποίο εμείς φέραμε στα όργανα του Κοινοβουλίου, ήταν η παρακολούθηση δημοσιογράφου. Το όνομά του είναι Κουκάκης, διερευνούσε την πορεία ύποπτου χρήματος. Ο κ. Κουκάκης θεωρήθηκε εθνικός κίνδυνος διότι έψαχνε δημοσιογραφικά και το θέμα της διαχείρισης των χρημάτων από την Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών παρακολουθείτο, στην οποία, με δικό του νόμο, ο υπεύθυνος είναι ο Πρωθυπουργός της Ελλάδας, ο κ. Μητσοτάκης. Το έτερο θύμα, ο δημοσιογράφος κ. Μαλικούδης, διερευνούσε δημοσιογραφικά ζητήματα που άπτονται του προσφυγικού και αυτός χαρακτηρίστηκε εθνικός κίνδυνος από την υπηρεσία της οποίας προΐσταται ο Πρωθυπουργός. Αν συνεχίσω με τα ονόματα, δεν θα μου φτάσει ο χρόνος.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Δημοσιογράφοι οι οποίοι αποκάλυψαν τη λίστα Lagarde και την υπόθεση Novartis οδηγήθηκαν στη δικαιοσύνη, λοιδορήθηκαν, χαρακτηρίστηκαν από τον πρωθυπουργό της Ελλάδας «συμμορία», ταλαιπωρήθηκαν, αθώωθηκαν. Υπάρχει στασιμότητα χωρίς καμία επίσημη πληροφόρηση. Είπατε ότι προχωρά η έρευνα. Κύριε Επίτροπε, ξέρετε κάτι; Γιατί εμείς δεν ξέρουμε τίποτα που είμαστε στην Ελλάδα. Για την υπόθεση Καραϊβάζ μιλάω. Άλλαξε και ο πρόεδρος του δικαστηρίου, έμαθα, σε μια υπόθεση με τη «greek mafia». Φεύγουν οι δικαστές από την Ελλάδα, αλλάζουν και χώρα οι εισαγγελείς. Με τον κορονοϊό είχαμε και λίστες επιχορηγούμενων, φιλικά προσκείμενων, μέσων. Τα SLAPPs είναι βιομηχανία στη χώρα. Όταν ο κύριος Μητσστάκης ερωτάται για την 108η θέση στην ελευθερία του Τύπου, απαξιώνει τους δεσμούς και λέει «Πού τα βρήκατε αυτά;». Στην Ελλάδα λοιπόν, ο καθένας μπορεί να πει ό,τι θέλει, δεν είναι δικτατορία, το θέμα είναι ότι ο δημοσιογράφος δεν μπορεί να βρει λόγο στα ολιγοπώλια του Τύπου και αυτό είναι πρόβλημα.

Sabrina Pignedoli (NI). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la libertà di stampa misura il grado di salute dello Stato di diritto e ne costituisce un pilastro fondamentale. Questo a parole, ma poi nei fatti?

Come fa un giornalista a poter fare inchieste, a essere il cane da guardia del potere se in tutti gli Stati dell'Unione europea non ci sono leggi che lo tutelino dalle azioni giudiziarie temerarie?

Invece di garantire il diritto di cronaca, si vuole limitare la possibilità di raccontare la verità ai cittadini, con regole assurde che ostacolano la libertà di espressione, come in Italia con la legge Cartabia.

Per non parlare delle perquisizioni e indagini sui telefonini, per scoprire le fonti dei giornalisti, azioni che si aggiungono alla gravissima mancanza di tutela dei *whistleblowers*.

Un caso su tutti è simbolo della nostra incapacità a tutelare la libertà di stampa: quello di Assange, in prigione da quasi quattro anni per averci dato il diritto di conoscere la verità. Lui in prigione e chi ha commesso i crimini di guerra in libertà, impunito.

È questa la nostra democrazia?

PŘEDSEDNICTVÍ: DITA CHARANZOVÁ

místopředsedkyně

Romana Tomc (PPE). – Gospa predsednica! Spoštovani! Neodvisni novinarji so ključni tudi za delovanje pravne države, zato jih moramo seveda zaščititi. Dolžni smo to storiti. Najbrž pa ne bomo našli nobene vlade na svetu, ki bi priznala, da si skuša podrediti medije in noben novinar na svetu ne bo priznal, da je politični aktivist. Pa vendar, tudi taki so, vsaj v Sloveniji.

Kaj recimo menite o novinarjih, ki me zmerjajo s fašistko zaradi moje politične pripadnosti in obkladajo z izrazi, ki jih je težko javno ponoviti. In še več, sodelujejo celo z uglednimi organizacijami, kot so Novinarji brez meja, in prejemajo nagrade. V Sloveniji po raziskavi več kot 75 % medijskega prostora zavzemajo mediji, ki so levo usmerjeni. Posledica tega seveda je, da ne poročajo o velikih aferah, v katere so vpleteni levi politiki, recimo tudi o pritiskih predsednika vlade, ki je včeraj tukaj pred vami nastopil, na policijo, zaradi katerih je odstopila pred dnevi notranja ministrica. Ne poročajo o korupcijskih aferah, klientelizmu in še o mnogih spornih zadevah, ki se nanašajo na člane leve vlade.

Vendar tudi to očitno še ni dovolj, saj je bila ena izmed prvih potez nove slovenske vlade sprememba zakona o nacionalni televiziji in radiu. Politika, ki je sprejela zakon, trdi, da gre za depolitizacijo. To seveda ne drži. Na to sem večkrat opozorila tudi pristojni odbor v Parlamentu in tudi Komisijo. Pravijo, vse je v redu. Jaz pravim, imate dvojna merila. Čez nekaj mesecev bodo brutalno obračunali še s tistimi redkimi izjemami, ki so do slovenske vlade kritični. Nastavili bodo svoje, ki jih bodo proglasili za neodvisne. To ... (*Predsednica govornici odvzame besedo.*)

Cyrus Engerer (S&D). – Li niehdu l-protezzjoni tal-gurnalisti for granted, anke fdemokraziji moderni, fejn is-Saltna tad-Dritt hija rrispettata, hu zball illi ma naffordjawnx.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Is-sena l-ohra aktar minn 900 ġurnalist irrapportaw illi ġew ippersegwitati, uhud minnhom sfaw anke assassinati. Għalhekk nilqa' l-evalwazzjoni tal-Kummissjoni Ewropea u r-rakkomandazzjonijiet tagħha. Madankollu, inhegġeġ lill-Kummissjoni Ewropea biex tkun iktar ambizzjuża u aktar b'saħħitha fejn hemm nuqqasijiet serji.

Illum ma rridx inhares lejn il-passat. M'iniex se nitkellem fuq id-diversi assassini ta' ġurnalisti f'numru ta' pajjizi Ewropej, inkluż tiegħi, u mhux se nidhol fuq kif il-Kummissjoni fahhret l-avvanzi ta' Malta f'dan il-qasam. U mhux se nitkellem l-anqas dwar kif il-Greċja hemm eskalazzjoni ta' persekuzzjoni fuq ġurnalisti, saħansitra mill-istituzzjonijiet, biċ-cherry on the cake ikun l-ispijjar tal-ġurnalisti u tal-Kap tal-Oppożizzjoni Grieg mill-istess istituzzjonijiet.

Illum irrid nitkellem dwar soluzzjonijiet, lil hinn mill-buzz words u d-diskors sabih li issa dejjaq lil kulhadd, inkluż lill-ġurnalisti u lili.

X'nistgħu naghmlu? X'jistgħu jagħmlu l-awtoritajiet fl-Istati Membri tagħna?

Hemm bżonn illi l-Istati Membri jagħtu protezzjoni legali lis-sorsi tal-midja, jagħtu rikonixximent legali lill-ġurnaliżmu bħala r-raba' pilastru, jiżguraw rimedji fil-liġi kriminali meta l-ġurnalisti jiġu aggrediti, jaraw li kull Stat Membru jkollu awtorità nazzjonali li thares is-sigurtà tal-ġurnalisti, u ladarba tidhol il-liġi tal-iSLAPP, ikun hemm tahrig lill-ġudikanti.

Kummisarju, irridu wkoll niżguraw li l-ġurnalisti jitnehhewlhom il-piż tal-ispejjeż tal-qrati – sakemm ma jkunux misjuba hatja – u fejn dan ma jsirx, għandu jkun hemm fond Ewropew li jgħinhom f'dan ir-rigward.

Il-libertà tal-istampa hija l-garanzija ta' soċjeta ġusta u hija l-gwardjana tagħna lkoll.

Maite Pagazaurtundúa (Renew). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, el informe sobre el Estado de Derecho acierta al reunir en un mismo documento aspectos como la lucha contra la corrupción, el pluralismo y la libertad de los medios de comunicación. Porque todos ellos nos permiten crear una fotografía global sobre el estado de salud de nuestras democracias. En materia de transparencia de la propiedad de los medios de comunicación nos sigue preocupando la ausencia de reglas suficientes sobre el reparto de la publicidad institucional y el conflicto de intereses.

Pero están también los casos de acoso concretos, sistemáticos, a periodistas europeos por parte de países extraeuropeos. Es el caso concreto y real de Ignacio Cembrero, un gran periodista español, encausado ya por cuarta vez por parte de Marruecos por informar sobre la política alauí, mientras las autoridades españolas permanecen indiferentes y dejan que un periodista español sea acosado y hostigado judicialmente. Señor comisario, algo debemos hacer.

La lucha contra la corrupción y la libertad de prensa son dos pilares básicos de nuestras democracias que debemos exigir con el mayor rigor desde Europa, sobre todo, cuando vemos a nuestros Estados flaquear abiertamente y también cuando, desgraciadamente, el veneno de la corrupción entra en nuestra propia institución.

Tineke Strik (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, Council, Commissioner, the freedom and independence of journalists are strong indicators of the quality of democracy and the rule of law. And yet these safeguards are increasingly at risk in the EU. Intimidation, SLAPP cases and surveillance are applied in notorious autocracies like Poland and Hungary, but just as well in other states, including Greece.

The Commission has confirmed persistent attacks and threats against journalists in Greece, and this repression has an intentional, chilling effect. Reporters on push-backs and other human rights violations are specifically targeted. The Greek policy of silencing media and civil society has created a hostile environment which is detrimental to the necessary checks and balances of an open society.

Impunity at the EU level has fuelled this development, and even with the long-awaited Media Freedom Act, only enforcement of the rules can stop this repression in all our Member States. So I urge the Commission to take legal action, protect our democracies and fundamental freedoms, protect journalists.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Clare Daly (The Left). – Madam President, I really wish I could be standing up here joining in the eulogies to a free media and its crucial role as a pillar in our democracies. But I look at the media that we have, and I don't see much freedom.

Our media is strangled by money. It's hobbled by fear. For most media organisations, access to power is far more important than holding power to account. Careers depend on toeing the line. Balance sheets demand a constant churn of stories – stories which are recycled from official statements, press releases, social media, anywhere but out in the world; anything but upset the status quo.

Nick Davies described this in 2008 as 'the mass production of ignorance'. 14 years later, it's way worse now. So if we want to hold ourselves as the defenders of media freedom, we have to recognise that our mainstream media is anything but free. It's a water carrier for political and corporate power dedicated to enforcing the demands of global capital, and people like Julian Assange are the exceptions, the ones who pay the price. If we don't accept that, we're on a hiding to nothing.

Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó (NI). – Madam President, Commissioner, press freedom is threatened by EU Member States that use software such as Pegasus or Candiru to spy on journalists just like they do on dissidents, lawyers and politicians. It is also threatened by the fabrication of evidence by public authorities to attack the reputation of political opponents, which are presented as solid evidence to which the press gives credibility.

I am a witness of both things, as a politician and as a journalist. The Commission should be more commanding in front of the states where these violations are taking place, which scandalise the citizens of countries such as Poland, Greece and Spain because democracy is at stake.

Άννα-Μισέλ Ασημακοπούλου (PPE). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κύριε Επίτροπε, τα θέματα Τύπου είναι και θέματα κράτους δικαίου και ως τέτοια τα αντιμετωπίζουμε στην πατρίδα μου, την Ελλάδα. Οπότε σταματήστε να συκοφαντείτε την Ελλάδα, η οποία από την πρώτη στιγμή καλωσόρισε την Ευρωπαϊκή Πράξη για την ελευθερία των μέσων ενημέρωσης, μια πρωτοβουλία ορόσημο για την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Συμμετέχουμε γι' αυτό ενεργά στον γόνιμο διάλογο, μέσα από τον οποίο θα αποκρυσταλλωθεί ένα ενιαίο αδιάβλητο πλαίσιο που θα ενδυναμώνει την ελευθεροτυπία και θα ενισχύει τη δημοκρατία. Σήμερα είναι η Ελλάδα αυτή που έχει αναλάβει πρωτοβουλίες και δράσεις για τη διασφάλιση της προστασίας, της ασφάλειας, της ελευθερίας και της ενίσχυσης του δημοσιογραφικού λειτουργήματος, και αυτό μέσα από μια task force που συντονίζει τη δράση κράτους και επαγγελματιών του χώρου, προασπίζει τα συμφέροντά τους και βρίσκεται σε αгаστική συνεργασία με τις ευρωπαϊκές αρχές και την αρμόδια Επίτροπο.

Η διαφάνεια, κυρίες και κύριοι συνάδελφοι, αποτελεί τη λέξη-κλειδί για τις κρατικές δράσεις αλλά και την κρατική ενίσχυση των μέσων ενημέρωσης. Γι' αυτό, στο ελληνικό κοινοβούλιο ψηφίζεται αυτές τις ημέρες ένα νομοσχέδιο που θα θέσει κανόνες πλήρους διαφάνειας σχετικά με τέτοιες χρηματοδοτήσεις, αλλά και για τη στελέχωση των μέσων ενημέρωσης με επαγγελματίες. Η Ελλάδα είναι μια δημοκρατική χώρα για όλους, πολίτες και δημοσιογράφους και το αποδεικνύει στην πράξη, χωρίς εξαιρέσεις, χωρίς σκιές, χωρίς αστερίσκους, θέτοντας θεσμικά χεγγύνα. Ο Τύπος χαρακτηρίζεται από αξιοπιστία και πλουραλισμό, απολαμβάνοντας παράλληλα την ελευθερία που απαιτείται, ώστε τελικά ο πολίτης να πληροφορείται έγκυρα και αντικειμενικά, διότι αυτό τελικά είναι και το ζητούμενο.

Matjaž Nemec (S&D). – Gospa predsednica! Spoštovani visoki zbor! Medijska svoboda v Evropi in širše je vedno bolj ogrožena in z njo je neposredno ogrožena tudi naša demokracija. Medijski prostor v Uniji je pod vse večjim pritiskom zaradi politično usmerjenega javnega financiranja, digitalizacije, ki zmanjšuje prihodke, in poskusov tujega vmešavanja.

Med drugim Evropska unija ni nikakršna varna cona za novinarje in raziskovalce. Na svojih plečih nosi številna ustrahovanja, grožnje novinarjem ter seveda tudi umore. Spomnimo se na primer utišanja novinarjev z Malte, Slovaške, Grčije in celo Nizozemske. To je nedopustno.

Zato potrebujemo zakonodajo, ki bo ščitila novinarje, medijem pa zagotavljala neodvisno delovanje in seveda pluralnost. Zato pozdravljam zadnji predlog Komisije. Komisarka Jourova je poudarila, da je bila ta spodbujena tudi zaradi dogajanja v moji državi, v Sloveniji. V moji državi je namreč pod prejšnjo vlado hudo nastradala medijska svoboda. Finančno izčrpavanje je doživljala Slovenska tiskovna agencija STA, javna RTV pa še danes trpi pod pritiski zaradi politične ugrabitve. A temu smo se in se bomo upirali. Brez politike v javni RTV, za več medijske svobode, za neodvisnost in varnost novinarjev ter seveda za zdravo demokracijo. Hvala lepa.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Ramona Strugariu (Renew). – Madam President, press freedom is a key condition for a functioning democracy under the rule of law. The findings of the 2022 Commission's rule of law report demonstrate once again that this vital pillar needs immediate reinforcing not only in some, but in all, Member States. To be very clear, there is no rule of law without a free press, and the reality on the ground is that too often journalists face enormous political pressure. Editorial independence is under threat. They are harassed to the point of having to abandon their profession and some politicians, their oligarch friends, as well as third country exponents, make constant efforts to control the press and distort realities.

Through the anti-SLAPP directive and the European Media Freedom Act, we have the responsibility to equip the press with the necessary tools to protect its independence. These acts are a vital part of our framework for upholding the rule of law. Journalism is about much more than just the mere provision of services. It is about democracy, freedom, values, education and fighting for the truth. If we want to keep and defend these things, journalists must feel safe, empowered and financially independent, and stay free. We owe this to them.

Erik Marquardt (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar! Ich bin ehrlicherweise ein bisschen erschrocken über einige Reden – natürlich nicht über alle. Ich wollte deswegen sagen, dass Angriffe auf die Pressefreiheit nicht erst beginnen, wenn Journalistinnen und Journalisten ermordet werden oder bedroht werden, sondern aus meiner Sicht beginnt das schon, wenn wir anfangen, hier das Parlament zu nutzen, um über einige Berichte zu sagen: Das ist überhaupt keine freie Presse, das hat mit Pressefreiheit gar nichts zu tun. Und die anderen Berichte, die uns gefallen, die sind dann toll.

Journalismus, Pressefreiheit, das muss uns nicht gefallen, soll uns nicht mal gefallen. Als Politiker ist es einfach wichtig, dass Presse uns auf die Finger schaut, dass Skandale aufgedeckt werden, dass die richtigen Konsequenzen gezogen werden, dass Journalismus bei der Meinungsbildung unterstützt. Ja, nicht jeder Bericht ist richtig, und ja, es gibt natürlich auch Organisationen, die versuchen, Presse auszunutzen oder zu kaufen.

Aber mich stört, dass wir insgesamt hier eine breite Mehrheit für Pressefreiheit haben, wenn wir gefragt werden: Sind wir denn eigentlich alle für Pressefreiheit, dass es aber in der Praxis schon so ist, dass an den Außengrenzen zum Beispiel Presseberichte mit einmal als Fake News bezeichnet werden, dass mit einem Mal gesagt wird: Wir haben doch eigentlich überhaupt keine Notwendigkeit, dass Presse hier Zugang bekommt. All diese Einschränkungen von Pressefreiheit müssen wir angehen. Das ist unsere Aufgabe. Wir sollen die Pressefreiheit nicht beklatschen, sondern wir sollen sie durchsetzen.

Isabel Wiseler-Lima (PPE). – Madame la Présidente, je crois en notre démocratie et je crois en nos valeurs. Pour les protéger, pour leur permettre même d'exister, les journalistes jouent un rôle essentiel. Ils sont indispensables à la démocratie. Défendre les journalistes, c'est aussi sauvegarder la liberté d'expression et l'indépendance des médias. C'est l'information fiable qui permet aux citoyens de décider en connaissance de cause. C'est en créant l'espace de liberté nécessaire ainsi que les conditions de sécurité requises que les journalistes pourront exercer leur métier: informer le public, avec tout le sérieux que cette tâche implique.

À nous il incombe de créer les conditions juridiques nécessaires pour que leur environnement de travail soit sûr. C'est pour cela que je salue nos textes, qui cherchent à empêcher des poursuites judiciaires abusives ou à favoriser, quand cela est nécessaire, une protection policière rapprochée.

Or, aujourd'hui, les formes de harcèlement des journalistes se sont multipliées et prennent des formes inattendues. Sur le net, à l'aide des réseaux sociaux, c'est souvent la réputation que l'on cherche à détruire, surtout quand il s'agit de journalistes d'investigation ou de vérificateurs de faits. Malheureusement, les chiffres le montrent, les femmes journalistes sont encore plus ciblées que leurs confrères. Il faut que nous ayons conscience de ces nouvelles données et que nous adaptions toutes nos mesures, y compris au niveau des États membres.

Иво Христов (S&D). – Г-жо Председател, кризата намалява приходите от реклама, а войната раздува бюджетите за пропаганда. Някогашните меродавни медии днес оцеляват или печелят от дезинформация. Регулацията често се изразжда в цензура, тя вече задушава дори социалните мрежи. Главният редактор на Euractiv – Гърция Спирос Сидерис се оказва обект на разработка за шпионски софтуер. На конференция в София той сподели как реагира проследяваният човек – изпитва безпричинна вина, страхува се за близките си, става предпазлив. Мнозина са като Спирос. Психологията на проследявания човек парализира европейската журналистика. Работата на комисията „Перас“ е пряко свързана с медийната свобода. Казусът Джулиан Асанж също.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

В България десницата превърна държавното финансиране в инструмент за контрол над медиите. Собствеността им остава неясна, а свободната журналистика бе маргинализирана. Решението е в гарантиран процент от бюджета за финансиране на обществените медии като златен стандарт за достоверна информация, в криптираната защита на личните и професионалните права на журналистите, които изпълняват важна обществена мисия, прозрачната собственост, която осветлява скритите интереси зад всяка медия.

Katalin Cseh (Renew). – Madam President, good evening and welcome to the evening news: Viktor Orbán changed his profile picture. The photo got 60 000 likes in a few hours and thus only likes with comments also. Many think he looks more handsome than earlier. Others believe the photo depicts a confident and strong leader.

So this is an actual quote from a news show on Hungary's second largest TV station. It also happens to be owned by Orbán's childhood friend. So, colleagues, assaults against media freedom doesn't always entail imprisoned journalists. Autocrats get much more sophisticated. It can happen through politically connected oligarchs capturing newsrooms. Hungary's Népszabadság, Origo, Index were all muzzled like this.

So, Commissioner, we need a strong and enforceable Media Freedom Act that also tackles market concentration. We need effective protection from spying, guarantees for the independence of public service, media and, in general, strong European rules.

Europe needs to honour the memory of Daphne Caruana Galizia and Ján Kuciak, reporters who were murdered for doing their job. And the best way to do so stand up against predators of media freedom.

Diana Riba i Giner (Verts/ALE). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, señor ministro, informar y estar informados son derechos indiscutibles en una democracia. Por eso estamos en estado de alerta. El último *Media Pluralism Monitor* recoge un número creciente de demandas contra la libertad de expresión en países como Bulgaria, Croacia, Malta, Rumanía o España e informa de un ambiente generalizado de crecientes amenazas y discursos de odio.

Seamos claros. La libertad de prensa en Europa está en peligro: monopolios mediáticos y medios directamente capturados por Estados, o periodistas que se convierten en víctimas de ciberespionaje o que son, incluso, asesinados, como Yorgos Karaivaz en Grecia y Peter R. de Vries en los Países Bajos, en el año 2021.

Cuando el periodismo está en riesgo, también lo está el debate público y la democracia misma. Fortalecer la Directiva contra las DECP y la Ley de Libertad de los Medios de Comunicación es prioritario. Porque no hay democracia sin un contexto informativo y mediático basado en valores públicos y democráticos, interseccional, sostenible e inclusivo.

