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VOLLEDIG VERSLAG VAN DE VERGADERINGEN VAN 6 FEBRUARI 2018

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STRAATSBURG

Inhoud	Bladzijde
1. Opening van de vergadering	3
2. Verklaring van de Voorzitter	3
3. Debat met de premier van Kroatië, Andrej Plenković, over de toekomst van Europa (debat)	3
4. Mededeling van de Voorzitter	34
5. Stemmingen	34
5.1. Verzoek om opheffing van de immuniteit van Steeve Briois (A8-0011/2018 - Evelyn Regner) (stemming)	34
5.2. Overeenkomst EU-Brazilië voor wetenschappelijke en technologische samenwerking (A8-0004/2018 - Angelo Ciocca) (stemming)	35
5.3. Instelling van een bijzondere commissie voor de vergunningsprocedure van de Unie voor pesticiden, bevoegdheden, aantal leden en duur van het mandaat ervan (B8-0077/2018) (stemming)	35
5.4. Geoblocking en andere vormen van discriminatie van klanten op basis van nationaliteit, verblijfplaats of plaats van vestiging (A8-0172/2017 - Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein) (stemming)	35
5.5. Kosteneffectieve emissiereducties en koolstofarme investeringen (A8-0003/2017 - Julie Girling) (stemming)	35
5.6. Jaarverslag 2016 van de Europese Centrale Bank (A8-0383/2017 - Jonás Fernández) (stemming)	35
5.7. Versnelling van de innovatie op het gebied van schone energie (A8-0005/2018 - Jerzy Buzek) (stemming)	35

Inhoud	Bladzijde
6. Stemverklaringen	35
6.1. Geoblocking en andere vormen van discriminatie van klanten op basis van nationaliteit, verblijf- plaats of plaats van vestiging (A8-0172/2017 - Róza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein)	35
6.2. Kosteneffectieve emissiereducties en koolstofarme investeringen (A8-0003/2017 - Julie Girling)	38
6.3. Jaarverslag 2016 van de Europese Centrale Bank (A8-0383/2017 - Jonás Fernández)	40
6.4. Versnelling van de innovatie op het gebied van schone energie (A8-0005/2018 - Jerzy Buzek)	40
7. Rectificaties stemgedrag/Voorgenomen stemgedrag: zie notulen	42
8. Hervatting van de vergadering	42
9. Goedkeuring van de notulen van de vorige vergadering: zie notulen	42
10. Samenstelling commissies: zie notulen	42
11. Nultolerantie tegenover genitale verminking van vrouwen (debat)	42
12. Besluit over de EU-uitbreidingsstrategie – Westelijke Balkan (debat)	60
13. Gedelegeerde handelingen en uitvoeringsmaatregelen (artikel 105, lid 6, en artikel 106, lid 4, onder d), van het Reglement): zie notulen	88
14. De situatie in Zimbabwe (debat)	88
15. De huidige mensenrechtensituatie in Turkije – Situatie in Afrin, Syrië (debat)	97
16. Situatie in Venezuela (debat)	119
17. Situatie van de UNRWA (debat)	129
18. Agenda van de volgende vergadering: zie notulen	137
19. Sluiting van de vergadering	137

VOLLEDIG VERSLAG VAN DE VERGADERINGEN VAN 6 FEBRUARI 2018

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. ANTONIO TAJANI

Presidente

1. Opening van de vergadering

(La seduta è aperta alle 9.10)

2. Verklaring van de Voorzitter

Presidente. – Prima di avviare il dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa con il Primo ministro della Croazia Plenković, voglio ricordare i terribili attentati che hanno scosso l'Afghanistan la scorsa settimana.

Qualche giorno dopo l'attacco contro l'Hotel Inter-Continental di Kabul, è stata fatta esplodere un'autoambulanza-bomba, un altro attacco ha preso di mira l'Accademia militare Marshal Fahim, e infine è stata colpita la sede della ONG Save the Children.

Questi attentati, con decine di vittime innocenti, si aggiungono purtroppo alla lunga lista di atti terroristici che stanno colpendo il mondo intero da troppi anni. Oggi più che mai abbiamo il dovere di ricordare tutte le vittime. Ai loro famigliari voglio indirizzare, a nome vostro, le condoglianze e la solidarietà di questo Parlamento.

A tutti quelli che continuano a operare sul campo in situazioni di difficoltà e pericolo voglio dire: non abbandonate, siamo al vostro fianco. Abbiamo tutti la responsabilità di continuare a lavorare per promuovere una soluzione politica per la pace in Afghanistan.

3. Debat met de premier van Kroatië, Andrej Plenković, over de toekomst van Europa (debat)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione con il Primo ministro della Croazia Andrej Plenković sul futuro dell'Europa (2018/2533(RSP)).

Prima di dare la parola al Primo ministro Plenković, che ringrazio per aver aderito al nostro invito – lo saluto anche perché è stato, all'inizio di questa legislatura, componente di questa Assemblea –, vi ricordo che è possibile richiedere il «catch the eye» usando l'apparecchio per il voto elettronico. Per introdurre la vostra richiesta, inserire la carta di voto e utilizzare uno qualsiasi dei bottoni per il voto elettronico. Procedo adesso all'apertura del sistema che resterà aperto durante l'intervento del Primo ministro Plenković.

Do adesso la parola al Primo ministro Plenković, perché possa illustrare all'Aula le sue idee e le idee del suo governo sul futuro dell'Europa.

Andrej Plenković, *hrvatski premijer*. – Poštovani predsjedniče Europskog parlamenta, dragi Antonio, poštovani potpredsjednici, čelnici političkih skupina, zastupnici, poštovani predsjedniče Europske komisije, dragi Jean-Claude, poštovana ministrica bugarskoga predsjedanja Vijeća, dragi prijatelji.

It is good to be back. It takes leaving the Parliament to arrive at the podium.

Drago mi je vidjeti prijatelje i osjetiti pozitivnu atmosferu Strasbourga. Zadovoljstvo mi je kao predsjedniku Vlade Republike Hrvatske govoriti danas o budućnosti Europe.

Ove će godine Hrvatska obilježiti petu godinu članstva u Europskoj uniji. To je prigoda za prisjećanje na naš zahtjevan proces pristupanja, kao i činjenicu da je Europska zajednica 15. siječnja 1992. godine međunarodno priznala Hrvatsku. Ona se time nakon devet stoljeća kao neovisna država vratila na političku kartu svijeta, na raskrće srednje Europe i Sredozemlja. Hrvatski narod, taj dan, kao i dan pristupanja Europskoj uniji, i danas pamti s puno emocija.

Pad Berlinskog zida označio je odbacivanje komunizma i pobjedu demokracije u cijeloj srednjoj i istočnoj Europi. Premda smo i mi težili povratku u okrilje demokratske Europe, to razdoblje i događaji početkom devedestih bili su za Hrvatsku izrazito nepovoljni i teški. Na kraju dvadesetog stoljeća u srcu Europe bili smo nažalost prisiljeni braniti svoju slobodu od vojne agresije. Opsada i razaranje Vukovara, prvog europskog grada uništenog nakon drugog svjetskog rata. Bombardiranje srednjovjekovnog Dubrovnika. Tisuće ubijenih, ranjenih te stotine tisuća raseljenih trajno su obilježili to bolno razdoblje.

U ratu koji je završio 1995. Hrvatska je pretrpjela štete koje su dosegle 150 % od predratnoga BDP-a. Možete samo zamisliti koliko je to usporilo našu društvenu i gospodarsku preobrazbu. Premda smo prije rata bili među razvijenijim tranzicijskim gospodarstvima, tijekom devedesetih, zbog svega navedenog, izgubili smo korak u odnosu na druge i ušli u Europsku uniju 2013., umjesto, da nije bilo tog rata, vjerojatno 2004.

Trebalo je proći gotovo četvrt stoljeća da bi se Hrvatska oporavila, promijenila i razvila, obnovila se, izgradila i danas postala jedna od europskih najatraktivnijih turističkih destinacija koju je prošle godine posjetilo 18 milijuna gostiju. Turizam danas predstavlja skoro 20 % našega BDP-a i prvi smo u Europi po broju turista po stanovniku. Kao istaknute elemente naše kulturne baštine, izumiteljstva, inovacija podsjetit ću da Hrvatska ima 23 upisana dobra na popisu svjetske baštine UNESCO-a, na naš grad, Rijeku, koji će 2020. biti europska prijestolnica kulture, na hrvatsku kravatu, koja je kao što i ovdje vidimo, osvojila svijet još odavna, kao i na Nikolu Teslu, rodom iz Hrvatske, bez čijih izuma bismo danas ovdje sjedili u mraku. U Hrvatskoj se danas proizvodi jedan od najbržih električnih automobila na svijetu. Jedna hrvatska tvrtka omogućava da 4 milijarde ljudi u svijetu digitalno komunicira putem SMS-a.

Istodobno sam svjestan da su pred nama brojne zahtjevne strukturne reforme koje našim građanima trebaju omogućiti kvalitetniji život. Moja je Vlada odlučna u njihovoj provedbi. Imamo pozitivne makroekonomske pokazatelje. Bilježimo gospodarski rast od 3 %, rast industrijske proizvodnje, ulaganja, izvoza, kao i rast zaposlenosti, plaća i socijalnih naknada. Značajno smo smanjili javni dug, ostvarili proračunski višak te imamo najnižu nezaposlenost do sada.

Uz napore Vlade to odražava i pozitivne učinke hrvatskoga članstva u Europskoj uniji. Tim više, kao Vlada koja je izbore 2016. godine dobila na proeuropskom programu, aktivno promišljamo budućnost naše zajedničke Unije.

Mesdames et Messieurs, j'ai consacré 25 ans d'action politique et de travail professionnel afin que la Croatie moderne fasse siennes les valeurs européennes. Mes compatriotes qui ont, hélas, eu à connaître la guerre n'en apprécient aujourd'hui la paix que davantage.

Il n'y a pas si longtemps, la démocratie n'était qu'une aspiration lointaine, alors qu'aujourd'hui nous vivons les valeurs et les libertés européennes. Nous avons un souvenir très clair de ce que signifie ne pas pouvoir bénéficier des mêmes chances de développement économique et social, de liberté de circulation, d'échange d'étudiants ou d'innovation technologique, si bien qu'aujourd'hui nous mesurons parfaitement toute la valeur ajoutée et les avantages que nous procure l'appartenance à l'Union européenne.

Je le mesure d'autant mieux que j'ai moi-même activement œuvré aux négociations d'adhésion de la Croatie et conduit la campagne référendaire pour notre entrée dans l'Union. Durant un an, cela a été pour moi l'occasion d'aller au contact de mes concitoyens afin de leur expliquer les bénéfices de l'adhésion. Ainsi, avec ma double expérience de député croate et européen, mais aussi celle de premier ministre et de membre du Conseil européen, je mesure parfaitement les différents intérêts qui cherchent à affaiblir et à fragmenter le projet européen.

Sans perdre le sens des réalités politiques, je pense qu'il est essentiel de renouveler ensemble les idées européennes, en renforçant nos politiques communes et en faisant un usage intelligent de nos ressources budgétaires, le but étant que nos concitoyens ne soient pas indifférents à l'Europe, voire hostiles à son égard. Au contraire, ils doivent en ressentir tous les bénéfices, se l'approprier et prendre activement part à la poursuite de sa construction, car il y va avant tout de leur intérêt.

Nos concitoyens doivent percevoir plus clairement les bénéfices que l'appartenance à l'Union leur apporte au quotidien. Ils doivent mieux saisir l'enjeu de notre action, de quelle manière, et surtout à quelle fin, nous la conduisons au niveau européen. Enfin, ils doivent en réaliser la finalité, qui est de mieux servir l'intérêt général en joignant nos forces. Nous devons montrer par des actes concrets que les institutions européennes agissent pour chacun de nos concitoyens. Cela ne peut se faire qu'avec le soutien du Parlement européen.

Aussi, je vais tâcher de vous livrer ma vision pour l'avenir de notre Europe. J'aimerais aborder les défis auxquels nous devons faire face, la nécessité de renforcer notre légitimité démocratique, nos priorités extérieures ainsi que les politiques internes cruciales, qu'il nous faut soutenir par des moyens budgétaires appropriés.

Signore e signori, la riunione a Roma dello scorso 25 marzo, con la quale abbiamo celebrato il 60° anniversario dei trattati di Roma e adottato la dichiarazione che indica la via al nostro futuro comune, è stata un passaggio importante per la discussione che ci troviamo ad affrontare oggi sul futuro dell'Europa.

Quasi un anno fa, noi leader europei siamo stati invitati e incoraggiati dal Santo Padre a perseverare nel cercare di restituire la speranza ai nostri cittadini e a continuare ad adoperarci per il loro benessere. In quell'occasione, il Presidente Tajani ha tenuto un brillante discorso, per il quale vorrei ancora una volta congratularmi con lui.

Sicurezza, terrorismo, attacchi cibernetici, scontri nelle aree vicine, cambiamenti demografici e migrazioni in aumento, cambiamenti climatici, disuguaglianze sociali e gap digitale: queste sono le sfide che affrontiamo quotidianamente e che impongono la necessità di adeguarvi le principali decisioni strategiche. Al giorno d'oggi queste sfide acquistano una nuova dimensione e pongono davanti a noi un nuovo compito: essere uniti nel dare la risposta.

L'unità però non deve intendersi meramente come la somma numerica dei paesi membri, ma deve essere rafforzata dalle nostre particolarità nazionali e dai raggiungimenti individuali. La stessa unità deve rispecchiarsi nelle nostre politiche e bilancio comuni, nonché nelle attività e nell'operato sinergico tra le istituzioni europee e gli Stati membri.

Negli anni passati, i processi elettorali in varie parti d'Europa sono stati in buona parte contrassegnati dalla crescita del populismo e dell'euroscetticismo, come diretta conseguenza delle sfide di cui ho parlato.

Dopo aver dimostrato che siamo in grado di affrontarle con successo, è importante proseguire sulla stessa strada per arrivare pronti alle elezioni del 2019 e per consolidare la fede nel progetto europeo.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, we must also work together to find answers to challenges posed by the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union. As I have repeatedly said on many occasions since 2013, before the referendum, I see this as a bad decision. It was a lose-lose situation for the United Kingdom and for the European Union as a whole. As a European, I respect the decision but I regret it.

The UK's exit is a result of populism and a campaign of disinformation, demonstrating the consequences that a lack of information about the EU has for its citizens.

I hope that the procedure in accordance with Article 50 will lead to an agreement on orderly withdrawal, ensuring legal security and clarity for citizens and business communities on both sides. It is particularly important to settle the rights of citizens on the basis of equal treatment. This means that Croatian citizens too must be treated equally when it comes to their access to the UK labour market. We must maintain unity in the process of negotiations, and our future relationship should be based on our mutual interests.

U daljnjoj izgradnji europskog projekta važno je osigurati demokratski legitimitet. Europski parlament predstavlja naj-snažniju poveznicu između odluka na europskoj razini i naših građana, a tu poveznicu trebamo dodatno jačati. Stoga podržavam nastavak primjene koncepta *spitzenkandidata* kroz koji građani mogu lakše prepoznati lice i ideje budućeg predsjednika Europske komisije, kao što je to bio moj prijatelj Jean-Claude Juncker, kao *spitzenkandidat* na pobjedničkoj listi EPP-a 2014. godine.

U kontekstu rasprave o izmjeni izbornoga zakonodavstva, trebamo se zapitati jesmo li na razini država članica, s obzirom na vremensko ograničenje, dovoljno organizacijski, zakonski pa i financijski spremni za uspostavu transnacionalnih lista.

Pozdravljam prijedlog koji je Europski parlament pripremio o njegovom novom sastavu, prema kojem Hrvatska dobiva dodatnog zastupnika. U jačanju demokratskog legitimiteta Europske unije važno mjesto imaju i nacionalni parlamenti. Stoga sam, nakon povratka u Zagreb, u Hrvatskom saboru uveo praksu plenarne rasprave nakon svakog formalnog sastanka Europskog vijeća. To mi daje priliku da zastupnike i svoje sugrađane upoznam s najvažnijim europskim temama, pridonoseći na taj način europskom trendu dijaloga s građanima, koji izrazito podržavam.

U našem daljnjem radu, mislim da trebamo ojačati primjenu načela supsidijarnosti i proporcionalnosti i odluke donositi što bliže našim sugrađanima te stoga pozdravljam i uspostavu posebne radne skupine.

Nekoliko riječi o politici proširenja. Hrvatska je dokaz transformativne snage koju u sebi nosi perspektiva članstva u Europskoj uniji, ali i dokaz da je Unija mirovni projekt koji snažno pridonosi pomirenju i izgradnji povjerenja. Upravo tu privlačnu snagu trebamo iskoristiti kako bismo svoje okruženje učinili boljim i otpornijim, a time i sebe jačim, sigurnijim i prosperitetnijim.

Europska unija i dalje je zajednica kojoj se mnogi žele pridružiti, i to mojih šest susjednih država jugoistočne Europe, najbližih susjeda, ali i Turska, ali ne samo oni već i dio našeg šireg susjedstva. Znam za ambicije naših prijatelja u Ukrajini, zemlji koju sam svakodnevno pratio dok sam radio ovdje zajedno s vama. Obećanja kandidatima i potencijalnim kandidatima trebamo ispuniti jednako kao što te države trebaju ispuniti zadane uvjete i kriterije te provesti potrebne reforme, uvijek uz vrednovanje individualnih postignuća svake od tih država.

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren! Es freut mich, dass die Europäische Kommission gerade heute eine neue Erweiterungsstrategie für den Westbalkan vorstellen wird. In dieser Strategie gilt es vor allem, Bosnien-Herzegowina besondere Aufmerksamkeit zu widmen, das genauso wie Kroatien eine schwere Wegstrecke hinter sich gelassen hat. Es ist ein Staat mit einer spezifischen Staatsordnung, bestehend aus drei konstitutiven Völkern – Kroaten, Bosniaken und Serben –, deren gleichberechtigte Stellung zusammen mit den anderen Volksgruppen die Grundlage für die Zukunft ist.

Erst mit der festen Verankerung im europäischen Wertverständnis kann Bosnien-Herzegowina seinen Bürgern eine sichere und stabile Zukunft garantieren. Das wünscht sich auch der Großteil seiner Bürger, und zwar auf der Grundlage einer gleichberechtigten Wahlgesetzgebung.

In unserer europäischen Nachbarschaft, im östlichen und südlichen Teil Europas, stehen wir vor großen sicherheitspolitischen Herausforderungen. Deshalb ist es das strategische Interesse aller EU-Mitgliedstaaten, seinen Nachbarn bei der Festigung und dem Ausbau einer prosperierenden, friedensorientierten, stabilen und vor allem demokratischen Staatsordnung zu helfen. Das ist der Einsatz den wir alle geben müssen, um den Schutz und die Sicherheit der europäischen Bürger zu gewährleisten.

Dame i gospodo, brojni izazovi i prijetnje traže snažniju, angažiraniju i asertivniju ulogu Europske unije u globalnim odnosima. Predanost međunarodnom poretku temeljenom na poštovanju demokracije, međunarodnog prava, vladavine prava i ljudskih prava ključna je investicija u jačanju uloge Unije kao globalnog čimbenika i promicatelja multilateralizma.

Za ostvarenje naših globalnih ambicija trebamo snažniju, djelotvorniju zajedničku vanjsku sigurnosnu i obrambenu politiku. Jednako važna je naša razvojna pomoć kojom kao globalnu lideri pridonosimo ispunjavanju UN-ovih ciljeva održivoga razvoja. Resurse za to imamo, a vjerujem i političku volju da to i ostvarimo.

Teroristički napadi na europskom tlu, ali i druge prijetnje, pokazuju da je Europa ranjiva te da se o svojoj sigurnosti treba brinuti unutar ali i izvan svojih granica. Tome će pridonijeti daljnje jačanje naših obrambenih sposobnosti i suradnje na sigurnosno-obrambenom polju. Stoga pozdravljam uspostavu stalne strukturirane suradnje u čijim će projektima, i to pet konkretnih, Hrvatska sudjelovati.

Jačanje suradnje i koordinacije sa Sjevernoatlantskim savezom ostaje ključno, uz osiguranje kompatibilnosti, sinergije i učinkovitosti zajedničkog djelovanja. Zaštita vanjskih granica Unije jedna je od naših najvažnijih zadaća. Mjere koje s tim ciljem donosimo na europskoj razini trebaju osigurati jednak tretman svih članica i svih građana. Puna provedba sustavnih provjera na granici između članica kada je samo jedna od njih u schengenskom prostoru, a to je primjer Hrvatske i Slovenije ili Hrvatske i Mađarske, pokazala je da može biti problem za slobodu kretanja unutar Europske unije, no otvorenom i iskrenom suradnjom i partnerstvom između ove tri zemlje te probleme smo uspješno riješili.

Hrvatska već sada daje svoj doprinos zaštiti granica, a naš sljedeći veliki ključni europski cilj je ulazak u schengenski prostor. Stoga u tome podržavamo i naše prijatelje iz Bugarske i Rumunjske. Naša je ambicija ispuniti schengenske kriterije što skorije i time otvoriti put za odluku Vijeća, a pritom očekujem i vašu podršku ovdje u Europskom parlamentu. To je važno za Hrvatsku, važno je za sigurnost cijele Europske unije i ta pitanja ne smiju biti povezivana s bilo kojim drugim nevezanim procesima ili temama.

Poseban izazov prošlih godina je onaj migracijski, koji nema samo sigurnosnu nego i humanitarnu dimenziju. Iako bilježimo smanjeni broj ulazaka na područje Europske unije, i dalje moramo biti na oprezu te nastaviti ulagati u vlastite kapacitete za nošenje s tim izazovom kao i pomagati državama izvora migracije. Za uspješan odgovor na ovaj izazov potrebno je završiti reformu europskog sustava azila. Solidarnost, po mojem dubokom mišljenju, treba ostati jedan od temelja našeg zajedničkog djelovanja. U tom duhu, u kojem je prije dvadeset pet godina svaki šesti stanovnik u mojoj zemlji bio prognanik ili izbjeglica, Hrvatska provodi svoj dio odgovornosti za politiku premještenja i preseljenja.

Gospodine predsjedniče, Europska unija je 2004. činila trećinu svjetskog BDP-a, a danas čini manje od njegove četvrtine. Stoga je potrebno nastaviti raditi na sklapanju trgovinskih ugovora s trećim zemljama jer je to ulog u daljnji gospodarski rast i prosperitet naših ljudi. Važno je jačati odnose s ključnim strateškim partnerima te dalje produbljivati transatlantske veze.

Jedno od naših najvećih postignuća je unutarnje tržište. Ono je u srcu europskog projekta i ključno je za konkurentnost našega gospodarstva. Nakon više godina zastoja zbog globalne financijske krize i recesije vratio se gospodarski rast. U Davosu prije dva tjedna konstatirali smo da raste svjetsko, raste europsko, ali drago mi je da raste i hrvatsko gospodarstvo i važno je zadržati taj trend. Mjere koje proizlaze iz strategije jedinstvenog tržišta naša su zajednička odgovornost, a na unutarnjem tržištu potrebno je zaustaviti diskriminatornu praksu standarda u kvaliteti hrane i ostalih proizvoda jer ne možemo imati unutar naše Unije dvije kategorije potrošača.

Uz intenziviranje mjera za produbljivanje unutarnjeg tržišta u svim aspektima potrebno ga je prilagođavati suvremenim izazovima, a posebno digitalnom dobu u kojem živimo. Stoga trebamo čim prije izgraditi funkcionalno, jedinstveno digitalno tržište, kako bismo dali poticaj novim poslovima, povećali konkurentnost ulaganja i inovacije. Hrvatska tome daje doprinos razvojem javnih elektroničkih usluga, imamo ih 685, a posebno smo ponosni na one poput e-recepta u zdravstvu, kojega su i druge države prepoznale, kao i uslugu e-novorođenčice koja je od prošlog tjedna omogućila i prijave rođenja djeteta preko interneta.

Gospodine predsjedniče, 1960. svaki sedmi stanovnik svijeta živio je na području Europske unije dok danas u njoj živi tek svaki petnaesti stanovnik svijeta. Prema Eurostatu, 2060. na tom području živjet će tek svaki dvadesiti stanovnik svijeta i dokaz je to sve lošije demografske slike Europe, što uzrokuje brojne izazove za naše države, uključivo na području rada i socijalne politike.

Jedno od naših postignuća je i naš socijalni model koji trebamo dodatno unaprijediti, njegujući pritom dijalog sa socijalnim partnerima i socijalnu koheziju. Pred nama je primjena načela europskog stupa socijalnih prava kao temelj uspostave pravednog tržišta rada i sustava socijalne sigurnosti, kao i brige o našim umirovljenicima.

Moramo nastaviti graditi europsku energetska uniju i osigurati našim građanima pristup održivoj, sigurnoj i cjenovno dostupnoj energiji. Stoga nam je važno razvijati strateške energetske projekte usmjerene ka diversifikaciji i sigurnosti opskrbe. Za Hrvatsku posebno izdvajam projekt LNG terminala na Krku koji je strateški projekt i moje Vlade i koji je već dobio financijsku potporu Europske unije, čime se Hrvatska pozicionira na energetskej karti Europe.

S druge strane, ispunjavat ćemo sve obveze iz Pariškoga sporazuma te nastojati nastaviti na našoj tradiciji zemlje koja je 1895. imala prvu hidroelektranu u Europi razvijati onu proizvodnju električne energije koja dolazi iz obnovljivih izvora, a u potrošnji u Hrvatskoj udio iz obnovljivih izvora već je na razini od 29 %, čime smo praktički deset godina ranije ispunili europske ciljeve od 2030.

Glede prometa samo ću izdvojiti za nas strateški projekt, najvidljiviji projekt financiran sredstvima Europske unije u ovom višegodišnjem financijskom okviru, a to je projekt Pelješkog mosta koji fizički povezuje južnu Hrvatsku, Dubrovnik za kojega svi znate, s ostatkom Hrvatske i Europske unije.

Dragi prijatelji, svi naši ciljevi, politike i ambicije odnosno sve ono što radimo zahtjeva odgovarajuća financijska sredstva. U planiranju sljedećeg višegodišnjeg financijskog okvira trebamo početi od toga kakvu Uniju želimo.

Za mene je to Unija koja osigurava gospodarski rast i razvoj svojih članica, koja je globalno konkurentna, u kojoj raste zaposlenost, a osobito perspektiva mladih. Unija koja potiče uravnotežen razvoj država članica, koja izgrađuje ekonomsku, socijalnu i teritorijalnu koheziju naših regija, Unija koja pruža sigurnost svojim građanima, štiti svoje vanjske granice i sposobna je odgovoriti na sve sigurnosne ugroze, Unija koja ulaže u obrazovanje, kulturu i stvaralaštvo, istraživanje i razvoj, koja se prilagođava suvremenim izazovima i digitalnoj ekonomiji, Unija koja je financijski stabilna, održiva i koja je sposobna građane zaštititi od mogućih financijskih kriza, vodeći se pritom načelom solidarnosti te konačno Unija koja je ključni politički akter u globalnom upravljanju, s obrambenim sposobnostima, promotor slobodne trgovine, lider u razvojnoj pomoći, zaštiti okoliša i borbi protiv klimatskih promjena.

U sljedećem višegodišnjem financijskom okviru temeljni princip financiranja treba biti europska dodana vrijednost. I stoga, elemente postojećeg sustava vlastitih sredstava koji dobro funkcioniraju i koji održavaju načela jednostavnosti i transparentnosti trebamo zadržati, a u kontekstu uvođenja novih vlastitih sredstava trebamo izbjeći stvaranje dodatnog poreznog opterećenja za građane.

Premda Hrvatska još nije članica europodručja, Hrvatska želi pridonositi daljnjem razvoju ekonomske i monetarne unije. U lipnju 2017. izašli smo iz procedure prekomjernog proračunskog manjka te nastavljamo provedbu nacionalnog programa reformi s ciljem ubrzanja realne konvergencije prema europodručju i uklanjanja prekomjernih makroekonomskih neravnoteža.

Pridruživanje europodručju strateški je cilj Hrvatske. Vlada i Hrvatska narodna banka prezentirali su strategiju uvođenja eura, čime je otvoren proces javnih konzultacija. Hrvatska već danas ispunjava skoro sve kriterije za uvođenje eura te je naš cilj najprije ući u tečajni mehanizam, takozvani *Exchange Rate Mechanism* 2 i to što prije. Hrvatski sabor je u siječnju ove godine ratificirao Ugovor o stabilnosti, koordinaciji i upravljanju u ekonomskoj i monetarnoj uniji, a ja sam imao čast u prosincu sudjelovati kao prvi predstavnik Hrvatske na Euro Summitu.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that our dialogue on the future of the European Union is as important as the outcome of this process. We saw the reflection documents produced by the Commission, we listened to our citizens, and we talked to each other at the levels of parliaments and governments. Many ideas are being discussed and different scenarios are being considered. Our path to the future should be a way forward and not backward.

Croatia joined the European Union to be an active and responsible member and to work with other partners to further build and develop the European project. Croatia, which longed so much to be again a part of Europe, today wants to be a part of its inner circle. This is why I place emphasis on Schengen and the eurozone. This is the reason behind our decision to participate in permanent structured cooperation (PESCO), and the reason why our next goals are, as I have said, Schengen and the euro. I work wholeheartedly towards achieving these goals every day, together with colleagues in my government, convinced that this is in the best interests of Croatian citizens.

In further building our future, equality is important to all of us: equality of states, citizens and opportunities. For the credibility of the European project and our reputation in the world, it is vital that we act as a family brought together by mutual trust. It is very important that Member States that have differences on bilateral issues approach them in good faith and constructively. Compromise is the building block on which the European Union was constructed.

Inclusiveness is also important for Croatia. No matter how fast or how much further we advance in these integration processes, each process should be open to all members on equal terms. Our achievements are our strongest tools in building our common future. They need to unite us because we can move forward only if we stand together. A strong Europe primarily also means strong Member States, but, at the same time, the pooling of sovereignty at the level of the EU makes our countries stronger, for their benefit and for the benefit of our fellow citizens across our Member States.

We also want strong European institutions which, on the basis of their Treaty powers, work for the benefit of every citizen of the Union. In that respect, Croatia is looking forward to its Presidency of the Council, in two years' time in the first half of 2020, as an opportunity further to build and promote the European project. Our priorities will be growth, development, connectivity, security and enlargement.

I look forward to working with Romania and Finland – in the trio – and in intensive cooperation with Parliament. Croatia will be taking over the Presidency after the formation of new institutions and our task will be to bring forward new ideas in the period which lies ahead of us at the beginning of the next decade. With its values and freedoms, quality and way of life, and the highly competitive social market economy, Europe needs to reassert itself as a role model that will inspire people across the world to build a better future. Dear friends, it is up to us all to deliver.

(Applause)

Presidente. – Grazie signor Primo ministro, grazie per aver sottolineato l'importanza della collaborazione tra il suo governo, la Croazia, e il Parlamento europeo, che vuole continuare ad essere centrale nel dibattito sul futuro dell'Europa.

Nel corso del suo intervento, il Primo ministro Plenković ha posto sul tavolo una serie di problemi che saranno poi al centro del dibattito che si svolgerà. Il primo commento è quello del Presidente della Commissione europea, Jean-Claude Juncker, al quale do volentieri la parola.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the Commission. – Mr President, honourable Members, it is a great pleasure to welcome my good friend Prime Minister Andrej Plenković to the debate today. I knew him when he was an influential Member of this House and of his parliamentary group. Andrej, we miss you in this House, but we welcome you in your new function, which is not as new as it seems because you have established a Europe-wide reputation. Thank you for being here today.

Croatia is both an example and an inspiration for what our Union should aspire to be in the future. Croatia is a young member – not a new member but a young member – of the European Union, but a nation with a long and inspiring history; a nation which has shown courage in self-defence and shown conviction when it comes to Europe.

With growth now above 3% in 2017 and unemployment set to fall by six percentage points from 2016 to 2019, Croatia is a symbol of what can be achieved by working together in our Union. Working together in our Union is another way to address the budgetary problems we have to face.

J'aime bien la rhétorique enthousiaste de presque tous les gouvernements – il y a des exceptions tout de même – lorsqu'il s'agit de l'organisation de l'avenir de l'Europe. Or, il faut mettre en concordance les discours et les réalités budgétaires. L'Europe, telle qu'elle est, avec les aspirations qui sont les siennes, avec les ambitions qu'elle nourrit, avec les ambitions et les objectifs qu'elle proclame, ne peut pas vivre à l'intérieur du carcan actuel de l'organisation budgétaire.

J'ai été longtemps premier ministre et ministre des finances, donc je ne plaiderai pas pour une augmentation du budget sans bornes et sans limites. Tel n'est pas mon propos. Mais je voudrais que nous nous mettions d'accord au cours des onze mois à venir, sur les objectifs de l'Union. Il faut d'abord se mettre d'accord sur le contenu et ensuite sur les chiffres.

Je n'aime pas ce débat qui consiste à fixer des limites budgétaires sans avoir évacué – si j'ose dire entre nous –, le débat sur les ambitions futures de l'Europe. D'abord le contenu, puis les chiffres et non le contraire. Par conséquent, concentrons-nous sur le contenu de nos politiques.

(Applaudissements)

Évidemment, il y a unanimité au Conseil. Les uns disant qu'ils ne veulent pas payer plus et les autres disant qu'ils ne veulent pas recevoir moins. C'est une équation qui ne fonctionnera pas. Il faudra faire des économies réelles dans plusieurs domaines, mais des économies qui ont un sens. Il faudra traduire en chiffres les politiques de cohésion et la politique agricole commune.

Mais je m'inscris en faux contre cette volonté stupide, passagère, irréfléchie qui consiste à organiser un attentat sur les politiques de cohésion et sur la politique agricole commune. ça ne fonctionnera pas et la Commission ne suivra pas ce chemin. Mais là où des économies intelligentes peuvent et doivent être faites, nous ferons des propositions dans ce sens.

Andrej Plenković a cité plusieurs exemples de politiques de cohésion intelligentes. Évidemment, la Commission accompagnera favorablement, en mettant à disposition les fonds nécessaires, ce projet concernant le pont Pelješac.

something like that ... but we know where it is, and we will support this project, as we support everything which is being done in Dalmatia. These are important Croatian and European projects, and the review for the next budgetary period cannot have as an aim a reduction of the support we are providing for this important Croatian and European project.

(Applause from one person)

Is there only one Croatian in the room? We will do it, even without applause.

(Applause)

You are welcome.

Oui, si j'annonçais le financement d'un pont sur la Seine, tout le monde applaudirait, mais ce projet en Croatie est aussi important que ceux réalisés en Europe occidentale. Il ne faut pas oublier le développement des nouveaux pays membres.

Ich wollte einen Satz zu der Erweiterungspolitik der Europäischen Union sagen. Wir werden heute in der Kommissionssitzung, die um ein Uhr beginnt, darüber reden. Deshalb bin ich ein bisschen in Eile, weil ich das vorbereiten muss. Wir werden heute die Balkanstrategie festlegen. Ich würde in dem Zusammenhang gerne einige Worte sagen.

Es ist falsch, wenn behauptet wird, ich oder die Kommission hätten gesagt, bis 2025 müsse der Beitritt von Serbien und Montenegro unter Dach und Fach sein. Nein, dies ist ein indikatives Datum, ein Ermunterungsdatum, damit die Betroffenen sich konsequent auf den Weg machen. Ich habe bei Amtsantritt gesagt, es wird keine Erweiterungen vor 2019 geben. Das hat hier im Hause für Aufregung gesorgt, das hat in der gesamten Region für Aufregung gesorgt. Und jetzt sorgt für Aufregung, dass dieses indikative Datum für Serbien und Montenegro – das sind die beiden fortgeschrittensten Länder – in den Raum gestellt wird. Man muss sich entscheiden: entweder oder. Entweder man will die Erweiterung in den Westbalkan hinein und mit dem Westbalkan oder man will sie nicht.

Ich möchte, dass die Westbalkanstaaten der Europäischen Union beitreten können, wenn die Bedingungen erfüllt sind. Sie sind es zurzeit nicht, und alle sind noch weit davon entfernt, die Bedingungen zu erfüllen. Aber wir müssen unseren Partnern im Westbalkan handreichend entgegenreten, wir müssen ihnen helfen, diesen schwierigen Weg zu gehen.

Kroatien hat diesen schwierigen Weg erfolgreich beschreiten können. Aber ich füge auch hinzu, angesichts dieses Problems, des Grenzkonflikts zwischen Kroatien und Slowenien, das gelöst werden muss – und dies ist ein bilaterales Problem, ist aber auch ein europäisches Problem. Die Kommission hat ihre Mithilfe angeboten. Diese ausgestreckte Hand wird nur fingermäßig in Empfang genommen. Dieses Problem zwischen Slowenien und Kroatien muss dringend einer Lösung zugeführt werden.

(Beifall)

Und die Kommission wird – da bin ich mir mit Andrej und anderen hier einig – sich anbieten, um dieses Problem zu lösen. Aber ich füge hinzu, auch angesichts dieses Problems: Es wird zu keinem weiteren Beitritt der Westbalkanländer kommen, ohne dass die Grenzkonflikte vorher gelöst worden sind – vorher.

(Beifall)

Dieses Spielchen, das darin besteht, zu sagen: 'Wir werden das Problem irgendwann nach unserem Beitritt lösen', wird nicht ein zweites Mal stattfinden – mit mir nicht. Diese Probleme müssen gelöst sein, bevor es zu einem Beitritt kommt, oder es wird zu keinen weiteren Beitritten kommen. Und insofern tragen Kroatien und Slowenien hier Verantwortung. Das Problem muss gelöst werden, bevor es zu anderen Beitritten kommt. Ich wollte dies klar und deutlich hier formulieren.

Genauso klar und deutlich – und da bin ich Andrej dankbar, dass er dies gesagt hat – möchte ich mich zur Frage der Spitzenkandidaten äußern. Es besteht bei mir der inzwischen fast gefestigte Eindruck, als ob einige im Europäischen Rat diesen winzigen Demokratiefortschritt, den einige von uns gemeinsam, miteinander verantwortet haben, zurückführen auf das, was der Vertragszustand 1957 war. Wir sind im Jahr 2018, wir brauchen ein Mehr an Demokratie, und ich setze mich mit aller Energie und Kraft dafür ein, dass es auch bei der nächsten europäischen Wahl einen Spitzenkandidaten der großen politischen Parteienfamilien geben wird. Wer das zurückdreht ...

(Beifall)

ich sage nur: Die Gefahr ist groß. Auch wenn wir hier im Hause – die meisten von uns – der Auffassung sind, dass wir diese Spitzenkandidaturen brauchen, gibt es im Europäischen Rat – so wie ich das fühle, voraussehe, spüre – fast eine Mehrheit dagegen. Dies ist ein Konflikt zwischen den politischen Parteien. Dies würde ein Konflikt werden zwischen diesem Haus und dem Europäischen Rat, und diesen Konflikt müssen wir so austragen, dass das 2014 Erreichte auch 2019 wieder stattfindet – unabhängig von der Bilanz dieser Kommission. Und es besteht kein Widerspruch zwischen der Idee, für die ich meine Sympathie ausgedrückt habe, der transnationalen Listen und der Spitzenkandidaturen. Wer hier Konfliktraum sieht, ist – ja – für transnationale Listen, aber eigentlich gegen die Neuerung der Spitzenkandidaten, die wir 2014 eingeführt haben. Und deshalb müssen wir in punkto Spitzenkandidatur engstens zusammenstehen. Wir müssen das tun, weil es hier um die demokratische Substanz der Europäischen Union geht.

Presidente. – Grazie Presidente. Il Parlamento europeo condivide la posizione a favore dello *Spitzenkandidat* – lo ripeterò al Consiglio in occasione della prossima riunione del Consiglio europeo – come condividiamo la posizione su un bilancio politico dell'Unione europea.

Non è una questione di soldi, è una questione di priorità da scegliere. Ci sarà presto una serie di relazioni sulle risorse proprie, e per esempio noi vogliamo che tutte le imprese paghino nella stessa maniera. I giganti del web non possono essere privilegiati rispetto alle altre imprese.

Ora cominciamo ad ascoltare i rappresentanti dei gruppi politici. Il primo a parlare è l'on. Manfred Weber, a nome del gruppo del Partito popolare europeo.

(Il sistema per la registrazione elettronica delle richieste per il «catch the eye» è chiuso)

Manfred Weber, on behalf of the PPE Group. – Mr President, I would like to welcome Prime Minister Plenković. It is a great thing for us to welcome him back again to this Chamber. And Prime Minister, I would like to thank you, first of all, for your commitment today to your and our vision of a democratic Europe. Your clear idea that Parliament is the place where we decide, especially on the Commission President, is absolutely crucial and clear, and I hope you can convince a lot of your friends and colleagues in the European Council, in a few weeks' time.

Croatia is our newest Member State but Croatia is already a key driver for European integration. Croatia's achievement proves to all in the region that, through hard work, persistence, political courage and determination, EU membership is not only within reach but also of great benefit to all of us. Croatia is a success story and a model for a lot of Balkan states, so congratulations on what you have achieved, Prime Minister.

Colleagues, the idea of today's debate on the future of Europe with Andrej Plenković (last time it was with Leo Varadkar) is to talk more generally about the future of this continent, our continent, and I want to talk today about identity. I want to talk about nations. For the PPE Group, it is clear that the nation states are the fundament of Europe. Europe is not possible without national pride, the history of our countries and the cultural heritage of our nations, but I think there is more when we talk about identity. When we look at the people of Scotland, South Tyrol, Sicily, and the Basque region, they feel they are British, Italian or Spanish citizens but they are also rooted in their regions. There is a double identity on this continent, so why should there be only national pride? Why should it not be possible to combine this with regional and European pride?

Here, in this House, and all over Europe, many politicians from the extreme right are telling people that their nation is the only thing, and to hell with Europe and Brussels. Politically, this is one of the key questions we have to answer in the debate about the future of Europe. I give a clear and personal answer: Bavaria is my home – hundred and fifty years ago we were an independent kingdom as Bavarians. Germany is my nation, with all the beauty and richness of the German culture, but also the unthinkable barbarism of the Nazi time. And I am a European. With heart and mind I love and live the European way of life and I will not allow any extremist or nationalist to hold these identities in contradiction: they belong together.

(Applause)

Let us look at Croatia when we talk about this. Croatian history has proved over the last centuries that neither big trading powers, such as the Venetian Duchies, nor big empires, such as the Ottoman Empire or the Austro-Hungarian dynasty, nor deals between powerful states behind closed doors at the Vienna Congress, nor fascists nor communists have guaranteed Croatia's independence and interests. Only a democratic Europe, acting together, has been able to protect self-determination, security, peace and prosperity for the Croatian people. Croatia is the best example when thinking of the future of Europe together as a national identity.

There is another important point. Let us imagine for a moment that the nationalists had won – Europe without a European Union, without Brussels or Strasbourg. Does anybody think that medium-sized and small Member States would then have any influence? Prime Minister Plenković has a say today in the European Council because a unanimous decision is necessary. Without such structures and without the European Union, I am sure that an intergovernmental Europe would be organised and led only by Germany, France and a few of the other nations. That is not the idea of Europe. We are equal, we are all Europe, and that is our future idea.

So the nationalists are stupid and naive. They have not learned from history and they weaken the power of their own people. Everybody who believes in strong nations must be in favour of a united and democratic Europe.

I spoke about identity and I want to add another aspect. When you fly from Lisbon to Tallinn, or when you fly from Helsinki to Sicily, you see a lot of diversity: food, music, languages and traditions. Our continent is so rich and so colourful, and I like it, but we have one thing in common: in the middle of every village, town and city, with only a few exceptions, there is a Christian church. Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are holidays we all share. We have to stick to our Christian heritage. Our democracies, welfare states and social market economies came into being only because of our Christian values of responsibility, solidarity and freedom. We have to protect our European way of life by preserving our Christian values.

It is clear that faith is a private thing, but for our societies, and for Europe, there will only be a Europe that sticks to its Christian heritage, or No Europe at all.

(Applause from the PPE Group)

Josef Weidenholzer, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, I would like to welcome Prime Minister Plenković back to the European Parliament. Prime Minister, you came to discuss with us the future of Europe and to do this we must know where we come from.

Like many of us, you come from a region, the Balkans, which has been at the centre of European history. I would even say it has been its destiny region. Its history has taught that peace in Europe can never be taken for granted. The Balkans also tell us that history does not provide the answers. Moving forward means no longer being obsessed with the wars of the past. A European perspective for the Western Balkans is the right answer. Our Group is supporting this endeavour by the Commission.

From your government, Prime Minister, we expect a clear commitment to peace in the Balkans and respect for neighbouring countries' borders and integrity. We also call on Croatia to respect arbitration decisions between Croatia and Slovenia.

History teaches us that a good future is not possible with extreme nationalism and racism. I am deeply worried by the recent racist attacks in Italy and I am sad to say that they could also have happened in other Member States. Our Union is not just a market: it is built on values, the rule of law and democracy, and it does not always deliver. A European democracy needs more open and inclusive institutions. We need bold decisions in order to overcome mistrust and apathy. Let us give our electorate the opportunity to choose a transnational list, giving people the right to choose this democracy.

We also support the idea of a *Spitzenkandidat* for the Commission Presidency, as it improves participation, but we should not be obsessed with institutional reforms. Sometimes it is hard for ordinary people to follow what we are discussing. Institutions must serve the people's interests and not the other way around. Europe has to deliver by changing our lives for the better.

Too many people in Europe are unhappy with the status quo. They want decent jobs, safe pensions and fair treatment when they are sick. All of us want a good future for our children. It is time to engage for a more social Europe, with a European minimum wage, with no social dumping, and with better and longer maternity and paternity leave. This is why the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will be crucial. Brexit cannot be an excuse to undermine the European budget. The Union must have more resources, its own resources, in particular to accompany the ecological transition towards a new, more sustainable development model.

There is no future for a continent when too many young people are stuck in precariousness and unemployment. We need to invest in the future. We need a strong initiative for public investment and we have to rethink the dogma of austerity. After Brexit, a new-found awareness of the importance of the European Union is growing. We cannot disappoint our citizens again: they will not give us a second chance. We must deliver now, but we can do so only if we are looking forward – not looking to the past – and in a courageous and inclusive way.

(Applause)

Ruža Tomašić, u ime kluba ECR. – Gospodine predsjedniče, poštovani predsjedniče hrvatske vlade, kolegice i kolege, posebna mi je čast i zadovoljstvo raspravljati o budućnosti Europe s premijerom države iz koje i sama dolazim. Ovo je prvi put da na ovaj način izmjenjujemo mišljenja s vodećim čovjekom hrvatske izvršne vlasti o izazovima s kojima se suočava Europska unija. Hrvatska je dugo bila stidljiva kad je riječ o europskim pitanjima. Iznimno mi je drago da je ova vlada to promijenila i da nastoji voditi proaktivnu politiku na europskoj razini.

Kao zastupnica mogu posvjedočiti o vrlo konstruktivnoj suradnji s državnim institucijama u mnogim pitanjima koja su važna za Hrvatsku i Europsku uniju, što prije često nije bio slučaj. Ova vlada konačno razmišlja u europskim okvirima, ali bojim se da građane još uvijek nije uspjela uvjeriti u važnost njihovog sudjelovanja u europskim politikama. Sukladno tome, Hrvati slabo iskorištavaju prednosti članstva u Uniji i to je izazov na kojem moramo poraditi.

Većini građana Hrvatske život se, nažalost, nije promijenio na bolje od 1. srpnja 2013. pa je razumljivo da oni članstvo u Uniji ne smatraju naročitim uspjehom. Od svih članica, iza Hrvatske je po razvijenosti samo Bugarska koja ju većom stopom rasta polako sustiže. MMF u svom *Country Reportu* piše kako je proces provedbe strukturnih reformi u Hrvatskoj usporen nakon ulaska u Uniju i da je investicijska klima loša u odnosu na usporedive ekonomije.

U takvim okolnostima ne treba nas čuditi što građani ne pokazuju veći interes za europske politike, institucije i izbore. Zato Vas, gospodine predsjedniče hrvatske Vlade, želim ohrabriti da nastavite mijenjati te nepovoljne okolnosti i ne posustanete u provedbi reformi.

Mnogima će to zvučati pomalo nevjerovatno, ali za budućnost Europske unije od iznimne je važnosti da njome budu zadovoljne i države poput Hrvatske. Države koje nemaju imperijalističkih ambicija, ali njihov glas u svijetu može biti pojačan članstvom u Uniji. Države koje nisu imale veliko i bogato tržište, a ulaskom u Uniju dobile su upravo to. Države čiji su građani na svojoj koži osjetili diktaturu i autoritarnu vladavinu i u Uniji još uvijek vide slobodu od represije i visoke demokratske standarde.

Ako Hrvatska i članice koje s njom dijele slične tegobe iz prošlosti i izazove sadašnjosti u Uniji ne budu vidjele dodanu vrijednost i utjelovljenje svojih višedesetljetnih težnji, onda ona nema budućnosti. Bude li Europska unija igralište samo za velike i moćne koji će nametati svoju volju manjima i slabijima, nikad neće ispuniti sav svoj potencijal.

Zato Vas, gospodine predsjedniče hrvatske Vlade, ovim putem pozivam da za briselskim stolom artikulirate autentičnu hrvatsku poziciju koja neće slijediti unaprijed zadane modele i tuđe ambicije. Neka sve Vaše inicijative budu plod volje hrvatskih građana koji žele snažnu Europu, ali ne bez prosperitetne, stabilne i suverene Hrvatske.

Guy Verhofstadt, on behalf of the ALDE Group. – Mr President, Prime Minister, I will not go too far in history to praise the European vocation of Croatia like my dear friend Manfred Weber, but I have a few shorter sentences about that. I did campaign in Croatia in 2014 together with Nino Jakovčić, so I have seen in Istria in Croatia how all these new companies raise the growth that is there since the entry of Croatia into the European Union. I mostly visited wine estates with him, I have to tell you, but it is impressive what is happening economically in Croatia. I will pick and choose two points on the reform of the European Union. The first is on the new financial framework.

It is clear that it is a crucial thing and I ask one thing of the Council, to accept that in the future it cannot be as in the past. This Parliament will request a say on the expenditure and on the income. It has to be finished that this is the only parliament worldwide that has no say on the income of the European Union. That has to stop now. This is a full parliament and we will have a Multiannual Financial Framework in which both Council and Parliament, based on proposals from the Commission, will be responsible.

The second thing is the Spitzenkandidat. You were a Spitzenkandidat, Mr President, and I think you have said exactly what is at stake. The Spitzenkandidat is a gain in the democratic process and we cannot lose it. In my opinion, the best way not to lose it is to embed this system in a democratic process. Because Spitzenkandidaten where there is a back-room deal inside a political party or between political parties – I can tell you – people are not very involved in this. You need to involve the citizens. You need to give them the possibility to vote directly for a Spitzenkandidat, not only a Spitzenkandidat from their country, but the Spitzenkandidaten from other countries, so all Europeans have to have this possibility. Therefore, I think it is necessary to embed the Spitzenkandidaten in transnational lists, the first on the transnational list is the Spitzenkandidaten. That is the system and it gives the power to the citizens to vote for him. So there is no contradiction between both concepts. I think, Manfred, this Parliament has to unite between both concepts and if we do not do it, we risk losing everything in this fight and that we cannot afford in the European Union.

Finally, my third point on the Western Balkans. We are all in favour, my Group is in favour, of the entry of these countries under the conditions set by the Commission and, in that respect, I hope that Croatia can, again, with their Slovenian friends, give a good example, and find a fast-track solution for the border issue as fast as possible, based on the arbitrage that has been made.

Νεοκλής Σουλκιώτης, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Πρωθυπουργέ, καλωσορίσατε στο Κοινοβούλιο. Κύριε Juncker και αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, κανείς δεν μπορεί πια να συγκαλύψει τη θεσμική, κοινωνική και πολιτική κρίση που βιώνει η Ένωση. Αν η φτωχοποίηση των λαών, η υψηλή ανεργία -ιδιαίτερα στους νέους, η έλλειψη αλληλεγγύης, τα μεγάλα δημοκρατικά ελλείμματα, η ξενοφοβία και ο ρατσισμός μπορούσαν να συγκαλυφθούν, δεν θα είχαμε καν αυτή τη συζήτηση σήμερα. Χρειαζόμαστε άμεση αλλαγή πλεύσης από τις πολιτικές της λιτότητας και της αχαλίνωτης ελευθερίας της αγοράς, από τις πολιτικές στρατιωτικοποίησης και έλλειψης κοινωνικής αλληλεγγύης.

Οι πολιτικές λιτότητας, που επιβάλλονται στους λαούς μέσα από τον συντονισμό των οικονομικών πολιτικών των κρατών μελών και την πάση θυσία πειθαρχία σε οικονομικούς δείκτες, σπρώχνουν τα κράτη μέλη σε συνεχές «ξήλωμα» του κοινωνικού κράτους. Οι προτάσεις που κατατίθενται, όπως για παράδειγμα σχετικά με ένα οικονομικό υπερυπουργείο, θα οδηγήσουν δυστυχώς στην εμβάθυνση της αντιδημοκρατικής και αντιλαϊκής οικονομικής διακυβέρνησης για την ευρωζώνη και θα διαιωνίζουν τη διεύρυνση των κοινωνικών ανισοτήτων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση.

Οι μέχρι στιγμής διακηρύξεις για κοινωνικό πυλώνα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και για κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη εκ μέρους της Επιτροπής αποδείχθηκαν προπέτασμα καπνού. Τα πρόσφατα αποτελέσματα των συζητήσεων για τον ευρωπαϊκό κοινωνικό πυλώνα, μεταξύ των αρχηγών των κρατών μελών της Ένωσης στο Göteborg, είναι ένα κοινωνικό «placebo», όπως εύστοχα το χαρακτήρισε ο ευρωπαϊκός Τύπος. Δεν υπάρχει καμία νομική δέσμευση προς τα κράτη μέλη και ούτε λέξη για το ανθρώπινο δικαίωμα στην αξιοπρεπή εργασία. Αντιθέτως, προωθούνται μέτρα προς την κατεύθυνση της περαιτέρω φιλελευθεροποίησης και της απορρύθμισης των εργασιακών σχέσεων. Σε αυτό το νεοφιλελεύθερο και αντικοινωνικό πλαίσιο, τα ξενοφοβικά ρατσιστικά κινήματα αξιοποιούν την ανθρωπιστική κρίση που προκάλεσαν οι νεοφιλελεύθερες πολιτικές λιτότητας, μέσω μιας ρατσιστικής ρητορικής. Κατηλεύονται τη φτωχοποίηση των εργαζομένων, τη συρρίκνωση του κοινωνικού κράτους, τη συνεχιζόμενη μείωση μισθών, συντάξεων και εργασιακών δικαιωμάτων και πετυχαίνουν νέες εκλογικές νίκες ενισχύοντας τη δύναμή τους. Τα ρεύματα προσφύγων αντιμετωπίζονται με βία και απανθρωπιά. Χιλιάδες πρόσφυγες αφήνονται στην τύχη τους, αφήνονται να πνιγούν στη Μεσόγειο, ενώ η Ένωση υψώνει νέα τείχη δημιουργώντας την Ευρώπη-φρούριο. Την ίδια ώρα, οι πόλεμοι στην περιοχή μας εντείνονται, με πιο πρόσφατο παράδειγμα την επίθεση της Τουρκίας στην περιοχή Αφρίν στη Συρία.

Αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, απέναντι σε αυτή την ολομέτωπη επίθεση ενάντια στους λαούς και τους εργαζομένους, οι θέσεις της GUE/NGL παραμένουν θέσεις αρχών. Ζητούμε την άμεση άρση των νεοφιλελεύθερων πολιτικών λιτότητας. Οι λαοί χρειάζονται δημόσιες επενδύσεις που θα δημιουργήσουν νέες αξιοπρεπείς θέσεις εργασίας με πλήρη δικαιώματα των εργαζομένων, μέσω της επαναβιομηχανοποίησης και της στήριξης της πραγματικής οικονομίας. Μόνον τέτοιες πολιτικές θα δυναμώσουν το κοινωνικό κράτος και θα επιτρέψουν την κοινωνική ανάπτυξη. Παράλληλα, ζητούμε ένα κοινό, ανθρώπινο και μόνιμο σύστημα ασύλου που θα διασφαλίζει τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα και την ανθρώπινη αξιοπρέπεια. Ένα σύστημα που θα εξασφαλίζει νόμιμες και ασφαλείς οδούς για τους πρόσφυγες, θεωρήσεις για ανθρωπιστικούς λόγους και ενίσχυση της επανένωσης οικογενειών, και θα κατανέμει δίκαια τα βάρη των προσφυγικών ροών. Η νέα αμυντική πολιτική που εξαγγέλθηκε το περασμένο καλοκαίρι για ενίσχυση της αμυντικής βιομηχανίας χρησιμεύει μόνο στην ενίσχυση της επιχειρησιακής δυνατότητας του NATO και στη συμμετοχή σε νέες επεμβάσεις και πολεμικές συρράξεις. Το παράδειγμα της τουρκικής εισβολής στην Αφρίν της Συρίας ενάντια στους Κούρδους, όπου οι Τούρκοι πολεμούν και επιτίθενται με γερμανικά τανκς και οι Κούρδοι αμύνονται με γερμανικά αντιαρματικά, είναι χαρακτηριστικό. Εκεί οδηγεί η περαιτέρω στρατιωτικοποίηση και στήριξη της εξαγωγής όπλων σε νέους πολέμους και σε νέες πολεμικές συρράξεις.

Αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, οι νεοφιλελεύθερες συνταγές της λιτότητας, των μνημονίων και της επικράτησης των νόμων της αγοράς και της στρατιωτικοποίησης δοκιμάστηκαν και απέτυχαν. Είναι οι πολιτικές που προκάλεσαν ανθρωπιστική κρίση. Το μέλλον της Ευρώπης βρίσκεται στην κοινωνική ανάπτυξη, την κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη και την αλληλεγγύη. Βρίσκεται στην περαιτέρω συμμετοχή των πολιτών, με ενίσχυση των εξουσιών του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου, καθώς και με ενίσχυση και διεύρυνση των πολιτικών ελευθεριών. Βρίσκεται στην ειρήνη και την ειρηνική συνύπαρξη, τόσο εντός της Ένωσης όσο και έξω από αυτήν.

Ska Keller, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – Mr President, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister to Parliament and to thank him very much for joining this debate about the future of Europe.

Prime Minister, I think it is particularly nice to have this debate with the Head of the newest of all the Member States, as one would think that the newest Member State would have the most to say about the future. But, unfortunately, it seems that many in your country – and also many in your party – are actually holding on to the past. While it is of course important to remember the past and to learn from it, it is also important to make peace with previous enemies. After all, this is what the European Union is all about. We have learned from the past, and we have decided never again to allow war to happen. We want to finally overcome nationalism, and we want to prosper together with our old enemies. I hope that Croatia will do the same, and that especially you – as the leader of the country – will do your utmost to overcome the shadows of the past.

The future of Europe, as I see it, lies in creating the future of the people who live in Europe. This means enhancing their quality of life, improving social policies, and guaranteeing human rights. When I say human rights, I mean the rights of all humans. I am sad to see that, despite the economic improvements in Croatia that have already been mentioned, social inequality seems to be increasing rather than decreasing. This is a trend that we see in many European countries, and it is a trend that we urgently need to address. Refugee rights are human rights too, and I hope that you, Prime Minister, will not allow push-backs to happen in the future and that you will investigate the push-backs that have already happened from Croatia.

Regarding women's rights, it is 2018, and Croatia – together with other Member States – has unfortunately still not ratified the Istanbul Convention. How can it be that there is even a question about whether we should protect women from violence? How come this is still a debate? How come we are not moving on with this?

Finally, the future of all of us depends on how we treat our planet. Croatia is an example of a beautiful, resourceful country that can really show other European countries the way ahead. You said that you want to be on the energy map. I think Croatia has plenty of resources to be on the map of renewable energies and to be at the forefront. Therefore, I would urge you to reconsider your plans for those LNG terminals in the northern Adriatic, and also to reconsider some other huge development plans – like golf courses – because those would hurt not only the environment, but also local businesses. Be the example: show the way to do economy and ecology together. Europe can learn a lot from Croatia, but for that you need to be ambitious.

The future of Europe is built by Europeans. It is what we make of it. I believe that civil society is a very important partner in this aim and needs to be supported. We should strive to end hate in Europe, to overcome nationalism and to strive together for a better and a common future. Your country, with its history and its geographical position, can be a prime example for all of that. The future can be bright, but only if we make it so.

Rolandas Paksas, *EFDD frakcijos vardu*. – Gerai, kad pagaliau bent diskutuojama dėl Europos Sąjungos ateities. Tuo akivaizdžiai pagaliau pripažindami, kad dabartis nėra tokia gera ir ji mūsų netenkina. Problemos dėl migrantų, socialinė atskirtis, nedarbas, daugelis kitų, kuomet daugiau mes diskutuojame, tuo daugiau šios problemos aiškėja, kartais aštrėja. Bet tik trys valandos kartą per mėnesį tokių diskusijų Europos Parlamente pristatant vienos šalies vyriausybės vadovo žvilgsnį yra, mano supratimu, per mažai. Tokiais tempais sukantis dvidešimt septintosios Europos Sąjungos šalies vyriausybės vadovo požiūris į problemas ir pasidalijimą siūlymais su Europos Parlamentu atsirastų ne anksčiau kaip dvidešimt metų pavasarį. Ar mes turime tiek laiko vien diskusijoms? Ir, nors buvo paminėta, kad Ministro Pirmininko požiūris būtų, vis tik labai įdomu išgirsti ką konkrečiai ponas Ministras Pirmininkas mano apie Europos saugumo ir gynybos sąjungos kūrimą. Aš supratau, kad Jūs pritariate nuostatai didinti gynybos išlaidų apimtį ir veiksmingumą. O gal geriau investuoti į švietimą, kultūrą, socialines veiklas, mokslą, sportą? O kaip su globalizacija, pone ministre pirmininke, Jūs ją vertinate teigiamai ar neigiamai? Ar Europos Sąjunga neturėtų ginti tokių mažų šalių, kaip Jūsų Kroatija ir mano Lietuva? Gal galėtumėte pristatyti savo konkretų požiūrį į Katalonijos nepriklausomybės siekį? Ar Europos Sąjungos poziciją matytumėte kaip tautų žandaro, ar pasisakytumėte už demokratinius procesus? Ar pritariate įvesti vieningą Europos valiutą visose Bendrijos šalyse? Būtų gerai, jeigu kartu pagalvotume kaip spręsti demografines problemas ir skatinti gimstamumą. Kaip ne kalbomis, o realiais sprendimais sumažinti jaunimo nedarbą? O migracijos sukeltų problemų kamuolys – koks sprendimas? Nereikėtų užmiršti ir demokratijos problemų. Bendrijos šalyse būtina surengti referendumus dėl Europos Sąjungos ateities, bent jau dėl krypties, ar žmonės pritaria savarankiškų valstybių sąjungos stiprinimui, išlaikant stiprias ir suverenias nacionalines valstybes? Ar nori naujos Europos federacijos be savarankiškų valstybių? Manau, kad artėjantys Europos Parlamento rinkimai kitais metais kaip tik yra puiki proga tokią referendumą surengti kiekvienoje valstybėje.

Matteo Salvini, *a nome del gruppo ENF*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ho l'impressione – fra sorrisi, complimenti, applausi – che ci sia qualcuno che ricorda l'orchestra che suonava sul Titanic prima che la barca affondasse.

Io sono preoccupato, da papà prima che da cittadino italiano. Sento che qualcuno dice che bisogna accogliere più immigrati. La Croazia vuole entrare nell'euro ed entrare nel sistema Schengen. State attenti! In Italia, negli ultimi anni, sono sbarcati 600 000 finti profughi, non dalla guerra ma che la guerra ce la portano in casa. In un anno i reati compiuti da cittadini stranieri sono stati 250 000: 55 % di furti, 51 % sfruttamento della prostituzione, 45 % delle estorsioni, 40 % degli stupri, vale a dire 1 500 stupri in un anno. E l'Europa che fa? Niente, anzi riconosce la figura dell'immigrato climatico, come se non avessimo già abbastanza problemi.

Ho sentito l'ipocrisia dell'abuso delle parole «democrazia e diritti umani», mentre nelle scorse ore il dittatore turco Erdogan, dittatore di quel paese che qualcuno vorrebbe far entrare nell'Unione europea, era accolto con tutti gli onori a Roma. Io ricordo che questo paese non riconosce il genocidio di un milione e mezzo di cittadini armeni, il primo olocausto della storia, e quindi mi vergogno alla sola idea del fatto che un tale dittatore possa tranquillamente essere accolto con tutti gli onori in un paese come il mio e che qualcuno pensi che la Turchia possa entrare in Europa, a meno che non ci siano morti di serie A e morti di serie B, e fra i morti di serie B gli armeni e magari gli italiani infoibati dai comunisti e dai partigiani titini dimenticati da tutto e da tutti.

Sull'immigrazione siamo messi male e sul lavoro siamo messi peggio: 30 milioni di disoccupati in Europa, 3 milioni di disoccupati in Italia, 5 milioni di poveri in Italia, 3 milioni di lavoratori sfruttati in nero. E l'Europa, governata dalla Commissione Juncker, aiuta ovviamente i grandi e massacra i piccoli. Cosa ci si poteva aspettare di diverso da qualcuno che è stato per quasi vent'anni al governo di un paradiso fiscale come il Lussemburgo, che ha aiutato le multinazionali a eludere il pagamento delle tasse laddove le dovevano pagare, massacrando artigiani, commercianti, professionisti e piccoli imprenditori.

E poi arriva la direttiva sulle banche, che aiuta le banche tedesche, arriva la direttiva Bolkestein che aiuta le multinazionali. Noi stiamo con i piccoli, Presidente. Noi vorremmo difendere la nostra agricoltura, il nostro riso, il nostro olio, il nostro latte, il nostro grano, il nostro pesce e il nostro modo di vivere.

Ho sentito il capogruppo Weber, che ha fatto un bel discorso. Ci sono più patrie, ci sono più popoli, ci sono più sentimenti di appartenenza. Il problema non è il populismo, il nazionalismo, la xenofobia e il razzismo. Il problema numero uno in questo momento è il terrorismo islamico e la disoccupazione che sta portando i popoli a reagire.

Qualcuno ha paura delle elezioni. Qualcuno teme le elezioni. Qualcuno teme le elezioni e il voto degli italiani. Vuol dire che avete un problema. Se avete paura del libero voto dei cittadini, vuol dire che questa Unione europea è il Titanic che sta affondando. Noi ce la metteremo tutta: o l'Europa cambia o saranno i popoli a cambiarla, a partire dal 4 marzo in Italia. Per qualcuno vengono prima i banchieri, le multinazionali e gli immigrati, per me e per la Lega vengono prima gli italiani. Grazie e auguri a tutti, ne abbiamo bisogno.

Zoltán Balczó (NI). – Elnök Úr! Európa jövőjéről beszélve a fő kérdés: tovább haladjunk-e a lisszaboni úton, az egyre erőteljesebb integráció irányába, vagy a tagállamok önállóságát jobban megtartó együttműködésre van szükség? A választ a brexit fényénél kell meghoznunk. Syed Kamall, a brit konzervatívok európai parlamenti vezetője a következőt mondta: egy tagállam távozása elmélyült gondolkozásra kell készítsen mindenkit az Európai Unió állapotával kapcsolatban.

Problémát jelent a hatáskörök túlzott központosítása az intézmények javára, a tagállamok polgárai nem érzik sajátjuknak az Európai Uniót. Az utóbbi években népszavazások, választások bizonyították, hogy Európa népei elvetik egy szövetségi állam modelljét. Az Unió tartsa tiszteletben tagállamait, váljon együttműködő nemzetek közösségévé. Ezzel szemben Martin Schulz kijelentette, hogy 2025-ig meg kell teremteni az Európai Egyesült Államokat, azoknak az országoknak pedig, akik ezt nem akarják, ki kell lépniük. Néhány szót arról, kik az Európa-pártiak?

Azok, akik a lisszaboni utat járók, maguknak vindikálják a jogot, hogy Európa-pártiak, akik mást képviselnek Európa-ellenesek. Ennek elrettentő példáját mondta Manfred Weber a jelenlegi beszédében. Azok, akik a tagállamok nagyobb önállóságát akarják, úgy minősítette, hogy ők veszélyes nacionalisták, és a felfogásunkat a következő kijelentésben foglalta össze: mi azt mondjuk, hogy pokolba Európával.

Honnan veszi a bátorságot, hogy ezzel vádol minket, azért mert mi más úton haladunk? Tisztelt Tajani elnök úr, Ön elképzelhetőnek tartja, hogy ebben a Parlamentben egy konstruktív vita legyen az Európai Unió jövőjéről, ha a legnagyobb frakció vezetője ilyen kirekesztő módon minősíti azokat, akiknek más a véleményük?

Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia. – Mr President, dear friends, thank you for the initial round of comments on the speech I delivered at the beginning of this great opportunity to discuss the future of Europe with you.

Several points on several questions and comments. First, on Jean-Claude's comment on balancing the enthusiasm, ambition and the financial realism of what we would like to see implemented, what policies should be the guiding lines of our project and which budgetary means we have available. The fact that the UK is leaving is – as I know thanks to my earlier position as a Member of the Committee on Budgets here – not a positive thing. It is a downside. Let's be very clear about it: we have a downside.

We all know that more or less 10 Member States finance around 80% of our budget. This is something we don't widely publicise, but these are the facts, and the catch in the negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework will be how to fill in the void which will be there.

Can we have enough resources to implement all the objectives of our policies? Will this require more contributions from all Member States? Are some countries willing to increase it or to remain in the framework of what they are paying or contributing today?