Salvatore De Meo (PPE). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la Federazione internazionale dei giornalisti ha già documentato, nel 2022, 59 omicidi di professionisti dei media, dodici in più rispetto al 2021. E ancora più sconcertante che nove omicidi di giornalisti su dieci restano tuttora impuniti.

Sono dei dati allarmanti, soprattutto se vengono associati anche ai tantissimi episodi di violenza e intimidazione ai danni di chi sceglie di raccontare la verità, tutelando e rafforzando di conseguenza la nostra democrazia.

La libertà di espressione, la libertà dei media e il pluralismo sono sanciti nella Carta dei diritti fondamentali dell'Unione, nonché nella Convenzione europea dei diritti dell'uomo.

È evidente che esiste un collegamento tra la libertà di stampa e lo Stato di diritto, perché promuovere e difendere lo Stato di diritto significa anche promuovere e difendere la libertà di stampa e di tutti coloro che si adoperano per questa.

Una cosa è certa anche dalla discussione odierna: nonostante le tante iniziative europee, dobbiamo essere più determinanti e incisivi di quanto non lo siamo stati nel caso della giornalista maltese uccisa pochi anni fa, oppure nei riguardi dell'attuale aggressione russa o delle rivolte in Iran, dove giornalisti, cameraman, fotografi vengono uccisi o arrestati solo perché vogliono occultare la verità in favore di una propaganda fatta di disinformazione e manipolazione.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

La libertà di stampa è uno dei capisaldi del nostro Stato di diritto e, in quanto tale, va promossa e difesa perché non ci può essere democrazia senza libertà e pluralismo dei media. Un attacco ai media è un attacco alla nostra democrazia.

Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D). – Señora vicepresidenta Charanzová, señor ministro Bek, señor comisario Hahn, sin duda, sin periodismo libre no hay democracia que funcione. Es muy preocupante que en el informe sobre el Estado de Derecho del año 2022 veamos el deterioro del indicador relativo a la profesión periodística y a su protección. Esta tendencia viene de lejos. Recordemos que, desde el año 2015, quince periodistas han sido asesinados en la Unión Europea: en Francia, Malta, Grecia, Países Bajos, Dinamarca, Polonia, antiguamente Reino Unido y Eslovaquia.

Y vemos cómo algunos países, desgraciadamente, van a peor. En lo que respecta a las amenazas a la seguridad física de periodistas, la Comisión ha tenido que hacer recomendaciones específicas para Eslovaquia y Grecia. Pero, además, Reporteros Sin Fronteras designó a Grecia, en el año 2022, como el peor país de la Unión Europea en libertad de prensa. Peor que Hungría, incluso. Los periodistas que en este país quieren informar sobre la política migratoria y las violaciones de los derechos humanos de los emigrantes son verdaderos héroes que se están jugando el tipo. Son víctimas de declaraciones hostiles por parte de responsables políticos. Sufren acoso y agresiones, incluso por parte de la policía, y hasta de detenciones.

Esta situación tiene que cesar y la Comisión tiene que seguir actuando. Yo diría que todavía con mayor énfasis en el caso que he descrito.

Γεώργιος Κύρτσος (Renew). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, θα ήθελα η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή να γίνει πιο δυναμική στις παρεμβάσεις της υπέρ της ελευθερίας των μέσων ενημέρωσης στα κράτη μέλη. Η πίεση στα μέσα ενημέρωσης είναι συνήθως το πρώτο σύμπτωμα της στρόφης μιας κυβέρνησης προς τον αυταρχισμό. Χαρακτηριστική είναι η περίπτωση της κυβέρνησης Μητσοτάκη, η οποία, σύμφωνα με την αξιολόγηση των «Δημοσιογράφων Χωρίς Σύνορα», έχει επιβάλει τους μεγαλύτερους περιορισμούς στην ελευθερία των μέσων ενημέρωσης μεταξύ των 27 κρατών της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και μεγαλύτερους περιορισμούς από ό,τι ισχύουν στις χώρες των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων. Ο Μητσοτάκης, βέβαια, αμφισβητεί την εγκυρότητα των «Δημοσιογράφων Χωρίς Σύνορα», ωστόσο η συγκεκριμένη Μη Κυβερνητική Οργάνωση είναι συνεργάτης του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου. Είμαι ένας ευρωβουλευτής του οποίου τα τηλέφωνα παρακολουθούνται με εντολή Μητσοτάκη, όπως άλλωστε και του συναδέλφου Ανδρουλάκη των Σοσιαλιστών. Πρώτα άρχισε η παρακολούθηση των δημοσιογράφων και στη συνέχεια επεκτάθηκε στους πολιτικούς. Ίδού η απόδειξη ότι από τον περιορισμό της ελευθερίας των ΜΜΕ στην Ελλάδα περάσαμε σε μεθόδους που θυμίζουν τον Berisha της Αλβανίας και τον Gruevski της Βόρειας Μακεδονίας. Πρέπει να αντιδράσουμε όλοι μαζί.

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield (Verts/ALE). – Madame la Présidente, la liberté de la presse et le pluralisme des médias, sans lesquels il n'existe tout simplement pas de démocratie, ne sont plus protégés dans beaucoup d'États membres. Il faut donc des dispositions européennes. Faisons un tour d'horizon.

Hongrie, 85^e sur 180 dans le classement Reporters sans frontières de 2022. La Fondation KESMA regroupe 500 médias nationaux et locaux au service aveugle du gouvernement, dans une totale opacité sur les fonds publics. La Commission européenne dit ne rien pouvoir faire. Peut-être pourra-t-on empêcher que cela se reproduise ailleurs: des oligarques qui achètent des médias et en font donation à un gouvernement.

Grèce, 108^e au classement. Un journaliste abattu devant son domicile, une enquête qui patine et des violences policières connues à l'égard des journalistes qui travaillent sur le sujet des réfugiés, de ceux qui couvrent les manifestations et de ceux qui révèlent la corruption.

Malte, 78^e. Peu de progrès dans l'enquête sur l'assassinat de Daphne Caruana Galizia, alors que, en Slovaquie, la justice a été efficace dans le cas de Ján Kuciak et n'a plus connu d'entraves par le politique au bout d'un moment. Spécificité de la loi maltaise: les proches héritent des procès intentés aux journalistes.

France, 26^e. Là, c'est le privé qui pose problème: concentration extrême des médias, dix actionnaires détiennent 81 % de la diffusion des quotidiens nationaux et 95 % des hebdomadaires. Le groupe Bolloré censure, interdit les publications, accumule les poursuites-bâillons et insulte certains politiques.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Madam President, dear Commissioner, I fully subscribe to the conclusion of the Commission's 2022 report on the rule of law that states that independent and free media are the watchdogs of democracy and are key for the rule of law. Free media is helping to inform and empower citizens and allow them to contribute to the democratic debate. Therefore, I underline the importance that both local and national media reflect the cultural, linguistic and social diversity of our societies.

Unfortunately, journalists and other media actors continue to face violence, threats and harassment in the European Union. Recent legislative reforms have limited these abuses in our Member States, and I welcome supportive action by the Commission in this regard. But more needs to be done. We need to safeguard transparency of ownership and funding of media providers. We should establish actions that help in the fight against disinformation and provide measures for the prevention of corruption. Journalists deserve to operate with a free mind and without external pressure.

Theresa Muigg (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin! Daphne Caruana Galizia, Jan Kuciak, Lyra McKee, Peter de Vries und Giorgos Karaivaz – Personen, die in den letzten fünf Jahren im Zuge ihrer journalistischen Arbeit in Europa ermordet wurden. Für sie können wir heute nichts mehr tun. Was wir tun können, ist, unsere Aufgabe hier und heute ernst zu nehmen. Denn dort, wo Journalistinnen ihr Leben lassen, wo die Demokratie bedroht wird, wo die Macht der Unwahrheiten immer stärker wird, dort werden wir im Europäischen Parlament jene sein, die für eine freie Meinungsäußerung kämpfen, die für einen Journalismus ohne Angst vor Angriffen kämpfen.

Wir tun damit nichts Geringeres, als die essenziellen Bestandteile der Grundrechtecharta der Europäischen Union zu verteidigen. Denn nur, wenn sie in jedem Mitgliedstaat ausnahmslos und voll umgesetzt und verteidigt werden, bieten wir jene Europäische Union, die wir versprechen. Wir alle brauchen den *European Media Freedom Act*. Dieses Gesetz muss Journalistinnen schützen, vor Spyware, vor Überwachung, vor Angriffen. Aber vor allem muss sie auch uns schützen. Denn unsere freien und unabhängigen Medien sind die Basis einer demokratischen und freien Gesellschaft.

Denken wir an den Beginn des russischen Angriffskriegs auf die Ukraine. Denken wir an die Flut der Unwahrheiten, die uns überschwemmt hat. Denken wir daran, wie dringend wir eine echte Berichterstattung von den EU-Außengrenzen brauchen. Wirklich unabhängigen Journalismus nennt man zu Recht die vierte Gewalt, denn wir brauchen ihn, um Grundrechte und Demokratie, um Freiheit, um den Kern unserer europäischen Wertegemeinschaft zu verteidigen. Kämpfen wir dafür!

Irena Joveva (Renew). – Gospa predsednica! Hvala! Zagotavljanje varnosti novinarjev in novinarjev je predpogoj učinkovite medijske svobode, ki je eden od temeljev vladavine prava. Za zagotavljanje njihove varnosti na ravni Unije postavljamo standarde v vseh poročilih, akcijskih načrtih, zakonodajnih predlogih, bolj ali manj uspešno.

Pogosto omenjamo tudi kakovost poročanja, ki vpliva na verodostojnost posredovanih informacij. Kakovost, ki pa se s porastom dezinformacij, poseganjem v uredniško politiko in cenzuro oziroma samocenzuro, vztrajno niža. Smo na točki, ko zgolj omenjanje pomena kakovostnega poročanja ni dovolj. Dajmo biti jasni. Ne more vsakdo biti novinar samo zato, ker si, ne vem, želi nastopati na televiziji, kaj šele zato, ker želi izpolnjevati želje dela neke politike. Kaj želim povedati? Da nam za zagotavljanje pomembnega vidika vladavine prava manjkajo jasno postavljeni standardi določanja kakovosti opravljanja novinarskega poklica. Čas je, da jih postavimo. Morda ravno v aktu o svobodi medijev.

Nuno Melo (PPE). – Senhora Presidente, caros colegas, não há liberdade de imprensa sem condições de trabalho. Em muitos países da União Europeia, começando por Portugal, grande parte dos jornalistas tem salários miseráveis e os empregos são precários. Toda a liberdade fica, assim, condicionada pelo justificado sentimento de injustiça e de revolta.

Não há liberdade de imprensa sem diversidade. A crescente colocação de órgãos de comunicação social sob a alçada dos mesmos grupos financeiros mata a diversidade, alinhando cada vez mais jornalistas pelo filtro de cada vez menos linhas editoriais. Não há liberdade de imprensa sem a independência do poder político.

Os auxílios dos governos que são representados por partidos políticos a órgãos de comunicação social em dificuldades extremas, minam o distanciamento necessário entre quem informa e algum poder político, justificando todas as suspeições.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Finalmente, não há liberdade de imprensa sem liberdade de expressão e segurança dos jornalistas. Na União Europeia, construída na base do respeito pela liberdade e os direitos fundamentais, há jornalistas que são fisicamente intimidados e até assassinados porque querem informar.

A este propósito, registe-se, a Federação Internacional de Jornalistas relata que em 2022 morreram no mundo 67 jornalistas, contra 47 no ano passado. Neste momento, há 375 jornalistas detidos, muitos deles europeus. O Parlamento Europeu está do lado certo desta história, está do lado da imprensa livre.

Massimiliano Smeriglio (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, l'Europa è considerata un posto sicuro per i giornalisti, tuttavia le minacce e gli attacchi contro di loro sono in preoccupante aumento, così come le intimidazioni e le pressioni.

La preoccupazione maggiore riguarda le condizioni di lavoro precarie e la ricattabilità, nonché la tutela delle fonti e del segreto professionale.

In merito alla tutela delle fonti, sette paesi dell'UE rientrano nella categoria rischio medio secondo il *Media pluralism monitor*. Tra questi vi è l'Italia, dove assistiamo a richieste da parte della magistratura di acquisire dati relativi a comunicazioni private dei giornalisti, nonostante la piena disponibilità a collaborare. A questo proposito voglio esprimere piena solidarietà a Sigfrido Ranucci e alla redazione di Report, importante trasmissione di inchiesta.

Il ripetersi di questi casi pone l'urgenza di approvare normative più efficaci a tutela delle fonti e del segreto professionale; il lavoro sulla legge europea sulla libertà dei media rappresenta una grande opportunità per rafforzare l'indipendenza della stampa.

La Corte europea dei diritti dell'uomo ha ribadito che ingerenze di questo tipo equivalgono a un attacco al diritto dei cittadini alla libera informazione. In alcuni Paesi questo monito rimane ancora oggi inascoltato.

Magdalena Adamowicz (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Zdrowa demokracja może istnieć tylko wówczas, gdy obywatele mają dostęp do uczciwych i obiektywnych informacji. Gdy atakowani i zastraszeni są niezależni dziennikarze, wówczas atakowane jest prawo obywateli do dostępu do informacji i uczciwych wyborów.

Atak, a w szczególności atak władzy na niezależne dziennikarstwo, to atak na fundamenty państwa prawa. Powtarzam: ochrona dziennikarzy tworzących wolne i niezależne media to ochrona bezpieczników demokracji. Walka z upolitycznieniem mediów i atakami na niezależnych dziennikarzy to nie tylko kwestia ochrony praw człowieka i wolności słowa. To często ataki brutalne i krwawe, zamykające usta na zawsze. Gdy z głośników i ekranów mediów publicznych sączy się mowa nienawiści, wówczas konsekwencją może być śmierć. Media, gdy stają się narzędziem politycznej manipulacji, mogą stać się nożem w sercu naszej demokracji.

Działania unijne nie mogą ograniczyć się do monitoringu. Raporty Komisji w tej kwestii są alarmujące. Za nimi muszą iść wymierne narzędzia – kontrola własności mediów, ochrona przejrzystości i niezależności finansowania, w szczególności mediów publicznych, ochrona i niezależność dziennikarzy.

Tom Vandenkendelaere (PPE). – Voorzitter, commissaris, mediavrijheid en pluralisme vormen de kern van onze Europese waarden. Geen enkele journalist zou mogen sterven of schade oplopen omwille van zijn perskaart. Omdat journalisten transparantie creëren. Omdat zij ons toegang geven tot een publiek goed, namelijk informatie. Hun werk is essentieel voor onze democratie. Meer dan ooit staat ook hun bescherming voorop, want helaas nemen de aanvallen op de media de afgelopen jaren toe.

In 2022 stierven 67 journalisten wereldwijd, vergeleken met 47 journalisten het jaar voordien, volgens de Internationale Federatie van Journalisten. Oekraïne is duidelijk het gevaarlijkste land voor journalisten in 2022, met twaalf vermoorde journalisten op de teller.

Ook de duidelijke erosie van veilige omgevingen die beletten dat media hun werk vrij kunnen doen, baart zorgen. Het aantal fysieke, juridische en online bedreigingen en aanvallen op mediaprofessionals blijft gestaag toenemen. We zien ook dat vrouwelijke journalisten, journalisten die tot minderheidsgroepen behoren, of journalisten die rapporteren over gelijkheidskwesties, bijzonder kwetsbaar blijven voor bedreigingen en aanvallen.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Het is onze collectieve verantwoordelijkheid om vrije media te verdedigen, schendingen van mediavrijheid recht te zetten en doortastende maatregelen te treffen die Europa écht veiliger maken voor journalisten.

Sunčana Glavak (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, povjereniče, kolegice i kolege, da, pluralizam i sloboda medija dio su Povelje o temeljnim pravima Europske unije i Europske konvencije o ljudskim pravima.

Poštivanje i nepovredivost ovih prava i načela predstavljaju ključnu ulogu za opstojnost demokracije, kao i njezinih procesa te institucija. Unatoč tome svemu što je napisano, posljednje izvješće izražava zabrinutost zbog postojeće situacije. Između ostalog, čuli smo i danas crne brojke. Prošlog petka objavljeno je, i to Međunarodna federacija novinara je objavila da je 67 medijskih profesionalaca ubijeno na poslu ove godine, 40% više nego prošle godine. Među ostalim, svjedočimo slučajevima degradiranja novinarske struke, politizacije medija, neprovođenjem prava na pristup informacijama, nedostatka transparentnosti u vlasničkim strukturama. Stoga pozdravljam najavljeni akt o slobodi medija kao i tzv. Anti-SLAPP direktivu. Želim se upravo na nju referirati jer Republika Hrvatska među prvim je članicama prije godinu dana osnovala stručnu skupinu u Ministarstvu kulture i medija i sustavno se počela baviti SLAPP tužbama. Održavaju se edukativne radionice uz predstavnike strukovnih udruga, novinara, Sindikata novinara, Ministarstva pravosuđa, Hrvatskog novinarskog društva, profesora Pravnog fakulteta, nakladnika. Cilj je zaštita novinara od neosnovanih ili zlonamjernih sudskih postupaka.

Naše je pravo i obveza kao zastupnika u Europskom parlamentu osigurati očuvanje vladavine prava i zaštitu temeljnih vrijednosti i znamo, kolegice i kolege, demokracija nema alternativu. Ali ne zaboravimo da medijski integritet podrazumijeva profesionalnost i poštivanje standarda, a prva i posljednja riječ novinara mora biti istina.

Peter Pollák (PPE). – Vážená pani predsedajúca, napriek tomu, že tu v Európskom parlamente často diskutujeme o postavení a o ochrane novinárov, novinári v Európe sú stále ohrození. Je stále mnoho novinárov, ktorým nie je umožnené vykonávať svoju prácu slobodne, bez zastrašovania, obmedzovania či strachu o svoj život a život svojich blízkych. Na vlastné oči dnes vidíme odvážnych novinárov na Ukrajine, ktorí riskujú svoje životy, aby sa svet dozvedel o pravde a zverstvách ruskej agresie. Taktiež vidíme odvážnych novinárov v Rusku, kde čelia najtvrdším trestom len za to, že riskujú a chcú šíriť pravdu. Európa má vlastných hrdinov: Jána Kuciaka zo Slovenska, Daphne Galiziovú z Malty, ktorých život vyhasol práve kvôli tomu, že chceli písať pravdu. Žiaľ, slobodná žurnalistika vymiera. Nedivme sa, keďže sú novinári pod obrovským tlakom. Ako môžu vyhrať boj s mafiánmi, skorumpovaným politikmi či oligarchami, keď na to nemajú vytvorené žiadne podmienky? V rôznych krajinách Európy skupujú mienkotvorné médiá bohatí oligarchovia, ktorí často stavajú svoj biznis na hranu zákona. Doslova korumpujú politikov a cez médiá, ktoré vlastnia, útočia prostredníctvom dosadených novinárov na tých, ktorí proti korupcii bojujú. Nehľadajú pravdu, reprezentujú záujmy svojich mecenášov a kazia dobré meno poctivým žurnalistom. Aj preto sa častejšie stretávame so pseudonovinármi, ktorí šíria dezinformácie, nenávisť a klamstvá. Ak chceme slobodnú Európu a spravodlivosť, spravodlivú spoločnosť, musíme dať novinárom dostatok prostriedkov vrátane ich osobnej ochrany. Nemôžeme už dopustiť, aby sa zopakovalo to, čo sa stalo Jánovi a Daphne.

David Casa (PPE). – Fl-2022, il-qajna proposti leġiżlattivi godda mill-Kummissjoni – proposti li jittrattaw il-libertà tal-istampa, li jipproteġu aħjar lill-ġurnalisti u li jsaħħu l-qagħda u l-indipendenza tal-ġurnaliżmu. Dawn huma proposti li jiena u shabi ilna snin niġġieldu għalihom, u din is-sena waslu. U rrid nibda, allura, billi nirringrazzja lill-Kummissarju Jourouva għax-xogħol immens illi għamlet biex allura jista' jkollna dawn il-proposti quddiemna. Proposti biex nikkumbattu, pereżempju, l-użu tal-kawżi abbużivi, l-iSLAPPs, imsejha aħjar bħala Daphne's law.

Grazzi għax-xogħol tal-Kummissjoni, għandna stampa ċara ta' x'inhi s-sitwazzjoni bħalissa. Madwar l-Ewropa, il-libertà tal-istampa mhi xejn felici.

Biex nikkwota mir-rapport dwar Malta, fejn il-Kummissjoni allura qiegħda tghid li tinnota l-influwenza sinifikanti u diretta fix-xandir pubbliku. Din mhix aċċettabbli. Mhijiex aċċettabbli u tkompli tghid illi m'hemmx rieda biex titjeb is-sitwazzjoni.

Sinjura President, l-indhil mill-gvernijiet fix-xandir pubbliku huwa theddida għad-demokrazija. U allura biex insaħħu d-demokrazija, irridu nsahħu l-indipendenza tal-ġurnaliżmu fl-Ewropa.

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Dan il-Parlament gharaf lil Daphne Caruana Galizia, gharaf lil xogholha, gharaf lill-valuri li kienet temmen fihom, u gharaf li meta lill-ġurnalisti nabbandunawhom, kapaci jispiċċaw maqtula.

Ghaddew hames snin u hemm wisq ġurnalisti li għadhom qed jinqatlu fuq xogholhom. Irrid insejjah lill-gvernijiet u lill-kollegi biex nagħrfu dan il-fatt.

Catch-the-eye procedure

Στέλιος Κυμπουρόπουλος (PPE). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, συνάδελφοι, εδώ και καιρό, εξαιτίας κυρίως της έκθεσης της ΜΚΟ «Δημοσιογράφοι Χωρίς Σύνορα» έχει στηθεί μια συντονισμένη προσπάθεια δυσφήμισης της Ελλάδας. Για όποιον γνωρίζει την κατάσταση στη χώρα μου, το να κατατάσσεται στη θέση 108, κάτω ακόμη και από δικτατορικά καθεστώτα, μόνο γέλια μπορεί να προκαλέσει. Γι' αυτό οφείλουμε να το πούμε κατηγορηματικά: Δεν υφίσταται ζήτημα σχετικά με την ελευθερία του Τύπου στην Ελλάδα. Ο καθένας έχει το δικαίωμα να δημοσιεύσει ό,τι θέλει και αυτό αποδεικνύεται από την πληθώρα επικριτικών και, σε αρκετές περιπτώσεις, δυσφημιστικών άρθρων κατά της κυβέρνησης. Αντίθετα, οφείλουμε να αντιληφθούμε ότι διεξάγεται συντονισμένος επικοινωνιακός πόλεμος κατά της Ελλάδας, με διασπορά ψευδών ειδήσεων και παραπληροφόρησης, τα οποία όχι μόνο άκριτα υιοθετούν μερικοί αλλά δεν έχουν και τη δεοντολογία να απολογηθούν, όταν τα γραφόμενά τους διαψεύδονται. Αυτό οφείλουμε να κάνουμε και όχι να στοχοποιούμε χώρες με προωθημένη την πολυφωνία των μέσων ενημέρωσης και την ελευθερία του Τύπου, όπως η Ελλάδα.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Señora presidenta, señor presidente en ejercicio del Consejo, señor comisario Hahn, el informe del Estado de Derecho, el tercero de este año 2022, acierta plenamente al recibir un punto subrayado por la Comisión LIBE: libertad de prensa y libertad de pluralismo en el contexto del Plan de Acción de la UE para los Derechos Humanos y la Democracia. Porque no hay libertad que no tenga como corolario el pluralismo.

Pero para asegurar el pluralismo hacen falta dos requisitos. El primero, transparencia en la propiedad de los medios y en la inversión en publicidad de esos medios. El segundo, asegurar a los periodistas frente a demandas truculentas para intimidarlos o querellas para meterles miedo —ya se llame Ignacio Cembrero, periodista español, o de cualquier otro Estado miembro— y, por supuesto, protegerles frente a atentados contra su vida. Hay una sala en este Parlamento Europeo que lleva el nombre de Daphne Caruana, pero no se habla tanto de Yorgos Karaivaz, un periodista griego igualmente asesinado en el año 2021.

Por tanto, dos iniciativas fundamentales: la legislativa, para proteger a los periodistas frente a la instigación intimidatoria, y la segunda, la Ley de Libertad de los Medios de Comunicación, para establecer estándares europeos de protección de la libertad de prensa y del pluralismo informativo.

Bogdan Rzońca (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Przysłuchiwałem się z ogromną ciekawością tej debacie. Ona jest bardzo potrzebna i jestem przekonany, że ochrona rzetelnych mediów jest jak najbardziej na miejscu. Także jestem za tym, żeby chronić niezależne dziennikarstwo. Wspominano jednakże kilkakrotnie tutaj o Polsce. Uważam, że są to bardzo krzywdzące opinie. W Polsce funkcjonują prywatne media z kapitałem niemieckim, prywatne telewizje, prywatne gazety. Nie ma żadnego problemu z pluralizmem medialnym w Polsce. Nie wiem, skąd i kto chciał pokazać jakieś przypadki tłumienia wolności dziennikarskiej w Polsce, bo z największym skandalem w historii Polski mieliśmy miejsce, jak chodzi o prześladowanie mediów za rządów Donalda Tuska. Było to w czerwcu 2014 r., kiedy Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego weszła do dziennika Wprost. Do dzisiaj ci dziennikarze żyją, pamiętają tamtą akcję. Zabrane zostały komputery, zamknięta została redakcja i kopiowane były dyski. I to jest największy skandal w historii Polski. A później pan Donald Tusk został przewodniczącym Rady Europejskiej.

Mick Wallace (The Left). – Madam President, you say that an independent free press is vital to any democracy, and I agree with you. But, sadly, so much of mainstream media across Europe today is either owned or controlled by vested interests. And that's a huge problem.

Big money controls most of our media, or people who have an agenda in how they shape the news. You also said that a journalist should not be punished for doing his work. I also agree 100% with that, but Julian Assange is in prison for over four years, and he was locked up in the Ecuadorian embassy for six years before that. And he is in prison because he spoke the truth. He exposed US NATO war crimes.

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What have we done here to protect Julian Assange? What have we done to see that he gets freedom and that he is released from prison for telling the truth? I want to know what the EU Commission are actually doing in this area, because I think it's really, really important. It is the journalistic story of a generation, and we're doing very little by the looks of it.

Maria Walsh (PPE). – Madam President, we know that democratic values and freedom of speech are in retreat and, in some parts of our world and EU, in serious decline. It is essential that we as a European Union defend journalists as this is a means of defending democracy itself. And it is deeply concerning that in 2022 alone 63 journalists have been killed, 78 journalists are retained as hostages and 478 journalists are imprisoned. And that's just what we know of.

On the day that we as a Parliament have awarded the Sakharov Prize to the people of Ukraine, let me echo the words of President von der Leyen when she stated that one lesson from the Ukrainian war is that we should have listened to those who knew Putin best – to Anna Politkovskaya and all the Russian journalists who exposed the crimes and paid the ultimate price.

The EU must be guided by its founding values of freedom of expression and ensure the safety of journalists here in the EU and around the world.

(End of catch-the-eye procedure)

Johannes Hahn, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, Minister, honourable Members, thank you again for this debate. I think the debate showed that we are dealing with a very important, urgent and pressing issue. The Commission is determined to pursue the implementation of recommendations and adoption of its proposals, as I mentioned earlier today. We need these rules on the ground without any further delay.

Unfortunately, we see developments in the media world which raise really very serious concerns. Together with increasing threats to their physical and online safety, legal threats and abusive litigation adds to an environment where hostile activity against journalists is growing and can have a serious impact on their willingness and ability to continue their work.

With this in mind, I believe that this debate is very encouraging for all of us to continue the positive work, and I am sure we can count on your sustained support on this subject.

Mikuláš Bek, President-in-Office of the Council. – Madam President, Commission, honourable Members, the Council attaches great importance to the rule of law, the protection of journalists and the defence of media freedom.

We all need to step up our efforts to ensure and guarantee media freedom. This important debate confirmed that. It starts with us as co-legislators to make progress on the two legislative proposals which the Commission has recently put forward. I trust that we will be able to work constructively on those issues and I look forward to the upcoming negotiations.

These texts, together with other actions that we will take, will be crucial to ensure that our Union is a safe place for journalists where democracy thrives. We need it now more than ever during the troubled times that we are going through.

President. Commissioner, honourable Members, this was the very last intervention in my capacity as the representative of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. I would like to thank you for all the exchanges of views we had and our cooperation on a number of issues. It has been a pleasure indeed. I thank you for your attention and wish you a merry Christmas.

President. – Thank you very much, Minister, and on behalf of the European Parliament, I want to take this occasion to thank the Czech Presidency for the very good cooperation with this House, with the European Parliament, over the last six months. We appreciate all the work done and we thank you.

The debate is closed.

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15. Daudzgaļu finanšu shēmas 2021. –2027. gadam uzlabošana (debates)

President. – The next item is the debate on the report by Jan Olbrycht and Margarida Marques, on behalf of the Committee on Budgets, on upscaling the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework: a resilient EU budget fit for new challenges (2022/2046(INI)) (A9-0281/2022).

Jan Olbrycht, Rapporteur. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Ministrze! Panie Komisarzu! Pytanie, które dzisiaj sobie zadajemy, brzmi tak: dlaczego teraz, przed końcem roku 2022, uchwalamy tekst rezolucji w sprawie wieloletnich ram finansowych? Jaka jest przyczyna tego, że Parlament chce zdecydowanie prosić Komisję Europejską o przygotowanie propozycji rewizji, czyli zmiany wieloletniej perspektywy finansowej?

Zazwyczaj było tak do tej pory w doświadczeniach Parlamentu, że Parlament zgadzał się, po bardzo wielu trudnych rozmowach, na stosunkowo mniejszy budżet, zakładając, że w połowie perspektywy nastąpi jednak zmiana i że Parlament wtedy upomni się o pewne wydatki. Sytuacja dzisiaj jest zupełnie inna. Sytuacja jest dlatego inna, ponieważ warunki, które nas otaczają powodują, że zadajemy sobie pytania, czy ten budżet jest przygotowany na nowe wyzwania. Czy jesteśmy w stanie pokryć wydatki na rzeczy, które są najpilniejsze, dotyczące COVID-u, dotyczące wojny? Czy ten budżet jest właściwie skonstruowany? Czy mamy wystarczającą ilość funduszy? A równocześnie mamy nowe propozycje, nowe programy, nowe inicjatywy, które przecież kosztują.

Parlament Europejski mówi: nie wystarczy nam przegląd, nie wystarczy nam review. Musi być zmiana, ponieważ ten budżet trzeba zmienić. To nie chodzi tylko o to, żeby dać więcej pieniędzy. Chodzi o to, żeby ten budżet zmienić w taki sposób, żeby on był w stanie reagować szybko na pewne najnowsze wyzwania, żeby mógł reagować, żeby mógł odpowiadać na nowe trudności. My z jednej strony wskazujemy, gdzie są braki, gdzie naprawdę brakuje pieniędzy, a równocześnie proponujemy, co należy zrobić, w jaki sposób do tego podejść, w jaki sposób znaleźć rozwiązania, również przy przebudowie funkcjonowania budżetu.

Bardzo liczymy na współpracę Komisji Europejskiej. I nawet jeżeli wszyscy dzisiaj powtarzają, że nie będzie żadnej rewizji, to przecież padają propozycje jednak rewizji. Dopiero co przeprowadzaliśmy zmianę wieloletniej perspektywy finansowej dotyczącej pomocy makroekonomicznej dla Ukrainy. To przecież była mała rewizja wieloletniej perspektywy finansowej. Dzisiaj na tej sali pani przewodnicząca Komisji Europejskiej mówiła o zapowiedziach nowego funduszu, Funduszu Suwerenności, że pojawią się niedługo propozycje. Jak będzie ten fundusz, co trzeba będzie zrobić? Trzeba będzie zmienić wieloletnie perspektywy finansowe. Inaczej mówiąc – wiemy, że trzeba będzie zmienić. Politycznie jest to bardzo trudna decyzja.

Parlament dzisiaj w rezolucji mówi: oczekujemy od Komisji bardzo pilnego działania. Oczekujemy, że Komisja przedstawi swoją propozycję zmiany w pierwszym kwartale roku 2023. Czas ucieka. Ten budżet naprawdę trzeba zmienić. Wieloletnia perspektywa wymaga rewizji. My mówimy, w jaki sposób chcielibyśmy to zrobić, gdzie należy szukać środków, w jaki sposób podejść do nowych źródeł dochodów w Unii Europejskiej. A więc czas na działanie. A na razie, Panie Komisarzu, przedkładamy rezolucję, a w niej oczekujemy od Komisji pilnego działania.

Margarida Marques, Rapporteur. – Senhora Presidente, Presidente, Senhor Comissário, dois anos após a sua entrada em vigor, o Quadro Financeiro Plurianual 2021-2027 no pilar da gestão centralizada foi levado até ao limite da sua disponibilidade orçamental. E isto, tendo ao lado o NextGenerationEU, que também tem permitido reagir aos efeitos económicos e sociais da pandemia.

Desafios inesperados chegaram ao orçamento da União Europeia: o apoio à Ucrânia, nas suas diferentes dimensões, o apoio às pessoas e às empresas para mitigar as consequências económicas e sociais da guerra, o impacto dos preços da energia, dos bens alimentares ou o efeito da inflação crescente.

Funcionou, tem funcionado o princípio da flexibilidade, mas já percebemos que o uso da flexibilidade é insuficiente. Registo aqui a força e a vontade política do Parlamento Europeu, enquanto autoridade orçamental, tomando decisões em tempo recorde para que os europeus tenham os apoios necessários da União Europeia. Das vacinas ao apoio aos refugiados ucranianos, ou apoiando o financiamento em 18 mil milhões de euros para o funcionamento do Estado ucraniano, para que possa assegurar os serviços mínimos aos cidadãos.

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É hoje evidente que a arquitetura do Quadro Financeiro Plurianual não está ajustada à pressão a que é sujeito, nem ao calendário macroeconómico atual. O atual QFP, tal como está, não está equipado para financiar políticas emergentes, como a transição climática e o respeito pelo Acordo de Paris, a cooperação acrescida em matéria de defesa, a criação de um fundo soberano para o reforço da autonomia estratégica da União Europeia, a construção da autonomia energética, onde o REPowerEU tem de se tornar um instrumento-chave, a implementação do Regulamento Circuitos Integrados, o Fundo Social para o Clima, que, sim, deve estar dentro do orçamento da União Europeia.

Por isso, precisamos de um quadro financeiro plurianual revisto. Por isso, precisamos de passar de soluções pontuais para soluções estruturais na arquitetura do orçamento. Precisamos, do lado da receita, que os novos recursos próprios acordados em 2020 entrem no orçamento da União, no calendário aprovado.

Para que o orçamento da União possa reagir rapidamente às crises e aos seus efeitos sociais e económicos, propomos a criação de um instrumento permanente que possa ser ativado sempre que necessário. Por isso, precisamos que a Comissão proponha um instrumento permanente dentro do QFP e esperamos, Senhor Comissário, que seja esse o seu legado para o futuro do orçamento da União.

Comissário HAHN, o Parlamento Europeu não quer continuar a assistir à criação de instrumentos financeiros fora do orçamento da União Europeia, em que o Parlamento viu o seu poder de autoridade orçamental reduzido. Assim se criou o Mecanismo Europeu de Estabilidade em 2012 e, fora do âmbito comunitário e mais recentemente, o NextGenerationEU. Chega de recorrer ao artigo 122.^o Também não queremos um financiamento fora do orçamento da União, via recursos externos, queremos mais transparência, mais responsabilidade democrática. Também não queremos que a política de coesão seja continuamente usada como um mecanismo de resposta à crise, como teve que ser agora, e bem, porque não havia outra solução para compensar as deficiências na flexibilidade orçamental. Não! A política de coesão não é um instrumento de crises, é a política de investimento da União Europeia e tem de continuar a sê-lo.

Comissário HAHN, como sempre, terá do Parlamento Europeu todo o apoio para tornar o orçamento da União Europeia mais eficaz e mais efetivo para sustentar a ambição política da União Europeia.

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, but in particular the rapporteurs, the Commission really welcomes, and I in particular welcome, the debate on the Parliament's own initiative report on upscaling the current multiannual financial framework: a resilient EU budget fit for new challenges. I am looking forward to exchange constructive ideas with you today, but not only today, but in the next couple of weeks and probably months.

Let me start by acknowledging the work of the co-rapporteurs of the draft report, Ms Marques and Mr Olbrycht, in particular on the assessment of the new pressures to the Union budget and on the important role of flexibility measures to respond to crises.

In the letter of intent on 14 September this year, President von der Leyen confirmed that the Commission will present a mid-term review of the current MFF in 2023, meaning earlier than the original 2024 date that the Commission had included in its 2020 declaration.

As you know, carrying out such a review is a voluntary initiative of the Commission, not a legal obligation. The commitment for an MFF review is not a commitment to propose a revision, and at this stage it's too early to speculate or foresee any such initiative. We will need to assess our options carefully, bearing in mind that the long-term budget agreed in 2020 lasts until 2027. It must be able to support the Union's priorities and react to new challenges over the next 4 to 5 years.

The Union budget has always been a key instrument to support the Union in delivering on its policy agenda and investing in projects that No Member State can implement as efficiently and effectively on its own. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union budget has served as one of Europe's key crisis response tools.

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Nevertheless, we cannot ignore that since the adoption of the current MFF and NextGenerationEU in December 2020, new and unexpected challenges, and in particular Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its fallout within and outside the Union, have been bringing significant pressure on the Union budget. Furthermore, the macroeconomic environment is also more challenging amid rising inflation and interest rates. We are all acutely aware how these developments affect the finances and how difficult it has been to reach an agreement on the annual budget for next year.

The questions underpinning the review will in large part have to take into account the new challenges as well as the implementation so far. Finding a strong and common response in this challenging environment requires deep reflection about the future of the Union budget and our joint efforts as Europeans.

The Commission will carefully assess the sustainability of the expenditure ceilings and subceilings of the current MFF, because the Union budget must continue enabling us to deliver on our policy priorities. We must also factor in our joint commitment on the repayment of NextGenerationEU and our ambitions about the new own resources.

Let me conclude by stressing again that the Commission looks forward to the ideas of the European Parliament in their own-initiative report, and we also take note of the planned own-initiative report on own resources that this committee is preparing for the beginning of next year. Both reports will be timely and important input to the reflection of the mid-term review of the MFF, and I am already today grateful for your constant and permanent support in our joint efforts to develop and to agree, hopefully, on an adapted Union budget which indeed addresses the needs we are facing in the near future.

Michael Gahler, *Verfasser der Stellungnahme des mitberatenden Ausschusses für auswärtige Angelegenheiten*. – Frau Präsidentin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ja, ich spreche hier für den Ausschuss für auswärtige Angelegenheiten, und das ist einer der Politikbereiche, wo es ganz offensichtlich ist, dass es vorne und hinten nicht reicht.

Herr Kommissar, schön, dass Sie da sind. Ich hätte mir gewünscht, dass vom Rat auch jemand da wäre, denn die müssen da auch zuhören, und ich hoffe, das wird denen auch hinterbracht. Wir müssen uns ehrlich machen. So sehr ich als Ukraine-Berichterstatter froh bin, dass man im Bereich der *Peace Facility* außerhalb des Haushalts jetzt offenbar etwas drauf legt, können wir es im Parlament nicht als Prinzip akzeptieren, dass angesichts der neuen Herausforderungen hier außerhalb des Haushalts Dinge veranstaltet werden. Als der Finanzrahmen verabschiedet wurde, da hatten wir weder Corona noch den verbrecherischen russischen Angriffskrieg. Wenn wir jetzt Corona und den verbrecherischen Krieg hatten und haben, dann müssen wir darauf reagieren, und zwar innerhalb der institutionellen Verantwortlichkeiten.

Dann sage ich als Abgeordneter: Alles das, was wir mehr brauchen, muss sich auch im Haushalt wiederfinden. Deswegen ist die Debatte, die wir hier anstoßen, eine notwendige. Ich hoffe, dass die Kommission auch den Mut findet, dann sich dem anzuschließen.

Charles Goerens, *rapporteur pour avis de la commission du développement*. – Madame la Présidente, le Parlement européen ne cesse de réclamer une révision à mi-parcours de l'actuelle période de financement de l'Union. En matière de planification budgétaire, il importe de se projeter sur le moyen terme et le long terme – c'est une évidence.

J'ai déjà eu l'occasion de dire, dans une intervention précédente, que le regard que porteront nos collègues en 2040 sur ce que nous faisons aujourd'hui dans ce domaine est ce qui compte vraiment. Les Ukrainiens – mais pas seulement eux, les pays en développement aussi, ceux qui sont tributaires de notre concours et qui souffrent énormément du télescopage des crises qui ne cessent de nous secouer depuis 2008 — pourront juger alors du degré de pertinence de nos choix politiques et budgétaires, et verront si nous avons été à la hauteur. On verra si nous avons été à même de défendre nos libertés et de reconstruire un ordre international fondé sur le droit, ou si nous avons laissé des pays frugaux avoir raison des choix qui s'imposent en ce moment.

Petri Sarvamaa, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Budgetary Control*. –Madam President, honourable Vice-President, Commissioner, over the past few years we have faced several crises to which we have had to react quickly with various financial instruments.

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This has indeed been necessary, but I would also like to use this opportunity to remind about the importance of economic balance in the long run. The Member States of the Union have significantly increased their borrowing, and the EU's attitude towards debt has also been very compassionate, I would say.

In the meanwhile it seems we have forgotten to have a serious debate about economic discipline and its significance. As Commission President Ms von der Leyen has also said in this Chamber, stability and growth can only go hand in hand. This basic principle must also be borne in mind when the Commission carries out a mid-term review of the MFF.

And not to forget that we must stop expanding the so-called 'budgetary galaxy' which has, among other things, limited the possibilities for the Parliament to monitor the use of EU funds.

Dragoș Pîslaru, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*. – Madam President, dear Commissioner Hahn, the challenges that we have faced since the adoption of the MFF 2021 to 2027 place us in a completely changed social, economic and political context. It is clear that we need to look at a very different scale for flexibility, as well as the resources needed to navigate through these challenging times.

Today, just to browse some data, 96.5 million people in the EU are at the risk of poverty and social exclusion, which represents a staggering 21.9% of the population. Imagine: one in five Europeans is suffering at the edge of poverty in this multiple crisis that we are having today – energy, inflation, and a potential economic crisis as well.

These numbers will grow at the same pace as inflation and food and energy prices increase across the EU. On behalf of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, we would like to have an urgent increase of European Child Guarantee funding through a dedicated budget of at least EUR 20 billion for the period 2021-2027. This needs to be at the core of the revised MFF and reinforced ESF+. This means we have to provide higher public and social investment. We need to be more ambitious than initially planned.

Isabel García Muñoz, *ponente de opinión de la Comisión de Transportes y Turismo*. – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, como ponente de la Comisión de Transportes y Turismo para este informe me gustaría destacar que los dos hitos principales que condicionan esta revisión ponen todavía más en evidencia el valor de invertir en movilidad y en infraestructuras en la Unión Europea.

La COVID-19 y la guerra en Ucrania han tenido un impacto incalculable en los sistemas de transporte y de turismo europeos, sectores que contribuyen, y mucho, a la economía y a la creación de empleo en Europa. El presupuesto del Mecanismo «Conectar Europa» 2021-2027, que ya era insuficiente, no puede abarcar las nuevas necesidades de transporte. El nuevo contexto geopolítico y la urgencia de acelerar la independencia energética y la descarbonización del transporte requieren más fondos europeos.

El Consejo no supo entender el valor añadido de invertir en movilidad dual. Hemos visto que adaptar las redes de transporte a un uso de defensa beneficia al uso civil y que, además, facilitaría el transporte de material humanitario y del grano de Ucrania a través de los corredores solidarios.

No me olvido del sector del turismo, que también se ha visto muy afectado en los últimos años y para el que volvemos a insistir en contar con un presupuesto específico europeo.

Victor Negrescu, *rapporteur for the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education*. – Madam President, dear Commissioner, dear colleagues, the current challenges require concrete measures – including, of course, the revision and upscaling of the multiannual financial framework. We need a budget that offers solutions to the current needs that enables us to manage the different crises, including inflation, the energy crises and social and regional disparities. We call, of course, for more flexibility in the annual EU budgeting, new own resources, but also to become more efficient in the use of available funds.

We have to make sure that the current EU programmes are functioning properly, so therefore beneficiaries of EU funds from programmes like Erasmus+, the Active Europe Programme or the European Solidarity Corps, but also from structural funds, are waiting for us to provide the solutions to continue to implement their projects.

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Today, it is more difficult than ever for students to go on Erasmus mobility. It is complicated for an artist to implement a cultural programme or for NGOs, social partners and local authorities to co-finance their projects.

We must also focus resources on the actions that directly help EU citizens to deal with the increases of living costs, to upskill and to get access to quality education and health services.

We need to be fair and open about what needs to happen. Transparency and fighting against corruption are key elements. No more 'frugals' versus 'cohesion countries'. It is about all of us getting through the current crisis together and not leaving anyone behind.

I am glad the European Parliament thinks ahead and plans for the MFF revision.

José Manuel Fernandes, *em nome do Grupo PPE*. – Senhora Presidente, Caras e Caros Colegas, Senhor Comissário, a revisão do orçamento plurianual é uma urgência, é uma evidência. Aliás, a Comissão Europeia, com as suas propostas para o REPowerEU, para a conectividade segura, os semicondutores, a proposta de um fundo soberano para reforçar a autonomia estratégica, veio demonstrar que está a mudar o quadro financeiro plurianual, está a fazer cortes em alguns programas e está a fazer reafetações.

Portanto, é evidente para todos que é necessário mudar, rever, reforçar o quadro financeiro plurianual. Uma evidência que é uma urgência, como eu referi. Aquilo que é necessário fazer é reforçar os programas europeus na área da saúde, do digital, da energia, da segurança, da defesa. Se não o fizermos, vamos pagar caro. Aliás, vemos o que a União Europeia paga pelo facto de não ter uma união da energia.