The situation is not the same if you are looking at it from the optics of the countries which contribute with a substantial percentage, or coming from a country with more modest economic and financial abilities where the increase would not be so dramatic. So after the analysis which we have made in Croatia if there were an increased demand from our side we would be willing to do it, to be very clear at the beginning.

When it comes to issues of enlargement, something that several of you have mentioned, if ever there was a policy or a dossier that we know more than well it is enlargement. It is a very positive coincidence for me that the Commission will come up with a paper during the college a few hours later, bringing forward, as you said, the indicative timeline for the countries that remain within the group that we called the Western Balkans.

They are divided into three groups. Serbia and Montenegro as the countries that negotiate, Albania, our friends in Macedonia – who are now negotiating the issue of the name with Greece more intensively, and from what I understand, with a bit more optimism on finding a solution as the second group – and then Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, as the final two.

My country has no dilemma. First of all, we are helping all of them already. You are not aware of that, but so many Croatian experts are engaged in one way or another, transferring the freshest knowledge on the process of accession negotiations to all of our neighbours. We also know that, as Jean-Claude has said, the bilateral issues should not obstruct or slow down the process of any country's accession to the EU.

We know it better than you, if I may be very clear. Having spent basically my entire life dedicated to the objective that one day my country would be around this table, I know what it means to lose a couple of years in the accession process. In my modest assessment around five years were lost, due to two main reasons. One relating to the bilateral issues, and the other to wider international conditionalities.

Five years from a historical perspective might not seem a lot, but it is an awful lot when you consider what it means to invest or lose in your economic, social development and take the benefits of EU membership. This is something I know well. That is why I see the role of my country as a bridge, as a facilitator and as someone who will advocate further enlargement.

There is no dilemma for us: we want to follow up on what the Bulgarian Presidency is doing in Sofia in May and that is the EU-Western Balkans summit after 15 years when it was last held in Thessaloniki. The first one was held in Zagreb. I was one of the organisers of it. My ambition is to have one in 2020, twenty years later, and we are trying to give a push because having the future of our neighbours anchored in the EU is positive for Croatia.

It will help us to address all the residual and open issues which stem from the times when Croatia, as I said at the beginning, was a victim of aggression. That's why we will do our utmost to help all of our neighbours, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina. Here we all have a historical responsibility, and that is why I mentioned it at the beginning, to safeguard the full equality of all the three constituent peoples and all other groups in the country.

When it comes to the issue of Slovenia, which you have raised, Slovenia is a friend of Croatia. It is the only country in our history, over many centuries, with which we have never had any conflict, which is rare in our part of the world, almost an exception. This is not perhaps the best forum or the place to go into details of our border issue, but what I would like to stress here is my government's readiness and openness to solve this issue in a manner which would be acceptable for both countries, taking into account the interests of both Slovenia and Croatia. That is what I proposed to Miro Cerar about a month and a half ago, because at this a moment we have a good opportunity to do it.

At the same time, those of you who are following this in a little more detail will know that Croatia's Parliament has withdrawn from the arbitration process that was facilitated by the EU in 2009 in order to unblock 14 chapters of the accession negotiations at a time stalled by Slovenia because of the fact that it was unfortunately the Slovenian representatives who violated the arbitration rules and violated in international law. We were there in good faith and we were investing all our efforts in this.

So what we need to do now is find a compromise where both Slovenia and Croatia can be happy. I am willing to do that. I have the courage to do it, but the only thing I cannot do is close my eyes and say 'no, everything was okay'. This is something I cannot do. But what I can do is to refrain from any unilateral actions, refrain from making this state-to-state problem into a citizens' problem. This is what I can do, and some of you know what I mean, and that includes fishermen. Because I do not think that is smart and that is useful. On the contrary, it can create an environment where it will be more difficult to achieve an agreement.

So from my point of view, with a bit of patience, with a bit of a sense and sensibility we can make progress, while refraining from unilateral actions, because even if arbitration was to be considered under international law both countries have to agree for it be implemented. Things are relatively clear to all of those who know a bit more detail. I will do everything in my power to eliminate tensions and ensure that a solution is found. At the same time, let me be very honest and clear with all of you. There are so many other still open bilateral issues among many Member States and they never arrive on the table of the European Council, or the European Parliament. This is something we should remember.

A few points on the social elements that you mentioned. On the social elements it was a very timely initiative that we had in Goteborg, initiated by Sweden. The social pillar principles, 20 of them, are items that we can all improve on a national level. I am in favour of social dialogue with our social partners, both at European and national level.

We have taken account of the fact that minimum wages and the average salary have increased, and that major tax reform which we have undertaken at national level has had an overall positive impact on our citizens, including on the demographic issue by leaving more money to mothers and fathers, by via some additional allowances for those with children and larger families. These include subsidising interest rates on the housing loans and a number of other measures that we have taken in order to address the most critical issue, a structural issue affecting my society at least, and that is the question of demographic revitalisation.

A few points on the Spitzenkandidaten and transnational lists. In the last elections in 2014 I was privileged to be on the list of the Croatian EPP family and I was always mentioning Jean-Claude at every single event we had – and he was more popular than he can imagine! But it took us a lot of effort to communicate to Croatian voters who Jean-Claude was. It wasn't always easy, it took me a lot of effort, as Dubravka and Ruža and the others know, so my point is that we have to be realistic. We have different budgets for campaigning, we have different legislative frameworks for campaigns. We have an issue of accountability to our constituency.

I am very much, as you can see, a pro-European leader of the Croatian Government, but I need to see that it is the right time and that there is sufficient preparedness. We need to look at things from all aspects. So I advocate the Spitzenkandidaten, absolutely. Are we ready for transnational lists, will they be adequately and fairly represented everywhere across the 27? For that I would need to see a little more concrete evidence that it is feasible. This is what I think from the experiences I have had personally so far and the consultations with my friends.

A few points on the issues of climate change, renewable energy, and the protection of nature. You are right. We are lucky to have such a place in Europe, with all the benefits of being on the Adriatic and the Danube, being a country which is really rich in water and natural resources, but we are also aware of our energy needs. So we are looking at the ecological aspects of every single project in a very detailed manner in dialogue with local communities and in dialogue with the NGOs looking at various projects and various items.

On the Istanbul Convention, which you have mentioned, few people know that Croat experts initiated the whole exercise within the Council of Europe just next door here. Here we signed it in 2013. I don't know why the Social Democratic government at the time didn't pass to the step of ratification. It remains a mystery to me because they had two years.

What I have done is ensure we have completed the public consultation. The process of preparing the legislation to forward to Parliament is almost over. Unfortunately, the debate on this Convention which was there, in my view, to protect and prevent violence in the family – especially violence against women – has somehow acquired a different dimension in many public debates, a sort of gender ideology debate which is trying to put a different angle on the substance. I am willing to debate this within the Croatian Parliament, within the political parties and with the public, and try to distinguish the wood from the trees. This is my task ahead in the months which will follow.

Finally, an issue of identity, which was rightly mentioned by Manfred, thank you very much. We have always longed to be part of this European project. It was on the lips of most of the Croats ever since we became independent in 1990. And therefore the national identity which we acquired, in terms of international recognition and finally having our own state after nine centuries, is very strong.

We will nurture it and respect it Ruža, as you know. But at the same time, trying to build this European project from the perspective of a country that is aware of what war means – and luckily most of your generations in your Member States are not aware of this – gives me another argument that this very project should be strengthened by all means, and by consensus if possible.

Procedura «catch-the-eye»

Francis Zammit Dimech (PPE). – Sur President, huwa ta' unur u pjaċir li niddiskutu, fil-preżenza tal-Prim Ministru tal-Kroazja, it-tema tal-futur tal-Ewropa. Nahseb anki dak kollu li huwa qalilna dalghodu, dwar ir-referenza għall-waqgħa tal-hajt ta' Berlin u anki dwar il-valuri komuni tagħna, lili jfakkarni anki fil-kliem li kien qalilna preċiżament wara l-kollass tal-Komuniżmu l-awtur Francis Fukuyama fil-ktieb tiegħu, "The End of History", "The great ideological struggles of the past were over, now that Western values have captured the world".

Il-futur tagħna nemmen li jrid jibqa' marbut anki mal-għeruq tagħna, mar-rebħa fuq in-nazzjonalizmu, mar-rebħa fuq il-fruntieri, mar-rebħa fuq il-firda u l-mibegħda, mar-rebħa fuq dak kollu li huwa marbut mat-totalitarjanizmu. U għalhekk nemmen ukoll li l-Ewropa trid tibqa' t-tarka tal-valuri tagħna, tal-harsien tad-drittijiet fundamentali tagħna billi anki tkun marbuta ma' aktar opportunitajiet għall-futur tagħna kollha.

Mercedes Bresso (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, caro Primo ministro, è un piacere rivederla qui fra noi ed è anche stato un piacere ascoltare alcune delle sue affermazioni. In particolare, come hanno ricordato molti colleghi, abbiamo un grosso problema sul bilancio futuro dell'Unione europea se vogliamo garantire, al tempo stesso, le politiche tradizionali ma importanti come la coesione e le nuove politiche su cui ci stiamo impegnando. È quindi importante sapere che c'è una disponibilità della Croazia a lavorare insieme agli altri paesi per un ragionevole aumento del bilancio in rapporto alle nuove funzioni.

In secondo luogo, grazie anche per il suo convinto appoggio alla procedura dello *Spitzenkandidat*. Saremmo lieti, noi che siamo favorevoli alle liste transnazionali, di spiegarle quanto le due cose possano essere collegate. Creare uno spazio di dibattito politico europeo nel quale tutti possano partecipare. Abbiamo votato che il numero di candidati delle liste sia pari a quello dei membri attuali dell'Unione europea. Quindi la possibilità per tutti c'è certamente e sarei lieta di spiegarle come ciò potrebbe esserle possibile.

Charles Tannock (ECR). – Mr President, I would like to congratulate Prime Minister Plenković on becoming prime minister and say that we still miss him on the Committee on Foreign Affairs. I, too, regret Brexit as a destructive act against the EU, which – no matter how much reform it requires – is still the greatest peace and prosperity project. Alone, Britain cannot face the common challenges of climate change, mass migration or international terrorism, for example. The UK's decision now to leave the single market and customs union will also weaken both parties, and poses big problems at the Irish border.

I also hope that the UK can stay plugged into security and defence structures by cooperating closely with PESCO, and as rapporteur of the Parliament for Montenegro, I also hope that the UK can stay engaged in joint projects in the Western Balkans. Stability in the Western Balkans must be a common priority for all of us. Lastly, I also see some merit in making European Parliament elections far more relevant to the people by the Spitzenkandidat process and the transnational lists.

Congratulations, and I think that Croatia is a great member of the European Union.

Pavel Telička (ALDE). – Mr President, I would like to say to the Prime Minister: it is very nice to have, as the second Prime Minister, someone from a country like yours: someone from a country which is very close to me, and which has done a tremendously good job – I can see this, as a very frequent visitor and part-timer in your country.

Now, two points from my side. As concerns the Western Balkans, I think that not just among the Western Balkan colleagues here, but among many of us, you have full understanding and support: first point. On Schengen, once Croatia will complete and comply, it should be in: second strong point.

Finally, on the transnational lists, I understood the position you have taken – a position in terms of more debate, more clarification, right timing – but how would you see the process between now (the *Spitzenkandidaten*) and, in the future, transnational lists? What is it that we could fine-tune that the Croats and the Czechs could better understand the institute of the *Spitzenkandidaten*?

Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, I would like to welcome Prime Minister Plenković. As a country on Europe's eastern border, it is regrettable that Croatia has played a role in the creation of 'Fortress Europe'. 'Fortress Europe' has no place in our future and we cannot sit in a Brussels bubble, surrounded by sea and barbed wire, while those fleeing war and discrimination are turned away and forcibly returned to Turkey, Libya and Serbia, or worse still, left to die in our seas.

The future of Europe should also not include a Europe where minority populations continue to face persistent discrimination. Populations like the Roma and traveller communities are not treated equally in my own country, Ireland, or in yours, Mr Plenković.

The future of Europe should also be rooted in its history. The EU was established as a peace project but it is now paving a future for itself in militarisation and the war alliance of Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence. A militarised Europe will create a future with more insecurity, more wars and more money for war, at the expense of the social protections that Europe once treasured.

Reinhard Bütikofer (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, I would like to thank Prime Minister Plenković for joining us. Prime Minister, I would like to ask a couple of questions regarding the remarks you made on the budget.

You said there should be an intelligent way of dealing with the budget. Can you be a bit more precise? What would your intelligence tell us about own resources of the European budget? When you say no new taxes, where should we get new resources from? Maybe you have an idea. Also, where should we reduce expenditure? The President of the Commission has said we have to cut somewhat our expenditure on agriculture and on regional policy. Where is your priority for making cuts to free up resources for new necessary expenditure?

Finally, what is your position on what some people call the 'weaponisation' of the European budget, meaning the proposal that the budget should be used to cudgel some governments into policies that are objectionable to the rest of us?

Marco Valli (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, mi spiace che non ci sia nessuno della Commissione in questo momento a rappresentare, perché ci sono dei punti anche molto importanti sull'Eurozona che bisogna snocciolare. Il futuro dell'Unione europea ha come fulcro anche quello che è il futuro dell'Eurozona e ci sono delle proposte sul piatto che vanno snocciolate, come ad esempio trasformare il Meccanismo europeo di stabilità nel Fondo monetario europeo.

Molti gruppi politici sono a favore di questa iniziativa, ma creare degli strumenti per andare fintamente ad aiutare gli Stati quando sono in difficoltà fiscale senza prima creare le condizioni per risolvere i pesanti squilibri economici di cui soffre l'Eurozona sono soluzioni incomplete. Bisognerebbe trovare il modo di creare dei trasferimenti fiscali dai paesi in surplus, come la Germania e l'Olanda, e risolvere il problema dei grandi paradisi fiscali, come ha detto anche lei, Presidente Tajani. Paesi fondatori come Olanda e Lussemburgo devono contribuire a questa situazione dell'Eurozona. E poi bisogna trovare una soluzione per il debito sovrano. Non possiamo subire ancora quelle che sono le condizioni della crisi del 2011. Dobbiamo trovare una soluzione perché il *quantitative easing* non durerà per sempre.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Πρωθυπουργέ, καλώς ήρθατε για μια ακόμη φορά στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο. Ελλείψει χρόνου, διερωτώμαι πώς είναι δυνατόν να υπάρξει μέλλον στην Ευρώπη όταν δεν υπάρχει αλληλεγγύη μεταξύ των ευρωπαϊκών χωρών; Χαρακτηριστικό είναι το παράδειγμα της Ελλάδας, την οποία και η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει εξαθλιώσει επί οκτώ συνεχόμενα χρόνια με το μνημόνιο. Πώς είναι δυνατόν να υπάρξει πρόοδος στην Ευρώπη όταν η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση επιβάλλει στα κράτη να φτωχοποιούν τους πολίτες τους; Πώς είναι δυνατόν να υπάρξει πρόοδος στην Ευρώπη όταν δεν μπορούμε να φυλάξουμε τα εθνικά μας σύνορα, τα οποία φυλάσσει -υποτίθεται- η Ευρωπαϊκή συνοριοφυλακή και ακτοφυλακή, και δεν μπορούμε να χειριστούμε το πρόβλημα των λαθρομεταναστών; Πώς είναι δυνατόν να υπάρξει πρόοδος στην Ευρώπη όταν στην πράξη έχει καταργηθεί η Συνθήκη Σένγκεν; Τέλος, πώς είναι δυνατόν να υπάρξει πρόοδος στην Ευρώπη όταν θέλουμε να δεχθούμε την Τουρκία η οποία, πέραν της γενοκτονίας των Αρμενίων που αναφέρθηκε, είναι υπεύθυνη για γενοκτονία των Ελλήνων του Εύξεινου Πόντου και της Μικράς Ασίας και αυτή τη στιγμή δεν αναγνωρίζει την Κύπρο; Πώς είναι δυνατόν, λοιπόν, να υπάρξει πρόοδος στην Ευρώπη με όλα αυτά;

(Sospensione della procedura «catch-the-eye» per permettere al Primo Ministro Andrej Plenković di rispondere alle domande dei deputati)

Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia. – Mr President, I have a few remarks on this first round of catch-the-eye.

First of all, on the issue of defence, which Charles Tannock mentioned, I believe that strengthening European defence is very important, given the wider context of the challenges we have when it comes to security. Having seen what we have discussed over the past couple of years, one of the first things I did as Prime Minister was to put through the new national security strategy, a new system of homeland security, and to increase our defence budget. We are in the process of acquiring new jet fighters. I want to be a credible country with capabilities that can increase and be inter-operational with other allies within NATO and with partners in the European Union. That is why we are participating, with almost 450 Croatian military personnel, in various operations across the world, be it with the UN, NATO or the European Union.

On the UK's exit, I think the critical thing is to find what type of future contractual relationship we will forge between the United Kingdom and the EU. I think it was Walter Hallstein who said that association can be membership minus one percent, or cooperation plus one percent: that is a very large span for what we can put into the new contractual relationship. This is a choice. It is a political choice, in a strange situation, when someone is actually about to leave. In my view, that will be critical in the next phase of the negotiations with London.

Regarding the *Spitzenkandidat* and transnational lists, I have a practical concern. The budget in my country currently for the whole list for the campaign is EUR 200 000. If a colleague wants to campaign he has EUR 200 000 for the whole length of the campaign. As a candidate, how do you think he will campaign in Turku, in Braga, in Palermo or somewhere on the shores of Bourgas in Bulgaria? He cannot do it. This is the problem.

We should invest a little bit more practical thinking in this: probably increasing the limits of financing, finding ways to ensure that the new system not only underpins the person who is a candidate for the future presidency of the European Commission but also gives equal opportunities to someone from what I would call a 'notorious' political family or someone from a big country with a strong media presence, or someone from a smaller country. This is my concern and I do not see the answer in the debate so far.

As I said, we need to have equal chances in this exercise. In my view, the way it is now being contemplated is not entirely fair. That is why I have very clear reservations at this stage. I am not saying we will not find a solution.

When it comes to the Multiannual Financial Framework, you mentioned that I said we needed to find smart approaches. The smartest way is to know what you want, what your political priorities are, and then attach the financial means to those priorities. For a couple of years, I have been following the work of the group of experts led by Mr Monti – so often eloquently represented by Alain Lamassoure – on the reform of the own resources system. This is absolutely key if we want to avoid the debates that Mr Verhofstadt mentioned when we asked if it is the Council which decides on income and Parliament which decides on expenditure. This is essential. We always debate in the nitty-gritty negotiations and trilogues in a short time in order to achieve a political goal. Therefore, finding a balance between research, innovation, the digital economy, youth, jobs, and traditional policy areas, such as regional policy development or agriculture or defence, is always a challenge.

I believe that if we understand what the challenges will be in the next decade we can find consensus, especially now when – after the 2016 blues, after the Brexit referendum and with the political developments in 2017, especially the enthusiastic approach of President Macron of France, and the likely formation of another German Government led by Chancellor Merkel – we have gone, in football terms, from a 0-1 to a 2-1 situation. That gives me hope and optimism for the strength of the European project, including the debate on the financial framework.

(Seguito della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Ivo Belet (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to thank Prime Minister Plenković for being in this House, which is very familiar to him.

Prime Minister Plenković, I would like to come back to the security issue which you referred to a few minutes ago. Of course, it is an important issue. Taking into account the international context, it is very turbulent and you already referred to this, but should we not accelerate our efforts to enhance defence cooperation? You referred to defence fighters but should we not invest more in common defence material, on a common platform, in order to be interoperable and to make the European defence capacity more robust? The advantages are obvious. The synergies are obvious. I think we can assume that citizens support it, so are you ready to support this line and really invest in initiatives in order to accelerate this common European defence initiative?

Ana Gomes (S&D). – Mr President, tax evasion and tax dumping among Member States – some transformed into tax havens or hubs for money laundering, crime and corruption, as LuxLeaks, Panama Papers and Paradise Papers show: this is what is fuelling growing inequalities and the consequent populism, nationalism and citizen distrust in the European governments and in the Union. So, Prime Minister, if you agree that the EU needs additional own-resources, is it not time for the Council to act for tax harmonisation – namely, setting a minimum corporate tax base to fight tax dumping in the unfair competition that is going on in the single market? And is it not smart, fair and necessary for the EU, in the context of the multiannual financial framework, to indeed enact the financial transaction tax that has already been agreed by 11 Member States and, considering the evolution of the digital economy, a tax on the robotisation of production? Would this not be also a way to regenerate income for Member States, and not just the Union?

Ivica Tolić (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče hrvatske Vlade, velik je Vaš osobni doprinos proeuropskom programu u Hrvatskoj. Vaša proeuropska politika i stajališta poznata su i u Hrvatskoj i u ovom domu. Napredak Hrvatske u strukturnim reformama pod Vašom Vladom vidljiv je u svim segmentima društvenog razvoja i ta postignuća Hrvatsku snažno integriraju u Europsku uniju.

Schengenski prostor jedan je od prioriteta Hrvatske. Očekujete li da će se hrvatski pristup realizirati za mandata ovog sastava Europske komisije i Europskog parlamenta?

Zaštita vanjskih granica, kako ste i sami rekli, važno je pitanje. Mislite li da bi ovaj Parlament i Vijeće trebali podržati da sustav ulaska i izlaska za registraciju podataka o ulasku i izlasku državljana trećih zemalja koji prelaze vanjske granice država članica Europske unije u provedbu od prvog trenutka treba uključiti i Republiku Hrvatsku jer je riječ o prvenstveno sigurnosnom pitanju?

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Mr President, Prime Minister Plenковиć, welcome back to the European Parliament and welcome to this forum about the future of the European Union. We first heard Ireland – a veteran, 45 years in the European Union – and now we have Croatia, the newest accession. Both have histories of success and progress, most notably in the case of Croatia overcoming terrible episodes of war and conflict, which is yet to be completed, with the cross-border tensions with Slovenia.

Many of us here are convinced that Europe, the European Union, has been in a protracted crisis, dragging its feet and hounded by nationalists, populists and europhobes. And do you know what? Many of us here think the problem is about the Council. It is about a lack of vision to face, in a European fashion, the eurozone needs, globalisation and, most notably, the refugee crisis. It is about a lack of solidarity, and also of backing for the democratic principle of *Spitzenkandidaten* and transnational lists.

Many of us here in the European Parliament would uphold a majority backing this democratic principle. It is about time that the European Council did its part of the job. Is it ready to either go European or face nationalist regression? That is the question.

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga (ECR). – Mr President; Prime Minister, welcome. I share your sorrow about Brexit. On the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity, I think that our lack of respect for both principles contributed to the effect of the referendum in the UK, rather than populism and external intervention. Unfortunately, it is still visible in the EU institutions. On foreign policy principles, I note that the Russian Ambassador receives royal treatment in the institutions, just as Moscow is a destination of political travellers, and unlike the treatment given to the Ukrainian Ambassador and Kyiv. Please ensure in Council that our focusing on the Western Balkans does not take other challenges off the European agenda.

Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE). – Hvala Vam na govoru gospodine premijeru i dobrodošao natrag u Europski parlament. Želim Vam postaviti tri pitanja. Supsidijarnost je riječ koju ste sami spomenuli. Vaš kolega, bivši predsjednik, gospodin Weber govorio je o dvojnim identitetima, regionalnom i nacionalnom. Moje je pitanje da li Vi zaista želite implementirati supsidijarnost i da li ga vidite kao pravi princip za Europsku uniju, naravno u tom slučaju i za našu zemlju? Kao što ste sami rekli, vlast koja je bliža građanima može bolje izvršavati svoje obaveze.

Drugo je pitanje vezano za Uljanik, gdje ste i Vi odigrali značajnu ulogu i želim Vas pitati ipak globalno, da li vidite brodogradnju kao pravu europsku industriju gdje će jedan proizvod, a to je brod, biti zajednički europski proizvod?

Treće je pitanje vezano za zapadni Balkan. Na neki sam način siguran da ćete Vi biti jedan od onih ljudi koji će se zalagati i biti za ulazak svih zemalja zapadnog Balkana u Europsku uniju, ali pitam se i volio bih čuti politički odgovor što znači taj dolazak gospodina predsjednika Vučića uskoro u Zagreb i što on donosi zapadnom Balkanu?

Igor Šoltes (Verts/ALE). – Seveda, lepo je govoriti o prihodnosti Evrope in tudi o Hrvaški, vendar pri tem ne moremo mimo temeljnih vrednot, brez katerih si prihodnosti Evropske unije ne moremo in ne bomo niti predstavljati in med njimi absolutno je tudi vladavina prava, ki je pravzaprav temelj evropskih vrednot in predpogoj za uresničevanje vsega. In če pademo na vladavini prava, pademo praktično kot Evropa.

Želim si, g. Plenковиć, da bi tudi vi kot predsednik vlade, kot ste rekli, države Hrvaške, razumeli in pravzaprav pristavili svoj prispevek k temu, da se tudi v primeru in v evropskem duhu ravna tudi tako pri implementaciji arbitražnih odločb, pri arbitražni odločbi med hrvaško in slovensko mejo.

Ta je seveda nedvoumna, zavezujoča, dokončna, *res judicata* in o njej se seveda ne moremo pogajati in tudi zato bi predlagal gospodu Junckerju, ki je ponudil svojo pomoč, najprej seveda lahko pomaga tako, da jasno, nedvoumno, brez zatikanja pove, da je arbitražne odločitve treba sprejemati za vse odgovorne članice v Evropski uniji.

Jiří Payne (EFDD). – Pane předsedající, máme před sebou pět variant budoucnosti Evropské unie, které nám předložila Komise. Co mají společného? V zásadě společným jmenovatelem je udržet moc „v Bruselu“. A já bych chtěl poprosit, abychom rozšířili úvahy také o další dvě možnosti.

Za prvé, odpovědný politik musí vždycky uvažovat o krizové variantě a musí mít připravený krizový scénář. A já bych si přál, prosím o to, abychom rozšířili debatu o úvahách i o takových situacích. A pak prosím ještě o jednu variantu. Protože stále se potýkáme s demografickým deficitem a měli bychom zahájit debatu o demokratickém scénáři budoucího vývoje evropského kontinentu. O scénáři, který by byl založen na racionální deregulaci, o scénáři, ve kterém přestane platit: „My víme, co je pro vás dobré, a my vám to přikážeme“, o scénáři, který bude založen na tom, že politikové budou občanům a voličům říkat: „My vám nasloucháme.“

(Sospensione della procedura «catch-the-eye» per permettere al Primo Ministro Andrej Plenković di rispondere alle domande dei deputati)

Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia. – Mr President, thank you very much for a series of questions on defence. Yes, Croatia wants the European Union to go in the direction of strengthening defence cooperation. If there is one area since 1993-99 that has evolved rapidly, it is certainly that one and, as I already said at the beginning, our commitment is strong and it is clear. The way we are building our own capabilities is in the direction that we are not there in a declaratory manner but in an operational manner. So from that point of view, a plus.

When it comes to the Schengen entry-exit system, you know that we got the envelope when we were negotiating our accession of EUR 120 million to increase the capacities of the Croatian police, of the Croatian border system to surveil our borders and it is perhaps the best absorption of all the funds that we have. We have so far, at the level of contractual arrangements, about 50% above the total allocation for Croatia, which is just over EUR 10.3 billion. We have more or less contracted EUR 5.2 billion. When it comes to Schengen we have actually absorbed 98%.

Given the migratory refugee crisis a few years ago we were the country that today looks at this issue in a way that our focus should be on protecting the external borders of the European Union, on preventing further migratory flows at the source of the crisis – failing states, wars, conflicts, poverty and other reasons why people are looking towards Europe from the continents which are around us. The entry-exit system, yes. Preparation for Schengen, whether it is formally within the mandate of this Parliament, I would be very happy if we could achieve that. We will try to do the maximum but you know it is a decision both of the Council and needing the support of the European Parliament.

We didn't opt for barbed wire on our borders but we are protecting our borders with our forces and strengthening our capacities if and where there is a need.

When it comes to the issue of minorities, which was mentioned earlier by one of the colleagues, perhaps you don't know, but the Croatian Parliament has a fixed quota for eight members of parliament from minorities – three from the Serbian minority, and today we also have representatives of an Italian minority. We have a representative of the Hungarians, of the Czechs, and of the Roma as well, which is very important because this was mentioned in one of the debates earlier where there was an insinuation that we do not protect the Roma minority enough. On the contrary, we have a special operational programme for minorities where we have invested a lot and one Albanian minority lady representative. Why am I saying this? All eight of those minorities are members of my parliamentary majority, which I personally wanted to be like that because I feel that the minorities in any European country, and especially in Croatia with all the historical legacies that we have, can better cater for their needs, their priorities and their position in our society if they are within the majority and influencing the policies of our country. That is why this is a very dear subject for me from a principle point of view, with all the European values always in mind.

When it comes to the three questions of my colleague Nino Jakovčić: on subsidiarity, absolutely yes. You are aware that my ambition is to involve – first of all when it comes to the European national level and the multi-layered governance – the Croatian parliament more than before. That is why I am there every single time after I come back from the European Council. I spend hours trying to promote the substance of the European dossiers to the Croatian MPs and to the Croatian public. No one has ever thought of doing this before and not even deliberated it. This is an idea that I want, where the national parliaments have a role to play in our legislative pipeline, more than today.

Second, on Uljanik and on the shipping industry and the shipyards in Croatia. In our accession process if there was one critical issue on the agenda it was in Chapter 8, it was competition, state aid, how to help the shipyards in distress. It actually cost a lot of money in the Croatian budget. Some of them are stable, restructured and ordering new ships. Some of them occasionally have difficulties in the market which has globally completely altered to what it was before. You know it and I know it.

The decision on Uljanik was a political choice, as we were convinced that this shipyard in Pula – which is also the co-owner of a shipyard in Rijeka, the 3. Maj, and which employs together more than 5 000 people – has the potential to find a strategic partner, restructure and have long-term viability of production. This is why we believed it was a good choice, and that is why we explained to the European Commission to give us a go-ahead in this decision.

On the visit of President Vučić, I don't see that much mystification as is flowing around in the media. I see President Vučić almost every two months in various international fora. There are items on the agenda which should be addressed – the question of missing persons, border issues, war damages if you like, the laws which Serbia has passed in order to increase its jurisdiction when it comes to the prosecution of war crimes beyond its own territories... We have debated this in this House. I don't want to enter into that. But there is goodwill on the Croatian side to sit down and try to understand how we can surmount the obstacles. This is the object. The normalisation agreement between the two countries dates from 1996. There are always political connotations when different personalities are involved, and this visit therefore has an extra careful element in the whole process of its preparation.

On the arbitration and Slovenia, dear colleague Šoltes, you can present it the way you said: yes, everything was perfect, a textbook case, fantastic behaviour, never better, and we should definitely try to copy the process for all the other open border issues. I, unfortunately, cannot agree with that, and you know it. I am even hesitating to be as explicit as I perhaps should in this forum, but I will repeat to you again, let's refrain from unilateral action. Let's find a way for both Slovenia and Croatia to find a commonly acceptable fair and reasonable solution to the border issue. In my view it is an overblown topic both politically and in the media. Nothing dramatic has happened to any of our citizens. But that will happen if one of the countries chooses the path of unilateral actions and fines. This is something I really regret and it was not the choice of my country. The goodwill is there. I know that the Prime Minister Cerar and the entire Slovenian Government have taken some positions – there are elections very soon in Slovenia – but despite that, we are open for dialogue and also, if you like, some good ideas from our friends that might help us in that direction.

(Seguito della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Henna Virkkunen (PPE). – Arvoisa puhemies, haluan kiittää pääministeriä erittäin hyvästä puheenvuorosta. Kroatia on monella tavalla menestystarina, ja on hienoa, että olette valmiina toimimaan sillanrakentajana koko Balkanin alueelle, kun naapurimaanne pyrkivät kohti Euroopan unionin jäsenyyttä. Samaan aikaan, kun puhutaan EU:n tulevaisuudesta, mielestäni meidän on kuitenkin nyt itse tartuttava erityisesti kahteen asiaan Euroopan unionin jäseninä.

Toinen niistä koskee eurooppalaisia arvoja. Tiedämme, että meillä on tällä hetkellä valitettavasti jäsenmaita, jotka eivät noudata meidän yhteisiä arvojamme koskien ihmisarvon ja ihmisoikeuksien kunnioittamista, vapautta, kansanvaltaa, tasa-arvoa ja oikeusvaltiota, jotka on linjattu niiksi asioiksi, joiden edistäminen on EU:n päätavoitteita.

Toinen kysymys liittyy siihen, että kun olemme tehneet jonkun päätöksen, jäsenmaiden on sitä noudatettava. Tiedämme, että tässä on ongelmia. Ennen kuin nämä asiat korjataan, EU ei voi palauttaa uskottavuuttaan. Meidän on kyettävä nopeammin reagoimaan näihin asioihin, ja nyt kun EU:n rahoituskehystä ollaan uudistamassa, oletteko valmiita siihen, että näiltä mailta, jotka eivät noudata yhteisiä sääntöjä, voitaisiin tulevaisuudessa myös leikata rahoitusta?

Maria Grapini (S&D). – Domnule președinte, domnule prim-ministru. Domnule prim-ministru aștept să și ascultați ce spun din secundele mele, vă rog foarte mult. Apreciez ceea ce ați spus și viziunea pe care ați prezentat-o corespunde și cu viziunea mea, însă, ați ezitat să spuneți dacă starea actuală a națiunii corespunde cu viziunea dumneavoastră. Eu sunt din România, avem 10 ani de aderare, dumneavoastră ați folosit cuvinte-cheie aici – subsidiaritate, să acționăm în interesul cetățenilor, zonă Schengen. Vreau să vă întreb... Și poate totuși mă ascultați...

(Președintele a întrerupt vorbitoarea)

Nu am terminat domnule președinte, pentru că domnul prim-ministru nu dorește să asculte intervenția mea. Deci, vă întreb domnule prim-ministru: considerați că starea actuală a națiunii corespunde cu ceea ce dumneavoastră ați prezentat ca viziune? Vorbim aici de subsidiaritate, de a acționa în interesul cetățenilor, de zona Schengen, de faptul că avem buget pe zona euro și buget pe zona non-euro. Avem o singură Europă sau nu? Care este părerea dumneavoastră legată de faptul că sunt state stigmatizate, cum sunt România și Bulgaria, care întrunesc condițiile de zona Schengen și nu sunt aprobate în Consiliu? Ce credeți de faptul că există doar pentru două state un MCV? Despre ce unitate vorbim și ce să le spunem cetățenilor, pentru că dumneavoastră ați folosit aici termenii „să explicăm cetățenilor avantajele Uniunii Europene”?

Aș dori să-mi răspundeți în intervenția dumneavoastră.

Franck Proust (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Premier ministre, l'avenir de l'Europe est l'affaire de tous et notre rôle, ici, est de dire la vérité. De dire ce que nous avons accompli depuis 2014 et de dire avec lucidité ce qui ne fonctionne pas, sans hypocrisie.

Un exemple récent: la modernisation des instruments de défense commerciale. Sur ce point, nous avons obtenu des progrès en augmentant nos taxes antidumping, mais les États membres n'ont pas assumé de supprimer l'application du «droit moindre», ce symbole de la naïveté qui enlève la valeur vraiment punitive aux taxes antidumping. Ce «droit moindre» ne doit plus être la règle mais l'exception en matière de défense commerciale. C'est le combat que nous devons mener.

Entre le rêve et l'incantation des uns et les dangers extrémistes et populistes des autres, il existe une voie du réalisme et de l'efficacité, celle que nous défendons.

Nous refusons de voir l'Europe s'éloigner des peuples et disons «non» au gadget inutile, injuste et inapplicable des listes transnationales. Nous sommes de ceux qui agissent pour que l'action de l'Europe soit resserrée sur des priorités. Soit certains défendent encore le consensus mou, soit nous faisons le pari d'une Europe qui avance plus vite, peut-être à différents niveaux d'intégration, avec des marqueurs forts pour donner de la visibilité et de la lisibilité à l'action de l'Europe.

Monsieur le Premier ministre, c'est ce qu'attendent nos concitoyens.

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Vaša sporočila so danes izjemno pomembna, predvsem v luči strategije širitve na Balkan.

Veste, da z zaskrbljenostjo sprejemamo vaše ravnanje vlade po odločitvi arbitražnega sodišča med Slovenijo in Hrvaško. Slišali ste predsednika Junckerja, da nobena druga država ne bo več vstopila v Unijo, če ne bo rešila meja.

Mi rešitev imamo, arbitražno. Tu ne gre za vprašanje nekega povsem novega kompromisa. Kakšno bo vaše sporočilo državam Zahodnega Balkana, če Hrvaška arbitražne razsodbe ne bo spoštovala in rešitve o meji ne bo? Boste prevzeli odgovornost za države, ki bodo ostale pred vrati? Zagotavljate, da ste pripravljeni storiti vse, da naši državi izideta iz situacije, ki predvsem škoduje našim ljudem, ampak danes me niste prepričali.

Veste, da Hrvatje vsako zimo preživljajo na smučiških počitnice, Slovenci na hrvaški obali in naša skupna skrb in odgovornost je, da ohranimo prijateljske in dobre sosedske odnose.

Bernd Lucke (ECR). – Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Herr Verhofstadt hat darauf aufmerksam gemacht, dass dieses Parlament nicht über seine eigenen Einnahmen verfügen kann. Es gibt aber einen guten Grund dafür, denn dieses Parlament wird nicht nach gleicher Wahl gewählt. Nicht alle Bürger Europas haben das gleiche Mitspracherecht, wenn es um Einnahmen geht. In diesem Parlament sitzen sechs Abgeordnete aus Malta. Wenn wir das Parlament nach gleicher Wahl wählen würden, dann müssten hier etwa tausend Abgeordnete aus Deutschland sitzen – relativ zu sechs Abgeordneten aus Malta.

No taxation without representation, das gilt seit 250 Jahren. Wir haben hier eine grobe Verzerrung – das Parlament ist nicht repräsentativ. Und deshalb ist es durchaus sinnvoll, dass das Parlament seine Einnahmen von den Parlamenten auf der mitgliedstaatlichen Ebene empfängt, die in gleicher Wahl gewählt worden sind.

Das ist wichtig in Erinnerung zu behalten. Es gibt kein Recht, keine demokratische Legitimation, für die Besteuerung der Bürger Europas ausgehend vom Europäischen Parlament. Dieses Recht liegt aus gutem Grund auf mitgliedstaatlicher Ebene.

Ivo Vajgl (ALDE). – Bili smo kolegi, najbrž je užitek, ko imaš več časa v tej plenarni dvorani, jaz imam eno minuto. V tej minuti bi rad rekel, da čestitam Hrvaški za uspeh in verjamem, da je lahko resnično zgled in vabilo vsem državam kandidatkam, ki si prizadevajo za članstvo v Evropski uniji.

Moram pa nekaj stvari povedati tudi o naših dvostranskih odnosih. Vi ste danes slišali podporo velikega dela tega Parlamenta reševanju našega bilateralnega, rekel bi odvečnega spora na osnovi arbitražnega sodišča.

Seveda je arbitražno sodišče tisto, ki odloči o tem, a je v nekem trenutku bila napravljena zloraba ali ne, sodišče je odločilo, da takšne zlorabe, ki bi onemogočila arbitražo, ni bilo, in je sprejelo odločitev, ki je vi ne želite implementirati.

Jaz bi rekel, gospod premier, jaz vas vabim k temu, da v duhu dobrega sosedstva, trajnega dobrega sosedstva, rešimo ta problem in zato je pač potrebno tudi nekaj spoštovanja mednarodnega prava in načel dobrega sosedstva.

Dubravka Šuica (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče, dugo je ovo jutro, imali ste izvrstan sveobuhvatan uvodni govor i ove odgovore. Manje više ste na sva pitanje odgovorili. Ja Vam želim čestitati na europskoj vokaciji Hrvatske, na vašoj mainstream politici koju vodite. Nadam se da nećete dopustiti populistima jeftinim i ekstremistima da preuzmu vodstvo u Hrvatskoj, a istovremeno se nadam da ćete voditi računa o nacionalnim interesima.

Ovdje ste više puta naglasili i Schengen i eurozonu. Naravno da se nadam da ćemo do kraja mandata ove Komisije biti u Schengenu. Isto bih tako željela da možda malo bolje objasnite koji su interesi hrvatskog ulaska u eurozonu. Rekli ste da želimo biti u unutarnjem krugu Unije i to je ono na čemu inzistirate Vi i mi ovdje koji Vas podržavamo.

Isto tako, lijepo ste objasnili da svi benefiti koje imamo od Europske unije, a to je što je spomenuo i gospodin Juncker, Pelješki most, i rekao je da bi bio ovdje aplauz da se gradi most na Seni, a za Pelješki most nismo možda u prvom momentu reagirali. Međutim, to je velika stvar od strane Europske unije. Isto tako LNG terminal i obnovljivi izvori za koje smo već postigli razine koje smo trebali.

Nicola Caputo (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, grazie Primo ministro Plenković, ho apprezzato tanto la sua relazione e i suoi interventi. Il suo essere profondamente europeista ci dà l'opportunità per riflettere insieme con un po' di ottimismo sul futuro dell'Europa.

Nell'incertezza che regna a livello internazionale, l'Europa ha il dovere di assumere il ruolo di guida a livello mondiale, indicando la strada per affrontare le paure e avanzare con determinazione verso le politiche del futuro, la cui strada è già tracciata. Passaggi ineludibili per questo obiettivo sono l'adeguato sostegno alla conversione del modello economico lineare verso la *green economy* e la *circular economy* e il raggiungimento di una maggiore coesione sociale ed economica.

Corre quindi l'obbligo di affrontare con determinazione i temi dell'immigrazione, dell'equità fiscale e della lotta alle disuguaglianze che, se ignorati ancora, rischiano di compromettere la tenuta stessa dell'Unione europea.

In tale contesto, il ruolo giocato dalla Croazia è un ruolo chiave nella promozione della stabilità e della pace nei Balcani, ma anche nell'affrontare con l'Italia e gli altri paesi dell'Adriatico le sfide macroregionali che abbiamo di fronte.

(Sospensione della procedura «catch-the-eye» per permettere al Primo Ministro Andrej Plenković di rispondere alle domande dei deputati)

Andrej Plenković, hrvatski premijer – Evo na hrvatskom jedan odgovor za moje prijatelje iz Slovenije, budući da su i Tanja i Ivo ponovno otvorili ovo pitanje bilateralnih odnosa između Hrvatske i Slovenije, primjer prema drugim zemljama.

Pozicija je Hrvatske vrlo jasna i vi je znate jako dobro. Hoćemo li nešto kvalificirati kao malu *zlorabu* ili *napaku*, kao da je *smučanje* u pitanju ili ćemo reći da je riječ o povredi međunarodnog prava, to je sada na procjeni vas ili nas, u smislu slovenske ili hrvatske strane o tome što je bilo u arbitražnom procesu.

Ono što vi isto znate, a znamo i mi, je da je Hrvatska donijela odluku Hrvatskog sabora i to u vrijeme dok sam ja bio u ovom forumu, a ne u tom sazivu Hrvatskog sabora i da je ona jednoglasna i čvrsta. Zato sam i rekao da ovaj trenutak, kada imamo arbitražnu presudu koju vi želite provesti, a mi je ne priznajemo, moramo naći jedan politički i pravni način da pomirimo ta stajališta i da iskoristimo prigodu za rješenje graničnog pitanja.

Ono što isto tako vrlo jasno hoću reći da ljudi koji nisu ni Slovenci ni Hrvati shvate, da se to pitanje dedramatizira: nije to neko pitanje o kojem ovisi sudbina ili Slovenije ili Hrvatske. I zato mi je bilo čak čudno da smo čuli retoriku o slovenskim zakonima koji će voditi računa o onim Slovencima koji su ostali s *nesrećne strane meje*. Meni je puno draže govoriti o Sloveniji kao o zemlji koja je imala slogan *Sončna strana Alp*. Ne vidim u tome *point*. *Point* je da smo blizu, da smo si prijatelji, da mi idemo na skijanje, a vi dolazite na more i ja hoću da tako i ostane. Ne želim da se jedan problem, međudržavni, transferira na razinu konkretnih, običnih ljudi, a u ovom konkretnom slučaju, posebno ribara.

I zato podcrtavam da smo otvoreni i za dijalog i za dogovor i za rješenje tog pitanja, ali to pitanje nije toliko dramatično kako ga se nastoji prikazati. To je ono što smo uspjeli u Hrvatskoj, prvi put u zadnjih 25 godina da nismo imali nikakvu veliku dramu u hrvatskoj javnosti o ovom pitanju. To nam se još nije dogodilo, a znate kako je to sve bilo proteklih godina.

Uglavnom, tu smo da problem riješimo, ali pokušajte i vi razumjeti realnosti i političke i pravne, a i činjenične, uostalom, koje su se dogodile.

Što se tiče ovih drugih tema, pitanje vladavine prava koje se evo nastoji malo kontekstualizirati u ovom kontekstu je naravno za Hrvatsku ključno i važno. Ta inicijativa je bila u krajnjoj liniji plod onog prijašnjeg saziva Sabora, Europskog parlamenta i prijašnje Komisije i na neki način smo je nastavili u ovo vrijeme. Bitno je da se na nacionalnoj razini i u dijalogu, prije svega s Europskom komisijom, pronađu načini kako da se otklone pitanja na koje imamo različite poglede i stoga vjerujem da mehanizmi dijaloga koji su nam na raspolaganju, sukladno ugovoru, mogu dovesti do rješenja.

Što se tiče Bugarske i Rumunjske u Schengenu, već sam u uvodnom govoru rekao da ja to podržavam, da smatram da bi to bilo korisno i dobro. Vi imate taj mehanizam suradnje i verifikacije još od 2007., kad ste postali članica. Mi koji smo postali kasnije ga nemamo. Smatrali smo u tom trenutku da je dobro da ga nemamo jer smo toliko dugo ispunjavali kriterije da smo bili uvjereni da nam takav nekakav postpristupni *monitoring* nije nužan i da možemo naći druge načine da se pridržavamo naših obaveza i tako ga gledamo. I zato smatram da bi vaš uspjeh prema Schengenu bio i naš uspjeh, a mi ćemo kriterije ispuniti što se tiče i tehničkih kriterija, i nadzora granice i garantiranja nepropusnosti vanjske granice Hrvatske.

Pitanja populizma i euroskepticizma, da, točno, ja sam vrlo jasno, i to govorim i u Hrvatskoj, odvjetnik zagovaranja političkoga *mainstreama* jer on donosi stabilnost, predvidljivost; nastavlja na temelju ovog europskog projekta koji su izgradili naši očevi utemeljitelji i mnogi političari i stranke i državnici i parlamentarci koji su ga gradili zadnjih skoro sedamdesetak godina. Ono što svjedočimo, svjedočimo na europskoj razini i na razini svih naših rasprava, da mnogi u današnjem digitalnom komunikacijskom prostoru koriste sva ta sredstva kako bi plasirali svoje ideje. Nekada te ideje nisu uvijek poduprte točnim i pouzdanim informacijama. Mislim da za budućnost naše demokratske rasprave, uopće demokratskih procesa, moramo jako dobro nastojati razlikovati ono što je točno i istinito i ono što nije. Tu vidim ključ

buduće demokratske rasprave koja će dati odgovor na pitanje populizma na razini država članica koje se, kao što znamo, reflektira i na europskim izborima.

(Seguito della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Elmar Brok (PPE). – Herr Präsident! Erst einmal möchte ich mich sehr herzlich bedanken für die Reden, die wir gehört haben, die eine große europäische Perspektive zum Ausdruck bringen. Und ich bin auch überzeugt, dass man aus diesem europäischen Geist heraus Wege finden wird, den Streit zwischen Slowenien und Kroatien zu lösen. Denn das Ziel Europas ist ja, Grenzen unbedeutend zu machen. Das ist vielleicht für beide Nationen ein Weg, zueinander zu finden und dies zu lösen.

Lassen Sie mich aber auch eine Bemerkung machen zu dem, was Herr Lucke zum Ausdruck gebracht hat: Das Europäische Parlament ist voll legitimiert; das Bundesverfassungsgericht hat das bestätigt. Und wir müssen sehen, dass im amerikanischen Kongress jeder Bundesstaat zwei Sitze hat. Dann wäre der amerikanische Senat auch nicht legitimiert, Steuern einzuziehen. Wir haben hier in Europa ein höheres Maß an Ausgewogenheit zwischen großen und kleinen Ländern in einem Zwei-Kammern-System als etwa in Deutschland. Wir haben keine völlige Parität der Stimmen im Europäischen Parlament. Dafür sind aber die größeren Länder im Rat letztlich stärker als die kleinen. Das ist in Deutschland im Bundesrat nicht der Fall. Deswegen sollten wir uns nicht auf eine solche Detaildebatte einlassen, dass die Legitimation dieses Europäischen Parlaments, das vom Volk gewählt ist, vom europäischen Volk, in Frage gestellt wird.

Jean-Paul Denanot (S&D). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Premier ministre, vous avez ouvert votre discours sur la valeur ajoutée pour les citoyens que représente pour un pays, dont le vôtre, l'adhésion à l'Union européenne. Vous avez aussi abordé la question de votre voisinage et vous vous êtes montré ouvert, à certaines conditions, à ce que ces pays puissent accéder, à leur tour, à l'Union européenne – je vous en remercie.

La guerre des Balkans, j'ai envie de dire les guerres, ont en effet laissé des traces. Je connais, comme membre des amitiés UE-Balkans, toutes les questions posées au sujet des réconciliations et je suis persuadé qu'il y a un chemin s'il y a des volontés. J'ai pu rappeler lors de la dernière réunion UE-Kosovo que la France et l'Allemagne ont été capables de cette réconciliation pour créer l'Union européenne, une union de paix, de sécurité, de liberté et de prospérité économique. La Croatie peut avoir un rôle moteur pour un retour au vivre ensemble dans ce secteur géographique des Balkans si souvent malmené au cours de l'histoire.

Je n'ai pas de question à vous poser, je vous encourage simplement à poursuivre le dialogue avec vos voisins.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Πρωθυπουργέ της Κροατίας να σας υπενθυμίσω ότι τα Σκόπια αναγνωρίζονται από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση ως «FYROM» και όχι ως «Μακεδονία», όπως εσφαλμένα τα αποκαλέσατε πριν από λίγο. Σας καλώ λοιπόν να επανορθώσετε, διότι «οι καλοί λογαριασμοί κάνουν τους καλούς φίλους». Σε σχέση με την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση, πρέπει να δοθεί έμφαση από την πλευρά της Ένωσης στην εγκατάλειψη του νεοφιλελευθερισμού, της λιτότητας και της βίαιης δημοσιονομικής προσαρμογής. Πρέπει να οικοδομηθεί η κοινωνική Ευρώπη, η οποία θα εγγυάται τη δίκαιη κατανομή του παραγόμενου πλούτου και την κοινωνική δικαιοσύνη. Στο θεσμικό πεδίο, η Ένωση οφείλει να σέβεται την εθνική κυριαρχία των κρατών μελών της καθώς και την εθνική τους ταυτότητα. Να στηρίζεται και να δρα με βάση την αρχή της επικουρικότητας και της αναλογικότητας. Μόνο μια Ευρώπη που θα βασίζεται στα έθνη-κράτη και στους λαούς μπορεί να αποτελέσει εναλλακτική λύση στην Ευρώπη της τραπεζοκρατίας και των πολυεθνικών.

Charles Goerens (ALDE). – Monsieur le Président, à l'heure actuelle, me semble-t-il, le problème majeur de l'Union européenne est le refus de la part de plusieurs États membres d'accepter la moindre charge pour ce qui est de l'accueil de réfugiés ou de demandeurs d'asile. Ces même États – et parmi eux les plus grands bénéficiaires des fonds de cohésion – vont même jusqu'à s'opposer à l'application de la loi européenne par le refus catégorique d'appliquer les quotas.

C'est inadmissible, inacceptable. Les mots ne manquent pas pour qualifier ce comportement, incompatible d'ailleurs avec les critères de Copenhague, auxquels les candidats à l'adhésion ont dû se conformer au moment de leur entrée dans l'Union.

Que faudrait-il faire de votre point de vue pour mettre un terme à ce mélange d'indifférence, d'égoïsme, de nationalisme et d'irresponsabilité? Quelles initiatives et quelles réactions vous semblent les plus appropriées face à ce phénomène?

Γεώργιος Κύρτσος (PPE). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, και εγώ θα ήθελα να αναφερθώ σε ένα λάθος του φίλου μου, Andrej Plenković. Πρόκειται για πολιτικό λάθος δηλαδή, με την έννοια ότι όσο αναφερόμαστε στο κράτος που είναι ο βόρειος γείτονας της Ελλάδας ως σκέτο «Μακεδονία» και όσο τους δημιουργούμε την εσφαλμένη εντύπωση ότι είναι οι απόγονοι του Μεγάλου Αλεξάνδρου και ότι αυτοί είναι οι Μακεδόνες, άρα εμείς οι Έλληνες πρέπει να έχουμε συλλογικά πρόβλημα εθνικής συνείδησης, τόσο απομακρύνουμε την προοπτική ένταξής τους στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Γιατί ακόμα και αν η ελληνική κυβέρνηση δεχθεί κάποιους συμβιβασμούς, ακόμα και αν οι Έλληνες ευρωβουλευτές δεχθούν κάποιους συμβιβασμούς, ο ελληνικός λαός είναι εντελώς ασυμβίβαστος σε αυτά τα ζητήματα και δεν πρόκειται να τους δεχθεί. Άλλωστε, σε συλλαλητήριο που πραγματοποιήθηκε την περασμένη Κυριακή στην Αθήνα και ήμουν και εγώ εκεί, εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες Έλληνες διατράνωσαν τη θέλησή τους να σταματήσουν την παρουσίαση του βόρειου γείτονά μας με το όνομα «Μακεδονία». Γι' αυτό και θέλω ο φίλος μου, Andrej Plenković, να κάνει την αναγκαία διόρθωση.

Κώστας Μαυρίδης (S&D). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Πρωθυπουργέ, καλωσορίσατε σε έναν κοινό χώρο, με τον οποίον είστε αρκετά εξοικειωμένος. Εύχομαι κάθε επιτυχία στο έργο σας. Θα ξεκινήσω λέγοντας ότι το 2018 έχει ανακηρυχθεί έτος πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς. Η πολιτιστική κληρονομιά αφορά μεν το παρελθόν, αλλά αυτό είναι που καθορίζει τις αξίες για το κοινό ευρωπαϊκό μας μέλλον. Θα συμφωνήσω με τον προλαλήσαντα σχετικά με το ότι το κοινό πολιτιστικό μας μέλλον, ως ευρωπαϊκό, πρέπει να βασίζεται στην ειλικρίνεια και στην αλήθεια και όχι στα ψεύδη των Σκοπίων.

Τώρα, σε σχέση με το κοινό ευρωπαϊκό μας μέλλον, θα ήθελα να ακούσω τις απόψεις σας για δύο θέματα. Πρώτον, στο βόρειο κατεχόμενο μέρος της Κύπρου, που είναι μέρος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, παρατηρείται μια πρωτοφανής καταστροφή των αρχαίων μνημείων και εκκλησιών. Δεύτερον, θα ήθελα την άποψή σας γύρω από το κοινό ευρωπαϊκό μας μέλλον με βάση την αμυντική συνεργασία. Σας εύχομαι και πάλι κάθε επιτυχία στο έργο σας.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for his fine speech a month after our own Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, was here. It was great to have two big men representing two small countries as Prime Ministers here in Parliament. You as babes of the European Parliament, we as veterans. Both equally important and committed.

You spoke a lot about security; I just have a quick question for you. You mentioned about building an LNG terminal; I want to ask you how important that is in the security supply for your country. Was there opposition to it or full support for it, and what is the cost to the State? Keep up the good work.

Doru-Claudian Frunzulică (S&D). – Mr President, Prime Minister, Croatia and my country, Romania, have an important role to play to engage more with our neighbours, bearing in mind that providing a clear European perspective to all the Western Balkan countries would act as a catalyst to accelerate the pace of reforms. At the same time, we have to continue to support the countries of the Eastern Partnership, especially the three countries associated with the European Union – the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia – to come closer to the European Union.

Please, Prime Minister, do not lose this window of opportunity to overcome old painful grievances that still exist in the Balkans. We should give a clear perspective to south-eastern Europe for development, peace, and of course taking more care of their citizens within the European Union.

Alojz Peterle (PPE). – Dobrodošel in hvala ti za jasne besede o prihodnosti Evrope. Pozdravljam evropske ambicije Hrvaške in ji želim, da se kvalificira za prvo hitrost.

Glede meje med Hrvaško in Slovenijo ne dramtiziram, želim pa biti zelo natančen. Ne iščemo več rešitve, ker je mejo v asistenci Evropske komisije po neuspešni bilateralni zakonito določilo arbitražno sodišče.

Sodišče je končalo svoje delo, kljub hrvaškim kvalifikacijam slovenskega ravnanja. Torej, iščemo pot do implementacije sodbe.

Komisiji sem hvaležen za ponudbo mediacije, tebi pa za odprtost za dialog. Odgovor si pravzaprav že dal in ga ni potrebno dodajati še enkrat.

Imam pa vprašanje. Srednja Evropa se vse bolj formira kot politična entiteta s svojo politično in kulturno identiteto in tudi s svojimi jasnimi pogledi na prihodnost Evropske zveze. Kaj misliš o tem?

Miroslav Poche (S&D). – Poštovani predsjedniče Plenkoviću, dobar dan. Integracija zemalja zapadnog Balkana u Europsku uniju nedvojbeno će utjecati na budućnost cijele Europe.

Kasnije ćemo u toku dana čuti izlaganje Johannesa Hahna, povjerenika za europsku suradnju, susjedsku politiku i pregovore o proširenju u vezi nove strategije za zapadni Balkan. Riječ je o vrlo ambicioznom dokumentu koji predviđa mogućnost ulaska Crne Gore i Srbije u Europsku uniju do 2025. godine. Vjerujete li da je takav vremenski rok moguć?

Ovo Vas pitam imajući na umu iskustvo ulaska Hrvatske u europski blok. Ulazak Hrvatske u EU bio je moguć i ranije, ali je to usporeno zbog graničnog problema sa Slovenijom. Taj problem još nije u potpunosti riješen jer Vi ne želite prihvatiti odluku arbitražnog suda od prošle godine i tvrdite da je ovo pitanje bolje riješiti bilateralno.

Također imate nerazriješena granična pitanja sa Srbijom i Crnom Gorom. Mogu li se ta pitanja riješiti u razumnom roku ili će se Vaša država ponijeti kao što se Slovenija ponijela prema Vama?

Ivana Maletić (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče parlamenta, pozdravljam predsjednika Vlade Republike Hrvatske. Dragi Andrej, hvala na izvrsnom i sveobuhvatnom govoru o budućnosti Europske unije i čestitam na gospodarskim rezultatima i dobrim pokazateljima u Republici Hrvatskoj, na ubrzanju u korištenju europskih fondova i posebno na donesenoj strategiji za ulazak u eurozonu u kojoj je apostrofirana važnost konvergencije Republike Hrvatske, dakle rast i razvoj, kako bi eurozona postala naše prirodno okruženje kojem pripadamo.

Imam pitanje vezano uz kohezijsku politiku. Drago mi je da ste u svom govoru istaknuli važnost kohezijske politike koju je potvrdio i predsjednik Juncker. Uz financijsku omotnicu jako je važno brzo donošenje provedbenih pravila vezanih uz kohezijsku politiku ako želimo biti uspješni u sljedećem razdoblju. Koje aktivnosti namjeravate poduzeti da se ubrza donošenje regulative i da to bude do kraja saziva ovog Parlamenta i Europske komisije?

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Úr! Tisztelt Miniszterelnök Úr, kedves Andrej! Meggyőzőnek, és Téged jól ismerve, hitelesnek tartom elkötelezettségedet az európai építkezés ügye iránt. Közös jövőnket, az európai építkezés sikerét azonban súlyosan veszélyezteteti, ha egy vagy több tagállam az alapokat bontja, EU-ellenes, antidemokratikus politikát folytat, avagy visszaél a szolidaritás eszméjével, s közös biztonsági érdekeinket is kiszolgáltatja.

Kérdésem tehát: Horvátország mint Magyarország fontos szomszédja és szövetségese, illetve Te mint az Európai Néppárt fontos vezetője, mit kívánsz és tudsz tenni Orbán Viktor Európa-ellenes átokfutásának megfékezése érdekében?

(Fine della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of Croatia. – Mr President, thank you very much for this opportunity. I see that voting time is approaching, so the plenary is filling up a little more than in the hours before, but that is absolutely normal and to be expected.

First of all, let me conclude with some general remarks. Your initiative of holding a debate here in plenary in Strasbourg with the prime ministers or heads of state or government of the EU Member States on the future of Europe is really useful and timely, and it will contribute to the strategic decisions which are ahead of us.

I feel enriched by your comments. I feel more up to date in terms of the direction that the political parties in the European Parliament are taking. That is very important for me, because, being fully occupied at national level, sometimes we do not fully grasp the trends at European level.

There were several comments in the last round of questions, one of them on the cohesion policy and implementing measures, which Ivana has just mentioned. I think that for Croatia, which is undergoing a first seven-year multiannual financial framework, the experience is critical with a view to improvement for the next seven years. And you have been working on this issue as closely as anyone here in this forum, Ivana.

What I would like to see is swifter absorption, clearer competences, a procedure that is transparent and efficient, and that finally EU financing is more visible, clearer and more recognisable for Croatian citizens. Therefore, we shall urge, at European level and at national level, the adoption of the new legislative mechanisms that are tending in that direction.

The comments made by Alojz are basically along the same lines as those of all the Slovenian colleagues. I think I have addressed this issue adequately. My message is clear. The open issues which exist among Member States should be resolved by negotiations, and by using various instruments of international dispute settlement, notably peaceful ones. We believe that these processes should be credible and clean, and that is the only way for the results to be accepted and implemented. This is the key message.

Croatia has no ambition to stall or make more difficult our neighbours' path to the EU. On the contrary, we have been very much a bridge, an influencing country that has unselfishly offered all the experience which is most recent, and thus most relevant for their path to the European Union – trying to address the questions that were mentioned by some of the Members.

I am also grateful that the only MEP still serving from the first directly elected Parliament, my friend Elmar, took the floor and mentioned the concept of equality and the representation in this House. I think that the right balance needs to be struck. It is not as easy for those national delegations which are less numerous to cover all the work of such big and important institutions. I know for a fact that smaller and bigger countries sometimes lose sight of one another's viewpoints because we do not really understand the other's concerns.

The Croatian Government that I head is, as you know, a reformist government, a government which will do its utmost to make my country part of the inner circle – Schengen, the eurozone and various other forms of enhanced cooperation – and to strengthen our own internal institutions and our European credibility and responsibility. In that respect, dialogue with the European Parliament will be something that we will take into account and take on board when preparing our presidency of the Council, which is envisaged for the first semester of 2020.

I thank you all very much for this opportunity. It has been a pleasure to be back with you in Strasbourg. I think that, in this parliamentary term, the European Parliament has done a lot in terms of important and relevant legislative acts of the European Union with long-term consequences.

(Applause)

Presidente. – Ringrazio anch'io, a nome di tutto il Parlamento, il Primo ministro Plenković per la sua disponibilità e per la volontà di rispondere in maniera concreta e puntuale a tutte le domande che gli erano state formulate.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Eva Maydell (PPE), in writing. – When it comes to the future of Europe, we should give a strong political signal that Western Balkans are a key element to build a better EU. Together, we share the European values and the idea of long-lasting peace, stability and, consequently economic-growth. I welcome President Andrej Plenković's statement that Europe needs to reassert itself as a role model that will inspire people across the world to build a better future. It is not conceivable without a clear commitment to improve connectivity in the region. Besides the value derived from cooperation at the official level, good neighbourly relations will accrue further benefits by working together, cooperating in the fields of culture, education, business and many others. There is still more to be done on the level of civil society initiatives, where efforts would have a direct impact on citizens. Future generations need to feel closer to each other, in particular in the regions of the Western Balkans, with its societies that have been through conflicts in the past. Prioritizing the Balkan region in the EU agenda is crucial to ensure preconditions for increased youth mobility and thus help further educational, employment and cultural co-operation opportunities in the Balkans.

Ivan Štefanec (PPE), písomne. – V utorok (6. 2. 2018) sa uskutočnila diskusia s chorvátskym premiérom Andrejom Plenkovićom. Diskutovalo sa na nej o budúcnosti Európskej únie, počnúc otvorenými výzvami na viacerých frontoch ako hospodárstvo, bezpečnosť a terorizmus, vzdelávanie a kultúra, migrácia či pristúpenie balkánskych krajín. Zo strany chorvátskeho premiéra odznel najmä problém narastajúceho regionálneho populizmu. Nabádal k zabráneniu častokrát až demagogických tendencií prostredníctvom diskusie informačného charakteru o dokumentácii EÚ. Pripomenul taktiež, že aj naďalej pokračuje silné úsilie o integráciu západného Balkánu do EÚ. Európsky parlament, ktorý tento proces postupnými harmonizačnými krokmi podporuje, však poukazuje na nedostatky, ktoré budú musieť v najbližšom období krajiny Balkánu v oblasti posilnenia funkcie právneho štátu, základných práv alebo boja proti korupcii podstúpiť.

Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL), *por escrito*. – O Quadro Financeiro Plurianual (QFP) representa o instrumento fundamental que determina a política orçamental da União Europeia. Fixa por um período mínimo de 5 anos os limites anuais da despesa por rubricas de acordo com as prioridades políticas aprovadas pelo conjunto dos Estados Membros. Apesar de estarmos ainda em plena vigência do QFP 2014-2020, já se iniciou a discussão sobre o próximo QFP pós 2020. A Comissão Europeia irá apresentar uma primeira proposta já em Maio deste ano, e o debate já começou. Ouvimos muitos apelos à necessidade de um orçamento à medida das ambições desta UE, mas a verdade é que o próximo QFP já tem os seus contornos bem definidos. Basta ler os últimos documentos estratégicos produzidos pela Comissão Europeia, desde o Livro Branco Sobre o Futuro da Europa até ao Documento de Reflexão Sobre o Futuro das Finanças da UE para adivinhar o que poderá ser a orientação fundamental do próximo orçamento da União Europeia. Em traços gerais, o que se vislumbra é um QFP com menos recursos, mais orientado para as novas prioridades como a «segurança e defesa» com a corrida armamentista e com a sua dimensão redistributiva amputada e cada vez mais subordinada à chamada condicionalidade.

4. Mededeling van de Voorzitter

Presidente. – Prima del voto voglio informare che, come richiesto dall'on. Demesmaeker la scorsa plenaria, ho scritto alle autorità spagnole per chiedere informazioni sulla visita dell'on. Demesmaeker e di altri parlamentari alle carceri di Madrid.

Ho ricevuto le informazioni richieste. Secondo le autorità spagnole, tutto si è svolto in maniera regolare e non ci sono state violazioni della legge spagnola. Invierò la risposta all'on. Demesmaeker e il testo della risposta è disponibile presso il mio Gabinetto per chiunque voglia prenderne conoscenza.

Puhetta johti HEIDI HAUTALA

varapuhemies

5. Stemmingen

Puhemies. – Esityslistalla on seuraavana äänestyskset.

5.1. Verzoek om opheffing van de immuniteit van Steeve Briois (A8-0011/2018 - Evelyn Regner) (stemming)

— *Before the vote:*

David Coburn (EFDD). – Madam President, I am getting very concerned. We are supposed to have immunity in this House, but every single time, we seem to be removing the immunity of honourable Members. I don't care whether the person is a fascist, a communist, a democrat or whatever they are: I will go to the barricades to defend their rights. What worries me is that if you keep on lifting this immunity, the immunity itself becomes a farce, and there is no point in speaking freely in this House if you do not have the protection of this House. So can I encourage Members – and could I ask you, Madam President – that we should not continually remove waivers of immunity from people simply because he might be a member of the Front National. It is simply not enough.

President. – Mr Coburn, I can assure you that the debate and the hearing have been conducted in the Committee on Legal Affairs, but I take note of what you have said.

- 5.2. **Overeenkomst EU-Brazilië voor wetenschappelijke en technologische samenwerking (A8-0004/2018 - Angelo Ciocca) (stemming)**
- 5.3. **Instelling van een bijzondere commissie voor de vergunningsprocedure van de Unie voor pesticiden, bevoegdheden, aantal leden en duur van het mandaat ervan (B8-0077/2018) (stemming)**
- 5.4. **Geoblocking en andere vormen van discriminatie van klanten op basis van nationaliteit, verblijfplaats of plaats van vestiging (A8-0172/2017 - Róža Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein) (stemming)**
- 5.5. **Kosteneffectieve emissiereducties en koolstofarme investeringen (A8-0003/2017 - Julie Girling) (stemming)**
- 5.6. **Jaarverslag 2016 van de Europese Centrale Bank (A8-0383/2017 - Jonás Fernández) (stemming)**
- 5.7. **Versnelling van de innovatie op het gebied van schone energie (A8-0005/2018 - Jerzy Buzek) (stemming)**

President. – That concludes the vote.

6. Stemverklaringen

- 6.1. **Geoblocking en andere vormen van discriminatie van klanten op basis van nationaliteit, verblijfplaats of plaats van vestiging (A8-0172/2017 - Róža Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein)**

Oral explanations of vote

Jasenko Selimovic (ALDE). – Madam President, in May 2016 when geo-blocking was presented, a lot of promises were made to our citizens: that they would be able in the future to see their favourite films, TV series and songs that were not available in their country of origin.

However, we deceived our citizens: the compromise on which we are voting is very limited. It will allow a Swedish customer who wants to buy a toaster to go to the German website and buy it – but only if he can secure the delivery by himself. It will allow a Danish family to buy a trip directly to an amusement park in France and without being directed to the Danish website. Oh, how big! I am voting in favour of this compromise because of the advantages it still gives to our citizens, but at the same time I'm thinking: 'come on, we could have done much, much better'.

Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE). – Madam President, 63% of EU websites use geo-blocking tactics which discriminate against online shoppers based on their place of residence or so-called temporary location. I believe that this violates our ambitions to create a genuine digital single market, and thus these practices should be tackled.

Therefore, I truly welcome the Commission's strategy based on more transparency and a ban on blocking website access, as well as defining situations in which geo-blocking would not be allowed. The decision we just made is truly going in the right direction.

Adam Szejnfeld (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Wspólny jednolity rynek europejski to moim zdaniem nasza największa wartość, ale w dobie elektroniki i internetu trudno, aby jednolity rynek europejski nie obejmował także rynku cyfrowego. Idziemy więc w dobrym kierunku. Dokonujemy zmiany jeżeli chodzi o nieuzasadnioną – trzeba wyraźnie to sobie powiedzieć – dyskryminację ze względu na miejsce zamieszkania czy miejsce prowadzenia działalności gospodarczej, nie mówiąc już o przynależności państwowej. Będziemy mieli także ograniczenia w zakresie pobierania dodatkowych opłat czy też przekierowywania stron. Natomiast także uczciwie trzeba powiedzieć, że to jest tylko krok w dobrym kierunku, a nie dobre rozwiązanie, dlatego że jednak mamy tutaj sporo wyłączeń. To, które jest chyba najważ-

niejsze dla każdego zwykłego obywatela to wszystkie dziedziny objęte prawami autorskimi. Niestety nadal nie będzie można, podróżując, oglądać filmów czy programów telewizyjnych.

Момчил Неков (S&D). – Г-жо Председател, подкрепих предложението за регламент за премахване на геоблокирането, защото тази практика е в противоречие със свободите на вътрешния пазар. Премахването на дискриминацията на база географски принцип ще спомогне за увеличаване на трансграничната търговия. Наред с това, българските и европейските потребители ще могат да пазаруват по-лесно онлайн и ще имат по-голям избор и възможности да се възползват от по-ниски цени.

Българите се нареждат на дванадесето място в класацията на най-дискриминираните граждани от онлайн търговците. Предлагането на различни цени въз основа на географското местоположение е чиста проба дискриминация, на която трябва да сложим край час по-скоро. С приемането на регламента моите съграждани ще могат да пазаруват онлайн на по-достъпни цени, да резервират почивки и да използват кредитната си карта зад граница безпроблемно.

Не на последно място, споделям виждането, че в същото време не трябва да създаваме прекомерна тежест за бизнеса. Не трябва да забравяме, че малките и средните предприятия са моторът на европейската икономика. Смятам, че трябва да създаваме стимули за тяхното развитие, а не препятствия.

Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Blokowanie geograficzne to dowód na istnienie w Europie bez granic bardzo istotnych i dotkliwych granic. Nie możemy powiedzieć, że są to granice wirtualne, raczej że są to granice w świecie wirtualnym. Blokowanie geograficzne to także dowód na istnienie modeli biznesowych z usługami nieodpowiednio dostosowanymi do klienta. Zwracam na to uwagę, bo dotyczy to niezwykle wielu obywateli, także tych, którzy korzystają z treści w internecie do celów edukacyjnych.

Chciałbym podziękować pani poseł sprawozdawczyni, która przygotowała to sprawozdanie wyjątkowo sprawnie. Chciałbym przy tej okazji podkreślić, że pomimo lepszego niż przy roamingu tempa debatowania nad tym sprawozdaniem cały czas działamy niezwykle wolno. Należy pamiętać o jednej istotnej rzeczy: jeżeli Parlament Europejski i Komisja Europejska tracą w oczach opinii publicznej, to przede wszystkim przez wolne reagowanie na te problemy, które, jak widać na tej sali, dotyczą wielu osób i wymagają bardzo sprawnego działania.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já bych chtěla vysvětlit, proč jsem podpořila návrh nařízení, který nakonec dostal velkou podporu 557 poslanců a poslankyň. A chtěla bych také poděkovat paní kolegyni Rózi Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, která se zasadila o přijetí této zprávy. Nařízení má umožnit a usnadnit občanům nákup zboží na dálku a využívání služeb na celém území Evropské unie. Navrhuje se jasný zákaz zeměpisného blokování a upřesňuje se, za jakých podmínek může dojít k přesměrování, a také to, co nelze považovat za diskriminační. Zákaz blokování a související zákazy se prozatím budou vztahovat jen na některé zboží a služby. Vyloučeny jsou tedy elektronicky dodávané služby, které jsou chráněny copyrightem. Já s tímto omezením souhlasím. Podmínky by bylo totiž potřeba nastavit tak, aby k rozšíření přístupu k audiovizuálním dílům nedošlo na úkor autorských práv.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Asszony! Szavazatommal támogattam a területalapú tartalomkorlátozásról szóló jelentést. Az úgynevezett geoblocking, és a belső piacon belüli lakóhely vagy székhely alapján történő egyéb megkülönböztetés egyértelmű akadály volt a belső piac, azon belül is a digitális belső piac kiteljesedésének.

Ezen gyakorlatok felszámolása mindenképpen szükséges, hiszen amíg a belső piacon belül dinamikusan növekszik az árak és szolgáltatások online értékesítése, a határokon átnyúló online vásárlások száma igen alacsony. Az indokolatlan területalapú korlátozások felszámolása több tanulmány szerint is csökkentené az árakat, és hozzájárulna a gazdasági növekedéshez.

Szintén üdvözlöm a tényt, hogy a jelentés elismeri: vannak vállalkozások, különösen kkv-k, amelyek méretükből és lehetőségeikből adódóan nem kívánnak határon túli vásárlókat megcélózni. Ezért is fontos kiemelni, hogy azon kereskedők, akik nem céloznak határon átnyúló piacokat, nem kötelesek árak vagy szolgáltatások területen kívüli szállítására.

Marlene Mizzi (S&D). – Madam President, markets in certain Member States are small, and e-commerce and the digital single market provides endless opportunities for businesses to expand those markets. Unfair practices of unjustified geoblocking often prevent consumers from ordering a product and services in other Member States or having to pay higher prices than the locals.

The removal of such artificial barriers means that European consumers should be able to purchase products and services from the retailer or supplier of their choice from other Member States. They should have wider cross-border access to products and services, and smaller businesses should have access to bigger markets that are potentially more profitable. So, under the new rules, consumers will be able to choose from which website they wish to buy goods or services without being blocked or automatically rerouted to another website due to their nationality, place of residence, or even their temporary location. This is the essence of the geo-blocking proposal that we voted for today.

Csaba Sógor (PPE). – Elnök Asszony! Bár értékeljük az Európai Bizottság erőfeszítéseit az egységes szerzői jogi piac kialakítása érdekében, az Európai Unióban élő 50 millió nemzeti vagy nyelvi kisebbséghez tartozó polgár számára a jelenlegi rendeletmódosítás nem elegendő. Az audiovizuális médiaszolgáltatásról szóló irányelvet is hozzá kellene igazítani az állampolgárok igényeihez, a médiatartalmak szabad vételét nem akadályozhatják olyan kereskedelmi megállapodások, amelyek nincsenek tekintettel az egyes tagállamok nyelvi és kulturális sokszínűségére.

A polgárok számára sértésként ér fel, amikor egy általuk megvásárolt médiaszolgáltatáshoz, adott esetben egy sportközvetítéshez való hozzáférést a szolgáltató korlátozza a területi geokódolás szerződéses kötelezettségére hivatkozva. Az a tény, hogy az uniós polgárok millióinak anyanyelve nem egyezik meg az országuk hivatalos nyelvével, nem foszthatja meg őket attól, hogy az általuk választott nyelven kövessenek egy nemzetközi sporteseményt, ha egyébként előfizetéssel rendelkeznek az adott műsorszolgáltatóra.

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já jsem velmi rád podpořil toto nařízení, tento návrh, protože to je jasná věc, kde můžeme občanům Evropské unie ukázat, jak Evropa přispívá k jejich zajímavějšímu, plnějšímu a komfortnějšímu životu. Toto nařízení, jak zde říkali moji kolegové, povede k tomu, že občané budou moci v rámci Evropské unie lépe nakupovat zboží na internetu. Odbourává to geografickou blokadu a myslím si, že je dobré, abychom o tom hodně hovořili, protože zvláště v zemích střední Evropy, kde poslední dobou myšlenka evropské integrace prochází krizí, je třeba občanům permanentně říkat, co konkrétního Evropská unie pro ně dělá, jak jim zlepšuje jejich život. A toto je konkrétní příběh konkrétního právního předpisu Evropské unie, který normálnímu občanovi umožní lépe se dostat ke zboží na internetu, získat to zboží ve větší nabídce a za lepší cenu. Takže děkuji a ten návrh jsem rád podpořil.

Daniel Hannan (ECR). – Madam President, to what problem is this proposal a solution? We are talking about highly competitive developed markets where there is no evidence of market failure and where individual businesses are pricing according to what they regard as the most profitable way of doing it. Why do we – sitting in this Chamber with absolutely no idea of what those considerations and calculations are for individual enterprises – presume to tell them what their own pricing structure should be?

There is a legitimate role for government in setting overall regulations. It is, I would say, legitimate, for example, for this Chamber and for the European Union as a whole to say that you shouldn't discriminate against goods or services on grounds of nationality, that you are providing a level playing field for consumers, but this is going way beyond that measure – which, by the way, I think the UK should retain after Brexit. This is telling individual companies that, regardless of what their own plans and their own profits show, they need to follow some arbitrary political criteria of ours rather than their own commercial considerations. Guys, we are not the best people to decide that.

Janusz Korwin-Mikke (NI). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Ja wstrzymałem się od głosu, bo kilka rzeczy było tutaj rozsądnych, ale całkowicie popieram pana Hannana, bo tam jest kilka spraw nie do przyjęcia. Jest założenie, że sprzedawca chce komuś nie sprzedać. Normalnie sprzedawcy chcą sprzedać. Tylko proszę zrozumieć sprzedawcę z Estonii, że on może sprzedać na pewnych warunkach klientowi z Estonii, ale pokryć koszty transportu do Portugalii to jest coś innego niż pokrycie kosztów transportu do Estonii.

Po drugie, to narusza zasadę swobody umów. Ja mogę chcieć, żeby moim samochodem nie jeździł Niemiec. Mam prawo powiedzieć – bo nie lubię Niemców – że nie sprzedam tego samochodu żadnemu Niemcowi ani nikomu, kto nie podpisze, że nie sprzedaje tego samochodu Niemcowi, i nie podpisze takiej samej klauzuli. Ta ingerencja jest naruszeniem swobody umów. To oczywiście jest wariactwo, ale również ludzie, którzy mają dziwactwa, też mają prawo istnieć w naszym świecie. A poza tym sądzę, że Unia Europejska powinna być zniszczona.

President. – Thank you, Mr Korwin-Mikke. I would now like to give the floor to the rapporteur, Ms Thun und Hohenstein, for her reaction.

Róža Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein, sprawozdawczyni. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Przepraszam, że zabieram czas. Już przedstawiałam wczoraj w dyskusji mój punkt widzenia. Nie wiem, czy ten czas jest na reagowanie, czy na zadawanie pytań, ale ani pan Hannan łaskawie się nie pofatygował, żeby przeczytać to sprawozdanie, ani pan Korwin-Mikke, bo opowiadacie panowie takie bzdury i dyrdymały, że włosy na głowie dęba stają. Nikt nikogo nie zmusza do wysyłki, do stosowania zasad krajów, do których się nie kieruje swojej działalności. Tam są właśnie specjalne ułatwienia dla sprzedawców, żeby nie blokowali, ale mogli sprzedawać zgodnie z prawem, które znają, które stosują w swoim własnym kraju, czy tam, gdzie mają swoją działalność. Chodzi o to, żeby nie dyskryminować konsumenta. Sprzedać, ale na zasadach sprzedawcy, jeżeli on nie kieruje swojej działalności. Przeczytajcie, zanim zaczniecie wrzeszczeć.

Seán Kelly (PPE). – A Uachtaráin, bhí áthas orm bheith i láthair agus páirt a ghlacadh sa díospóireacht seo oíche aréir go déanamh. Agus bhí gach duine ag moladh an jab iontach a rinne Róža Thun agus a comhghleacaithe chun feabhas a dhéanamh ar na moltaí a tháinig ón gCoimisiún. Agus de bharr na hoibre sin beimid in ann an margadh aonair digiteach a chur chun cinn san Aontas. Faoi láthair, mar a dúradh, tá 63% de na láithreáin ghréasáin ag déanamh blocáil ar chustaiméirí nó á gcur ar bhóthar eile. Ní nach ionadh mar sin nach mbíonn ach 15% dár siopadóirí ag déanamh siopadóireacht trasna teorainn ar an idirlíon. Agus anois, tiocfaidh deireadh le sin. Beidh tionscail in Éirinn níos cinnte faoi na dlíthe agus beidh custaiméirí in ann carr a cheannach, nó ticéid a cheannach, nó pé rud is mian leo a dhéanamh anois dá bharr.

Míle buíochas. Go raibh maith agat.

6.2. Kosteneffectieve emissiereducties en koolstofarme investeringen (A8-0003/2017 - Julie Girling)

Oral explanations of vote

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já jsem podpořila tento výsledek třístranných jednání. Bylo to jistě velmi složité dojednat kompromis, ale výsledkem je směrnice, která si klade za cíl uskutečnit závazek snížení emisí skleníkových plynů o 43 % do roku 2030. Je to kompromis, který je přijatelný. Je ambiciózní, ale zároveň realizovatelný. Obsahuje opatření, jež mají zabránit takzvanému úniku uhlíku a přesunutí investic do jiných zemí. Ponechání redukčního koeficientu na úrovni 2,2 % je také lepším řešením než jeho zvyšování. Za důležité považuji v dojednaném kompromisu také skutečnost, že ta nejefektivnější průmyslová odvětví budou mít více povolenek zdarma. To je velmi důležité opatření, které podporuje inovace a modernizaci, což zvyšuje také celkovou konkurenceschopnost.

Νίκος Ανδρουλάκης (S&D). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, σήμερα ψηφίσαμε το νέο πλαίσιο για το ευρωπαϊκό εμπόριο ρύπων για την περίοδο μετά το 2021. Στο πλαίσιο αυτό προβλέπεται και η δημιουργία ενός ταμείου εκσυγχρονισμού το οποίο θα χρηματοδοτηθεί από την πώληση του 2,5% των συνολικών δικαιωμάτων.

Δυστυχώς, στην αρχική πρόταση της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, η Ελλάδα, παρά την οικονομική κρίση και το γεγονός ότι έχει χάσει πάνω από το 25% του ΑΕΠ της, δεν μπορούσε να επωφεληθεί από τις ευρωπαϊκές χρηματοδοτήσεις συνολικού ύψους άνω του ενός δισεκατομμυρίου. Το Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο, μετά από τροπολογία μου, διόρθωσε την αδικία αυτή και είχε ζητήσει την αλλαγή του έτους βάσης για το ταμείο, από το 2013 στο 2014, ώστε να μπορεί να συμμετέχει και η Ελλάδα. Από το ταμείο αυτό θα μπορούσαν να χρηματοδοτηθούν έργα όπως η διασύνδεση της ηπειρωτικής Ελλάδας με τα νησιά του Αιγαίου και την Κρήτη, ανανεώσιμες πηγές ενέργειας και τεχνολογίες φιλικές προς το περιβάλλον. Δυστυχώς όμως, βάσει της δημιουργίας του ειδικού μηχανισμού, όπως αυτή αποφασίστηκε, θα πάρουμε τα μισά χρήματα ως χώρα και εδώ πέρα δεν είμαστε πλήρες μέλος. Αυτή η εξέλιξη βαρύνει την ελληνική κυβέρνηση, αλλά πάνω απ' όλα βαρύνει την ακαμψία άλλων κρατών μελών που δεν σέβονται την οικονομική κατάσταση της Ελλάδας.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Asszony! Az Európai Bizottság 2015. július 15-én közzétette az ETS negyedik szakaszára irányuló javaslatát. A javaslat arra irányul, hogy 2030-ra az EU érje el az üvegházhatásúgáz-kibocsátással kapcsolatos célját, azaz legalább 40 százalékos csökkentését, ugyanakkor biztosítsa az európai ipar védelmét, a kibocsátáshelyezési kockázatával szemben, valamint támogassa az európai ipari és energiatermelő ágazatok innovációját és modernizációját a 2020 utáni évtizedben.

Az előadóval egyetemben támogatom a javaslatot mint a 2030-ig tartó időszakra szóló éghajlat-politikai és energiaügyi csomag részét. A Párizsi Megállapodásban részt vevő tagállamok ugyanis vállalták, hogy a globális átlaghőmérséklet emelkedését jóval kettő Celsius fok alatt tartják, hogy le lehessen küzdeni az éghajlatváltozás legkedvezőtlenebb hatásait.

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Wstrzymałam się od głosu, ponieważ rozwiązania przyjęte w sprawozdaniu, które nazywa się „racjonalne pod względem kosztów redukcji emisji oraz inwestycje niskoemisyjne”, ograniczają możliwość finansowania w ramach mechanizmów kompensacyjnych inwestycji opartych na paliwach kopalnych, nawet takich, które są efektywne ekonomicznie i charakteryzują się niską emisyjnością. Tak więc nazwa tego sprawozdania jest tylko i wyłącznie nazwą. My proponujemy rozwiązania polegające na inwestowaniu w nowoczesne technologie węglowe, które dadzą realną szansę na obniżenie emisji zanieczyszczającej środowisko. Ponadto reforma ETS ingeruje w prawo państw członkowskich do decydowania o miksie energetycznym, a prawo to powinno zgodnie z traktatami pozostać wyłączną kompetencją państw członkowskich.

Diane James (NI). – Madam President, I voted against this provisional agreement because the European Union Emissions Trading Scheme has been an unmitigated failure. It has generated two billion excess tons of ozone damaging gases. It has generated 600+ million tons of excess CO₂ via the Linking Directive. It has created a EUR 23 billion tonne windfall for the European Union's largest emitters. It has created the world's biggest VAT fraud and it has created a system of stolen credit netting hundreds of millions for organised crime. This provisional agreement, as usual, ducks the reality and promotes dangerous practices cloaked in commercial investment strategy, because the EU is compounded all of the problems I mentioned by strive towards alternative technologies for fossil fuel generation, notably carbon to help capture and storage, which are clearly demonstrated to be uneconomic and damaging. So, quite frankly, this was an appalling Directive.

Igor Šoltes (Verts/ALE). – Torej, sam nisem najbolj zadovoljen s tem, kar predvideva reforma, zlasti zato, ker se mi zdi, da preprosto ni dovolj ambiciozna, in ko smo poslušali velike besede pri sprejemanju Pariškega sporazuma, smo nekako mislili, da te zaveze pomenijo resno akcijo s konkretnimi aktivnostmi, pa vendar se to ni zgodilo, in te akcije, ki so sprejete, so kljub temu premalo odločne, bolj bi jim rekli sramežljivi premiki naprej.

Ampak, da ne bom samo kritičen, je pa tudi pomembna smer naprej, predvsem zaradi teh presežkov delitvenih pravic, ker jasno je, da trgovanje z emisijami pomeni na nek način tudi pranje slabe vesti velikih onesnaževalcev.

In tukaj mora biti Evropa odločena v vseh segmentih, če želi resno pri varovanju okolja za naše potomce.

6.3. Jaarverslag 2016 van de Europese Centrale Bank (A8-0383/2017 - Jonás Fernández)

Oral explanations of vote

Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE). – Madam President, this report is very important as it reports on the Eurosystem's Monetary Policy 2016. We have emphasised that the European Central Bank should remain free of any political interference and reaffirmed the European Central Bank's mandate for price stability, which was especially crucial in response to the crises and the challenges. In addition, we called on the European Central Bank for more transparency and accountability, especially towards the European Parliament, and stressed that it is of the utmost importance that ECB actions are complemented by sound fiscal policies and structural reforms performed by Member States to generate growth and jobs, apart from stability.

Adam Szejnfeld (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Dzisiejsza debata i głosowania odbyły się w wyjątkowym czasie, trzeba przyznać. Dziesięć lat temu bowiem wybuchł światowy kryzys finansowy, który dotknął bardzo dotkliwie także Europę i państwa członkowskie Unii Europejskiej. Ale też dlatego, że wczoraj mieliśmy bardzo głębokie załamanie na giełdzie Wall Street w Stanach Zjednoczonych, największe załamanie właśnie od 2008 r. Spadki odnotowały także giełdy w Japonii, Tajwanie, Hongkongu, Szanghaju. Warto więc, pamiętając tamte złe czasy, myśleć o Europejskim Banku Centralnym jako instytucji gwarantującej bezpieczeństwo finansowe Europy. W tym zakresie należy – odnosząc się do raportu – pochwalić EBC za jego wkład w rozwój gospodarczy w ostatnich latach, m.in. poprzez obniżenie stóp procentowych i skup aktywów.

Thomas Mann (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Dem Bericht zur EZB-Jahresbilanz habe ich zwar zugestimmt, meine jedoch, dass die Kluft zwischen einer guten wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung einerseits und einer Prolongation der expansiven Geldpolitik der EZB andererseits nicht weiter wachsen darf. Ja, es besteht die Gefahr von Preisblasen auf dem Aktienmarkt, vor allem auf dem Immobilienmarkt. Die andauernde Niedrigzinspolitik hat negative Auswirkungen auf die Altersversorgungssysteme und auf die privaten Spareinlagen. Es muss doch an der Zeit sein für ein Ende des Anleihen-Aufkaufprogramms von 30 Milliarden Euro pro Monat – bitte ab September dieses Jahres.

In einem aber stimme ich Herrn Draghi absolut zu: Geldpolitische Maßnahmen allein können Wirtschaftsprobleme in vielen Mitgliedstaaten nicht lösen. Wir brauchen ambitionierte Strukturreformen, solide Haushaltsführung und die Einhaltung statt der Aushöhlung des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakts. Nur so ist eine positive Konjunkturentwicklung im Euro-Währungsraum nachhaltig gewährleistet.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η ετήσια έκθεση του 2016 για την Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα, κάνει -επί της ουσίας- σπονδές στον κ. Draghi και στη δραστηριότητα της ΕΚΤ συνολικά. Πρώτα από όλα, θα πρέπει να επισημάνουμε, όπως είπαμε και στη χθεσινή μας ομιλία, ότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρική Τράπεζα οφείλει να επιστρέψει τα κέρδη από τα ομόλογα του ελληνικού Δημοσίου, τα οποία αγόρασε με έκπτωση 40% και τα πληρώνεται στο 100%. Ομόλογα τα οποία εξαιρέθηκαν από το PSI και τη διαδικασία που ακολουθήθηκε, ενώ αντίθετα τα ομόλογα των ασφαλιστικών ταμείων κουρεύτηκαν. Επομένως, θα πρέπει όλα τα κέρδη από τα SMPs και τα ENFAs, όλα τα κέρδη της Ευρωπαϊκής Κεντρικής Τράπεζας και του ευρωσυστήματος να επιστραφούν στην Ελλάδα προκειμένου να υπάρξει στήριξη της απασχόλησης, διότι η χώρα αυτή τη στιγμή αντιμετωπίζει τεράστια προβλήματα ανεργίας λόγω της μνημονιακής πολιτικής της τρόικας και του κ. Draghi.

6.4. Versnelling van de innovatie op het gebied van schone energie (A8-0005/2018 - Jerzy Buzek)

Oral explanations of vote

Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE). – Madam President, I supported this text which we voted on today. The text welcomes the Commission's communication on accelerating clean energy innovation. We needed this action and we got this result today.

This proposal lays out a strategy using a market-based approach, which would help to accelerate private investment to boost clean energy innovation. I am very hopeful that in this way we can ensure a better funding of energy science and technology, and create a dynamic business environment for energy innovations. The environment will benefit from those innovations and people will live in a cleaner environment as well.

Adam Szejnfeld (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Trzeba podkreślić w tej debacie to, iż Unia Europejska jest liderem walki na świecie o klimat i zachowanie środowiska naturalnego, natomiast nie należymy do czołówki tych państw, które skutecznie inwestują w innowacje w zakresie czystej energii. Potrzebne są więc zmiany. Jakie? Po pierwsze, między innymi spójność działań Unii Europejskiej i państw członkowskich. Po drugie, koordynacja unijnych, krajowych i regionalnych programów badań i innowacji – dzisiaj tego nie ma – oraz oczywiście wsparcie finansowe, ale w zakresie tego chciałbym powiedzieć, że fundamentalnie ważne są długoterminowa pewność finansowania i długoterminowa pewność prawna. Niestety w państwach członkowskich inwestycje w energetykę to są inwestycje na 12, 15, 20 lat, a przepisy prawa lub finansowanie potrafi się zmieniać w ciągu kilku lat. To oczywiście uniemożliwia skuteczne działanie.

Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Propozycje Komisji przyjęliśmy w jednym głosowaniu, ale nie oznacza to, że poszło tak łatwo. Potrzebnych było kilkadziesiąt uzgodnionych kompromisów i sporo pracy, wykonanej przede wszystkim przez posła sprawozdawcę Jerzego Buzka. Chciałbym podkreślić, że poparcie dla tych propozycji Komisji i Parlamentu Europejskiego to budowanie bezpieczeństwa Europy. Zgodność geograficzna miejsca produkcji energii z jednoczesnym odbiorem tej energii to bezpieczeństwo Europy, bo oznacza niezależnienie się od zewnętrznych dostawców. Chciałbym także podkreślić konieczność długofalowej polityki w tej materii i zwrócić uwagę, że to sprawozdanie jest bardzo poważnym i niezwykle trudnym wyzwaniem. Przy bardzo wolnym tempie realizacji zapisów, które tam się znalazły, nie ma szans na sukces.

Момчил Неков (S&D). – Г-жо Председател, аз дадох своята подкрепа за доклада относно ускоряването на иновацията в областта на чистата енергия, защото вярвам, че възобновяемите енергийни източници и добрата регулация на вътрешния пазар на енергия могат да гарантират сигурността на доставките и енергийната ефективност в Европейския съюз след 2020 година. Същевременно с това обаче съм силно обезпокоен от високия процент на енергийна бедност в Европейския съюз, който според някои оценки засяга всеки един от десет граждани.

Държавата, най-застрашена от енергийна бедност в Европейския съюз, е моята България, в която всяко трето домакинство попада в категорията „енергийно бедни“. Една немалка част от тези домакинства са на възрастни хора с ниски пенсии. В плановете на Европейския съюз за чиста енергия трябва да бъде взет под внимание този фактор и тези хора да се подпомагат чрез инвестиции във възобновяеми източници и енергия, която лесно и евтино да достига до най-уязвимите.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, já se domnívám, že zpráva o urychlení inovací v oblasti čisté energie, které se skvěle zhostil kolega Buzek, je dobrou reakcí Evropského parlamentu na sdělení Komise, protože obohatila její sdělení o některé důležité aspekty. Za největší přínos této zprávy považuji akcent na komplexní strategii pro vývoz technologií pro udržitelnou a čistou energii. Evropská unie je v této oblasti napřed oproti zbytku světa a po těchto technologiích je poptávka. Jejich vývoz tedy má velký ekonomický potenciál, kterého může náš průmysl využít. Rozhodně také souhlasím s důrazem, který tato zpráva klade na inovace čisté energie takzvané zespoda, tedy od občanů a obcí. V Evropě i v České republice máme řadu úspěšných příkladů domácností i celých obcí, které jsou energeticky soběstačné a nijak neznečišťují prostředí. Takový přístup bychom měli dále podporovat.

Tibor Szanyi (S&D). – Elnök Asszony! A tiszta energiákkal kapcsolatos innováció felgyorsításáról szóló jelentést a szavazatommal is támogattam. A jelentés leírja, hogy az energia előállításának, átvitelének, tárolásának és használatának módjai hatalmas átalakuláson mentek keresztül. A tiszta energiával kapcsolatos jelentés azonban még csak az említés szintjén sem tartalmazza a nukleáris energiát, hisz úgynevezett kevesebb üvegházhatású gázot bocsát ki, mint például a szénelapú energiatermelés, az atomenergia használatával egyben jelentős kockázatot is jelent.

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Oczywiście, że głosowałam za projektem „Przyspieszenie innowacji w dziedzinie czystej energii”, bo myślę, że ponad podziałami politycznymi łączy nas to, że chcemy, aby ludzie w Europie i na świecie oddychali rzeczywiście powietrzem, które jest zdrowe i czyste. Warto przy tej okazji zwrócić uwagę, że to przyspieszenie innowacji w dziedzinie czystej energii nie powinno dyskryminować żadnego ze źródeł energii, a niestety mam odczucie, że Parlament Europejski jednak ciągle dyskryminuje nowoczesne technologie węglowe, które są szansą. Innowacje w zakresie nowoczesnych technologii węglowych są szansą na ograniczenie ubóstwa energetycznego właśnie w Polsce. Mamy taką kopalinę! Jesteśmy państwem stojącym na węglu. Jeśli dostaniemy pieniądze na nowoczesne inwestycje węglowe, powietrze w Polsce będzie czystsze i zdrowsze.

Christelle Lechevalier (ENF). – Madame la Présidente, nous sommes favorables à ce que l'efficacité énergétique et le stockage de l'énergie deviennent des priorités, et l'électro-mobilité est une solution d'avenir en matière d'indépendance énergétique.

La politique de soutien à l'innovation et au développement des énergies renouvelables est également intéressante. Nous apprécions ici la volonté de rechercher des énergies alternatives compétitives, mais regrettons que ce programme soit lié aux objectifs ubuesques de l'Union de l'énergie.

Le dispositif crée des incitations en faveur de l'investissement privé, laissant ce secteur financer l'essentiel des projets. Les projets soutenus sont donc liés à l'innovation dans le secteur de l'énergie, mais toujours avec une recherche de développement concret et de rentabilité, ce que nous approuvons.

Les priorités fixées par ce programme, la volonté de trouver des sources autochtones d'énergie, la participation du secteur privé et l'intérêt des projets financés pourraient permettre de voter en faveur de ce texte. Cependant, la soumission affichée à l'Union de l'énergie, à laquelle nous sommes opposés, et à la revendication de voir le neuvième programme-cadre d'Horizon 2020 augmenter de 40 milliards, soit 50 % de son budget malgré le Brexit, nous invite à ne pas soutenir ce texte et à privilégier l'abstention.

7. Rectificaties stemgedrag/Voorgenomen stemgedrag: zie notulen

(The sitting was suspended at 13.07)

IN THE CHAIR: MAIREAD McGUINNESS

Vice-President

8. Hervatting van de vergadering

(The sitting resumed at 15.00)

9. Goedkeuring van de notulen van de vorige vergadering: zie notulen

10. Samenstelling commissies: zie notulen

11. Nultolerantie tegenover genitale verminking van vrouwen (debat)

President. – The next item is the debate on the oral question to the Commission, on zero tolerance of female genital mutilation (FGM), by Vilija Blinkevičiūtė on behalf of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (O-000003/2018 – B8-0005/2018) (2017/2936(RSP)).

Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Autorė. – Šiandien minėdami Tarptautinę kovos su moterų organų žalojimu dieną privalome imtis platesnių kovos su visų formų smurto prieš moteris ir mergaites veiksmų, nes Europos Sąjunga yra įsipareigojusi dirbti kartu, kad būtų sustabdytas moterų lytinių organų žalojimas, ir kartu remti valstybių narių pastangas šioje srityje.

Pasaulio sveikatos organizacijos duomenimis, šiuo metu visame pasaulyje moters lytinių organų žalojimo pasekmės išgyvena apie du šimtai milijonų moterų ir mergaičių, o Europos lyčių lygybės institutas praneša apie nuo šio žalojimo nukentėjusias moteris ir mergaites mažiausiai trylikoje Europos Sąjungos valstybių narių. Taigi moterų lyties organų žalojimas kartu su kitomis smurto dėl lyties formomis yra būdas kontroliuoti moters kūną ir juo pažeidžiama moterų teisė į sveikatą, saugumą, kūno neliečiamybę ir tam tikrais atvejais net teisė į gyvybę.

Visų Europos Sąjungos valstybių narių baudžiamojoje teisėje tiesiogiai arba netiesiogiai yra numatyta mergaičių ir moterų apsauga nuo moters lytinių organų žalojimų, bet mes Europos Parlamente esame itin susirūpinę dėl to, kad ji atrodo neveiksminga, nes Europos Sąjungoje buvo iškelta vos keletas bylų. Tai gali būti ir dėl daugelio priežasčių. Todėl yra labai svarbu, kad šalintume kliūtis valstybių narių teisėse iškelti bylas dėl moterų lyties organų žalojimo, atsižvelgiant, pirmiausia, į vaiko interesus, nes ši gėdingą procedūra yra vykdoma mergaitėms dar nesulaukus pilnametystės. Žinoma, prevencija būtų kur kas efektyvesnis ir labiau pageidaujamas būdas kovoti su šiuo reiškiniu. Deja, tai ne visada yra įmanoma. Todėl ir turime užtikrinti, kad baudžiamasis persekiojimas galėtų vykti, kad tai tarnautų kaip atgrasymas ir apsaugotų bent jau būsimas aukas.

Kalbant apie prevenciją reikia pažymėti, kad moterų lyties organų žalojimas yra viena iš labiausiai nuspėjamų smurto dėl lyties formų. Todėl noriu paraginti ir Komisiją ir valstybes nars užtikrinti ryžtingus prevencinius veiksmus pabėgėlių stovyklose. O taip pat raginu ir gerbiama Komisiją ir toliau įtraukti moterų lyties organų žalojimo ir kitų žalingų praktikų prevenciją į integracijos procedūras ir Prieglobsčio migracijos integracijos fondą bei teikti svarbią informaciją per ES prieglobsčio agentūrą. Kita prevencinė priemonė būtų aukščiausio lygio prieglobsčio prašytojo apsaugos nustatymas, kai prieglobsčio prašomasi dėl priežasčių, susijusių su moterų lyties organų žalojimu, žinoma, atsižvelgiant į Europos prieglobsčio sistemos reformą ir prieglobsčio direktyvų peržiūrą. Šią praktiką siekiantys panaikinti suinteresuoti subjektai laikosi požiūrio, kad reikia stiprinti tarpsektorinį bendradarbiavimą, o moterų lyties organų žalojimo problemą įtraukti į visus sektorius: sveikatos, socialinio darbo, prieglobsčio, švietimo, teisėsaugos, teisingumo, vaiko apsaugos, žiniasklaidos ir komunikacijos, nes vykstantis moters lytinių organų žalojimas ar jo pavojus daro daugialypį poveikį mergaičių ir moterų gyvenimams. Visuose šiuose sektoriuose turi būti parengtos priemonės, kad nukentėjusioms moterims, mergaitėms ar galimoms aukoms būtų suteikiama tinkama apsauga ir paslaugos. Dar penkiolika metų Komisija informavo Parlamentą apie savo veiksmus siekiant atsisakyti moters lytinių organų žalojimo. Tačiau, šiandien dar kartą prašau Komisijos pateikti padarytos pažangos ir veiksmų, kurių buvo imtasi iki dabar, apžvalgą. Būtent ką nuveikė Komisija, kad įtrauktų moterų lyties organų žalojimo prevencijos klausimą į visas susijusias įvairių generalinių direktoratų politikos ir teisėkūros programas, siekiant užtikrinti, kad šis klausimas būtų sprendžiamas visuose minėtuose sektoriuose? Kokių tolesnių veiksmų imamasi dėl integruotų politikos priemonių ir kokie bendradarbiavimo mechanizmai yra įgyvendinami? Be to, kaip Komisija integruos savo pastangas ir koordinuos valstybių narių kovos su moterų lytinių organų žalojimu veiksmus įgyvendinant platesnę kovos su smurtu dėl lyties programą pagal Stambulo konvenciją? Ir kaip bus sprendžiamas moterų lyties organų žalojimo klausimas įgyvendinant naujai pradėtą ES ir Jungtinių Tautų pavyzdinę iniciatyvą dėl smurto prieš moteris ir merginas panaikinimo? Ačiū ir laukiame atsakymų.

Věra Jourová, *Member of the Commission*. – Madam President, let me start by thanking the European Parliament, and in particular the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and its Chair, Ms Blinkevičiūtė, for putting this important topic on the agenda today, on the occasion of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. I remember our past discussions on this subject, and I am happy that the European Parliament is shedding light again on this evil practice.

I want to say a few words about statistics, but whenever we start speaking about figures, we forget that we are speaking about real people and real tragedies of women and children, women and girls. So let me share two stories with you. Last year, I met Ms Assiatou Diallo. She is now 49. She underwent FGM when she was 3 years old. Now, she is the mother of two teenage girls aged 16 and 18. She arrived in Belgium from Guinea 10 years ago: she escaped in order to save her girls from undergoing female genital mutilation.

I wish you could all meet her. Her life has not been easy. But she is active in the *Groupe pour l'Abolition des mutilations sexuelles féminines*, a Belgian NGO, and she speaks loudly about the need to stop the practice. I have also read the story of Jaha Dukureh, who is 24. As an infant growing up in Gambia, she experienced female genital mutilation. As she describes, it took away a part of her femininity, her ownership of her body. Some girls, including her half-sister, who died from complications resulting from being cut, even lose their lives.

We must keep in mind these real stories of real women and girls. We must think about them. We must work for them and we must fight those who are committing this horrible crime. Neither custom, tradition, culture, privacy, religion nor so-called honour can justify violence.

Let me come back to statistics. Estimates show that at least half a million of the girls and women who have suffered female genital mutilation live in Europe in 13 EU Member States. The Commission has been active in working towards prevention, as well as ensuring adequate support for victims since 2013, mainstreaming the importance of preventing and eradicating female genital mutilation, and actively contributing to several services.

We believe that it is important to work on different areas at the same time and to tackle the issue from different angles and across the portfolios. This is why the communication is an Action Plan built around five priority areas: the first is improving knowledge and data; the second, supporting sustainable social change; the third, priority protection; the fourth, prosecution; and the fifth priority is combating FGM worldwide.

Within our rights, equality and citizenship programme we have issued a specific call on projects relating to female genital mutilation and other harmful practices. The last call, worth EUR 9.7 million, closed in November 2017, and a new call, worth EUR 10.6 million, will open on 8 March this year. Moreover, the European Institute for Gender Equality has developed a common methodology and indicators to estimate the risk of FGM.

Under the heading of development policy outreach outside the EU we are one of the main contributors to the United Nations Joint Programme on the Abandonment of FGM. Through the programme, to which the EU contributes EUR 11 million, more than 1.5 million girls and women have received mutilation-related protection and care services. In addition, since 2016 the EU has supported seven projects implemented by civil society organisations in third countries to put an end to this practice.

The 'Spotlight Initiative' intends to target specific issues and prevalent forms of gender-based violence in different global regions, in a comprehensive manner and on the basis of evidence. In Africa, for example, the priority is to eliminate female genital mutilation.

The role of the Commission also consists of disseminating training materials for legal practitioners through the European e-Justice portal. One thing must be emphasised here. FGM is a crime in all EU Member States. Its criminalisation is also required under the Istanbul Convention, and its victims therefore also fall within the scope of the Convention's prevention, support and protection measures in those Member States that have ratified the Convention. So far, there have been 17 within the EU. All the others, which have started the process of accession through signing, are now assessing their legal frameworks. The way to ratification is not always easy, and recently we have seen very worrying signals in several Member States whereby the issues of ideology and religion have been brought into the discussion. But the Convention is clearly about protecting girls and women from violence based on the fact that they are women, nothing else, and nothing less.

The efforts to combat FGM and support its victims are integrated into EU legislation, notably the Victims' Rights Directive. The reform of the Common European Asylum System put forward by the Commission in 2016 aims to reinforce the protection safeguards available to persons with special needs seeking asylum in Europe. Relevant provisions of the Reception Conditions Directive stipulate that victims should receive the necessary medical and psychological treatment, and staff working with them should have appropriate training.

Female genital mutilation has to stop in Europe. It is a crime in all Member States, but girls continue to be cut. The legal framework is important, but it is not enough, unfortunately. The research by the European Institute for Gender Equality for the new study to be published in May clearly shows that in order for the rules to work, the police and the courts must enforce them and prosecute those responsible for crimes. Training for people implementing the law is vital, combined with raising awareness of the legislation amongst the communities involved. We must work together with all stakeholders at all levels, from our political dialogues with national administrations to our support for doctors, religious leaders and parents determined to eradicate female genital mutilation once and for all.

President. – Commissioner, thank you for putting real people behind those statistics. I think that is very important in this debate.

Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, on behalf of the PPE Group. – Madam President, today on International Day against Female Genital Mutilation we give a voice to the hundreds of millions of girl victims. Let's join forces and say loud and clear: 'my issue too. For everyone, everywhere'.

FGM is a harmful practice that can have serious consequences, including physical and psychological damage on girls. We are talking about little girls as young as four to eight years old. And no culture, no tradition can justify this terrible violence. As co-rapporteur on the Istanbul Convention, as you mentioned Madam Commissioner, we call once again on all Member States to ratify and enforce the Convention fully.

It criminalises FGM. It provides strict sanctions and medical and psychological support for victims. Member States must do more faster and better to combat impunity, bring perpetrators to justice, work on prevention, identify girls at risk at an early stage, provide access to health care and reproductive services and train professionals. Member States should also fully implement the Directive on protection of victims and consider, as you said, FGM in the asylum process. The victims should be considered vulnerable groups.

Madam Commissioner, I fully support the EU commitment to step up cooperation with third countries, providing technical assistance to encourage the adoption of laws banning FGM, and ensuring that these laws are fully enforced. But no sustainable change can happen without involving the local communities, and we need to work hand in hand with civil society at grass-root level to empower girls to speak up and to change behaviour, to promote changed behaviour, including in refugee camps, as was said here, for girls on the move.

I fully support the FGM European network and many other children's rights champions and I welcome them to the European Parliament today. Let's support their campaign wholeheartedly. It is about girls' dignity, it is about the integrity of their bodies, it is about gender equality. With the EPP Group and the Intergroup on Children's Rights, we continue to be committed to zero tolerance of FGM and all forms of violence against women and girls.

Iratxe García Pérez, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señora presidenta, señora comisaria, ya hemos hablado aquí de cifras y de rostros humanos de mujeres y niñas: 200 millones de niñas y mujeres que han visto destruida su integridad física tras sufrir la mutilación de sus genitales. Esta práctica tan brutal no es exclusiva de otros continentes. También en Europa hay 500 000 mujeres y niñas que han sufrido estas prácticas, incluso a nivel de países: en el caso del mío, de España, hay 17 000 niñas en riesgo de sufrir la mutilación genital femenina.

Hablamos de una práctica brutal. Hablamos de la peor forma de violencia de género que existe en estos momentos y —como digo— no somos ajenas a ello. Por lo tanto, la comisaria ha estado hablando de esa estrategia en la Unión Europea en la que debemos volcar todos nuestros esfuerzos y nuestra voluntad para mejorar la calidad de las acciones que se están llevando a cabo en estos momentos: la formación del personal médico; la formación del personal de educación; posibilitar la prevención de esta situación para que no se dé en Europa.

Pero, también a través de la política de cooperación y la política exterior de la Unión Europea debemos mantener firmes nuestras propuestas en esta materia para evitar que las mujeres en el mundo sufran esta perversión tan inmensa, porque hablamos —vuelvo a decir— de la peor forma de violencia de género. Y es también una razón por la que las mujeres están pidiendo asilo en la Unión Europea y por lo tanto necesitamos agilizar los trámites en este sentido y garantizar que todas las mujeres peticionarias de asilo en la Unión Europea puedan tener su estatus de mujeres refugiadas para evitar que esta realidad continúe y se siga planteando como una realidad inevitable en el mundo.

Es la peor manifestación de la violencia de género y debe haber una estrategia europea en la materia. Las Naciones Unidas dicen que podemos acabar con esta realidad en una generación. Si realmente hay voluntad, en nuestras manos está que podamos acabar con ello.

Urszula Krupa, *w imieniu grupy ECR*. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Zarówno klitoridektomia, najbardziej rozpowszechniona forma ekscyzji, jak i inne tego typu zabiegi są klasyfikowane z punktu widzenia medycyny jako ciężkie uszkodzenia ciała zagrażające nie tylko zdrowiu, ale także życiu kobiet z powodu poważnych powikłań fizycznych i psychicznych. Co prawda w Europie tego rodzaju praktyki są karane, jednak na razie bez konsekwencji dla osób przybywających z krajów pozaeuropejskich. Konieczne wydaje się, aby zarówno Parlament Europejski, jak i inne instytucje wpływały na państwa, gdzie proceder ten jest dopuszczalny, i mu przeciwdziałały, eliminując go całkowicie z porządku prawnego i praktyki społecznej. Szacunki mówią o około 200 milionach okaleczonych kobiet, szczególnie w krajach afrykańskich, a to wymaga uświadamiania i edukacji, także w kwestii odpowiedzialności karnej rodziców i opiekunów, którzy podają swoje nieletnie, nieświadome dzieci tego rodzaju przemoc.

Poza edukacją za pomocą wszelkich form przekazu i możliwością zapobiegania należy zwracać uwagę na konsekwencje zdrowotne i cierpienia okaleczanych kobiet przez całe życie oraz łamanie praw człowieka. Nadużyciom seksualnym, które podawane są jako obyczajowe powody okaleczeń, warto byłoby zapobiegać nie poprzez edukację seksualną (mającą czasem cechy pornograficzne), ale w ramach wychowania do życia w rodzinie, promując czystość przedmażeńską czy w małżeństwie, gdyż świadczy ona o duchowym rozwoju człowieka i jego człowieczeństwie.

Angelika Mlinar, *on behalf of the ALDE Group*. – Madam President, the inhuman practice of cutting female genitals in fact reflects a deep-rooted inequality between the sexes and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls. There is no place for such a practice in a civilised society.

Today is the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). However, it is important to remember that we have to fight this human rights violation every single day of the year. This is not just happening outside our continent. This is a practice – as we heard from our colleagues here in the House – also inside the EU, probably in most of our Member States. I want Member States to mainstream the prevention of FGM into all sectors: health, social work, asylum, education, child protection and media. Cross-sectoral cooperation is the key to fighting this inhuman practice.

This cooperation will serve to disseminate acquired knowledge and foster an enabling environment for collective social change and, above all, it will contribute to an improvement in the well-being of young women and girls where FGM is practised. Actions speak louder than words. We have a shared responsibility to fight this practice, and I thank the Commissioner for presenting to us the concrete measures taken in order to mainstream FGM prevention.

The Istanbul Convention is the first treaty to recognise that FGM exists in Europe and that it needs to be systematically addressed. Therefore, I urge the Member States which have still not ratified the Istanbul Convention finally to do so. I call on the Bulgarian Presidency to accelerate the process on their side, because it is their issue too. It is highly important that the EU cooperates in this matter and finds a unified approach to fighting violence against women and to fighting female genital mutilation. The time for zero tolerance is now.

(Applause)

Malin Björk, *för GUE/NGL-gruppen*. – Fru Talman! Vi är mycket eniga här i kammaren, fru kommissionär, om att vi måste göra mer för att bekämpa kvinnlig könsstympning, både i våra hemländer och globalt. Men om vi vill nå framgång med det så måste vi se att kvinnlig könsstympning är en form av våld mot kvinnor, bland andra. En patriarkal attack mot kvinnors kroppar och sexualitet, precis som så mycket annat våld, precis som andra attacker på våra kroppar.

I den bemärkelsen är arbetet mot kvinnlig könsstympning för mig en del av det feministiska systerskapet; kampen för våra kroppar, vår rätt att bestämma över dem, rätten till vår sexualitet. Och i den bemärkelsen så borde kvinnlig könsstympning vara del av en övergripande strategi för att bekämpa våld mot kvinnor och flickor. En strategi som vi fortfarande väntar på, fru kommissionär.

Det vi också måste göra för att bli framgångsrika är att lära av de organisationer och aktörer som i olika länder arbetat i årtionden med mycket små medel för att bekämpa kvinnlig könsstympning, och det är ofta i andra delar av världen. Vi måste också kräva, som några kolleger har sagt, att kvinnor och flickor som utsätts eller riskerar att utsättas för kvinnlig könsstympning får asyl här hos oss.

Och sist, men kanske störst av allt: ge mer stöd till kvinnoorganisationer som arbetar outtröttligt, men med allt för små medel. Vad vi inte behöver, kolleger – vi kommer säkert höra det från högerextrema aktörer senare här – vad vi inte behöver är att rasister runt om i Europa instrumentalisera en eller annan form av våld mot kvinnor för att piska upp mer av sin rasistiska eller flyktingfientliga politik. Det kommer vi i vänstern aldrig acceptera. Att bekämpa kvinnlig könsstympning handlar om feministiskt systemskap, och det är någonting vi kommer att göra tillsammans.

Jordi Solé, *on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group*. – Madam President, female genital mutilation is without a doubt a form of violence against girls and women. It is a violation of women's rights. Therefore there must be no place at all for that practice in our societies and no tolerance towards those who still carry it out or justify it.

But do we want to eradicate it only with law enforcement and criminal proceedings? Working together with communities is key to achieving the abandonment of this practice. Families from practising communities who live in Europe must have the opportunity to participate in debates about sexuality, women's rights and female mutilation. We know that the active involvement of schools, professionals and men in this debate is fundamental to break the silence that surrounds this harmful practice. Let me give Catalonia as a clear example of working hand-in-hand with communities to eradicate FGM. In our country we have taken great steps in this direction and we have it in mind to keep doing so.

We know that building trust between communities and professionals is a slow process that needs commitment from every stakeholder, and sound interprofessional and inter-administrative coordination to detect, analyse and intervene in cases of risk. It is also vital to establish contacts with NGOs working in the countries of origin and to support them so that they can follow up on the girls who live in Europe when they travel to visit their families, when the risk of genital mutilation is higher. So let us together put an end to FGM. It is our issue too.

Daniela Aiuto, *a nome del gruppo EFDD*. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signora Commissario Jourová, oggi, nella giornata mondiale contro le mutilazioni genitali femminili, rinnoviamo alla Commissione europea la richiesta di politiche concrete per fermare questo disumano crimine. Un abuso vile che perpetua la sottomissione femminile lesionando permanentemente l'apparato riproduttivo e provocando, per tutta la vita della donna, dolore durante l'atto sessuale e spesso morte al momento del parto, colpendola nel corpo e nell'intimo, privandola del piacere stesso che può derivare dalla sessualità e trasformandola da essere umano ad un semplice contenitore di riproduzione ad uso e consumo dell'uomo.

Non è accettabile che tutto ciò sia praticato né all'interno dell'Unione europea né nel resto del mondo, ma soprattutto non si possono giustificare tali azioni imputandole a mere convinzioni religiose, sessuali, sociologiche e culturali distorte. Mettiamo fine in maniera definitiva a questo problema, perché è di tutti noi, come afferma lo slogan di oggi «*IsMyIssueToo*».

Mylène Troszczynski, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Madame la Présidente, les chiffres et les statistiques qui concernent les mutilations génitales féminines (MGF) sont terribles, dans le monde, mais également en Europe. Madame la Commissaire, vous l'avez dit, un million de victimes dans treize pays membres. Cette réalité est bien trop présente aujourd'hui en Europe. Notre devoir est de tout mettre en œuvre pour enrayer cette menace qui pèse sur nos jeunes filles européennes.

Chose rare, vous admettez dans votre résolution que ces pratiques barbares sont le fait de civilisations et de populations immigrées. Très bien, mais que proposez-vous pour y remédier? Une réforme des procédures d'immigration de l'Union pour faire des mutilations un motif automatique d'asile. Ne pensez-vous pas que cela va créer un nouvel appel d'air pour l'immigration venue d'Afrique et l'utilisation, par les passeurs, des mutilations pour s'assurer le passage en Europe?

Cela n'offrira pas aux femmes victimes que vous pensez défendre avec ce texte des solutions, bien au contraire. Vous leur offrez cruellement un nouvel espoir en sachant pertinemment qu'il n'est qu'illusoire. J'imagine déjà votre prochaine résolution qui proposera sans doute le regroupement familial pour les proches des victimes. La France de M. Macron vous devance d'ailleurs sur le sujet, puisque le projet de loi du gouvernement français sur l'immigration facilite l'arrivée de la famille des victimes.

Combattre les mutilations génitales en collaboration au niveau international est une solution, effectivement, pour contribuer à éradiquer ces horreurs, notamment dans les pays d'origine des MGF, par exemple aider à l'installation d'hôpitaux, offrir des soins, une écoute psychologique, mais également de la chirurgie réparatrice ou encore de la formation et un accès à l'éducation pour tous les jeunes, filles et garçons.

(L'oratrice refuse une question «carton bleu» de Mme Corraza Bildt)

Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz (PPE). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Pani Komisarz! Szanowni Państwo! Co roku trzy miliony dziewcząt jest drastycznie okaleczanych. Zabieg okaleczania narządów płciowych wykonuje się już na kilku- lub kilkunastoletnich dziewczynkach, często podczas pierwszej miesiączki. Zabieg polega na wycięciu łechtaczki, w drastycznych przypadkach także warg sromowych mniejszych i części warg sromowych większych. Tę operację wykonują znachorki, często w warunkach urągających higienie, w wielu krajach Afryki i Azji, ale też w Europie, w środowiskach imigrantów z tych rejonów. Ocenia się, że w roku 2016 żyło na świecie dwieście milionów kobiet okaleczonych w ten sposób. W kulturach, w których stosuje się te okrutne zwyczaje, zabieg ma wprowadzić dziewczynkę w świat dorosłości, zintegrować ze społecznością, uczynić ją czystą i wierną przyszłemu mężowi. W rzeczywistości to tortury, źródło zakażeń, poważnych chorób, nerwic, a nawet śmierci dziewcząt i kobiet.

Próby zlikwidowania tego zjawiska w Afryce i w Azji poprzez zakazy prawne jak dotąd nie przyniosły satysfakcjonujących rezultatów. Także w Unii Europejskiej, gdzie żyje pięćset tysięcy okaleczonych kobiet i gdzie w każdym kraju członkowskim mamy przepisy karne pozwalające ścigać sprawców tych okrutnych czynów, miało miejsce tylko kilka procesów karnych.

Pytanie do Komisji Europejskiej brzmi: dlaczego nie potrafimy sobie wciąż poradzić z tym zjawiskiem? Dlaczego nie potrafimy ani skutecznie stosować prawa, ani skutecznie stosować prewencji? I dlaczego ten okrutny zwyczaj, ten okrutny rodzaj przemocy wobec kobiet wciąż trwa także w naszych krajach, gdzie – zdawałoby się – mamy wszelkie sposoby, żeby ten zwyczaj ograniczyć?

Jeszcze tylko jedno zdanie: Uważam, że medykalizacja, która jest stosowana przez niektóre kraje jako próba wyjścia z tego kryzysu, jako ograniczanie szkód, jest bardzo złym rozwiązaniem i że powinniśmy jednak stosować inne polityki, które skutecznie nas wyprowadzą z tej katastrofy.

Anna Hedh (S&D). – Fru talman! Fru kommissionär! Kvinnlig könsstympning är ett av de grävsta uttrycken för mäns förtryck av kvinnor. Män tar makt över kvinnor genom att förneka dem rätten till sin egen kropp och sin egen sexualitet. Det är ett fruktansvärt övergrepp mot flickor och kvinnors sexuella frihet och integritet samt mot deras fysiska och psykiska hälsa. Övergreppen görs inte enbart genom fysiskt våld utan också psykiskt och sexuellt.

Problemet bottnar inte bara i religion eller identitet utan är ett uttryck för patriarkatet och mäns överordning över kvinnor. En uppskattning är att en halv miljon kvinnor i EU lever med ären av kvinnlig könsstympning och 90 000, en femtedel av dem, lever i mitt eget hemland Sverige. Dessa kvinnor måste få rätt till en bra och välfungerande klinisk vård men också rätten att träffa psykiatri.

Insatser måste också göras för att stärka det förebyggande arbetet så att dessa övergrepp aldrig mer sker. Vi behöver stärka samarbetet mellan alla samhällets institutioner för att komma åt problemet. Vi behöver utbilda oss i frågan, samla in uppgifter på nationellt plan och EU-nivå om problemets omfattning. Vi behöver lyfta barnperspektivet på en bredare front, då det i första hand är unga flickor som drabbas av övergreppet.

Frågan får inte isoleras, den får inte stå ensam utan vi måste sätta den i ett större sammanhang och förstå att kvinnlig könsstympning är en fråga om våld. Det är 2018 nu, det är mer än hög tid att medlemsländerna börjar respektera flickor och kvinnors egna kroppar.

Arne Gericke (ECR). – Frau Präsidentin, Frau Kommissarin! Weibliche Genitalverstümmelung, das bedeutet die teilweise oder vollständige Entfernung der äußeren weiblichen Geschlechtsorgane, das Zerfetzen der Klitoris, das Abschneiden der Schamlippen oder gar das Zünähen der Vulva. Alles schrecklich! Doch wir müssen es benennen, um klarzumachen, welches Leid Mädchen und junge Frauen weltweit erleben. Weltweit? Ja, rund 200 Millionen Frauen sind Opfer dieser abscheulichen Praktiken. Aber nicht nur in Afrika und im Mittleren Osten, nein, auch bei uns in Europa.

Ich danke meiner Parteikollegin Annette Walter-Kilian, die mich dazu mit Informationen des Arbeitskreises Gesundheit versorgt hat. 180 000 Mädchen trifft dieses schreckliche Schicksal jährlich in Europa, und selbst in Deutschland sind mindestens 25 000 Frauen davon betroffen – bei einer hohen Dunkelziffer. Unmissverständlich: Weibliche Genitalverstümmelung ist eine Gewalttat, die einem Mord entspricht – kein religiöser Akt, keine Tradition. Sie gehört verboten und verfolgt, die Aufklärungs- und Vermeidungsarbeit vor Ort entschieden gestärkt und der Schutz Betroffener garantiert – in Europa und der Welt. Kämpfen wir gemeinsam dafür.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – Señora presidenta, comisaria, erradicar la mutilación genital es un trabajo de largo recorrido que solo tendrá éxito si lo enfocamos desde la perspectiva de los derechos humanos, la protección de la infancia y las políticas de género. La clave es la prevención. Para que sea eficaz, es imprescindible que las comunidades que incorporen las poblaciones de riesgo participen en una tarea que nos atañe a todas. Debe centrarse en la integración comunitaria e intercultural y apoyarse mediante el trabajo en red de los profesionales de la asistencia social, sanitaria y educativa. No podemos caer en el error de estigmatizar o generar una doble victimización de las personas amenazadas por la mutilación genital. Convencer y empoderar desde un trabajo que se centre en desactivar las creencias que dan origen a esta práctica son las claves de una guía de actuación profesional elaborada por el Instituto Vasco de la Mujer, Emakunde, que está ofreciendo buenos resultados.

Señora comisaria, ¿cómo se está organizando el intercambio de buenas prácticas en este campo para poder enriquecer el enfoque con el que actuamos frente a la mutilación genital en la Unión Europea?

Terry Reintke (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, women know best what to do with their bodies. Neither the state nor the church nor husbands nor parents nor anybody else should tell them what to do with their bodies. This is the very basic of sexual self-determination, and female genital mutilation is one of the most massive attacks on this sexual self-determination. It is violence and it can never be justified by tradition or religion or anything else. We know what is best for our bodies. We know when to have sex, we know when not to have sex. We know when to have babies and we know when to have a relationship, and with whom. In order to end female genital mutilation, we need to ratify the Istanbul Convention all over the European Union.

It is high time, we need to step up. We need to stop this horrible practice and we need to stop telling women what to do with their bodies, because they themselves know best.

Margot Parker (EFDD). – Madam President, today is the international day of zero tolerance of female genital mutilation, a day with which to raise awareness of this barbaric practice. This appalling violation of the human rights of millions of women and young girls is being applied to our most vulnerable.

There were 5 391 newly reported cases in the United Kingdom for the period of 2016 to 2017. The NHS recorded that the most common age range for this vile practice were children between the ages of five and nine years old. However, we know that FGM is carried out on those as young as new-born girls.

These are just the reported figures. The scale of this is far greater: 200 million girls and women globally have undergone FGM. This form of torture is damaging both physically, psychologically and can result in death. We cannot accept such a crime in the name of tolerance, political correctness or cultural sensibilities. This crime cannot go unpunished in the name of humanity.

Barbara Matera (PPE). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, vorrei iniziare leggendovi delle parole: «Senza essere circondata io non sarei mai stata considerata donna, non mi sarei mai sposata, né avrei avuto mai figli. Un essere inutile, per loro potevo anche morire.» Queste sono le forti parole di Nice Nailantei Leng'ete.

Nice, a soli nove anni, decise di opporsi alla volontà della sua famiglia, di opporsi alle sue tradizioni. Nice ha visto molte sue coetanee perdere la vita dopo il taglio. Nice è una giovane donna masai che, dopo essere sfuggita all'infibulazione, ha deciso di dedicare tutta la sua vita alla lotta contro questa pratica dannosa e violenta.

Con l'aiuto della NGO Amref è riuscita a studiare, diventando educatrice per la salute riproduttiva delle donne. Con queste conoscenze è riuscita a convincere gli anziani della sua comunità che un cambiamento era necessario. Nuove pratiche più sicure che hanno salvato migliaia di donne. Oggi Nice è ambasciatrice Amref per la lotta in tutto il mondo contro le mutilazioni genitali femminili. Questa piccola grande donna ha voluto cambiare le cose e con lo studio l'ha potuto fare.

I fenomeni migratori in aumento portano con sé tradizioni e culture che non possono essere ignorate. Si pensi a tutte quelle donne e ragazze di seconda generazione, donne europee nate e cresciute con le nostre usanze, schiacciate tra due culture. Allora diamogli voce, diamogli centri di supporto e di informazione per loro e per le loro famiglie, diamogli la possibilità di fare la differenza, come Nice ha insegnato a tutti quanti noi.

Maria Noichl (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Frau Kommissarin, liebe Kolleginnen, liebe Kollegen! Es war richtig, dass Sie alle, die jetzt gesprochen haben, den Blick auf die Opfer gerichtet haben. Es ist richtig. Ich möchte jetzt ganz konkret den Blick auf die Täter richten, und ich meine bei den Tätern nicht die Mütter, die oftmals bei den Verstümmelungen dabei sind und die Mädchen der Verstümmelung zuführen, sondern ich meine die eigentlichen Täter. Die eigentlichen Täter sind die Männer, die der Meinung sind, dass Genitalverstümmelung von Frauen die Vorbereitung für die Ehe ist. Ich meine die Männer, die nicht willens sind, eine gleichgestellte Frau zu heiraten, sondern nur eine Frau, die vielleicht teilweise getötet ist.

Jetzt wende ich mich ganz speziell an Sie, Frau Kommissarin: Natürlich ist es unsere erste Pflicht, die Opfer in den Blick zu nehmen. Aber unsere zweite Pflicht ist es, dafür zu sorgen, dass Aufklärung, Prävention, all diese Dinge auch auf der Männerseite passieren. Solange es die Nachfrage gibt – und bitte verzeihen Sie mir dieses schwierige Wort in diesem Zusammenhang –, aber solange es die Nachfrage nach beschnittenen Frauen gibt, solange es Männer gibt, die sagen: „Ich heirate nur eine Frau, die beschnitten ist!“, solange wird es Beschneidung geben.

Ich fordere auch die Männer hier im Parlament auf, sich endlich mal dafür einzusetzen, dass sie mit ihren Geschlechtsgegnossen reden und dafür sorgen, dass auch die Männer sich stark machen. Nur ein ganz, ganz, ganz schwacher Mann – ein ganz, ganz schwacher Mann – wünscht sich als Ehefrau eine verstümmelte Frau. Ein starker Mann wünscht sich eine Frau, die ihm gegenübersteht, die Lust empfinden, die Liebe empfinden, die gesunde Kinder gebären kann. Das ist ein starker Mann. Helfen Sie uns, dafür zu sorgen, dass deutlich wird, wer hier schwach ist und wer stark ist.

(Die Rednerin lehnt es ab, eine Frage von Herrn O'Flynn nach dem Verfahren der „blauen Karte“.)

Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Szanowni Państwo! Dzisiaj obchodzimy Międzynarodowy Dzień Zerowej Tolerancji dla Okaleczania Kobietych Narządów Płciowych. Statystyki dotyczące tego przestępstwa są przerażające: dwieście milionów kobiet na świecie. Od tego problemu nie są wolne kobiety i dziewczynki również w Unii Europejskiej. Ten problem narasta wraz z narastającym kryzysem migracyjnym, i dzisiaj debatujemy o tej kwestii w Parlamencie Europejskim. Część z nas wykazuje empatię i wrażliwość w stosunku do kobiet i dziewczynek, które są brutalnie okaleczane. Dziękuję pani komisarz za przedstawienie programu, jaki Komisja wdraża mniej lub bardziej skutecznie, ale podejmuje działania na rzecz ochrony dziewczynek i kobiet, na rzecz edukacji i dobrej profilaktyki.

Ale popatrzmy na siebie: jak my dyskutujemy o sprawach kobiet? Lewa strona gniewa się na prawą stronę, a prawa niekoniecznie chce z lewą stroną sali dyskutować o tym problemie. Nawet wspólne stanięcie do zdjęcia w imię piętnowania tego procederu wywołuje irytację lewej strony Parlamentu Europejskiego. Szanowne Panie! Mniej ideologii, mniej zaciętrzewienia, więcej refleksji! Tylko razem możemy doprowadzić do tego, aby wzmocnienie ekonomiczne kobiet spowodowało, że one naprawdę poczną się silne i wolne, i aby nie było przyzwolenia dla tak brutalnego ich traktowania.

Charles Goerens (ALDE). – Madame la Présidente, nous sommes nombreux, j'espère même unanimes, dans cette enceinte à vouloir mettre fin aux mutilations génitales, qui constituent des horreurs encore trop souvent présentes dans nombre de pays.

L'interdiction par la loi est le minimum que l'on peut et doit faire en l'occurrence. Mais l'interdiction seule ne suffit pas à abolir ces crimes. Oui, il s'agit bien d'un crime. Il faut aller au-delà de l'interdiction légale. Il faut se donner les moyens juridiques et financiers, notamment, pour traduire en réalité cette ambition et mettre en place des stratégies visant à l'abolition de ces violences auxquelles des filles, par millions, sont encore exposées sans défense.

Il importe donc de mobiliser, dans le cadre d'une stratégie à engager par la Commission, tous les moyens, et notamment un appui sans faille aux acteurs des Nations unies, comme par exemple le Fonds des Nations unies pour la population, dont les interventions sont très prometteuses. Je le sais pour avoir cofinancé ce genre de programme.

Aussi, et je terminerai sur ce point, me semble-t-il judicieux de brandir la menace de faire dépendre l'aide publique au développement de la volonté du pays bénéficiaire de mettre un terme à des crimes pour lesquels il n'y a pas la moindre circonstance atténuante.

Linnéa Engström (Verts/ALE). Fru talman! Tänk dig att någon skulle ta ett rostigt rakblad och sedan skära i ditt underliv – det är omöjligt att föreställa sig, eller hur? Ändå är det här verklighet för miljontals kvinnor världen över. Varje dag könsstympas 8000 flickor. I Sverige befinner sig 10 000-tals flickor i riskzonen. Det handlar om våld mot kvinnor i dess allra hemskaste form, allt för att stävja kvinnors möjlighet till njutning och självbestämmande över den egna kroppen.

Vi i EU-parlamentet, vi tar upp den här kampen i dag mot den urgamla traditionen som är ett fortsatt övergrepp mot flickors och kvinnors sexuella frihet och deras fysiska och psykiska hälsa. Kvinnlig könsstympning är också ett fullgott skäl att få asyl. Det finns en samsyn att det här är ett brott mot mänskliga rättigheter.

Ändå gör flera EU-länder bedömningen att kvinnor som könsstympats inte ska få stanna i unionen. Vi behöver en global samling mot den här vedervärdiga sedvänjan, och att allt fler länder ratificerar Istanbulkonventionen. Det handlar verkligen om våld. Först då kommer vi att komma till rätta med det här problemet.

Mireille D'Ornano (EFDD). – Madame la Présidente, l'Institut européen pour l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes fait état de victimes de mutilations génitales féminines dans environ la moitié des États de l'Union européenne.

En 2015, la Commission affirmait qu'«il est essentiel de sensibiliser l'opinion publique, en particulier dans les communautés qui procèdent à de telles mutilations». Cet aveu pointait du doigt l'origine de ces pratiques effroyables, passibles d'emprisonnement dans mon pays, la France.

En 2016, l'ONU dénombrait 200 millions de femmes victimes de mutilations génitales. La moitié des 55 États d'Afrique sont encore touchés, ainsi que le Yémen, l'Iraq ou l'Indonésie. Chaque année, 3 millions de jeunes femmes sont excisées, soit six par minute.

Aussi, la coopération entre les services publics de la santé, de la justice et de l'enfance est-elle plus que jamais nécessaire afin de prévenir, de soigner et, bien entendu, de punir les faits pour protéger d'éventuelles autres victimes.

Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE). – Señora presidenta, efectivamente han sido víctimas de la mutilación genital femenina 200 millones de mujeres y niñas, de las cuales 500 000 viven aquí, en nuestro continente europeo.

Este año tres millones de niñas pueden volver a ser víctimas de esta atrocidad. No puede justificarse nunca ni por religión ni por honor ni por tradición ni por costumbre. Es violencia y es un crimen. Es la violencia más extrema contra los derechos humanos.

Una habitación oscura, una choza oscura en el campo, un cristal roto, una cuchilla, una hojita de afeitar, unas espinas de un arbusto silvestre son suficientes para esta atrocidad, que provoca —lo hemos dicho aquí— dolor insuperable toda la vida, que la mujer sea insensible a partir de ese momento al placer sexual, infecciones, traumas, dolor físico y psíquico, dolores menstruales insoportables en algunos casos y, en muchos, también la muerte como resultado.