Para tudo isto, também precisamos de recursos próprios, de novas receitas que não prejudiquem e que ajudem a termos novos recursos (*a Presidente retira a palavra ao orador*).

Juozas Olekas, *Žemės ūkio komiteto nuomonės referentas*. – Ačiū, Pirmininke. Komisijos nare, mieli kolegos. Pirmiausia noriu pasveikinti Parlamento iniciatyvą peržiūrėti daugiamečių finansinę perspektyvą. Pastarųjų metų įvykiai pakeitė mūsų pasaulį ir anksčiau priimtus sprendimus tikslinga koreguoti. Ypač svarbu užtikrinti apsirūpinimą maistu ir Europos savarankiškumą šioje srityje. Putino Rusijos karas prieš Ukrainą sukėlė rimtą pavojų maisto tiekimo sistemoms. Kitas labai svarbus aspektas mūsų kova su klimato kaita. Paketas „Fit For 55“ turėtų būti susietas su daugiamečių finansine perspektyva. Biudžetą peržiūrėti taip pat reikia ir dėl sparčiai kylančių kainų. Reikia ypač atsižvelgti į jaunų ir smulkių ūkininkų padėtį. Karas didžiausią poveikį turi toms šalims, kurios yra netoli fronto linijos. O ūkininkų gebėjimui užtikrinti aprūpinimą maistu didelę įtaką turi bendrosios žemės ūkio politikos išmokų skirtumai. Rytuose esančios valstybės narės, kurių ūkininkai gauna mažiausias išmokas, patiria didžiausią spaudimą dėl karo Ukrainoje. Turėtume parodyti Europinį solidarumą ir įvykdyti senus pažadus: užtikrinti mūsų Rytų Europos ūkininkams tiesioginių išmokų vidurkį.

Nils Ušakovs, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, Commissioner, dear Colleagues, the Latvian media recently reported about a renovation project of a leading hospital in Riga that will be financed by Next Generation EU. EUR 37 million are planned to be spent on full reconstruction of historical premises, as well as buying heavily needed modern medical equipment.

Spending European money to upgrade a hospital in order to cope with the crisis resulting from a pandemic, that is a fantastic example of a European programme that is both highly demanded and effectively implemented. But we are already facing a new crisis which is incomparable in its magnitude and social consequence neither to the pandemic nor any other crisis of the last decades.

This time we will have to provide direct support to our citizens and help them to pay for heating, but also to buy food. Hospital renovation will look like a luxury type of support, comparing to much greater challenges we will be facing in the next years.

It's not a question of social solidarity or fairness only, it's a question of avoiding widening the dangerous gap between the East and West European Union. The western part of the EU has much higher capacities to provide help to its citizens, while in the eastern part, people literally will have to choose either paying for their heating or for their food.

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This winter, like in my home country, Latvia, we need to upscale the MFF to the levels that will allow us to establish Next Generation EU 2.0 and help Europeans directly.

Valérie Hayer, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente. Monsieur le Commissaire, chers collègues, s'il y a bien une leçon que nous retenons de la guerre russe en Ukraine, c'est que nos dépendances sont nos faiblesses. L'énergie en est une. Les puces, les batteries, les matières premières, les panneaux photovoltaïques et les produits chimiques en sont d'autres. Or, ces dépendances nous coûtent un peu plus chaque jour.

La réalité, chers collègues, est la suivante: Northvolt, groupe suédois spécialisé dans les batteries, l'espagnol Iberdrola, qui figure parmi les plus grandes sociétés d'énergie au monde, le français Safran, l'un des principaux fournisseurs de moteurs d'avion, ou encore le géant de la chimie allemand BASF sont tous en train d'annoncer en cascade leur volonté de rediriger leurs investissements vers les États-Unis.

La réalité, chers collègues, est que notre tissu industriel se déchire. Il se déchire à cause des prix de l'énergie, qui sont bien sûr le résultat de notre naïveté énergétique, qui a mené à notre dépendance aux hydrocarbures puisés dans l'Oural. Notre tissu industriel se déchire aussi à cause de notre incapacité à faire jeu égal avec les grands de ce monde: avec les États-Unis, qui lancent un grand plan de subventions, et avec la Chine, qui surprotège ses entreprises.

J'ai donc une question pour tous ceux qui sont ici dans cet hémicycle: quand va-t-on sortir de notre naïveté? Quand va-t-on reconnaître que ce n'est pas en appliquant de nouveau, encore et encore, les mêmes vieilles recettes ayant mené à nos dépendances que nous rendrons l'Europe plus forte, plus à même de faire croître ses entreprises, mais surtout plus à même de garder ses entreprises chez nous?

Monsieur le Commissaire, proposez-nous une révision ambitieuse de ce cadre financier pluriannuel; proposez-nous ce fonds de souveraineté; mais, je vous en conjure, munissez-le de véritables moyens, parce que d'énormes redéploiements ne dupèrent personne, ni nos entrepreneurs, ni nos investisseurs.

Rasmus Andresen, *im Namen der Verts/ALE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin! Mit diesem Haushalt ist die EU nicht zukunftsfähig. Deshalb brauchen wir jetzt ein Update. Klimaneutralität bis 2050, die sozialen Folgen der Wirtschaftskrise, mehr sicherheitspolitische Verantwortung, der industriepolitische Wettbewerb mit den USA und China, aktive Partnerschaften auf dem Balkan und dem afrikanischen Kontinent, die Digitalisierung, das Artensterben – die Herausforderungen sind groß.

Die Antworten auf die großen Fragen müssen europäisch sein. Deshalb ist es an der Zeit, aus Sonntagsreden konkrete und in Zahlen gegossene Politik zu machen. Wir brauchen eine Revision des Finanzrahmens, um gemeinsame europäische Prioritäten auskömmlich zu finanzieren.

Aber es geht nicht einfach nur um mehr Geld. Es geht auch um die Qualität der Ausgaben. Noch immer wird viel zu viel europäisches Geld klimaschädlich ausgegeben. Durch unseren EU-Haushalt tragen wir dazu bei, dass klimaschädliche Infrastruktur gefördert wird und das Artensterben voranschreitet. Wir müssen unsere Klimaquoten verbindlicher machen, Nichteinhaltung muss stärkere Konsequenzen haben, und wir müssen klimaschädliche Subventionen aus dem Haushalt streichen. Deshalb haben wir gemeinsam mit den Liberalen zu dem heutigen Bericht konkrete Änderungsvorschläge vorgelegt.

Mein Appell soll in den letzten Stunden vor der Abstimmung vor allem an die sozialdemokratischen Kolleginnen und Kollegen hier im Haus gehen: Sie sind das Zünglein an der Waage. Stimmen Sie morgen für unsere Änderungsanträge, stimmen Sie für eine bessere Klimafinanzierung, machen Sie mit uns den Haushalt klimakonform!

Joachim Kuhs, *im Namen der ID-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, wertee Kollegen! Erst vor Kurzem habe ich hier prophezeit, dass der Haushalt 2023 nicht zukunftsfähig sei und bald platzen werde.

Heute kann ich dies wiederholen, denn heute wollen Sie den Siebenjahresplan wieder neu justieren, indem Sie diesen riesigen Ball weiter mit Geld aufpumpen, und zwar mit Geld, das Sie noch nicht haben und vermutlich auch niemals in der erforderlichen Höhe mit den geplanten Eigenmitteln einnehmen werden. Und dann passiert im nächsten Jahr exakt das Gleiche wieder.

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Liebe Kollegen, dabei sollten wir uns heute doch auf Weihnachten freuen und das Kommen des Erlösers in die Finsternis dieser Welt feiern. Ich wünsche Ihnen deshalb – trotz all dieser kriminellen Ereignisse derzeit – eine fröhliche und gnadenbringende Weihnacht.

Und nicht vergessen: Die Schätze der Weisen aus dem Morgenland, die sind völlig unbedenklich. Sie dienten nicht der Bestechung wie bei den Königen von Katar, sondern der Würdigung des neugeborenen Königs. Mögen auch Sie sich an allen Geschenken, die sie zur Weihnachtszeit bekommen, von Herzen und ohne Reue freuen können.

Bogdan Rzońca, w imieniu grupy ECR. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Szanowni Państwo! Polepszenie wieloletnich ram finansowych – tak. Łamanie traktatów – nie. Oczywiście popieramy każde działanie, które przyniesie ulgę walczącemu narodowi ukraińskiemu. Z tym się zgadzamy. Chcemy także pamiętać o tym, że należne jest wsparcie państwom członkowskim, które pomagają uchodźcom uciekającym przed wojną na Ukrainie do różnych krajów. Trzeba to zauważyć w budżecie Unii Europejskiej.

Należy również pozytywnie ocenić decyzję o przyznaniu Ukrainie i Mołdawii statusu krajów kandydujących. Popieramy to. Ponadto zgadzamy się, że rola budżetu Unii jako gwaranta dodatkowej pomocy makrofinansowej dla Ukrainy jest niezbędna. To też popieramy. Musimy jednak zaapelować, by nowe inicjatywy polityczne były finansowane za pomocą świeżych środków bez szkody dla wcześniej istniejących programów lub polityk unijnych, a nowe zasoby nie mogą mieć charakteru agresywnego. A tak się może zdarzyć, bo słyszymy, że pewne kraje na skutek nowych pomysłów podatkowych tracą swoje dochody, tak jak Polska. My możemy po prostu na tych nowych pomysłach dużo stracić.

Nie możemy też absolutnie zgodzić się z odejściem od jednomyślności na rzecz głosowania większością kwalifikowaną podczas przyjmowania rozporządzenia w sprawie wieloletnich ram finansowych. Taki pomysł bardzo psuje solidarnościową politykę państw unijnych i wzajemne zaufanie. Narzucanie głosowania większością kwalifikowaną niesie za sobą ryzyko pogłębiania różnic między państwami członkowskimi. Więksi będą ważniejsi, mniejsi będą tłamszeni. Tego bardzo się obawiamy. To jest kardynalna zmiana i na nią się nie chcemy zgodzić. A więc zrobmy wszystko, żeby nie niszczyć jedności Unii Europejskiej.

Younous Omarjee, au nom du groupe The Left. – Madame la Présidente, il y a deux ans, quand les États membres se sont mis d'accord sur le budget, c'était avant la guerre d'Ukraine. C'était avant les crises humanitaire, sociale, économique, migratoire et énergétique qui en ont découlé. C'était avant la terrible inflation.

Aujourd'hui, les crises sont là. Elles se combinent et elles s'inscrivent dans la durée. Elles sont un véritable défi pour se donner la capacité budgétaire de mieux faire face aux accidents de l'histoire, tout en gardant le cap des ambitions stratégiques de cohésion, de réindustrialisation, de transition énergétique et de lutte contre la pauvreté.

La solution, en réalité, nous la connaissons: c'est un grand budget européen, avec de grandes ressources fiscales propres et plus d'autonomie par rapport aux États. La taxe sur les transactions financières représente à elle seule 50 milliards d'euros de plus. Nous devons aujourd'hui la mettre en place, sans tarder.

Puhetta johti HEIDI HAUTALA

varapuhemies

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Andor Deli (NI). – Elnök Asszony! A jelentés célja a 2021-27-es pénzügyi keret felülvizsgálata, ugyanakkor még meg sem kezdődött a lényegi végrehajtása. Az új közös agrárpolitika csak 2023-tól indul, az új kohéziós forrásokból még semmit, a helyreállítási forrásokból pedig csak 136 milliárd eurót fizetett ki az Unió. Ebben a helyzetben, amikor még nincsenek értékelhető eredmények, nem megalapozott felülvizsgálatot követelni. Nézzük például a kohéziós eszközöket. Mindjárt 2023 van, mégis, még az előző, 2014-20-as időszak kifizetéseinél tartunk. Az új partnerségi megállapodások megkötése nagyon lassan haladt, és örülhetünk, ha a jövő év első felében legalább az előlegek kifizetésére sor kerül.

Felvetődik tehát a kérdés, hogy miért nem jutnak a tagállamok az őket megillető uniós forrásokhoz? A válasz: a felesleges adminisztratív terhek, politikai alapú jogállamisági zsarolás, túlzó, a kifizetéseket megnehezítő feltételrendszerek. Ezek lebontásán kellene inkább dolgozni. Nincs vesztegetni való időnk! Az új gazdasági válságot látva elengedhetetlen, hogy a tagállamok mihamarabb hozzájussanak az őket megillető forrásokhoz.

Siegfried Mureșan (PPE). – Madam President, Commissioner, dear colleagues, when we adopted the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, we adopted it together with Next Generation EU. Next Generation EU and the budget together allow for more spending, more investments than ever at the level of the European Union.

But these two together are bigger than previous budgets. But, because of Next Generation EU, we decided to cut the budget narrower than before, and there are areas in the budget where the funding is insufficient simply because the budget, the headings, the lines are smaller than before.

Of course, it would be wrong to always ask for bigger budgets, like it is also wrong to always ask for smaller budgets. The right thing to do for us now in the context of the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework is to look concretely where we can improve things, where we can do better. And one proposal is the following: in the budget we have included the repayment of the interest rate for Next Generation EU.

We do not know exactly how much interest rate we will have to pay in each year, and including that inside the ceilings of the Multiannual Financial Framework means that we have an amount there which can grow and, if it grows, it becomes a risk for priorities of the budget and it also becomes a risk for our capacity to react in situations of crisis.

The more we spend for interest rates inside the budget, the more we have for our real priorities, for our real policies and for helping people in need in times of crisis. And this is why I would like to reiterate what already is an official position of the Parliament to have the repayment of Next Generation EU interest payments outside the ceilings of the budget.

Other than that, of course, we have to make sure that we allow for more flexibility in the context of this revision and that we really look at those lines in which we had unexpected crises, foreign policy, migration, borders, where the money that we provided is not enough,

Concrete solutions for concrete problems, this is what we demand.

Pierre Larroustourou (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, chers amis, nous sommes face à deux crises qui peuvent avoir des conséquences catastrophiques si nos politiques et notre budget, notre CFP, ne sont pas à la hauteur.

La première crise est la flambée des prix liée à la guerre en Ukraine. Ce soir, des millions de citoyennes et de citoyens vont avoir froid en rentrant chez elles et chez eux. Des millions de nos amis auront froid. Des millions de femmes et d'hommes doivent choisir tous les jours entre chauffer normalement la maison et faire les courses normalement pour nourrir la famille. Si le prix de l'énergie reste trop élevé trop longtemps, on risque des délocalisations catastrophiques.

L'autre crise est le dérèglement climatique. En 2022, les canicules, les incendies, les feux de forêt et les inondations ont fait des dizaines de milliers de morts à travers le monde.

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Le point commun à ces deux crises est le besoin d'argent et de budget. Pour faire face aux conséquences de la guerre en Ukraine, les États-Unis ont mis 400 milliards de subventions sur la table pour la loi sur la réduction de l'inflation. Et nous, ne pourrions-nous pas faire pareil, pour aider toutes les familles et toutes les entreprises qui en ont besoin et pour financer enfin une autonomie stratégique de l'Europe?

Beaucoup de pays ne sont pas d'accord pour un plan européen et bloquent en disant que l'on ne sait pas comment rembourser Next Generation, le plan qu'on a adopté pour faire face à la COVID-19. Bonne nouvelle, le Parlement européen propose des solutions pour les trois problèmes: si l'on crée enfin la taxe sur la spéculation, que le Parlement demande depuis des années, on pourrait avoir 57 milliards chaque année.

Or, si l'on a 57 milliards chaque année, on peut rembourser Next Generation – 12 milliards chaque année pendant trente ans. On peut financer un plan de lutte contre l'inflation et financer un plan pour le climat – 37 milliards chaque année. Mes amis, il est urgent de fixer la taxe sur la spéculation. (*La Présidente interrompt l'orateur*)

President. - Excuse me, colleague, I am obliged to tell you that presentations are not allowed in plenary. It's not personal, it's in the Rules.

Pierre Larroustou (S&D). – Je continue en disant: mes amis, il n'est pas nécessaire d'avoir l'unanimité, il suffit d'une coopération renforcée pour créer la taxe sur la spéculation, qui donnerait 57 milliards chaque année et nous permettrait d'éviter le chaos social et le chaos climatique. Je ne sais donc pas ce que l'on attend.

Puhemies. – Todellakin meillä on siis säännöissä pykälä, jonka mukaan täällä ei saa esittää (*sanat eivät kuulu*) ... ei sallita eikä myöskään, niin kuin muistatte, lippuja ja bannereita. Tämä liittyy siihen samaan asiaan.

Nicolae Ștefănuță (Renew). – (*începutul intervenției nu a fost făcut la microfon*) ... crize ale cetățenilor europeni. Putem veni cu tot felul de legislație, de propuneri, dar dacă nu punem banii să le facem, e degeaba. Cetățenii așteaptă rezultate, nu vorbe. Și știm care sunt problemele structurale, le-a spus și domnul Siegfried Mureșan. Acestea sunt rezerve microscopice. Avem costurile dobânzilor în bugetul Uniunii Europene. Avem înlocuirea metodei comunitare cu metoda interguvernamentală, care este un pericol pentru noi, pentru Uniunea Europeană.

Am văzut că bugetul este în criză încă de la începutul acestui an. Când am început să muncesc ca raportor pentru 2023, am fost primul care a spus că bugetul pentru șapte ani trebuie redeschis și renegociat. Pentru că am observat de la început că nu avem bani necesari pentru energie, nu avem pentru Moldova, nu avem pentru Ucraina atât cât ne trebuie. Cadrul financiar trebuie redeschis cât mai repede posibil în primul trimestru al anului 2023, așa încât să ridicăm plafoanele acestui buget, așa încât să dăm un răspuns așteptărilor cetățenilor.

Înainte de a ține o predică oamenilor, Isus Hristos le-a spus ucenicilor să hrănească mulțimile înfometate. Deci, nu putem vorbi cu mintea și sufletul oamenilor despre valori până nu le răspundem priorităților. Crăciun fericit și vă aștept la anul cu răspunsuri.

Alexandra Geese (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, Commissioner, colleagues, every study shows that women work more than men, but they have a lower income – and that's called the gender pay gap.

In the same way, we have a public budget gender pay gap, and in order to measure that gap and to find out what causes this, we agreed in the MFF on finding a methodology to measure the impact of the MFF expenditure on gender equality. But the method the Commission is coming up with now does not draw an accurate picture because it doesn't take into account any negative impact that major programmes might have.

We should be learning the lesson from NextGenerationEU where we have some nice wording on gender equality in the regulation, but we are finding out now that from 70% to 80% of that expenditure goes to one gender and that's not the gender that has been hardest hit by the COVID crisis – women. The result is that NextGenerationEU might even increase the gender pay gap.

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So we expect strong action on gender equality in the MFF review, and we expect that from a Commission President who represents European women more than any of her predecessors.

Matteo Adinolfi (ID). – Signora Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, l'attuale quadro finanziario pluriennale è sottoposto a forti tensioni a causa delle molteplici crisi che l'Unione europea sta affrontando, in particolare la guerra in Ucraina e gli effetti che ha scatenato.

Con i fondi e le misure di flessibilità già ampiamente utilizzati e un'inflazione elevata, è auspicabile una revisione urgente del quadro finanziario pluriennale.

È altresì necessario che la Commissione continui il suo lavoro con gli Stati membri, anche attraverso l'assistenza tecnica, per aumentare la loro capacità di utilizzo dei fondi senza compromettere la qualità dei progetti ed evitarne l'uso improprio e le relative frodi.

La Commissione dovrebbe poi assicurare che l'Ufficio europeo per la lotta antifrode, la Corte dei conti e la Procura europea dispongano dei mezzi e del personale necessari per indagare su potenziali casi di frode a danno del bilancio comunitario.

Alla luce dello scandalo emerso in questi giorni, al fine di tutelare l'immagine di questa istituzione e soprattutto del lavoro svolto quotidianamente da noi deputati, è necessario garantire la massima trasparenza e responsabilità sugli strumenti di finanziamento comunitario. Lo dobbiamo ai cittadini europei.

Zbigniew Kuźmiuk (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Obecne ramy finansowe były tworzone na długo przed epidemią COVID-19 i jej skutkami, na długo przed wojną w Ukrainie, na długo przed podwyższoną inflacją czy destabilizacją rynków surowców energetycznych, ze wszystkimi tego negatywnymi konsekwencjami. Nie ulega więc wątpliwości, że potrzebna jest ich rewizja w tych nowych warunkach. Zresztą organizowanie pomocy makrofinansowej dla Ukrainy jest dowodem na to, że dodatkowe, świeże pieniądze są potrzebne.

Ale chciałbym zgłosić tutaj dwa zasadnicze zastrzeżenia do propozycji, które pojawiają się także w sprawozdaniu. Otóż te nowe zasoby własne, szczególnie o charakterze środowiskowym, mają charakter regresywny. Bardziej obciążają kraje mniej zamożne niż te bogate i doświadczenia z opłatą od nieprzetworzonego plastiku w przypadku mojego kraju, Polski, dobitnie to pokazują.

I drugie poważne zastrzeżenie to sprzeciw wobec chęci wprowadzenia zasady kwalifikowanej większości przy uchwalaniu ram finansowych. Panie Komisarzu, to jest absolutnie nie do przyjęcia. Umawialiśmy się, że o sprawach finansowych decydujemy jednomyślnie. I to, co się proponuje, pogłębi tylko różnice pomiędzy krajami.

João Pimenta Lopes (The Left). – Senhora Presidente, o Parlamento reconhece o que já se antecipava quando aprovou o orçamento: o orçamento é insuficiente. Mais ainda no quadro dos sucessivos instrumentos, impondo ou mais endividamento ou antecipação de verbas, ou a resposta a mais com o mesmo orçamento.

O problema, inflação e guerra, dizem. Mas onde cabem os impactos das sanções ou os aproveitamentos especulativos que geram lucros ainda mais obscenos aos grandes grupos económicos? E que dizer de sucessivas reduções do orçamento na coesão, nos envelopes nacionais, na agricultura e pescas, enquanto se opta pelo aumento das despesas militares e pelos programas que servem sobretudo às grandes potências, o que não é conjuntural, mas resulta, sim, de uma decisão e opção política.

O que se exige é um efetivo reforço do orçamento através das contribuições nacionais com base no rendimento nacional bruto de cada país, pondo fim às borlas aos países que mais beneficiam da integração, o reforço cabal da coesão e dos fundos estruturais, eliminando as rubricas de defesa e intervencionismo externo, o fim da condicionalidade económica e política e o alinhamento das opções de investimento com as necessidades reais de cada país.

Karlo Ressler (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, poštovani povjereniče, kolegice i kolege, proračun je temelj svakog europskog djelovanja u našim državama članicama, u našem neposrednom susjedstvu, ali i šire.