Han sido las mujeres africanas las que pidieron a las Naciones Unidas tolerancia cero contra la mutilación genital femenina y han sido ellas las que se han puesto en primera línea para la erradicación y por esto acabo con unas palabras de una de estas mujeres africanas: «Mi hija tiene cinco años y va a seguir intacta. No se perderá ni un día de colegio porque la menstruación la consume de dolor. Podrá jugar y correr sin miedo a que se le rompan los puntos. Jamás maldecirá haber nacido mujer».

Hoy tenemos una oportunidad aquí para cooperar, para proteger y para erradicar en el mundo la mutilación genital femenina. Tenemos una oportunidad para apostar por la cultura de la paz y acabar con la cultura de la violencia.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Madam President, Hibo Wardere is a Somali-born British woman. At six years old, she was subjected to type 3 female genital mutilation (FGM), the most extreme form of cutting. Fahma Mohamed is a Bristol teenager who, together with her friends and teacher, famously worked with Integrate UK to take a stance against FGM by singing and rapping. I am proud of these women and others in my country who have overcome the stigma of FGM and who campaign to end the practice, whilst also fighting racism and Islamophobia.

FGM is a totally unacceptable practice, and in order to bring it to an end we must understand the complexity of the phenomenon. FGM is a part of a continuum of violence against women. It's an extreme manifestation of patriarchy but it is not the only one. In order to eradicate FGM, it is important to view it as a form of violence against women and girls, and as one of the multiple avatars of society's policing of women's bodies and sexuality.

FGM must also be understood as a cultural practice often viewed as beneficial for the victim. FGM is more common in families where the parents' background includes a low level of education, and this demonstrates the importance of empowering women, not only when it comes to sexual and reproductive health but also from an economic, political and educational perspective. Involvement in political and social processes is always beneficial but it holds particular relevance when it comes to ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

Lastly, we must bear in mind that FGM is practised in many countries, including in Europe. In the UK, many girls are at risk of falling victim of mutilation. It is time the EU and Member States embraced a real and viable strategy to end FGM on their territory, and therefore the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention is our best hope. We must join up the dots and understand the reasons for all forms of violence against women and girls.

Julie Girling (ECR). – Madam President, the oral question talks about the best way to mainstream FGM prevention. I would like to say that best way to do that is through prosecution, and I am going to do confine my remarks to that subject. In France, I understand, over 120 parents and two practitioners have been prosecuted in over 50 criminal cases. By contrast, in the UK no successful convictions have been brought to date, despite the existence of a specific Female Genital Mutilation Act, from 2005.

We don't see enough emphasis placed on securing successful prosecution. It is not enough to have legislation in place if it is not used. Indeed, a landmark UK case collapsed due to lack of preparedness by the Crown Prosecution Service.

There is clear evidence that if a mother has been cut then a daughter has an 80% chance of being subjected to mutilation. These women are fellow Europeans. Their problems are our problems and I would ask you specifically, Madam Commissioner, to request information from Member States on prosecutions and ask them why it is not happening quickly enough and what they are going to do to improve it. Because, in my view this has been going on a long time, it is the only way we are going to make it stop.

(The speaker declined to take a blue-card question from Patrick O'Flynn)

Madam President, I make it a policy not to accept blue-card questions from UKIP. I don't give them any more oxygen.

Jaromír Štětina (PPE). – Paní předsedající, ženská obřízka je barbarský zvyk. Na světě dnes žije asi 140 milionů žen, které byly někdy této potupné a nebezpečné operaci podrobeny. Asi před 15 lety, když jsem jako filmař žil v Keni, dostal jsem za úkol o ženské obřízce natočit film. 90minutový dokument jsem tenkrát spolu s malým štábem v jedné vesnici kmene Samburu natočil. Jmenuje se „Josefína – africký příběh“.

K vlastní obřízce neměli přístup muži. Zde náleží ocenění naší ženské kameramance, jejíž profesionalita dokázala přehlušit otřes, kterému byla vystavena. Josefína – dvanáctiletá Samburu holčička – ležela na mlatu před chýší, plakala bolestí a ponížením. Vlastní „operaci“ dělala babice tupou žiletkou. Trvalo to asi pět minut. Poté odnesly ženy Josefínu do chýše vyzdobené květinami. Muži mezitím opodál tančili a oslavovali událost pitím čaje s mlékem.

Proč vám to všechno říkám, dámy a pánové. V Evropě převládá pověra, že v Africe praktikují tento středověký zvyk pouze muslimové. Není to pravda. Josefína byla křesťanka, její rodiče byli křesťané, bába s žiletkou byla křesťanka. Stejně jako ostatní Samburu pokřesťanštění před desítkami let italskými misionáři. Barbarství ženské obřízky není konfesně podmíněno. Nemá s vírou nic společného. Je projevem primitivního zvykového práva.

Edouard Martin (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, les mutilations génitales féminines sont des actes barbares qu'il faut évidemment condamner et que je condamne. Mais j'ai entendu, ici, des propos tout aussi barbares, et à ceux-là je veux leur crier la chose suivante: «la souffrance n'a ni frontière ni couleur politique. La souffrance est comme le droit, elle est universelle.»

Puis, je voudrais dire à M^{me} la Commissaire que les années se suivent et se ressemblent. Nous avons toujours les mêmes débats et, pour autant, malgré nos discours empreints de bons sentiments, cela a été dit, ces actes barbares continuent et c'est criminel. D'ici 2030, hélas, 15 millions de nouvelles victimes viendront grossir ces rangs. Alors que faisons-nous?

Je regarde l'initiative *Spotlight* de la Commission avec beaucoup d'espoir, avec l'espoir d'être rassuré sur les effets réels qu'elle aura sur ces femmes et ces filles laissées pour compte. Une société peut-elle perdurer quand une partie de sa jeunesse, a priori force vive du développement, est mise de côté et fait l'objet de souffrances.

Par conséquent, il y a deux investissements majeurs qui n'ont pas de prix! Deux! Le premier, c'est l'accès à la santé. Il nous faut accentuer le financement des plannings familiaux. La Commission doit donc revoir à la hausse son engagement financier dans le programme «*planning familial 2020*». Nous devons inscrire les droits sexuels et reproductifs dans nos prévisions budgétaires et donc faire cesser l'hypocrisie.

Le deuxième investissement, c'est l'éducation, partout et pour tous, puisqu'aucune tradition ne saurait justifier quelque violence sexuelle que ce soit. C'est aussi la raison pour laquelle le financement du planning familial est une priorité cruciale. Ce n'est pas moi qui le dis, c'est Salamita, cette jeune Malienne de 14 ans, qui dit: «Au centre de santé, j'apprends beaucoup. J'ai appris les conséquences de l'excision, par exemple. Je n'osais pas en parler chez moi. Maintenant je suis écoutée par ma famille parce que l'information vient du centre de santé.» C'est en éduquant les filles que nous pourrions sauver toutes les générations à venir.

Par conséquent, Madame la Commissaire, de grâce, assez de discours, des actes. C'est urgent et c'est maintenant!

Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio (PPE). – Señora presidenta, prestamos hoy nuestra voz a los más de doscientos millones de mujeres y niñas que han sufrido mutilación genital femenina, porque es la más grave violación de los derechos humanos. Y no solo de uno, sino de varios: el derecho a la seguridad, a la salud, a la integridad física, y el más importante de todos ellos, el derecho a la vida. No valen más excusas.

Me da igual si es algo cultural, pero ¿cómo unos padres pueden decirle a una niña que la van a mutilar y poner a sus cuatro hermanos de centinelas para que la vigilen? ¿Cómo la pueden golpear con un cable eléctrico y reducirla para que llegue la mutiladora y le quite el clítoris? El cuerpo de esta niña, Janeth, sobrevivió, pero su alma se quedó en el camino. En más de veintinueve países de África y Asia se sigue practicando. Y las leyes no se cumplen. Y no podemos decir que es algo lejano. Hay más de quinientas mil niñas que la han sufrido en suelo europeo. En mi país, España, dieciocho mil niñas están en riesgo de ser mutiladas.

Por eso, hay que luchar con firmeza. Y no se trata solo de tolerancia cero, sino de impunidad cero. Para ello es muy importante la formación de policías, jueces, funcionarios de asilo, doctores, educadores... En la prevención, la educación y la sensibilización está la clave. Pero todo ello debe ir de la mano del Derecho penal. Las víctimas, en su mayoría menores, tienen derecho a vivir protegidas y el Estado debe velar por ellas. No es un problema local, señorías, es un problema mundial, y por ello necesitamos estar todos a bordo para evitar que millones de niñas sigan perdiendo a diario no solo su dignidad, sino también la vida.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, è già stato detto che mezzo milione di donne nell'Unione europea e 200 milioni nel mondo hanno subito il trauma della mutilazione genitale. Queste mutilazioni riflettono profonde disuguaglianze di genere e sono una forma estrema di discriminazione nei confronti delle donne e delle ragazze. Queste pratiche violano anche i loro diritti alla salute e alla sicurezza e all'integrità fisica, ed è fondamentale che la comunità internazionale, i governi e la società civile si mobilitino contro questa forma di violenza.

Io penso che la prevenzione di queste violenze debba rimanere una priorità per l'Unione europea. Occorre garantire sostegno alle ONG attive in questo campo, promuovere iniziative coordinate e sistematiche con i paesi terzi nei quali si praticano le mutilazioni genitali femminili e continuare a praticare progetti concreti di prevenzione e sensibilizzazione.

Ad esempio, una buona pratica portata avanti in Europa è lo studio condotto l'anno scorso dall'Istituto europeo per l'uguaglianza di genere, inteso a fornire una stima del numero di ragazze a rischio di mutilazione in sei paesi dell'Unione. Continuiamo dunque a lavorare su progetti concreti che portino allo sradicamento di questa atroce pratica e bisogna investire in assistenza, in cultura e in istruzione, con maggiore determinazione. L'Europa non può non tener conto dei dati preoccupanti che emergono ogni giorno e deve rafforzare la cooperazione intersettoriale.

Infine, io credo che sia giusto sottolineare che questo delle MGF è solo un aspetto delle grandi questioni che investono le donne e le politiche discriminatorie nei loro confronti. E questo non possiamo assolutamente dimenticarlo.

Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Commissaire, chers collègues, le message sur nos tee-shirts est clair: faisons cesser au plus vite les mutilations génitales féminines. Ou devrions-nous plutôt dire «mutilations sexuelles»? En effet – j'insiste sur ce point –, ce sont les organes sexuels de ces femmes qui sont détruits et c'est le reflet d'une inégalité entre les sexes profondément enracinée.

Au mois d'octobre, au Parlement, j'ai entendu le récit d'une victime d'excision expliquant comment elle a surveillé ses deux jeunes filles jour et nuit, dans la rue, devant l'école, devant sa maison pour éviter qu'elles ne se fassent enlever et exciser. C'est un récit glaçant. Que devons-nous faire pour ces millions de victimes, aussi en Europe? Investir dans l'éducation, évidemment, changer les mentalités, aussi, promouvoir les droits sexuels et reproductifs et adapter notre arsenal législatif.

La convention d'Istanbul est un traité international juridiquement contraignant qui appelle à la pénalisation des mutilations sexuelles afin qu'elles soient dûment sanctionnées. La ratification, par les États membres qui ne l'auraient pas encore fait – et ils sont encore trop nombreux – et par l'Union européenne, sera donc une étape fondamentale. Il faut la ratifier et la mettre en œuvre au plus vite pour que les auteurs soient punis.

Michela Giuffrida (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, in questa sede la tutela dei diritti umani deve sempre avere una posizione prioritaria. Le mutilazioni genitali femminili sono tutt'altro che una pratica riconducibile a motivi di salute, come qualcuno dice, ma al contrario possono avere spesso effetti terribili sulla salute e sul benessere anche psichico delle bambine che le subiscono. Vengono effettuate per ragioni culturali, religiose e sociali. Si tratta di violenza pura e sola su chi le subisce.

Ritengo fondamentale il richiamo ad uno sforzo congiunto tra Commissione e Stati membri, perché questa pratica barbara abbia fine, in ossequio a quanto previsto dalla Convenzione di Istanbul sulla lotta contro la violenza di genere. Dobbiamo impegnarci, oltre che per porre fine a questa pratica tribale, ancora oggi in uso anche in paesi evoluti, per dare un efficace sostegno alle vittime e per agevolare quel cambiamento culturale che ci compete tra i nostri compiti, necessario perché non si debba più parlare di MGF.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospođo predsjednice, genitalno sakaćenje brutalan je oblik nasilja nad ženama i djevojčicama kojemu ne smije biti mjesta u Europi 21. stoljeća. Vjerujem da svi u ovome domu dijelimo stajalište o potrebi bolje prevencije i edukacije, važnosti osnaživanja žena, ali i nužnosti strožeg sankcioniranja onih koji žene i djevojčice prisilno podvrgavaju tom zvjerskom postupku.

No sigurna sam da se nećemo složiti u tome kako je to pitanje uopće postalo važan Europski izazov. U pokušaju razvodnjavanja dominantne kršćanske kulture i vrijednosnog udaljavanja Europe od njezinih korijena, liberali su desetljećima zagovarali labavu imigracijsku politiku i pravo kulturnih i vjerskih manjina na život prema vlastitim pravilima. Pošast genitalnog sakaćenja žena u Europi tek je jedna od manifestacija takve štetne politike.

Nisu sve svjetske kulture u svom izvornom obliku spojive s europskim sustavom vrijednosti i od njihovih se pripadnika mora zahtijevati da se po dolasku...

(Predsjednica je govornici oduzela riječ.)

Hilde Vautmans (ALDE). – Voorzitter, commissaris, collega's, vandaag op de Internationale Dag tegen genitale vermin-king ben ik heel blij dat we hier in het Europees Parlement onze stem heel hard laten horen. De stem in het debat hier is heel luid en duidelijk geweest.

De cijfers zijn hallucinant: 200 miljoen meisjes wereldwijd, maar ook 180 000 meisjes per jaar in Europa. Dus we moeten inspanningen leveren om dit te stoppen. Deze praktijken zijn hallucinant. Ik heb slachtoffers ontmoet in Afrika. Ik heb een meisje ontmoet die dacht dat ze naar een feestje ging. Maar toen ze daar aankwam, werd ze naar de achterkamer geleid en werd ze met een heel bot, vuil scheermes ontdaan van haar clitoris. Infecties volgden. Gruwelijke taferelen!

Eigenlijk mogen we dit in 2018 niet toelaten. En we weten dat een multidisciplinaire aanpak nodig is. We moeten inzetten op preventie en repressie, op aanpak in Afrikaanse landen, maar ook hier in Europa.

(De spreker wordt door de Voorzitter onderbroken)

Igor Šoltes (Verts/ALE). – Pri pohabljanju ženskih spolovil ne moremo drugače govoriti o tem kot o nečem nedopustnem, zavrženem. Gre za poseg v digniteto posameznika, poseg v temeljne pravice, v pravico do normalne prihodnosti.

Za tako ravnanje seveda ni opravičila in ne moremo poiskati ne v verski ne v sami tradiciji. Gre torej za dejanje, ki mu ne moremo drugače reči kot nasilje, in skupaj seveda moramo končati s to bolečo prakso v Evropi, pa tudi skupaj z Združenimi narodi v okviru drugih držav.

To dejanje seveda je potrebno obsoditi, ker če pomislimo, da najmanj 200 milijonov deklic in žensk živi s temi poškodbami, moramo ravnati takoj, ker bo ta številka v prihodnosti še višja, in veliko moramo delati na izobraževanju, na ozaveščanju in tudi na področju zdravstva in poskrbeti za kazenski okvir in kaznovanje.

Λάμπρος Φουντούλης (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η Waris Dirie με τη διάσημη αυτοβιογραφία της «Λουλούδι της ερήμου» το 1997, έσπασε τη σιωπή σχετικά με το βάρβαρο έθιμο της κλειτοριδεκτομής. Από τότε έχουν περάσει 21 χρόνια, ο δυτικός κόσμος ευαισθητοποιήθηκε, ο ΟΗΕ διεξήγαγε επίμονες καμπάνιες ενημέρωσης, όμως το έθιμο -αν μπορεί κάποιος να το χαρακτηρίσει έτσι- δεν ξεριζώθηκε. Η παράδοση επιβιώνει σε 28 αφρικανικές χώρες, σε χώρες της Μέσης Ανατολής και της Ασίας, κυρίως στην Υεμένη, το ιρακινό Κουρδιστάν και στην Ινδονησία. Επεκτείνεται όμως από τις αφρικανικές χώρες και σε περιοχές που δεν είχαν μέχρι σήμερα τέτοια παράδοση, όπως στο Ιράκ. Κορίτσια ανήξερα, ανήμπορα και τρομοκρατημένα δεν αντιστέκονται στο ξυράφι, στο μαχαίρι, στο κομμάτι γυαλι ή σε ό,τι αποτελεί το όργανο του μαρτυρίου. Από τη βρεφική ηλικία

μέχρι την ηλικία των δεκαπέντε ετών υφίστανται την επέμβαση, κάτω από άθλιες συνθήκες, υπό την πίεση ολόκληρης της κοινότητάς τους και κυρίως της οικογένειας. Δυστυχώς και σήμερα, στις χώρες της Ευρώπης όπου υπάρχουν μεγάλες κοινότητες μεταναστών, εξακολουθούν να γίνονται κλειτοριδεκτομές, ακόμα και από γιατρούς. Ο Παγκόσμιος Οργανισμός Υγείας εκτιμά ότι 150 εκατομμύρια γυναίκες στον πλανήτη έχουν υποστεί κλειτοριδεκτομή και ότι κάθε χρόνο ο αριθμός αυξάνεται κατά 2 εκατομμύρια.

Gabriela Zoană (S&D). – Doamnă președintă, domnilor comisari, dragi colegi, în data de 6 februarie este marcată Ziua Internațională a Toleranței Zero față de Mutilarea Genitală a Femeilor. Cred că aceasta este o zi importantă, în care toate femeile din Uniunea Europeană ne dorim să creștem gradul de conștientizare a cetățenilor, indiferent de vârstă sau categorie socială, cu privire la încălcarea drepturilor omului în aceste situații, care pun în pericol grav viața și demnitatea femeii. O mai bună înțelegere a fenomenului va ajuta la prevenirea și combaterea lui.

Statisticile sunt îngrijorătoare. Cel puțin 200 de milioane de fete care sunt astăzi în viață, din 30 de state, au suferit mutilarea organelor genitale. Consider că la nivelul Uniunii nu există suficiente date care să arate dimensiunea și natura acestui fenomen, cu atât mai mult cu cât majoritatea femeilor nu raportează cazurile respective și nici nu se simt încurajate să facă acest lucru. Este și motivul pentru care datele oficiale ale sistemului judiciar penal înregistrează puține cazuri care sunt raportate.

Nu trebuie să uităm totodată că, de multe ori, autoritățile au considerat organizațiile neguvernamentale drept...

(oratorul a fost întrerupt de către președinte).

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, με αφορμή τη διεθνή ημέρα κατά του ακρωτηριασμού των γυναικείων γεννητικών οργάνων, η Ένωση οφείλει να στείλει αποφασιστικό μήνυμα μηδενικής ανοχής απέναντι σε όσους επιβάλλουν τέτοιες πρακτικές. Στην παρούσα φάση, 140 εκατομμύρια γυναίκες και κορίτσια στον κόσμο υφίστανται αυτή τη μορφή έμφυλης βίας. Απαιτείται, λοιπόν, η επιβολή σκληρών ποινών στους υπεύθυνους. Επιπλέον, χρειάζεται προστασία των θυμάτων. Κυρίως όμως, πρέπει να δρομολογηθεί μια εκτεταμένη εκστρατεία πρόληψης, μια και ο γενετήσιος ακρωτηριασμός εφαρμόζεται λόγω συγκεκριμένων αναχρονιστικών παραδόσεων, ως επί το πλείστον σε χώρες της Αφρικής. Συνακόλουθα, τα κράτη μέλη οφείλουν να κυρώσουν και να θέσουν σε άμεση εφαρμογή τη Σύμβαση της Κωνσταντινούπολης για την καταπολέμηση της έμφυλης βίας. Επιπλέον μέτρα απαιτείται να ληφθούν από την Ένωση και από την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή, χωρίς όμως τα μέτρα αυτά να αποτελούν άλλοθι ή ακόμη και κίνητρο για την ενθάρρυνση της παράνομης μετανάστευσης γυναικών προς την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση.

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea (ALDE). – Señora presidenta, hoy en la Unión Europea las cuchillas amenazan con mutilar a más de 180 000 niñas, aquí en nuestro territorio. La mutilación genital femenina es una terrible amenaza para la salud y para la integridad de las niñas y las mujeres que la sufren, porque no solamente tiene enormes consecuencias, como quistes, infecciones, infertilidad, sino que es una gravísima vulneración de los derechos humanos, que procede, además, de una visión aberrante de la mujer: se las ve como propiedad de padres y maridos y se las considera como objetos que incitan al pecado. Ignorarlo o atenuarlo es todo menos progresista, compañeros.

Las Naciones Unidas contemplan la erradicación de esta práctica en su Agenda 2030 y el Convenio de Estambul obliga a todos los países firmantes a criminalizar la ablación y proteger a las niñas, es decir, nos obliga a nosotros, a la Unión Europea, a prevenir y proteger y a perseguir y penalizar a los que perpetran cualquier forma de violencia contra la mujer.

Señores, yo creo que la causa feminista debe ser global, no local, y les animo a todos a compartir este rechazo porque también es nuestro problema.

(End of catch-the-eye procedure)

Věra Jourová, Member of the Commission. – Madam President, I think it is extremely important that we have had this debate, and I thank all the honourable Members for their contributions because we need to understand what we are facing when we talk about female genital mutilation. What we are facing is not just habit or stereotype or tradition: it is the problem of taboo, and taboo is something which is deeply rooted in society and is sustainable over centuries.

Some of you spoke about the need to change the culture. I fully agree with that, but it will need more time and more intensive action, and also public debate because one of the features of the taboo is that it is something we do not speak about, something we do not want to hear about, something which we close our eyes to, and we don't want to deal with the problem. That is why it is so important to discuss it.

Also, I want to thank all of you who emphasised the importance of the Istanbul Convention and its ratification in all the Member States. I can tell you I feel a certain bitterness after some recent debates in certain Member States, because I heard opinions from some national parliaments that the Istanbul Convention goes against the traditional family, or against the best traditions in the EU. We have to fight that opinion and we have to convince those who want to defend traditional family, by saying that it is not a good tradition to accept and tolerate violence against women and children. We still have many Member States which have not yet ratified the convention, so I want to ask all of you, who can influence public opinion and political decision making in your states, to please do that, because we need it.

The Istanbul Convention is a very efficient legislative instrument, not only against female genital mutilation but also against forced marriages, forced abortions and forced sterilisation – all those horrible things which women in the EU still have to face. We must help to ensure they are not exposed to such practices, and female genital mutilation is a particularly barbaric habit that we have to get rid of.

Let's protect good traditions in the EU. Let's not protect traditions which serve as an excuse for barbaric habits.

I agree with all of you who spoke about the need to come forward with efficient actions along the lines of prevention, protection and prosecution. I fully agree. I am sure that the Commission will propose a series of actions along those lines.

To conclude, I would like to share with you some experience from practice, taking the example of the field of prevention. We try to involve men, as well as women, in prevention, and we have heard many good reflections from fathers who have started to fight against this practice, saying that their daughters must not be exposed to it. This is a good sign, although we need many more to get on board.

As for prosecution, it has some downsides because what we see in practice is that girls are taken for a holiday to Africa, where this procedure is done. The crime has thus been committed outside the EU, where there is no European jurisdiction, and it is extremely difficult to prove that those who took the girls to Africa knew what was going on. It is difficult to prove, and we have to do much better in that regard.

There is also a connection with prevention and the need to ensure that society does not turn a blind eye, because very often it is known beforehand that a girl is planning to go to Africa. At school, or in the neighbourhood, people may be aware of this. We therefore need society too to be active and to help potential victims of this horrible practice.

My last comment is on prosecution. Some of you spoke about female genital mutilation being both physical and psychological torture. We have horrible cases in which family members – mothers, grandmothers, fathers – have been prosecuted for this practice, or for assisting with it on their daughter or granddaughter. Then the victims have experienced further trauma by seeing their mothers or fathers prosecuted. These are the reflections from practice which show that this is an extremely complex phenomenon, requiring a very careful but proactive approach. I am sure that, when we join forces in making the links between prevention, protection and prosecution, we can change a lot, but we have to work together.

Thank you very much, once again, for this debate.

President. – I have received one motion for a resolution tabled in accordance with Rule 128(5) of the Rules of Procedure.

The debate is closed.

The vote will take place on Wednesday, 7 February 2017.

Written statements (Rule 162)

Carlos Coelho (PPE), *por escrito*. – A Mutilação Genital Feminina é um crime que não pode encontrar justificação na cultura ou tradição. É uma violação dos direitos humanos de mais de 200 milhões de mulheres e raparigas em todo o mundo. Estima-se que mais de 500 mil mulheres na Europa tenham sido vítimas desta prática, com mais de seis mil casos em Portugal. Não podemos aceitar estes números, que nos devem instar a agir de forma mais determinada, quando passa mais um Dia Internacional da Tolerância Zero à Mutilação Genital Feminina.

Se nada fizermos, o número de vítimas não parará de crescer e mais milhões de mulheres verão a sua vida afetada por uma prática bárbara que impede a sua plena afirmação e prejudica a igualdade. Na União Europeia há medidas que temos de tomar. No quadro do Sistema Europeu Comum de Asilo temos de garantir refúgio a quem foge desta prática bárbara. Na cooperação para o desenvolvimento temos de considerar políticas de erradicação. No interior da Europa, temos de garantir que à criminalização corresponde uma fiscalização mais eficaz e uma prevenção e sensibilização mais eficiente.

Eider Gardiazabal Rubial (S&D), *por escrito*. – El 6 de febrero celebramos el Día internacional contra la mutilación genital femenina, una práctica brutal que sufren 200 millones de niñas y mujeres en todo el mundo, también en la UE, donde se estima que 500 000 mujeres y niñas han sido víctimas de esta barbarie. Este año tres millones de niñas pueden convertirse en nuevas víctimas de esta atrocidad, que no admite justificación por tradición, religión, honor y mucho menos para aumentar el valor de una mujer como una mera mercancía. Es la peor forma de violencia de género que existe en estos momentos. Es un crimen contra derechos humanos fundamentales como son la integridad física y la salud sexual y reproductiva, porque estas mujeres sufren terribles dolores durante toda su vida. La ONU afirma que podemos acabar con esta realidad en una generación. Necesitamos una estrategia europea que tenga como objetivo mejorar la prevención y la formación del personal médico y educativo, y que apoye la lucha contra esta práctica inhumana como parte integrante de las Políticas Exterior y de Cooperación y Desarrollo de la UE. También es importante agilizar los trámites para la concesión de asilo a las mujeres que lo solicitan huyendo de esta perversión.

Ivan Jakovčić (ALDE), *napisan*. – Praksa genitalnog sakaćenja žena trebala bi što prije postati stvar prošlosti. Živeći u modernom svijetu, takvih praksi i situacija nekad uopće nismo ni svjesni, a one se događaju u našoj bliskoj okolini.

Podržavam Istanbulsku konvenciju u kojoj se utvrđuje da kultura, običaji, vjera, tradicija ili takozvana „čast” ne mogu biti opravdanje ni za jedan čin nasilja nad ženama te u skladu s člankom 38. iste Konvencije države su članice obvezne kriminalizirati genitalno sakaćenje žena kao i poticanje, prisilu ili utjecanje na djevojčice da se podvrgnu tom postupku. Ta praksa nanosi fizičke, psihičke i emocionalne posljedice koje djevojčice i žene mogu osjećati cijeli život.

Smatram da međunarodne organizacije i države trebaju pojačati svoje napore, prvenstveno stvaranjem poveznica i veza među različitim regijama, dionicima i sektorima radi aktivne međusobne suradnje kako bi se uspjela napustiti nepotrebna praksa. Bitan je rad organizacija koje sa zajednicama na terenu u EU-u i izvan njega rade na prevenciji i podizanju razine osviještenosti naroda.

Integracija sprečavanja genitalnog sakaćenja žena u sve sektore, osobito u zdravstvo (područje spolnog i reproduktivnog zdravlja), socijalni rad, azil, obrazovanje (spolni odgoj), izvršavanje zakonodavstva, pravosuđe, zaštitu djece te medije i komunikaciju pridonijelo bi bržem iskorjenjivanju ove užasne, nepotrebne i za žene štetne, prakse.

Mia Petra Kumpula-Natri (S&D), *kirjallinen*. – EU:ssa on tehtävä kahdenlaista työtä tyttöjen silpomisen lopettamiseksi: silpomista ehkäisevää ja silpomisen uhreja auttavaa. Puhun jalkimmäisestä.

Monissa EU-maissa ympärileikkauksesta puhuminen on silpomista harjoittavissa yhteisöissä tabu ja julkisella tasolla vähäistä. Kenen puoleen esimerkiksi lapsi voi kääntyä siinä tapauksessa, että hänet on silvottu joko hyvin nuorena tai myöhemmin? Koulukavereiden joukossa ei ehkä ole ketään, joka voisi ymmärtää, eikä kouluterveydenhoitajalle tai opettajalle kertominen välttämättä tunnu hyvältä. EU-maiden täytyy aktiivisesti edistää vertaistukiverkostoja. Erityisesti teini-ikässä olevat silvotut ihmiset tarvitsevat muita samassa tilanteessa olevia sekä aikuisia, joiden kanssa voivat käydä asiaa läpi.

Tämän lisäksi on kaikkien jäsenmaiden velvollisuus kartoittaa silpomisen yleisyys sekä kouluttaa terveydenhuollon ammattilaisia kohtaamaan silvottuja ja neuvomaan silpomiseen liittyvän fyysisen ja psyykkisen terveyden asioissa. Tämän lisäksi on varmistettava, että silvotut tietävät, mistä apua ja tietoa saa. Kaikkein tärkeintä on tietenkin silpomisen lopettaminen!

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D), *por escrito*. – El 6 de febrero celebramos el Día internacional contra la mutilación genital femenina, una práctica brutal que sufren 200 millones de niñas y mujeres en todo el mundo, también en la UE, donde se estima que 500 000 mujeres y niñas han sido víctimas de esta barbarie. Este año tres millones de niñas pueden convertirse en nuevas víctimas de esta atrocidad, que no admite justificación por tradición, religión, honor y mucho menos para aumentar el valor de una mujer como una mera mercancía. Es la peor forma de violencia de género que existe en estos momentos. Es un crimen contra derechos humanos fundamentales como son la integridad física y la salud sexual y reproductiva, porque estas mujeres sufren terribles dolores durante toda su vida. La ONU afirma que podemos acabar con esta realidad en una generación. Necesitamos una estrategia europea que tenga como objetivo mejorar la prevención y la formación del personal médico y educativo, y que apoye la lucha contra esta práctica inhumana como parte integrante de las Políticas Exterior y de Cooperación y Desarrollo de la UE. También es importante agilizar los trámites para la concesión de asilo a las mujeres que lo solicitan huyendo de esta perversión.

Urmas Paet (ALDE), *kirjalikult*. – Naiste suguelundite moonutamise on mitmes ühiskonnas siiani äärmiselt levinud, olles samas tervistkahjustav, ohtlik ning alandav. Hoolimata sellest, et suguelundite moonutamise esinemissagedus on vähenenud, on see siiski suur probleem, mis vajab lahendamist.

Resolutsioon kutsub üles pidama kinni ÜRO kestliku arengu tegevuskavast aastani 2030, millega võideldakse soopõhise vägivalla vastu, ning pöörama probleemile tähelepanu eelkõige sellistes valdkondades nagu tervishoid, sotsiaaltöö, varjupaigamenetlus, haridus, õiguskaitse, lastekaitse ning meedia ja kommunikatsioon.

Probleemi teadvustamiseks ja kaotamiseks nendes ühiskondades on oluline inimesi harida, teha ennetus- ja selgitustööd. Lisaks tütarlaste ja naiste harimisele on oluline koolitada ka sotsiaal- ja meditsiinitöötajaid, kogukonna- ja usujuhte ning politsei- ja õiguskaitseametnikke. Ning mõistagi on oluline, et ELi liikmesriigid, kes ei ole veel ratifitseerinud Euroopa Nõukogu naistevastase vägivalla ennetamise ja tõkestamise Istanbuli konventsiooni, seda viivitamatult teeksid.

João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL), *por escrito*. – Segundo a UNICEF, cerca de 200 milhões de meninas no mundo terão sido vítimas de Mutilação Genital Feminina, havendo relatos de 80 casos de meninas vítimas em Portugal no ano de 2016.

A mutilação genital feminina é uma das mais sórdidas formas de violência contra as mulheres, praticada na infância, que inflige danos emocionais para toda a vida e atinge os mais vulneráveis: raparigas até aos 15 anos. Constitui uma grave violação dos seus direitos, que provoca infeções, doenças, complicações no parto e lesões irreparáveis à sua saúde física, sexual e psicológica, podendo mesmo provocar a sua morte.

É importante definir objetivos, medidas e compromissos concretos para a erradicação da mutilação genital feminina, com uma forte ênfase na saúde e nos direitos sexuais e reprodutivos das mulheres em todo o mundo. É fundamental criminalizar e punir os criminosos, mas também prevenir. Levar ações de sensibilização e consciencialização às comunidades onde se perpetram estes crimes. Educar novas gerações para os direitos das mulheres.

A luta pela erradicação da mutilação genital feminina é inseparável da luta pela proteção e pelo reforço dos direitos sexuais e reprodutivos das mulheres, pelo acesso à educação e, em particular, à educação sexual, e pela melhoria da saúde materno-infantil, por um caminho de progresso e justiça social.

Evelyn Regner (S&D), *schriftlich*. – *Female genital mutilation*, die weibliche Genitalverstümmelung, ist eine grausame Verletzung der Menschenrechte von Mädchen und Frauen. Weltweit sind über 200 Millionen von dieser folgenschweren Form der Gewalt betroffen. Jährlich werden bis zu 3 Millionen Mädchen beschnitten. Weibliche Genitalverstümmelung bedeutet lebenslange, teils lebensgefährliche Folgen für die Opfer. Es ist ein weltweites Problem, das auch vor den Toren Europas nicht Halt macht. Schätzungsweise leben über 500 000 Frauen in Europa, die von dieser Gewalt betroffen sind. Weibliche Genitalverstümmelung muss ein Ende haben! Sorgen wir gemeinsam dafür, Mädchen genau so zu lassen, wie sie geboren wurden: perfekt!

Bart Staes (Verts/ALE), *schriftelijk*. – Genitale verminking bij vrouwen (VGV), waarbij met opzet de vrouwelijke geslachtsdelen worden verwond zonder medische redenen, is ingegeven vanuit culturele, religieuze of sociale motieven, en gebeurt bij jonge meisjes tot 15 jaar. Gezondheidsvoordelen zijn er niet. Integendeel, het kan ernstige problemen veroorzaken. Infecties op korte termijn, maar ook seksuele problemen op latere leeftijd. Volgens Unicef zijn zo'n 200 miljoen meisjes en vrouwen wereldwijd slachtoffer van genitale verminking. De helft van deze vrouwen woont in drie landen: Egypte, Ethiopië en Indonesië.

Vandaag is het internationale dag tegen vrouwelijke genitale verminking. De vraag aan de Commissie voor nultolerantie is dus terecht en ik steun de bijbehorende resolutie ten volle. In de resolutie worden de EU en de lidstaten die het Verdrag van Istanbul omtrent de bestrijding van gendergerelateerd geweld nog niet hebben ondertekend, opgeroepen dit alsnog te doen. Dat verdrag bevat een grond om VGV strafbaar te maken. Verder wordt erop aangedrongen om de medicalisering van VGV uitdrukkelijk strafbaar te stellen en om de hoogste normen van bescherming in te stellen voor asielzoekers die op aan VGV gerelateerde gronden asiel aanvragen, in het kader van de hervorming van het gemeenschappelijk Europees asielstelsel en de herziening van de asielrichtlijnen, en via het nieuwe EU-Asielagentschap.

Josef Weidenholzer (S&D), *schriftlich*. – Nach Angaben der Weltgesundheitsorganisation leben derzeit weltweit 140 - Millionen Frauen und Mädchen mit den Folgen von weiblicher Genitalverstümmelung. Dies ist eine folgenschwere Form von Gewalt an Frauen und Mädchen und bedeutet lebenslange, teils lebensgefährliche Folgen für die Opfer. Jahr für Jahr werden bis zu 3 Millionen Mädchen zusätzlich beschnitten. Diese grausame Verletzung der Menschenrechte der Frauen macht auch vor Europa nicht halt. Das Europäische Institut für Gleichstellungsfragen geht von Opfern in mindestens 13 - EU-Ländern und mehr als 500 000 betroffenen Frauen aus. Weibliche Genitalverstümmelung ist eine Straftat in allen EU-Mitgliedstaaten. Dennoch braucht es mehr als Gesetze, um dieser aus Traditionen heraus begründeten Gewalt an Frauen und Mädchen endlich ein Ende zu setzen.

Kristina Winberg (EFDD), *skriftlig*. – Dags att ta krafttag mot kvinnlig könsstympning, en gång för alla! Det medvetna våldet mot flickor och kvinnor genom könsstympning kan ej längre få förekomma i medlemsländerna.

Medlemsländerna kan agera på ett enat sätt i denna viktiga fråga. FN och WHO uppskattar att 125-140 miljoner kvinnor och flickor har blivit könsstympade och är skadade för livet, för alltid. Den så kallade EIGE-rapporten visar att 13 medlemsstater i EU på ett eller annat sätt tillåter att detta sker. Sverige är ett av de länderna med den största delen migranter som härrör från så kallade FGM/C-riskområden. Detta måste få ett slut.

Det är viktigt att poängtera att detta inte är en fråga som ligger till grund för asylrätt, främst för att detta kommer att uppmuntra könsstympning i syfte att få asyl. Könsstympning är endast att se som ett grovt brott och inget annat.

Medlemsländerna kan gå samman för att visa att detta inte är acceptabelt, då det inte är värdigt ett modernt Europa, att unga flickor blir könsstympade.

12. Besluit over de EU-uitbreidingsstrategie – Westelijke Balkan (debat)

President. – The next item is the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the decision adopted on the EU Enlargement Strategy – Western Balkans (2018/2517(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. – Madam President, let me start by thanking Parliament for the opportunity we have to share something that is very important in our eyes and which we have adopted today: a strategy on the Western Balkans. This is a fundamental pillar, I would say, of the work that Commissioner Hahn and I together with the President and all of our colleagues have done in these months and years to reconfirm, recommit and give strong credibility to the European Union perspective of the entire region of the Western Balkans.

I say European Union perspective, I do not say European perspective, because we have to start from the simple truth and the self-evidence that the Western Balkans are European already. They are part of Europe historically and geographically. If you look at the borders, the Western Balkans are within the Member States of the European Union. We share a cultural heritage, we share the same interests at present, and we share some of the challenges at present, and we will share a common future inside our European Union.

There is in the Western Balkan strategy which we have just adopted, a clear path indicated for the Western Balkans and for all our six partners in the Western Balkans to finally join the European Union on a merit-based process but with a clear, political commitment on our side to have this perspective credible and finally coming through. Over the last three years, we have achieved already incredible results. Our investments are increasing in the Western Balkans, our economic ties are as strong as they have ever been. Our trade is constantly growing – I believe it's 75% or something like this. Our security is more and more connected and our foreign and security policy is more and more coordinated. Out of the six, two of the Western Balkan partners we have – Montenegro and Albania – are 100% aligned with our common foreign and security policy positions.

This means that we are together already, and we have seen this very clearly. A couple of years ago, when we called on them to manage together the refugee flows that were crossing the Balkans, we realised that we were one. We were, as we say in the Mediterranean, on the same boat. We were on the same side of the problem and of the solution. So now we are facing a reality which is that the Western Balkans are European. They want to clearly invest in the future membership of their countries in the European Union. The people, especially the younger generations, are determined to see their future inside the European Union and the leaderships have shown commitment and political courage to make the reforms needed to bring their countries in that direction. This strategy today gives a shared, unequivocal, concrete perspective for European Union integration for each and every one of the six partners. It has its own pace, with its own specificities and different conditions but the direction is clear, and it is one direction. I would like to stress this, because the strategy addressing the entire region and each of the six individual is an important element if we want to understand the sense of direction of the region. The region will succeed together or fail together. There is no possibility for dividing the prospects. Again, obviously it is merit-based, but history and geography tells us the perspective is one, and as one we address this situation in the strategy.

Of course, at the core of all of this process is the need for reforms; not the European Union need for reforms but the citizens of the Western Balkans' need for reforms. Wherever you travel in the Western Balkans, young people especially tell you that they feel Europeans. They want to have the same opportunities, the same guarantees, the same standards and rights, the same rights, the same fundamental freedoms, the same systems of governance and the same environment that our friends, colleagues and relatives share inside the European Union, and this means the citizens of the Western Balkan countries are asking for reforms so that they can enjoy the same rights, protections and standards as the citizens of the European Union.

Over the last few years Commissioner Hahn and I have been travelling very often to the entire region. We have seen and we are seeing a lot of ongoing reforms, with courage and determination and in the best cases with an approach that is an approach of national unity, because these challenges are never wise to be taken as political divides but more as a generational challenge for the leaderships of these countries. All of this has told us a simple truth. As I mentioned, the people and the leaders of the Western Balkans have made a clear choice – the choice of bringing their countries inside the European Union – and today we are telling them that we have made the same choice. We are not setting a target nor a deadline, but we are setting a realistic perspective of timing – 2025 as a perspective. The process is merit-based and it depends on the pace and the success of negotiations and reforms, and let me stress this very clearly that this is a realistic perspective which is true for the countries that are currently negotiating, but also for the countries that will start negotiations in the coming months – and I believe and hope that there will be others starting negotiations soon – which will have exactly the same realistic timeframe and perspective. As I said, this is a challenge and this is a process, not for one or two countries, but for the entire region.

In the past few years, as I was saying, we have seen great determination and commitment from citizens and from leaders in the region. It has not always been easy. Actually, it has been very difficult from time to time. There have been political crises; there have been difficult political and electoral cycles; there have been slower and faster periods of progress. Overall, though, the sense of direction in these years has been absolutely clear. All of the six have always kept moving forward towards the European Union integration path. The sense of direction has been clear. The point is sustaining the sense of direction, bringing results and walking this path together. When we talk about the path towards the European Union, there is plenty of *langue de bois* – benchmarks, chapters, criteria. Once someone from the region told me: ‘my citizens couldn’t care less about how many chapters we open or we close. They don’t “get” what it means by opening or closing chapters’. I think that many citizens actually get it very well, but the point is that this is not about technicalities or bureaucracy. This is real life; things that have an impact on societies that transform societies from within. It’s about guaranteeing opportunities and European standards in different fields from the economy to fundamental rights and freedoms, just to mention a couple of them. The whole process might sound technical, but it is indeed not abstract at all. It has concrete impact, it is real and it is already taking place. The process itself is leading to transformation that is positive, both for the economies and for the societies and for the governance.

This strategy reconfirms a commitment and makes it explicit and clear. As I said, the door is open, we want you in. There is a need for some work to be done on both sides and we are ready to do this work together, but it also means a couple of months of very intense work that we have ahead of us. We have come somehow to the moment of truth: 2018 can be the year when this process becomes not only more credible, but also irreversible.

We will have the Commission’s annual report in April; we will have the EU Western Balkans Summit in Sofia – the first one for 15 years, Thessaloniki was the last one – and ultimately possible Council decisions in June. The strategy supports this agenda with very concrete initiatives that I imagine Commissioner Hahn will describe in more detail. Six of them will cover all the key areas and I would just mention the headlines: rule of law, security, social and economic development, connectivity and the digital agenda – and let me translate this as it also means, for example, bringing the costs of roaming down which is one of the very concrete things that has an impact on the citizen’s life – support for reconciliation and good neighbourly relations.

We have ahead of us very intense and ambitious months. Together we can make 2018 a turning point – the moment when the progress towards EU membership becomes irreversible and tangible for all. Our message is: ‘Let’s make it happen’. We are not passing a message saying that you need to be patient. This is not the message we are passing to our friends in the Western Balkans. The message is: ‘Let’s make it happen’. Let’s bring the Western Balkans inside the European Union not in a faraway future but in our generation on the basis of serious, concrete and tough work that we are ready to do together with our partners in the region.

Let me add two last words. One is that this is a reflection also on the future of Europe, and it is not by chance that President Juncker mentioned this in his State of the Union speech here in this Parliament in September. This means that the European Union is imagining and considering its future not with 27 Member States but potentially with more, and we say this clearly in the strategy and are starting to get ready for that. Obviously, this doesn’t only depend on us. It depends on the path we will walk together. However, we are serious on this and I guess this is the first time, in these difficult times, that we are seriously having a reflection on that and I think this is a major step forward.

My second and last point is that this is a challenge, and a generational challenge, not just for the Commission, not just for our partners in the Western Balkans, and not just for the Council. This is also a challenge for the European Parliament and I believe that we need to be in this together. The role that the European Parliament has played in our relations with the Western Balkans has been critical. I believe we need to continue working together to make this a success and to make this happen.

IN THE CHAIR: PAVEL TELIČKA*Vice-President*

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, from my side thank you for the opportunity to discuss the very timely Western Balkans Strategy adopted by the Commission today. I would like to use the opportunity to thank the House for all your valuable support in the past couple of years, for your interest, and your dedication in dealing with this issue. In particular, I know many Members are travelling to the region, working and dealing with people, including colleagues, in the region, and it is extremely important to embrace our friends in the region in this way in order to make progress.

I believe today is a big day for the countries of the Western Balkans and also for the European Union. Maybe some colleagues in the Western Balkans have not yet discovered the fact that it is a big day, but some things take time.

That we have decided on and adopted the Balkans Strategy today is, in a way, a window of opportunity, in particular for the countries in the region. We confirm that the door to our Union remains open: it is open beyond any doubt, with, as Federica Mogherini has already said, a 2025 perspective. Not more, but not less, and I think this is important to recall.

Our six partners in the region are already part of Europe, not only geographically but also emotionally and culturally. They are surrounded institutionally by EU Member States. Also, the European project would not be complete without them. We have a common heritage, a history, and a common future defined by our shared opportunities and challenges. The migration crisis, for example, has shown very clearly that there are certain topics on which, in a way, borders do not exist when it comes to addressing a particular topic affecting all of us.

The Union has repeatedly affirmed this European perspective and we have created positive momentum over the last few years, in difficult times. But we must now go a strategic step further. We must use our 'soft power' of attraction, this magnetic force of the European Union, more efficiently and smartly. Because inclusion is the best security policy for European citizens.

The firm, merit-based prospect of EU membership is in our own political, security and economic interest. It is a geostrategic investment in a strong, united Europe, based on common values, and we must not leave a vacuum on our doorstep for others to step into.

That is why today we reaffirm this shared European perspective, this commitment to a Union that is ready to expand. Let's be clear: a credible enlargement perspective is not a free lunch. It requires a tough transformation from our partners. They must now 'walk the talk' and deliver.

The criteria are clear and they will not change: they are not technical, but are essentially about European values. It is important to stress that the Balkans Strategy is not an invitation or an opportunity to soften our conditions or our agreements – quite the opposite. It must be clear that we will stick to what has been agreed and what is necessary for the future.

Therefore, progress along their EU path depends fully on the objective merits and concrete results achieved by each individual country. There are no shortcuts on this European path. Despite all the progress in the countries, a lot remains to be done, and we are very clear about this in the strategy.

The Western Balkans countries must now urgently tackle the key areas, starting with the rule of law, fundamental rights and the fight against corruption and organised crime. Also, on economic reforms and tackling high unemployment the countries must make significant progress.

One thing is especially important. All countries must work even harder on reconciliation and ensure good neighbourly relations. All pending bilateral issues must be settled in a binding way ahead of accession. Let's be clear, and I think this was already stressed and mentioned today by President Juncker: the European Union and its Member States will simply refuse to import unresolved status issues, so any new Member State has to resolve its bilateral conflicts and issues with neighbouring countries.

The Union itself must also improve its support. This strategy therefore includes, as already mentioned by the High Representative, six new flagship initiatives with, altogether, 57 very concrete individual, innovative actions. It is about the rule of law, security and migration; a focus on socio-economic development; increasing connectivity, including the aforementioned digital agenda and pushing harder for reconciliation.

The Union itself needs to ensure that it will be ready – institutionally and financially – to welcome new Member States once the conditions are met. This will include specific provisions in the next multiannual financial framework, and refocused pre-accession aid before that. Until 2020, we will not need additional money but we will be able to provide the necessary financial means – it is about EUR 500 million – by restructuring and by further and better targeting of our current budget.

I want to be very clear about another key point of the strategy: all Western Balkans countries can move on the EU path in a 2025 perspective. Yes, Montenegro and Serbia are the current so-called front-runners, but others can catch up, and present front-runners can fall behind if they don't deliver. So it is not 100% sure who will cross the finishing line first. As a sailor, I might say: enlargement remains a regatta and not a convoy.

So once again, 2025 is not a fixed target. It is an incentive. There are no guarantees. It is actually very ambitious, but doable: a best-case scenario, if you like. Whether it is achieved or not will depend entirely on the merits and results of each country. We are not giving a present to the Western Balkans. Joining the EU is a generational choice based on fundamental values. We are making them a sincere and transparent offer.

The Union, but especially the leaders of the region, must now show and assume responsibility for making this historical opportunity a reality, and respond to the European aspirations of their citizens. In that respect, I strongly believe that this perspective date can provide the necessary positive pressure in order to tackle all the necessary issues and reform necessities. In this strategic project, once again, we both count on the continued support of this House because, as was said, a lot has been done but much more will have to be done in the next couple of months and years.

David McAllister, *im Namen der PPE-Fraktion.* – Herr Präsident, meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Federica Mogherini und Johannes Hahn haben beide eben darauf hingewiesen: Die sechs Staaten des westlichen Balkans sind wichtige Partner der Europäischen Union. Wir sind geografisch, kulturell und wirtschaftlich eng verbunden. Die Stabilität, Sicherheit und der Wohlstand unseres gesamten Kontinents können langfristig nur dann gesichert werden, wenn wir als Europäische Union diese sechs Länder dabei unterstützen, strukturelle Herausforderungen und regionale Spannungen zu überwinden.

Mit der heute vorgelegten Strategie zeigt die Kommission einen konkreten Pfad und einen detaillierten Aktionsplan für diese Staaten auf, um EU-Mitglied werden zu können. Damit wird ihre europäische Perspektive untermauert. Aus eigener Erfahrung als ständiger Berichterstatter für Serbien weiß ich, die Aussicht auf einen EU-Beitritt hat bereits dazu beigetragen, notwendige politische und wirtschaftliche Reformen umzusetzen und das alltägliche Leben der Menschen zu verbessern.

Diese Anreize gilt es aufrecht zu erhalten und weiter auszubauen, und deshalb ist die nun vorgelegte Strategie ein wichtiges Signal. Ich möchte ausdrücklich Federica Mogherini und Johannes Hahn und allen weiteren Beteiligten für die gute Vorarbeit danken.

Gleichwohl sind die Vorgaben klar: Der konkrete Beitrittstermin eines neuen Mitgliedstaates wird ausschließlich davon abhängen, wann das jeweilige Land die strengen rechtlichen, politischen und wirtschaftlichen Voraussetzungen tatsächlich und vollständig erfüllt. So unterschiedlich die sechs Länder des westlichen Balkans auch sind, sie alle einen ähnliche Herausforderungen. Diese gilt es eben nachhaltig anzugehen: die Rechtsstaatlichkeit stärken, der Kampf gegen Korruption und organisierte Kriminalität, Meinungs- und Medienfreiheit garantieren, die Volkswirtschaften wettbewerbsfähiger zu machen und bilaterale Konflikt im Sinne gutnachbarschaftlicher Beziehungen zu lösen. Hierbei muss jeder der sechs Westbalkanstaaten nach seinen eigenen Leistungen beurteilt werden. Wir sollten sie dabei ermutigen und aktiv dabei unterstützen.

Victor Boştinaru, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Mr President, it is not by chance that we are discussing today the strategy on the enlargement towards the Western Balkans during the Bulgarian Presidency. It is certain that enlargement towards the Balkans will remain a priority of the Union in 2018 and equally in 2019 during the Romanian Presidency.

While looking to the future, I can only start by stating the obvious, and the most important thing, namely that our Union is not completed nor safe or stable without the Western Balkans. This region is key for the stability and the security of our Union and for its citizens. And the integration of the Western Balkans into Europe is in the interests of both sides. This is why the S&D Group has always been the first promoter of enlargement as one of the most successful EU policies.

Today we are facing common challenges in the region which include migration, radicalisation, the rise of nationalism, tensions and terrorism. It is important not to lose momentum and come together with a common answer to the very many problems. We are the only reliable and credible partner in the region for the region. This strategy is a step in the right direction, but we need to do more than talk, and this has to be reflected in the future multiannual financial framework.

What we need today is more EU initiatives, programmes and investment in the region. Considering the rising inequalities in the region, it is necessary to focus on the real social policies and programmes to tackle the problems of growing gaps. The Balkans were playing with history and nationalism. This is exactly where our Union should play an important role in fostering more regional cooperation, cohesion and dialogue.

I will conclude by saying that we will be judged by history if this day turns a historical page for our Western Balkans.

Charles Tannock, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I am very pleased to say, on behalf of the ECR, that much of the accepted thinking over the last year regarding the enlargement strategy has finally found its way into the official policy published this afternoon. All countries of the Western Balkans have a natural place in the European Union and each of them shares a strong desire to join. Fulfilling these ambitions must be a key priority in the coming decade.

As rapporteur for Montenegro, I am very pleased to see 2025 affirmed officially now as a target date for accession. The support for a merit-based regatta principle in which each country is assessed on its own merits and rights is also to be welcomed. Montenegro is doing particularly well.

The 'more for more' approach is vital to maintaining confidence in the process and to preserving the integrity of a rules-based approach. New EU Member States should also not seek to discriminate against those still waiting in the queue to join over border issues. 2025 is some way off still, but we cannot ignore rising scepticism in some parts of the EU to all future enlargement, with particular concerns about corruption and organised crime, and we may even see one referendum on the issue in France.

I sincerely hope that the UK, which has invested a lot of political capital in the stability of the Western Balkans over many years, is still able to carry on participating in joint EU projects post-Brexit. The glue that holds the region together is Euro-Atlantic integration, and any disruption would have devastating consequences across the whole continent. My hopes had been raised that we were very close to securing a solution to the Macedonia name question finally.

I welcome the recent efforts from both sides' governments on this matter, although it now seems that such hopes have been dashed by populist protest, which is deeply regrettable. But, nevertheless, the Western Balkans is a key part of our continent and they all belong in the European Union in the future.

Ivo Vajgl, *v imenu skupine ALDE*. – Želel bi Komisiji izreči priznanje za, kot pravi v svojem dokumentu, verodostojno perspektivo širitve in okrepljeno sodelovanje z Zahodnim Balkanom.

Skupina ALDE podpira proces širitve Evropske unije na države v tej regiji, v prepričanju, da bo integracija celotnega Zahodnega Balkana prispevala k stabilnosti in napredku našega kontinenta in k njegovi varnosti. Pozdravljam odločitve Komisije, da nadaljuje pogajanja o članstvu s Srbijo in Črno goro, pod predpostavko, da se možnosti za pristop novih članic lahko realizirajo z letom 2025. V odvisnosti od dosežkov in izpolnjevanja pristopnih pogojev odpira strategija vrata tudi Makedoniji, Albaniji, Bosni in Hercegovini ter Kosovu. To je celo bolj pomembno od omenjenega datuma.

Spoštovani, razen potrebnih reform pri uveljavljanju pravne države, osnovnih pravic, neodvisnosti sodstva, funkcioniranja demokratičnih institucij, inkluzivnosti parlamentov in usklajenosti vladajočih koalicij z opozicijo, ko gre za reforme, ki so neposredno povezane z evropsko perspektivo, se mi zdi pomembno izpostaviti še sledeče.

Države Zahodnega Balkana bodo morale bolj učinkovito zavreči nacionalizem, prepustiti preteklost zgodovini, urediti odprta mejna vprašanja. Pri tem velja opozorilo, da EU ne bo sprejemala v svoje članstvo držav, ki bi v Unijo vnašale stare konflikte. Enako umestno se mi zdi opozorilo, da članice Evropske unije ne izkoriščajo svojega statusa za pritiske in za izsiljevanje kandidat.

Zahodni Balkan je regija, ki jo v Evropski uniji vidimo kot celoto, kot potencialno dodatno vrednost politični, gospodarski in kulturni raznolikosti naše celine. To je razlog več, da si države tega področja prizadevajo tudi za dobro medsebojno sosedstvo in sodelovanje.

Τάκης Χατζηγεωργίου, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, συμφωνούμε καταρχήν με την Ύπατη Εκπρόσωπο ότι οι χώρες αυτές ανήκουν ήδη στην Ευρώπη και θα πρέπει να υποστηρίξουμε τη θέληση των λαών τους για ένταξη στην Ένωση. Έχουμε χρέος ως Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να σταθούμε δίπλα σε αυτά τα κράτη και τους πολίτες τους και να φανούμε χρήσιμοι στην προσπάθειά τους να οικοδομήσουν δημοκρατίες που θα σέβονται το κράτος δικαίου και τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα. Θα πρέπει να συνδράμουμε τις χώρες αυτές στην προσπάθειά τους να μπορέσουν να καταπολεμήσουν τα φαινόμενα διαφθοράς που τις ταλανίζουν και στην προσπάθειά τους να γίνουν μέλη της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, ώστε να μπορέσουν να αφήσουν στο παρελθόν τα μίσση και τους εθνικισμούς. Στην προσπάθειά μας αυτή θα πρέπει να αποφύγουμε την επιβολή οικονομικών πολιτικών που έχουν αποδείξει ότι δεν είναι προς όφελος των πολιτών. Οι πολίτες των εν λόγω χωρών αναμένουν από εμάς στήριξη και όχι την εξ αποστάσεως επιβολή πολιτικών που το μόνο που προκαλούν είναι δυσареσκεία.

Igor Šoltes, v imenu skupine Verts/ALE. – Če ponovim besede komisarja Hahna, danes je velik dan za Zahodni Balkan.

In danes smo torej priče temu, da je pred Zahodnim Balkanom jasno izražena evropska prihodnost za vse države Zahodnega Balkana. Torej današnje sporočilo je jasno – Evropska unija se bo širila, vrata so se na široko odprla.

In gre, pravzaprav, za dokument, ki je naravnan izjemno pozitivno. In pred nami torej so obdobja priložnosti, obdobja, seveda, tudi reform. Obdobja mnogih naporov, pa tudi na koncu rezultatov. In prepričan sem, da s tem današnjim dokumentom tudi Evropa daje jasno sporočilo, da brez držav Zahodnega Balkana, ne bo stabilne Evropske unije in mirne Evropske unije. In to je seveda tudi obdobje priložnosti za obe strani.

Že dandanes moramo povedati, seveda, da je Evropska unija en največjih trgovinskih partnerjev Zahodnega Balkana v letni vrednosti več kot 43 milijard evrov, tudi največji donator in dajalec finančne pomoči.

Prepričan sem, da seveda je treba finančno pomoč še nadgraditi, vendar tudi z ustrezno kontrolo in ustreznim nadzorom, kajti še vedno je kar nekaj tem, ki niso zaprte in ki bodo predmet mnogih pogajanj držav. Zlasti glede korupcije, organiziranega kriminala, neodvisnosti pravosodja, seveda tudi svobode medijev. Ampak prepričan sem, da ima tudi Zahodni Balkan v vsej svoji lepoti tudi ogromno volje, da te stvari spremeni in dokonča.

Še nekaj za konec. Jasno je, da je treba rešiti tudi dvostranska vprašanja, ki so pomembna pred vstopom. Tudi vprašanje meje, kjer se je lahko Komisija zelo dobro že danes seznanila z vprašanjem Hrvaške in Slovenije. In samo še nekaj – želim si, da prevlada pravilo ne regatnega boja, ampak regatnega sodelovanja.

James Carver, on behalf of the EFDD Group. – Mr President, it won't surprise anyone in this Chamber to hear me say that I oppose any further expansion of the European Union into the Western Balkans. We have seen the damage that the European Union has done in southern Europe and further to the east.

It is possible to be friendly, close and supportive to a nation without consuming and subjugating it, and this is something the Commission should learn in its dealings with all European nations. This whole policy is, to my mind, nothing but naked imperialism or, as it is often described, neo-colonialism by other means.

Mr President, I am astounded that we are conducting this debate just a few hours after the European Parliament released its strategy at 14.20 this afternoon. This lack of transparency would be more concerning to me, and indeed my constituents, had my country not taken the wise decision to leave.

Dominique Bilde, au nom du groupe ENF. – Monsieur le Président, par la relance des négociations avec les Balkans occidentaux, annoncée cette année par Jean-Claude Juncker lors du traditionnel discours sur l'état de l'Union, ainsi que dans le programme de la nouvelle présidence bulgare, l'Union européenne tente de conjurer le désaveu cinglant du Brexit.

Mais, quinze ans après le sommet de Thessalonique de 2003 qui se voulait le premier jalon de cette longue feuille de route, jamais ce nouvel élargissement n'aura paru aussi chimérique. En effet, non seulement l'absence de progrès est patent sur l'essentiel des chapitres de négociations, mais l'engouement s'est, de part et d'autre, considérablement émoussé puisque, outre la désapprobation massive des opinions publiques des États membres historiques, 51 % des Serbes âgés de 18 à 29 ans se déclaraient en 2016 hostiles à l'adhésion.

Comment pourrait-il en être autrement, alors que l'avenir s'écrit désormais à Moscou, à Dubaï et à Pékin, où l'ensemble de ces États croient trouver les fondements d'une collaboration économique et diplomatique de bonne foi et dénuée de conditionnalité politique? En témoigne le rôle clé de la Serbie par la restauration des 370 km de voies de chemin de fer reliant Belgrade à Budapest, dans le projet hégémonique chinois de nouvelles routes de la soie.

À l'évidence, l'Union européenne n'incarne plus un horizon indépassable, et le réveil des passions nationales place son projet désincarné à contre-courant du sens de l'histoire.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, ένα από τα βασικά σφάλματα της εξωτερικής πολιτικής της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, εδώ και πολλά χρόνια, είναι η ταύτιση της με την πολιτική των ΗΠΑ. Αυτό την ωθεί να λαμβάνει πολλές φορές αποφάσεις εναντίον των συμφερόντων της. Αυτό ακριβώς συμβαίνει και με την απόφαση για επίσπευση των διαδικασιών ένταξης των χωρών των δυτικών Βαλκανίων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση.

Η πολιτική αυτή εγκυμονεί κινδύνους διότι, με εξαίρεση τη Σερβία η οποία έχει σημειώσει σημαντική πρόοδο, οι άλλες χώρες απέχουν πολύ από το να πληρούν τα κριτήρια της Κοπεγχάγης. Από την άλλη πλευρά, οι Ηνωμένες Πολιτείες επείγονται να εντάξουν γρήγορα τα Σκόπια στο ΝΑΤΟ, ούτως ώστε να αποφύγουν πιθανή επέμβαση της Ρωσίας, και πιέζουν τους πάντες προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση. Στα Σκόπια όμως επικρατεί αστάθεια και υφίστανται αλυτρωτικές βλέψεις κατά της Ελλάδας. Το δε Κοσσυφοπέδιο είναι η πλέον διεφθαρμένη χώρα της Ευρώπης και η Αλβανία, η οποία ελέγχεται από την Τουρκία, υποθάλπει επεκτατικές βλέψεις μιας μειοψηφίας της χώρας εναντίον της Ελλάδας. Εάν σε αυτά τα ζητήματα προστεθούν και τα προβλήματα των λαθρομεταναστών και τα εσωτερικά προβλήματα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, ο κίνδυνος αποσταθεροποίησης της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης γίνεται σημαντικός. Γι' αυτό πρέπει η επέκταση της Ευρώπης προς τα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια να μην γίνει βεβιασμένα.

Cristian Dan Preda (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, Madame la Haute représentante, Monsieur le Commissaire, la nouvelle stratégie sur l'élargissement est une occasion de réaffirmer avec force notre engagement en faveur de la région et d'offrir enfin une perspective crédible d'élargissement pour les pays des Balkans de l'Ouest.

Une perspective crédible signifie pour moi donner des repères temporels clairs ainsi que des dates pour tous les pays de la région et pas seulement pour deux. Il y a là toute une génération qui n'a connu que l'attente de l'adhésion à l'Europe, une Europe à laquelle ils appartiennent historiquement et culturellement.

Cette absence de perspectives claires conduit les jeunes à quitter leur pays. On le voit clairement en Bosnie-Herzégovine, pays pour lequel je suis rapporteur. Il faut donc donner de l'espoir aux pays de la région sur leur avenir européen. C'est un passage obligé pour encourager la transformation de ces pays et une réconciliation durable. Le plan d'action en six points, annexé à la stratégie, pourrait s'avérer utile. En même temps, comme le commissaire Hahn l'a dit récemment à Sarajevo, il ne peut pas y avoir de *free lunch*.

L'adoption de ces stratégies devait être un moment de responsabilité pour les autorités des pays de la région. L'avancement vers l'Europe dépendra de leur sérieux dans les réformes, surtout pour ce qui est des droits fondamentaux, de l'état de droit et de la lutte contre la corruption. Ces domaines essentiels doivent être replacés avec force en tête de nos priorités pour l'élargissement. Comme je l'ai dit à chaque fois que j'ai rencontré des représentants politiques de ces pays, ce sont là les vraies priorités.

Knut Fleckenstein (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Das ist ein guter Tag – ein guter Tag für die Länder des westlichen Balkans, aber auch ein guter Tag für die Europäische Union. Wir begrüßen die vorgelegte Erweiterungsstrategie, weil sie eine neue Dynamik in unseren Prozess bringen kann. Es ist ein erneutes Zeichen an unsere Freunde auf dem westlichen Balkan, dass wir es ernst meinen, und es ist ein klares Zeichen an die Menschen in der EU, dass wir ihre Bedenken ernst nehmen. Diese Strategie ist ein Teil eines Gesamtbildes; Reformen sind notwendig – in den Ländern des westlichen Balkans und in der EU –, damit die Integration auch erfolgreich durchgeführt werden kann.

Eigentlich gibt es keinen Mangel an guten Worten und guten Absichten, aber es gibt einen Mangel an Umsetzung und Geschwindigkeit – auf beiden Seiten. Die Strategie ist erstaunlich konkret. Meine Fraktion unterstützt diese Bemühungen, und wir werden auch erstaunlich konkret sein in der Debatte um den MFR, wenn wir über die IPA-Mittel sprechen.

Ich will hier nicht auf einzelne Länder eingehen, weil wir das bei den Länderberichten im April tun werden, aber natürlich müssen bei den Verhandlungen für Serbien und Montenegro mehr Kapitel geöffnet werden. Und wir fordern die Aufnahme von Verhandlungen mit Albanien und Mazedonien noch in diesem Jahr. Albanien hat es sich erarbeitet, und in Mazedonien würden wir auch zeigen, dass wir uns nicht mehr erpressen lassen von rückwärtsgewandten Nationalisten – weder von denen in Thessaloniki noch von denen in Skopje noch von denen in Brüssel.

Dieses Parlament hat sich stets über Fraktionsgrenzen hinweg engagiert, und das werden wir auch in Zukunft tun. Dieses konstruktive Miteinander, das ja nicht ohne Diskussion und Streit im Detail verläuft, erhoffen wir uns auch von den Parlamenten unserer Partner. Wir nehmen keine Regierungen auf in die EU, sondern die Völker des westlichen Balkans. Deshalb ist ein vielleicht intensiverer Dialog zwischen uns und den Oppositionsparteien in der Region auch wichtig, denn sie vertreten auch einen großen Teil der Bevölkerung.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-н Председател, госпожо и господин Комисари, няма как да не поздравим Комисията за днешното ѝ решение и за започването на този процес. И няма как да не се радваме, че тя потвърждава една от целите на българското председателство на Съвета на Европейския съюз. Искам само да напомня, че този процес започна с подписването на историческия договор за добросъседство с братска Република Македония.

Европейският съюз трябва да бъде завършен в тази част на континента – в това няма съмнение. Разбира се, след необходимите промени и мерки присъединяването на държавите от Западните Балкани ще завърши процеса на изграждане на Европейския съюз – повтарям – в тази част на континента.

Особено радващи са процесите в – повтарям – братската ни Република Македония. Разбира се, всички кандидати трябва да изпълнят условията за членство, през които са минали всички останали държави, и да решат всички спорни въпроси със своите съседи. Това важи особено за Република Сърбия, например, която освен че трябва да избере към кой свят иска да принадлежи, трябва да започне наистина да спазва правата и законните интереси на признатите национални малцинства на своята територия, особено в западните български покрайнини.

Jozo Radoš (ALDE). – Gospodine predsjedniče, zbog važnosti zemalja zapadnog Balkana za Europsku uniju, zbog izloženosti toga prostora utjecaju vanjskih čimbenika čiji su interesi i vrijednosti nekada protivni vrijednostima Europske unije i zbog poteškoća i mogućih opasnosti s kojima se suočavaju zemlje zapadnog Balkana, potpuno podržavam i novu orijentaciju, pojačani angažman Europske unije na zapadnom Balkanu, ovu strategiju i inicijative bugarskog predsjedanja Vijećem Europske unije kao i *summit* u Sofiji koji će biti posvećen zemljama zapadnog Balkana.

Želim posebno naglasiti dvije stvari: 2025. godinu razumijem ne kao ograničenje ni kao cilj, nego kao pozitivnu perspektivu i za zemlje članice i za zemlje zapadnog Balkana koja se svaka mora mjeriti prema svojim vlastitim postignućima i, druga stvar, zbog sličnosti i povezanosti ovoga prostora ovaj projekt može uspjeti samo ako je zajednički i cjelovit.

Jaromír Kohlíček (GUE/NGL). – Pane predsjedající, máme-li diskutovat o zemích Západního Balkánu a jejich ambicích na vstup do Evropské unie, musíme v prvé řadě mít na paměti, že klíčovou zemí tohoto regionu je Srbsko. Úporná snaha řady politiků Evropské unie oslabit tento stát přinesla své ovoce.

Místo Jugoslávie a Albánie jsou zde dva malé členské státy – Chorvatsko a Slovinsko. Dále pak Albánie, Srbsko, Bosna a Hercegovina s uspořádáním, které silně připomíná konfederaci, Černá Hora, která se oddělila od zbytkové Jugoslávie jenom díky velmi zvláštnímu hlasovacímu mechanismu při referendu, a Makedonie, která navíc nesmí být ani Makedonií nazývána.

Ve všech nečlenských zemích EU je složitá náboženská a národnostní situace a všechny tyto státy mají s EU smlouvu o přidružení stejně jako různé koncipované smlouvy o volném pohybu osob. Politika EU se snaží zahraniční politiku těchto států podřídit svým představám a křečovitá snaha odtrhnout od Srbska provincii Kosovo je hodna největšího opovržení.

Je čas přijmout jasné pozitivní kroky vůči státům Západního Balkánu, proto tuto diskusi vítám.

Terry Reintke (Verts/ALE). – Mr President, if I may make this small comment. I am only the second woman after the High Representative who has spoken in this debate. Especially keeping in mind the very important Resolution 1321, we should make sure that female voices are also heard in these debates. It is of the utmost importance in order to create an accession process that is inclusive and that is democratic. I was born in the 1980s and as a child growing up ...

(The President interrupted the speaker due to a problem with interpretation)

Mr President, it was so confusing for the interpreters that when they finally heard a female voice they could not interpret any more, I think that must have been the case!

As I said, I grew up in the 1990s and one of my earliest childhood memories is a crying Bosnian woman on the television. I went to school with classmates who were called Franjo, Dušan and Damjan, because their parents had to flee the Western Balkans. And for me personally, it will be the greatest pleasure to see all countries of the Western Balkans join the European Union.

But at the same time, I must also very clearly say that we also need to make this process a success for minorities in the Western Balkans. We need to state very clearly that without clear progress when it comes to human rights, when it comes to the rule of law, when it comes to the rights of minorities like LGBTI, we cannot have accession at the moment. We need to be absolutely clear about this, and I hope that very soon I can welcome all those citizens of the Western Balkan states to join the European Union.

President. – Thank you. I have given you more time because I did interrupt you, but I have to leave the gender balance to the political groups. That is something that is subject to deliberations in the groups.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, sono passati quindici anni dal summit di Thessaloniki e dalla promessa di una prospettiva europea per i Balcani occidentali. Questa promessa oggi torna a essere priorità. La Presidenza bulgara così ha scelto e si parla di un *timing* possibile e credibile per Serbia e Montenegro di raggiungere la nostra famiglia entro il 2025.

Restano sfide importanti e passi da compiere: la normalizzazione delle relazioni tra Belgrado e Pristina, l'allineamento all'*acquis communautaire*, il problema fondamentale delle frontiere che va risolto preventivamente per evitare che si facciano anche dei giochini da *politique politicienne*. Ma gli strumenti li abbiamo a disposizione: la diplomazia parlamentare, un forte coinvolgimento della società civile e soprattutto dei giovani, il vero motore che può portare le forze politiche a fare quelle riforme necessarie per raggiungerci.

La strategia per l'allargamento e la preparazione di un summit congiunto nel mese di maggio testimoniano la nostra attenzione. Adesso dobbiamo facilitare questo processo per un'integrazione credibile che premi chi va più lontano – *more for more, less for less* –, per un'Europa più forte e credibile, per un'Europa allargata e capace di essere sempre di più un *player* globale.

Marcus Pretzell (ENF). – Herr Präsident, meine Damen und Herren! Die Erweiterung um die Länder des Westbalkans, also um sie mal aufzuzählen: Wir reden über Serbien, über Bosnien-Herzegowina, über das Kosovo, über Albanien, Mazedonien und Montenegro.

Eine Beitrittsperspektive in sieben Jahren ist hier angekündigt. Wenn wir uns die ökonomische Realität, die politische Realität und die gesellschaftliche Realität in diesen Ländern ansehen, dann müssen wir doch konstatieren, dass sieben Jahre deutlich zu kurz bemessen sind. Dreißig Jahre, das wäre vielleicht eine glaubwürdige, eine vernünftige Perspektive, und wir alle sollten aus den Fehlern der überstürzten Beitritte der Vergangenheit gelernt haben.

Frau Mogherini, auch wenn Sie den Saal gerade verlassen, eine persönliche Bemerkung: Wenn Ihnen als einziges konkretes Beispiel für Vorteile, die den Bürgern daraus erwachsen, niedrigere Roaming-Gebühren einfallen, dann ist das Politik auf Kindergartenniveau, und das ist bei einem EU-Beitritt dieser Länder der Sache ganz und gar nicht angemessen.

Σωτήριος Ζαριανόπουλος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, πώς προέκυψε το σημερινό μωσαϊκό των κρατικών οργανισμών στα δυτικά Βαλκάνια; Με βομβαρδισμούς της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης και του NATO, που διέλυσαν τη Γιουγκοσλαβία και ξαναχάραξαν τα σύνορα με το αίμα των λαών. Και σήμερα, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση έχει το θράσος να επικαλείται την ευημερία και την ειρήνη για να επεκταθεί στα Βαλκάνια.

Διαιρούν και ματώνουν τους λαούς υποδαυλίζοντας ανιστόρητους και επικίνδυνους αλτρωτισμούς. Δεν εγγυώνται ειρήνη και ευημερία, αλλά πόλεμο για τα συμφέροντά τους, όπως με διεκδικήσεις νατοϊκών συμμάχων -βλ. Τουρκία και Αλβανία- κατά της Ελλάδας. Επείγονται να εντάξουν τα Σκόπια, την Αλβανία και τη Σερβία και να ενισχύσουν την επιρροή τους έναντι της Ρωσίας και της Κίνας, ελέγχοντας δρόμους ενέργειας και μεταφορών και αγορές. Αυτό είναι το κύριο ζήτημα που συγκαλύπτουν και στο οποίο συμπλέουν τόσο η κυβέρνηση ΣΥΡΙΖΑ/ΑΝΕΛ στην Ελλάδα, εκτελώντας πάλι βρώμικη δουλειά για αναβάθμιση του ελληνικού κεφαλαίου, αλλά και όσοι, εκμεταλλευόμενοι λαϊκές ανησυχίες, περιορίζονται στο ονοματολογικό, με συλλαλητήρια στιγματισμένα από εθνικιστικές και φασιστικές δυνάμεις, υποβαθμίζοντας κινδύνους από αλτρωτισμούς, καθώς και τον επικίνδυνο ρόλο του NATO και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Εξάλειψη αλτρωτισμού στο Σύνταγμα των Σκοπίων, εγγύηση συνόρων, ...

(Ο Πρόεδρος διακόπτει τον ομιλητή)

Андрей Ковачев (PPE). – Г-н Председател, г-н Комисар, приветствам представянето на стратегията за разширяване на Европейския съюз към Западните Балкани. След период на застой в развитието на отношенията между Европейския съюз и тези страни, стратегията изпраща силен знак, че те не са забравени и имат ясна европейска перспектива, но всичко зависи от тях. Това, което казахте, че няма гаранция за датата, е изключително важно. Но и без пълноценна европейска интеграция на Западните Балкани, проектът на мирното обединение на Европа ще остане незавършен.

Това е една от причините защо България и българското председателство са извели като основен приоритет нуждата от ясна европейска перспектива за страните от региона. Стъпка към това е осигуряването на свързаност на държавите от Западните Балкани, което е в интерес както на гражданите на Европейския съюз, така и на гражданите на тези страни, обратно на това, което колегата преди малко каза – транспортна, енергийна, образователна и цифрова свързаност. И аз се надявам, както комисарят Габриел, така и България да имат успех в намирането на такава пътна карта за намаляване на роуминга в Западните Балкани.

На Балканите има много исторически рани, които могат да заздравеят само по пътя на европейската интеграция. Тя е единственият медикамент, който може да предотврати повторното им отваряне. В тази връзка приветствам подписването на договора между София и Скопие. Протестите, които сега наблюдаваме по улиците на Солун и Атина, както и такива сигнали на квазинационалистически сили в Скопие срещу опитите на правителството на г-н Ципрас и на г-н Заев да се намери решение на спора с името, не са в интерес на гражданите на региона.

С оглед на силната подкрепа и конкретните дати за започване на преговори, аз се надявам страните да имат смелост за намиране на общо решение.

Tanja Fajon (S&D). – Veseli me, da imamo prvič po petnajstih letih in obljubah z vrha v Thessaloniki na mizi strategijo, ki ima nedvoumno sporočilo: Unija želi Zahodni Balkan kot del svoje družine, vrednot, skupne zgodovine in prihodnosti.

Strategija predstavlja jasno zavezanost in spodbudo zahodnobalkanskim državam, a hkrati polaga odgovornost v roke voditeljev na Zahodnem Balkanu, ki lahko to zgodovinsko priložnost izkoristijo le, če izpeljejo nujne reforme, in državljanom omogočijo dostojno življenje.

Proces priključitve Unije ni zgolj tehnični proces, odpiranje in zapiranje poglavij, gre za sprejetje sistema vrednot, na podlagi katerih naše družbe delujejo.

Pogosto od ljudi v regiji slišim, da želijo več demokracije, manj korupcije, vladavino prava, neodvisne medije in neodvisno in delujoče sodstvo. Mladi na Balkanu želijo ostati v svojih državah, a le, če imajo možnosti zaposlitev.

Od voditeljev v regiji zato pričakujem, da s svojim obnašanjem, in ne zgolj na papirju, pokažejo dejansko zavezanost vrednotam Unije. Brez Zahodnega Balkana zgodovinski projekt Evropske unije ne bo nikoli končan. Skupaj bomo močnejši blok, ki bo lažje premagoval številne družbene izzive vedno bolj povezanega sveta.

Ljudje na Balkanu so, kolegice in kolegi, namreč siti zelo temačne preteklosti, želijo pa si svetle prihodnosti, ki jo lahko prinese le članstvo v Uniji.

Ruža Tomašić (ECR). – Gospodine predsedniče, daljnje proširenje na prostoru jugoistočne Europe važen je korak u razvoju tog prostora, ali i same Evropske unije te stoga mora biti izvedeno na pravi način i u pravo vrijeme.

Hoće li se to dogoditi 2025. manje je važno, važno je da se dogodi nakon što sve te države ispune jasno definirane kriterije. Trenutno smo, moram priznati, vrlo daleko od tog cilja jer glavni izazovi, poput priznanja Kosova od strane Srbije, osiguravanja ravnopravnosti Hrvata u BiH, dogovora oko imena Makedonije, graničnih sporova, učinkovitog procesuiranja ratnih zločina, prava manjina, borbe protiv organiziranog kriminaliteta i vladavine prava, ostaju još uvijek neriješene.

Uloga Evropske unije u ovom procesu mora ostati konstruktivna. Neintegrirane države jugoistočne Europe oslanjaju se na naše vodstvo i pomoć u rješavanju problema. No prije nego što se ti problemi doista riješe, nema smisla spekulirati o datumu novog proširenja. Tim državama treba pružiti pomoć u pristupnom procesu, ali bez davanja lažnih nada.

Hilde Vautmans (ALDE). – Voorzitter, commissaris, ik ben heel erg blij dat we vandaag met een echte Balkanstrategie naar voren komen, dat we de landen een perspectief bieden, onder voorwaarden weliswaar. We vragen dat ze de druk opvoeren om de noodzakelijke hervormingen door te voeren. En dat is een goede zaak. We vragen die hervormingen niet alleen voor de stabiliteit van onze regio, maar we vragen die in de eerste plaats voor de burgers daar ter plaatse. Want laat ons eerlijk zijn, ze hebben genoeg oorlogsgeweld meegemaakt en ze verdienen een democratisch land.

Maar ik heb hier vandaag heel veel gehoord. Ik heb hier gehoord: het is een perspectief, het is geen echte datum. Ik wil een element in het debat toevoegen. Wij in Europa moeten ook klaar zijn, als we een volgende uitbreidingsfase tegemoet gaan. We moeten tegen dan de brexit goed hebben afgerond. Maar we moeten ook de Unie hervormen. We moeten gaan voor een kleinere Commissie. We moeten gaan naar een afschaffing van de unanimiteitsregel. Laten we dus een Balkanstrategie voeren met het oog op een mogelijke toetreding, maar laten we Europa hervormen om daar klaar voor te zijn.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κυρία Mogherini και κύριε Hahn,

η χώρα μου, η Ελλάδα, και η ελληνική κυβέρνηση υποστηρίζουν θερμά τη διεύρυνση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης προς τα δυτικά Βαλκάνια. Υποστηρίζουμε έναν οδικό χάρτη δημοκρατικών αλλαγών και μεταρρυθμίσεων, έτσι ώστε μέσα στην επόμενη δεκαετία τα 27 κράτη μέλη να γίνουν 33. Αυτό απαιτεί σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας, σταθερότητα συνόρων, ειρηνική συνύπαρξη, κράτος δικαίου, καταπολέμηση της διαφθοράς, δημοκρατία, συνανάπτυξη και επενδύσεις. Πρέπει να κάνουν και τα 6 κράτη μέλη τη δική τους δουλειά, αλλά πρέπει να βοηθήσει και η Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή έμπρακτα και όχι με λόγια, διότι αυτό υπήρξε στρατηγική από τη Θεσσαλονίκη, το 2003, και ξεχάστηκε για 15 χρόνια.

Αυτήν ακριβώς την ευκαιρία επιδιώκουν να αξιοποιήσουν οι κυβερνήσεις Τσίπρα και η νέα κυβέρνηση της Πρώην Γιουγκοσλαβικής Δημοκρατίας της Μακεδονίας για να λύσουν και μια μακρόχρονη διαμάχη γύρω από το όνομα, που εμποδίζει την ειρηνική συνανάπτυξη όλων των βαλκανικών λαών. Χαίρομαι, διότι και η Επιτροπή και το σύνολο σχεδόν του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου, συμπεριλαμβανομένων και του Ευρωπαϊκού Λαϊκού Κόμματος και του Σοσιαλιστικού Κόμματος, υποστηρίζουν αυτή την προσπάθεια και όχι ανιστόρητους λαϊκισμούς και εθνικισμούς που βλάπτουν τα συμφέροντα τόσο των βαλκανικών λαών όσο και της ευρωπαϊκής προοπτικής. Είναι η ώρα να περάσουμε στην πράξη.

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

President. – I still have fresh memories of Thessaloniki in 2003, which I remember was a great summit.

Ελισάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυονίδη (PPE), ερώτηση «γαλάζια κάρτα». – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Αντιπρόεδρε, κύριε Παπαδημούλη, ήθελα να σας ρωτήσω, με βάση την εισήγησή σας, θεωρείτε ή όχι σημαντικό, σχετικά με την πρώην Γιουγκοσλαβική Δημοκρατία της Μακεδονίας, να εξαλειφθούν οριστικά οι αλυτρωτικές διατάξεις που υπάρχουν στο Σύνταγμα και στις διατυπώσεις; Το λέω διότι ακούσατε το πρωί τον Πρόεδρο της Επιτροπής, τον κ. Juncker, που είπε ότι αναγκαία προϋπόθεση για την εξομάλυνση των σχέσεων των δύο κρατών είναι η επίλυση των διμερών διαφορών.

Δημήτριος Παπαδημούλης (GUE/NGL), απάντηση «γαλάζια κάρτα». – Είναι αυτονόητο ότι μια λύση επωφελής τόσο για την Ελλάδα όσο και για την Πρώην Γιουγκοσλαβική Δημοκρατία της Μακεδονίας πρέπει να εξασφαλίζει σταθερότητα συνόρων, σύνθετη ονομασία κοινής αποδοχής -erga omnes- έναντι όλων και εγκατάλειψη όλων των αλυτρωτισμών, είτε υπάρχουν σε συντάγματα είτε όχι. Μόνον έτσι μπορούμε να εγγυηθούμε την ειρηνική συνύπαρξη, που είναι το θεμέλιο για την ένταξη όλων των κρατών των Βαλκανίων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Το είπε ο κύριος Juncker, το στηρίζουν η ελληνική κυβέρνηση και ο υπουργός Εξωτερικών και ο πρωθυπουργός. Είναι αυτονόητο ότι συμφωνώ.

Bronis Ropé (Verts/ALE). – Paskelbta žinia, kad Serbija ir Juodkalnija bus pasirengusios 2025 metais įstoti Europos Sąjungą, ir džiugina, ir neramina. Kaip visi gerai pamename, su 2004 metų plėtros banga į Europos Sąjungą įstoję dvylika valstybių narių, kurių gyventojai, pagal kai kuriuos analitikus, buvo vadinami idealiais europiečiais. Šiuo metu, taip pat ir šioje salėje, kalbame ir apie tai, kad dalis šių valstybių gyventojų laiko save antrarūšiais europiečiais, nepaisant aktyvių vykdomos sanglaudos politikos. Todėl, sveikindami su pažanga potencialias valstybes nares, turime padaryti viską, kad Europos Sąjungos plėtra vyktų be politikavimo, nes jo kaina – nenumaldomas iliuzijų žlugimas ir euroskeptikų įsigaliojimas ne tik naujose, bet ir senose Europos Sąjungos šalyse. Pasirengimas stojimui turi vykti pragmatiškai, abiem pusėms, kiek Europos Sąjungos, tiek šalims kandidatėms adekvačiai ir sąžiningai įvertinant pažangą

Jörg Meuthen (EFDD). – Herr Präsident! Wir reden heute über den von der Kommission vorgelegten Plan für den möglichen Beitritt der sechs Westbalkan Staaten, darunter Mazedonien, Kosovo und Albanien, bis 2025. Ehe wir über eine solche EU-Erweiterung nachdenken, sollten wir besser zunächst über den beklagenswerten Zustand von Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Demokratie in der EU sprechen. Die EU hat in der Eurokrise sowie in der Migrationskrise vielfach ihre eigenen Regeln gebrochen. Das hat die EU gespalten und destabilisiert. Die Folgen, siehe Brexit, sind bekannt. Wollte die EU in dieser Verfassung der EU beitreten, sie müsste doch ihren eigenen Beitritt ablehnen. Es ist dann auch grotesk, dass die EU, die ihr eigenes Recht mit Füßen tritt, Polen wegen vermeintlicher rechtsstaatlicher Mängel oberlehrerhaft disziplinieren möchte.

Wenn das so weitergeht, wird sich nicht die Frage stellen, welche sechs Staaten der EU als nächste beitreten, sondern welche sechs Staaten als nächstes dem britischen Austritt folgen werden. Das durch kluge institutionelle Konsolidierung zu verhindern, ist das Gebot der nächsten Jahre. Das ist wichtiger, als die Aufnahme weiterer Staaten vor dieser Aufgabe; letzteres ist völlig nachrangig.

Franz Obermayr (ENF). – Herr Präsident! Kommissionspräsident Juncker sprach sich im September 2017 für eine Erweiterungsperspektive des westlichen Balkans aus, um dort, wie er sagte, Stabilität zu garantieren. Mittlerweile zeigt es sich, dass dieser auf den ersten Blick sicher lobenswerte Gedanke doch schwieriger umzusetzen ist, als es in der blumigen Theorie erscheinen mag. Die Kommission selbst weist ja regelmäßig darauf hin, dass die Rechtsstaatlichkeit bei etlichen Beitrittskandidaten – höflich gesagt – stark reformbedürftig ist. So müssen sich die Herren Kommissare, auch der Kollege Hahn, fast monatlich damit auseinandersetzen, dass das organisierte Verbrechen und die Korruption auf allen Ebenen von Regierung und Verwaltung weit verbreitet sind.

Hinzu kommt natürlich auch, dass die Kommission selbst auf meine schriftliche Anfrage im März 2017 die Kenntnis vom Rekrutierungscamp des IS in Montenegro einräumte und im Mai desselben Jahres, wieder aufgrund meiner Bedenken, islamische Radikalisierung des Westbalkans zugeben musste. So auch der deutsche Bundesnachrichtendienst – Herr Präsident, es dürfte Ihnen entgangen sein, dass ich eineinhalb Minuten habe, bitte diese Unterbrechung einzukalkulieren, besten Dank!

So auch der deutsche Bundesnachrichtendienst, der feststellte, dass vor allem Saudi-Arabien durch enorme finanzielle Mittel einen radikalen salafistisch-wahabistischen Islam am Westbalkan installiert.

Ich glaube, wir sollten nicht an Realitätsverlust leiden. Es ist nämlich zu befürchten, dass die Union ihre eigenen Bedenken wieder einmal ignoriert. Und ich prophezeie: Diese geplante und übereilte Erweiterung wird die nächste tickende Zeitbombe sein, die sich die Union in ihr eigenes Haus holt.

President. – Mr Obermayr, I apologise because I misread the line. It was a minute and a half, but I have given you extra seconds.

Colleagues, I need to announce at this moment, bearing in mind that we have a long list on this item and we are behind schedule, that from now on I will not take any blue cards.

Eduard Kukan (PPE). – Mr President, I resolutely welcome the new enlargement strategy for the Western Balkans. We need a credible strategy which gives a clear enlargement perspective to the region and equally to us.

It is needless to mention that it is in our strategic interest to integrate the countries of the Western Balkans into the Union. We all know it will not be an easy task. It will require efforts both from the region and from ourselves. We need to get ready for the enlargement in the same way that the countries of the region need to be ready to join the Union. It will require constant work and engagement on many levels, especially on the functioning of democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil liberties and freedom of the media, just to mention a few.

We also need to be clear about the resolution of bilateral issues. The EU should proactively work on their solution and find the mechanisms which would allow to solve them before they accede to the Union. I welcome this strategy; however I would also like to see a joint approach of the European Institutions. The European Parliament has been supportive to the enlargement process, and stepped up its efforts to solve political crises in the countries of the region. I am convinced that we are ready to assist and actively and effectively help the Commission in many initiatives aimed at facilitating democratic political processes in the region. Therefore, I would like to see in the future more thinking on our joint cooperation.

Tonino Picula (S&D). – Gospodine predsjedniče, od predstavljanja Bijele knjige o budućnosti Europske unije prošlo je manje od godinu dana. Bilo je zabrinjavajuće što je samo jedan od tada pet predloženih scenarija bio otvoren za novi ciklus proširenja.

Međutim, danas izražavam zadovoljstvo što, svega pet mjeseci od izjave predsjednika Junckera kako zemljama zapadnog Balkana treba pružiti vjerodostojnu perspektivu članstva u Europskoj uniji, imamo predstavljanje ove strategije.

Današnja Europska unija mora prevladati skepsu prema daljnjem proširenju, jednoj od najuspješnijih politika Unije od njezina nastanka. Stanovništvo zapadnog Balkana čini samo 3,6 % stanovništva Europske unije, ali njegova važnost za nadogradnju europskog projekta u 21. stoljeću je daleko značajnija. Ovo je vrijeme dalekosežnih reformi kako bi se uklonili postojeći prijevori koji generiraju nestabilnost i zaostajanje. Ali, treba očekivati otpore, pogotovo od takozvanih veto skupina kojima *status quo* osigurava uživanje neopravdanih privilegija na štetu većine u društvu.

Osim toga, zapadni Balkan je sve više točka ukrštanja interesa različitih sila. Europska unija ovim dokumentom demonstrira da želi investirati u vlastitu perspektivu, sigurnost i stabilnost. Uspjeh procesa ne ovisi samo o uspješnosti otvaranja i zatvaranja pregovaračkih poglavlja nego i o snažnoj potpori građana u zemlji kandidatkinji. Ovog trenutka ta podrška članstvu u Europskoj uniji među građanima država zapadnog Balkana izrazito varira.

Pozdravljam prijedlog da se sastanci Europska unija – zapadni Balkan ubuduće održavaju svake dvije godine. Skup u Sofiji bit će prvi takav nakon predugih petnaest godina otkako se održao *summit* u Solunu.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, τα μεγαλειώδη συλλαλητήρια σε Αθήνα και Θεσσαλονίκη έστειλαν μήνυμα με πολλούς αποδέκτες, ακόμη και σε αυτήν εδώ την αίθουσα. Έστειλαν το μήνυμα ότι ο ελληνικός λαός δεν ανέχεται την καπηλεία του ονόματος της Μακεδονίας μας, ούτε και της ιστορίας μας, από τα Σκόπια. Έστειλαν το μήνυμα ότι για το όνομα των Σκοπίων δεν ανέχονται καμία χρήση της λέξης «Μακεδονία», ούτε και οποιαδήποτε σύνθετη ονομασία με γεωγραφικό ή άλλο προσδιορισμό που χρησιμοποιεί τον όρο «Μακεδονία». Έστειλαν το μήνυμα ότι τα Σκόπια πρέπει να αποκηρύξουν κάθε αλυτρωτισμό έναντι της Ελλάδας και να τροποποιήσουν το Σύνταγμά τους.

Όμως, η ηγεσία των Σκοπίων επιμένει στην αδιάλλακτη στάση της. Στάση η οποία ενισχύεται ακόμη και από εσάς, κύριε Hahn, μια και σε πρόσφατη συνέντευξή σας σε γερμανικό περιοδικό αποκαλείτε τα Σκόπια «Μακεδονία», παρότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση αναγνωρίζει τα Σκόπια ως «FYROM». Σας ζητώ λοιπόν, κύριε Hahn, να ανακαλέσετε εδώ, όπως ζήτησα το πρωί και από τον Κροάτη πρωθυπουργό, ο οποίος επίσης αντί να αποκαλέσει «FYROM» τα Σκόπια, τα αποκάλεσε εδώ «Μακεδονία».

Ilhan Kyuchyuk (ALDE). – Mr President, the new EU strategy for enlargement which has been presented today is another step on the long path to bringing the Western Balkans into the European family. I appreciate the fact that the topic of the Western Balkans is at a higher level on the European agenda, but it is not enough to solve the problems of the region. In order to make real progress, the countries need a clear road map, and the period of the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU is the right time for this.

The 2025 accession date proposed by the Commission for two of the countries is an appropriate timeframe. However, I do not believe that this will have a positive impact on the region. On the contrary, there are historical contradictions in the Balkans which can be solved only with the full membership of all six countries in the region.

The idea of putting countries at different speeds is not good, and could undermine the fragile peace in the region. Europe should not worry about the Western Balkans. The people of the region deserve EU membership.

(The President cut off the speaker)

Νικόλαος Χουντής (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η κατάσταση στην περιοχή των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων χαρακτηρίζεται από τεράστια οικονομική δυσπραγία, ανάπτυξη του οργανωμένου εγκλήματος, διαφθορά, εθνικισμούς, αλυτρωτισμούς, απουσία κράτους δικαίου και καταπίεση μειονοτήτων. Προβλήματα που σε μεγάλο βαθμό δημιουργήθηκαν, και σίγουρα οξύνθηκαν, μετά τη διάλυση της Γιουγκοσλαβίας, στην οποία πρωτοστάτησε η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και το NATO.

Σήμερα, αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, από τα Βαλκάνια γενικότερα λείπει η ελπίδα. Ο ελληνικός λαός, λόγω οικονομικής κρίσης και μνημονίων, φτωχοποιείται και ο δημόσιος πλούτος της χώρας ξεπουλιέται. Χώρες όπως η Ρουμανία και η Βουλγαρία εξακολουθούν να παρουσιάζουν τεράστια οικονομικά προβλήματα, με φαινόμενα ακραίας φτώχειας και ανεργίας, παρά την ένταξή τους στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Υπάρχει ευρωπαϊκή πολιτική σήμερα για τα Βαλκάνια ή αυτό που ακούμε είναι μια ευκαιριακή πολιτική χρησιμοποίησης των Βαλκανίων με στόχο την ένταξη της περιοχής σε παιχνίδια οικονομικής και γεωπολιτικής επιρροής, με πρωταγωνιστές το ΝΑΤΟ και τη συνεχή διεύρυνσή του και την ιδιότελή πρωτοβουλία της Γερμανίας με τη διαδικασία του Βερολίνου; Οι βαλκανικές χώρες και οι λαοί τους έχουν ανάγκη από συμφωνίες φιλίας, ισότιμης συνεργασίας και συνανάπτυξης, χωρίς αλτρωτισμούς και ανταγωνισμούς και χωρίς ξένες επεμβάσεις.

Patrick O'Flynn (EFDD) – Mr President, the prospect of EU membership for countries in line to become big net recipients from the budget can provide leverage over their conduct. If used wisely, this can foster a functioning democracy and other norms of an advanced society, so the potential is there for enlargement taking in the Western Balkans to be a good thing.

But that potential is undermined by the EU's determination to intrude ever further into a central national sovereignty. For example, commanding countries to take in large numbers of young men from Africa or the Middle East, which is naturally being resisted by newer members such as Hungary. The EU should also have more regard as to the likely consequences of further enlargement for current members, notably Greece and Italy, which are already suffering under EU policy in the areas of migration and the currency union.

Were the EU a club of friendly advanced countries rather than a nascent superstate then the capacity of prospective membership to do good would be immeasurably improved.

Michèle Alliot-Marie (PPE). – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le Commissaire, parler d'élargissement, c'est bien entendu parler à la fois de stratégie mais aussi de pragmatisme. Stratégiquement, l'élargissement est évidemment une bonne chose, à la fois pour les pays concernés mais également – ne l'oublions pas – pour l'Europe.

L'adhésion s'est toujours accompagnée, pour chaque pays, d'un développement économique, social, politique, démocratique, technologique et d'un développement de la paix. Mais parallèlement, dans la compétition économique mondiale comme dans la réponse aux défis sécuritaires, l'Europe – ne l'oublions pas – relèvera d'autant mieux les défis qu'elle pèsera davantage sur le plan démographique comme sur le plan économique.

L'élargissement est donc une bonne chose, mais à une condition, c'est le pragmatisme dans la démarche. Les pays qui adhèrent doivent être à même de s'intégrer rapidement. Cela implique effectivement des droits pour eux, mais également des devoirs, et le premier des devoirs est de remplir totalement les critères qui ont été rappelés par vous-même, par M. McAllister ou par M. Preda tout à l'heure.

À défaut, ne l'oublions pas, nous serons tous confrontés à des difficultés, comme vous l'avez appelé, Monsieur le Commissaire, y compris à des réticences des opinions publiques dans ces pays comme dans nos pays, et ce domaine psychologique est important. Alors, il faut effectivement cette mise à niveau économique, démocratique, et sociale, et il faut que l'Europe soit à même de contrôler effectivement, sérieusement et publiquement ce qui se passe dans chacun de ces pays.

Cela suppose, comme l'a rappelé le Premier ministre M. Plenković ce matin, que chacun prenne et assume la totalité de ses responsabilités.

David Martin (S&D). – Mr President, President Trump talks about military might, Russia utilises it. What I like about this document is that, as Commissioner Hahn has indicated, it demonstrates that soft power can really work. It is the attraction of soft power, the attraction of the European Union, that encourages the Western Balkans to go down the path of peaceful resolution of border disputes. It encourages them to continue on a democratic path, it encourages them to develop their human rights, and it encourages them to continue to promote the rule of law. It is a demonstration that the European Union can make a real difference to real people's lives.

Of course, it also demonstrates to the people of Western Europe and to the European Union as a whole that membership is not a mere bauble to be handed out, that it has to be earned, and they can be reassured that the Western Balkans will only be allowed to join the European Union if it meets our values and meets our expectations in terms of standards of behaviour.

Mirosław Piotrowski (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Od kilku lat trwają negocjacje krajów Bałkanów Zachodnich w sprawie członkostwa w Unii Europejskiej. Mimo że niektóre z sześciu bałkańskich krajów robią duże postępy, Komisja Europejska w przedstawionej strategii zakłada, że przystąpią one do Unii w perspektywie siedmiu lat, czyli do 2025 roku. Za przyspieszeniem procesu integracyjnego Bałkanów Zachodnich opowiada się wiele krajów UE, szczególnie tych z Grupy Wyszehradzkiej, w tym rząd polski, ale także austriacki, słoweński i chorwacki. Przemawiają za tym względy europejskiego bezpieczeństwa. Komisją Europejską jednak zdają się kierować bardziej względy utylitarne. Z wcześniejszych wypowiedzi pana komisarza Hahna wynika, że liczy przede wszystkim na atrakcyjne rynki zbytu. Nie możemy jednak zapominać, że zanim przyjmimy nowych członków, Wielka Brytania opuści naszą organizację, powodując wyrwę budżetową. Trzeba więc najpierw przeprowadzić prawdziwą reformę Unii, biorąc pod uwagę nie tylko aspekty ekonomiczne.

Jasenکو Selimovic (ALDE). – Mr President, 25 years ago I was stuck in a besieged Sarajevo that was being shelled daily. Friends were killed by snipers while searching for food; others got raped. All became refugees like myself. I can tell you that, afterwards, you become haunted by these memories almost every day. I hope that this step we are taking today towards enlargement will successfully close the door on that dark period, and open a new one to the brighter European future of the Balkans.

Do we know why we are doing this? Yes, certainly. We don't have any other choice. Do we know how we will do it? No, but we will find that out on the way. Do we know should we do it? Yes, certainly, without any doubt.

My story is just one, just a small part of what has happened, and I hope this is the last time a Parliamentarian will share these stories in this Chamber. So, let's start this enlargement now. This evening I will be in my room, working on this.

(Applause)

Σοφία Σακοράφα (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, κύριε Επίτροπε, παρουσιάζετε στρατηγική διεύρυνσης χωρίς ουσιαστικό περιεχόμενο. Ενώ επικαλείστε δήθεν τα πολιτικά κριτήρια της Κοπεγχάγης, ουσιαστικά λειτουργείτε όπως και στο παρελθόν, με καθαρά κριτήρια συμφέροντος. Βαρεθήκαμε να διαβάζουμε εκθέσεις που ωραιοποιούν την πραγματικότητα και λειτουργούν ανασταλτικά στην πρόοδο των χωρών αυτών. Το χειρότερο παράδειγμα είναι η FYROM.

Η πολιτική σας μέχρι σήμερα συντήρησε και υποδαύλιζε τον εθνικισμό και την παραχάραξη της ιστορίας, με εμφανή αποτελέσματα. Είναι οξύμωρο να λέτε ότι για να υπάρξει ένταξη θα πρέπει να έχουν λυθεί ανοιχτά ζητήματα, τη στιγμή που είστε και πάλι έτοιμοι να συστήσετε την έναρξη ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων πριν καν να υλοποιηθούν οι μεταρρυθμίσεις του Πρίζνο. Παράλληλα, στη σημερινή κρίσιμη καμπή που βρίσκονται οι διαπραγματεύσεις για το ονοματολογικό, εσείς ο ίδιος χρησιμοποιείτε τον όρο «Μακεδονία» στην πρόσφατη συνέντευξη στο Spiegel, την οποία δεν διαψεύσατε, υπονομεύοντας τις όποιες προσπάθειες και συνεχίζοντας να δίνετε λάθος μήνυμα στην κυβέρνηση των Σκοπίων. Ο ελληνικός λαός έχει εκφράσει τις ανησυχίες του για τα ζητήματα αυτά και θα σας συνιστούσα, κύριε Επίτροπε, να μην συνεχίσετε να τον αγνοείτε.

Ignazio Corrao (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, signor Commissario, ho ascoltato il suo intervento e condiviso molti dei passaggi della strategia proposta, anche se credo che sia ancora un po' un libro dei sogni. È chiaro che ce lo auguriamo tutti di vedere l'Europa completata dal punto di vista geografico, e i Balcani ne fanno senz'altro parte, però è vero che la storia ci insegna anche che se li acceleriamo troppo questi processi, rischiamo di avere l'effetto opposto, l'effetto inverso.

Noi stiamo vivendo in questa epoca una crisi all'interno dell'Unione europea, dove molte cose non funzionano e dove dobbiamo stare attenti quando parliamo ad altri paesi che ancora non hanno completato delle riforme e ancora hanno dei problemi seri. Abbiamo problemi tra Belgrado e Pristina, abbiamo problemi tra un paese membro dell'Unione europea, la Grecia, e il riconoscimento della Macedonia, o FYROM come preferite chiamarla voi. Quindi, questo processo va accompagnato con forza e per realizzarlo serve fare i passi uno alla volta.

Dubravka Šuica (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče, hvala vam na ovoj strategiji, vama i gospođi Mogherini i Komisiji. Također zahvaljujem bugarskom predsjedništvu koje je za jedan od svojih prioriteta predsjedavanja izabrala upravo proširenje.

Isto tako, vidi se nit iz rujna, iz govora „State of the Union”, gospodina Juncera koji je najavio proširenje i očito Komisija radi na tome i ova strategija je upravo razrada te ideje koja je, nažalost, u jednom trenutku na početku ovog mandata bila zastala.

Jasno je da treba nadvladati regionalne napetosti, to je ono što je najvažnije i najteže, vjerojatno. Međutim, moramo shvatiti da se sigurnost Europske unije upravo nalazi u stabilnosti i sigurnosti ovoga prostora, takozvanog zapadnog Balkana ili jugoistoka Europe. Stoga je vrlo važno da je Europska unija prisutna, da ne prepušta ovaj prostor ni Rusiji ni Turskoj, što je u jednom trenutku bilo zaprijetilo, i stoga shvaćam razloge zašto je i Komisija konačno shvatila da proširenje treba biti visoko na dnevnom redu.

Slažem se da trebaju svi ispuniti kriterije, znam to iz hrvatskog iskustva, čuli smo jutros našeg premijera o tome govoriti i stoga ću se i ja pridružiti ovom vašem jedriličarskom rječniku gdje ste rekli svatko prema zaslugama, odnosno, ovo je regata, a ne konvoj.

Stoga vjerujem da ima prostora da i Bosna i Hercegovina sustigne one koje vi spominjete, dvije države, da 2025., znači ostavljen je prostor, ako postoji politička volja da se ispune i politički i pravni kriteriji da sve zemlje sustignu taj datum.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, sono convinto che l'avvicinamento progressivo dell'area balcanica all'Unione europea rappresenti uno strumento fondamentale per la stabilizzazione dell'area e lo sviluppo di pieni regimi democratici. Penso che il summit di Sofia debba servire soprattutto a fornire piani d'azione per ciascun paese, senza creare aspettative irrealistiche ma con passi concreti da intraprendere, e avendo l'accortezza, come nel caso della Serbia e del Kosovo, di guardare al percorso come qualcosa di intimamente legato.

Ma dobbiamo chiederci se l'Unione europea è pronta a tutto questo. Noi nel 2004 abbiamo realizzato un grande allargamento ad Est, un importante allargamento. In quel periodo si confrontavano due scuole di pensiero nel mondo intorno all'idea di esportazione della democrazia: quella che qualcuno paventava con le armi e noi che abbiamo posto il problema dell'allargamento come esportazione di democrazia. Ma a quell'allargamento però non è seguita un'adeguata politica di integrazione e le dinamiche politiche alle quali assistiamo oggi, se riflettiamo bene, sono anche la conseguenza di questo limite evidenziato in questi anni. Allora io credo che sia utile una maggiore consapevolezza perché preparare adeguatamente il 2025 significa innanzitutto preparare adeguatamente noi stessi.

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR). – Een nieuw voorzitterschap, een nieuwe prioriteitenlijst. Het Europese perspectief dat Bulgarije de westelijke Balkan wil bieden, kan de stabiliteit, de welvaart en de veiligheid in die regio bevorderen. Op zich is dat een goede zaak op voorwaarde dat er minutieus wordt toegekeken op het nakomen van alle voorwaarden. Hervormingen die de democratie, de rechtsstaat en de bescherming van universele mensenrechten garanderen zijn dan ook essentieel. Het lidmaatschap moet het sluitstuk zijn van de weg die kandidaat-landen afleggen. En die weg is nog lang, heel lang.

Maar bovendien, is een Unie die zelf problemen ondervindt met het naleven van democratische principes, wel klaar voor een verdere uitbreiding? Wanneer het oude Europa democratisch verkozen leiders liever achter de tralies ziet dan in het parlement, dan is de legitimiteit om nieuwe leden op te nemen, ver zoek. En toch is dat precies wat vandaag gebeurt in Catalonië. De EU is op dit moment niet echt een voorbeeld van democratie en onvoorwaardelijk respect voor fundamentele rechten en vrijheden. Laten we dus eerst verder verdiepen voor we dromen van verdere uitbreiding.

Μανώλης Κεφαλογιάννης (PPE). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η επιλογή της βουλγαρικής προεδρίας για τη διεύρυνση της Ένωσης είναι προς τη σωστή κατεύθυνση. Στόχος πρέπει να είναι η διεύρυνση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, αλλά με κοινή πολιτική σε όλα τα επίπεδα. Μια Ευρώπη, μια φωνή και μια πολιτική, χωρίς εθνικούς εγωισμούς και χωρίς εθνικές περιχαράκωσεις.

Οι χώρες της διεύρυνσης οφείλουν να επιλύσουν τις μεταξύ τους διαφορές. Σερβία και Μαυροβούνιο έχουν κάνει σημαντικά βήματα και προβλέπεται να ενταχθούν το 2025. Αλβανία και FYROM έχουν πολλά ακόμα να κάνουν, κυρίως όσον αφορά το κράτος δικαίου. Η Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη έχει πάρα πολύ δρόμο μπροστά της.

Θα με ρωτήσετε ασφαλώς, και εύλογα: «Γιατί εσείς οι Έλληνες, επί 26 χρόνια δεν λύσατε το πρόβλημα με τα Σκόπια; Είναι εθνικό καπρίτσιο, ματαιοδοξία ή ατολμία;». Η απάντηση είναι ότι η Ελλάδα δεν έφυγε ποτέ από το τραπέζι των διαπραγματεύσεων. Η Ελλάδα πρότεινε ένταξη της FYROM στο NATO με μια ονομασία για όλες τις χρήσεις, *erga omnes*, άλλοι αποχώρησαν. Σε καμία περίπτωση όμως δεν μπορεί να δεχθεί αλυτρωτικές και επιθετικές βλέψεις, με ανιστόρητους χάρτες που διεκδικούν τη μισή ελληνική επικράτεια, αλυτρωτικές αναφορές στο Σύνταγμα και παραχάραξη της ιστορίας -όπως αυτή της τρίτης Κομμουνιστικής Διεθνούς και αυτό που έκανε ο Τίτο το 1945. Χάρη στις επιθετικές βλέψεις του Τίτο για κάθοδο στο Αιγαίο, το έθνος αυτό ονομάστηκε Μακεδονικό και η γλώσσα του -μια ιδιότυπη βουλγαρική- ονομάστηκε μακεδονική. Εδώ είμαστε για να συζητήσουμε με τα Σκόπια την επίλυση του προβλήματος χωρίς αλυτρωτικές τάσεις.

Νίκος Ανδρουλάκης (S&D). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η ένταξη των δυτικών Βαλκανίων, που στο παρελθόν έγιναν θέατρο αιματηρών συγκρούσεων, είναι ιστορικό παράθυρο ευκαιρίας για την ειρήνη και την ευημερία της ευρύτερης περιοχής. Ως σκιώδης εισηγητής για την ένταξη του Μαυροβουνίου, θέλω να εκφράσω τη χαρά μου για την πρόοδο που έχει παρατηρηθεί στις θεσμικές μεταρρυθμίσεις. Πιστεύω ότι πριν από το 2025 θα μπορέσουμε να υποδεχθούμε το Μαυροβούνιο ως το 28ο μέλος της Ένωσης.

Θέλω όμως να αναφερθώ ιδιαίτερα στη FYROM και στην ανάγκη να βρεθεί μια δίκαιη λύση στο ονοματολογικό, σεβαστή και από τους δύο λαούς. Μια λύση χωρίς αλυτρωτισμούς εις βάρος της Ελλάδας. Δεν μπορεί τα Σκόπια να θέλουν να μονοπωλούν το όνομα της Μακεδονίας και να χτίζουν πλαστές ιστορικές συνειδήσεις χρησιμοποιώντας την ιστορία των γειτονικών λαών. Τα κριτήρια της Κοπεγχάγης και οι σχέσεις καλής γειτονίας είναι οι επιταγές των κοινών αξιών μας απέναντι στους παλιούς δαίμονες του εθνικισμού και της μισαλλοδοξίας που κάποιοι, είτε για γεωπολιτικούς λόγους είτε για να εξυπηρετήσουν τα εσωτερικά πολιτικά τους συμφέροντα, προσπαθούν πάλι να αφυπνίσουν.

László Tókécs (PPE). – Elnök Úr! A folyamatban lévő törvényhozási ciklus elején Jean-Claude Juncker elnök a bizonytalan jövőbe utalta a nyugat-balkáni országok integrációját. Ez a körülmény igencsak visszavetette ezen országok előrehaladását és teljesítményét. Öröndetes, hogy az Unió nyugat-balkáni bővítési stratégiájáról szóló, mostani határozat új lendületet kíván adni az elfáradt és elakadt integrációs folyamatnak. Ezt segíti elő, hogy az új bolgár elnökség prioritásként kezeli nyugat-balkáni szomszédai csatlakozását. Magyarország és a visegrádi négyek, valamint Románia szintén elkötelezettek ebben az irányban.

Fontos előrelépésnek számít, hogy legutóbbi belgrádi látogatásakor, Antonio Tajani elnök Szerbia és Montenegró 2025 előtti csatlakozását valószínűsítette. További konkrét lépésekre és eredményekre van szükség. Macedónia és Albánia esetében ki kell tűzni a csatlakozási tárgyalások elkezdésének időpontját. Bosznia-Hercegovinát fel kell venni a tagjelöltek sorába. Végérvényesen rendezni kell a koszovói kérdést. Mindazonáltal kettőn áll a vásár. A nyugat-balkáni országoknak is maradéktalanul teljesíteniük kell európai vállalásaikat. Az uniós határvédelem, illetve a balkáni migrációs útvonal lezárása szempontjából is közös európai érdek ezen régió országainak az integrálása.

Δημήτρης Παπαδάκης (S&D). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η περιοχή των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων αποτελεί -πολύ ρηδή- μία από τις προτεραιότητες της βουλγαρικής προεδρίας. Τα πλεονεκτήματα της διεύρυνσης είναι πολλά. Ευημερία σε όλα τα κράτη μέλη και σταθερότητα στην περιοχή, όπου πλέον η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση καθίσταται ένας από τους σημαντικότερους παράγοντες ασφάλειας, αποκλείοντας παράλληλα την ανάμειξη τρίτων χωρών που προσπαθούν να έχουν ηγεμονικό ρόλο δημιουργώντας προβλήματα. Επιβάλλεται να δώσουμε νέα πνοή στη διαδικασία της διεύρυνσης.

Όμως, υπάρχει ανάγκη επίλυσης των προβλημάτων στους τομείς του κράτους δικαίου, των θεμελιωδών δικαιωμάτων και της καταπολέμησης της διαφθοράς. Είναι σαφές προς όλες τις υποψήφιες χώρες ότι πρέπει να παραμείνουν αφοσιωμένες στην ευρωπαϊκή πορεία και να εκπληρώσουν όλες τις υποχρεώσεις τους. Οι λαοί της Ευρώπης είναι έτοιμοι να υποδεχτούν τα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια στους κόλπους της, χωρίς όμως εκπτώσεις σε αρχές, αξίες και υποχρεώσεις.

Ως σκιώδης εισηγητής για τη Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη, θέλω να τονίσω ότι η ευρωπαϊκή προοπτική της χώρας θα αλλάξει τα μέχρι σήμερα δεδομένα. Θα επηρεάσει θετικά τον τρόπο με τον οποίον οι πολιτικοί πολιτεύονται στη χώρα και θα δώσει ελπίδα για ένα καλύτερο μέλλον σε όλους τους πολίτες της. Οι μεταρρυθμίσεις στη Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη θα πρέπει να προωθηθούν με ισορροπημένο τρόπο και με διαφάνεια και διάλογο με τους κοινωνικούς εταίρους, έτσι ώστε να επιφέρουν θετικές αλλαγές στην καθημερινότητα όλων των κατοίκων της χώρας. Οι δυσκολίες παραμένουν, καθώς δεν έχει απαντηθεί ακόμη το ερωτηματολόγιο της Επιτροπής, και χρειάζεται πολλή δουλειά για την εφαρμογή των συμφωνηθέντων.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Mr President, I would like to welcome the Commission's Balkan strategy because it's about our common strategic interests, but it also needs a transformation from both sides. The Western Balkans is not a neutral ground. Fake alternatives are promised by Russia, China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Islamism. The only chance for permanent stability and economic reforms, and also for reconciliation, is European integration. I agree with Commissioner Mogherini that the Western Balkan region will succeed together or fail together and this will be our shared opportunity and responsibility.

However, strengthening democracy and the rule of law remains the concrete responsibility of each country in that region. Progress and stability cannot be achieved at the expense of good governance by neglecting the rule of law and respect for democratic procedure. I think the best chance to catch up with the 2025 target is a practical demonstration of political will to cooperate nationally in advancing the common EU goal.

My final key word is about reconciliation, and here it is opportune to make reminder also of the former Macedonian President, Boris Trajkovski, who took a personal lead to bring the different Balkan leaders together for reconciliation, friendship and mutual understanding.

Sergei Stanishev (S&D). – Mr President, I welcome the new Commission strategy on the Western Balkans enlargement. It is important not just for the countries of the region but also for the European Union itself: without providing a credible prospect of full membership for all the countries of the Western Balkans the EU global role will not be credible, because this is our region, this is our first commitment.

We need to invest more, both politically and financially. Yes, it is a difficult process because enlargement is a joint effort. You need two to tango, and we are all aware of the efforts which have to be made by the candidate countries. But, at the same time, there is always an alternative that we should not forget, and the alternative is embracing nationalism and populism and creating rivalries and hostilities again.

Where there is a will, there is always a way, and last year the Republic of Macedonia made tremendous progress towards realising that European perspective.

I will quote Nelson Mandela: 'It always seems impossible until it is done.' So let's do this process.

Željana Zovko (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče, poštovani uvaženi povjereniče Hahn, uvažena povjerenice Mogherini, osobno, 15 godina nakon solunskog samita, ovo je veliki emotivni događaj, kako za čitav zapadni Balkan, tako i za Bosnu i Hercegovinu o kojoj je bilo riječi.

Nadam se iskreno da će se u ovoj godini desiti velike promjene u Bosni i Hercegovini, isključivo u nalaženju jednog velikog kompromisa koji će zemlju izvući iz čorsokaka u koji je upala i koja će krenuti putem integracije, koja će biti *front runner* kako se ovdje navodi. Znači 2025. godina je stavljena kao limit za sve zemlje zapadnog Balkana. Limita nema za zemlje, limita ima samo za ljude i u ljudskim glavama se rađa ili mir ili se rađa rat.

Ja pozdravljam ono što je rekao povjerenik Hahn. Znači, mi izvozimo stabilnost da ne bi uvozili nestabilnost i smatram ovaj dan velikim danom. Nakon solunskog samita radujem se što će u Zagrebu biti 2020. isto tako jedan samit. Nadam se da ćemo do tada imati stabilnu Bosnu i Hercegovinu na putu ka Europskoj uniji i da ćemo imati mir i stabilnost u zapadnom Balkanu jer bez toga ostavljamo ovaj prostor silama koje su već prisutne tamo i na žalost već duže vremena rade mimo kontrole.

Isabella De Monte (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il processo di adesione dei paesi dei Balcani occidentali necessita di mutua cooperazione. È importante che la strategia preveda misure quali l'erogazione di fondi, in aggiunta ai già esistenti Fondi IPA, che aiutino i paesi della regione a raggiungere le condizioni richieste per l'adesione.

Credibilità deve essere invece la parola chiave dei Balcani occidentali. I governi della regione devono infatti portare avanti politiche responsabili tese a stabilità, tutela dei diritti, lotta alla corruzione, nonché sviluppo economico ed efficaci trasporti collegati all'Unione.

Il 2018 sarà un anno favorevole per avanzare il processo di allargamento con le Presidenze bulgara e austriaca, ma anche col nuovo summit del processo di Berlino. In tale summit il sistema intergovernativo deve essere tuttavia superato e deve esserci la partecipazione dei parlamentari europei che, in quanto rappresentanti dei cittadini, non possono non avere un ruolo attivo in tale processo.

PRZEWODNICTWO: BOGUSŁAW LIBERADZKI

Wiceprzewodniczący

Асим Адемов (PPE). – Г-н Председател, г-н Хан, бъдещото разширяване на Европейския съюз в посока на Западните Балкани ще означава повече сигурност и стабилност за Съюза, ще означава по-силна и единна Европа. Но приемът на страните от Западните Балкани не зависи само от желанието на Съюза.

Държавите от Западните Балкани имат да извървят дълъг и труден път. Те трябва да имат политическа воля да извършат решителни реформи, да зачитат правилата и ценностите на Европейския съюз и да изпълняват критериите за членство. Пътят им към Брюксел минава през задълбочаването на регионалното сътрудничество и развитието на добросъседските отношения. Ключов момент за региона е и укрепването на етническата и религиозната толерантност, свободата на религията и вероизповеданията.

Страните кандидат членки трябва да поставят на дневен ред фундаменталните ценности на Европейския съюз: толерантността, многообразието и взаимното уважение. От своя страна, Европейският съюз трябва да приема факта, че бъдещето на Западните Балкани е в Съюза. Ангажиментът на Европейския съюз е да поощрява и окуражава тези страни да извършат необходимите реформи, да ги подпомага за подобряване на транспортната, енергийната, комуникационната и образователната структура.

Европейският съюз трябва ясно и категорично да заяви на страните от Западните Балкани, че в близко бъдеще, при изпълнение на критериите за членство, те ще бъдат приети в Съюза. Ще бъде голяма грешка, ако се създаде впечатление у жителите на тези страни, че държавите им ще бъдат вечните кандидати. Поради тази причина евроинтеграцията на Западните Балкани трябва да е основен приоритет на Европейския съюз, а не приоритет само на българското председателство.

Paul Tang (S&D). – Mr President, it is at moments like this that we realise that the European Union is a community of values. We stand for freedom of democracy and of expression, and we stand for the strong rule of law. Clearly these six countries do not live up to these values yet.

For example, for Serbia I am concerned with media freedom; I'm concerned with the attacks on members of the LGBTI community; I'm concerned about the relations with Kosovo. This shows that even a frontrunner still has a long way to go, and no specific dates can be attached to this.

I can only hope that Serbia and these other countries will choose the path of European values. But this path goes two ways. It's good the Commission has given a real perspective to the Western Balkans, and as a community we should reach out and help to bring them closer.

Γεώργιος Κύρτσος (PPE). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η στρατηγική της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής για τη διεύρυνση στα δυτικά Βαλκάνια είναι, κατά την άποψή μου, σωστή στη θεωρία. Στην πράξη, όμως, μπορεί να οδηγήσει σε περιπέτειες ανάλογες με αυτές που παρατηρούνται σε σχέση με τη διεύρυνση προς την Τουρκία. Οι πιθανότητες για επιτυχία μπορεί να αυξηθούν, κατά την άποψή μου, αν γίνουν τα εξής: πρώτον, πρέπει να εγκαταλείψουμε τους υπερφιλόδοξους στόχους για ένταξη κρατών των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων μέχρι το 2025 και να υιοθετήσουμε ένα πιο ρεαλιστικό χρονοδιάγραμμα, διότι συνήθως μετά τη μεγάλη αισιοδοξία έρχεται η μεγάλη απαισιοδοξία· δεύτερον, πρέπει να υπάρξει σοβαρή αύξηση των ιδίων πόρων της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης για να εξασφαλιστούν χρήματα για τα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια και πρόσθετοι πόροι για τα λιγότερο αναπτυγμένα κράτη μέλη, διαφορετικά θα μετατραπεί η Ένωση σε ένα είδος οικονομικού ΟΗΕ, με τεράστιες διαφορές στην ανάπτυξη και μεγάλη ασυνενοησία· τρίτον, πρέπει να ακολουθήσουμε τη γραμμή του Προέδρου της Γαλλίας, Μακρόν, και να πάμε σε μια ειδική σχέση με την Τουρκία, διότι ο συνδυασμός της διεύρυνσης προς τα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια και της διεύρυνσης προς την Τουρκία μπορεί να καταστήσει

αποθητική την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση για τους λαούς πολλών κρατών μελών και να έχουμε μια συνέχεια στη λογική του Brexit-τέταρτον, τα διμερή ζητήματα πρέπει να αντιμετωπιστούν στη ρίζα τους και όχι να κουκουλωθούν. Στόχος μας πρέπει να είναι ο εξευρωπαϊσμός των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων και όχι η βαλκανοποίηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης.

Alojz Peterle (PPE). – Pozdravljam strategijo, ki odpravlja dvome o strateškem pomenu Zahodnega Balkana za Evropsko zvezo. Pomembno je, da je odprta do vseh šestih držav v regiji. Pomembno je tudi, da se hoče Evropska zveza pred širitvijo notranje urediti.

Nisem prijatelj datumov, ponovno pa rečem: kredibilnost pomeni, da mora biti Evropska zveza pripravljena, ko bo pripravljena katera od držav kandidatk.

Biti pripravljen pomeni deliti evropske vrednote in načela, doma ter s sosedi, najprej pa polno uveljavitev pravne države. Sprava ni potrebna samo med sosedi, ampak tudi znotraj držav z močno polarizacijo.

Strategiji mora slediti tak akcijski pristop, da ne bo dvoma, da evropska pot za Zahodni Balkan nima alternative ne po politični, ne po varnostni, ne po gospodarski strani.

Od Soluna ni bilo več vrha Evropska zveza-Zahodni Balkan. Prvi vrh se bo spomladi zgodil ponovno v Sofiji. Tam se mora zgoditi že prva dodana vrednost po sprejetju te strategije, ki ima še rezerve v ambicijah.

Predlagam, da bi bilo v prihodnje več institucionalne osmoze na visoki politični ravni. Državam Zahodnega Balkana pa želim, da nov moment čim boljše in čim hitreje izkoristijo.

Othmar Karas (PPE). – Herr Präsident, Herr Kommissar Hahn! Ich begrüße recht herzlich die von Ihnen, Herr Kommissar, und Frau Mogherini vorgelegte Westbalkanstrategie. Wir Österreicher empfinden aus historischer Sicht eine besondere Verpflichtung für die Menschen, die Regionen und Völker in diesem Raum. Aber für uns ist die Integration der sechs Staaten des Westbalkans eine politische, eine wirtschaftliche, eine moralische und eine sicherheitspolitische Frage. Wir können beide davon profitieren. Wir reichen den Staaten des Westbalkans daher auch beide Hände, ergreifen müssen die Staaten und die Regierungen unsere Hände aber selber. Die Nennung eines möglichen Beitrittsdatums für Serbien und Montenegro und alle anderen Staaten ist daher auch kein Rabatt und keine Aufweichung der Beitrittskriterien. Es ist ein Anreiz, es ist ein Motivationsfaktor.

Im Übrigen wäre mir ein Beitritt schon zur Europaparlamentswahl 2024 — wenn die Kriterien erfüllt sind — lieber, weil dann auch die Menschen bereits an der Wahl für ihre Bürgerkammer teilnehmen könnten. Es müssen aber noch viele Hausaufgaben gemacht werden, und es muss auch von der Europäischen Union einmal zum Beispiel von allen Staaten die Unabhängigkeit und Souveränität des Kosovo als Staat anerkannt werden. Es müssen diese Fragen zwischen Serbien und Kosovo geklärt werden, es müssen die bilateralen Fragen geklärt werden. Wir haben viel zu tun, aber es reizt mich, die Perspektive umzusetzen und Europa damit eine noch stärkere Integrität und Stabilität zu geben.

Ева Майдел (PPE). – Г-н Председател, г-н Комисар, днес ние обсъждаме отворената врата за присъединяване на държавите от Западните Балкани към Европейския съюз — нещо, което смятахме за немислимо само преди няколко години. Това, което се промени, е, че Европейският съюз мина през много и различни кризи. Важното е, че чрез тях ние осъзнахме, че ролята на Европейския съюз като глобален фактор е силно оспорвана дори и в най-близкото ни съседство. Радвам се, че чрез българското председателство отново се поставя фокус върху Западните Балкани — този общ, но позабравен донякъде европейски интерес.

Приветствам, че стратегията за разширяване не дава напразни обещания на страните от Западните Балкани, но същевременно признава, че Европейският съюз има политически ангажимент към региона. Перспективата за потенциално членство може да бъде движещ фактор за реформите и за подобряване на стабилността в тези страни.

Нека да признаем, че и Европейският съюз има собствен интерес, свързан със сигурността, имиграцията и с това да приобщи тези държави. Затова перспективата за Западните Балкани трябва да бъде обшоевропейска цел.

Приветствам и факта, че Европейската комисия се ангажира с дигитална адженда за Балканите. Технологиите и дигиталните умения са секторът, който има най-голям потенциал в процеса на настигане на икономиките в Европейския съюз.

Andor Deli (PPE). – Mr President, in 2014, at the beginning of our parliamentary term, it seemed like enlargement fatigue was irreversible. However, the migration crisis and the security challenges pointed up the fact that Europe needs the Western Balkans and that the EU cannot have white holes on its map. It also became clear that we simply cannot wait for all major political issues to be settled before we endeavour to have further enlargement. Therefore, I sincerely welcome the Commission strategy and the action plan as documents which will officially and permanently put Western Balkan enlargement back on the European agenda.

Additionally, I would call on the Commission to draw up annual reports concerning the implementation of this strategy and the action plan, which should be discussed here in plenary. That would give enlargement a more prominent presence, supplementing the usual progress reports for the countries. All this could provide a strong political backdrop for the difficult work that lies ahead, on all sides, in order to welcome the front-runner countries, Serbia and Montenegro, as full members in 2025.

Hungary and we in the Hungarian EPP Group delegation here in Parliament will do our best to help.

Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (PPE). – Mr President, the Western Balkan countries are a part of Europe and show clear intentions to become part of the Union. By achieving European integration, the four candidate countries and the two aspirant countries will achieve peace and stability.

The Union has brought respect and successful collaboration between former long-time rivals, and I congratulate the Commission for the new strategy with concrete actions like this six flagship initiatives. Conflicts, violence and war and corruption need to be replaced by tolerance, strong democracies and proactive dialogue. European integration, as a common goal, can be a fundament of political consensus among all the actors in the region. One of the good examples of this is the agreement on good neighbourly relations signed by Bulgaria and FYROM after a long period of pressures and diplomatic tensions.

I would like to remind our Balkan friends that we need reliable partners who share our values, especially in the context of current global challenges and the ones that are going to arise.

Ivana Maletić (PPE). – Gospodine predsjedniče, jedno je sigurno, put država jugoistočne Europe, odnosno zapadnog Balkana u Europsku uniju je zacrtan i potpuno otvoren. Ovom strategijom zaustavljamo razmišljanja da se s državama pregovara bez stvarne namjere da zaista postanu države članice i to je jako važna poruka. Imam tri ključne poruke.

Prva: šest država nije u istoj fazi procesa pristupanja i to ste povjereniče Hahn Vi posebno istaknuli. Ako želimo da svih šest ima jednaku šansu u pristupanju do 2025. godine, onda je potreban individualan pristup i što prije otvaranje pregovora s Bosnom i Hercegovinom, Makedonijom, Albanijom i Kosovom. U protivnom neće moći sustići uznapredovale Crnu Goru i Srbiju.

Druga poruka: dobro je što povećavamo sredstva IPE, ali moramo pojačati i napore za uspješno korištenje, osobito u Bosni i Hercegovini. Cilj je pronaći rješenja za korištenje, a ne razloge za blokiranje. Isto tako, Junckerov fond usmjeriti što više prema ovim državama članicama, nemamo baš tu projekata.

I treće: posebno podržavam poticanje na rješavanje neriješenih pitanja sa susjedima. Sve je važno. I pitanje granica, kulturnog blaga i poštivanje prava manjina, ali bih posebno u prvi plan stavila pitanje nestalih. I sad osjećam bol ljudi koji su bili u Europskom parlamentu na konferenciji o nestalima zastupnika Tolića i jedino što žele je moći doći na grob svom djetetu, mužu, ženi, ocu, majci. Zamislite, u 21. stoljeću, da je to ljudima najveća želja. O kojim demokratskim standardima i vladavini prava možemo govoriti dok se to ne riješi.

Franc Bogovič (PPE). – Spoštovani komisar Hahn, iskrene čestitke in hvala za ta dokument, ki ste ga prinesli v Evropski parlament. Največ je v tem dokumentu vredno to, da je jasan.

Šestim državam Zahodnega Balkana, ki živijo med petimi državami Evropske unije, daje jasno perspektivo, da lahko postanejo članice Evropske unije. Jasno je tudi sporočilo, da je potrebno spoštovati kriterije za vstop v Evropsko unijo, odpraviti korupcijo, spoštovati vladavino prava in kar je še bolj pomembno, znati sodelovati v regiji, vzpostaviti medsebojno sodelovanje, si odpustiti za preteklost in pogled usmeriti naprej. To je tudi garant za mir v tem delu Evrope, za mir v moji neposredni sosesčini.

Kar je tudi zelo pomembno, je, da je prvič zapisano to, kar tudi že tri leta govorim tu v Parlamentu, da je treba tem državam zaradi velikega gospodarskega zaostanka intenzivneje pomagati, kot danes pomaga Evropska unija. Pomagati je treba predvsem zato, da bodo gospodarsko močnejši, da bodo mladi ljudje, ki danes trumoma odhajajo in so poceni delovna sila v Avstriji, Nemčiji, ostalih evropskih državah, da bodo ti ljudje ostali doma, da bodo doma kreirali prihodnost in da bodo oni garant za prosperiteto teh držav.

To je tudi pomembno za to, da bomo v Evropi imeli močne države, s katerimi bomo konec koncev tudi države, kot je Slovenija, ki ima s temi državami tradicionalno dobre odnose, tudi v prihodnje trgovali.

Iskrene čestitke, upam, da se izpolni to, kar je dala zaveza Evropska unija, predvsem pa, da bodo države pravilno razumele in izpolnile to, kar so njihove zaveze.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Pane předsedající, velmi vítám iniciativu více se věnovat Západnímu Balkánu a více pomoci našim partnerům v přibližování k Evropské unii.

Jako poslanec za Českou republiku chci zdůraznit jeden aspekt, který zde také zazněl, a to aspekt geopolitický. Ve chvíli, kdy nebudeme aktivní na Balkáně, ve chvíli, kdy necháme Západní Balkán být, pak tam v této oblasti obrovsky bude posilovat Rusko. Říkám to jako český poslanec. My jsme v České republice měli před několika dny prezidentské volby. Bohužel vyhrál provýchodní kandidát, současný prezident Zeman, a na naší zemi jasně vidíme, že zkrátka zájmy Ruska v bývalých oblastech RVHP, v bývalém postkomunistickém bloku zůstávají a naopak narůstají. Takže i z vlastní zkušenosti z České republiky říkám, dělejme aktivnější politiku na Balkáně, protože je třeba, aby Evropa a její hodnoty zde zvítězily.

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, the debate on the relationship between the EU and the Western Balkans must fully take into account the perspectives of citizens, and more particularly the younger generation.

The high youth unemployment rate in Western Balkan countries – for example, more than 60% youth unemployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina – and the overall lack of opportunities has led to an unprecedented and ongoing brain drain which could deprive the country of an entire generation of well-educated young leaders. So offering economic and social opportunities to young people, including ensuring the better representation of women and girls in the labour market, must be the top priority at every level of government.

But most importantly, the youth must be trusted and allowed to actively participate in the decisions that affect the future of their country. We must support the emergence of a generation of young Balkans to lead their countries on this European path, and so that means we have to invest in people-to-people contacts, youth, culture and education.

Κώστας Χρυσόγονος (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, θεμελιώδης προϋπόθεση για την εισδοχή ενός νέου κράτους μέλους στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση πρέπει να θεωρηθεί πως είναι ο σεβασμός του διεθνούς δικαίου και, βέβαια, θεμελιώδης αρχή του διεθνούς δικαίου είναι το απαραβίαστο των συνόρων. Ωστόσο, η FYROM, με πρωτεύουσα τα Σκόπια, εδώ και δεκαετίες υποδαυλίζει αλυτρωτικές βλέψεις και εδαφικές διεκδικήσεις σε βάρος της ελληνικής Μακεδονίας. Παράλληλα, το κράτος αυτό προσπαθεί να σφετεριστεί την ελληνική πολιτιστική κληρονομιά προβάλλοντας ανιστόρητες αξιώσεις συνέχειάς του με την αρχαία Μακεδονία του Μεγάλου Αλεξάνδρου, με την οποία οι σλαβόφωνοι σημερινοί κάτοικοι των Σκοπίων δεν έχουν καμία σχέση. Όλα αυτά υποδηλώνουν την απαρχή της έγερσης ζητημάτων αλλαγής συνόρων σε βάρος της Ελλάδας. Πρέπει να καταστεί σαφές στην κυβέρνηση των Σκοπίων ότι τούτο είναι παντελώς ασύμβατο με κάθε σκέψη εισόδου στην Ένωση.