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Kroz proračun određujemo naše strateške prioritete i budućnost našeg razvoja. Politički, gospodarski i socijalni kontekst u kojem definiramo te prioritete promijenjeni su do neprepoznatljivosti nakon brutalne ruske agresije na Ukrajinu. Tektonske promjene u sigurnosnoj strukturi i sigurnosnoj arhitekturi Europe, povijesna prekretnica, ali i ostali rastući globalni izazovi, nepredviđene potrebe koje su nastale u Europi zbog rata daleko nadilaze sredstva koja imamo na raspolaganju. Imamo ljudsku i moralnu odgovornost stati uz ukrajinski narod koji se bori za svoju slobodu, za svoju opstojnost, a isto tako imamo i odgovornost podržati Europu u transformaciji koja je pred nama. U novoj epohi neizvjesnosti pred nama su i nevjerovatne potrebe, od digitalne zelene tranzicije, europske konkurentnosti, sigurnosti i obrane. Treba nam povratak temeljnim europskim politikama kojih nema bez odgovarajućih sredstava.

Krajnje je vrijeme zato za ozbiljnu, temeljitu, detaljnu reviziju višegodišnjeg finansijskog okvira.

Ilan De Basso (S&D). – Fru talman! Det är kris i Europa, och EU har i det här skedet visat handlingskraft. Vi har satsat hundratals miljarder på att öka energiproduktionen. Vi stöder Ukraina ekonomiskt och militärt och vi är i färd med att tvinga ner elpriserna.

Samarbete och solidaritet i EU är centralt för att vi ska klara den här krisen. Men vi måste också vara medvetna om våra begränsningar. För i den här allvarliga krisen så är det våra länder som drar det tyngsta lasset. Det är de nationella välfärdssystemen som våra medborgare förlitar sig på. Det är på nationell nivå som elstödet finansieras. Det är viktigt att vi har en diskussion om EU:s budget och hur vi kan göra så att den fungerar bättre.

Men vi måste förstå att det vi gör i EU måste komplettera det som görs i de enskilda medlemsstaterna. För här och nu är det våra länder som stöttar medborgarna. Det är där vi snabbt kan få fram hjälp till de mest utsatta grupperna. Jag är övertygad om att det är där våra gemensamma resurser gör störst skillnad i det här läget. Det borde styra debatten om EU:s budget.

Mauri Pekkarinen (Renew). – Arvoisa puhemies, kun Next Generation EU:sta päätettiin, päätöksen piti olla ainutkertainen, mutta maailma muuttuu kaiken aikaa. Mikrosirut, akut, puolustus: rahaa tarvittaisiin moniin uusiin tarpeisiin, mutta sitä EU:llakaan ei ole. Sama on tilanne useimmissa jäsenvaltioissa. Ne ovat velkaantuneet. Ne eivät pysty täyttämään finanssipoliittisia sääntöjä. Siksi lisärahan ottaminen sieltä on vaikea tehtävä. Sille tielle astuminen, siinä pitää olla tarkka. Ukraina on toinen tarina.

EU:n vastauksen näihin haasteisiin, joita kohtaamme, tulee olla kilpailukyvyyn parantaminen, satsaaminen osaamiseen, innovaatioihin, tutkimukseen ja bisnekseen ja parempaan yhteistyöhön. ERA, valtiontuet, markkinoiden epäneutraaliteetti ja sen tukeminen eivät voi olla Euroopan tie. Ei ainoastaan ja ei erityisesti pienten eurooppalaisten maiden. Menestyksemme ehto on se, että markkinat ovat reilut ja kilpailu siellä on aitoa.

Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin, meine Damen und Herren! Eigentlich grenzt es an ein physikalisches Wunder, dass das Leben auf unserem Planeten überhaupt möglich wurde. Die unglaubliche Vielfalt und Schönheit der vermuteten 8,7 Millionen Tiere, Pflanzen, Organismen auf unserem Planeten ist nicht nur faszinierend, sondern ist auch die Prämisse für unser Leben.

Eine Million Arten sind heute vom Aussterben bedroht. Unsere Art und Weise, wie wir Platz einnehmen, wie wir Land- und Forstwirtschaft betreiben, wie wir das Land versiegeln, aber auch unsere Emissionen und der Klimawandel sind Treiber dieses rapiden Massensterbens.

Die Europäische Union muss ihre Ziele und ihre Versprechungen für die Rückkehr des Lebens auch umsetzen. Dafür brauchen wir effektive, verfügbare und auch zielgerichtete Finanzierungsmittel. Deshalb haben wir ja auch bereits 10 % als Ziel für die Biodiversitätsmaßnahmen in unserem EU-Haushalt fest verankert. Jetzt muss die Kommission dringend eine konsequente und an der Biodiversität orientierte Methodologie liefern, um diesem Artensterben entgegenzutreten und mit den Mitgliedstaaten endlich zu agieren, um das Artensterben zu stoppen.

Michiel Hoogeveen (ECR). – Voorzitter, toen ik in het Europees Parlement begon, gaf een prominent oud-lid van dit huis mij het advies: “Tradities zijn er om gebroken te worden.” U kunt zich voorstellen dat ik enigszins teleurgesteld was toen ik de titel van dit debat zag. Want geheel in de traditie van dit Parlement hebben wij het weer over het “opschalen” van het meerjarig financieel kader.

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De uitgaven van de EU gaan altijd omhoog. Altijd. Zo ook in dit verslag, waar financiële dekking bestaat uit het heffen van “eigen middelen”, lees “EU-belastingen”, terwijl het de nationale parlementen zijn die gaan over de belastingen die zij innen van hun burgers.

Voorzitter, tradities zijn er inderdaad om gebroken te worden. Hoe mooi zou het zijn als we het eens zouden gaan hebben over “inkrimpen”? Of om president Reagan te citeren: “Onze schuld is niet te hoog omdat we niet genoeg belasting hebben geheven. We hebben een te hoge schuld omdat we te veel hebben uitgegeven.”

Andrey Novakov (PPE). – Madam President, dear Commissioner, I believe that Ms Marques and Mr Olbrycht deserve a congratulation for their work well done. I believe that the MFF desperately needed an update. It looks like an old black and white TV screen that we tried to connect to YouTube; it's not going to happen.

I'll give you only one example. In the previous MFF, there are about 30 billion for transport infrastructure. With the current numbers and the current prices of raw materials, the project that has been planned will never be implemented.

So we need an MFF that can cover the requirements of the high inflation, the war, the high prices of raw materials, the new prices of fuel, in order to get the job done and conclude those projects.

I believe this is the right direction and we have a last chance now to cover the expectations of the people who are outside this building, just before the European elections.

Pedro Silva Pereira (S&D). – Senhora Presidente, Senhor Comissário, desde que o Quadro Financeiro Plurianual europeu foi aprovado, em dezembro de 2020, o mundo mudou e mudou bastante. Só não vê quem não quer.

Estamos agora confrontados com uma guerra terrível na Europa, uma crise da energia e das cadeias de abastecimento, uma espiral de inflação, uma mudança de rumo da política monetária e, provavelmente, uma recessão.

O cenário que serviu de base ao Quadro Financeiro Plurianual mudou radicalmente. Por isso, o quadro financeiro de dezembro de 2020 não está em condições de responder aos novos desafios de dezembro de 2022. Apelamos, por conseguinte, à Comissão para que reveja urgentemente o atual Quadro Financeiro Plurianual para o tornar mais ambicioso, mais flexível e mais adequado aos desafios do momento. Só assim poderemos estar à altura das expectativas dos cidadãos.

Engin Eroglu (Renew). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrter Herr Kommissar Hahn! Wir diskutieren heute den Mehrjährigen Finanzrahmen 2021-2027, und dass wir diesen anpassen müssen, steht außer Zweifel.

Aber zur Klarheit und Wahrheit gehört auch, dass er, obwohl es zum Brexit kam, leider der höchste Haushalt bis dato ist. Das heißt, wir haben hier schon aus dem Vollen geschöpft. Auch bei der Anpassung haben wir damals schon noch mal 750 Milliarden draufgehauen für den Wiederaufbaufonds. Das heißt, der Haushalt wurde angepasst, und wir müssen jetzt auch wieder anpassen.

Aber eins ist doch klar: Zur Wahrheit und Klarheit gehört doch auch, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen und sehr geehrter Herr Hahn: All das Geld, was wir hier aufstocken wollen, das nehmen wir den Mitgliedstaaten weg, und diese werden es ihren Bürgern wegnehmen, es wird zu mehr Steuern und mehr Belastungen führen.

Ich glaube, dass das der falsche Weg ist. Ich bin der festen Überzeugung, dass wir hier auch mal mit Wahrheit und Klarheit anfangen müssen. Ich weiß auch nicht, welche Krise noch kommen soll nach dem Krieg in der Ukraine, nach Corona, nach der Krise des billigen Geldes, des Rausches des Konsums, dass wir jetzt endlich mal anfangen, bei uns zu sparen.

Warum nehmen wir jetzt nicht mal den Mut in die Hand und sagen: Ein Sitz für das Europäische Parlament? Warum sind wir nicht mutig und sagen: Wir reduzieren die Anzahl der Kommissare – alles das, was in unserer Hand ist?

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Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou (PPE). – Madame la Présidente, Monsieur le Commissaire, chers collègues, depuis l'adoption du cadre financier pluriannuel, deux événements aux conséquences majeures, la pandémie et l'invasion russe totalement injustifiée de l'Ukraine, ont radicalement changé notre vie. À l'heure de la «permacrise», le cadre financier pluriannuel n'est pas adapté aux objectifs qu'il vise, et il ne permet pas en l'état d'assurer la transition verte et numérique.

Confrontés à un monde multipolaire, nous devons renforcer l'autonomie stratégique de l'Union européenne et financer nos nouvelles ambitions politiques, telles que le paquet législatif sur les semi-conducteurs ou la facilité pour la reprise et la résilience.

À ce jour, nous avons dû utiliser de l'argent provenant de domaines essentiels du budget européen, comme la réserve de solidarité et d'aide d'urgence ou la politique agricole commune. Paralyser ces domaines aura un effet problématique sur nos citoyens et sur l'Union dans son ensemble.

Le budget a besoin de nouvelles ressources pour faire face aux nouvelles crises. Cela signifie une révision ambitieuse du CFP et de nouvelles ressources propres. Nous accusons un retard trop important pour continuer comme si de rien n'était. Nous avons besoin d'un budget européen plus solide, plus résilient et plus flexible, capable de faire face aux crises passées, présentes et futures.

René Repasi (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar! Die Bekämpfung der sozialen und ökonomischen Konsequenzen des Ukrainekrieges wird teuer. Und in Zeiten, in denen die EZB die Inflation bekämpft, fällt sie als Retterin von Staaten aus.

Heute Morgen haben wir die Reaktion Europas auf den *Inflation Reduction Act* der Vereinigten Staaten diskutiert. Entweder müssen wir hier die EU-Beihilfenkontrolle massiv zurücknehmen, sodass starke Mitgliedstaaten damit konkurrieren können. Dann allerdings ist der Preis das Auseinanderfallen des Binnenmarktes. Oder wir brauchen unionsweite Mittel. Aber machen wir es ehrlich: 1 % des europäischen BIP reicht noch lange nicht aus, um mit den USA oder China mithalten zu können.

Deshalb brauchen wir ein zusätzliches, ich zitiere: „dauerhaftes Sonderinstrument, das über die Grenzen des MFR hinausgeht“ so wie es in dem Bericht unter Ziffer 66 steht. Das ist die entscheidende Zeile. Nur so schaffen wir, als Europa wettbewerbsfähig zu sein und mit den Amerikanern mitzuhalten.

Das Bundesverfassungsgericht ist hier übrigens kein Problem. Dieses hat nämlich nicht entschieden, dass ein Mechanismus nicht dauerhaft sein könne. Nein, die schuldenfinanzierten Mittel dürfen nur die Eigenmittel des Haushaltes nicht übersteigen.

Andrius Kubilius (PPE). – Madam President, colleagues. I would like to say a few words about the major message of the report. And that message is very simple: we are living in a time of war, but not with our finances, since the MFF was planned and approved for permanent peace.

We need to understand that this war is also our war, and it demands from us mobilisation of all of our resources. In order to win the war, you need to have in order your army and also your finances. You need to have sufficient war finances. We need to finance arms deliveries to Ukraine, the budgetary needs of Ukraine, the reconstruction of Ukraine, the accession of Ukraine and other new candidate countries towards the EU.

The report's main message is clear: the MFF's structure and size is not able to meet the needs of the war and also the needs of other big crises, urgencies. Why is this so? The report speaks very clearly, I quote, 'Parliament regrets the gradual decrease of the EU budget as a percentage of EU gross national income and the excessive focus on capping overall spending at roughly 1% of EU GNI'.

This is a most important message. We cannot stay with 1% because at the end it will bring the whole EU into very painful crisis of its own finances. We need to avoid it. This crisis of the war is a good occasion for us to strengthen ourselves from a geo-political point of view and also radically strengthen our finances. This is the only way we can make the EU strong again.

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Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Niech mi wolno będzie zacząć od słów uznania zarówno dla Jana Olbrychta, jak i Margaridy Marques za wykonaną pracę. To jest kawał dobrej i potrzebnej roboty. Druga uwaga. My nie mówimy tutaj o rewizji, zmianie czy rewolucji wieloletnich ram finansowych, bo mówimy: ulepszenie wieloletnich ram finansowych, gotowy na nowe wyzwania, odporny budżet Unii Europejskiej. A zatem chcemy zrobić lepszy pożytek z istniejących pieniędzy i zasobów.

Dwa punkty, które są wyeksponowane jako szczególnie ważne. To jest inflacja i spadek realnej wartości pieniądza i punkt drugi: nowe zdarzenia, głównie wojna w Ukrainie. I z tego punktu widzenia uważam, że zwłaszcza w punktach 9, 10, 14 sprawozdania po prostu spełniamy oczekiwania. Ja bym chciał jednocześnie wyrazić głębokie przekonanie, że zamiast wielu słów na temat drążącego nas zewsząd kryzysu, powinniśmy raczej zmobilizować się do tego, w jaki sposób lepiej zagospodarować środki. *Simply to make better use of already owned resources.*

Tomislav Sokol (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, povjereniče, izjavitelji, kolegice i kolege, od donošenja aktualnog višegodišnjeg finansijskog okvira politički, gospodarski i socijalni kontekst promijenio se do neprepoznatljivosti, počevši od dosad nezabilježenih razmjera i dramatičnih posljedica pandemije koja još nije završena, pa sve do rata u Ukrajini i enormnog porasta cijena.

Možemo slobodno reći da je trenutačni VFO opterećen do krajnjih granica te ne može poslužiti za odgovor na izazove. Iz tog razloga, moramo početi ozbiljno razmišljati o reviziji VFO-a jer uobičajeni pristup nije ni približno dovoljan za rješavanje niza izazova koji se pojavljuju. Stoga pozdravljam činjenicu što se u izvješću poziva Komisija da podnese prijedlog sveobuhvatne i ambiciozne revizije VFO-a. Što se kohezijske politike tiče, ona se sve više koristi za jačanje drugih politika i otklanjanje nedostataka u proračunskoj fleksibilnosti ili mehanizmima za odgovor na krizu u sklopu VFO-a. U tom kontekstu, iako su mjere odgovora na krizne situacije nužne i korisne, kohezijska politika ne smije biti alat za odgovor na krizu. Postojeća mogućnost prijenosa sredstava iz fondova kohezijske politike u druge instrumente EU-a u iznosu do 5% početnih dodijeljenih sredstava pruža dovoljnu fleksibilnost, no na tome treba i ostati te ne povećavati taj prag. Također, posebno je važno da revizija VFO-a ne dovede do smanjenja iznosa unaprijed dodijeljenih nacionalnih omotnica ili programa EU-a.

Financiranje kohezijske politike mora i dalje prvenstveno služiti njenom glavnom cilju: smanjenju razlika u razvijenosti između pojedinih regija Europske unije.

Matthias Ecke (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Stellen Sie sich vor, Sie bauen ein Haus. Dafür legen Sie jeden Monat Geld zurück. Ihr Haus soll standfest sein, modern, klimaneutral, und noch Ihre Enkel sollen darin wohnen. Doch dann brauchen Sie Geld für andere wichtige Zwecke: Sie helfen Ihrem Nachbarn in Not, sie brauchen Brot und Wärme für den Winter. Doch was wird aus dem Haus? Kein Mensch glaubt, dass man langfristig investieren kann, wenn man immer wieder Mittel abzweigt. Warum tun wir denn genau das mit dem EU Haushalt?

Die Regionalpolitik ist das zentrale langfristige Investitionsinstrument der EU. Sie hilft unseren Regionen, zu wachsen, grüner zu werden, moderner zu werden, Jobs zu schaffen. Doch für verschiedene Krisen werden immer wieder Mittel aus der Regionalpolitik zweckentfremdet. Allein im Rahmen des EFRE ist fast ein halbes Dutzend Ad-hoc-Instrumente entstanden. So gefährden wir Investitionen in Technologie, in Stadtentwicklung, in Radwege. Das ist der falsche Weg.

Für neue Aufgaben braucht man neue, zusätzliche Mittel. Bauen wir weiter am Haus Europa und laden wir unsere Nachbarn ein. Wir brauchen dafür einen stärkeren, zukunftsfesten Finanzrahmen.

Robert Hajšel (S&D). – Vážená pani predsedajúca, v dôsledku súčasnej energetickej krízy a vysokej inflácie môže podľa predpovedí WHO túto zimu prísť o život viac ako 120 tisíc ľudí v Európe. Státisíce prídu o prácu a milióny ľudí budú mať na výber, či zdravo ješť alebo dostatočne kúriť. Ľuďom preto musíme pomôcť, keďže do tejto situácie sa nedostali svojou vinou, ale kvôli ruskej invázii na Ukrajinu, našim sankciám voči Rusku a jeho následným protiopatreniam. Jasne sa ukazuje, že v súčasnosti platný dlhodobý rozpočet nestačí a potrebujeme štruktúrovanejší prístup, ktorý nám umožní lepšie podporovať naše domácnosti aj naše podniky čeliace výzvam, ako je táto energetická kríza alebo kríza vyvolaná pandemiou koronavírusu. Treba ale postupovať tak, aby sme boli schopní splácať aj náklady spojené so zvyšujúcimi sa úrokovými mierami a financovať programy, ako je EU4health alebo Erasmus+. Ale verte, ľuďom je úplne jedno, či dodatočný finančný nástroj vytvoríme v rámci dlhodobého rozpočtu alebo bude nezávislý od výdavkových stropov v dlhodobom rozpočte. Musí to byť ale zdroj, vďaka ktorému budeme schopní v budúcnosti lepšie a rýchlejšie odpovedať na krízové situácie a ich sociálne dôsledky.

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Pöynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot

Sunčana Glavak (PPE). – Poštovana predsjedavajuća, poštovani povjereniče, kolegice i kolege, jasno je da živimo u vremenu velikih izazova koji se odražavaju na svakodnevicu naših građana i koji zahtijevaju jasne i odlučne odgovore.

Mogli bismo reći da nam zapravo treba reset. U ovoj godini, koja je bila godina puna izazova, bila je vrlo turbulentna, svjedočili smo ruskoj agresiji na Ukrajinu, porastu cijena energenata i pojačanom inflatornom pritisku. Svaki od ovih elemenata uvjetovao je da dodatni financijski trošak dovede do značajnog opterećenja dostupnih sredstava. Kako bi se prilagodili ovim promjenama moramo osigurati pravovremene i konkretne mjere, no ne na štetu manje razvijenih članica. Pozivam stoga da iskoristimo puni potencijal i svoje institucionalne uloge u donošenju proračuna Unije i pošaljemo jasnu poruku stabilnosti našim građanima.

Moramo djelovati razumno i strukturne promjene zaista su nam nužne. One moraju biti pravovremene i konkretne, jer samo tako ćemo osigurati povjerenje našim građanima.

(Pöynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot päättyvät)

Johannes Hahn, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, dear colleagues, I thank you once again for having this exchange of views today and I thank you for your engagement in reflecting about the future of the MFF. And listening to all of you, I have heard a lot of support for an ambitious but targeted MFF review.

Because we have to acknowledge that since the adoption of the MFF, the current MFF, in December 2020, significant pressures on the EU budget have been testing its ability and flexibility to react to the multiple humanitarian, economic and social consequences of the war of aggression against Ukraine for neighbouring countries into the Union.

And therefore, we have mobilised some of the flexibilities of the MFF and in particular special instruments, symmetric ones and non-symmetric ones. The flexibility that can be found within the MFF and within programmes is essential. While these instruments have been increased compared to the 2014 and 2020 MFF, they remain limited in size and we are mobilising them at a fast pace.

An ambitious review means that we must not shy away from taking a critical look at where the Union budget spends and how it can address both our long-term priorities and tackling new challenges and emergencies. Political courage is finally needed to reconsider where to prioritise funds and where we can economise our spending, given the difficult economic conditions across Europe.

The current geopolitical and economic situation is defined by events, which are still subject to significant uncertainty, and the Commission continues to monitor the situation. We will assess the needs carefully and responsibly as part of a long-term reflection on the future of the Union budget.

But already today, and this to those who are critical, I would like to say and to recall about the gradual loss of purchasing power due to the inflation and the fact that we have an automatic deflator of 2%. So in that respect, already something has to be done. But I fully agree with all those who have said we have to see to which extent we can flexibilise the budget or to create something which enables us to react faster, quicker to future possible developments, as it was the case in the past.

So I am looking forward to a very intensive discussion in the next couple of weeks and months because there is an urgency and we have to address it.

Jan Olbrycht, rapporteur. – Madam President, Mr Commissioner, I think that at the end of our debate, before voting, it's very clear that the European Parliament, in its majority, really feels co-responsible for the actions which should be organised and made by the European Union.

This is our challenge but, of course, we know very well how difficult it is and how difficult it will be to find the financial resources to do it. So that's why I think, and I hope, that you understand that we are waiting for the very concrete steps.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

I would like to thank Mr Commissioner for explaining what is the ambitious review, but I understand that when we speak about revision and the Commission speaks about review, the question is, is it a real difference? I don't think so. I don't think so, because if we want to change something, and we have to change, we need a very deep and ambitious review.

And, of course, at the end of this debate, I would like to say that if this review is really well done and really not only ambitious but very, very concrete, the conclusions will be absolutely obvious, because the review will show that we have to change the MFF. So I think that if your review will be ambitious, we will have revision, and I think that we share this view and the Council will agree as well.

Margarida Marques, Rapporteur. – Senhora Presidente, no final deste debate, é claro que precisamos de um QFP revisto, precisamos de proteger a política de coesão e precisamos de um instrumento permanente dentro do orçamento da União Europeia. E pedimos à Comissão que, na preparação da proposta revista do QFP 2021-2027, tenha em conta as linhas políticas que constam desta resolução e que são os pedidos do Parlamento.

Termino este debate agradecendo a Jan Olbrycht, que preparou comigo este relatório. Jan, é um prazer trabalhar contigo! Agradeço aos relatores-sombra que ajudaram a tornar este relatório ambicioso e orientado para o futuro, a Valérie Hayer, a Rasmus Andresen, a Dimitrios Papadimoulis, aos relatores setoriais das diferentes comissões, porque também eles tiveram uma palavra a dizer, ao secretariado da Comissão dos Orçamentos e às nossas equipas pelas horas longas e pelo trabalho de qualidade. Obrigada!

Vamos por o Quadro Financeiro Plurianual da União Europeia a funcionar ao serviço da União Europeia e dos cidadãos.

Puhemies. – Keskustelu on päättynyt.

Äänestys toimitetaan huomenna torstaina 15.12.2022.

Kirjalliset lausumat (171 artikla)

Eugen Jurzyca (ECR), písomne. – EÚ dnes čelí viacerým problémom, ktoré sa v roku 2020 pri schvaľovaní rozpočtu neočakávali (napríklad vojna na Ukrajine, vysoké ceny energií a vysoká inflácia). Súhlasím s tým, že preto treba prispôbiť rozpočet EÚ novej realite. Nesúhlasím však s výzvou v správe, aby sme zachovali financovanie naplánovaných programov a nové výzvy riešili len dodatočnými zdrojmi. Podľa mňa by sme mali klásť väčší dôraz na to, aby sme zdroje na potrebné výdavky získali presunom z neefektívnych programov v rámci súčasného rozpočtu. Inak to bude na úkor hospodárskeho rastu, teda životnej úrovne ľudí v EÚ.

16. Lūgumrakstu komitejas apspriedes 2021. gadā (debates)

Puhemies. – Esityslistalla on seuraavana Loránt Vinczen vetoamusvaliokunnan puolesta laatima mietintö vetoamusvaliokunnan vuonna 2021 käsittelemistä asioista 2022/2024(INI) (A9-0271/2022).

Loránt Vincze, rapporteur. – Madam President, Commissioner Hahn, dear colleagues, I am pleased to present you the report about the outcome of the Committee on Petitions' deliberations in 2021. It is the concluding part of this traditional exercise in which our committee provides a comprehensive overview of the work carried out in the previous year.

The Committee on Petitions, and I quote from the report, 'is best able to show citizens what the European Union does for them and what solutions it can provide at European, national or local level'. I would emphasise that our committee should be considered as a bridge between Europeans and the EU institutions. Petitions enable citizens to contribute to the legislative work and to make the institutions accountable.

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In 2021, the European Parliament received 1392 petitions, which represent a decrease by 11.5% compared to 2020, but an increase by 2.5% compared to the petitions registered in 2019. Last year there were considerable differences in the number of petitions submitted to the committee, with most of the petitions concerning Spain with 17%, followed by Germany with 9.7%, then Italy, Greece, Romania, Poland and France. Slovenia and Estonia remain the countries least concerned.

More than 78% of the petitions were submitted via Parliament's Petitions Web Portal, confirming that it has become by far the most used channel for citizens to submit petitions. The number of users supporting one or more petitions was more than 200 000; that means four times more than in 2020.

The Committee on Petitions had 12 meetings, at which 159 petitions were discussed, with over 100 petitioners present remotely at that time. Under difficult circumstances, I must say that our committee swiftly adapted to the new way of working and played a key role in ensuring Parliament's prompt response to citizens' concerns. Our committee organised one fact-finding visit and five public hearings, partly jointly with other parliamentary committees. The Committee on Petitions adopted several reports, opinions and forwarded short motions for resolution to the plenary.

Petitions were submitted in 22 of the official languages of the European Union. German and English remain the most used languages. As regards the nationality, petitions submitted by German citizens represent the highest number. There was a considerable rise in the number of petitions submitted by Italian and Greek nationals.

Now on the subject of the petitions: a large number of those were related to the public health emergency triggered by the outbreak and spread of COVID-19; fundamental rights, health and environment were the most important topic of the petitions. As an example, we dealt also petitions concerning the coexistence with large carnivores, notably wolves and brown bears in Europe. I have to underline that several petitions related to the rights of national minorities, especially in the areas of right to education in their mother tongue, linguistic or cultural rights, but also their right to property as outlined in petitions concerning land confiscation and restitution cases.

The efficient work of the Committee on Petitions relies on the cooperation of the Commission and other institutions. The Commission is our strongest partner in examining petitions. We count on the Commission also in the broader follow up in these topics which have been raised by the petitioners.

Member States are also invited to take part in the discussions. Petitions very often concern one or more Member States, or they include a cross-border element.

Petitions are useful means to draw the attention of the EU institutions and the Member States to matters that affect and concern citizens, that they can also contribute to the EU current debates. When citizens choose to address their concerns and complaints directly to their elected EU representatives, they place significant trust in the Parliament, and we must continue to do our utmost, also in the Petitions Committee, to validate this trust.

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, on behalf of the Commission, I really would like to welcome Mr Vincze's report, which offers a comprehensive overview of the Committee on Petitions' activities in 2021.

Engaging with citizens remains of paramount importance to the Commission and petitions are an effective channel for direct contact and open dialogue on problems affecting the daily lives of Europeans.

We are committed to providing timely and pertinent contributions to Parliament's response to these concerns. A clear signal of this commitment is that throughout 2021, Commission representatives were present at all meetings of the Committee on Petitions, including at the highest political level.

For example, my colleague, Vice-President Šefčovič, was with you on 3 December 2021 to hold the structured dialogue in accordance with the Framework Agreement on relations between our two institutions. Vice-President Jourová discussed the European Citizens' Initiative with you on 15 July last year, and Commissioner Dalli on 22 March last year presented to you the strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities for this decade.

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Even though the overall number of petitions decreased in 2021 compared to the year before, the Commission still received 554 new ones from the European Parliament, which required us to provide contributions. Out of this total number, we have so far transmitted our replies on 327 petitions. The remaining petitions are currently in different stages of the internal approval procedure.

I would like to say a few words about the main topics citizens have raised in these petitions because this is a good thermometer of their concerns. On the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission has constantly provided information and explained the efforts made at Union level – coordinated response measures, shared science and research efforts, joint procurement of vaccines and protective equipment.

As reiterated in the European Green Deal, we are working with Member States to ensure the correct implementation of Union environmental law through financing, technical assistance and enforcement. The situation on the ground in Member States has already improved in areas like air quality and the protection of natural ecosystems, among others. We support environmental governance at national level so that citizens can access national mechanism and judicial systems. We have taken legal actions whenever needed against projects that may cause irreversible environmental or public health damage on a significant scale. We welcome the opinion adopted by the Committee on Petitions on our proposal for a directive on environmental crime.

On fundamental rights, I would like to commend your efforts to support and promote the rights of people with disabilities, as well as LGBTIQ+ rights with special attention being paid to rainbow families. I am pleased to inform you that last week, on 7 December, the Commission made a proposal for a regulation on the recognition of parenthood between Member States. As reflected in the 2021-2030 strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities, together with Member States, we make efforts to ensure full participation of persons with disabilities in our society. By the end of 2023, the Commission will propose a European Disability Card to facilitate mutual recognition of disability status within the Union.

The Commission agrees with you on the importance of the European Citizens' Initiative, which gives Union citizens the opportunity to initiate debates on issues that concern them.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our commitment to addressing infringement-related petitions. The proper application of Union law is a collective responsibility shared between the Commission, as the guardian of the Treaties, and national authorities and courts. Therefore, I welcome your call on national authorities to be proactive in taking the necessary measures to respond to citizens' petitions in cases of systemic failure to comply with Union law.

The infringement procedure allows the Commission to take action if it considers that a Member State breaches Union law, asking Member States to remedy the situation by a certain date. Infringements contribute to addressing systemic problems affecting a large amount of people, often across Member States. To put it simply, our enforcement work focuses on addressing the root causes of problems. That procedure is not designed to offer concrete solutions for individuals or ensure individual redress. Petitioners, pointing to the incorrect application of Union law in individual cases would benefit more from the mechanisms at national level, such as national courts, regulatory bodies or Ombudsman. If the problem has a cross-border dimension, then the SOLVIT network may offer quick remedies.

To conclude, I want to reassure you that the Commission remains committed to maintaining its close and fruitful cooperation with Parliament in general and with the Committee on Petitions in particular. In this way we can work together to continue effectively addressing the matters that citizens address to the European institutions.

Peter Jahr, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Herr Kommissar, meine sehr verehrten Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Ich bedanke mich ausdrücklich bei meinem Kollegen Loránt Vincze, für seine gute Arbeit, für seinen Bericht. Er hat es geschafft, durch gute Kompromisse einen objektiven Bericht zu erstellen, der nicht unnötig politisiert wurde und die Arbeit des Ausschusses im Jahr 2021 ausreichend darstellt. Näher als der Petitionsausschuss kann man im europäischen Entscheidungsprozess nicht am Bürger sein.

Der Petitionsausschuss hat im Jahr 2021 zwölf Ausschusssitzungen abgehalten, in denen 159 Petitionen mit 113 zugeschalteten Petenten erörtert wurden. Das gibt es wohl kaum in einem anderen, nationalen Petitionsausschuss, und es ist wirklich eine Besonderheit: Es ist gelebte Demokratie.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

Welche Schlussfolgerungen ziehe ich aus dem Bericht, bzw. was kann man noch besser machen? Ein relativ hoher Anteil der eingegangenen Petitionen, 26,5 %, werden für unzulässig erklärt. Das heißt, hier ist noch umfassende Kommunikationsarbeit notwendig, um den Bürgern zu erklären, wofür der Europäische Petitionsausschuss zuständig ist.

Zweitens: Ich bedauere sehr, dass die Kommission es noch immer oft versäumt, den Petitionsausschuss umfassend über legislative und nichtlegislative Maßnahmen zu informieren, die im Anschluss an eingegangene Petitionen ergriffen wurden.

Drittens: Unsere Petenten wenden sich häufig an den Petitionsausschuss, wenn es um dringliche Probleme geht. Mir persönlich dauert die Abarbeitung der Petitionen immer noch zu lange, und wir müssen auch den Rückstand an vorhandenen Petitionen abbauen, weil das das Vertrauen in die EU-Institutionen schwächt.

Viertens: Ich finde es schade, dass in letzter Zeit die Arbeit des Petitionsnetzwerks – damit ist die Zusammenarbeit des Petitionsausschusses mit den Fachausschüssen gemeint – ein bisschen eingeschlafen ist. Wir könnten da wieder einen *wake up call* machen.

Und zum Schluss wünsche ich natürlich uns allen ein gesegnetes Weihnachtsfest und ein gesundes neues Jahr 2023.

Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señora presidenta, gracias al ponente por el trabajo realizado. También quiero agradecer a mi compañero, Álex Saliba, como ponente alternativo, el trabajo realizado.

La Comisión de Peticiones es la vía de comunicación más directa entre la ciudadanía y las instituciones europeas. Gracias a las peticiones los europeos pueden denunciar la vulneración de derechos o plantear debates a tres bandas —con el Parlamento, el Consejo y la Comisión— sobre determinadas propuestas en las que tenga competencias la Unión Europea. Es verdad, pocos parlamentos en el mundo tienen esta fórmula de rendición de cuentas y de aseguramiento de los derechos.

La pregunta es ¿se potencia plenamente este valioso instrumento? Yo coincido con mis compañeros en que hay espacio para la mejora, por ejemplo, una mayor implicación de la Comisión Europea a la hora de aportar su valoración ante determinadas denuncias. En muchas ocasiones muestra una equidistancia que no debería ser tal a la hora de posicionarse sobre cuestiones que son de su competencia. Debería también ser más proactiva y más rápida y diligente en la tramitación de esas peticiones. Por lo tanto, aprovecho la presencia del comisario Hahn para hacerle llegar esa reivindicación.

En cualquier caso, ¿conocen suficientemente los ciudadanos la Comisión de Peticiones? ¿la valoran? ¿les es útil? Podría decirse que, en términos generales, sí. Sería injusto negar el trabajo serio y comprometido de la mayoría de los compañeros que trabajan por dar voz y respuesta a los ciudadanos. Es nuestro deber velar por el correcto funcionamiento de la Comisión de Peticiones, que debería llamarse Comisión de Ciudadanía Plena. Deberíamos estar todos los días sacándole brillo a la Comisión de Peticiones. Sin embargo, determinados diputados, en vez de sacarle brillo, le sacan tajada. En vez de irse a sus partidos a hacer oposición, utilizan esta comisión presentando peticiones no solo para defender a los ciudadanos, sino principalmente para atacar a Gobiernos democráticamente elegidos. Hay peticiones que se han debatido hasta en tres ocasiones sin ni siquiera tener competencia en el ámbito europeo, solo porque algunos deciden seguir estrategias partidistas que no respetan la decisión de los ciudadanos. En el camino, muchos ciudadanos aguardan años, incluso décadas, sin obtener respuesta de este Parlamento.

Hagamos una reflexión conjunta, que vaya más allá del sectarismo partidista de unos cuantos, sobre cómo podemos mejorar la Comisión de Peticiones. Esto también es democracia y esto también es rendición de cuentas y, ante todo, son derechos de la ciudadanía europea.

Feliz Navidad para los compañeros y para todos los miembros del Parlamento Europeo.

Yana Toom, *on behalf of the Renew Group*. – Madam President, dear colleagues, as all technical things were, fortunately, already said, I can allow myself to be a bit more general.

Trešdiena, 2022. gada 14. decembris

First of all, I would like to thank the rapporteur and the other shadows for their collaboration on this report. Secondly, I have to admit that the Petitions Committee is actually my favourite in this House, for this is the place where you hear the real voice of real Europeans. And you know what? Europeans are very well aware of their rights. Almost everyone knows about the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, but very few realise that it is consistent with Article 51, which says that the Charter has to be followed only when European law is implemented, which in practice means that the national legislator is not supposed to follow or even to read it. So in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, we, as a rule, declare these petitions inadmissible, despite the fact that very often we see clear violations of people's rights.

The Commission says, 'no worries, we have some other tools in our toolbox'. One of them – widely promoted – is the Citizens' Initiative. So we urge people to use it. But do they receive a proper answer? This might not be the case. We all remember what happened to Minority SafePack: nothing. I mean, nothing happened. The Commission just does not dare to touch the hot potato of minority issues. Do you think all these more than a million Europeans who gave their signatures to support national and linguistic minorities are still pro-Europeans? Let's hope they are, despite the fact that here at PETI we clearly see all these bottlenecks of the European project when it comes to human rights.

Of course, there is a lot to be improved in the committee itself: a common set of clear and objective criteria, a petitions portal with clear information on what exactly falls under the Union's fields of activity. We have to stop misusing PETI for internal political issues, which unfortunately takes place sometimes.

But the main thing to improve is the European Union as such. If we prefer to limit ourselves to common market and border policies, we would not be able to meet the expectations of our citizens.

Margrete Auken, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, thank you to the rapporteur and colleagues who worked on this file; the result is overall balanced and positive.

It's good that we reiterate the request to the Commission to revise its approach to petitions, which the Parliament already considers to be in breach of the Treaties. It leaves many citizens who filed individual petitions without adequate protection of their rights.

I am happy that this report considers the best way forward to be an agreement between the Parliament and the Commission on the handling of petitions, and the fulfilment of the request to get access to the Commission's documents and information on EU pilot and infringement procedures, based on petitions.

But we should have been more outspoken on the very bad situation we are experiencing in this committee. Frankly, it's taken hostage mainly by Partido Popular on Spanish issues. These often have no connection with EU law but are nonetheless treated to accommodate national party political interest. This includes biased decisions that undermine the spirit of this citizen-close committee, and violate our internal rules and practices in ways that I have never seen in my 14 years of work in this committee.

We must safeguard the committee's credibility and restore its authentic European dimension by working in full compliance with all applicable rules, and truly be the citizens' gateway to the EU institutions.

Jorge Buxadé Villalba, *en nombre del Grupo ECR*. – Señora presidente, estas fueron algunas peticiones de España de 2021: fraude en la contratación temporal del personal interino, estados de alarma ilegales, abusos sexuales a menores tutelados por gobiernos socialistas en Baleares y Valencia, y la carta de más de 2 500 jueces denunciando un serio riesgo para el Estado de Derecho en España. Hoy la situación es dramática. Pedro Sánchez, un autócrata sin escrúpulos, se ha concertado con los separatistas que dieron un golpe a la Constitución en el año 2017 para la demolición sistemática de la separación de poderes y el Estado de Derecho.

En el corazón de Europa, el Gobierno socialista, esta semana, va a aprobar un delito de sedición para liberar a los golpistas, corromper el delito de malversación de caudales públicos para amnistiar a todos los políticos ladrones, y asaltar —violentando la Constitución— el Poder Judicial y el Tribunal Constitucional, poniendo fin al Estado de Derecho. Vivimos en directo un golpe al Estado de Derecho y ustedes siguen amparando a un Gobierno que quiere llevar a España a sus tiempos más oscuros mientras chantajea a gobiernos conservadores. Pero España ni se negocia ni se vende, España se defiende. Es lo que millones de españoles van a hacer hasta el final de sus días, con ustedes o sin ustedes.

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Luke Ming Flanagan, *on behalf of The Left Group*. – Madam President, one of the issues discussed at the committee last year was the defective block scandal in Ireland. We got great support from MEPs present. Having heard their case though, the Commission's first instinct was to run away from the issue, which begs the question: what's the point in having a Construction Products Regulation if it's not in force?

We ended up at the PETI Committee because our government wants to bury its head in the sand. That became even more clear this week with the leak of a draft audit carried out by Ireland's National Building Control Office. It poignantly pointed to the fact that market surveillance of construction products is to construction as public health is to medicine. The draft also stated millions are spent on planning with billions on remediation and fixing non-compliances. In comparison, very little is spent on building control, inspection and market surveillance.

But none of it made it into the politically sanitised version which the government released. The final report was a whitewash. The Commission can no longer run away from its responsibilities. The people's lives are at risk. We're all talking this week about corruption. Well, this is corruption, crippling and corrosive corruption. Time for the Commission to stop talking about it and act. DG GROW, I'm looking at you.

Antoni Comín i Oliveres (NI). – Señora presidenta, el derecho de petición es un componente fundamental de la ciudadanía europea y por ello es importantísimo que la Comisión de Peticiones examine de manera rigurosa todas las peticiones de los ciudadanos relacionadas con las competencias de la Unión.

Pero tenemos un problema, comisario, el cual, por cierto, ya ha sido apuntado por varios grupos parlamentarios este año: la presidenta de la comisión. La señora Monserrat instrumentaliza esta comisión, priorizando peticiones que o bien van en interés del nacionalismo español o bien en el de su partido, el Partido Popular español. Por ejemplo, estamos gastando tiempo y recursos para tramitar reiteradamente peticiones sobre el sistema escolar en Cataluña, ignorando que la Comisión ya ha dicho, en todas las ocasiones, que la Unión Europea no es competente en este tema. Yo fui presidente de la Comisión de Peticiones del Parlamento de Cataluña y nunca se me hubiera ocurrido hacer un uso tan sectario de mi cargo.

Señorías, necesitamos que la Comisión de Peticiones deje de ser el instrumento para los intereses nacionales o partidistas de su presidenta y que vuelva a su función original: un instrumento democrático para defender los derechos de los ciudadanos europeos.

Pöynnöstä myönnettävät puheenvuorot

Diana Riba i Giner (Verts/ALE). – Señora presidenta, señor comisario, así como nos repugna la corrupción, nos debe avergonzar también el descarado uso partidista que la presidenta Dolors Monserrat ha hecho y hace de la Comisión de Peticiones, que hoy no está al servicio de la ciudadanía, sino del Partido Popular español, con el apoyo de Renew y del Partido Popular Europeo.

Algunos datos: en esta legislatura el 40 % de las misiones que ha hecho esta comisión ha sido en España, dejando a los ciudadanos de los otros 26 Estados miembros fuera. Interpretaciones tendenciosas del Reglamento interno por parte de la presidenta han llevado a los coordinadores de diferentes grupos a quejarse formalmente. Y la lista sigue. Cargos electos del PP español presentando peticiones en una comisión que se supone que debería ser para los ciudadanos. Peticiones, como las que se refieren al catalán, que se mantienen abiertas a pesar de que la Comisión repita una y mil veces que este asunto no es competencia de Europa.

Presidenta Montserrat, esta institución y los ciudadanos europeos se merecen un poco más de respeto. *Shame on you!*

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PRZEWODNICTWO: EWA KOPACZ*Wiceprzewodnicząca**(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)*

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, the Commission pays special attention to the work of the Committee on Petitions. We will continue our efforts to improve the speed, quality and pertinence of our contributions to your replies to petitioners' concerns. I take note that your report insists once again on the link between petitions and infringement procedures. As I said, the proper application of Union law is a collective responsibility shared between the Commission, as the guardian of the Treaties, and the Member States. However, the decision on if and when to investigate the potential breach of Union law is the prerogative of the Commission, and we face the burden of proof in bringing cases before the European Union Court of Justice.

On your proposal to set up a one-stop-shop interinstitutional IT tool between the Commission and Parliament to share publicly available information on follow-up actions taken on petitions, we are ready to examine practical options in order to make it happen. For example, the Commission publishes its decisions on every step of an infringement procedure on the European webpage. This ensures transparency on the decision-making process, on the type of infringement pursued and on benefits that the resolution of these cases can bring to citizens and businesses. So, we might envisage a link between the Europa pages and the petition web portal to help citizens be regularly informed on how the Commission is already addressing their petitions via infringement procedures.

As regards an interinstitutional agreement between the Parliament and the Commission, the Commission considers the current interinstitutional context is sufficient and appropriate to ensure the efficient handling of petitions. The Commission deals with each and every petition received from the Parliament. It analyses all aspects of the issues raised by the petitioner and transmits its detailed responses to the Parliament. The Commission keeps your committee duly informed on how it will pursue the issues raised by the petitions within the limits of its competences.

However, I would also like to stress that when we have petitions that are not within the remit of the European Union competences, we should be very honest and upfront in explaining this to the petitioners. We commend the Parliament's commitment to respond to citizens' concerns and the overall parliamentary activity of the Committee on Petitions, including their reports and opinions, as well as the organisation of hearings and workshops on a wide range of topics.

So I am convinced that together we can show citizens that we take their concerns seriously and strengthen their confidence and trust in the European project, particularly in the current international context.

Loránt Vincze, *rapporteur*. – Madam President, I would like to thank all my colleagues for their valuable opinion and the good cooperation, to the shadow rapporteurs – you expressed very important proposals, you also expressed the political criticism.

Well, our Petitions Committee is a political body, and we give the chance to all the citizens, all the petitioners, no matter from which ideology they come from, to have their say, to be able to address the Committee, to hear possible remedies and the internal decision-making process in our Committee. I think it is done in a democratic manner.

Despite, of course, all the improvements that the petitions process went through, the overall number of petitions remains modest in relation to the total population of the EU. And this brings us to the conclusion that more efforts are needed to be done to step up the increase of the citizens' awareness. And also, Commissioner, you touched on the matter of informing the citizens about pilot projects, about infringement procedures, about legislative proposals, because these are all linked to the petitions process.

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Petitions also make a valuable contribution to the work of other parliamentary committees, which give opinions or receive petitions for information. In 2021, 82 petitions were sent to other committees for opinion, and 548 for information. That's a very important amount of inter-committee cooperation.