Ελευθέριος Συναδινός (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η είσοδος νέων μελών πρέπει να συνάδει με τις Συνθήκες αλλά και με την κοινή λογική. Όταν στο σύνολο των κριτηρίων σύγκλισης εντοπίζονται ελλείψεις, από τη διαφθορά έως το κράτος δικαίου, τότε το αφήγημα ότι οι μόνες εκκρεμότητες αφορούν σε λεπτομέρειες, όπως για παράδειγμα στο ζήτημα της ονομασίας των Σκοπίων, είναι τραγελαφικό. Πέραν όμως των όποιων κριτηρίων, είναι ανόητο να εμπιστεύεσαι μια χώρα, και κυρίως την κυβέρνησή της, όταν κλέβει το όνομα, τη γλώσσα, την ιστορία και τον πολιτισμό άλλου κράτους και έχει αλυτρωτικές διαθέσεις σε βάρος της πατρίδας μου, της Ελλάδας. Και ερωτώ: γιατί Βερολίνο, Βρυξέλλες και Αμερική πιέζουν την Ελλάδα να ανεχθεί το ψεύδος της ονομασίας και δεν πιέζουν τα Σκόπια να αποδεχθούν την αλήθεια: ότι είναι δηλαδή Σλάβοι και όχι, φυσικά, Μακεδόνες; Η εκκωφαντική συγκέντρωση του ελληνικού, και όχι μόνο, λαού σε Θεσσαλονίκη και Αθήνα, αλλά και των Ελλήνων σε όλο τον κόσμο, αποτελεί δήλωση προς τους Έλληνες πολιτικούς αλλά και τους Ευρωπαίους εταίρους ότι με σφετεριστές δεν συζητάμε.

Patricija Šulin (PPE). – Pozdravljam začetek politične razprave o prihodnosti Zahodnega Balkana, saj potrebuje jasno evropsko perspektivo. In le tako bomo motivirali države, da bodo zadostile političnim in gospodarskim pogojem ter uvedle potrebne reforme.

Članstvo držav Zahodnega Balkana v Evropski uniji, ki uživa tudi visoko podporo med ljudmi, je porok za stabilnost širše regije ter za umiritev nekaterih napetosti med državami.

Vprašanje širitve Evropske unije na Zahodni Balkan je bilo v zadnjih letih zaradi številnih kriz, s katerimi smo se spopadali, odrinjeno na rob. Reformna prizadevanja v teh državah so se upočasnila, povečuje se delež ljudi, ki ne verjame, da bodo sploh kdaj prišli v Evropsko unijo. Poleg tega pa smo priča povečanemu interesu nekaterih velesil, ki si želijo povečati svoj vpliv v Zahodnem Balkanu.

Zaradi vsega naštetega moramo v prihodnosti nameniti več pozornosti državam v tej regiji.

Κώστας Μαυρίδης (S&D). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, τα έξι κράτη των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων έχουν, ομολογουμένως, μέλλον στην κοινή ευρωπαϊκή μας οικογένεια, όχι τόσο λόγω της γεωγραφίας, αλλά εφόσον εφαρμόσουν στην πράξη το κράτος δικαίου και το διεθνές δίκαιο. Ωστόσο, δεν βρίσκονται όλα τα κράτη των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων στο ίδιο σημείο. Για παράδειγμα, αν συγκρίνουμε το πού βρίσκεται η σημερινή Τουρκία, που είναι ήδη σε ενταξιακό καθεστώς, με το πού βρίσκονται ορισμένα από αυτά τα κράτη μέλη, θα παρατηρήσουμε ότι, ομολογουμένως, ορισμένα κράτη στα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια είναι σε καλύτερη θέση.

Όμως, κύριε πρόεδρε, το 2018 είναι και έτος Πολιτιστικής Κληρονομιάς, η οποία καθορίζει τις αξίες μας και οι αξίες μας καθορίζουν το μέλλον μας. Να είμαστε ειλικρινείς και να βασιζόμαστε στην αλήθεια: το λεγόμενο κράτος στα Σκόπια δεν έχει καμία σχέση με την ελληνική Μακεδονία και τον Μέγα Αλέξανδρο. Ας είμαστε επιτέλους ειλικρινείς για να έχουμε κοινό ευρωπαϊκό μέλλον.

Λάμπρος Φουντούλης (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, αισιόδοξη βρίσκω την Επιτροπή σχετικά με το θέμα της ένταξης των χωρών των Δυτικών Βαλκανίων στην Ένωση. Προτείνει, σε βάθος χρόνου, την ένταξη πέντε κρατών και μιας επαρχίας, αλλά παραβλέπει ως συνήθως την πραγματικότητα. Η Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη δεν είναι παρά ένα τεχνητό κράτος δημιουργημένο από τις νατοϊκές επιδρομές και εξακολουθεί να υπάρχει μόνο χάρη στη συνεχή υποστήριξη από τα γερμανικά συμφέροντα. Η Σερβία σύντομα θα πληροί τα κριτήρια ένταξης, αν και θα συμβούλευα τους Σέρβους να την αποφύγουν· το ίδιο και το Μαυροβούνιο. Το Κοσσυφοπέδιο δεν είναι παρά μια επαρχία της Σερβίας και καλά θα κάνει η Επιτροπή να σέβεται τα πέντε κράτη μέλη που μόνον ως επαρχία το αναγνωρίζουν. Η Αλβανία από την άλλη, με τις συνεχείς -σχεδόν επίσημες- επεκτατικές βλέψεις της και τη μακροχρόνια καταπίεση της ελληνικής μειονότητας της Βορείου Ηπείρου, δεν πρέπει να ενταχθεί ποτέ στην Ένωση. Τέλος, το κράτος των Σκοπίων, με την κλοπή του ονόματος, της ταυτότητας και της ιστορίας της ελληνικής Μακεδονίας, καλείται να ξεχάσει μια για πάντα οποιαδήποτε προοπτική ένταξής του. Πρόσφατα, ο ελληνικός λαός, με δύο γιγαντιαία συλλαλητήρια, κατέστησε σαφές πως δεν υπάρχει κανένα αντικείμενο διαπραγμάτευσης με τα Σκόπια και μοναδική αποδεκτή λύση θα είναι η υιοθέτηση ονόματος χωρίς τον όρο «Μακεδονία» ή παράγωγό του.

Milan Zver (PPE). – Danes je torej vesel dan za vse državljane, ki živijo v državah Zahodnega Balkana. To sporočilo oziroma dana roka, ki je bila ponujena s strani Evropske unije, bo zagotovo v prihodnjih letih uresničeno oziroma sprejeta.

Vendar bi rad poudaril naslednje: države, ko izpolnijo vse pogoje za članstvo v Evropski uniji, se morajo sprejeti zagotovo v Evropsko unijo. Ni pa prav, da jim sedaj postavljamo še dodatne pogoje, kot je na primer dopoldne postavil predsednik Evropske komisije, ko je dejal, da morajo najprej rešiti svoja obmejna vprašanja.

Vsi, ki poznamo zgodovino, geostrateške razmere na Balkanu, vemo, da to ni enostavno in da je to dodaten pogoj, ki lahko postane svojčas tudi ovira za vključevanje teh držav, čeprav bi izpolnile vse pogoje za polnopravno članstvo v Evropski uniji.

Csaba Sógor (PPE). – Elnök Úr! Az EU stabilitásának kulcskérdése a Nyugat-Balkán integrációjának felgyorsítása, az EU pedig nem teheti, hogy nem beszél a bővítésről. Az elmúlt években a Bizottság ezt az utat követte, aminek meg is lett az eredménye: a térség országaiban csökkent az érdeklődés a csatlakozás iránt. Más globális és regionális politikai szereplők ezzel párhuzamosan rendkívül aktívvá váltak a térségben, fejlesztési perspektívát nyújtva a Nyugat-Balkán államainak. Bár Európában vannak, akik leállítanák a további bővítéseket, tudomásul kell venni: az EU integráció nem lehet teljes a Nyugat-Balkán nélkül.

Azzal a gondolattal is meg kell barátkozni, hogy a térség etnikai konfliktusai ezáltal EU-n belüli gondokká válnak, utópia azt gondolni, hogy a csatlakozás után minden történelmi sérelmet elfelejtenek ezek a nemzetek. A megoldás tehát az EU kisebbségvédelmi rendszerének kialakítása, amely felkészül erre a helyzetre, nem pedig az abban való reménykedés, hogy a csatlakozás után eltűnnek az etnikai feszültségek.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Johannes Hahn, Member of the Commission. – Mr President, first and foremost I would like to thank you for this debate and, in particular, for the very strong and overwhelming support and commitment to the whole strategy which have been expressed by almost all of you. Secondly, we should not forget that we are talking about a region of 18 million people, surrounded by EU Member States, which is still in fragile and shaky shape. It is not necessary, I think, to reiterate why it is so important, not least in terms of European interests, to give those people a European perspective.

Thirdly, I have heard several times about an accession date of 2025; some Members even talked about all of the countries joining the Union by 2025. That is an indicative date, a prospect, and it should demonstrate that if there is strong political will, and dedication in the countries themselves, then it is possible to conclude negotiations and join the Union. But this means, once again, strong political will, a readiness to carry out necessary reforms and, in particular, to prove the sustainability of measures which have been called for. So in a way we have learned our lessons from previous accession negotiations and therefore we are now talking more and understand better that what matters is the process rather than negotiations.

A process takes time and therefore it is necessary to strike the right balance between the prospect of a lasting – not to say long-lasting – process and keeping motivation and stimulation alive. Therefore, it was necessary to indicate that there can be light at the end of the tunnel and link it to a certain date, but we are not saying that everything will happen without any fulfilment of conditions. It is important to stress this again and again.

Finally, I have two requests for Members. Firstly, I want to appeal to all of you. If we are to continue this process it is definitely necessary to have compromise in one form or another. That is democracy and democracy means finding a compromise in which everybody has to give in a little bit in order to get more. This is important for making the necessary progress. We also need to understand that on our side. The second request: I have felt this very strong support here, and I am also speaking on behalf of Federica Mogherini, but we are all responsible and called upon to communicate back home about what we are talking about here, what we are thinking, and what we believe to be necessary, for today I believe that the bigger challenge will be to convince our own citizens. We have to start communicating to our citizens why all this is necessary, why it is also in our interest, and we have to start doing it today and not in two or three years' time. Therefore, we should bear in mind that either we as Europeans export stability or else we will import instability and keep the level of instability that we are still facing in the region today. So it is in our own interest, but of course our friends and partners in the region have to do their homework: they have to do what is necessary in order not only to meet European standards, but also to live up to the European values to which we are all committed and dedicated.

Przewodniczący. – Dziękuję Panie Komisarzu za tę konkluzję, którą Pan bardzo czytelnie zarysował.

Zamykam debatę.

Oświadczenia pisemne (art. 162)

Andrea Bocskor (PPE), *írásban*. – A nyugat-balkáni országok integrációja továbbra is prioritást élvez Magyarország szemében, ezért magam is támogatom a bővítés felgyorsítását. Az illegális migrációt ezen balkáni országok segítségével lehet csak lefékezni, így a térség országai jogosan támasztanak elvárásokat az Európai Unióval szemben. Az illegális bevándorlás nagymértékű terrorfenyegetettséget és társadalmi feszültséget hozott az Unióba, így bebizonyosodott, hogy azt még az EU külső határainál meg kell állítani. A Bizottság ma bemutatott bővítési stratégiája újra felhívja a figyelmet a térség stratégiai szerepére.

Az integráció magasabb szintre emelése sokat segítene a térségen belüli feszültségek csökkentésében. De nemcsak politikai és biztonsági kockázatot látok a bővítés halasztásában, hanem gazdasági kockázatot is. A Bizottság is megállapítja, hogy a térség jövőjének alakítása az Unió saját politikai, biztonsági és gazdasági érdeke. 2025-re pedig Montenegró és Szerbia készen állhat a csatlakozásra!

Mario Borghesio (ENF), *per iscritto*. – In questi giorni si stanno moltiplicando gli sforzi diplomatici di Bruxelles per accelerare l'adesione dei paesi dei Balcani occidentali alla UE, come testimoniano le recenti dichiarazioni del Commissario Hahn ed i viaggi di Juncker in programma prossimamente nell'area. La strategia dell'Unione, totalmente irrealistica, è quella di prevedere una normalizzazione delle relazioni tra Serbia e Kosovo entro il 2019. È però bastato il recente assassinio del *leader* dell'ala moderata della minoranza serba, Oliver Ivanovic, a sconvolgere di nuovo la regione. Utopistica la stabilizzazione, se non si vogliono affrontare le cause storiche delle faide etniche, in primis una forte e conflittuale presenza islamica, nonché la progressiva penetrazione di gruppi jihadisti. Ma la politica dell'UE resta sempre la stessa: con la promessa dei cospicui fondi europei di coesione, distogliere la Serbia e gli altri paesi dalla tradizionale vicinanza alla Russia. Una politica miope ed inconcludente!

Eugen Freund (S&D), *schriftlich*. – Höchste Standards bei EU-Erweiterungen: Das heißt aber auch, dass bestehende Grenzkonflikte am Westbalkan vor einem Beitritt gelöst werden müssen und nicht danach. Schon einmal – und darauf hat auch Kommissionspräsident Juncker hingewiesen – sind diese Probleme vor der Aufnahme einfach beiseite geschoben worden. Dieser Fehler darf nicht wieder passieren.

Einem möglichen Beitritt bis 2025 liegt jedoch noch sehr viel Arbeit zugrunde. Es muss gewährleistet sein, dass ein solcher Beitrittsprozess nicht von einem Datum, sondern von den erfüllten Bedingungen geleitet wird. Ein Beitrittskandidat muss höchste demokratische Standards erfüllen. Vor allem in den Bereichen Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Justizwesen, Korruption sowie bei Meinungs- und Medienfreiheit besteht noch ein großer Verbesserungsbedarf.

Im Falle Serbiens gibt es noch offene Fragen. Die Beziehungen des Landes zum Kosovo können immer noch nicht als normalisiert bezeichnet werden. Bestehende Differenzen, vor allem hinsichtlich der Grenzziehung, müssen geklärt werden. Bei Montenegro wünsche ich mir klare demokratische Strukturen.

Bevor es zu einer Erweiterung kommt, müssen auch wir uns Gedanken machen, wie wir die europäischen Institutionen stärken. Denn in einer größeren Union muss die Entscheidungsfähigkeit gewährleistet sein.

Doru-Claudian Frunzulică (S&D), *in writing*. – I welcome the reinforced Enlargement Strategy entitled 'Credible Perspective of Enlargement to the Western Balkans', which is in line with President Juncker's announcement during the 2017 State of the Union address and reaffirms the European perspective for all Western Balkans countries, by recognising the efforts of the frontrunners, Serbia and Montenegro.

Being recognised too by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the EU as a main priority, further integration of Western Balkans countries will, I am certain, improve the stability of Europe as a whole. Accordingly, we need to encourage reforms, reconciliation, regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations. Indeed, the economic convergence of the Western Balkans may be a long-term process, taking into account the problems, such as high unemployment, low productivity and weak competitiveness, that some of these countries face.

As a final remark, I would like to underline that ensuring a clear European perspective for these countries would stimulate the acceleration of reforms while also increasing youth opportunities for education and work and offering young people clear prospects for their future.

Maria Grapini (S&D), *în scris*. – Țările din Balcanii de Vest ar trebui să se regăsească în Uniunea Europeană! Au avut o istorie frământată, însă au cultură și tradiții care au rolul lor în Europa.

Persoane politice importante spun că, dacă Balcanii de Vest nu ar fi existat, Europa de Vest ar fi trebuit să-i inventeze. Evident că statele din Balcanii de Vest pot contribui la diversitate, crescând consistența și puterea Uniunii Europene. Consider că orizontul 2025 este realist dacă și noi, Uniunea Europeană, acordăm asistența tehnică privind cunoașterea valorilor europene.

Așa cum familia care are mai mulți copii se ocupă de fiecare să-i învețe respectarea valorii familiei, așa și Uniunea Europeană ar trebui să ajute statele din Balcani, respectiv pe cetățenii acestora, să înțeleagă valorile europene.

Theodor Dumitru Stolojan (PPE), *în scris*. – Este salutară inițiativa Comisiei Europene de a prezenta o strategie pentru Balcanii de Vest, prin care redeschide opțiunea de aderare a acestor țări la UE, pe măsură ce îndeplinesc criteriile de aderare. Regret însă că aceeași Comisie Europeană refuză să pregătească o strategie și pentru Republica Moldova. Consider că și Republica Moldova trebuie sprijinită prin aceleași instrumente propuse pentru țările din Balcanii de Vest, spre a îndeplini criteriile de aderare la UE.

Ελένη Θεοχάρους (ECR), *γραφτώς*. – Από τη συζήτηση για τα Δυτικά Βαλκάνια είναι πρόδηλη η πρόθεση της ΕΕ να προχωρήσει σε νέα διεύρυνση περί το 2025, εφόσον πληρωθούν οι προϋποθέσεις και επιλυθούν τα διασυνοριακά προβλήματα, στα οποία -όπως ελέχθη- δεν θα αναμειχθεί η ΕΕ. Υπό αυτές τις συνθήκες, εάν τα Σκόπια επιθυμούν ένταξη στην ΕΕ θα πρέπει να εγκαταλείψουν την αλυτρωτική τους πολιτική σε βάρος της Ελλάδας, που σημαίνει ότι καμιά σύνθετη ονομασία με τον όρο Μακεδονία δεν μπορεί να γίνει δεκτή. Είναι απαράδεκτη η στάση του Επιτρόπου αρμόδιου για θέματα Διεύρυνσης, Γιοχάνες Χαν, ο οποίος απέφυγε να ανακαλέσει προηγούμενες δημόσιες αναφορές στις οποίες αποκαλούσε Μακεδονία τα Σκόπια. Όσον αφορά την Αλβανία, εάν η χώρα αυτή εξακολουθήσει να καλλιεργεί τον ιδεατισμό της Μεγάλης Αλβανίας εποφθαλμιώντας το Κοσσυφοπέδιο, το Τέτοβο και περιοχές της Δυτικής Ελλάδας, και παραβιάζοντας βάναυσα τα ανθρώπινα, θρησκευτικά, εκπαιδευτικά, πολιτιστικά και περιουσιακά δικαιώματα των Ελλήνων της Βορείου Ηπείρου, το μόνο βέβαιο είναι ότι δεν πρόκειται να ενταχθεί ποτέ στην ΕΕ. Το δε Κοσσυφοπέδιο, για την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία εξακολουθεί να είναι επαρχία της Σερβίας.

Владимир Уручев (PPE), *в писмена форма*. – Стратегията за присъединяването на Западните Балкани към ЕС отваря широк прозорец на възможности за тези страни, от които те следва да се възползват в максимална степен. Петнадесет години след Солунската декларация Западните Балкани се връщат в дневния ред на разширяването на ЕС с ясното осъзнаване, че без тях европейският проект е незавършен, а в европейската сигурност има пробойни. Стабилен и сигурен ЕС е възможен само с интегрирани в него Западни Балкани.

Стратегията отваря врати за по-интензивно сътрудничество със Западните Балкани, за по-бърз напредък по присъединяването им, с ясен хоризонт до 2025 г. Шест основни инициативи и десетки конкретни мерки ще подпомогнат тази перспектива да стане необратима, но преди това тя трябва да бъде избор на народите на тези страни за своето европейско бъдеще. Без съмнение перспективата за присъединяване ще ускори реформите в страните, ще подтикне повече хора да поддържат историческия избор, ще спомогне за решаване на множеството спорове между страните и заздравяване на раните от миналите конфликти.

Приоритетите на българското председателство на Съвета на ЕС към Западните Балкани раздвижиха европейското политическо пространство. Набраната скорост трябва да бъде запазена с конкретни стъпки от всяка страна, с неотменими ангажименти от ЕС, за да превърнем Западните Балкани в регион на мир, просперитет и спокойствие.

13. Gedelegeerde handelingen en uitvoeringsmaatregelen (artikel 105, lid 6, en artikel 106, lid 4, onder d), van het Reglement): zie notulen

14. De situatie in Zimbabwe (debat)

Przewodniczący. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dnia jest oświadczenie Wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji i Wysokiej Przedstawiciel Unii do Spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa w sprawie sytuacji w Zimbabwe (2017/3022(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, Zimbabwe has a unique opportunity for change. For the first time since independence, a transition of power has begun. We still do not know where this transition will end. Europeans would like, first and foremost, to accompany the people of Zimbabwe on the path of political and economic reform. We want to sustain their hope that real change is possible and help them realise their aspiration to democracy and social justice.

This is our offer to the country: we are ready to intensify our cooperation and be with you in this moment of your history. It will be up to the people of Zimbabwe to decide the new course of the country. Yet I believe it is already quite clear what kind of change the people of Zimbabwe are asking for. Zimbabwe is a country of talented people with good education. They are asking for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. They are asking for an opportunity to prove their talents and put the country's economy back on track.

The country needs structural change that will require strong popular backing. Reconciliation and an inclusive dialogue are essential, and they are possible. They will require, first and foremost, respect for the constitutional order, the rule of law and the fundamental rights of all citizens. We then hope that the new authorities will organise inclusive, transparent and credible elections later this year. A peaceful electoral campaign and credible elections can set the country on track towards positive change. It is precisely for this reason that we have already started to assist the Zimbabwe Election Commission in establishing a credible electoral role through biometric voter registration. We are also supporting the local media with training on how to cover elections, and also inter-party dialogue and civic and voter education, and this support could be enhanced. I would also support the idea of an electoral observation mission by the European Union, provided that the required conditions are fulfilled and that we receive an invitation from the Government of the country.

The economic situation also needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. We count on the Government to reengage quickly and substantively with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. On our side, we will continue to work very closely with international financial institutions towards a package of measures to stabilise the economy and guarantee basic social services.

The people of Zimbabwe have the opportunity to close a difficult chapter in their history and start anew. It is a delicate and decisive moment for the country. All those who are working for progress in Zimbabwe can count on us in strong cooperation with the United Nations, the African Union and the Southern African Development Community. It is now up to the new authorities to make the first move. A first and encouraging discussion took place in Addis Ababa last week between the President and Commissioner Mimica. Our next steps will depend entirely on the new Government's actions and its commitment to change.

We see an entire people hoping for progress and for true democracy. The aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe are our own aspirations and we want to make sure that this opportunity is not wasted and that the mistakes of the past do not happen again. But if Zimbabweans embrace the path of change, they can count on the European Union to be with them every step of the way.

Bogdan Brunon Wenta, w imieniu grupy PPE. – Panie Przewodniczący! Wysoka Pani Przedstawiciel! Właściwie mogę powtórzyć te zachęcające słowa, chociaż ostatnie wydarzenia polityczne w Zimbabwe napawają nadzieją na demokratyzację kraju, przywrócenie rządów prawa i polepszenie standardów ochrony praw człowieka. Z zadowoleniem przyjmuję obietnicę prezydenta Mnangagwy dotyczącą przeprowadzenia wolnych wyborów w drugiej połowie 2018 r. i respektowania woli obywateli niezależnie od wyniku. Liczymy wszyscy, że prezydent dotrzyma słowa i że władza zostanie przekazana i ustanowiona w sposób w pełni demokratyczny i pokojowy.

Jak już Pani wspomniała, Unia Europejska jest gotowa wesprzeć wybory poprzez organizację misji obserwacyjnej w Zimbabwe. Ponadto, niedawno została podjęta decyzja o uruchomieniu trzech projektów o wartości około 3 milionów euro na rzecz wspierania rządów prawa w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Rozwoju.

Przywrócenie demokratycznego państwa prawa w Zimbabwe spowoduje, że społeczność międzynarodowa będzie bardziej skłonna udzielać krajowi pomocy rozwojowej. Istotne jest także utrzymanie stabilności w tym regionie Afryki. Pamiętać bowiem należy, jak wydarzenia sprzed kilku miesięcy wpłynęły na kraje sąsiadujące z Zimbabwe. Przykładem jest tu Botswana, która w krótkim czasie przyjęła tysiące uchodźców z tego kraju.

Jednocześnie zapewnienie stabilizacji wewnętrznej jest kluczowe dla zwiększenia atrakcyjności Zimbabwe dla inwestorów i otwarcia jego gospodarki na świat. Są to kwestie niezwykle istotne z punktu widzenia poprawy sytuacji ekonomicznej po wielu latach stagnacji i zubożenia obywateli w związku z wysokim poziomem inflacji.

Będziemy z uwagą śledzić rozwój wydarzeń w Zimbabwe w najbliższych miesiącach. Mam nadzieję, że obecne zmiany w kraju otworzą nowy rozdział w jego stosunkach z Unią Europejską i społecznością międzynarodową oraz pozwolą na stworzenie w Zimbabwe warunków dla zrównoważonego rozwoju.

Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, *a nome del gruppo S&D*. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, ringrazio l'Alto rappresentante Federica Mogherini per il suo lavoro e anche per questa dichiarazione.

Emmerson Mnangagwa è passato al potere nello Zimbabwe a novembre, dopo le dimissioni di Mugabe, pressato dall'esercito, dal ZANU-PF e dalla mobilitazione popolare. Durante le trattative per la resa di Mugabe, siamo rimasti con il fiato sospeso perché temevamo che la situazione potesse sfuggire di mano, sfociando appunto nella violenza. Per fortuna l'alternanza è avvenuta in modo pacifico e il nuovo presidente si è insediato senza particolari problemi. La comunità internazionale ha persino preso parte alla cerimonia di insediamento, segno che il passaggio del potere tra Mugabe e il suo ex vice ha trovato gradimento.

Oggi il paese punta all'elezione generale prevista entro luglio, se possiamo dare credito alla recente dichiarazione del presidente. Sarebbe così rispettato il normale processo elettorale. Anche su questo punto dobbiamo riconoscere che i nuovi dirigenti del paese stanno dando segnali positivi. Sulla questione dell'elezione sono in gioco la trasparenza e l'imparzialità. L'attuale presidente è stato il primo a prometterli, invocando con serenità anche l'ipotesi del coinvolgimento di una missione di osservazione elettorale da parte dell'Unione europea, come già ricordato dall'Alto rappresentante.

Le elezioni sono doverose, perché l'attuale potere è segnato da un'insufficienza di legittimità in quanto regime di transizione e si deve dunque confrontare con il popolo dello Zimbabwe in una partita elettorale che vorremmo concorrenziale. Qui sta la mia preoccupazione: lo Zimbabwe versa oggi in una situazione politica di egemonia dello ZANU-PF, il partito di Mugabe e di Mnangagwa. L'opposizione, una volta incarnata da Morgan Tsvangirai, mostra evidenti segni di affaticamento e questo potrebbe contribuire alla svalutazione delle offerte politiche, cioè all'abbassamento delle tutele dei cittadini dello Zimbabwe. Su questo punto e sui diritti umani dobbiamo restare vigili ed esigenti nei confronti del nuovo governo dello Zimbabwe.

Geoffrey Van Orden, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Mr President, I speak as Chairman of the Friends of Zimbabwe in the European Parliament. We can only welcome the overthrow of Mugabe's tyranny that took place last November, but I want to look forward now and there is indeed hope for the people of Zimbabwe. The international community needs to help reinforce that hope.

Morgan Tsvangirai was mentioned, and I want to put on record our admiration for Morgan Tsvangirai as the MDC leader who campaigned over so many years for democratic change in Zimbabwe. He is seriously ill at the moment. I hope I can speak on behalf of all Parliament in saying we send our best wishes to him for a strong recovery.

I wrote to Emerson Mnangagwa immediately before he became President urging him to initiate the much-needed political, economic and social changes to set Zimbabwe on a fresh course. He must be assured that if he does the right thing then we will give Zimbabwe every possible support, but we need to know that the Zimbabwean authorities are indeed committed to a new path. That means action against political thugs. Just four days ago Joice Mujuru and her supporters were injured by such thugs on their way to a political meeting in the Glen Norah suburb of Harare. Violence and intimidation has to stop.

I am most encouraged by what Ms Mogherini had to say on the subject of support for the elections to make sure they are indeed credible elections, and indeed on an economic package.

The possibility of Zimbabwe rejoining the Commonwealth is under active consideration. I very much hope the Zimbabwean Government will commit itself to this and it will be invited to send observers to the CHOGM meeting in London.

Lola Sánchez Caldentey, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señor presidente, hace un año ya que alertamos sobre la situación en Zimbabwe y sobre el rol que estaba teniendo la Unión Europea. Ya rechazamos entonces cualquier operación externa, así como injerencias en los asuntos internos de Zimbabwe por meros fines geoestratégicos que solo respondan a intereses económicos de la Unión Europea. Seamos realistas porque los problemas los sufre la gente. La pobreza, el desempleo, la malnutrición crónica son los principales problemas que afronta este país. Y consideramos que estos problemas solo pueden ser resueltos mediante políticas públicas del Gobierno, apoyadas, eso sí, por la solidaridad y la cooperación internacional.

Zimbabwe es también uno de los países más endeudados del mundo y ejemplifica, una vez más, que necesitamos abordar la deuda desde un enfoque basado en los derechos humanos y su sostenibilidad a largo plazo, así como en unos estándares justos que redefinan los mecanismos de préstamo. Sin todo ello, seguiremos siendo incoherentes, utilizaremos nuestras declaraciones sobre terceros países a modo de palo y zanahoria en función de intereses económicos y desatendiendo los problemas reales de todo un pueblo.

Judith Sargentini, *namens de Verts/ALE-Fractie*. – Voorzitter, natuurlijk is er hoop nu Mugabe vertrokken is en er een nieuwe president is in Zimbabwe. Maar Emmerson Mnangagwa heeft een geschiedenis in dat land. Emmerson Mnangagwa is een kameraad van Mugabe, die betrokken was bij de moordpartijen in Matabeleland. Nou sluit je nooit vrede met aardige mensen – dat begrijp ik heel erg goed – en het is natuurlijk een stap voorwaarts dat deze verandering vreedzaam is verlopen.

Maar we moeten ons ook wel realiseren dat er in dat land veel meer mis is dan alleen maar een economisch probleem. Ik denk inderdaad dat Emmerson Mnangagwa een ander soort economisch beleid zal voeren en dat dat goed is ook voor internationale investeerders. Maar als wij hem nu alleen maar het voordeel van de twijfel gegeven omdat hij niet Robert Mugabe is, dan missen we ook een kans. De verkiezingen zijn in juli of juni. Na de verkiezingen heeft deze regering, die toch uit wel erg veel militairen bestaat, een nieuwe legitimiteit gekregen. Vóór die tijd zijn ze op zoek naar legitimiteit.

Volgens mij is het nu het moment om ook om democratische veranderingen te vragen. De *public order security act* bijvoorbeeld kan veranderd worden. Het land is al decennia bezig met constitutionele hervormingen. Er is geen enkele reden om te wachten tot na de verkiezingen om die eis bij meneer Mnangagwa neer te leggen. Het maatschappelijk middenveld is momenteel zwak. Dat komt ook omdat wij Europeanen na die regering van nationale eenheid een paar jaar geleden zeiden: "Laat maar, we gaan nu inzetten op de regering". De oppositie is ongelooflijk zwak. Dus we kunnen ervan uitgaan dat er na de verkiezingen in juni of juli een ZANU–PF-parlement zit. Dan is het zaak om je *checks and balances* anders te organiseren. Dus het is aan ons om nu vragen te stellen over democratisering en nu het maatschappelijk middenveld te helpen.

Przewodniczący. – Pan Stuger chciał zadać pytanie poprzez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. Mam jednak prośbę: Pan będzie mówcą, a ponieważ mamy opóźnienie, które narosło już w trakcie poprzednich wystąpień, chciałbym prosić, aby ci z Państwa, którzy będą mówcami, nie zadawali pytań w trybie niebieskiej kartki.

Raymond Finch, *on behalf of the EFDD Group*. – Mr President, I am tentatively optimistic about the prospects for Zimbabwe under this new administration. The former breadbasket of Africa has been ruined by decades of misrule by a despot whose policies were built more on bitterness over old wounds than on optimism for Zimbabwe's 'home together'.

Already there are signals coming from the Government for a fair resolution to the farming issue, which I welcome. Zimbabwe is a crucial cornerstone for the prosperity and security of Eastern and Southern Africa. The situation is, however, delicate, and we must be sure not to rush ahead with unfairly high standards pressured onto Zimbabwe, as the EU usually likes to do. If Zimbabwe is to progress it must be allowed to do so at a reasonable pace, led by its own domestic society with region-led support from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union.

It would be a positive move for Zimbabwe to rekindle its relationship with the Commonwealth and build on the latent trade potential which an organisation of such historically and culturally close countries can provide.

Janice Atkinson (ENF). – Mr President, I would like to agree with all my UK colleagues who have spoken on Zimbabwe, and I have hope for that country too, but I do not want to talk about Zimbabwe, I want to talk about human rights in South Africa. We have spoken about Zimbabwe so many times in this Chamber, but why is South Africa not on the agenda?

South Africa is the rape capital of the world and 109 rapes are recorded every day. In 2016, there were 42 000. They have one of the highest per capita murder rates in the world, with 52 murders every day. In 2017, there were 463 brutal farm attacks and 94 murders. So far in 2018, today, there have been 38 farm attacks, four murders – that is a 27% increase. But human rights is still not on the agenda.

And racial discrimination. We all condemn that in this Parliament, yet do you condemn the Marxist ANC's black economic-empowerment programme that discriminates against white people because of the colour of their skin? And do you condemn the racially motivated farm attacks and murders from blacks and whites? Why are we not having a discussion on the brutal attacks and the human rights abuses in South Africa?

Przewodniczący. – Chciałbym tylko prosić Panią Poseł i innych Państwa, abyśmy rozmawiali o Zimbabwe, nie o innych częściach Afryki.

David McAllister (PPE). – Mr President, back to Zimbabwe. I understand the current development in this country is a sign of hope. As previous speakers have pointed out, the 37 years of Mr Mugabe's authoritarian regime caused Zimbabwe's economy to plummet, created social unrest and isolated the country internationally. The rule of law was not only ignored, but police brutality against critics of the regime was commonplace.

Now the path towards democracy seems to be in sight. Mr Mugabe's decision to step down as President was the right choice and definitely overdue. The Zimbabwean people are now desperately seeking a government that is able to establish the necessary reforms, but first and foremost to listen to what the people are saying.

The upcoming electoral process will be an essential step. We should welcome the commitment of the authorities in Harare to hold the elections in line with the Constitution, and underline the importance that the conditions are in place to allow those elections to be peaceful, inclusive, credible and transparent.

I would like to acknowledge, and also commend, the efforts taken by the High Representative in offering assistance with reform processes in Zimbabwe. The European Parliament, as has been pointed out, is ready to start the preparation of an election observation as soon as we receive an invitation. We ought to stress firmly the responsibility and the accountability that lie in these promised elections. Democratic processes and the rule of law are the foundations of a peaceful society. I sincerely hope the Zimbabwean people will accomplish this through democratic and conflict-free elections.

Boris Zala (S&D). – Mr President, the ongoing transition of power in Zimbabwe creates a new window of opportunity. The EU must be flexible and ready to deepen relations with Harare and provide economic and political support for positive change.

But we must also set clear conditions. Most important of all is the return of the rule of law and political freedoms and the re-establishment of civilian rule over the military. It must also include a clear path to inclusive and fair elections in 2018, which could also be observed by the European Parliament. Moreover, the EU could – and should – be an important partner in the government's effort to restore growth and create new jobs for Zimbabweans.

The EU has an important role to play in Zimbabwe's future, if Member States pursue a common position. We have to show a brighter perspective for Zimbabwe than other players, especially China. We possess potentially strong tools and leverage when it comes to supporting Zimbabwe's transition. Let's make sure we use our leverage wisely.

Ελένη Θεοχάρους (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, θα συμφωνούσα με την Υπάτη Εκπρόσωπο ότι η Ζιμπάμπουε μπήκε σε μια πολιτικά μεταβατική περίοδο. Απλώς ελπίζω ότι οι διάδοχοι του Μουγκάμπε δεν θα είναι τόσο διεφθαρμένοι όσο ήταν το καθεστώς του. Δεν πιστεύω δηλαδή ότι το μόνο πρόβλημα ήταν ο Μουγκάμπε, του οποίου ο βιολογικός κύκλος έφτανε στο τέλος του. Σίγουρα η μεταβατική περίοδος δεν θα λήξει με τις εκλογές, όσο ομαλά και αν διεξαχθούν. Υπάρχει ένα χρόνιο μίσος ανάμεσα στους πολίτες, λόγω της πρακτικής της μεταφοράς φυλών από το ένα μέρος στο άλλο για την επιτέλεση βίαιοπραγιών. Το ίδιο και οι λευκοί, σήμερα, περνούν πάρα πολύ δύσκολες ώρες και δεν έχουν καμιά σχέση με το παρελθόν. Τα οικονομικά προβλήματα είναι τεράστια και δεν μπορεί να τα επιλύσει ούτε μεμονωμένα ο πρόεδρος ούτε η ηγεμονική πολιτική της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Η ζωή είναι ιδιαίτερα σκληρή στην ύπαιθρο, παρόλο που η Ζιμπάμπουε θα μπορούσε να επιλύσει από μόνη της το επισιτιστικό πρόβλημα ολόκληρης της Αφρικής, καθώς είναι μια πάρα πολύ εύφορη χώρα. Ας μην ξεχνάμε, επίσης, ότι οι οροθετικοί ξεπερνούν το 50%. Όταν είχα πρωτοπάει εκεί ήταν στο 75%. Επιπλέον, η υποδομή σε νοσοκομεία και σχολεία είναι ανύπαρκτη, ειδικά στην ύπαιθρο.

Ignazio Corrao (EFDD). – Mr President, after a very long time of leadership, President Mugabe finally resigned from power, ceding to internal pressures and opening a new and delicate scenario. In a situation where the economy of Zimbabwe is on the brink of collapse, the upcoming electoral process will be critical for the future of the country and for the re-establishment of the rule of law.

The new President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, recently said that a transparent election will be held by July and that he will respect the result if the opposition wins. Fair and free elections are essential in order to stand any chance of reviving the comatose economy and improving the country's relations with the West.

During previous elections Zimbabweans have suffered serious human rights violations and severe abuses, including killing and torture. We should manifest our support to the country to prevent the recurrence of such violence. As the forthcoming, pre-electoral period is crucial for Zimbabwe, I believe that the European Union should monitor this essential step and provide the support and the assets needed to achieve fair and transparent elections.

Olaf Stuger (ENF). – Voorzitter, voor de uitbreiding van de EU wordt altijd naar het oosten gekeken, naar corrupte en labiele landen als Albanië en Oekraïne. Maar waarom niet naar het zuiden kijken? Waarom wordt het zuiden gediscrimineerd? Want als we naar het zuiden kijken, dan komen we op een gegeven moment Zimbabwe tegen. En volgens mij is Zimbabwe het ideale nieuwe land om de EU te komen versterken.

Ik zal u uitleggen waarom. Zimbabwe heeft historische banden met Europa en de officiële taal is Engels. Daarnaast is Zimbabwe in staat, zijn de mensen in Zimbabwe in staat om een revolutie te ontketenen, waarbij de president wordt weggestuurd zonder de hulp van de heer van Baalen of de heer Verhofstadt. En als laatste is het een land dat al zoveel hulp heeft gekregen van de EU –honderden miljoenen euro's – dat de toetredingsgelden eigenlijk al betaald zijn. Dus, Voorzitter, via u wil ik mevrouw Mogherini vragen om over haar eigen schaduw heen te stappen en om Zimbabwe het EU-lidmaatschap aan te bieden.

Frank Engel (PPE). – Mr President, I am aware that the carnival season is starting but I was not that aware that it had already cast its shadow over one or two colleagues!

To return to more serious matters, I welcome every sentence that the High Representative has said about the involvement that the European Union intends to recommence with Zimbabwe, after a long period where our presence was not only not overwhelming but indeed not much welcomed.

I want, however, to draw attention to the fact that such a state of affairs may well be lingering on, at least in part. Nearly four decades of Robert Mugabe's rule have estranged the European continent from parts of the Zimbabwean population and we need to win back a significant share of trust – trust which has now, very intentionally, been shifted towards China and the general idea of the East.

It is probably a good thing that, precisely at this time when we are reconsidering our strategic partnership with Africa, we should get the chance to prove what we can actually mean in terms of reconstituting a democratic state in the southern part of the African continent and helping it along both democratically and economically. Zimbabwe has tremendous possibilities that it could use in its relationship with Europe. We should seize all these opportunities, and maybe win back trust that was lost.

Ana Gomes (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, quando Mugabe se demitiu finalmente o povo do Zimbábue e o mundo aplaudiram. Gerou-se uma onda positiva augurando-se um futuro melhor para o Zimbábue. Como se a miséria e a opressão do regime tivessem sido obra de um único homem. Os que afastaram Mugabe do poder, como o atual presidente Emmerson Mnangagwa, foram cúmplices e beneficiários ao longo de décadas.

Não se podem esquecer os tremendos desafios que o país enfrenta. A corrupção prolifera, milhões emigraram, em 2017 houve inundações, surtos de cólera e de febre tifoide. A economia está à beira do colapso.

As anunciadas eleições poderão ser uma oportunidade, mas haverá competição genuína? Será que vão mesmo ser convocadas eleições? A União Europeia ao lado da União Africana tem de estar na linha da frente no apoio às forças da sociedade que querem que o Zimbábue inicie a transição para a democracia. É essencial que haja uma transição limpa e genuína e não meramente cosmética. Para isso a União Europeia tem de envolver-se, tem de exigir, tem que apoiar as reformas estruturais de governação incluindo o setor da justiça, incluindo a organização do processo eleitoral e tudo o que diga respeito à capacitação democrática das forças partidárias, dos *media* e da sociedade civil que têm que ser incluídas num verdadeiro diálogo para o futuro democrático do país.

John Stuart Agnew (EFDD). – Mr President, I would like to reinforce everything Ms Atkinson had to say about the South African farm murders. And having lived in Zimbabwe in the 1970s I have witnessed how that country really can work to the benefit of all its citizens. So what needs to be done to get this show back on the road?

First, repeal the law that requires 51% of a business to be owned by local people. This is restricting investment. Second, privatise the coal and steel industries to raise some immediate cash for the Government and allow investment to create jobs and exports. Third, privatise the railways, which have virtually ceased to function. They will be needed to transport this new coal and steel. Fourth, use the revenue raised from privatisation to compensate displaced white farmers in exchange for the return of their title deeds. Fifth, offer the resultant vacant farmland on 99-year assignable leases to competent commercial farmers who can use these leases as security for borrowing. This borrowing will allow them to restart the farm, creating jobs, food and exports.

Ninety-five per cent of the potential workforce are unemployed. What good are nationalised industries doing them? Zimbabwe is the perfect example of how to destroy a country through well-meaning socialist policies.

Michael Gahler (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! Im Jahr 2000 war ich der bisher letzte Leiter einer Wahlbeobachtungsdelegation des Europäischen Parlaments in Simbabwe. Seither wurden wir nicht wieder eingeladen, und deswegen höre ich mit Freude, dass es offenbar geplant ist, uns diesmal mit anderen internationalen Beobachtern einzuladen.

Aber ich möchte auch das unterstreichen, was andere Kollegen bereits gesagt haben: Es geht jetzt auch darum, dass den schönen Worten auch Taten folgen. Das heißt insbesondere, dass im Vorfeld der Wahlen faire Bedingungen für alle Parteien herrschen, dass in Simbabwe zum Beispiel die Wählerliste auf einen neuesten Stand gebracht wird. Und mir ist es auch wichtig, dass es möglich werden müsste, dass die vielen Millionen Simbabwe, die unter anderem nach Südafrika geflohen sind, die Möglichkeit haben, sich wieder rechtzeitig zu registrieren, um an dieser Wahl auch teilnehmen zu können, denn die haben ja am meisten, auch im Ausland dann, unter den schwierigen Bedingungen leiden müssen.

Ich hoffe, dass wir eben nicht eine Situation haben, wo die alte Garde – nur ohne Mugabe – an der Macht festhalten kann. Wenn man genau hinschaut, sind im Kabinett sehr viele Militärs vertreten, die sich über viele Jahre auch bereichert haben, und die alte Führungsschicht ist unangefochten. Deswegen ist es sehr wichtig, dass wir die Prinzipien, die wir überall im Hinblick auf freie und faire Wahlen anwenden, auch einfordern. Und danach muss auch ein Prozess der nationalen Versöhnung in diesem Land stattfinden. Auch da, glaube ich, können wir vielleicht behilflich sein.

Francisco Assis (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Comissária, a saída do poder do ditador Mugabe foi em si mesmo um acontecimento muito positivo que foi, aliás, devidamente saudado pelo povo do Zimbábue nas ruas e pela generalidade da comunidade internacional. Abriu-se, assim, a possibilidade de se avançar para uma nova fase, para um novo ciclo político no Zimbábue e a União Europeia tem naturalmente responsabilidades por razões as mais diversas, por razões históricas, por razões que têm que ver com aquilo que é a sua própria visão do quadro internacional em acompanhar esta nova situação no Zimbábue.

O Zimbábue atravessa agora uma fase de tensão como é próprio destes momentos de grande mudança política. O novo presidente comprometeu-se já em promover reformas tendo em vista a democratização da sociedade e a promoção de medidas que promovam a prosperidade do país, e já fez muitos anúncios muito positivos nesse sentido. Aliás, o Conselho Europeu já saudou essa postura a 22 de janeiro e manifestou claramente expectativas positivas quanto a uma transição pacífica.

Mas temos de ter consciência que os períodos de transição são, por definição, períodos de incerteza, encerram potencialidades mas também perigos. A União Europeia tem, por isso, de estar vigilante, sobretudo num momento em que se desenha uma tentativa de regresso do ex-presidente Mugabe no quadro do ato eleitoral que terá lugar em breve.

Seria, aliás, incompreensível que não houvesse uma missão de observação eleitoral da União Europeia para acompanhar estas eleições tendo em vista o que sucedeu naquele país até aqui, isto é, temos razões para ter esperança, mas temos a obrigação de permanecer vigilantes.

Eduard Kukan (PPE). – Mr President, the November 2017 events will go down in the history books as the days when the world's attention was turned to President Mugabe and his long overdue resignation.

I have been following Mr Mugabe's political career from the beginning with great interest and I was deeply disappointed by his demise from a progressive leader to an authoritarian dictator in the last four decades. The world also watched the peaceful voices of many Zimbabweans, who clearly stated that their country deserves better. They want their country to get out of diplomatic isolation, they want an economic overhaul of their devastated and crippled economy, and they want functioning democratic institutions. And now, a historical opportunity for Zimbabwe is on the horizon. There is tangible hope on the streets of Harare.

It is now more important than ever to stand by Zimbabwe in the upcoming difficult transition months and to make sure that President Emmerson Mnangagwa keeps his promise to hold free, fair and democratic elections without delay. The elections are crucial in this phase of political development in the country. If conditions are favourable, and if it is acceptable for Zimbabwe, I think it would make sense to send an observation mission to these presidential elections.

Tunne Kelam (PPE). – Mr President, it is high time for change because Zimbabwe since 2000 has struggled to feed its people. Poverty and unemployment are endemic. The history of Zimbabwe has been a history of mismanaged and misused opportunities. About three million people have fled the country, and politically-motivated violence since 1980 has taken the lives of approximately 200 000 people.

Remember that the change is not a revolution. Yes, people supported the resignation of Mugabe enthusiastically, but now they must be guaranteed that real, lasting democratic change is going to happen. The only way to guarantee the legitimacy of this change is through fair and democratic elections.

The future government has to be open to cooperation with different political forces. As it is now, Mr Mugabe, instead of taking responsibility for numerous crimes, is planning to establish a new political party.

Important in terms of the legitimacy of the latest events is that millions of Zimbabwean citizens abroad, most of them having been forced to leave, should be able to participate freely and easily in the coming elections without having to face excessive bureaucratic obstacles. This should be seen as a litmus test of whether the new leaders are prepared to be leaders of all the nation.

Joachim Zeller (PPE). – Herr Präsident, Hohe Vertreterin, liebe Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Nach 37 Jahren Herrschaft mit Methoden einer Diktatur wurde der bisherige Präsident Simbabwe, Mugabe, durch einen Militärputsch seines Amtes enthoben. Beobachter vor Ort sprechen etwas spöttisch von der höflichsten Revolution aller Zeiten – sind es doch diejenigen, die bislang die Herrschaft Mugabes stützten, die nun selbst die Schalthebel der Macht in ihre Hände nahmen, wie der langjährige Geheimdienstchef und enge Vertraute Mugabes – der jetzige Präsident – Mnangagwa. Augenscheinlich ist das einst reiche Land durch Misswirtschaft, Korruption und Willkürherrschaft so heruntergewirtschaftet, dass die Angehörigen der bisherigen Machtelite die Notbremse gezogen und den Präsidenten und einige Regierungsmitglieder ausgetauscht haben. Die bisher ihrer Bürger- und Menschenrechte beraubte Bevölkerung tanzte in der Nacht des Machtwechsels auf den Straßen. Die Zukunft wird zeigen, ob sich in Simbabwe wirklich etwas ändert und die Erwartungen der Bevölkerung erfüllt werden, was die Gewährung bürgerlicher Freiheiten anbelangt.

Der neue Präsident hat baldige Wahlen zugesagt. Es muss sich erst erweisen, ob Pressefreiheit gewährt wird und oppositionelle Kräfte eine Chance erhalten, sich politisch betätigen zu dürfen. Mnangagwa hat baldige Wahlen und internationale Wahlbeobachtung zugesagt. Wir sollten die Entwicklungen in Simbabwe sehr aufmerksam betrachten, die zivilen Kräfte ermutigen und, sollte es wirklich zu einem demokratischen Wandel kommen, diesen auch unterstützen.

Adam Szejnfeld (PPE). – Panie Przewodniczący! Zimbabwe to przykład tego, do czego mogą doprowadzić rządy autorytarne: korupcja, kryzys gospodarczy, bezrobocie (wynoszące w niektórych środowiskach nawet 90 %, co w Europie jest nie do pomyślenia), a także bieda. Dzisiaj pojawia się szansa na zmianę tej sytuacji, trudnej dla państwa, ale jeszcze trudniejszej przecież dla jego obywateli. Pierwszym krokiem do tego mogą być demokratyczne wybory, dlatego Unia Europejska powinna się włączyć w proces doprowadzający do uczciwych, demokratycznych wyborów. Chcę jednak powiedzieć, że wybory to nie jedyny warunek tego, aby w państwie zapanowała demokracja i praworządność. Muszą nastąpić działania na rzecz odbudowy instytucji państwa demokratycznego, a także upodmiotowienia obywateli, budowy społeczeństwa obywatelskiego. To wszystko jest potrzebne, aby Unia Europejska mogła odnowić dobre stosunki z tym krajem i rozpocząć od nowa wspieranie jego rozwoju. Myślę, że jest na to szansa i że powinniśmy ją wykorzystać.

Zgłoszenia z sali

Jiří Pospíšil (PPE). – Pane předsedající, já jsem velmi pozorně poslouchal celou tu rozpravu a musím říci, že já jsem relativně skeptický k demokratickému vývoji v této zemi. Odchod Mugabeho v listopadu je určitě radostnou zprávou, ale úřadující premiér zatím spíše o reformách hovoří a volby zatím vyhlášeny nebyly.

Vítám tedy to, co říkala paní vysoká komisařka, snaha Evropské unie by měla být maximální. Pomoci svobodným volbám nejenom tím, že vyšleme samotnou pozorovací misi, ale měli bychom se pokusit zasahovat do samotného procesu přípravy na volby. Pomoci zajistit, aby ty volby pokud možno alespoň trochu byly svobodné a demokratické.

Opravdu musím říci, že optimismem zatím nehýřím a pokud se podaří nějaké volby, které budou svobodné, zorganizovat, bude to úžasné, ale pak teprve začíná proces reform, u kterých bychom také měli stát a také je podporovat.

Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D). – Mr President, some of us here in Parliament attended the last ACP-European Union Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Haiti and there was a special debate on Zimbabwe. This was no surprise because, after 37 years in a row, President Mugabe was compelled to resign, being the second longest serving ruler in Africa, after President Obiang of Equatorial Guinea.

The legacy is repression, isolation and corruption, and there is an expectation of the new transition Government although it is chaired by a former Vice-President of Mugabe, Mr Mnangagwa. So the situation means requires a very clear message from the European Union. In order to lift the current dispensation of arms embargo, freezing of assets and lack of cooperation from the European Union towards Zimbabwe, there has to be European Union involvement and oversight, and the involvement of this Parliament, making sure, by watching over them, that the elections next June are free and fair.

Νότης Μαρίας (ECR). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η κατάσταση στη Ζιμπάμπουε, παρά την απομάκρυνση του Μουγκάμπε, παραμένει κρίσιμη. Η νέα ηγεσία προχωρά στην παραπέρα στρατιωτικοποίηση του πολιτικού συστήματος της χώρας. Το πολιτικό σύστημα, αντί να στηρίζεται στους ίδιους τους πολίτες και σε δημοκρατικές δομές, συνεχίζει να στηρίζεται στον στρατό. Στο πεδίο της οικονομίας, η λιτότητα είναι πλέον στην ημερήσια διάταξη. Ο υπουργός Οικονομικών προχωρά σε βίαιη δημοσιονομική προσαρμογή, με απολύσεις τριών χιλιάδων υπαλλήλων. Επίσης, δίνει τη δυνατότητα σε πολυεθνικές στον τομέα της ενέργειας να μην καταβάλουν φόρους για πέντε χρόνια. Είναι δεδομένο ότι απαιτούνται σημαντικές αλλαγές στη Ζιμπάμπουε. Χρειάζεται να ενισχυθούν οι δημοκρατικές δομές. Χρειάζονται δημοκρατικές και ελεύθερες εκλογές, προκειμένου οι ίδιοι οι πολίτες να αποφασίσουν για την ανάπτυξη της χώρας τους και να έχουν οι ίδιοι τη δυνατότητα να αξιοποιήσουν τις πλουτοπαραγωγικές πηγές της πατρίδας τους.

Τάκης Χατζηγεωργίου (GUE/NGL). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, για πάρα πολλά χρόνια η Ζιμπάμπουε δεν ήταν μια δημοκρατική χώρα και είναι πάρα πολύ δύσκολα τα πράγματα στη μεταβατική περίοδο. Και δεν θα μπορούσε να είναι δημοκρατική μια χώρα όταν επτά εκατομμύρια άνθρωποι, περισσότεροι από τον μισό πληθυσμό της, βρίσκονται ακόμα στα όρια της λιμοκτονίας, όχι απλώς της φτώχειας. Οι πληροφορίες, έστω και αν ανήκουν στο παρελθόν, για βίαια βασανιστήρια με ξυλοδαρμούς, ηλεκτροσόκ και δηλητηριάσεις, επιδείνωσαν δραματικά την εικόνα. Είμαστε όμως τώρα στη μεταβατική περίοδο. Υπάρχει ίσως η μεγάλη ευκαιρία να κινηθεί η νέα ηγεσία της χώρας αποφασιστικά προς τη σωστή κατεύθυνση. Να συγκρουστεί με κάθε μέσο με τη διαφθορά και την κακοδιαχείριση. Προς αυτή την κατεύθυνση θα έχει τη στήριξή μας. Δεν είναι όμως αρκετή. Όλα, ή πολλά, θα εξαρτηθούν από τη βούληση του λαού της χώρας και της ηγεσίας του.

James Carver (EFDD). – Mr President, Southern Africa has, in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), a structure that can support Zimbabwe's re-emergence as an important trading partner. I believe that support not just for Zimbabwe but also for the surrounding states, such as Botswana and Zambia, will help Zimbabwe to prosper both economically and politically.

I urge Zimbabwe to rejoin the Commonwealth as soon as possible. Intra-Commonwealth trade, based on historic and cultural ties, can help Zimbabwe to prosper and not to be in thrall to yet another exploitative EU free trade agreement, a fate that has already befallen many African countries to their detriment.

I am optimistic about Zimbabwe's future, but we must work with them and certainly not dictate to them.

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Comissária, Senhora Alta Representante, eu gostava de me dirigir à Sra. Atkinson, que já não está aqui, para lhe dizer que a África do Sul e o Zimbábue são países completamente diferentes. Eu vivi na África do Sul e sei o que digo, embora a África do Sul seja ali ao lado.

Caros Colegas, quatro décadas de governo de Mugabe foram marcadas pela repressão, fraude e corrupção e pelo uso abusivo dos meios do Estado que conduziram o Zimbabué ao conflito político e a uma pobreza endêmica.

O Presidente Mnangagwa, desde que assumiu o poder, em novembro, tem privilegiado o fortalecimento do papel dos militares nas estruturas do poder e o anúncio de reformas económicas que permitam recuperar o investimento estrangeiro, deixando para trás as reformas legais que garantam a independência do poder judicial, a neutralidade da comissão eleitoral, os direitos de voto da diáspora e o alargamento do espaço de participação da sociedade civil e da oposição política, reformas essas vitais para que as eleições deste ano possam ser livres, transparentes e justas.

Senhora Alta Comissária, Senhora Alta Representante – eu peço desculpa estar sempre a enganar-me – gostaria que a União condicionasse o diálogo político com as autoridades do Zimbabué aos avanços destas reformas e à libertação imediata dos presos políticos atualmente detidos.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, sono bastati trentasette anni al potere per trasformare Robert Mugabe da eroe della liberazione da una minoranza bianca e razzista a despota autoritario, simbolo di quella corruzione e di quel nepotismo che oggi caratterizzano molti paesi dell'Africa.

A 93 anni Mugabe è stato costretto a lasciare il posto al suo braccio destro, il vicepresidente Emmerson Mnangagwa, membro del suo stesso partito. Quest'uomo promette elezioni libere e democratiche e sembra pronto ad accogliere gli osservatori internazionali, ma non lasciamoci ingannare dalle apparenze. È infatti lo stesso uomo che fino a qualche anno fa ha eseguito, senza batter ciglio, gli ordini più sporchi del presidente uscente, incluse torture e violenze di ogni tipo. Come non dimenticare la strage del Matabeleland, dove morirono 20 000 persone, o la dura repressione dell'opposizione durante la campagna del 2008?

Se oggi il coccodrillo ha il supporto di cui ha bisogno, il popolo dello Zimbabwe non ha dimenticato il suo passato, e neanche noi dobbiamo dimenticarlo. Nessuno sforzo deve essere risparmiato da parte nostra per garantire elezioni libere e democratiche. Le voci dei cittadini dello Zimbabwe devono essere finalmente ascoltate.

(Koniec zgłoszeń z sali)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, I would like to thank all the speakers for having expressed not only their hopes but also their concerns and their support for the work we are doing, together with Commissioner Mimica, at this crucial moment for Zimbabwe.

Let me say that this debate will also be useful for us, as Commissioner Mimica is planning to go to Harare in the coming months, so we will be able to follow up on the many elements that we have discussed here today and that we have shared, because I see a convergence of approach on this. It is quite easy to conclude from this exchange that the country is indeed at a crossroads, after 37 years of the same leadership since independence, and that we see two sides of the coin. We see the opportunity for a different kind of future lying ahead and for the potential of the country to be unleashed, and we also see the risk – as some of you said – that the country could go through a cosmetic operation and that change might not come.

At this crossroads, I believe the key element for us will be the forthcoming elections. Many of you made that point, and this is also why I have insisted on the fact that we are ready – and will continue to be ready – to accompany Zimbabwe, with all our instruments and policies, through this transition and after, and especially with the hope that the new leadership will live up to the high expectations raised with the end of the Mugabe era. We understand very well that this remains to be done, but the expectations are there and we can help move in the right direction.

Lastly, I would like to thank Parliament for your continuing work to promote and defend human rights and democratisation in Zimbabwe. I know that it has been long-standing, constant and consistent work, for which I thank you, and also for keeping the country on our international agenda. I am looking forward to continuing our good cooperation across the institutions in the European Union to make sure that the changes are not cosmetic and that progress is really made.

Przewodniczący. – Zamykam debatę.

15. De huidige mensenrechtensituatie in Turkije – Situatie in Afrin, Syrië (debat)

Przewodniczący. – Kolejnym punktem porządku dnia jest wspólna debata nad:

— oświadczeniem Wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji i Wysokiej Przedstawiciel Unii do Spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa w sprawie obecnej sytuacji w zakresie praw człowieka w Turcji oraz (2018/2527(RSP))

— oświadczeniem Wiceprzewodniczącej Komisji i Wysokiej Przedstawiciel Unii do Spraw Zagranicznych i Polityki Bezpieczeństwa w sprawie sytuacji w Afrinie (Syria) (2018/2563(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, let me start by saying that this is not the first, and will not be the last, debate in this Chamber about Turkey. We are holding this debate, I believe, because we care. We care about Turkey, we care about the Turkish people, we care about Turkey's democracy, security and stability, and we care about security and stability in the Turkish region because it is also our region. Sometimes we refer to Turkey only as a candidate country. Let me stress one thing that is obvious: it is first and foremost, through my lens, a regional player that shares the same geographic space with us.

We have disagreements and we are extremely clear on them. We have what can probably be termed a frank dialogue and, let me say this very clearly: our dialogue with Turkey is today more important than ever. The negative trend of the human rights situation in the country has not been reversed. There have been some small steps in certain human rights cases, but violations have continued, affecting prominent civil society figures, users of social media, medical staff, and the list could continue. This is on top of the initial violations we have seen in recent years, which have not been resolved.

Last Friday, Commissioner Hahn and I issued a statement focusing in particular on the unprecedented decision by the Turkish authorities to contradict a ruling by the Constitutional Court. This decision goes against the Turkish Constitution and it casts serious doubt on the independence of Turkey's justice system.

The ongoing state of emergency also remains a key issue of concern. We all know that it was established in one of the most difficult moments in Turkish history, we remember those hours very well, in which we expressed our concern, our proximity with the people and the leadership of Turkey after the attempted coup d'état. Yet, one-and-a-half years later, the state of emergency has allowed measures that go well beyond those initially foreseen, and this has to be clearly stated.

In parallel, it is true, there has been some work to normalise bilateral relations between Turkey and the EU Member States, and this is good news but I want to be very clear: human rights and fundamental freedoms should apply to all Turkish citizens, to all of them in the same way. In our partnership with Turkey, as I said, we have always been open and frank. We know that Turkey has faced, and is facing, incredible challenges and we have to acknowledge this: terrorist attacks on its soil, an attempted coup, a difficult refugee crisis and a war just next door.

We understand Turkey's concerns, for instance, about the situation at its borders. Turkey has the full right, and I would even say the duty, to provide safety and security to Turkish citizens living near the border with Syria, yet we are deeply worried about the new front that has been opened in northern Syria. We are worried, first of all, for humanitarian reasons. The new clashes have already resulted in civilian casualties and thousands have been displaced. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed to all those in need. The United Nations is warning that the humanitarian situation right across Syria is definitely not improving, and the people of Syria cannot afford a new front and a new crisis, adding to the other ones still ongoing in the country.

Beyond the humanitarian tragedy, the Afrin offensive could have political consequences on the internal balances inside the future Syria, on the region at large and on the potential for political negotiations, because the new escalation of violence could push further away the chances of a political solution to the conflict. We need – all of us – to concentrate all our energies on supporting the UN-led negotiations in Geneva. That is where any concerns should be raised and addressed.

The war in Syria is not over yet. People are still dying even if it is not headline news. That is happening in Afrin as well as in Idlib and elsewhere. Opening new fronts is no solution and I am afraid it will not make Turkey more secure. Real security can come only from a negotiated political solution to the conflict. We believe that all military action should focus on UN-listed terrorist organisations, not others; and it should not make peace harder to achieve.

Let me also reiterate that the European Union remains committed to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We have to be extremely careful about the moves we make today, in order to avoid consequences for the future set-up in the country.

Peace in Syria will require everyone's contribution and Turkey, as one of the guarantors of the Astana Process, has an essential role to play, as well as special responsibility. The agreement reached through the Astana Process on the escalation zones needs to be pursued and implemented, including in northern Syria. We are working, together with the United Nations and all the international community, to make sure that our second Brussels Conference on the future of Syria and the region, which we will host next spring, supports the UN-led process in an effective and, indeed, a decisive manner, in particular with regard to the prospects for the future, and the need to make sure that each and every Syrian citizen will find in Syria his or her own home, his or her own country, with a system and a prospect of inclusion, and recognition of diversity and the diverse composition of the country and society. That is the only way out of the conflict in a sustainable manner.

Let me finish by saying that, as you probably know, President Erdoğan was in Rome yesterday, where he met Pope Francis. During the meeting – and I quote from the text supplied by the Holy See – ‘the Pope stressed the need to promote peace and reconciliation through dialogue and negotiation, with respect for human rights and international law’. I believe that we can all share the words of Pope Francis on this occasion.

For our part, we will continue our dialogue with Turkey, as we do every single week and, indeed, on a daily basis. We will keep all channels of communication open, working to overcome our differences, working to manage our differences when they remain, and working to find common solutions. We do this for ourselves, we do it for the Turkish people, and we do it for peace, security and democracy in our common region, starting with Syria.

Elnökváltás: JÁRÓKA LÍVIA

alelnök asszony

Cristian Dan Preda, *au nom du groupe PPE*. – Madame la Présidente, je voudrais tout d’abord exprimer ma grande inquiétude quant à la situation des droits de l’homme en Turquie.

La semaine dernière, avec d’autres collègues, j’ai eu l’occasion de rencontrer des universitaires turcs et des organisations de la société civile. La situation qu’ils dépeignent, nous la connaissons, est toujours très grave. Depuis juin 2016, des milliers de personnes, des employés de l’administration, des militaires, des juges, des journalistes, des enseignants, des militants de la société civile et des universitaires connaissent la mise en accusation, le harcèlement, les pressions et la prison pour des crimes imaginaires, qui ne servent qu’à une centralisation du pouvoir entre les mains des autorités actuelles.

C’est pourquoi nous devons mettre les droits de l’homme au cœur de toutes les discussions avec les autorités turques, y compris lors du prochain sommet UE-Turquie. De plus – et j’ai soutenu activement cette position dans ce Parlement –, nous devons réorienter les fonds destinés à l’adhésion de la Turquie vers la société civile, vers ceux qui sont engagés dans la préservation des libertés. C’est d’autant plus urgent qu’il me semble impossible de continuer à parler d’adhésion.

J’ai été pendant longtemps un fervent défenseur de l’élargissement à la Turquie. Aujourd’hui, au vu des évolutions récentes, je pense qu’un partenariat resserré est la voie à suivre dans les prochaines années. La question des droits de l’homme devrait bien sûr figurer à l’ordre du jour. Dans le cadre de ce partenariat, nous devons aborder des questions d’intérêt commun, telles que les Balkans occidentaux. La discussion autour de nos actions dans cette région devrait être franche et ouverte, afin qu’elle puisse profiter aux citoyens de ces pays et non pas être soumise à des objectifs cachés.

Cela est également valable pour le dossier syrien car il y a un réel danger que l’actuelle offensive turque mette en danger les faibles chances de construire la paix, qui s’esquissent à présent.

Kati Piri, *on behalf of the S&D Group*. – Madam President, I would like to say to Osman Kavala, Ahmet Şık and Selahattin Demirtaş that, at the moment, as Turkey is going through a difficult period, it needs brave people like you to stand up for human rights and respect for the rule of law. But, for having done exactly that, you are now in a prison cell. While you cannot follow this debate, I hope your lawyers and family will inform you that we have not forgotten you and we will continue to plead for your release, as your arrests were politicised and arbitrary.

Osman Kavala, Ahmet Şık and Selahattin Demirtaş are not the only innocent people in jail in Turkey. While the perpetrators of the heinous coup attempt must be prosecuted and brought to justice, many, many people have become victims of the massive crackdown on all democratic opposition voices. The numbers are mind-boggling – more than 150 000 people fired and more than 50 000 imprisoned. But remember that all these people have a faith, have a family and have friends who are hoping that normalisation is still possible.

The state of emergency has led to a situation where the Government can rule by decree without parliamentary or judicial scrutiny. Every aspect of Turkish society has become securitised, meaning that all those who voice criticism of the Government's policies are being labelled as terrorists or terrorist supporters. Legitimate and peaceful opposition is thus being silenced, in real life and on social media. In the past two weeks, almost 500 people were detained for peacefully opposing Turkey's military operation in Afrin.

There is also a structural problem with the lack of independence of the judiciary, and we witnessed last month how big that problem is. First, there was a ruling by the Constitutional Court to release jailed journalists Mehmet Altan and Şahin Alpay as their rights had been violated and, although the orders of the highest court were crystal clear, a local penal court decided to keep them in detention.

Last week, we witnessed another travesty of justice. The wife and daughters of Turkey's Amnesty International Chair were waiting in front of the gates of the prison in Izmir to welcome their loved one after eight months' imprisonment. A judge had ruled earlier that day that he should be released, but within a couple of hours the same judge decided to order his rearrest.

And, for all those people who lost their jobs by decree, there is so far little hope of remedy.

High Representative Mogherini, the EU is preparing a mini summit with Turkish President Erdogan at the end of March. We could read in the papers that no preconditions have been put on the table, but I hope you can tell us what you expect in terms of results from such a meeting. We in Parliament expect the EU to be loud and clear on human rights in Turkey, as you were in your introduction just now, not only because these are the values on which our Union is based, and which Turkey as a candidate should adhere to, but also because we risk losing credibility and the support of a majority in Turkish society if we don't stand up for their rights in these dark times.

Charles Tannock, *on behalf of the ECR Group*. – Madam President, Turkey has been moving in the wrong direction for an EU candidate country for some time under President Erdoğan and, sadly, the war in Syria and the July 2016 coup attempt have provided ample opportunity for a more openly hostile approach by the AK Parti to Western democratic norms. We therefore see today a Turkey that openly violates civil and human rights at home and pursues a foreign policy objective directly opposed to the aims of its EU and NATO allies abroad.

The situation in Afrin is the starkest of those decisions yet, as only two days ago Turkey announced in somewhat sinister terms that nearly 1 000 so-called terrorists had been neutralised since the assault began on 20 January. By 'neutralised', we are to read 'surrendered', 'captured' or 'killed'. By 'terrorists', we are to read 'members of the Kurdish YPG', who have been bravely fighting against Isis across northern Syria with the support of US troops, who continue to fight alongside the YPG. The Americans have refused Turkish requests to remove their troops, paving the way for a potential clash between Turkish and US forces. Such behaviour from a NATO ally and EU candidate country is extremely concerning. Finding a way back to the peace talks between Ankara and the Kurds in Turkey will be one of the keys to normalising politics in Turkey in future, but ahead of the presidential elections at the end of next year, such prospects seem a distant hope.