In the end, I would also like to thank the Secretariat of the Committee, the advisors and my Office for their preparatory work on this file.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 15 grudnia 2022 r.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 171)

Ádám Kósa (NI), írásban. – Köszönöm Vincze Loránt kollégám kiváló és alapos munkáját. Két dolgot szeretnék kiemelni:

Az Európai Bizottság 2021. január 14-i közleményében nem javasolta új jogi eszköz megalkotását a „Minority SafePack” elnevezésű európai polgári kezdeményezés ügyében. Ezáltal 1,1 millió európai uniós állampolgár hiteles aláírásával ellátott kezdeményezést hagyott figyelmen kívül. Az aláírók az Európai Unióban élő nemzeti és nyelvi kisebbséghez tartozó 50 millió személy védelmének javítását tűzték ki célul javaslatcsomagjukban. Sajnálatos, hogy az őshonos európai kultúrák és nyelvek védelme ma nem tartozik az Európai Bizottság prioritásai közé, ahogy a polgári kezdeményezés, mint a polgárok részvételi demokráciájának eszköze, és annak hitelessége sem.

Az 1056/2016. sz. petíció arra kéri az Európai Parlamentet, hogy tegye lehetővé a petíciók nemzeti jelnyelveken történő benyújtását. A petíció ugyan nyitva van, a Parlament szervei és néhai Sassoli elnök között folytak egyeztetések, a végrehajtás azonban a mai napig késlekedik. Kérem a tisztelt kollegákat, hogy tegyenek eleget ennek a petíciónak, hogy az európai unió siket állampolgárai a saját anyanyelvükön, jelnyelven adhassák be a jövőben a petícióikat!

17. Debates par cilvēktiesību, demokrātijas un tiesiskuma principu pārkāpumiem (debates)

17.1. Ķīnas valdības īstenotās represijas pret miermīlīgiem protestiem visā Ķīnas Tautas Republikas teritorijā

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest debata nad pięcioma projektami rezolucji w sprawie tłumienia przez rząd chiński pokojowych protestów w Chińskiej Republice Ludowej (2022/2992(RSP))¹.

¹ Patrz protokół posiedzenia.

Isabel Santos, Autora. – Senhora Presidente, depois de assistirmos à cerimónia de entronização de Xi Jinping como líder supremo, eis que o que parecia impossível aconteceu. Sim, haverá sempre esperança enquanto existirem homens e mulheres capazes de se revoltar contra qualquer forma de tirania e clamar por liberdade e direitos.

Os protestos do povo chinês em relação às medidas Covid-19, pedindo liberdade e mesmo a saída de Xi Jinping do poder, demonstram a vontade do povo de lutar e forçaram o governo chinês a retroceder nas medidas de confinamento. Sim, é possível. Então, retiremos as conclusões e façamos dos diálogos sobre os direitos humanos algo efetivo e não um mero expediente. Sejamos consequentes na defesa dos direitos humanos na China.

Não fechemos os olhos às atrocidades cometidas em Xinjiang e no Tibete. Não fiquemos impávidos e serenos face ao processo de adoção em Macau de uma lei de segurança nacional igual à aplicada em Hong Kong, leis que violam as liberdades e garantias inscritas nas declarações sino-portuguesa e sino-britânica.

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Não fechemos os olhos à forma como as plataformas tecnológicas têm cooperado para o controlo repressivo do povo chinês. E acabe-se de uma vez por todas, entre os Estados-Membros, com as extradições para a China.

Engin Eroglu, *Verfasser*. – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Kommissarin! China hat sich unter der Herrschaft von Präsident Xi in den letzten zehn Jahren bezüglich der Menschenrechte massiv zurückentwickelt. In der jüngsten Entwicklung hat er sich nun auch auf Lebenszeit wählen lassen.

Es würde Stunden dauern, die barbarischen Menschenrechtsverletzungen in China hier aufzuzählen, sei es in Tibet, sei es in Hongkong oder sei es das schreckliche Verbrechen an den Uiguren in der Region Xinjiang. Was Wegschauen verursacht, das sehen wir gerade in der Ukraine. Es bleibt uns nichts anderes übrig, es ist unsere Pflicht, bei diesen schlimmen Menschenrechtsverletzungen in China hinzuschauen und jetzt schon klar zu mahnen und den richtigen Weg aufzuzeigen.

Die Menschenrechtsverletzungen beinhalten in der Region Xinjiang ja auch schon systemisch das Vorgehen bei der Vernichtung des Volkes der Uiguren. Deshalb ist es sehr wichtig, dass wir bei allen Demonstrationen, die in China stattfinden, als Europäisches Parlament ganz genau hinschauen und die Menschen vor Ort mit allem unterstützen, was wir haben, auch wenn das leider sehr begrenzt ist.

China nutzt seine Macht aus, rüstet auf ohne externe Bedrohung, ignoriert internationales Recht und baut letztendlich in der Europäischen Union eine Geheimpolizei auf. Daher fordere ich die Kommission auf, alles, was in ihren Möglichkeiten steht, zu tun und auch mit dem Rat gemeinsam Sorge dafür zu tragen, dass wir schnellstmöglich von der chinesischen Diktatur unabhängig werden. Und das müsste unser gemeinsames Ziel sein.

Reinhard Bütikofer, *Verfasser*. – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kommissarin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Gestern noch hat der Kollege David Leger von der EVP die Verhandlungen, die sehr harmonischen und konsensualen Verhandlungen über die Entschließung, über die wir morgen abstimmen werden, geleitet. Ich bedaure, dass er heute nicht als Koautor hier reden kann.

Zur Sache. Ich glaube, dass die landesweiten Proteste in China gegen die sogenannte *Zero-Covid Policy* der chinesischen Führung ein Ereignis von historischer Bedeutung darstellen. Da hat sich im Verhältnis zwischen dem Unterdrückerregime und dem unterdrückten Volk etwas geändert. Jahrzehntlang hatte es das nicht gegeben, dass sich landesweit Protest erhebt. Jahrzehntlang hatte es das nicht gegeben, dass Menschen aus den verschiedensten sozialen Gruppen gemeinsam protestieren. Und jahrzehntlang hatte es nicht gegeben, dass solche Forderungen direkt an die zentralen Verantwortlichen in Peking gerichtet werden. Die Pekinger Führung hat selber dafür gesorgt, dass dieser große Protest zustande gekommen ist. Und die Perspektive der chinesischen Freiheit, die im Moment so weit entfernt zu sein scheint, ist durch diese Proteste stärker geworden und näher gerückt.

Charlie Weimers, *author*. – Madam President, discontent is spreading in red China, where lockdowns remain an essential part of the zero-COVID policy. Lockdowns are enforced so harshly that 10 people, including a 3-year-old child, died when a fire broke out in a residential building in Xinjiang. Some suspect they could not get out and that firefighters were prevented from arriving at the scene by CCP pandemic laws.

The tragedy triggered protests across China and the world. Some, mainly in Chinese, bravely called for an end to CCP rule and for Xi Jinping to step down. Blank pieces of paper were used to mourn those who died and to protest against the censorship, cover-up and victim-blaming of the regime in Beijing.

We know that authoritarian regimes do not value human life. We know the CCP is on the wrong side of history. But why is High Representative Borrell silent? Where is the condemnation by the EU? Fellow colleagues, I've summarised High Representative Borrell's statements in support of the brave protesters in China. This is the summary.

(The speaker held up a sheet of paper)

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Željana Zovko, *on behalf of the PPE Group*. – Madam President, Commissioner, dear colleagues, in the light of the ongoing criminal investigations into a corrupt network of some individual Members, former MEPs and assistants in the European Parliament, the EPP Group is extremely concerned about the integrity of the foreign policy positions of the European Parliament, as expressed in the urgency resolutions and procedures as foreseen in Rule 144 of the House.

Before we can establish with certainty that the integrity of the procedure and the network does not remain compromised by third countries like Qatar, we should stop all work on the urgency resolutions. We simply cannot continue with our business as usual. We must take bold and radical decisions to stop the damage of this corrupt network of individual Members, former MEPs, and assistants from spreading further into our parliamentary work. The EPP Group has therefore decided that it will not sign any urgency resolution, not take part in any preparation, negotiations or plenary debates in the context of the urgency resolutions.

Hannah Neumann (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, I would like, first of all, to make the statement that whatever Ms Zovko just said was totally out of scope of the debate. So please allow me to also make a remark a bit out of the ordinary. I have to say that I am quite surprised by the fact that the EPP now decides not to table, not to negotiate and not to vote on urgency resolutions. The fact is that apparently, third countries, autocratic regimes, are trying to interfere with us. They are trying to influence with illegal means, with bribery and corruption, the way we work here.

I don't think that our political answer to this should be to no longer criticise their human rights atrocities. So I really think we have to debate this in a proper way and not under the point of the Chinese Government crackdowns. We have also to honour the human rights defenders in China that we are supposed to be talking about here today.

Przewodnicząca. – Pani Poseł, chciałam tylko i wyłącznie zwrócić uwagę, że w momencie debaty mogła Pani zadać w ramach niebieskiej kartki pytanie do pani poseł. Pani poseł opuściła salę.

Panowie w sprawach proceduralnych, bardzo proszę, z powołaniem się na numer Regulaminu.

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, I would like to raise a point of order. My point of order is the request that Ms Zovko should be sanctioned because first, she misused a China debate to enact a hypocritical theatre, charging everybody else as culprits in a criminal gang system. And I also want to have her criticised for not even having the respect for her colleagues to wait until the question to her has been asked. I think that is completely objectionable behaviour. She should be sanctioned.

Przewodnicząca. – Bardzo proszę, w momencie kiedy w sprawach proceduralnych zabieramy głos, powoływać się na numer artykułu Regulaminu, w myśl którego będziemy zabierać głos.

René Repasi, *im Namen der S&D-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kommissarin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Meine Notizen liegen da, aber nach der Vorrednerin kann man nicht einfach so seine Rede in dieser einen Minute herunterhalten. Denn was hier gesagt worden ist, ist skandalös. Denn wir sprechen hier von einer dramatischen Menschenrechtsverletzung. Wir haben eine Entschliebung, die klar ist im Wortlaut, dass das, was wir dort in China gesehen haben, die Unterdrückung von Meinungsäußerung, die Unterdrückung vor allen Dingen von Frauen, mit Schärfe verurteilt wird. Das ist unsere Pflicht, unsere noble Pflicht als Europäisches Parlament, dies mit Schärfe zu sagen.

Das Problem der Skandale, die wir hier in den letzten Tagen gesehen haben, ist, dass wir dieser Pflicht nicht nachgekommen sind, weil wir Dinge verwässert haben. Genau das machen wir hier nicht, und deswegen ist das eine andere Situation. Hier muss das Haus zusammenstehen und klar sagen, dass wir solidarisch mit den Frauen und mit den Männern sind, die hier auf die Straße gehen, die für ihre Meinungsfreiheit eintreten, wo wir sehen, was passiert, wenn man keine ordentliche Impfquote hat, weil man die Leute einsperrt und ihre Freiheitsrechte wegnimmt, wo keine Pressefreiheit, keine Meinungsfreiheit ist. Da, verdammt noch mal, muss das Europäische Parlament eine einheitliche Position haben und deutlich machen, dass es solidarisch steht. Das ist unsere einzige Kompetenz in der Außenpolitik. Lasst sie uns verantwortungsvoll nutzen und nicht die Dinge miteinander vermengen!

Przewodnicząca. – Panie Pośle, w myśl art. 10 Regulaminu, proszę używać tylko słów parlamentarnych na tej sali.

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Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, *au nom du groupe Renew*. – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, une nouvelle fois, nous mesurons le courage d'un peuple face à un régime totalitaire. Depuis plusieurs semaines, le gouvernement chinois voit sa jeunesse et sa population se soulever contre sa politique du zéro COVID-19. Ne nous y trompons pas: à travers elle, c'est contre le régime dictatorial qu'elles se retournent. À cela, le parti a répondu en fermant les espaces publics: fermeture des quartiers, suppression des panneaux de signalisation ou encore traçage électronique. Enfermer pour mieux régner, toujours.

Cependant, leur courage porte ses fruits. Pendant plus d'un mois, le pouvoir a annoncé un assouplissement de sa politique anti-COVID-19 et la suspension de l'application des déplacements. Ces annonces sont toutefois trompeuses. L'Europe doit être ferme et se tenir aux côtés des Chinois qui manifestent pour leurs droits les plus fondamentaux et leur quête de liberté. Ce débat doit aussi nous pousser à être plus fermes, face à ce rival systémique, dans notre politique commerciale, et à travailler pour une plus grande autonomie dans nos chaînes d'approvisionnement. Chers collègues, il est temps pour tous les dirigeants européens de prendre unanimement position en faveur des Chinois.

Manu Pineda, *en nombre del Grupo The Left*. – Señora presidenta, los días 1 y 2 de diciembre se celebró en Washington una reunión entre la Vicesecretaría de Estado de los Estados Unidos y el responsable de acción exterior de la Unión Europea. Una de las conclusiones de dicho encuentro fue que los Estados Unidos y la Unión Europea nunca habían estado tan alineados en nuestras perspectivas estratégicas.

Ahora, a continuación, en este Parlamento Europeo, parece que no hay límite que no estemos dispuestos a cruzar para menospreciar y criticar a China para mayor regocijo del dueño del circo, es decir, los Estados Unidos.

En esta ocasión se la condena por implementar las medidas anticovid que ellos habían decidido. Unas medidas anticovid, unas políticas que han demostrado una prevalencia de muerte por esta pandemia casi mil veces menor que la de los Estados Unidos. Y, a pesar de eso, han sido sensibles a las protestas y han cedido. Han cedido ante las peticiones de los manifestantes.

Pero parece que los impulsores de esta Resolución comparten más el tratamiento de Donald Trump o de Jair Bolsonaro, verdaderos hombres récord en índice de afectación y muerte en sus países. Aviso a los colegas que están en estas posiciones de que es muy estrecha la línea que separa el discurso de que las medidas anticovid no sirven para nada del de que con las vacunas anticovid se incrusta un chip que nos convierte en robot. Después de esto ya solo queda que la tierra es plana o que la mujer fue creada de la costilla del hombre, como tanto gusta en promulgar alguna escuela de los Estados Unidos.

Desde esta Unión Europea deberíamos apostar por una política exterior basada en la paz, la cooperación, la solidaridad y el beneficio mutuo, respetando la soberanía de los pueblos y los principios de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas y del Derecho internacional.

Milan Uhrík (NI). – Kolegovia, mne sa asi sníva. Tak koncentrované pokrytectvo ako tu, to som asi ešte v živote nevidel. Nejdem sa ani rozčuľovať nad tým, že za 7,5 tisícové platy tu zase nikto neseď. Ale naozaj nerozumiem, prečo tu musíme riešiť protesty v Číne vzdialené desaťtisíce kilometrov namiesto toho, aby sa riešili problémy súčasných Európanov. Tak Parlament ide prijať nejaké odsudzujúce uznesenie za protesty v Číne. Ale ja sa pýtam, kde bola Európska únia, keď polícia potlačala protesty Európanov? Kde boli odsudzujúce rezolúcie europarlamentu, keď policajti na Slovensku strelili protestujúcemu chlapovi projektil do krku, že mal dieru v krku? Vtedy boli všetci ticho. Dnes sú protestujúci v Číne nazývaní uvedomelými občanmi bojujúcimi za slobodu, ale protestujúci Európania boli označovaní za dezolátov a za extrémistov a za nezodpovedných občanov. Prosím vás, s týmto absolútne nesúhlasím a myslím si, že mali by sme sa sústrediť na to, na čo sme boli zvolení. To znamená riešiť problémy Európanov a nie problémy celého sveta, pretože za to nás sem ľudia nezvolili.

Carina Ohlsson (S&D). – Fru talman! Redan i maj slog Världshälsoorganisationen fast att Kinas nolltoleranspolicy mot covid-19 inte är hållbar. Virusnet går inte att utrota genom att tvångsomhändertagna människor och spika igen deras bostäder.

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Lägenhetsbranden i staden Urumqi i provinsen Xinjiang, där tio personer tragiskt omkom, har dock inspirerat till modiga manifestationer över hela Kina. Fredliga demonstranter håller upp tomma vita pappersark som symbol för den censur och det politiska förtryck som den kinesiska befolkningen genomlider. I stället för att straffa folket borde myndigheterna lyssna på deras uppmaningar, låta människor fritt uttrycka sina åsikter och protestera fredligt utan rädsla för repressalier.

Kinas brott mot grundläggande fri- och rättigheter måste sättas i centrum av EU:s relationer med Kina och lyftas öppet och transparent på den högsta politiska nivån, liksom de tvångsaborter och steriliseringar av uiguriska flickor och kvinnor som också utgör ett brott mot mänskligheten, som vi tidigare har konstaterat.

Thijs Reuten (S&D). – Madam President, Commissioner, colleagues, yes, the greatest gift that we can do to autocrats all over the world is to stop doing our job in here defending human rights. I will continue in my mother tongue, Dutch.

Heel China gingen ze door, de beelden van de gruwelijke brand in het Oeigoerse Ürümqi. De Chinese bevolking ging de straat op, verenigd tegen het bewind van Xi Jinping. Dit had het moment moeten zijn voor China's democratisering. Maar natuurlijk was het dat niet. Natuurlijk draaide Beijing de duimschroeven van onderdrukking net nog wat meer aan.

Die onderdrukking is niet beperkt tot China, Hongkong en Macau. Zelfs in onze Europese Unie intimideert Beijing de diaspora met illegale politiebureaus. Krankzinnig. Natuurlijk moeten die politiebureaus onmiddellijk op slot. Natuurlijk moeten we onze diaspora beschermen. En natuurlijk moeten we de Chinese bevolking steunen. Hun hang naar vrijheid is zelfs sterker dan Xi Jinpings onderdrukking. Wij hebben hen gehoord, luid en duidelijk.

(De spreker aanvaardt een 'blauwe kaart'-reactie)

Karen Melchior (Renew), *(blue-card speech).* – Thank you very much. You mentioned that we should not suspend our protection of human rights. How do you see the importance of our urgency resolutions here in the Parliament, in our fight for the human rights across the world?

Thijs Reuten (S&D) *(blue-card reply).* – Thank you for that question dear colleague. I think it's of great importance that we continue to do our work despite what's happening and despite the terrible circumstances that we find ourselves here in this House. And my colleague, Mr Repasi, already referred to that, we need to stand together as Parliament as a whole, together to defend our values in the European Union and to support everyone who's fighting to get the same freedom and the same liberties that we have strived for, for decades. We need to help them. We need to stand by them.

Salima Yenbou (Renew). – Madame la Présidente, «nous allons assouplir les restrictions COVID-19» est une bien belle promesse du gouvernement chinois, qui cache en réalité le renforcement de la répression contre toute forme de dissidence. Nous assistons depuis désormais trois semaines à des faits historiques.

Historiques par leur masse: des milliers et des milliers de manifestants, que nous soutenons, descendant dans les rues d'au moins 27 villes de Chine. Historiques par leur contenu: nous n'avons pas assisté à une telle manifestation politique en Chine depuis Tian'anmen, avec leurs draps blancs contre la censure et leurs revendications, «Xi Jinping, démissionne!» ou «Nous voulons la liberté.»

Dans cette guerre que la Chine dit mener contre la COVID-19, les armes et la répression visent les citoyens chinois. Nous le savons bien: le plus grand ennemi du régime autoritaire de Xi Jinping n'est pas le virus, mais son propre peuple. Or, combien d'autres peuples désirent être libérés du gouvernement chinois? Je pense aux Ouïghours, aux Hongkongais, aux Taïwanais ou encore aux Tibétains. La liste est bien trop longue. Arrêtons enfin ce totalitarisme insupportable. L'Union européenne en a les moyens diplomatiques. Il nous manque malheureusement la volonté politique.

Raphaël Glucksmann (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, la liberté n'a ni nationalité, ni continent. Au cœur même de la plus grande dictature du monde, des milliers de citoyens ont eu le courage de défendre leurs droits fondamentaux et universels. Dans ce premier grand élan de solidarité des Chinois han envers les Ouïgours, martyrisés par le régime, on peut lire ce que le philosophe tchèque Patočka qualifiait de «solidarité des ébranlés». Voilà ce qu'est le courage. Voilà ce qu'est l'amour de la liberté.

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Nous, que faisons-nous? Nous, nous acceptons sur notre territoire des commissariats du régime chinois. Nous, nous acceptons que les produits de l'esclavage se déversent dans nos marchés. Nous, nous acceptons que nos multinationales fassent un fric démentiel avec le régime communiste chinois. Nous, nous baissions la tête quand nous parlons à Xi Jinping. Nous devons donc apprendre du courage de ceux qui sont descendus dans les rues de Shanghai.

And now I will continue in English to conclude, to say that it is not because corrupt regimes, autocratic regimes, are corrupting some Members and are trying to destabilise our institutions that we should stop having resolutions condemning corrupt and authoritarian regimes. On the contrary, the more Qatar, Russia and China will start corrupting us, the more we will criticise them. And that is our response to them.

(The speaker agreed to respond to a blue-card speech)

Karen Melchior (Renew), *(blue-card speech)*. – Thank you very much, Mr Glucksmann. You mentioned that we should ban the import of forced labour goods into the European Union. How is the production of forced labour goods in China helping to support the Chinese Government also in its crackdown on protests in China?

Raphaël Glucksmann (S&D), *(blue-card reply)* – The fact is that today we are – if we want it or if we don't want it – connected to this crackdown. How? Through the value chain of our companies. Through the export of the goods produced by forced labour.

For instance, if you take things that we need most of all now for the Green Deal, which are solar panels, yes? How are they produced? They are produced by Uyghur slaves. And why? Because we don't produce them ourselves. So that's why it's so important to change, to change the rules of the game so that we can have a market that is free from these goods. If we don't do it, it means we are collaborating with the repression and the crackdown. That is also why we need these resolutions to point the finger when it hurts, where it hurts, and when we want them to be hurt.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Clare Daly (The Left). – Madam President, I'm just constantly amazed by the discussions that go on in here because in the main, what we've been subjected to is a diatribe of anti-Chinese rhetoric, which is of no benefit to anybody living in China.

Of course the people in China are fed up! Lockdowns can't go on forever without serious social and psychological effects, and the extraordinary conditions experienced by factory workers in the Foxconn complex in Zhengzhou, where they produce iPhones, would drive anybody around the bend. They have a right to strike, lockdowns can't be used as an excuse to railroad workers into intolerable exploitation.

But we have to avoid being simplistic. Lockdowns and their effects are not unique to China, we've had them here. It's been clear for a while that China would have to transition, the government has begun that process. They face huge problems with a large unvaccinated elderly population and the risk of a spike in excess mortality in a country of 1.4 billion people.

With our own COVID blunders, it's a bit facile of us leaping to judgement. If we want to be useful, let us internationally cooperate, support and help China's ease from zero COVID.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Stella Kyriakides, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members, we would like to recognise the immense bravery of people across China who recently came out to stand up and express themselves.

It was an exceptional moment for many reasons. Protesters came out despite many risks, ubiquitous mass surveillance, the fear of being pursued afterwards. Protests happen in China, but they are usually local on specific issues. Indeed, these demonstrations followed that of a lone protester with slogans written on white banners ahead of the 20th Party Congress. Worryingly, his whereabouts remain unknown.