Furthermore, I hope that the welcomed re-election of President Anastasiades of Cyprus will lead to renewed reunification talks, where Turkish cooperation is again vital but has, to date, been lacking. Turkey has still not implemented the Ankara Protocols, recognised Cypriot rights to gas exploration, or accepted that it must withdraw its occupying forces from northern Cyprus. Turkey must do more, and it must do more to support the goodwill that exists on that island – but, sadly, that looks very unlikely in my opinion.

Nadja Hirsch, *im Namen der ALDE-Fraktion*. – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte Hohe Vertreterin, sehr geehrte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Präsident Erdoğan führt die Türkei immer weiter weg von europäischen Werten und damit auch weg von der EU. Erdoğan's Türkei wird sich weiter auf dem Weg in Richtung eines Unrechtsstaats befinden. Ich nenne nur einige Beispiele: systematisches Zum-Schweigen-Bringen der politischen Opposition, massive Einschränkung der Presse- und Meinungsfreiheit, Inhaftierung von Richtern, Journalisten, Aktivisten und Bürgern, zunehmend auch staatliche Verfolgung von kritischen Stimmen in *social media*. Das lässt jedes Verständnis von Freiheit, Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Demokratie nach europäischen Standards vermissen.

Eines ist klar: Eine Beitrittsperspektive muss immer realistisch sein und vor allem die Bereitschaft voraussetzen, dass die türkische Regierung diese Kriterien auch erfüllen will. Aber diese Bereitschaft sehe ich angesichts der anhaltenden Missachtung von Menschenrechten, Grund- und Freiheitsrechten unter der Führung von Erdoğan nicht.

Deshalb muss Europa Konsequenzen aus dieser Entwicklung ziehen. Ich sage ganz klar: Selbst wenn die jüngsten konstitutionellen Veränderungen zurückgenommen werden würden, müssen die Verhandlungen zum Beitritt eingefroren bleiben. Denn es ist eine Frage der Glaubwürdigkeit: Die EU ist eine Wertegemeinschaft, wir verteidigen Bürger- und Menschenrechte und fordern auch die verbindliche Einhaltung der Kopenhagener Kriterien.

Die türkische Regierung selbst muss sich die Frage stellen: Will sie eine Wertegemeinschaft mit der EU sein oder will sie eine illiberale Autokratie sein? Letztere hat definitiv keinen Platz in der EU.

Der militärische Alleingang in Afrin stellt zudem die Bündnisfähigkeit der Türkei infrage. Das gilt für die Europäische Union, das gilt auch für die NATO-Mitgliedschaft. Verteidigungsbündnisse sind an gemeinsame Werte gebunden. Mit ihrem Vorgehen in Afrin entfernt sich die türkische Regierung immer weiter von dieser gemeinsamen Wertebasis. Wir müssen deshalb die Erwartungen an einen Bündnispartner Türkei im Dialog deutlich machen.

Τάκης Χατζηγεωργίου, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL. – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι, είμαι ένας από πάρα πολλούς σε αυτή την αίθουσα, αλλά και ευρύτερα, που πιστέψαμε και εργαστήκαμε για χρόνια νομίζοντας ότι η ενταξιακή διαδικασία της Τουρκίας θα οδηγούσε στον εκδημοκρατισμό της χώρας αυτής. Δεν θα πω ότι έχασα κάθε ελπίδα, διότι ο χειρότερος θάνατος είναι ο θάνατος της ελπίδας. Όμως, έχει υποβιβαστεί πάρα πολύ αυτή η εντύπωση που είχαμε για πάρα πολλά χρόνια. Δεν χρειάζεται να επαναλάβω και εγώ τη δραματική υποχώρηση του κράτους δικαίου στη χώρα αυτή. Προέχει όμως η υποστήριξη της αποφυλάκισης των ηγετών του κόμματος της Δημοκρατίας των Λαών, των δημάρχων, των δημοσιογράφων, εκπροσώπων του δικαστικού σώματος αλλά και μελών της ίδιας της τουρκικής Εθνοσυνέλευσης. Δυστυχώς όμως, πρόσφατα ο πρόεδρος του Ερντογάν προσπάθησε να επεκτείνει τον αυταρχισμό του και στην Κύπρο, καλώντας σε ομιλία του στην Προύσα τους αδελφούς του, όπως είπε, στην Κύπρο να απαντήσουν στην εφημερίδα «Αφρίκα», η οποία έγραψε την άποψη της ότι η εισβολή στο Αφρίν προσομοιάζει με την εισβολή στην Κύπρο το 1974. Και απάντησαν οι αδελφοί του στην Κύπρο με βανδαλισμούς κατά της εφημερίδας. Θέλω όμως να σας πω ότι λίγες ημέρες μετά, χιλιάδες Τουρκοκύπριοι βρέθηκαν στους δρόμους υποστηρίζοντας την ελευθερία γνώμης της εφημερίδας και υποστηρίζοντας πολύ περισσότερο το δικαίωμά τους να εκφράζονται ελεύθερα και να έχουν αυτόνομη βούληση για το μέλλον της κοινότητάς τους και της Κύπρου.

Κλείνω καλώντας σας όλους να υποστηρίξουμε την άποψη ότι η Τουρκία βρίσκεται πλέον πολύ κοντά στο κατώφλι της απόλυτης απομάκρυνσης από κάθε έννοια κράτους δικαίου και αυτό μπορεί να γίνει με καθαρή εντολή από το Ευρωκοινοβούλιο προς τους εαυτούς μας και προς την Τουρκία, ότι αν δεν εκδημοκρατιστεί η χώρα θα πρέπει να ξανασκεφτούμε τη διαδικασία που υπάρχει ενώπιόν μας.

Elnök asszony. – Kérem, hogy az időkorlátokat próbálják betartani, 15 perc késésben vagyunk.

Bodil Valero, för Verts/ALE-gruppen. – Fru talman! Det var mycket länge sen något gick åt rätt håll i Turkiet, och jag lider med alla de turkiska medborgare från olika folkgrupper, yrkeskårer, religioner, politiska partier, med flera som ser allt fler av sina rättigheter inskränkas i takt med att president Erdogan tar ett starkare tag om hela samhället i sin jakt på meningsmotståndare, både i och utanför landets gränser.

Ett kandidatland förväntas leva upp till EU:s grundvärderingar, det vill säga respekt för rättsstatens principer och för grundläggande medborgerliga och mänskliga rättigheter. Men Turkiets domstolar är inte oberoende. Människor anklagas för terrorism utan anledning och sitter åratals i fängelse utan rättegång. Pressfrihet och yttrandefrihet existerar inte. Sedan 2016 har över 6 miljoner turkiska invånare utsatts för rättsliga utredningar på grund av misstanke om brott, ibland endast på grund av en uppfattning uttryckt i sociala medier. 107 000 har förlorat jobbet utan rättslig grund.

Våld är aldrig en långsiktig lösning, oavsett vem som använder det. Jag lider också med alla dem som dödas och fortfarande dödas i konflikten i sydöstra Turkiet, i terrorattacker runt om i Turkiet och nu också i det totalt orätfärdiga kriget i norra Syrien. Erdogans förklaring att han vill hålla gränsen fri från terrorister håller inte, och vi vet det alla. Turkiets attacker är angrepp på en annan stat, inte försvar, och strider därför mot folkrätten.

I dag borde världen i stället tacka alla dessa modiga kvinnors och mäns motstånd och militära insatser för att besegra Daesh. Vi har dem att tacka för mycket. Men vårt svar är att tystlåtet se på när Turkiet med hjälp av syriska rebeller slaktar kurdiska barn, kvinnor och män i ett av de mest fredliga områdena i Syrien. Ett område som också tagit emot många syriska internflyktingar.

Redan efter krigets första dagar fick jag en mängd bilder på skadade och döda barn skickade till min telefon. Om jag inte missminner mig så menade Erdogan att al Assad är en barnamördare, vilket stämmer, men vad kallar han då sig själv? Jag är uppenbart oroad över det budskap som vår passivitet sänder både till Erdogan och till invånarna i Afrin och resten av Rojava.

Om vi vill leva upp till våra egna principer och till folkrätten så bör vi med kraft protestera och fördöma den pågående attacken mot Afrin. Till exempel kan vi stoppa all vapenexport till Turkiet. Natoländerna borde fundera över vad de har för medlem egentligen, och vi ska självklart inte ge Erdogan de favörer han allra helst vill ha, som tullunion och visumlättnader och annat.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo, a nome del gruppo EFDD. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il 20 gennaio 2018 è scattata l'operazione «Ramoscello d'ulivo». Il prosieguo naturale della precedente operazione «Scudo dell'Eufrate» è l'ennesima puntata della continua persecuzione di Erdogan contro il popolo curdo. Mai nome fu più tragicamente beffardo. Il ramoscello che Erdogan protende verso Afrin consiste infatti nelle bombe di 72 aerei da guerra coadiuvati da decine di carri armati e truppe terrestri.

A distanza di poco più di due settimane dall'inizio delle operazioni inizia il solito tragico gioco dei numeri. Le vittime civili potrebbero già essere oltre 100. Fa dunque impressione vedere Erdogan incontrare a Roma, ieri, tra strade blindate e scontri tra manifestanti e polizia, il Papa, il Presidente della Repubblica e il Primo ministro Gentiloni. Sul contenuto dei colloqui massimo riserbo. Sicuramente, come trapela, molto spazio è stato dato ai temi commerciali, visto che l'Italia è uno dei principali partner della Turchia.

Quello che mi chiedo e vi chiedo: quante purghe e violenze deve compiere Erdogan per scatenare almeno una scintilla d'indignazione da parte dei governi europei? Una reazione che non sia di facciata? In meno di un anno dal tentato colpo di Stato, la Turchia è diventata, come la definisce un noto giornalista, una sorta di autocrazia con simulacri democratici. Chiunque osi criticare Erdogan viene incarcerato. Nel contempo, i curdi siriani ad Afrin, valorosi soldati nella guerra contro Daesh, vengono uccisi nel silenzio imbarazzato e complice della comunità internazionale.

Come siamo arrivati a questo punto? Le risposte sono molte e vanno dagli intrecci economici a quelli energetici. Ma il vero asso nella manica di Erdogan è senz'altro quell'accordo illegale sui migranti accettato dall'Unione europea nel marzo 2016, da noi più volte denunciato. Un accordo che gli permette di tenere in piedi un negoziato all'allargamento surreale, a cui non crede più nessuno e che va definitivamente chiuso.

Ha fallito l'Unione europea e ha fallito il mio governo, il governo del mio paese, accogliendo il Premier turco con i massimi onori. Siamo sotto ricatto. È ora di ammetterlo e di rialzare la testa, per difendere la democrazia, per difendere i nostri principi e per difendere quella coraggiosa società civile turca che ancora oggi vuole avere la voce e vuole avere una rappresentanza democratica.

Mario Borghezio, a nome del gruppo ENF. – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, non saluto l'Alto rappresentante perché, come da cattive abitudini, sentiti un paio di interventi, appena arrivano quelli più critici taglia la corda.

Incredibili e imprevedibili le mosse di questo satrapo islamista. Prima si scontra con la Russia – ricordiamo l'abbattimento di un caccia –, poi tratta con Mosca, quindi con Teheran per arrivare ai trattati di Astana, per contrastare l'avanzata dei curdi, coraggiosi protagonisti della sconfitta dell'Isis a Raqqa. Ora si lancia in un'impresa militare finalizzata a schiacciare le milizie curdo-siriane dell'Ypg e ad assicurarsi al proprio confine una zona di sicurezza.

Quello che però sta accadendo realmente in questa guerra non lo sa nessuno, non è chiarissimo, anche se alcune cose sembrano esser certe, cioè perdite di vite da parte dei militari siriani, sembra almeno una ventina solo sabato. Ma quel che più ci dovrebbe indignare pare un centinaio di vittime civili, secondo fonti ospedaliere curde, dei quali molti donne e bambini. Donne e bambini, l'Alto rappresentante non si commuove.

È vero che il Papa ha ricevuto Erdogan, ma conoscendo Papa Francesco sono sicuro che, oltre a parlargli dei diritti umani dei cristiani perseguitati, gli avrà anche fatto il conto di queste vittime civili. Ma si sa questa Europa – l'Alto rappresentante ne è maestro – in questo compartimenta i diritti umani. In certi casi sono gravissimi e si invocano i tribunali internazionali, in altri casi se ne parla così genericamente come se fosse stato, non so, uno scherzo di carnevale. Invece questo accade, è vero, in una regione alla quale apparteniamo in un certo senso anche noi, anche se la Turchia non è in Europa. Qualcuno che adesso è pentito e che dice che non vuole più l'adesione della Turchia ci diceva che la Turchia è Europa. Beh, lasciamo perdere.

Un'offensiva che vuole proseguire una strada decisamente contrastante con la strategia della NATO e degli Stati Uniti, e di questo bisognerebbe che a un certo punto gli USA ci dessero contezza. Ora questa offensiva, secondo le testuali parole di Erdogan, mira a schiacciare sul nascere una forza vista come aperta minaccia alla sua sicurezza. Quindi è pericolosissima questa strategia di Erdogan, pericolosissima per il nostro futuro, per la nostra sicurezza.

Ma quest'Europa è vile. L'aggettivo è rivolto anche a chi si dimentica di condannare, come si è dimenticata la signora Mogherini, con parole dure, perché occorre durezza quando si bombardano donne e bambini, come si è fatto in altri casi. Ma qui altri interessi evidentemente geopolitici e di altro genere impongono questa vergognosa viltà.

Ελευθέριος Συναδινός (NI). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η Τουρκία, λόγω και έργω, συνεχώς επιβεβαιώνει όσα η Ελλάδα και η Κύπρος γνωρίζουν ήδη. Ότι αποτελεί έναν δύστροπο μεγαλομανή κακοποιό που περιφρονεί κάθε αίσθηση δικαίου και λογικής· έναν παρία της διεθνούς τάξεως. Αυτά βέβαια δεν απασχολούν τους φιλελεύθερους και εθνομηδενιστές που προσεγγίζουν την Τουρκία με οικονομικά και μικροπολιτικά κριτήρια. Όσοι δεν έχουν ηθικές αξίες, προφανώς δεν έχουν τον οποιοδήποτε ενδιασμό να διαπραγματευτούν με έναν αναξιόπιστο και απρόβλεπτο δυνάστη. Τα γεγονότα όμως δεν παραποιούνται. Δυτικότροπη Τουρκία δεν υπάρχει. Η Τουρκία δεν έχει συνάφεια με την Ένωση και δεν ανήκει στην Ευρώπη γεωγραφικά, εθνοτικά, πολιτισμικά, ιστορικά, πολιτειακά ή θεσμικά. Απόδειξη είναι η επαναλαμβανόμενη και καιροσκοπική καταπάτηση ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων και θεμελιωδών ελευθεριών. Η περιφρόνηση κανόνων του διεθνούς δικαίου και αποφάσεων του ΟΗΕ και άλλων διεθνών οργανισμών. Η επιβολή μιας ισλαμικής τρομοκρατίας και η διώξη κάθε πολιτικού αντιπάλου ή αντιφρονούντα, συμπεριλαμβανομένων δημοσιογράφων, δικαστικών, στρατιωτικών, δασκάλων ακόμη και ιατρών.

Renate Sommer (PPE). – Frau Präsidentin! Die Lage der Menschenrechte in der Türkei ist ja wirklich erschütternd. Es vergeht kaum noch ein Tag, an dem wir nicht Hiobsbotschaften über den Zustand der Menschenrechte in der Türkei hören.

Es herrscht eine Autokratie, die nur ein Vorgeschmack auf das ist, was uns bei der Umsetzung der Verfassungsänderung in der Türkei erwarten wird, wenn dann die Präsidialdiktatur zum Zuge kommt. Mit dem immer wieder verlängerten Ausnahmezustand setzt die türkische Regierung dauerhaft die Menschenrechtskonvention außer Kraft. Präsident Erdoğan nutzt diesen Ausnahmezustand offensichtlich ausschließlich dazu, Kritiker, politische Gegner und auch übrigens Andersgläubige mundtot zu machen und aus dem öffentlichen Leben zu entfernen.

Oppositionelle, Journalisten, Menschenrechtler, Akademiker, Anwälte, alle möglichen Vertreter der Zivilgesellschaft sitzen im Gefängnis. Auf die türkische Justiz ist schon lange kein Verlass mehr – es herrscht eher das Gesetz der Willkür bei Gerichten und bei Behörden. Immer neue Gruppierungen geraten ins Visier. Standen anfangs Kurden und angebliche Gülen-Anhänger im Visier, muss mittlerweile nahezu jeder um seine Freiheit bangen, der auch nur eine unbedachte Äußerung macht.

Jegliche Kritik scheint zum Straftatbestand zu werden und wird mit Terrorismus gleichgesetzt. Wer nicht verhaftet wird, wird entlassen, enteignet, anderweitig mundtot gemacht – da gibt es genügend Beispiele. Alle diese Menschen – und dazu gehören ein Drittel der Richter und Anwälte, ein Zehntel der Polizisten, 110 000 Beamte und Lehrer, 5 000 Akademiker – alle entlassen; alle diese Menschen stehen vor dem Nichts, keinerlei finanzielle Unterstützung, keine Pensionsansprüche mehr, nirgendwo finden sie mehr einen neuen Job. Sie sind ganz schnell bettelarm. Ganz offensichtlich sollen hier Exempel statuiert werden. Die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung ist vergiftet durch Spitzeltum, Angst und Hetze. Die Lage ist wirklich dramatisch.

Wenn die Europäische Union jetzt nicht endlich handelt, verliert sie endgültig ihre Glaubwürdigkeit. Ja, die Kürzung oder Umschichtung der IPA-Mittel, das war unser erstes Signal an die Türkei. Aber ganz offensichtlich reicht das nicht aus, und ich frage mich, ob dieser freundliche Dialog, in dem wir uns immer noch bewegen, erreichen wird, dass sich die Menschenrechtslage in der Türkei ändert. Ich glaube, wir müssen bald mal andere Saiten aufziehen, und ich würde geradezu empfehlen, mal einen kritischen Blick auf die Zollunion zu werfen.

Victor Boştinaru (S&D). – Madam President, I will focus today on the situation in Afrin, as I trust that the resolution on which we will vote on Thursday, and the introduction made by our colleague Kati Piri, have given us a clear picture of the grave violations of human rights in Turkey and a comprehensive and accurate picture of the situation on the ground.

It is the legitimate right of Turkey to ensure the security of its border. As the Turkish military operation in Afrin is unfolding, civilian casualty numbers – including women and children – are rising and the humanitarian situation is worsening day by day. Refugees and residents in the Afrin district of Syria are trapped once again between warring parties on the border, without any protection and any proper medical supplies or services. They are suffering daily attacks. These are people who have already fled their homes and suffered heavily from the longstanding Syrian war.

The legitimate right of Turkey to ensure the security of its borders cannot be, and should not be, accepted as an excuse for the escalation and continuation of a military operation that seems to be much wider than initially announced. Furthermore, the YPG (People's Protection Unit) made a great contribution in the fight against Daesh. This is something we, including the Commission, already know, and portraying all its fighters as terrorists is more than just an oversimplification.

The military operation against the Kurdish majority enclave of Afrin risks jeopardising the peace talks in Geneva, which remain the only possible way forward for a sustainable and lasting peace in Syria. Thus, we urge Turkey to ensure the cessation of hostilities and to devote its efforts to bringing back peace to Syria, as I trust this is in its own interests.

Finally, we call for an immediate halt to any indiscriminate targeting of civilians and we urge all parties to strictly respect humanitarian law and to guarantee full access to humanitarian aid in the belligerent areas.

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga (ECR). – Madam President, 100 kilometres to the south of Afrin, in the Syrian province of Idlib, chemical weapons were recently used once more. It happened five years after the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons was granted the Nobel Peace Prize for overseeing the disposal of chemical weapons. Debate in the UN Security Council has once again been blocked by Russia. I urge the Commissioner to take a clear position on the EU's behalf on this issue.

Marietje Schaake (ALDE). – Madam President, each time we debate Turkey more damage has been done to the rule of law, to the separation of powers, to the promise of Turkey's European path and especially to the rights and freedoms of people. We have never questioned the legitimacy of bringing to justice those who perpetrated a failed coup. However, the measures taken, including the arrest of eight doctors last week when they called for peace after Turkish operations in Afrin, show that actions taken are often entirely unrelated to the failed coup and are certainly disproportionate. Even if the doctors have been released, another chilling message is sent that no one can assume freedom of expression, or freedom after expression.

Not only countless journalists are imprisoned, including Ahmet Şık and others from *Cumhuriyet*, but also members of the parliamentary opposition, such as People's Democratic Party (HDP) leader Selahattin Demirtas, and the head of Amnesty International. Additionally, more than 100 000 people have lost their jobs, wait endlessly in pre-trial detention and are de facto punished without trial. Those who do stand trial cannot be sure that the procedures are fair. The arrest of Osman Kavala is a case in point.

Turkey is drifting further and further from anything that resembles a European dream. The Council of Europe's Venice Commission assessed that the constitutional changes would 'introduce a presidential regime which lacks the necessary checks and balances required to safeguard against becoming an authoritarian one'. Well, interestingly and sadly, even without these constitutional changes in place, that is what we are witnessing. We are witnessing NATO's two largest armies opposing each other in Afrin.

I believe that we as Europeans have to attach consequences to the de facto violation of the Copenhagen criteria. While we cannot prevent President Erdoğan and his AKP party from leading his country off the cliff, we can at least ensure that we are credible about the basic principles of the EU.

Marie-Christine Vergiat (GUE/NGL). – Madame la Présidente, depuis juillet 2016, la situation en Turquie ne cesse de se dégrader.

Des milliers de personnes croupissent dans les prisons, y compris sans qu'aucune accusation réelle n'ait été portée contre eux ou sans qu'ils puissent avoir accès à un avocat. Les témoignages de tortures se multiplient: fonctionnaires, avocats, magistrats, défenseurs des droits de l'homme en font les frais parmi d'autres. Les journalistes de *Cumhuriyet* comme les responsables d'*Amnesty International* en sont des symboles, mais les minorités, et notamment les Kurdes, en sont les principales victimes.

La lutte contre le terrorisme a bon dos. C'est une répression tous azimuts qui est en cours et l'invasion d'Afrine a permis à Recep Erdogan de durcir encore un peu plus l'état d'urgence. Comment peut-on laisser la Turquie intervenir à Afrine avec l'aide de groupes terroristes contre ceux qui ont été parmi les principaux acteurs de la lutte contre Daech? L'état de droit, les droits de l'homme, le droit international ont-ils encore un sens pour l'Union européenne?

Il est temps d'arrêter M. Erdogan, les troupes turques doivent se retirer de Syrie.

Jordi Solé (Verts/ALE). – Madam President, it is true that in the last few years Turkey has faced unprecedented challenges, such as the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees, an increasing number of terrorist attacks, a failed coup d'état, and a troubled and unstable neighbourhood, but this should never justify the deterioration in democracy, the rule of law and human rights that we are seeing in Turkey. This should never be an excuse to violate, on a massive scale, fundamental freedoms and basic rights, and it can never be a reason for us, EU citizens, to stay silent on all these worrying trends.

Turkey is a candidate country and, as such, it should comply with EU values and principles, which have been deeply eroded by the measures taken under the state of emergency that has been in place for more than one-and-a-half years now, while the opposition has been sidelined and silenced. I am thinking especially of the People's Democratic Party situation.

Regarding Afrin, I share the concerns over the Turkish military operation, as it could seriously undermine the resumption of peace talks in Geneva. I am also concerned about the fate of the civilian population on the ground and I am convinced that the Kurdish people, especially after their efforts in combating ISIS and other fundamentalists, do not deserve to be attacked as they are being. Once again, peace in the region will not be achieved without a permanent political solution to the Kurdish question.

James Carver (EFDD). – Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to comment not just on Turkish human rights abuses, but on Turkey's general disregard for interests other than those of Turkey. For example, it would appear that US and Turkish troops are on a collision course in Manbij in Syria, whilst US forces allied with Kurdish and Arab forces are battling against Islamic State insurgents. The Turkish Government say that Manbij is a prime objective in wiping out Syrian Kurds. Turkey appears to be using the fight against Islamic State to perpetrate further human rights abuses against the Kurdish community, and appears to be willing to endanger a NATO ally to achieve those ends. We should condemn not just Turkish human rights abuses, but also strongly condemn President Erdoğan, his destabilising of foreign policy and his quest to crush all opposition to his despotic rule.

Nicolas Bay (ENF). – Madame la Présidente, nous voilà encore à débattre du régime de M. Erdogan, qui piétine allègrement les droits de l'homme dans son propre pays, mais aussi en Syrie.

Au cours d'un entretien, la veille de son déplacement à Rome, celui qui se rêve en sultan d'un empire ottoman reconstitué assume son odieux chantage sur les migrants. L'accord signé en mars 2016 impose à la Turquie de maîtriser les flux de clandestins vers l'Europe, en contrepartie d'une colossale enveloppe de six milliards d'euros. C'est la lâcheté de nos dirigeants qui a permis à M. Erdogan de conclure ce marché de dupes, tout en continuant d'exiger l'adhésion à l'Union européenne, pour laquelle il reçoit déjà énormément d'argent.

Face à l'arrogance de M. Erdogan, il faut être ferme car les nations européennes peuvent maîtriser elles-mêmes les flux migratoires. Elles doivent prendre exemple sur ce que font la Bulgarie et la Hongrie, qui se donnent les moyens de protéger réellement leurs frontières, contre l'avis, d'ailleurs, des commissaires européens.

Aujourd'hui, la politique migratoire européenne est un «échec total». C'est ainsi que le premier ministre bulgare, qui assume désormais la présidence tournante de l'Union européenne, l'a qualifiée, jeudi dernier. Oui, comme l'a déclaré Boiko Borissov, je cite: «Nous devons maintenant préparer les migrants à rentrer chez eux».

En attendant, je dénonce la résolution sur la Turquie qui sera soumise au vote jeudi. Il y est question encore des milliards d'euros que perçoit chaque année, depuis 2002, ce pays comme candidat à l'Union. Entre 2007 et 2013, la Turquie a reçu plus de subventions européennes que la Slovaquie, pourtant membre de l'Union.

Dirigée par un parti islamiste, la Turquie n'est européenne ni par son histoire, ni par sa géographie, sinon par les bouts de territoires qu'elle a gardés après des siècles de conquêtes et de colonisations sanglantes sur les peuples européens. Un siècle après le terrible génocide arménien, les Turcs continuent de brimer et même d'opprimer quelques communautés chrétiennes, qui subsistent dans ce pays en pleine islamisation. Après des décennies de kémalisme, où l'état laïc avait au moins le souci du patrimoine chrétien, voilà qu'on laisse tomber en ruines des vestiges classés au patrimoine de l'Unesco, comme dans l'ancienne capitale arménienne, Ani.

C'est ce que nous dénonçons dans l'un des amendements qui a été déposé par notre groupe Europe des Nations et des Libertés.

Par conséquent, si la Turquie peut, en effet, être un partenaire, elle ne saurait en aucun cas devenir membre de l'Union. Il est temps de le faire savoir clairement à M. Erdogan et de mettre fin au processus d'adhésion ainsi qu'aux financements totalement injustifiés qui sont actuellement pratiqués.

Udo Voigt (NI). – Frau Präsidentin! Wie lange wird eigentlich die Türkei hier noch als Beitrittskandidat gehandelt? Was muss das Land tun, bis es endlich in Ungnade fällt? Wir haben heute Morgen im Falle von Kroatien gehört, dass einer Aufnahme etwas entgegensteht, solange die Grenzkonflikte nicht gelöst sind. Die Grenzkonflikte der Türkei mit Griechenland, mit Zypern sind nicht gelöst, offensichtlich nicht mit Syrien, offensichtlich nicht mit dem Irak. Wie kann es sein, dass türkische Truppen im Ausland einmarschieren, um dort Kurden zu töten, die Partner der USA, die Partner von anderen NATO-Ländern wie Deutschland, wie EU-Ländern gewesen sind und uns im Kampf gegen Da'esh, gegen ISIS geholfen haben? Wann werden wir endlich dazu übergehen, Sanktionen gegen die Türkei zu verhängen, um hier eine klare, deutliche Sprache in der Außenpolitik zu sprechen?

Eduard Kukan (PPE). – Madam President, it is with great concern that we need to repeatedly appeal to our principles and stand firmly behind them in the EU's evolving relationship with Turkey. The rule of law and respect for fundamental freedoms have to be the main axes of our bilateral relations. We have just confirmed this in the previous debate on EU enlargement strategy with the same messages. Turkey is our partner and an ally in security-related matters, but we find ourselves reaching the limits of our partnership with Turkey over and over again. I believe that there is still some room for discussion to take place on the parliamentary level with MPs from the Turkish Parliament via the Joint Parliamentary Committee, which should meet tomorrow. I hope this could be a productive meeting in this period of partnership.

In the plethora of the wider crackdown on fundamental freedoms in Turkey, I would like to concentrate on the failure to implement the rulings of the Constitutional Court. This is a straightforward attack on the functioning of the judiciary in Turkey.

In this respect, I would like to ask the High Representative or Commissioner Hahn to indicate in which strategic direction our bilateral relations will evolve with regard to the events since the beginning of this year. The human suffering of the people in Syria is beyond any possible words. Further assaults by a NATO member state are just unacceptable. Beyond the reprehensible damage to the most vulnerable population still left in northern Syria, this action directly endangers the possibility of successful talks in Geneva.

Josef Weidenholzer (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin! Die türkische Intervention in Afrin ist verstörend und paradox. Lange schien es, als würde der syrische Bürgerkrieg zu einem Ende gelangen, aber der völkerrechtswidrige Angriff auf Afrin bedeutet ein neuerliches Aufflammen der Kämpfe. Vor allem ist eine friedliche Regelung der Kurdenfrage in weite Ferne gerückt – ohne diese wird es aber keinen Frieden geben.

Es ist mehr als verstörend, dass hinter diesen unglaublichen Aktivitäten ein Mitgliedstaat der NATO steht und Kriegsmaterial anderer NATO-Mitgliedstaaten zum Einsatz kommt. Es ist skandalös, dass sich auf Seite jener, die vorgeben, gegen Terrorismus zu kämpfen, islamistische Extremisten befinden. Diese gehen ohne Rücksichtnahme gegen Minderheiten vor – Minderheiten wie die Jesiden, die gerade einem Genozid entkommen konnten. Viele Unschuldige und Unbeteiligte – Kinder – werden Opfer von Luftangriffen. Das muss ein Ende haben!

Ελένη Θεοχάρους (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, κύριε Επίτροπε, κύριε Hahn, αντιλαμβάνομαι ότι οι συνάδελφοι αρχίζουν σιγά-σιγά να κατανοούν τι είναι η Τουρκία· όχι μόνο σήμερα αλλά και διαχρονικά. Πριν από δύο χρόνια, από αυτήν την αίθουσα είχα καταγγείλει ένα έγκλημα εναντίον της ανθρωπότητας, που διαπράχθηκε από τον τουρκικό στρατό κατοχής στην Κύπρο, τον τακτικό τουρκικό στρατό. Επρόκειτο για τη μετακίνηση από μαζικούς τάφους προς άγνωστο μέρος των οστών εκατοντάδων αγνοουμένων που δολοφονήθηκαν το 1974 από τον τουρκικό στρατό στην Κύπρο, στο χωριό Άσσια. Τότε είχαμε εκδώσει και ένα ψήφισμα αν θυμάστε, κύριε Επίτροπε. Τελικά, κάποιος ευσυνείδητος πολίτης ομολόγησε, ενώ η Τουρκία το αρνείτο όλα αυτά τα χρόνια, ότι τα οστά έχουν ταφεί σε έναν σκουβαλότοπο στο χωριό Δίκωμο της Κύπρου, της κατεχόμενης Κύπρου, και επάνω στον σκουβαλότοπο δημιουργήθηκε με κονδύλια της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης ένα πάρκο, το οποίο αυτή τη στιγμή κοσμεί την περιοχή. Ορίστε πού πηγαίνουν τα λεφτά της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Αναρωτιέμαι πώς είναι δυνατόν την αξία του σεβασμού στον νεκρό, που την αναγνώριζαν όλοι οι πανάρχαιοι πολιτισμοί, οι Ετρούσκοι, οι Αιγύπτιοι, οι Έλληνες, οι Ρωμαίοι, να μην την αναγνωρίζει κανένας στον σύγχρονο κόσμο και να επιτρέπει στην Τουρκία να συνεχίζει αυτό το αποτρόπαιο έγκλημα.

Hilde Vautmans (ALDE). – Mevrouw de voorzitter, commissaris, de toestand in Turkije baart ons zorgen. Dat hebben we hier vanavond al vele keren gehoord. Telkens als we in de Commissie buitenlandse zaken een verslag bespreken over de vooruitgang van Turkije om toe te treden tot de Europese Unie, is dat eigenlijk altijd een achteruitgangsverslag. Van persvrijheid is geen sprake, wel van mensenrechtenschendingen bij de vleet. Vrijheid van meningsuiting bestaat niet meer.

We mogen vandaag heel duidelijk zeggen: dit Turkije kan niet toetreden tot onze Europese Unie. We moeten hard zijn wat betreft het respect voor de mensenrechten. We moeten misschien spreken over een ander soort partnerschap. We moeten misschien kijken welke economische of diplomatieke relatie we wel kunnen opbouwen met Turkije.

Een ander aspect dat we hier vandaag ter sprake willen en moeten brengen, is het offensief van Afrin. De beelden en berichten die we over de gebeurtenissen aldaar te zien en te lezen krijgen maken duidelijk dat we met een globale strategie voor Syrië moeten komen. De mensenrechtenschendingen en aanvallen wennen, zegt men dan. Wel, dit mag niet wennen. Laten we een globale strategie uitwerken om dat conflict te beëindigen en de vredesonderhandelingen vlot te krijgen. Ik dank u.

Martina Michels (GUE/NGL). – Frau Präsidentin! Erdoğan's Dekret 696 läutete die Totenglocke für eine rechtsstaatliche Aufarbeitung des Putschversuches 2016 ein. Lynchjustiz ist inzwischen erwünscht, während friedlicher Protest, politische Opposition und kritischer Journalismus in den Knast wandern. Die Existenz vieler Lehrer und Wissenschaftler ist zerstört, Zehntausende wohnen in den Häusern in Cizre und Diyarbakır – vertrieben lange vor dem Ausnahmezustand.

Und nun sitzen die vermeintlichen Terroristen, von denen sich Erdoğan bedroht fühlt, auch in Syrien und Afrin. Ich frage: Wo bleibt die klare Ächtung dieses völkerrechtlichen Angriffs durch die EU, durch die NATO-Partner, ja, und auch durch Russland?

Eine friedliche Lösung der Kurdenfrage würde die Menschenrechtslage in der ganzen Region verbessern. Statt Flüchtlingsdeal und Waffen braucht die Region Korridore der humanitären Hilfe, ein Ende des Krieges in Syrien. Beenden wir den Verrat der Menschenrechte in der Türkei, indem wir die EU-Politik des Wegschauens, des Abschottens und Auslagerns von Problemen beenden!

Michel Reimon (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin! Vor einer Woche hat hier in Straßburg eine Demonstration zur Situation in der Türkei, zum Einmarsch in Afrin stattgefunden. Heute, vor wenigen Stunden, ist ein Teilnehmer dieser Demonstration wegen dieser Teilnahme in Istanbul, in der Türkei, festgenommen worden: Herr Selçuk Duman ein österreichischer Staatsbürger, ein EU-Staatsbürger, der in der Türkei für eine Demonstration in der Europäischen Union festgenommen wird. Nach meinen informellen Informationen ist es bereits der Dritte in den letzten Tagen. Ich weiß nicht, wie viele EU-Staatsbürger aus anderen Ländern es sind.

Jetzt geht das schon so weit: Wir reden nicht mehr nur über Menschenrechtsverletzungen in der Türkei an Türken, wo Europa wegschaut. Wir reden nicht mehr nur davon, dass die KurdInnen im Stich gelassen werden, dass die JesidInnen im Stich gelassen werden, dass die AlevitInnen im Stich gelassen werden. Jetzt geht es auch schon um EU-Staatsbürger, die in der Union ausspioniert werden und in der Türkei systematisch verhaftet werden. Da muss ein Schritt gesetzt werden. Wir alle wissen, dass die Türkei in den nächsten Jahrzehnten nicht Mitglied der Europäischen Union wird. Damit zu drohen, dass das nicht mehr wird, wird nicht mehr genügen.

Herr Kommissar – ich begrüße Sie –, ich fordere Sie auf, gehen wir einen Schritt weiter: Erhöhen wir den Druck auf Erdoğan, erhöhen wir den Druck auf die Türkei! Es gibt dieses Zollabkommen, das der Türkei wichtig ist, das Druck machen würde. Stellen wir es zur Diskussion! Drohen wir unmissverständlich damit, dass die Europäische Union aus diesem Zollabkommen aussteigt, wenn die Menschenrechte weiter verletzt werden und wenn die Türkei sich so wie jetzt international benimmt. Erhöhen wir den Druck!

Jean-Luc Schaffhauser (ENF). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, voilà le retour de la réalité de la géopolitique. Nous constatons tout simplement que la politique ottomane n'est pas une politique européenne. Seuls, à mon avis, des naïfs et des idéologues ont pu ignorer ce que l'histoire nous décrit.

Mais je voudrais vous parler également de la violation du territoire souverain de la Syrie par la Turquie. C'est également manifestement contre le droit international. Toutefois, l'Union est-elle légitime pour condamner cette violation? N'avons-nous pas prêté soutien aux Américains et aux États du Golfe pour démembrer la Syrie? N'avons-nous pas laissé la Turquie armer l'État islamique, laissé faire le trafic des réfugiés et du pétrole? Ne sommes-nous pas soumis dans les actes à la Turquie? N'avons-nous pas diabolisé l'intervention russe pourtant décisive contre les djihadistes?

Donc, à quel titre faisons-nous la leçon? Trop souvent, nous chérissons les causes en dénonçant les effets. Ainsi en est-il aussi de l'élimination des chrétiens, par un manque de réalisme.

Janusz Korwin-Mikke (NI). – Madam President, for one minute I will focus on the situation of the Kurds in Turkey. Two-and-a-half years ago, a Kurdish delegation was in the European Parliament and I advised them to make a deal with Bashar al-Assad, who was then in a desperate situation and, I think, would have made any deal. But they responded by saying that they would not make any deal with a murderer. And nobody in the European Parliament supported me – nobody. The Kurds are now in a desperate situation: they are beaten by Turks from the north and by Bashar al-Assad from the south, and they are in a really desperate situation. They lost their chance.

I am not saying that everybody who does not listen to me will end up like the Kurds now, but remember that even a nation that has good soldiers but is led by the wrong leaders will end up like the Kurds. Moreover, I think that the European Union must be destroyed.

Jaromír Štětina (PPE). – Paní předsedající, útok na Afrín znovu otevřel závažné dilema. Členský stát NATO, náš vojenský spojenec, se dopouští násilí vůči kurdské národnostní menšině na svém území i vůči Kurdům na cizím území, v Sýrii a Iráku.

Dilema brzdí nejen řešení blízkovýchodního konfliktu, ale i pokračování konstruktivních vztahů EU s Tureckem. Ohrožuje i migrační dohodu mezi EU a Tureckem o uprchlících. Vzniklé dilema nabývá absurdních až pitoreskních rozměrů. Spojené státy, nejsilnější spojenec Turecka v NATO, letecky shazují vojenským jednotkám ozbrojených sil YPG, které nyní bojují s Tureckem, v Rodžavě a Afrínu munici a zbraně. Americké vojenské letectvo přímo podnikalo leteckou přípravu pozemních operací YPG. Navíc Spojené státy na rozdíl od Turecka nepovažují jednotky YPG za teroristy.

Vyřešit dilema, kdo je náš spojenec v Afrínu, vyžaduje mnoho diplomatické obratnosti. Vyžaduje však i schopnost odpovědět na otázku, zda je brutální porušování lidských práv ze strany Turecka akceptovatelné za cenu oslabení vojenského spojení.

Nedávno jsem navštívil Rodžavu i kurdské jednotky YPG. Poznal jsem, jak statečně Kurdové dobyli hlavní město ISIS Rakku, jak statečně začali obnovovat město Kobani zničené organizací ISIS. Jsou to spojenci našich amerických spojenců. Nemůžeme je hodit přes palubu jen pro to, aby byl udržen status quo mezi organizací NATO a Tureckem.

Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, cosa si può dire di più, ormai, della Turchia, perché quanto sta avvenendo è evidente a tutti, anche ai sassi. È evidente che si sta azzerando la democrazia e noi non possiamo pensare che sia un partner amico, la Turchia, nel momento in cui incarcerava persone che protestano pacificamente, impedisce la libertà di espressione e di informazione arrestando giornalisti e chiudendo le redazioni, avvelena il sistema giudiziario togliendo la libertà ai magistrati e ai professori, colpisce i difensori dei diritti umani e agisce per eliminare i curdi.

Io credo che l'Unione europea, la Commissione europea, di fronte alle cose che stiamo discutendo e che emergeranno nella risoluzione debba assumere una posizione molto più netta e chiara e debba rivedere le relazioni con la Turchia e porre, su tutti gli accordi che ci sono, le condizionalità come elemento essenziale per poter andare avanti nel rapporto con questo paese. Senza questo rischiamo semplicemente di fare delle prediche. Quindi occorre un atto davvero molto forte da parte della Commissione europea.

Marek Jurek (ECR). – Turcja się zmienia i nie chodzi tylko o relacje między rządem i opozycją, o następstwa zamachu stanu, kiedy Turcja stanęła na krawędzi wojny domowej, ale chodzi o zmiany głębokie, które mogą niestety pozostać. W Aja Sofia wyznaczono już oficjalnie imama. Historia cofa się o 80 lat. Jest to jeszcze muzeum, ale jego status ma zostać zmieniony. To nie ma być miejsce, w którym się pamięta równocześnie o tysiącletniej historii chrześcijańskiej i o historii późniejszej, tylko jak mówię, historię cofa się o 80 lat. Nie wiem, czy w tej sprawie reagowała Komisja Europejska, ale bardzo zachęcam do wydania komunikatu. Chodzi o prosty sygnał, że to nam nie jest obojętne. Seminarium na wyspie Chalki ciągle nie jest przywrócone. Przecież to ma fundamentalne znaczenie dla funkcjonowania patriarchatu konstantynopolańskiego. To jest część naszego dziedzictwa. W tej sprawie też powinniśmy wysłać sygnał, że to są rzeczy nam nieobojętne. Nie zmieni się tych spraw na siłę, ale Turcja powinna wiedzieć wyraźnie, że nam na tym zależy, i o to proszę Komisję Europejską.

Ali Nedzhmi (ALDE). – Madam President, we need a more balanced approach on the status of human rights in Turkey. Misunderstanding and bad judgment of the facts could create a rather negative picture of Turkish society. In order to have a proper EU reaction to the events in a neighbouring country, we need to take into account the real situation there and the reasons for it to emerge.

Parliament should avoid strong condemnation of a country which is one of our closest partners, both in economic and political aspects. Recently, we have started to forget Turkey's enormous efforts in dealing with the migration crisis and its role in providing asylum to millions of refugees. Despite the fact that this is organised just based on a statement by the EU and Turkey, it contributes effectively to the protection of the external borders of the Union. This is visible in south-east Europe and particularly in my country, Bulgaria. The positive results have been recognised many times by representatives of the Commission who are directly involved in the process. That is why we must show greater respect for our neighbour.

Soon, a formal EU-Turkey meeting will be held, where we expect many of the contradictions to be overcome. At the same time, there are some proposals for the suspension of the accession negotiations. In this regard, questions arise. What is our goal? What kind of effect do we want to achieve? The only result would be the isolation of Turkey and pushing it in another direction. We need Turkey and Turkey needs us for the security of the whole region and the European Union. The aggressive tone of the discussion is not a productive one. I call for a more balanced approach and proposals.

Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL). – Senhora Presidente, não podemos ficar em silêncio em relação ao que está a acontecer em Afrine. Até agora, Afrine era uma região relativamente segura e até recebeu milhares de refugiados. Mas isso acabou com a invasão e com a ofensiva unilateral por parte da Turquia e daí já resultaram muitas mortes. É uma clara violação do direito internacional e uma violação dos direitos humanos.

A população de Afrine tem sido um garante de paz e tem impedido o alastramento das forças terroristas. A União Europeia deve apoiar os esforços de paz da população de Afrine e deve condenar ativamente aquilo que é a ofensiva unilateral de Erdogan. É fundamental também que a União Europeia se decida a envolver-se para que as populações curdas possam participar no processo político para a paz na Síria.

E, finalmente e fundamentalmente, tem que se dizer de forma clara ao Sr. Erdogan que não aceitamos chantagem e que não há negócio nem acordo que valha mais que as vidas humanas.

Rebecca Harms (Verts/ALE). – Frau Präsidentin, sehr geehrte türkische Gäste! Die Aufklärung des gescheiterten Putsches, die ohne Zweifel notwendig ist, dient in der Türkei immer mehr als Rechtfertigung dafür, Rechtsstaatlichkeit, Gewaltenteilung, Meinungsfreiheit und Menschenrechte zu begraben. Zehntausende Männer und Frauen – Lehrer, Richter, Rechtsanwälte, Akademiker, Oppositionspolitiker, Bürgermeister, Soldaten, Menschenrechtler – und auch Hunderte kleiner Kinder sind seit Monaten und Jahren in der Türkei im Gefängnis. Es sind in der Türkei mehr Journalisten eingesperrt als in jedem anderen Land. Mehmet Altan und Şahin Alpay bleiben eingekerkert, obwohl das Verfassungsgericht ihre Haft als unrechtmäßig verurteilt hat. Ähnlich geht es dem Vorsitzenden der Amnesty-Gruppe in der Türkei, Taner Kılıç, und die Fälle von Deniz Yücel oder meiner Freunde Ahmet Şık, Osman Kavala und Selahattin Demirtaş zeigen, dass der internationale Druck, zu Rechtsstaatlichkeit zurückzukehren, bisher scheitert. Ich möchte deshalb hier dringend appellieren, dass der Europäische Gerichtshof für Menschenrechte endlich und ohne weitere peinliche Verzögerung diese Fälle von Unrecht verhandelt und entscheidet.

Denke ich an die Türkei, bin ich oft zornig, aber auch traurig. Es ist furchtbar, zu sehen, wie so viel demokratischer Geist, so viel Zukunft für das Land hinter Gefängnismauern verschwindet. Denke ich an Afrin, muss ich Ihnen sagen, erfasst mich pure Angst. Das, was in Afrin und in Idlib passiert, das sind wieder Verbrechen an der Menschlichkeit, das verstößt in Afrin gegen das Völkerrecht. Es droht, dass die größte Region von Despoten in eine neue Eskalation geschoben wird.

Herr Hahn und Frau Mogherini haben die schwierige Aufgabe, von hier aus mitzunehmen, dass wir Sie bitten, einen neuen Flächenbrand in dieser Region aufzuhalten. Denn das ist es, was ich befürchte: dass aus Afrin ein Flächenbrand wird. Ich appelliere auch, diese Botschaft in die Türkei zurückzutragen: Die Türkei war lange stabil und auf einem guten Weg. Auch die Türkei – das ist meine große Angst – kann in diesen Flächenbrand hineingezogen werden.

Sophie Montel (EFDD). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, j'étais venue ici pour rappeler toute la complaisance avec laquelle votre Union européenne a traité la Turquie, pays officiellement candidat à l'intégration. Puis, après réflexion, je me suis demandé ce qui empêcherait la Turquie d'adhérer à cette Union. Réfléchissez-y. Après tout, il y a plus de vestiges romains dans l'Anatolie turque que dans toute la Scandinavie réunie. Cela devrait même faire réfléchir les «droitards identitaires» qui devraient, s'ils étaient logiques, soutenir l'adhésion de la Turquie.

Vous me répondrez que l'Union européenne est d'abord construite autour de valeurs communes et que la Turquie s'en éloigne, mais c'est faux. La Turquie n'a jamais été aussi proche de cette union autoritaire qui a mis la Grèce sous coupe réglée. La Turquie n'a jamais été aussi proche de nos pays qui criminalisent la liberté d'expression au nom de la bataille contre de prétendues *fake news*.

La vérité, c'est que cette Union européenne relève de la cohabitation forcée de pays trop différents et qu'elle ne suscite aucun sentiment d'appartenance.

Ce débat sur la Turquie est donc un formidable rappel aux citoyens que cette Union ne représente rien et que seules les nations ont une âme et des valeurs qui rassemblent leurs membres.

Michaela Šojdrová (PPE). – Paní předsedající, všichni se shodujeme, že Turecko by mělo zůstat partnerem Evropské unie, ale že situace je tam dnes velmi vážná, smutná a alarmující. Řešení migrace, bezpečnost, boj proti terorismu jsou prioritou pro Turecko stejně jako pro Evropskou unii. Je třeba ocenit to, jakým způsobem se Turecko vypořádalo s uprchlíky v jejich přijímání, integrování a také to, že dohoda EU–Turecko podle mého názoru funguje. Zřejmě také proto, že je to v zájmu samotných Turků.

Vést dialog s režimem prezidenta Erdogana je v těchto chvílích téměř nemožné. Prezident a jeho vláda se chovají autoritativně. Je možné, že je to ten samý prezident, který se hlásil k evropským hodnotám? Který usiloval o vstup do Evropské unie? Jak je možné, že dnes násilně umlčuje opozici, pronásleduje novináře, akademiky, pronásleduje každého, kdo volá po lidských právech?

Seznam stíhaných novinářů v Turecku roste. Jen v únoru bude v Turecku stát před soudem více než desítka novinářů a zaměstnanců médií. Osobně sleduji případ pana Akina Atalaye, výkonného ředitele opozičního deníku Cumhuriyet. Ten je již vězněn 14 měsíců a je obviněn z údajné podpory terorismu a jeho soudní proces nese všechny známky soudu na politickou objednávku. Velmi se obávám, že seznam stíhaných novinářů se znovu rozšíří v souvislosti s vojenskou operací v severní Sýrii. Podle dostupných informací turecký premiér dal médiím přesné instrukce, jak podávat zpravodajství. Novináři by podle jeho slov měli ignorovat zpravodajství zahraničních médií o tom, že jde o zásah proti Kurdům.

Kolegyně a kolegové, měli bychom usilovat o obnovení dialogu s parlamentem i s vládou Turecka. Nesmíme se otočit zády k těm milionům lidí, kteří věří v demokratické hodnoty. A chtějí žít v zemi, kde bude dodržován právní stát a nezávislé soudnictví. K tomu by také měly být využity evropské prostředky.

Soraya Post (S&D). – Madam President, last week Taner Kılıç, the Chair of Amnesty International Turkey, was rearrested by Turkish police and charged with membership of an armed terrorist organisation. Many other human rights activists have been arrested and labelled by the Turkish Government as terrorists.

According to several reports from human rights organisations, since July 2016 the Turkish Government has started a crack-down on human rights. Civil servants, journalists, teachers, police, military, judges and prosecutors – anyone that does not openly support the government is at risk. Civil society is being paralysed. The Turkish Government is not only attacking human rights defenders; it is also attacking other countries, for example in its military operation in Afrin, Syria.

I, as a feminist, with full respect for international human rights conventions, will not join the group of EU leaders that are ignoring attacks on human rights because of a migration deal.

Monica Macovei (ECR). – Doamnă președintă, din nou vorbim despre Turcia, ceea ce înseamnă că nu s-a schimbat nimic și că lucrurile merg tot mai rău, așa că trebuie să adoptăm un alt stil. În afară de dezbateri trebuie pur și simplu să mergem la sancțiuni.

Istoria recentă ne-a arătat că sunt state, cum ar fi Turcia, de exemplu, cu dictatura lui Erdogan, sau cum este Federația Rusă, cu dictatura Putin, căora nu le pasă nici măcar de sancțiuni. Dezbaterile le putem face, sunt bune, dar trebuie sancțiuni mult și mult mai severe, pentru că altfel nu se poate discuta cu aceste țări.

Sunt momente și țări în care diplomația nu merge și nu le pasă de diplomație. Erdogan este unul dintre acești oameni. Avem peste 5 000 de judecători concediați, 2 500 la închisoare, inclusiv membri ai Curții Constituționale. În Turcia, cei mai mulți jurnaliști din lume sunt arestați, deci e pe locul întâi în lume. Mulți cetățeni turci aflați în Europa sunt arestați în Turcia de regimul Erdogan și apoi se trimit mandatele de arestare pentru a fi extrădați. S-a întâmplat, de exemplu, cu cetățeni turci care se aflau în Albania. Din fericire, instanțele albaneze nu i-au extrădat. Un profesor universitar, ce pericol era profesorul universitar pentru Turcia, ca să emită mandat de arestare și să vrea să-l trimită în închisoare în Turcia?

Deci, sancțiuni!

Κώστας Χρυσόγονος (GUE/NGL). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, τέσσερα χρόνια στο Κοινοβούλιο αυτό έχω συμμετάσχει σε αμέτρητες συζητήσεις για τη συμπεριφορά του τουρκικού καθεστώτος, το οποίο παραβιάζει συστηματικά και ολοένα πιο απροσημάτιστα κάθε έννοια ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων στο εσωτερικό της Τουρκίας και κάθε έννοια διεθνούς δικαίου στο εξωτερικό. Η πολυνεκρη εισβολή στη Συρία, με μαζικές δολοφονίες Κούρδων από τις τουρκικές ένοπλες δυνάμεις, αποτελεί μόνο το τελευταίο επεισόδιο στο σίριαλ. Έχει καταντήσει πια βαρετό να ακούμε όλες τις πτέρυγες του Ευρωπαϊκού Κοινοβουλίου να καταδικάζουν τα εγκληματικά πεπραγμένα του καθεστώτος Ερντογάν – και ενίοτε το ίδιο να κάνουν και τα άλλα όργανα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης – και στην πράξη να μην κάνουν τίποτα για να το σταματήσουν. Μία μόνο γλώσσα μπορεί να καταλάβει ο κύριος Ερντογάν και σε αυτή τη γλώσσα πρέπει να του μιλήσουμε εάν θέλουμε να δείξουμε στοιχειώδη σοβαρότητα. Είναι η γλώσσα της επιβολής οικονομικών και πολιτικών κυρώσεων.

Cristian-Silviu Buşoi (PPE). – Madam President, the human rights situation in Turkey is very critical. Abuses of human rights include the imprisonment of journalists and abuses of the human rights of ethnic minorities, especially Kurds. The ongoing Turkish state of emergency gave the pretext to imprison political opponents, businessmen and also human rights defenders and journalists. Furthermore, the lawyers of these human rights defenders are facing, on a daily basis, great barriers to performing their work and are at continuous risk of detention and prosecution. This situation is evidence of a well-developed pattern of silencing people whose work lawfully calls into question the policies of the Turkish Government. As representatives of European fundamental rights, we need to unify and strengthen our voices in order to urge the Turkish Government to stop these abuses against human rights.

Bogusław Liberadzki (S&D). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! W pierwszym zdaniu chcę podkreślić, że zgadzam się z bardzo wieloma wypowiedziami wyrażającymi zaniepokojenie rozwojem sytuacji w Turcji. Jednocześnie z zadowoleniem przyjmuję zwłaszcza ostatnie zdanie wystąpienia pani wysokiej komisarz, która mówi: chcemy utrzymać linię dialogu, chcemy po prostu rozmawiać z Turcją, bo jest o czym rozmawiać. Turcja jest członkiem NATO, jest naszym partnerem w NATO. Turcja jest wciąż na drodze stowarzyszenia z Unią Europejską. Turcja jest wielkim państwem, znaczącym państwem. I co jest z naszego punktu widzenia bardzo ważne to, aby do Turcji, do rządu tureckiego dotarła świadomość, że wielkość, siła oznacza odpowiedzialność. Oznacza odpowiedzialność za pokój w regionie. Oznacza odpowiedzialność za stabilność wokół i oznacza także odpowiedzialność za dobre, demokratyczne rządzenie państwem.

Ангел Джамбазки (ECR). – Г-жо Председател, господа Комисари, поне четири години повтаряме в тази зала, че турският президент Ердоган се превръща в диктатор. Диктатор, който не спазва човешките права, диктатор, който смазва човешките права, диктатор, който се намесва във вътрешните работи на съседни държави. Диктатор, който продължава да окупира Кипър, диктатор, който продължава да провокира Гърция, диктатор, който се опитва да се меси във вътрешните работи на България, включително чрез опита му през последните дни да издейства българско гражданство на два милиона турски граждани.

Днес същият този диктатор води война на територията на съседна държава. Това е навлизане на територията на съседна държава – Сирийската арабска република. Това е инвазия, това е нашествие.

Уважаеми колеги, крайно време е да прекъснем и прекратим това лицемерие, което виждаме в средите на нашите колеги от ляво – Левица, Зелени и т.н. Ердоган е диктатор, който нарушава човешките права. Ердоган е човек, който ясно доказва защо Турция няма място в Европейския съюз. На тази Турция на Ердоган трябва да бъдат наложени финансови санкции и ограничения. Такива са правилата и ясно трябва да му се покаже, че няма място в Европейския съюз и че трябва да бъде наказан за поведението си.

Josu Juaristi Abaunz (GUE/NGL). – Señora presidenta, mis colegas han retratado ya sobradamente las consecuencias presentes y futuras de la ofensiva turca contra Afrin, así que pasaré directamente a informar a la Comisión de la declaración que hemos impulsado diputados y diputadas de cuatro grupos políticos, declaración que han firmado ya exactamente cien representantes de esta Cámara y que hemos presentado hoy aquí.

Urgimos a la Comisión y a los Estados miembros a redoblar sus esfuerzos para que Turquía detenga inmediatamente su ofensiva. Demandamos una reactivación real e inclusiva del diálogo en el marco del proceso de Ginebra. Reconocemos que la lucha de las fuerzas kurdas contra el ISIS contribuye también a la seguridad europea. En cambio, el ataque turco constituye una gravísima amenaza a la seguridad de toda la región.

Señora Mogherini, señor Hahn, su voz debe alzarse con mucha, mucha más fuerza frente a Erdogan. Hoy la percibimos más como silencio y equidistancia, y ante unos hechos tan graves esa no es una opción, no es comprensible ni admisible.

Jean-Paul Denanot (S&D). – Madame la Présidente, oui, le gouvernement turc est à nouveau à l'actualité de notre Assemblée et je m'en désolé car, une fois de plus, nous sommes confrontés à la politique répressive et aux exactions du Président Erdogan, qui entraîne son peuple et les pays voisins dans une surenchère belliqueuse, dangereuse et sans fondement.

L'offensive déclenchée ces dernières semaines contre les Kurdes dans la région d'Afrine, au nord-ouest de la Syrie, est complètement injustifiée. Les Kurdes syriens sont, avec les Peshmergas du Kurdistan, les meilleurs alliés des forces occidentales dans la guerre contre Daech. Des milliers d'entre eux sont morts dans cette lutte pour notre liberté et notre sécurité. C'est grâce à eux que l'État islamique ne contrôle plus que quelque 5 % du territoire après de nombreuses défaites.

Une fois de plus, Erdogan use des mêmes ficelles: prétextant lutter contre le terrorisme, il bombarde en plein hiver une région qui n'a jamais attaqué ni menacé le territoire turc et arrête quiconque s'élève dans son pays contre cette violation flagrante du droit international. Cette offensive vient grever, en outre, la recherche d'une solution à la guerre en Syrie.

Notre devoir d'Européens est d'exiger le retrait de l'armée turque ainsi que la libération des personnes emprisonnées très abusivement en Turquie depuis juillet 2016.

Branislav Škripek (ECR). – Madam President, since 20 January we have received cries for help from the Kurdish Christians in Afrin – they have begged for an immediate end to the Turkish attacks. They clearly know that jihadi extremists, including al-Qa'ida, are part of the Turkish attempt to invade Afrin. Yes, I say 'al-Qa'ida': I already have a whole document demonstrating the cooperation between Turkey and al-Qa'ida in the Afrin operation. Turkey has been caught: it is not hunting terrorists; it is supporting terrorists in order to take Afrin.

Two questions for my fellow colleagues. Shall we allow Turkey to create another influx of refugees into Europe? Shall we allow a NATO member state to cooperate with a terrorist organisation? I challenge Ms Mogherini to show leadership in this situation and condemn this invasion without any reservation.

Finally, I call on Ms Mogherini to recognise – now – that the Federation of Northern Syria should be part of the peace talks. Their Syrian democratic forces liberated one third of Syria from ISIS and cannot be ignored as a partner.

Νίκος Ανδρουλάκης (S&D). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, η κατάσταση στην Τουρκία είναι απολύτως ανησυχητική. Ο Ερντογάν είναι αποφασισμένος να συνεχίσει τη δίωξη πολιτικών, δικαστών, δημοσιογράφων, αλλά και απλών πολιτών. Παρατείνει την κατάσταση εκτάκτου ανάγκης για να διευρύνει την εξουσία του. Όποιος του ασκεί κριτική βαφτίζεται εχθρός του Έθνους. Διαμορφώνει μια ακραία εθνικιστική συμμαχία, αμφισβητώντας ακόμη και τη Συνθήκη της Λωζάνης. Το τελευταίο διάστημα, ισλαμιστές και κεμαλιστές συναγωνίζονται για το ποιος θα έχει την πιο επιθετική ρητορεία έναντι γειτονικών κρατών. Επιτίθεται στις αποφάσεις της ελληνικής δικαιοσύνης σχετικά με την παροχή ασύλου σε τούρκους πολίτες, διότι προφανώς κρίνει εξ ιδίων τα αλλότρια όσον αφορά το πώς λαμβάνονται οι αποφάσεις. Τέλος, με την ανοχή της διεθνούς κοινότητας εισβάλλει στη Συρία χτυπώντας τους Κούρδους. Επί της ουσίας, στην Αφρίν πολεμά αυτούς που νίκησαν το Ισλαμικό Κράτος. Μετά από εφτά χρόνια αιματηρού εμφυλίου και ενώ η σύγκρουση είχε αρχίσει να αποκλιμακώνεται, η συγκεκριμένη τουρκική εισβολή οδηγεί σε νέα ανθρωπιστική κρίση. Οφείλουμε σήμερα να καταδικάσουμε με απόλυτο τρόπο τη συμπεριφορά του Ερντογάν.

Bernd Kölmel (ECR). – Frau Präsidentin! Um die Menschenrechtslage in der Türkei ist es schlecht bestellt. Wir haben gesehen, dass nach 2016 — nach dem Putschversuch in der Türkei — dort viele Säuberungen erfolgt sind und auch viele Gerichtsverfahren, die den rechtsstaatlichen Ansprüchen bei weitem nicht genügen. Und der Umgang der Türkei mit der eigenen kurdischen Minderheit ist in den vergangenen Jahren, ja sogar schon Jahrzehnten, sehr problematisch. Und schließlich zeigt sich jetzt mit dem Angriff der Türkei auf die Kurdengebiete in Nordsyrien, dass sich die Türkei nicht an geltendes Recht, noch nicht einmal an das Völkerrecht hält.

Hier geht es nicht nur um die inneren Angelegenheiten eines Landes. Die Türkei ist immer noch ein EU-Beitrittskandidat, und wir sollten diesen Zustand der Heuchelei beenden. Die Türkei hat derzeit und bis auf Weiteres keinerlei Perspektiven, der EU beitreten zu können. Darauf aufbauend müssen wir allerdings auch zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass die Türkei sowohl für die EU als auch für viele andere Staaten in ihrem Umfeld strategisch wichtig ist. Deshalb müssen wir anstreben, dass wir einerseits die Beitrittsverhandlungen zwar einstellen, aber gleichzeitig mit der Türkei im Dialog bleiben und eine strategische Partnerschaft erreichen.

Κώστας Μαυρίδης (S&D). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, στο Κομπάνι, οι κούρδοι πολεμιστές -άνδρες και γυναίκες- αποφάσισαν να σταματήσουν τη βαρβαρότητα του ισλαμικού κράτους και τα κατάφεραν. Σήμερα, η Τουρκία εισβάλλει στη Συρία, στην περιοχή Αφρίν, όπως εισέβαλε το 1974 στην Κύπρο· με την ίδια προπαγάνδα. Αλλά τα εγκλήματα παραμένουν τα ίδια. Ο πληθυσμός της Αφρίν στέλνει ένα μήνυμα σε μας εδώ στις Βρυξέλλες, αλλά και σε όλες τις πρωτεύουσες των μεγάλων δυνάμεων. Σας το μεταφέρω: μη μας θυσιάσετε σε μια νέα γενοκτονία χάριν των σχέσεων σας με την Τουρκία. Μακάρι να μπορούσε αυτή η κραυγή τους να ακουστεί και εδώ στο Στρασβούργο.

Γι' αυτό, επιτέλους, ας περάσουμε από τα λόγια στις πράξεις. Κύριε Επίτροπε, δύο είναι τα ζητήματα. Θα επιβάλλουμε, επιτέλους, κυρώσεις στην Τουρκία όπως επιβάλλουμε σε άλλα κράτη που κάνουν παρόμοια πράγματα; Δεύτερον, οι Κούρδοι έχουν ένα μήνυμα: ζώνη απαγόρευσης πτήσεων. Αν τους την διασφαλίσουμε, να είστε βέβαιοι ότι θα σταματήσουν τον τουρκικό στρατό στην Αφρίν, όπως έκαναν και στο Κομπάνι.

Mark Demesmaeker (ECR). – Hoe verzint men het? “Operatie Olijftak”. Turkse bommenwerpers droppen hun dodelijke ballast boven de Koerdische enclave Afrin, op Syrisch grondgebied. Wat een cynisme. De olijftak is een eeuwenoud symbool. Afkomstig van de traag groeiende en stevige olijfbom staat het voor vrede, hoop en verzoening. Niet dus voor de Koerden van Afrin.

Turkije heeft het gemunt op de stellingen van Koerdische strijders maar jaagt burgers, ook vrouwen en kinderen, de dood in. Dat net de burgers van Afrin het slachtoffer zijn van het Olijftakgeweld, is ronduit schandalig. Onze grootste bondgenoot in de strijd tegen de duistere krachten van Islamitische Staat wordt aan zijn lot overgelaten. Het zijn de Koerden die de kogels van het radicale fundamentalisme voor ons opvangen. En nu krijgen zij een dolksteek in de rug van hun burens, maar ook van de internationale gemeenschap.

Wij zijn laf, schijnheilig en hypocriet. We bakken zoete broodjes en maken schimmige deals met Ankara en geven in ruil hun doodzaaiers vrij spel. Collega's, we zijn de vriendschap van het Koerdische volk niet waard.

Javi López (S&D). – Señora presidenta, Turquía tiene que oír alto y claro que cualquier relación entre la Unión Europea y Turquía, presente o futura, estará condicionada al levantamiento del estado de emergencia y a la paralización de las violaciones sistemáticas que estamos viviendo en materia de derechos humanos, Estado de Derecho, libertad de expresión o respeto a las minorías. Son centenares de miles las personas, los activistas, los jueces, los funcionarios, los periodistas que han sido encarcelados, acusados o que han visto violentada su libertad durante los últimos meses. Estas últimas semanas, también aquellos que han osado criticar operaciones militares con un enorme potencial desestabilizador en Siria, en una zona que ya está en ebullición.

Pero nuestro mensaje tiene que ser muy claro. Esta no es una batalla entre Europa y Turquía. Y Europa no es enemiga de Turquía. Esta es una batalla de los ciudadanos demócratas europeos defendiendo la democracia, apoyando a los demócratas turcos.

Νότης Μαριάς (ECR). – Κυρία Πρόεδρε, είμαστε ξανά στο ίδιο έργο θεατές, με την Τουρκία να επιτίθεται σε Κούρδους, να φυλακίζει χιλιάδες αντιφρονούντες, να υποδάλπει τους δουλεμπόρους και να γεμίζει τα νησιά του Αιγαίου με χιλιάδες παράνομους μετανάστες. Ο Ερντογάν απειλεί την Ελλάδα. Ζητεί αναθεώρηση της Συνθήκης της Λωζάνης και διεκδικεί δεκάδες ελληνικά νησιά στο Αιγαίο. Ο υπουργός Εξωτερικών της Τουρκίας, Τσαβούσογλου, απειλεί την Ελλάδα με πόλεμο αν δεν δοθούν στην Τουρκία δεκαοκτώ ελληνικά νησιά. Ταυτόχρονα, συνεχίζονται οι παραβιάσεις του ελληνικού εναέριου χώρου, παραβιάζονται τα ελληνικά χωρικά ύδατα και αποκλείονται τα Ίμια. Πρέπει, λοιπόν, η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση να αφήσει τα λόγια και να περάσει στα έργα. Πρώτον, άμεση διακοπή των ενταξιακών διαπραγματεύσεων. Δεύτερον, άμεση διακοπή χρηματοδότησης της Τουρκίας. Τρίτον, επιβολή οικονομικών και πολιτικών κυρώσεων κατά της Τουρκίας. Τέταρτον, εμπάργκο στις εξαγωγές τουρκικών αγροτικών προϊόντων στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Πέμπτο, πάγωμα περιουσιακών στοιχείων της τουρκικής κυβερνητικής ελίτ που βαρύνεται με παραβιάσεις δικαιωμάτων. Έκτο, απαγόρευση εισόδου στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση τούρκων αξιωματούχων που βαρύνονται επίσης. Συγκεκριμένα μέτρα εδώ και τώρα κύριε Hahn. Τέρμα τα λόγια και τα χαιδέματα στην Τουρκία.