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But last month's demonstrations happened in at least 12 cities, with people from many walks of life. Images spread on the Internet as quickly as they were captured by surveillance cameras. The protests offered a show of inter-ethnic solidarity, and the fire in Xinjiang, which tragically left at least eight Uyghur Chinese citizens dead.

The triple implications of social instability, economic impact and people's fatigue after almost three years of lockdowns seem to have led the authorities to conclude that the time has come to change the zero COVID-19 policy. The voices of the protesters did not therefore go unnoticed.

No one can anticipate how things will evolve. The public health impacts or what may happen in case of a large scale pandemic outbreak. The challenge is massive, with the risk of grave consequences as case numbers spiral and health systems come under strain.

President Michel shared with President Xi Europe's experience with massive vaccination of all age groups going hand in hand with easing of measures.

Those who chose to stand up and protest showed great courage. Systematic repression of public dissent by state authorities has been raised many times in this chamber. There are reports of security services tracking down protesters. Anyone who had a mobile phone switched on knows they may be traced. Many students were sent home from universities. People who took to the streets may still feel reprisals, especially those who chanted certain slogans or sent images abroad.

Honourable Members, the EU will continue to speak up for the right to freedom of peaceful expression everywhere in the world – that is a fundamental right which must be enjoyed by everyone.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 15 grudnia 2022 r.

17.2. Militārās huntas īstenotās represijas pret miermīlīgām demonstrācijām Čadā

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest debata nad sześcioma projektami rezolucji w sprawie tłumienia pokojowych demonstracji przez juntę wojskową w Czadzie (2022/2993(RSP))¹.

¹Patrz protokół posiedzenia.

Hannes Heide, Verfasser. – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kommissarin! Eines gleich vorweg: Wenn wir hier den Schwachen und Entrechteten eine Stimme geben, dann hat das mit Haltung zu tun und mit nichts anderem. Bei Protesten gegen die Übergangsregierung im Tschad wurden bis zu 150 Menschen getötet. Die Zahl der Verletzten ist nach wie vor unklar. Mehr als 1300 Personen wurden verhaftet und gefoltert, 200 sind nach wie vor vermisst. Die meisten Inhaftierten befinden sich 600 Kilometer von der Hauptstadt entfernt im Hochsicherheitsgefängnis Koro Toro unter katastrophalen Verhältnissen bei Temperaturen von über 40 Grad im Sommer und bei null Grad im Winter.

Die Ankündigung seiner eigenen Kandidatur und der Verlängerung einer Übergangszeit von 18 Monaten bis zu Wahlen durch Präsident Mahamat Déby, der seinem getöteten Vater nachfolgte, brachte die Menschen auf die Straße. Das Land ist von schwerwiegenden Grund- und Menschenrechtsverletzungen gezeichnet und mit Korruption, extremer Armut und einer sich ausweitenden Hungersnot konfrontiert.

Die EU muss auf die humanitäre Lage im Land reagieren und den demokratischen Übergang entschieden unterstützen. Eine Untersuchung der gewalttätigen Niederschlagung der friedlichen Proteste ist unbedingt notwendig. Und es bräuchte eine gemeinsame Stellungnahme dieses Hauses, die Unterstützung aller Abgeordneten – und besonders von der größten Fraktion hier in diesem Haus –, um eine klare Botschaft auszusenden, die diese schwachen Menschen, die diese Menschen in dieser Situation auch entsprechend unterstützt.

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Pierrette Herzberger-Fofana, auteure. – Madame la Présidente, la situation au Tchad est alarmante. Après le décès du président de la République, les militaires ont pris le pouvoir, suspendu la Constitution et dissous l'Assemblée nationale. Des milliers de personnes ont manifesté dans tout le pays pour exiger le retour immédiat à un régime démocratique. La répression a été brutale. La police a répondu aux manifestants en tirant à balles réelles et en lançant des gaz lacrymogènes.

Selon les premières estimations, 50 personnes auraient été tuées depuis le mois d'octobre, mais le chiffre exact est probablement plus élevé. Plus de 1 000 personnes ont été arrêtées et, selon le Comité de l'ONU contre la torture, 400 ont été emprisonnées au centre d'incarcération de Koro Toro, situé en plein désert. La plupart d'entre eux ont été condamnés, par contumace, jusqu'à trois ans de prison. Les conditions dans les prisons sont désastreuses. Selon les derniers rapports, le manque d'équipements de base, comme l'eau potable, est criant. La torture est toujours d'actualité.

La société civile a préparé un plan de transition afin de réinstaurer les structures démocratiques et de sortir de cette situation de crise. Nous ne devons pas abandonner les populations qui sont victimes de violences. Nous devons faire entendre la voix de la société civile, pour soutenir le retour aux structures démocratiques.

Miguel Urbán Crespo, autor. – Señora presidenta, lo primero que quería decir es que me parece una auténtica vergüenza que el Partido Popular no esté participando en estos debates. El Partido Popular parece que quiere acabar con las injerencias de terceros países sobre este Parlamento aboliendo los derechos humanos. Parece que el Partido Popular quiere combatir la corrupción aboliendo la democracia. ¿Cuál será la próxima propuesta del Partido Popular? ¿Cerrar el Parlamento? Claro, es lo que estamos viendo.

Hace dieciocho meses este Pleno habló de un golpe de Estado que la Unión Europea no quería reconocer en Chad. Una violencia sobre el pueblo que clamaba democracia. Nos pidieron confiar en el período de transición por la estabilidad en la región. Hoy hemos llegado al final de ese período y ha pasado lo previsible: la Junta Militar y Déby han decidido alargar su dictadura y continuar reprimiendo a su pueblo. Decenas de muertos, de detenidos y de perseguidos. El uso de la fuerza letal contra los manifestantes en Chad es una costumbre.

Mientras esto pasa, la Unión Europea y los Estados miembros, como Francia, han apoyado a la Junta Militar y han mantenido la cooperación con el régimen, incluida la cooperación militar y policial con muertos encima de la mesa. ¿Esto es estabilidad?

Exigimos que se restablezca el orden constitucional y se entregue el poder político a las autoridades civiles y, hasta que esto no pase, que se cese la cooperación con la dictadura de Chad.

Carlos Zorrinho, em nome do Grupo S&D. – Senhora Presidente, Senhora Comissária, a repressão violenta das recentes manifestações no Chade levou a que 50 pessoas perdessem a vida e se tivessem contabilizado mais de três centenas de feridos. Destes confrontos resultaram ainda 400 detidos. A maioria dos manifestantes detidos, julgados sem garantias, foram condenados a penas de dois a três anos de prisão. A oposição da sociedade civil manifestava-se contra a prorrogação do período de transição política decretado pela Junta Militar, a qual dissolveu o Parlamento e o governo e prometeu eleições livres e democráticas, após uma tradição de 18 meses renovável apenas uma vez.

O Parlamento Europeu não pode ficar silenciado perante este facto. Por isso, agendamos este debate. Lamento profundamente que o maior grupo político desta Casa, o PPE, não tenha a compaixão, a empatia, a responsabilidade política para se associar a este debate e apoiar a transição democrática que o povo do Chade anseia.

Como membro desta Casa da democracia, não prescindo do meu direito e do meu dever de apelar às autoridades do Chade para que garantam e protejam o exercício dos direitos à reunião e associação pacífica, bem como à liberdade de opinião e expressão dos seus cidadãos no Chade e para que criem condições para uma rápida transição democrática pacífica.

Thierry Mariani, au nom du groupe ID. – Madame la Présidente, après l'éclatement de la Libye, après l'abandon de la France et des soldats de l'opération Barkhane, l'Union européenne entreprend désormais de participer à la déstabilisation du Tchad. À Fort-Lamy, le Tchad accueille une base aérienne française. À N'Djamena, il se coordonne avec les forces militaires françaises pour lutter contre les mafias, les groupes djihadistes et les trafiquants d'êtres humains.

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C'est vrai, l'Union européenne ne s'embarrasse pas de ces considérations. Pour elle, un pays africain mérite d'être condamné. À mon avis, le Parlement européen est à l'heure actuelle très mal placé pour faire la leçon à un gouvernement qui négocie avec son opposition, sous l'égide – devinez – du Qatar.

Oui, les événements du 20 octobre dernier sont une très dure épreuve pour tous les Tchadiens. Oui, toutes les victimes sont à déplorer et à regretter. Oui, la transformation de ces manifestations en ce que les autorités tchadiennes jugent comme une insurrection a été l'occasion d'affrontements sanglants. Je note cependant que l'Union africaine a refusé de sanctionner le Tchad. Il est urgent que nous renouvelions nos alliances avec les partenaires africains qui ont une tradition de confiance avec la France.

Alors que le Tchad a déclaré l'urgence alimentaire l'été dernier, qu'il fait face à de nombreux défis sécuritaires, au Nord comme au Sud, et qu'il a dû affronter les pires inondations de son histoire, ce nouveau débat, à mon avis, est déplorable. Ouvrez les yeux, mes chers collègues: notre politique idéologique en Afrique est en train d'y effacer nos amitiés et d'y détruire nos intérêts. Votez cette résolution, mais demain, il ne faudra peut-être pas vous étonner que ce vide soit rempli par d'autres pays en Afrique.

Stella Kyriakides, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members of the European Parliament, what happened in Chad on 20 October is unacceptable. The excessive and disproportionate use of force by the Chadian security forces to repress opposition demonstrations led to the death of at least 50 people – likely more – and over 600 arrests.

Hundreds of detainees, reportedly including minors, are being held in a high-security prison far from the capital. We understand that some of the arrested have been released in the meantime. Trials have started against the detainees and verdicts have already been handed down, often without giving them access to lawyers and in the absence of independent observers. Allegations of serious human rights abuse abound. These are grave breaches of international human rights law and, as such, risk seriously undermining the ongoing political transition.

The EU has been Chad's steadfast partner for years, offering its contribution to help them face their many political, social and economic challenges. Together with our partners and, in particular, the African Union, the EU has supported the transition process that started in 2021 as the basis upon which to build a new social contract in Chad, rooted in the respect of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law.

In this spirit, the EU has been calling on the authorities, including at the highest level, to shed full light on the events of 20 October and their aftermath, and for the full respect of the right to a fair trial and due process of all the arrested. Only a credible, independent investigation into what happened, in full respect of the rights of detainees, and ensuring accountability and justice for any human rights violations and abuses committed, will rebuild trust in Chadian institutions. This will be crucial to allow the transition process to be credible, inclusive and able to pursue its ultimate goal of building back better for the benefit of the Chadian population.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

Głosowanie odbędzie się w czwartek 15 grudnia 2022 r.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 171)

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Dominique Bilde (ID), *par écrit*. – Le 20 avril 2021, Idriss Déby, Président du Tchad, mourait au combat. Son fils, Mahamat Idriss Déby, a assuré dès lors une transition, en dehors des standards démocratiques, ce que l'Union européenne a vu d'un mauvais œil. C'est d'autant plus vrai que cette période de transition a été prolongée et que les manifestations de l'opposition auraient été réprimées. Pour autant, ayant suivi attentivement l'évolution de la conjoncture au Sahel et de l'opération militaire Barkhane menée par la France, je tiens à rappeler le lourd tribut payé par le Tchad contre le terrorisme islamiste. Le Tchad accueille toujours une présence militaire française, notamment sur la base aérienne Fort-Lamy. Alors que le djihadisme gagne du terrain depuis le désengagement de la France, cette charge contre le régime tchadien devrait être quelque peu nuancée, afin de tenir compte de ce contexte. Les principes démocratiques, ainsi que le respect des droits fondamentaux, ne sont évidemment pas négociables. Mais, dans le cas d'espèce, on peut encore espérer que la voie du dialogue et de la diplomatie finisse par porter ses fruits et c'est, du reste, notre meilleure carte à jouer. Je vous remercie.

György Hölvényi (PPE), *írásban*. – A 2021-ben meggyilkolt Idriss Deby elnök kormányzása alatt Csádot viszonylagos stabilitás jellemezte. Mára azonban a cselekvőképes kormány hiánya, a vallási szélsőségek egyre fokozódó jelenléte és a romló gazdasági helyzet Csád teljes összeomlásával fenyeget. Csád a Föld egyik legszegényebb országa. Szintén nagy kihívást jelent a 450 ezer szudáni, nigériai és közép-afrikai menekült ellátása. A gyenge kormányzat pedig képtelen megakadályozni, hogy a környező országok vallási fanatikussai beszivárogijanak Csádba.

Látunk kell, hogy a vallási szélsőségek térnyerése fenyegetést jelent, elsősorban az országban élő keresztények, de más muszlim közösségek számára is, akik csak remélhetik, hogy az állam képes gátat vetni az iszlamista túlkapasoknak. A Száhel régió és így Csád biztonsága és stabilitása az Európai Unió stratégiai érdeke. Különösen most, amikor az Unió keleti határain dúló háború az európai családok gazdasági és energiabiztonságát fenyegeti. Ebben a helyzetben egészen egyszerűen nem engedhetjük meg, hogy a Száhel régió összeomlása újabb, az eddigieknek jóval nagyobb migrációs hullámot indítson el.

Csád stabilitásának helyreállításához elengedhetetlen, hogy minél hamarabb demokratikus választásokat tartsanak. Az Uniónak készen kell állnia arra, hogy segítse ezt a folyamatot. Emellett a biztonság megteremtésében az Európai Uniónak saját eszköztárával támogatnia kell a regionális partnerek kezdeményezéseit, illetve a tagállamok erőfeszítéseit.

17.3. Cilvēktiesību aizstāvja Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja lieta Bahreinā

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego jest debata nad sześcioma projektami rezolucji w sprawie obrońcy praw człowieka Abdulhadi al-Chawadży w Bahrajnie (2022/2994(RSP))¹.

¹Patrz protokół posiedzenia.

Karen Melchior, *author*. – Madam President, it is right and it is important that we in the European Parliament today debate the situation of human rights in Bahrain, especially the situation of Danish-Bahraini citizen, Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, whose health is in danger because of his imprisonment of 11 years, whose family has only once been allowed to visit him in the last 2 years.

We will not be silenced. And they have tried. Bahrain actively tried to tarnish the reputation of this internationally respected human rights defender to MEPs to stop this debate. I will never remain silent in the face of repression and I will never remain silent if I suspect corruption or undue influence. We must not accept colleagues being unduly influenced to change the wording of our work, or our votes. Even suspicion must not be allowed. It destroys the reputation of our House.

So, colleagues, I will confront you and even your political leadership on this. The Bahraini Government must not be allowed to silence the voices of Bahrain. I condemn the severe continued repression of civic and political space in Bahrain. Bahraini authorities should restore political society to give full civil and political rights to all opposition members. The horrific regime in Iran, close to Bahrain, and Iran's regional influence must not be an excuse to close down democracy and imprison political opponents for years.

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Finally, we as the European Union cannot claim to support democracy in the world and export surveillance and repression. Technology from the European Union must never be exported to suppress our core values of human rights and democracy, to silence the voices of human rights. So Member States, you must do more. Every Member State must look critically at the export licenses for European surveillance software under the Dual-use Regulation.

Hannah Neumann, author. – Madam President, dear colleagues, in Europe we take the right to freedom of expression for granted, but people in the Gulf region risk their life for it. In Bahrain, human rights defender Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja was sentenced to life in prison because he led pro-democracy protests and is still in prison today and our urgency resolution is about his case.

But his case is by far not the only one in the region: 34 years in prison for PhD scholar Salma al-Shehab in Saudi Arabia for her tweets on women's rights. Life imprisonment for the Qatari lawyers Hazza and Rashed bin Ali Abu Shurayda al-Marri, who had organised so-called unauthorised meetings. Ten years for human rights defender Ahmed Mansoor in the UAE for his social media activism. And lawmakers in Iran have just called on the judiciary to sentence protesters to death. For what? For calling for political freedoms and the freedom of expression, and two of them have already been executed.

So in every encounter with the Gulf region and beyond, we have to speak up on behalf of those who are not allowed to speak up. And we must call for the release of those unjustly detained again and again and again, and especially and continuously in this European Parliament. Because if we are silent, they will be forgotten in their dark prison holes, but theirs are the voices that the world needs to hear.

Evin Incir, on behalf of the S&D Group. – Madam President, imagine sitting at home years after years, hoping and praying for your father, husband, or son to enjoy a dinner with you, or just being able to have a good laugh together. These simple things might not be dreams for us, but they are dreams for many people in Bahrain. The family of the Danish-Bahraini citizen Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja has over a decade dreamt what we take for granted.

Today gives us all here in this room the possibility to send a clear message to his family and all other human rights defenders' families that their dreams are our dreams. Today gives us all here in this room the possibility to send a clear message to the cruel regime of Bahrain that human rights are not for selected people to enjoy. Human rights are not if and when: human rights are universal and always. The European Union's – including Parliament's – biggest role is to defend the universal values within the Union and globally.

Colleagues, all prisoners of conscience must immediately be released. Death penalty must be abolished. And the EU officials should always include visit of political prisoners on their programme in Bahrain. The crackdown on the political opposition must end. Therefore we also need to ensure that no surveillance technology of the European Union or the Member States ends up in the hands of the oppressive regime of Bahrain. Enough is enough.

And I must also say that I think that the EPP's boycott of the urgent resolutions on human rights breaches are a shame. Human rights cannot wait.

Maximilian Krah, im Namen der ID-Fraktion. – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kollegin, meine Damen und Herren Kollegen! Das ist jetzt innerhalb eines Jahres das zweite Mal, dass wir uns um einen inhaftierten „XY Unbekannt“ in der arabischen Welt kümmern. Einmal war es in den Emiraten. Heute ist es in Bahrain.

Zunächst glaube ich nicht, dass die europäischen Wählerinnen und Wähler tatsächlich Verständnis dafür haben, dass wir unsere Zeit für solche Einzelfälle aufwenden. Das Zweite ist, dass ich mich wundere, dass Sie sich jedes Mal Länder aussuchen, die in der arabischen Welt – die in der Tat Menschenrechtsnachholbedarf hat – als verhältnismäßig liberal gelten. Wir müssen doch einfach auch die Relationen beachten.

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Tatsache ist, dass Bahrain seit Jahren ein Partner des Westens und dieser Union ist, dass wir Abkommen geschlossen haben, dass wir Partnerschaft haben. Wieso wird nun ausgerechnet wegen eines Einzelfalls diese Partnerschaft in Frage gestellt? Bahrain kämpft um seine staatliche Existenz. Der Iran akzeptiert die Unabhängigkeit nicht. Und der hier heute so Gelobte war beteiligt an einer Auseinandersetzung, die die staatliche Existenz in Frage gestellt hat.

Ich denke, mehr Vertrauen in unseren Partner und weniger Menschenrechtsimperialismus wäre angezeigt.

Stella Kyriakides, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, honourable Members of the European Parliament, human rights represent a core dimension of the EU's engagement with Bahrain and are regularly addressed, including during our annual human rights dialogue with the country as well as by our Member States.

Since the first round of our dialogue with Bahrain in 2016, we have been addressing several areas of concern with regard to the human rights situation; freedom of expression and association, the right to a fair trial, allegations of torture and prison conditions, and the situation of prisoners of conscience are among the points that we raise systematically and consistently with Bahraini authorities.

We have seen progress on certain human rights issues in Bahrain. The fact that healthcare in prisons is now provided by the Ministry of Health instead of the Ministry of Interior and the increasing number of cases for which alternative punishments apply are steps in the right direction. We continue to urge that independent oversight mechanisms are put into place and that the officials are held accountable in cases of torture and ill treatment of prisoners.

The case of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja is one of the cases we have been actively following, both from Brussels and via the Delegation in Riyadh, accredited to Bahrain. We are regularly insisting on seeking clarifications from the Bahraini authorities on his health and access to medical treatment, as well as details on the judicial process. In doing so, we have constantly reiterated the respect for the UN guidelines on the minimum standards of treatment of prisoners – the Mandela rules – as well as the EU's principled position on freedom of expression and association.

The most recent dialogue held on October 27 in Manama, provided further opportunity to discuss pertinent issues of concern with Bahraini authorities. Moreover, three EU Member State ambassadors present in the country participated in the dialogue as observers. On that occasion, the EU emphasised rule of law as a foundation for our engagement with partner countries. We have also inquired about the conditions in prisons, urging Bahrain to seriously investigate any torture allegations and violations of the right to a fair trial, as well as to extend an amnesty to all currently on death row.

The meeting also allowed raising individual cases, including the one of Al-Khawaja. We pleaded for transparency and openness from the Bahraini side and requested for the possibility for EU Special Representative for Human Rights, E. Gilmore, to visit him and other prisoners of conscience.

In the same vein, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights has been raising the cases of imprisoned Bahraini human rights defenders, with Bahraini authorities, pleading for a release, including on humanitarian grounds.

The EU will remain actively engaged on human rights situations in Bahrain, including on the case of Al-Khawaja. We are confident that intensification of relations with Bahrain could possibly lead to an improvement of the overall human rights situation in the country. For this reason, we will also explore opportunities for sharing EU expertise and best practices in specific human rights-related domains with competent Bahraini authorities.

Moreover, the EU will also work with Bahrain to implement its recently adopted national human rights action plan, which includes specific objectives in the area of the rule of law.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam debatę.

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18. Balsojumu skaidrojumi

Przewodnicząca. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dziennego są wyjaśnienia dotyczące stanowiska zajętego w głosowaniu.

18.1. Izredzes panākt divu valstu risinājumu attiecībā uz Izraēlu un Palestīnu (RC-B9-0552/2022, B9-0552/2022, B9-0553/2022, B9-0554/2022, B9-0555/2022, B9-0556/2022, B9-0557/2022)

Ustne wyjaśnienia dotyczące głosowania

Miriam Lexmann (PPE). – Madam President, I welcome today's vote on the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine. We must continue to work with our allies, especially the United States, to continue supporting durable peace between Israel and the Palestinians, but also across the regions through the Abraham Accords.

However, let me also stress the importance of education in building durable peace based on respect and tolerance. Hatred, incitement to violence and antisemitism are in conflict with European values and are a key impediment to the resolution of the conflict. That's why I would like to stress that all schoolbooks and school materials supported by the Union funds, including those used by UNRWA, must be in line with the UNESCO standards of peace, tolerance, coexistence and non-violence. EU funding must be suspended if clear and substantiated evidence of misuse is presented.

Przewodnicząca. – Zamykam dyskusję w tym punkcie porządku dziennego.

19. Nākamās sēdes darba kārtība

Przewodnicząca. – Informuję Państwa: następne posiedzenie odbędzie się jutro, tj. w czwartek 15 grudnia 2022 r. o godz. 9.00.

Porządek obrad został opublikowany. Jest dostępny na stronie internetowej Parlamentu Europejskiego.

20. Šīs sēdes protokola apstiprināšana

Przewodnicząca. – Protokół dzisiejszego posiedzenia zostanie przedłożony Parlamentowi do zatwierdzenia jutro, wczesnym popołudniem. W związku z tym to był ostatni punkt naszego porządku w dniu dzisiejszym. Zamykam posiedzenie, życząc Państwu dobrej nocy.

21. Sēdes slēgšana

(Posiedzenie zostało zamknięte o godz. 22.01)