Eugen Freund (S&D). – Frau Präsidentin! Es geht immer weiter in der Türkei, Herr Kommissar; jetzt werden Vertreter der Ärzteschaft eingekerkert, nur weil sie auf die Zahl der zivilen Opfer in den syrischen Kurdengebieten hingewiesen haben, und, wie wir gehört haben, auch ein Österreicher ist jetzt wieder festgenommen worden.

Als langjähriger Journalist bin ich besonders bestürzt, dass 148 Journalisten, Verleger und Autoren im Gefängnis sitzen. Sie haben nie eine Anklageschrift gesehen – wahrscheinlich wohl, weil sich die Regierung schwertut, so eine zu formulieren. Die jüngsten Vorgänge in der Stadt Afrin zeigen auch, dass sich die Türkei über internationale, anerkannte Grenzen im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes hinwegsetzt.

Sicher ist: Nur ein Teil der türkischen Bevölkerung trägt diesen Kurs mit. Daher ist für mich ganz klar: Wir müssen den progressiven Kräften des Landes klarmachen, dass wir auf ihrer Seite stehen, andererseits aber auch ganz deutlich Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Verlässlichkeit von türkischer Seite einfordern.

PRESIDENZA DELL'ON. DAVID-MARIA SASSOLI

Vicepresidente

Arne Gericke (ECR). – Herr Präsident, verehrte Kommission! Kennen Sie das Bild der drei Affen, die nichts hören, nichts sehen, nichts sagen? Offen gesprochen: So kommt mir die Rolle der EU und meiner deutschen Regierung vor, wenn es um Menschenrechte und das Verhalten des türkischen Machthabers Erdoğan in Nordsyrien geht. Wie lange wollen wir uns noch dumm stellen? Über 100 Journalisten wurden seit 2016 inhaftiert, und wir sehen nichts. Erdoğan stürmt ohne Mandat völkerrechtswidrig Nordsyrien, bekämpft die kurdisch-christlichen YPG-Truppen – unseren verlässlichsten Partner im Kampf gegen den IS –, und wir sagen nichts. Seine Truppen schießen mit deutschen Waffen an der Grenze auf Flüchtlinge, auf 3000 Jahre alte christliche Stätten, und wir? Nichts gehört. Er inhaftiert türkische Ärzte, die für Frieden demonstrieren, und, und, und.

Wir verhandeln freundlich weiter über einen Beitritt zur EU, bezahlen Milliarden für einige Tausend ausgetauschter Flüchtlinge. Wem wollen Sie das erklären, wenn Sie gleichzeitig Israel labeln und für Verhalten in Demokratie und Rechtsstaatlichkeit fälschlicherweise zur Verantwortung ziehen? Seien wir endlich ehrlich! Stoppen wir jede Zahlung an Erdoğan! Stoppen wir alle Verhandlungen mit der Türkei und rügen wir das völkerrechtswidrige Verhalten in Nordsyrien! Stehen wir zu unseren Werten!

Ana Gomes (S&D). – O regime de Erdogan está a violar todos os critérios de Copenhaga, assim como todas as obrigações da Turquia como membro do Conselho da Europa: milhares de presos políticos, incluindo centenas de jornalistas, *media* encerrados, perseguição de ativistas de direitos humanos, sistema de justiça instrumentalizado para a repressão, medo e perseguição instalados na sociedade turca e fora de portas.

Este desastre não pode desligar-se da agressão turca em curso na Síria com o bombardeamento de civis e contra as forças curdas que corajosamente combateram o Daesh e a Al-Qaeda que o regime de Erdogan, duplamente, ajudou a infiltrar na Síria e no Iraque.

Afrine não é um caso de legítima defesa, é uma agressão que envolve crimes de guerra contra civis. Além do desastre humanitário, provoca uma perigosa escalada militar, como se viu no ataque ao avião russo, e há tensões irreparáveis no seio da própria NATO.

A União Europeia tem de condenar a Turquia, tem que exigir que o Conselho de Segurança da ONU trave esta agressão que compromete as negociações para uma solução política na Síria e afeta a segurança regional, incluindo de segurança da própria União Europeia.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, a un anno e mezzo dal tentato golpe, siamo ancora a denunciare la morsa di Erdogan sulle libertà fondamentali dei propri cittadini, dentro e fuori il territorio nazionale.

Al tempo stesso, la nuova offensiva lanciata ad Afrin contro le milizie curde, parte della coalizione internazionale contro Daesh, preoccupa non solo per ragioni umanitarie. Ufficialmente, l'attacco è stato sferrato contro la minaccia terroristica. La Turchia ha diritto a difendere la propria sicurezza, ma qui si tratta di una reazione sproporzionata per colpire invece una minoranza scomoda. Non sembra siano valutate neanche le ripercussioni internazionali derivanti dalla rottura del fronte anti ISIS, un rischio di destabilizzazione dai potenziali effetti devastanti.

La Turchia è un partner strategico per l'Europa. Ciononostante, dobbiamo continuare a condannare le azioni del suo governo e rimanere fermi nelle conseguenze nelle relazioni con l'UE. Come chiesto dal Parlamento, i negoziati d'adesione vanno sospesi e poi formalmente interrotti, anche nella cooperazione economica e finanziaria, se Erdogan proseguirà a distruggere lo Stato di diritto. L'Europa deve far valere il suo peso.

Liliana Rodrigues (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, Senhor Comissário, a repressão na Turquia começou muito antes da tentativa de golpe de Estado de 2016 que tem servido para calar as vozes dissidentes.

Esta situação tende a agravar-se com a detenção de mais de cinco centenas de cidadãos e de todos aqueles que se opõem ao ataque em Afrine. Os mortos de Afrine valem quanto no acordo que fizemos com a Turquia?

A Turquia tem o direito proteger as suas fronteiras, mas não tem o direito de entrar num país, neste caso, a Síria, e decidir quem fica e quem sai. Para já, temos cerca de 70 civis mortos. Os alvos têm sido as milícias curdas. Não é de mais relembrar que são estes mesmos curdos que o Ocidente armou. São estes curdos, homens e mulheres corajosos, que foram eficazes na luta contra o autoproclamado Estado islâmico.

O legítimo direito à segurança da Turquia não pode ser feito à custa da liberdade de existir, nem sacrificando o Estado de direito. Não é terrorista quem pensa de maneira diferente, não é terrorista quem é diferente. É terrorista quem mata por ódio.

Wajid Khan (S&D). – Mr President, since mid-December, the fighting in northern Syria – both with airstrikes and ground operations – has forced thousands of people to flee. According to Human Rights Watch, refugees who succeeded in reaching Turkey have reported that Turkish guards shot at them whilst they were attempting to cross the border. In some cases, Syrian asylum seekers were denied medical assistance and forced to go back.

As the military operations in Idlib and Afrin continue, the number of people in need of protection is only likely to increase. Turkey launched a heavy offensive in the Kurdish area, unilaterally and unprovoked. It must take responsibility and bear the consequences. This means respecting the principle of non-refoulement and keeping its borders open to refugees. Turkey must meet its human rights obligations and guarantee humanitarian assistance to all. We should not accept any deviation from that.

Procedura «catch-the-eye»

Λευτέρης Χριστοφόρου (PPE). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η Τουρκία φροντίζει καθημερινά να επιβεβαιώνει τον εαυτό της. Η Τουρκία αποδεικνύει ότι ήταν, είναι και παραμένει μία χώρα η οποία εφαρμόζει τη στρατηγική «εισβάλλω και κατέχω ξένα εδάφη». Αυτή είναι η Τουρκία που εισβάλλει σήμερα στην Αφρίν της Συρίας. Αυτή είναι η Τουρκία που εισέβαλε πριν από 43 χρόνια στην Κύπρο και παραμένει σε χώρα μέλος της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης, παραβιάζοντας κάθε αρχή διεθνούς και ευρωπαϊκού δικαίου. Αυτή είναι η Τουρκία που, σήμερα, τώρα που μιλάμε, προσπαθεί και παραβιάζει την ΑΟΖ της Κυπριακής Δημοκρατίας, σε μια προσπάθεια να παρεμποδίσει την ανεύρεση φυσικών πόρων που θα χρησιμοποιηθούν για την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση. Η Τουρκία είναι αυτή που παρεμποδίζει μέχρι σήμερα τις έρευνες για τους αγνοούμενους. Το ίδιο έγινε και με τις φρικαλεότητες της όσον αφορά τους Ασιαώτες αγνοούμενους και τα οστά που ευρέθηκαν στο Ορνίθι, εκεί όπου τα μετακίνησε για να μην βρεθούν από τους συγγενείς τους. Αυτή είναι η Τουρκία, η οποία θα συνεχίσει να δημιουργεί και να προκαλεί προβλήματα.

Κύριε Επίτροπε, πρέπει επιτέλους να πούμε στην Τουρκία: φτάνει πια, ως εδώ και μη παρέκει! Δεν μπορεί να συνεχίζει να προκαλεί, ιδιαίτερα τις αρχές και τις αξίες της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Πρέπει, επιτέλους, να ληφθούν μέτρα και να επιβληθούν κυρώσεις ενάντια στην Τουρκία, διαφορετικά θα συνεχίσει με αυτόν τον προκλητικό, επεκτατικό και απαράδεκτο τρόπο συμπεριφοράς και πολιτικής.

Γεώργιος Επιτήδειος (NI). – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η κυρία Mogherini μας είπε πριν από λίγο ότι η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση είναι ειλικρινής απέναντι στην Τουρκία. Όμως, και η Τουρκία είναι ειλικρινής απέναντι στην Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση: ανέκαθεν την αντιμετώπιζε ως υποτελή. Απειλεί, εκβιάζει για να πάρει περισσότερες παροχές, αδιαφορεί για τις ευαισθησίες της και συνεχώς απειλεί. Απειλεί να πάρει περισσότερα χρήματα. Απειλεί την Ελλάδα και την Κύπρο με πόλεμο. Απειλεί την Ελλάδα προκειμένου να εκβιάσει την παραχώρηση δεκαοχτώ ελληνικών νησιών. Δεν αναγνωρίζει την Κυπριακή Δημοκρατία. Παραβιάζει τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα, παραβιάζει το διεθνές δίκαιο, και όλα αυτά συμβαίνουν υπό τα απαθή βλέμματα ή, στην καλύτερη περίπτωση, υπό τα κλαψουρισμάτα της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης. Τώρα η Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση ανησυχεί για την εισβολή της Τουρκίας στην περιοχή Αφρίν. Όμως, έχει καταδικάσει η Ένωση την εισβολή της Τουρκίας, το 1974, στην Κύπρο; Έχει απαιτήσει να φύγουν τα στρατεύματα από τα κατεχόμενα εδάφη; Έχει απειλήσει, έχει καταστήσει σαφές στην Τουρκία ότι έχει κλείσει η πόρτα της

Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης οριστικά για το -ούτως ή άλλως- ασιατικό αυτό κράτος που δεν έχει καμία σχέση με τις αρχές και τις αξίες της Ευρώπης;

Julie Ward (S&D). – Mr President, over the past year the Turkish Government has been organising a very worrying crackdown against members of the political opposition and representatives of civil society. Last week, we received the welcome news that Taner Kilic, Chair of Amnesty International, was released. However, the broader human rights and democracy situation generally continues to deteriorate, and there are still many political prisoners in Turkey. So I ask the High Representative and the EU Member States to step up their diplomatic efforts to end the crackdown against civil society in Turkey and push for the release of all political prisoners.

As part of a project launched by the Committee to Protect Journalists and Human Rights Watch, I have been twinned with a Kurdish artist and journalist best known for being the editor of JINHA, a feminist Kurdish agency with a staff consisting entirely of women. In 2016, Turkish authorities prosecuted her with charges of terrorism for her journalistic activities, and after her release she was prosecuted again and jailed for posting a painting on social media depicting Turkish tanks as animals. I deplore the Turkish attacks on Afrin: this region has been a beacon of hope amidst the general despair, with the Kurdish people establishing new models of inclusive democracy that champion gender equality and pluralism as well as respect for the environment. We must do something.

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, o Nobel da Literatura Orhan Pamuk defendeu que as fronteiras da Europa não deveriam ser definidas com base em critérios geográficos e históricos, mas sim pela partilha de um conjunto de valores. Infelizmente, em vez do respeito pela democracia e pelo primado do Estado de direito defendidos por uma grande parte da sociedade civil turca, verificamos que o país de Erdogan está hoje no topo das violações dos direitos humanos na Europa.

O regime do Presidente Erdogan, a pretexto de um estado de emergência sucessiva e inconstitucionalmente renovado, continua a sua purga, despedindo milhares de funcionários públicos, prendendo jornalistas e estudantes e perseguindo ferozmente os ativistas de direitos humanos e das organizações LGBTI.

Senhor Comissário, os cidadãos europeus já perderam a paciência com a hipocrisia, as constantes violações dos direitos humanos por parte do Sr. Erdogan, e a invasão de Afrine, no final de janeiro, foi a gota de água que fez transbordar o balde da paciência para com o Sr. Erdogan.

Caros colegas, as constantes campanhas de terror contra o bravo povo curdo, a quem nós, europeus, muito devemos, a intolerância, o autoritarismo e o sectarismo não são compatíveis com os critérios de Copenhaga e inviabilizam definitivamente as negociações para uma adesão plena da Turquia à União Europeia.

Caros colegas, há que dizer uma vez por todas ao Sr. Erdogan: Basta!

(Fine della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Johannes Hahn, Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President, thank you for this important debate, which I believe creates the necessary international attention, and which, unfortunately, confirms once again that we are all equally fearful and concerned about the developments in Turkey and its neighbourhood. It is not the first time that we have discussed this issue, and I fear that it will not be the last time, but it will not be helpful to show disagreement, which I personally share, with a sign that is most likely within the legal framework but which is unnecessarily provocative.

As Federica Mogherini and I stated last week, we keep seeing more worrying developments undermining the rule of law and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Turkey. We are following the case of Amnesty International's Taner Kılıç very closely. In particular, the non-implementation of judgments – including the recent constitutional court ruling and continued detention of two journalists – could really undermine the judiciary. In the short term, this affects the cases of individuals, including EU citizens. In the longer term, this could significantly erode trust in the judiciary as a whole, which also affects issues like Turkey's business climate. We must seek concrete and lasting improvements in the area of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. This is an essential footing for EU-Turkey relations.

Many of you here today also alluded to the situation in the south-east of Turkey, which remains of great concern. It is essential that a political process start again as there can only be a political solution to the Kurdish issue. Nevertheless, like some other speakers, I believe it is necessary to keep our channels of communication open. This includes raising our voice regarding the current worrying situation. It is clear: Turkey needs to respect the values on which our Union is based as per its own commitments as a candidate country and through international treaties. For the benefit of their people, the Turkish authorities should take clear steps to urgently improve the human rights situation there and restore the rule of law.

Presidente. – Comunico di aver ricevuto otto proposte di risoluzione conformemente all'articolo 123, paragrafo 2, del regolamento.

La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà giovedì 8 febbraio 2018.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Ignazio Corrao (EFDD), per iscritto. – La profonda erosione dello stato di diritto in Turchia sta raggiungendo livelli davvero vergognosi, in quello che è ormai un paese completamente fuori controllo. Il fatto che il governo turco abbia prolungato per la sesta volta lo stato di emergenza è un chiaro segnale dell'intenzione di Erdogan di perpetuare questo sistema fino alle prossime elezioni di novembre 2019. Tale contesto, o forse pretesto, viene palesamente strumentalizzato dal governo per continuare a mantenere sospese le garanzie costituzionali del popolo turco. Tuttavia l'elemento che ritengo più preoccupante non è solo l'agire del governo, quanto il deterioramento del sistema giudiziario, essendo questo il garante ultimo dello stato di diritto. Coloro i quali dovrebbero limitare gli abusi del governo o sono loro stessi limitati e minacciati o, ancor peggio, vengono sostituiti da altri oppressori. Chi difende i difensori quindi? Ritengo che questo rapporto malsano con uno dei peggiori paesi d'Europa in quanto a violazioni dei diritti umani e civili debba essere urgentemente rinegoziato. Il finanziamento miliardario e le agevolazioni a un paese che sistematicamente viola quasi tutti i nostri principi di democrazia e diritti umani non è assolutamente giustificabile solo sulla base del tamponamento della crisi migratoria.

Marita Ulvskog (S&D), skriftlig. – Situationen för de mänskliga rättigheterna i Turkiet är oerhört allvarlig. Vi får rapportering om fall efter fall av kränkningar av grundläggande rättigheter. Det handlar om människorättsaktivister, journalister, akademiker och oppositionella. Det handlar om dem som inte tycker som Erdoğan. Det handlar också om dem som protesterar mot Turkiets offensiv mot befolkningen i det kurdkontrollerade Afrin.

Vad som sker i Afrin är djupt oroande. Turkiets offensiv mot den kurdiska befolkningen i Afrin är ett brott mot folkrätten. Den underminerar arbetet för fred, demokrati och mänskliga rättigheter. Offensiven måste få ett omedelbart slut. Lösningen på kriget i Syrien kan endast nås vid förhandlingsbordet, och vi måste komma ihåg att kurderarna har varit en viktig allierad i kampen mot terroristerna i Daesh.

EU får inte vända bort blicken från vad som händer i Turkiet och vad som sker i Afrin. Vi måste öka de politiska ansträngningarna för fred och mot eskalering. Jag vill uppmana utrikesrepresentant Mogherini att lägga största vikt vid läget för de mänskliga rättigheterna i Turkiet. Jag vill också uppmana Mogherini att höra vår djupa oro för befolkningen i Afrin, och arbeta för ett omedelbart slut på Turkiets destabiliserande offensiv.

Kathleen Van Brempt (S&D), schriftelijk. – Nu Da'esh bijna verdreven is uit Syrië, bevinden we ons op een cruciaal moment voor vrede en heropbouw in het land. Alle energie van de internationale belanghebbenden moet nu gaan naar het vredesproces van Genève, en niet naar het voeren van oorlogen die dit proces ondermijnen. Ik juich de verklaring van de hoge vertegenwoordiger tegen de Turkse aanval op Afrin dan ook toe.

Onze acties mogen echter niet beperkt blijven tot een sterk statement hier en daar. Ik roep de hoge vertegenwoordiger en de lidstaten op om een actievere rol als bemiddelaar in het conflict op te nemen. De EU investeert miljoenen euro's in humanitaire hulp en de opvang van vluchtelingen in de regio. Maar wat voor zin heeft dat zolang de aanvallen blijven voortduren? Alles wat heropgebouwd wordt, wordt weer vernietigd en miljoenen vluchtelingen en ontheemden blijven vastzitten in precarie situaties. Verschillende burgers schreven mij aan met hun bezorgdheden. Zij vrezen voor een nieuwe, langdurige escalatie van het geweld en voor de toekomst van de Syrische Koerden en de democratie. Hun ogen zijn op de EU gericht. Laten we die handschoenen opnemen en alle noodzakelijke diplomatieke middelen inzetten om een robuust en inclusief vredesakkoord te bereiken.

Ελισσάβετ Βόζεμπεργκ-Βρυονίδη (PPE), γραπτώς. – Το καθεστώς Ερντογάν, με πρόσχημα την αποτυχημένη απόπειρα πραξικοπήματος τον Ιούλιο του 2016, προσπαθεί να «νομιμοποιήσει» κάθε έννοια κατάλυσης του κράτους δικαίου στο εσωτερικό της χώρας. Οι εγγυήσεις ανεξαρτησίας της δικαιοσύνης έχουν υπονομευθεί σοβαρά, ενώ αυξάνεται η λογοκρισία και οι συλλήψεις δημοσιογράφων. Διεθνείς οργανισμοί κρούουν τον κώδωνα του κινδύνου, υπογραμμίζοντας ότι με βάση πρόσφατα νομοθετικά διατάγματα έχουν χορηγηθεί στις τουρκικές διοικητικές αρχές και την εκτελεστική εξουσία σχεδόν απεριόριστες εξουσίες, κατά παρέκκλιση των γενικών αρχών του κράτους δικαίου και των απόλυτων εγγυήσεων των ανθρωπίνων δικαιωμάτων, που εφαρμόζονται σε κάθε δημοκρατική κοινωνία. Παρόλο που η Τουρκία φιλοξενεί στα εδάφη της πάνω δύο εκατομμύρια πρόσφυγες, λαμβάνοντας γι' αυτό γενναιόδωρη χρηματοδότηση από την ΕΕ, τους χορηγεί μαζικά καθεστώς προσωρινής προστασίας, το οποίο δεν αναγνωρίζει στους δικαιούχους τα δικαιώματα και τα ευεργετήματα από τη Σύμβαση της Γενεύης. Παράλληλα, η Τουρκία συνεχίζει να απειλεί ευθέως και κατ' εξακολούθηση τα κυριαρχικά δικαιώματα δύο κρατών μελών της ΕΕ, της Ελλάδας και της Κύπρου, περιφρονώντας προκλητικά το διεθνές δίκαιο. Η Ευρώπη πρέπει να σκληρύνει τη στάση της και να ασκήσει πιέσεις στον Ερντογάν, προκειμένου να επιστρέψει στη νομιμότητα, στον σεβασμό του κράτους δικαίου και των θεμελιωδών δικαιωμάτων, που αποτελούν αναντίρρητα την ουσία της δημοκρατίας αλλά και θεμέλιο λίθο της ΕΕ.

16. Situatie in Venezuela (debat)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sulla dichiarazione del Vicepresidente della Commissione/Alto rappresentante dell'Unione per gli affari esteri e la politica di sicurezza sulla situazione in Venezuela (2018/2559(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.* – Mr President, let me start by saying that what we see in Venezuela is obviously, first and foremost, a political crisis, but it is also an economic, social and refugee crisis, with serious repercussions on neighbouring countries, starting with Colombia and Brazil.

Everything we are doing as the European Union aims at a peaceful and democratic solution to all these different layers of the crisis, through credible and serious negotiations. As we speak, other efforts are ongoing to resume negotiations, and we can just hope that, this time, we will see some credibility and some concrete steps and openness in place. That has not been the case so far but it is never too late.

When we last discussed Venezuela in this plenary, last September, we indicated four main areas where steps needed to be taken: an agreed calendar and conditions for credible elections; the facilitation of an emergency access plan for external assistance; the liberation of political prisoners; and respect for democratically elected institutions, notably the National Assembly. Unfortunately, progress was not made on any of these points.

Throughout this period we have repeatedly engaged, all together as the European Union and together with our Member States, in a well-coordinated approach. In several meetings with our Venezuelan interlocutors we have discussed the need to respect democratic principles, democratic institutions, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We have called for serious engagement and flexibility in the ongoing negotiations to achieve a political agreement as a matter of urgency. Again, let me stress that talks are restarting, hopefully within hours.

It was with a heavy heart that Member States decided to adopt targeted restrictive measures, in the absence of concrete results and in view of the constant deterioration of the situation. It is the first time that we have imposed measures of this kind in a Latin American context, and the decision was not taken lightly, as you can imagine. On 13 November, the Council adopted together targeted, gradual and reversible restrictive measures. These comprised a ban on the export of arms and equipment for internal repression, and a framework decision for a travel ban and assets freeze. Two months later, the Council recognised the lack of progress in the national dialogue and the worrying deterioration of the political and social situation in the country. As a consequence, the Council adopted a list of seven individuals subject to these measures. These targeted restrictive measures do not harm the people of Venezuela, but are directed at seven individuals who are responsible for undermining democratic principles and the rule of law and for human rights violations. Our measures are a signal to the authorities of Venezuela, an invitation to engage seriously towards a negotiated solution to the crisis and to reverse the moves that have called into question Venezuela's constitutional order.

We continue to monitor events on the ground and we stand ready to take appropriate measures in one way or another if the situation in the country evolves, with the constant aim of supporting democratic and negotiated solutions.

The recent decision of the Government of Venezuela to declare the Spanish Ambassador persona non grata is wrong and unacceptable, first and foremost because closing diplomatic channels does not help at a time when it is more important than ever to keep them open and seek a solution. We expect the Government of Venezuela to show genuine engagement in the negotiations and openness to compromise. We also hope that the opposition can work in a united and constructive manner. This is what the country needs in order to address the current challenges. Both parties should agree on a mutually acceptable date for the presidential elections. Unilateral decisions will only create more polarisation and new obstacles to a peaceful solution.

It is also essential to set up guarantees to ensure free, transparent and credible elections. No artificial conditions should be imposed to limit the participation of political parties. The Supreme Court has decided to block the participation of Mesa de la Unidad Democrática in the elections, and clearly this goes against the goal of free, fair and inclusive elections.

The people's trust in elections can be regained only through a credible electoral process, with the lifting of bans on political opponents, with independent international observers and a balanced composition of the National Electoral Council. The future of Venezuela should be determined by its people. This is what we are asking of the Venezuelan authorities and all national political forces: the future of Venezuela should be determined by its people.

We do not take sides in Venezuela's domestic debate but we do ask for this debate to be democratic and inclusive, in line with the Constitution of the country. We see that the people of Venezuela are suffering, including the many European Union citizens who are also Venezuelan citizens. We have a stake in this. Everything we do is to encourage and support the country to come out of this political, economic and social crisis.

We are also concerned about the progressive deterioration of the social situation. The reports we are receiving from the United Nations agencies are extremely worrying. More than one million people are currently food insecure and the percentage of children affected by global acute malnutrition has reached emergency levels. The lack of medicines is estimated at around 90% by the National Chamber of Pharmacists. Diseases such as malaria and diphtheria that had disappeared are now spreading across the country. And there are no signs of recovery from the economic crisis. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 1.5 million Venezuelans have already left the country.

I want to reiterate that the repercussions in the region – on the fragile process in Colombia, on Brazil, on the regional organisations that are trying to move forward the regional integration process of Latin America and the Caribbean – are particularly worrying. The European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (DG ECHO) is present in Bogotá and deploys regular missions to Venezuela and bordering regions to evaluate the humanitarian situation, including the humanitarian conditions of the numerous Venezuelans who are fleeing the country to neighbouring countries. We are exploring all possibilities to develop our support, together with Member States and also with other donors and partner agencies. Let me stress once again that we will adapt our policies to any change in the situation in Venezuela, in one sense or the other.

We need to see progress in the negotiations. I believe progress is still possible. It is a matter of political will. It is in the hands of the parties. As I mentioned, the Government has a clear responsibility to show flexibility and to engage seriously in these negotiations, and we hope to see real, concrete, encouraging steps.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, *en nombre del Grupo PPE*. – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, señorías, el Parlamento Europeo tiene que alzar nuevamente su voz para denunciar un nuevo intento de usurpación de la soberanía nacional por la convocatoria de unas elecciones que no reúnen los más mínimos estándares democráticos y que no harán otra cosa más que agravar la ya dramática situación política, económica, humanitaria y de derechos humanos que se está viviendo en Venezuela.

Ayer el Foro Penal Venezolano denunció detenciones masivas la semana pasada, entre otras la del respetado y prestigioso político Enrique Aristeguieta, de 84 años. Y ayer cuatro periodistas tuvieron que abandonar nuevamente el país.

Me parece que el comentario que ha hecho el secretario de Estado de los Estados Unidos en su gira por América Latina es una reflexión absolutamente pertinente: ¿puede el mundo permanecer de brazos cruzados mientras se destruye la democracia en Venezuela?

Es evidente que las sanciones adoptadas por la Unión Europea han hecho mella en el Gobierno. La declaración de *persona non grata* y la expulsión del embajador de España exigen, señora alta representante, más allá de la solidaridad y simpatías —que son bienvenidas—, una reacción contundente por parte de la Unión Europea. Porque un ataque a un Estado miembro es un ataque al conjunto de la Unión.

El Parlamento Europeo, en la Resolución que va a votar el próximo jueves, va a pedir la ampliación de la lista de personas sancionadas para incluir a los máximos responsables por graves violaciones de los derechos humanos. Pero más allá de las sanciones, señora alta representante, es importante que la Unión Europea se movilice con la comunidad internacional, con el Grupo de Lima y con los actores regionales para, como usted decía, perseguir que el pueblo venezolano vuelva a tomar la palabra a través de un proceso creíble, un proceso inclusivo, un proceso sin trampas, sin inhabilitaciones, con todos los partidos políticos y con la comunidad internacional.

Sin estas premisas, la Unión Europea no puede dar ni credibilidad ni legitimidad a estos comicios y debe expresar su solidaridad con aquellas personas que se están jugando todos los días la vida por la causa de la libertad.

Ramón Jáuregui Atondo, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señor presidente, yo creo que el Parlamento Europeo ha dicho ya muchas veces, y yo lo voy a decir otra vez, que el Gobierno de Maduro, el Gobierno de Venezuela, está violentando gravemente los derechos humanos y no cumple las reglas de un Estado de Derecho, de una democracia. Esto lo sabemos, y desgraciadamente hay demasiados ejemplos y pruebas de lo que acabo de decir. Este Parlamento lo ha dicho muchas veces y yo vuelvo a repetirlo.

Segunda convicción que quiero transmitirles, señorías. La llamada revolución chavista y la revolución de Maduro han fracasado, hasta el punto de que la mitad de la población está viviendo en una crisis humanitaria gravísima. Lo que más lamento es que esa llamada revolución se llame socialista, porque ni es revolución, ni es socialista. Para mí, socialismo es libertad. Es igualdad, pero también es libertad.

Y tercera convicción que quiero trasladarles. Más allá de las condenas, más allá de las sanciones, señorías, mi convicción y la de mi Grupo es que solo un diálogo serio, un acuerdo nacional entre Gobierno y oposición dará salida democrática y pacífica a la crisis democrática de Venezuela. Y creo que es importante reivindicar, como bien ha dicho la señora Mogherini, que hay que darle la voz al pueblo —con garantías, por supuesto, con transparencia, con igualdad, pero hay que darle la voz al pueblo—. Y un acuerdo que se está logrando en estas mismas horas sobre esas elecciones puede ser definitivo.

Esperemos a ese acuerdo para hacer una Resolución congruente con el tiempo y con la posición europea en esta materia.

Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, *w imieniu grupy ECR*. – Lata marksistowskich rządów w Wenezueli doprowadziły do ruiny tego pięknego kraju, zniszczyły również jego tkankę społeczną, spowodowały kryzys humanitarny w regionie. Kościół katolicki stara się odwrócić negatywne skutki tych procesów, zachęcając do przejmowania odpowiedzialności za wspólnotę. Te działania powodują fale represji aż nazbyt dobrze znanych w historii mojego kraju.

Apeluję do wysokiej przedstawiciel o zwrócenie uwagi również na ten aspekt zagrożenia praw człowieka w Wenezueli.

Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, *en nombre del Grupo ALDE*. – Señor presidente, señora Mogherini, mientras hablamos en esta Cámara, Venezuela se desangra, víctima de una tiranía corrupta e incompetente. Mientras debatimos, los venezolanos no tienen comida, ni medicinas, ni libertad. No tienen futuro y nuestra obligación es, precisamente, ayudarles a que lo recuperen. Ellos, el pueblo venezolano.

La última vez que en Venezuela hubo unas elecciones con un mínimo de garantías la oposición ganó por goleada. Desde entonces, Maduro ha manipulado, reprimido e ignorado la Constitución. Quien lo desafía acaba inhabilitado, exiliado, preso o asesinado. Porque no le interesa nada más que el poder.

Por eso, Europa no puede reconocer unas elecciones fraudulentas cuyo objetivo es convertir a Venezuela en una dictadura de partido único, como en Cuba. No podemos reconocerlas cuando el régimen ha inhabilitado a casi todos los líderes opositores y a su principal alianza, cuando están controlados por un órgano electoral que es el brazo ejecutor del régimen, un régimen que acaba de ejecutar también a Óscar Pérez, como asesinó a muchos venezolanos que salieron a la calle en defensa de su dignidad.

Esta convocatoria de elecciones presidenciales es una nueva burla al proceso de diálogo que está teniendo lugar en la República Dominicana, un proceso que vuelve a ser instrumentalizado por Maduro para servir a su único interés: perpetuarse en el poder y conservar su red corrupta y la de su entorno mientras el pueblo sufre las consecuencias de su modelo fracasado. Si el régimen creyera en el diálogo, permitiría que los venezolanos se expresaran en unas elecciones de verdad: creíbles, transparentes, libres, inclusivas, con estándares internacionales y con observadores independientes que pudieran garantizar que son unas elecciones de verdad.

Yo sé que al presidente Nicolás Maduro le interesa lo que debatimos en este Parlamento. Por eso, le digo: para que el pueblo de Venezuela decida su futuro, libere a los presos políticos, abra un canal humanitario, respete la Constitución y convoque unas elecciones de verdad. Porque entonces comprobará que los venezolanos no están dispuestos a seguir soportando su incompetencia y su tiranía.

Javier Couso Permuy, *en nombre del Grupo GUE/NGL*. – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, miren, cuando la Unión Europea hace caso de los extremistas, de la confrontación, le va muy mal. Tenemos el caso de Cuba: los mismos que impulsan esa confrontación son los que apoyaban la Posición Común. Ahora tenemos una normalización de relaciones —usted estuvo hace poco en Cuba— y un diálogo sin cortapisas.

Las sanciones unilaterales fueron una mala noticia, y no haga trampa, señora alta representante, porque fueron unilaterales y de parte. Y de una parte de esa parte de la oposición, valga la redundancia. Además, fue un sabotaje directo a las conversaciones que se producen entre Gobierno y oposición desde hace cinco meses (desde diciembre de 2011 en la República Dominicana), con su presidente implicado y con un expresidente europeo, que es el señor Rodríguez Zapatero, al que ustedes deberían haber nombrado «enviado especial para la paz».

Es curioso, esos extremistas que hablan de toda Venezuela pero no reconocen al otro, porque, según el CNE, el PSV es el primer partido; ese CNE que le dio su representación al señor Borges, al cual se le premió aquí. Solo vale cuando ganan los suyos. Algunos lo deben de pasar mal intentando acabar con un gobierno democrático. Se creen que todavía hay colonias, pero no hay colonias, porque por una parte de ese pueblo venezolano todavía hay sangre de libertadores y no van a aceptar imposiciones de ustedes.

¡Respeto a la soberanía de un país y un gobierno democrático, y acompañamiento del diálogo!

Ernest Urtasun, *en nombre del Grupo Verts/ALE*. – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, yo creo que todos tenemos interés en que el diálogo encuentre su camino en Venezuela. Desde este punto de vista, estamos a la expectativa de lo que pueda pasar —como usted ha dicho— en las próximas horas en la República Dominicana, donde esperamos que haya buenas noticias. Y yo quiero a apremiar a la alta representante y al Servicio Europeo de Acción Exterior a apoyar ese proceso, lo que, evidentemente, sería lo más positivo que podemos hacer en este momento.

Y desde ese punto de vista, encuentro dificultades para entender por qué en medio de este escenario se pretende aprobar una Resolución que ni tan siquiera va a mencionar en su articulado ese diálogo que está produciéndose; en cambio, estamos hablando todo el rato de imponer más sanciones, de no reconocer en ningún caso las elecciones, etcétera, etcétera. No entiendo esa Resolución en ese contexto y, por lo tanto, va a ser muy difícil para mi Grupo poder suscribirla.

Lo que yo creo es que a Venezuela la Unión Europea debe darle una perspectiva, y la única perspectiva es la del acuerdo entre Gobierno y oposición y la del diálogo. Y eso es lo que este Parlamento debería hacer apoyando la labor del grupo de la República Dominicana y de la alta representante.

Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, *au nom du groupe ENF*. – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, Madame la Haute représentante, la question ici n'est pas de juger la politique intérieure du Venezuela. Chacun d'entre nous l'appréciera selon sa sensibilité politique.

Disons pourtant la vérité. Ce pays fait face à l'impérialisme des États-Unis depuis le 19^e siècle, et particulièrement depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir d'Hugo Chavez, en raison de ses ressources pétrolières. Cet impérialisme est réel, contrairement à celui dont vous accusez – dont nous accusons – la Russie.

Notre Parlement a approuvé les sanctions contre la Russie pour – je cite – déstabilisation de l'Ukraine. Où sont les sanctions contre ceux qui déstabilisent le Venezuela? Les méthodes de déstabilisation sont les mêmes que celles utilisées en Ukraine et ailleurs: grèves insurrectionnelles, campagnes de dénigrement médiatique interne et externe et, pour couronner le tout, une tentative de coup d'État.

Le droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes nous commande de ne jamais confondre État et gouvernement. Je le répète, quelles que soient nos opinions sur le gouvernement du Président Maduro, l'ingérence extérieure ne se justifie pas.

Luis de Grandes Pascual (PPE). – Señor presidente, seamos sinceros. Tristemente en Venezuela no hay esperanza de que algo cambie. La actual Venezuela sufre una dictadura pura y dura, y cualquier esfuerzo bienintencionado será estéril. Se ha dicho aquí y es posible que sea verdad. En estos momentos, es posible que Maduro alcance sus objetivos y logre que la oposición se divida y claudique. Ese momento, con estas condiciones, será el principio del fin.

Recientemente han expulsado al embajador de España porque no quieren testigos molestos de las actividades de un régimen que tiene encarcelados a los adversarios políticos, que es responsable de una crisis humanitaria terrible, que además utilizan para parecer un Estado compasivo que aporta pequeños paliativos públicos para cuidar a sus ciudadanos de una indigencia de la que es responsable. Son viejas recetas cubanas, mediante las que inculcan la idea de que fuera del régimen no hay salida.

La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, a todas luces ilegítima, convoca elecciones con previas maniobras fraudulentas para amañar el resultado.

El Consejo Nacional Electoral, órgano sectario y sin credibilidad alguna, ilegaliza a los partidos de la oposición, invocando supuestas trasgresiones de normas que son inaceptables por injustas y aberrantes.

¿Hasta cuándo, señorías, el sátrapa Maduro abusará de la paciencia del mundo democrático?

Señorías, ya no valen medias palabras, no hay sitio para la ingenuidad, no se puede colaborar con un dictador porque seríamos cómplices. Pero sí es lícito y hasta obligado sancionar la conducta de unos dirigentes políticos que no respetan los derechos humanos, que oprimen a su pueblo, y que no tienen pudor en enriquecerse a su costa, sojuzgándolo y empobreciéndolo, hasta cotas inaceptables.

El Parlamento Europeo no puede permanecer impasible. Podemos y debemos condenar públicamente y de forma contundente una deriva totalitaria que está produciendo creciente tensión en las fronteras con sus vecinos y constituye un factor de inestabilidad regional.

El Grupo de Lima está marcando pautas sobre las medidas que se deben adoptar. La OEA está hablando fuerte y claro, sin tapujos, y nosotros, señorías, tenemos una obligación inexcusable de denunciar y condenar los desmanes de Maduro y su régimen.

Elena Valenciano (S&D). – Señor presidente, yo comprendo y comparto la exasperación de muchos demócratas ante esta especie de tapón a la democracia venezolana que representa Maduro. Es desesperante que llevemos meses tratando de que el acuerdo sea posible, pero lo cierto es que todavía es posible. Y a mí me parece muy difícil colocarme en el lugar de la oposición democrática venezolana, que, sin embargo, está sentada en una mesa intentando un acuerdo. Hasta que la oposición venezolana no se levante de la mesa no veo por qué nosotros tendríamos que adelantarnos.

Todos los que estamos aquí sabemos que si hay alguna posibilidad en Venezuela, esa es un acuerdo entre las partes para abrir un camino democrático y de respeto a los derechos humanos en Venezuela. No hay otro camino más que el acuerdo democrático. Y como resulta que se están produciendo todavía esas conversaciones —exasperantes, sí, pero ahí están sentados—, respetemos a la oposición democrática venezolana, veamos si se llega a un acuerdo o no —¡ojalá que sí!—, analicemos el acuerdo y entonces decidamos qué es lo que tenemos que hacer.

No creo que debamos anticiparnos nosotros al fracaso de un acuerdo que a lo mejor no se produce.

Dita Charanzová (ALDE). – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, estas elecciones prematuras son un ejemplo más que confirma lo que todos ya sabemos: el diálogo es una farsa del régimen, y Maduro no tiene ninguna intención de dejar el poder o de restablecer la democracia en su país.

Más grave aún que el socavamiento de la democracia son las varias denuncias de crímenes de lesa humanidad cometidos por esta dictadura contra su propio pueblo. No podemos permitir que esta situación continúe. La Unión Europea, por fin, tomó una posición firme y necesaria al imponer sanciones selectivas. No podemos retroceder. Tenemos que fortalecer nuestra posición y hacer más.

Por eso, les pido a usted y al Consejo que amplíen la lista de sancionados y que la extiendan a sus familiares. Pido que empiecen ya a explorar medidas adicionales como un embargo de petróleo y la prohibición de negocios con la petrolera estatal. Y pido a la Corte Penal Internacional que investigue todos esos crímenes cometidos en Venezuela. Demasiado tiempo pasó antes de que se aprobaran las primeras medidas contra el régimen. Y no podemos esperar otros tres años para que se apliquen nuevas medidas.

Tenemos que estar preparados para dar otro paso ante una situación que empeora cada día. Venezuela ha estado viviendo un infierno durante demasiado tiempo y es nuestra responsabilidad, nuestro deber, hacer todo lo que podamos para ayudarlos.

João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL). – Senhor Presidente, a sanha que este Parlamento destila à revolução bolivariana aqui faz trazer de novo a Venezuela. De forma irresponsável e sem legitimidade de qualquer ordem, massacram a realidade, moldando-a aos vossos interesses. Alimentam a desestabilização do país em prejuízo do povo venezuelano e das comunidades de imigrantes, como a portuguesa, que ali residem.

Falam numa crise humanitária que organizações como a ONU, a CEPAL ou a FAO rejeitam, falam de violência, omitindo a brutalidade das ações de uma oposição que aqui laurearam, responsável pela morte de dezenas de pessoas. Clamam por diálogo, mas com a postura neocolonialista de permanente apelo à ingerência e agressão a um país soberano, prática, aliás, comum nesta Casa, ignoram e comprometem o processo de diálogo em curso na República Dominicana que pode lograr acordo.

Usam a velha máxima de que uma mentira dita muitas vezes se torna realidade. Mas a verdade, essa, não poderão mudá-la. A verdade que o povo venezuelano afirmou claramente nos três últimos atos eleitorais de apoio à revolução bolivariana.

Francisco José Millán Mon (PPE). – Señor presidente, la situación en Venezuela es dramática y recuerdo, señora Mogherini, que son muchísimos los lazos que unen al pueblo venezolano con Europa. Desde aquí yo quisiera hacer una especie de triple llamamiento.

En primer lugar, al Gobierno venezolano, que injustamente ha declarado *persona non grata*, hace unos días, al embajador de España en Caracas. El régimen debe poner fin a su clara deriva totalitaria, que incluye ahora la convocatoria de unas elecciones presidenciales sin garantías democráticas y convocadas, además, por un órgano ilegítimo como la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente. Además, se prohíbe participar a los partidos de la oposición democrática y no hay libertad todavía para los presos políticos.

Mi segundo llamamiento es a la oposición democrática venezolana, perseguida por el régimen. A esa oposición democrática, a la que el Parlamento Europeo concedió el Premio Sájarov hace unos meses, le pido que busque la unidad y que se oriente exclusivamente por el objetivo de conseguir la libertad, la democracia y la prosperidad para el pueblo venezolano.

Mi tercer llamamiento es a usted, señora Mogherini, aunque se dedique a hablar sin prestar atención al debate. Mi tercer llamamiento es al SEAE, a usted, señora Mogherini, y a los Estados miembros para que lleven a cabo una auténtica política europea común en relación con la crisis en Venezuela. Es decir, que haya unidad y coherencia. Y también, por cierto, solidaridad con España. Y me gustaría, por ejemplo, que nos explicara qué medidas específicas tomó, si acaso el SEAE convocó —como debería haber hecho— al embajador venezolano en Bruselas para presentar una protesta por la expulsión del embajador español.

Venezuela sufre una gravísima crisis política, económica y social, y la Unión Europea y sus Estados miembros deben contribuir, en estrecho contacto con la comunidad internacional y con nuestros amigos del continente americano, a hacer frente a esta situación y a contribuir a buscar una solución a una situación que no se debe prolongar.

Francisco Assis (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Comissária, o estrondoso falhanço da revolução bolivariana é um facto absolutamente evidente e que se manifesta dramaticamente nas condições de vida do povo venezuelano.

Os resultados desse falhanço são conhecidos: uma supressão das liberdades públicas, desrespeito pelos direitos humanos, uma situação de miséria económica e social, uma gravíssima crise humanitária. Milhões de venezuelanos tiveram já de fugir do seu próprio país. Este é o retrato exato e objetivo do que se passa na Venezuela. E, perante isto, nós, evidentemente, Parlamento Europeu, temos obrigação, como grande parlamento democrático que somos, de condenar claramente e sem quaisquer reservas este tipo de regime que é um regime liberticida, que é um regime que desrespeita direitos humanos, que é um regime de natureza ditatorial.

Apesar disso, é evidente que, estando a decorrer um processo negocial, por mais ínfimas que sejam as possibilidades de ele ter sucesso, nós temos que manter até ao último momento uma luz de esperança em relação à possibilidade de ele mesmo ter sucesso, embora devamos também dizer que temos fortes razões para acreditar que, neste processo, o poder não está de espírito aberto, não está com bom espírito, como nunca esteve até aqui.

Se porventura houver um acordo, isso constituirá uma enorme surpresa, uma surpresa positiva. Não devemos fechar as portas a que isso aconteça, mas devemos estar particularmente vigilantes em relação ao que se passa na Venezuela.

Izaskun Bilbao Barandica (ALDE). – Señor presidente, señora Mogherini, las personas, las y los venezolanos, son los paganos de una crisis que tiene su origen en el totalitarismo del régimen de Maduro. Nuestra primera obligación es hacerles llegar la ayuda humanitaria que necesitan; la que bloquean desde Caracas; la que solventará el hambre, la malnutrición, la falta de medicinas, de bienes de primera necesidad que no llegarán expulsando embajadores. Tampoco con interminables discursos del caudillo, que come, que vive bien, que se hace rico. Por eso su verborrea supuestamente bolivariana insulta al admirado Libertador. No alimenta, no cura, no crea empleo, no paga pensiones, no convence ya ni al micrófono que la amplifica.

Convocar unas elecciones desde un órgano que no reconoce la comunidad internacional; hacerlo cuando en una supuesta mesa de diálogo ese es uno de los puntos claves de la negociación entre las partes; prohibir partidos, encarcelar opositores, cambiar cada día las normas electorales son agresiones al sentido común, a las leyes y a los derechos fundamentales. Merecen sanciones que deben extenderse al Gobierno de Venezuela y a su entorno. Merecen un embargo de armas y de toda herramienta que pueda utilizarse en la represión interna. Merecen explorar todo tipo de medidas diplomáticas y económicas, incluidas las que puedan centrarse en la compañía estatal del petróleo.

Venezuela necesita transparencia, contraste. Por eso hay que lograr las condiciones necesarias para que una delegación de este Parlamento apoye sobre el terreno la paz y los derechos fundamentales; para que impulse un diálogo entre todas las partes en un conflicto que no tiene otra salida que cambiar represión y dictadura por libertad y democracia.

Fernando Ruas (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, nos últimos anos têm sido inúmeras as vezes em que falámos deste grande país da América Latina e nem sempre pelas melhores razões. O ano passado atribuímos o prémio Sakarov à oposição venezuelana, mas, de lá para cá, a situação política, social e económica da Venezuela piorou, estando a evoluir para uma crise humanitária e de carestia alimentar que atinge os grupos mais vulneráveis da população e muito particularmente as crianças.

A emigração económica em massa para os países vizinhos, particularmente para a Colômbia e Brasil, tem pressionado fortemente as comunidades, as administrações e a economia das zonas fronteiriças desses países.

A situação de hiperinflação que o país vive é profundamente preocupante, projetando o FMI um valor de 13 000 % para o corrente ano e uma contração de 15 % do PIB, o que, no final de 2018, pode levar a uma perda acumulada de 50 % do produto desde 2013.

A coexistência de duas Câmaras Legislativas é também um fator de forte instabilidade, fazendo lembrar outros momentos históricos mundiais de forte insurreição social e mesmo de guerra civil. Por isso, apelamos mais uma vez ao reconhecimento por parte do Governo de venezuelano da legitimidade da Assembleia Nacional como única Câmara Legislativa.

Uma última palavra de solidariedade para a forte comunidade imigrante e expatriada de cidadãos europeus que vivem e trabalham na Venezuela, entre os quais a significativa comunidade portuguesa, que têm sentido bastantes dificuldades na sua vida quotidiana, nomeadamente em termos de segurança e de acesso a bens alimentares, medicamentos e cuidados de saúde.

À nova embaixadora da União Europeia, a portuguesa Isabel Pedrosa, e a si, Alta Representante, solicitamos apenas que continuem a fazer tudo o que seja possível para ajudar todos aqueles que acreditam no futuro desse grande país.

Karoline Graswander-Hainz (S&D). – Herr Präsident, werte Kolleginnen und Kollegen! Die Situation in Venezuela ist besorgniserregend und schockierend zugleich.

Die Menschen im Land – vor allem die Kinder – leiden Hunger und haben keinen Zugang zu medizinischer Versorgung. Die Inflation im Land ist rasant gestiegen. Plünderungen finden tagtäglich statt, weil sich die Menschen die Lebensmittel nicht mehr leisten können. Führende Oppositionspolitiker sitzen zudem im Gefängnis, stehen unter Arrest, sind ins Exil geflohen oder dürfen bei den kommenden Wahlen nicht antreten. Das sind unakzeptable Zustände.

Die Europäische Union ist bereits tätig geworden: Es wurden Sanktionen gegenüber Venezuela verhängt. Wir müssen alle Hebel, die uns zur Verfügung stehen, in Bewegung setzen, um die Lage in Venezuela zu verbessern. Der Respekt für Menschenrechte und für demokratisch gewählte Institutionen muss wiederhergestellt werden, und die politischen Gefangenen müssen freigelassen werden. Vor allem aber muss das menschliche Leid vor Ort so schnell wie möglich ein Ende haben.

José Inácio Faria (PPE). – Senhor Presidente, Senhor Vice-Presidente, o dia 23 de janeiro de 1958 ficou conhecido como o dia do nascimento da democracia na Venezuela, com o afastamento do ditador Pérez Jiménez. Sessenta anos depois, a democracia sucumbe perante o autoritarismo ideológico de Nicolás Maduro, as prisões e a inabilitação dos dissidentes políticos e a fragmentação e desmoralização da oposição.

A antecipação da data das eleições presidenciais para 2018 e a exclusão da Mesa da Unidade Democrática deste ato eleitoral constituem mais um triste episódio desta já longa tragicomédia que visa consolidar o perfil ditatorial do regime e perpetuar ilegítimamente o Sr. Nicolás Maduro no poder.

Perante a gravidade da crise humanitária na Venezuela e a reiterada violação dos direitos civis e políticos de centenas de presos exilados políticos, as sanções seletivas impostas pela União Europeia a 7 altos funcionários venezuelanos, que deveriam, em minha opinião, ser extensíveis aos seus familiares, não são, ao contrário do que o Governo venezuelano afirma, resultado de uma política intervencionista e submissão ao Governo do Sr. Trump. São, isso sim, um instrumento diplomático de apoio à justiça, ao respeito pelos direitos humanos e à defesa da democracia.

Mas caros colegas, a verdade é que a situação na Venezuela é insustentável, a morte de mão dada com o terror e a opressão saíram à rua.

Sra. Vice-Presidente, a senhora disse que o futuro da Venezuela deveria ser decidido pelo seu povo, mas essa decisão tem que ser livre, e isso, por mais vontade que a senhora tenha, nunca acontecerá se a comunidade internacional continuar a permitir que o Sr. Maduro continue a sangrar o seu povo.

Termino, Sr. Presidente, dizendo, como já aqui disse antes, que sou indubitavelmente venezuelano e, como venezuelano, peço a este Parlamento e à Comissão que tomem medidas mais enérgicas contra o Governo bolivariano da Venezuela que oprime o povo venezuelano.

Carlos Zorrinho (S&D). – Senhor Presidente, Senhora Alta Comissária, quando mais de 2 milhões de pessoas têm que abandonar o seu país por falta de condições de segurança e pela escassez de alimentos e medicamentos que atinge em particular as populações mais vulneráveis, deixamos de estar perante um grave problema político para nos situarmos numa crise humanitária profunda e na falência de um regime e de um sistema político, com gravíssimas consequências políticas.

Este Parlamento aprovou no passado múltiplas recomendações que não foram seguidas. Por isso, sem quebrar as linhas tênues de diálogo que ainda se mantêm é importante mobilizar a comunidade internacional e em particular os países vizinhos para pressionarem o Governo venezuelano a restabelecer a normalidade democrática e a criar condições para a realização de um processo eleitoral livre, transparente e credível.

Numa sociedade profundamente dividida como é venezuelana, só a devolução da voz ao povo, em condições de plena liberdade, pode assegurar o reencontro da Venezuela consigo própria, assegurando condições dignas de vida aos seus cidadãos e um futuro à altura da sua história e da ambição das novas gerações.

Procedura «catch-the-eye»

Georgi Pirinski (S&D). – Mr President, the EU must put its full support behind reaching an agreement at the talks between the Venezuelan Government and the opposition being hosted by the president of the Dominican Republic.

To that end, first the EU must reject in unequivocal terms the totally inadmissible threats by the US President and his administration to launch a military intervention against Venezuela; second, call for an immediate end to US-imposed financial sanctions, since starving the Venezuelan economy of its foreign currency earnings risks turning the country's current humanitarian crisis into a full-blown humanitarian catastrophe; and, third, urge the representatives of the opposition to return to talks with the government in a joint effort to reach agreement on the upcoming presidential elections.

The latest polls show that, as of today, fully 50% of Venezuelans consider that Hugo Chavez was a good president. The one and only way to overcome the deep polarisation of Venezuelan society is renouncing violence in favour of negotiations towards an agreement.

Jonathan Arnott (EFDD). – Mr President, economic stability and political stability are neither inextricably linked nor are they completely separate, but something between the two. They're correlated, so I'll focus therefore on the Venezuelan economy.

Venezuela should, given its natural resources, be a rich country. Yet the mistakes of the Chavez regime and its over-reliance on food imports, compounded under Maduro, led to this: to a society where GBP 100 couldn't even buy you a dozen eggs; to 2000% inflation. And from a crumbling economy and from political idealism failing – as so often in history – flow human rights abuses. To the UK's eternal shame, Corbyn promoted Venezuela as a shining example of socialism in action, rather than to read the warning signs that were there. But to save a country that is in such a state requires not idealism, but pragmatism. Malaria, diphtheria and starvation in a nation with Venezuela's resources – or, frankly, in any nation – this should not be.

(Fine della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Federica Mogherini, Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Mr President – as, I think, all Members mentioned – there is only one way out of this crisis that is at the same time political, social and humanitarian, and that is a negotiated solution: a peaceful, constitutional outcome that brings the regime and the opposition together in a credible manner.

And this is the effort we are supporting with all the means we have and in constant contact with the regional players, because we have always invested in regional dynamics. This is particularly true for our Latin American partners, and that region is going to be at the same time more affected and hopefully also more influential.

I say this with a deep respect for the institutional and political internal dynamics, but still recognising that what is happening there is not happening behind closed doors and concerns the international community. This concerns the European Union and this concerns many European Union citizens. Many of you have mentioned that European Union citizens that are suffering as a result of this crisis. So it is in our interest for a solution to be found. That can only be a political, negotiated solution in a peaceful and constitutional outcome of the crisis.

I mention that a peaceful and constitutional outcome of the crisis is a key element because there could be a different outcome. And I think we have to be aware of the risks that a further deterioration of the situation could bring us.

So we have mentioned the key elements that most of you have recalled today: credible elections, the release of all political prisoners, respect for democratically elected bodies, upholding of human rights and, very importantly, an alleviation of the suffering of the people of Venezuela. That would also imply a different trend in the fleeing of Venezuelans to neighbouring countries. That, as many of you recalled, might have a destabilising effect for different political situations in different countries that are also close to our hearts.

We will continue to use all the different instruments we have, political support, diplomatic engagements, pressures, work with the international community and with the regional players, direct contacts with the opposition, but also with the authorities.

And yes, we have had opportunities to pass very clear messages to the Venezuelan authorities, both locally and in Brussels, including messages that were very clear on our common position on the decisions that have been taken on the Spanish ambassador. I was very clear on that.

Let me stress one thing – and I will close with this because I know we are running late – the unity of the European Union and its Member States is remarkable on this issue, maybe more than it is in this Chamber. But let me say, the work we have done both in Venezuela and in Brussels has shown unity of purpose, unity of action and coordinated efforts.

I would like to thank the Member States for this, because this is what makes the difference when it comes to playing a role and making a difference, again with respect, with no interference. Venezuela is a sovereign country, but when there is a political crisis, when there is a social crisis, when there is an economic crisis, when there is a humanitarian crisis and also European interest and regional dynamics are at stake, we have a duty to support a positive outcome to the ongoing efforts.

As I said, another attempt is being made at the present time. A solution is possible, we are not seeing this now, but I believe that it is our duty to invest in this possibility.

Presidente. – Comunico di aver ricevuto sei proposte di risoluzione conformemente all'articolo 123, paragrafo 2, del regolamento.

La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà giovedì 8 febbraio 2018.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

María Teresa Giménez Barbat (ALDE), *por escrito*. – Se difumina en el horizonte la posibilidad de alcanzar una solución a la terrible crisis humanitaria y de derechos humanos que vive Venezuela. El régimen de Maduro propone ahora, a través de la ilegítima Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, la celebración de unas elecciones presidenciales anticipadas; unas elecciones sin mínimas garantías democráticas, con más de trescientos opositores políticos encarcelados y otros tantos inhabilitados para presentarse a un cargo público; unas elecciones que se celebrarían en un espacio donde no se respeta la libertad de expresión ni de asociación, donde el poder judicial trabaja para cumplir con la agenda política del Gobierno y donde se toman medidas gubernamentales para restringir el financiamiento internacional de ONG defensoras de derechos humanos. El informe de Human Rights Watch indica que al menos 124 personas han muerto durante incidentes relacionados con protestas contra el Gobierno, y el propio Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos, en su informe del pasado agosto, indicaba que más de la mitad de estas muertes habían sido provocadas por agentes de seguridad. Este Parlamento debe rechazar de manera contundente la celebración de estas elecciones ilegítimas. La UE solo podrá reconocer unas elecciones basadas en un calendario electoral viable, justas y transparentes.

17. Situatie van de UNRWA (debat)

Presidente. – L'ordine del giorno reca la discussione sulla dichiarazione del Vicepresidente della Commissione/Alto rappresentante dell'Unione per gli affari esteri e la politica di sicurezza sulla situazione dell'UNRWA (2017/2553(RSP)).

Federica Mogherini, *Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. – Let me first of all thank you for this debate. It is timely and it is important. It is important first of all because millions of people – men, women and children – depend on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for education, healthcare and social services, humanitarian assistance and employment. So, supporting UNWRA is a humanitarian duty and it is also in our collective interest for peace and security in the Middle East.

I would like to mention a few reasons why it is essential to support UNWRA, its work and why the European Union not only is supporting it but is going to continue to support it and argue for continued or increased support from other international partners. Firstly, the work they do is crucial for the prospects of an agreement between Israel and Palestine. It is a key contribution that UNWRA is bringing to the prospect of relaunching a credible peace process, because a just, fair, agreed and realistic solution to the refugee question is one of the parameters of for peace negotiations, with the ultimate objective of achieving a two-state solution. The work that UNWRA does provides the political space towards achieving a peace deal and building a Palestinian State.

Secondly, it is a matter of regional stability. This strikes me every time when international players don't see the reality on the ground in the countries that have been hosting, for decades; a huge number of Palestinian refugees. Reducing the activities of UNWRA would cause instability and even security threats all around the region. This is true for the West Bank and Gaza, but this is also true for Lebanon and Jordan. They are themselves facing enormous challenges on other fronts and this is obvious to all of us I believe; there is no need for me to go into details about the huge pressure that both Lebanon and Jordan have been facing. Investing in UNWRA is also investing in our collective regional security.

Thirdly, education. The European Union has always invested and will always continue to invest in the education of people and children to avoid any lost generation. For Palestinian kids, this means the possibility to keep hoping, to build their own future, and to believe in their own personal lives – which is no minor thing when you are a child; and it means also fighting radicalisation. So it's also here an investment in our own security.

Fourthly, UNWRA is particularly important for the political process in Gaza, where work is ongoing, efforts are ongoing for the return of the Palestinian Authority, and Palestinian reconciliation is essential for the prospect of a viable state of Palestine. So for all these reasons, we are – and we will continue to be – strong and reliable supporters of the work of UNWRA. Together with our Member States, we are doing all we can to avoid repercussions from the US decision to ensure that UNWRA can continue to operate and to ensure a continued engagement from all other international actors, but also from the United States. We have already increased our support in recent times. For 2018, the European Union will assist UNWRA by accelerating our first scheduled payment for this year, and I also count on donors around the world with whom we are in contact, including in coordination with other players. Here I would mention established partners for UNWRA, which already has important donors, but also all those that have so far been less engaged and who can step up their efforts in order to safeguard something that can be qualified as a global public good: the work that UNWRA does.

Peace between Israel and Palestine will clearly be built through negotiations, which requires a commitment from the two sides, but it must also be preserved every day on the ground and this is what UNWRA is doing with the Palestinian refugees. Investing in UNWRA is an interest we all share and the international community and the Palestinian refugees and the countries in the region can count on the European Union to continue to support its work.

Johannes Hahn, *Member of the Commission*. – Mr President, I also welcome this timely opportunity to join some of you today to discuss UNRWA, which is currently facing unprecedented challenges.

The European Union is convinced that the two-state solution is the only possible answer if we want to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East. We believe that any solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict will need to include an agreed just and fair solution to the refugee question. The Palestinian refugee question has existed for almost 70 years. The United Nations General Assembly established and mandated UNRWA to provide assistance and protection to registered Palestinian refugees until a just and lasting solution is found to their plight.

This is the work that UNRWA continues to do, laying the groundwork for future development through its work in education and health, and contributing – as the High Representative has just said – to security and stability in the region. The Commission will disburse our scheduled payment for 2018, which is about EUR 82 million, by the end of February – much earlier than originally planned. Some of our Member States have also announced plans to accelerate their contributions for this year and I can tell you that we will also do so in 2019 and 2020, at least, in order to reassure UNRWA from our side.

It is still too early to tell you how exactly UNRWA will be affected since the scope and nature of the cuts in US funding are not entirely clear. What we do know is that the EU will not be able to compensate for substantial US cuts, given the pressure on available funds. We can and will actively assist UNRWA in reaching out to non-traditional donors in order to help the agency to broaden its donor base and, given the magnitude of the problem, we also need to work with host governments on how they might consider providing certain services that UNRWA cannot and maybe should not provide.

UNRWA needs reform. Some of its financial problems are structural and predate the US decision. The EU has long been calling on UNRWA to review its operational and financial planning approach in order to safeguard its basic and essential core services, intended to help the most marginalised refugees. We therefore commend UNRWA's commitment to a process of comprehensive financial reforms, including measures sustaining institutional change and increasing the cost-effectiveness of its programmes.

But, in order to achieve improvements, we will work on this together with – and not against – the agency. There should be no doubt that the EU is and will remain a staunch and reliable supporter of UNRWA, both politically and financially. The EU and its Member States are by far the largest provider of assistance to Palestinian refugees – they provide around EUR 460 million a year. In June 2017, a joint declaration was signed between the EU and UNRWA as a framework for our financial and political support for the agency as further proof of our continued commitment, not just this year, but also in the years to come.

José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, *en nombre del Grupo PPE*. – Señor presidente, señora alta representante, señor comisario, señorías, la Administración de los Estados Unidos ha decidido congelar una parte sustancial de la ayuda a la agencia de las Naciones Unidas para los refugiados de Palestina. Esta decisión está vinculada al polémico traslado de la Embajada de los Estados Unidos de Tel Aviv a Jerusalén. Esta decisión ha causado una honda preocupación al secretario general de las Naciones Unidas y también, por qué no decirlo, una honda preocupación entre nosotros.

Podremos tener diferencias con los Estados Unidos en lo que se refiere al Acuerdo de París sobre el cambio climático, al Acuerdo Transpacífico, al acuerdo de comercio e inversión, a la designación de los árbitros en los grupos especiales de la Organización Mundial del Comercio, pero estamos aquí hablando de personas, hablando de millones de personas: dos millones de refugiados en el Líbano; casi 500 000 refugiados en Jordania; 540 000 refugiados en Siria; 1 400 000 en la Franja de Gaza; 800 000 en Cisjordania. Y son personas que, como nos ha recordado la alta representante, tienen necesidades básicas que cubrir, niños a los que hay que educar y atender y que se juegan su futuro.

Creo que tenemos que apoyar decididamente los esfuerzos que ha realizado la Comisión para subvenir a corto plazo a estas necesidades y movilizar a la comunidad internacional para que los compromisos con Palestina sean mantenidos.

Espero, señora vicepresidenta, señor comisario, que podamos mantener el nivel de esos compromisos porque la credibilidad de la Unión Europea en un tema tan sensible como es el de los refugiados está en juego.

Elena Valenciano, *en nombre del Grupo S&D*. – Señor presidente, a un lado están los que llevan más de seis décadas ofreciendo comida, agua, educación, salud a padres, hijos y nietos de refugiados palestinos y por otro lado está quien a golpe de tuit rompe el *statu quo* y hace que todo salte por los aires sin ofrecer ninguna alternativa. Y este Parlamento tiene que decir con toda claridad, de manera clara y unívoca, que el OOPS tiene todo nuestro apoyo efectivo. Nuestra confianza. Y que vamos a apostar por que el OOPS pueda seguir haciendo la labor humanitaria que está desarrollando y que nadie más puede hacer.

La cruda realidad es que hoy, a raíz de la decisión de la Administración Trump, el OOPS va a dejar de ingresar más de 500 millones de dólares, y eso significa un riesgo real de que el OOPS tenga que cerrar completamente, dejando abandonados a más de cinco millones de seres humanos que necesitan dignidad, seguridad y ayuda.

Como muy bien dice el OOPS la dignidad no tiene precio. En cambio la irresponsabilidad de la Administración Trump sí lo tiene, y es un precio muy alto.

Por eso creo que debemos actuar y nosotros vamos a defender y apoyar que se celebre una conferencia internacional con todos los actores, porque todas las manos son necesarias: la Unión Europea, los Estados miembros, el conjunto de la comunidad internacional y también los países árabes, que deben cumplir con sus compromisos. Necesitamos todas las manos para sostener al OOPS, que, a su vez, sostiene a millones de seres humanos completamente desamparados. Y sostener al OOPS envía un mensaje de esperanza a una región en la que los mensajes de esperanza no abundan. Hagamos nosotros que esa esperanza sea posible; actuemos con dignidad y responsabilidad porque nos va a todos casi la vida en ello.

Ivo Vajgl, *v imenu skupine ALDE*. – Če se neka vlada po več desetletjih širokogrudne podpore humanitarni organizaciji, v našem primeru UNWRI, odloči, da bo podpora brez vnaprejšnje napovedi drastično zmanjšala in praktično onemogočila njeno normalno delovanje, potem se je dovoljeno vprašati: čemu?

Govorimo o odločitvi ameriškega predsednika Trumpa, ki je ne samo prizadela nekaj več kot pol milijona deklic in dečkov v šolah, ki jih na področjih, kjer živijo palestinski begunci, vzdržuje UNWRA, ampak o več milijonih Palestincev, ki životarijo v najtežjih pogojih v taboriščih v Jordaniji, Libanonu, Siriji, na Zahodnem bregu in v Gazi.

Zaradi skrajne stiske, v katero je pahnila trda odločitev ameriške vlade, je naša moralna dolžnost, da prizadetim Palestincem in UNWRI priskočimo na pomoč in poskusimo nadoknaditi izpad dohodkov. Zato v resolucijo, o kateri bomo odločali jutri, pozivamo, da se pridružijo države Evropske unije solidarnostni akciji.

Združene države Amerike so vse od davnega leta 1950, ko je dejavnost UNRWE prvič stekla, zanesljivo in širokogrudno podpirale njeno dejavnost. Verjetno ni samo naključje, da je prepolovitev sredstev za UNRWRO neposredno sledila napovedi ameriškega predsednika, da bo formalno priznal Jeruzalem kot glavno mesto države Izrael. Tej napovedi je sledila izjava palestinskega predsednika Abbasa, da ZDA ne vidi več kot možnega posrednika v izraelsko-palestinskem mirovnem procesu.

Tistim, ki smo v minulih letih imeli priložnost obiskati katerokoli palestinsko taborišče na Bližnjem vzhodu, je jasno, da je delo, ki ga opravlja UNWRA, neprecenljivo. Medtem ko se neprenehoma srečuje s finančnimi problemi, število pomoči potrebnih pa se veča, organizacija ne samo, da ohranja upanje v boljši jutri beguncev, omogoča šolanje otrokom in tolažbo starejšim, s svojim požrtvovalnim delom in pogosto za ceno lastnega žrtvovanja ohranjajo nepolitičen in nevtralen status svoje organizacije in njenih ustanov.

Humanitarna pomoč ni nadomestilo za normalno, človeka vredno življenje. Takšno življenje bo palestinskim beguncem omogočeno šele, ko bodo Izrael in Palestinci trajno rešili svoj spor z medsebojnim spoštovanjem in življenjem v dveh suverenih državah.

Do tedaj bo UNWRA nenadomestljiva opora tistim, ki na Bližnjem vzhodu najbolj trpijo. Zato moramo organizaciji pomagati in to takoj.

Νεοκλής Σουλκιώτης, εξ ονόματος της ομάδας GUE/NGL. – Κύριε Πρόεδρε, η προκλητική απόφαση της αμερικανικής κυβέρνησης να ανακοινώσει στις 16 Ιανουαρίου μια ακόμα αποκοπή από την εισφορά για την UNRWA αποτελεί άλλο ένα χτύπημα στην ειρηνευτική διαδικασία στη Μέση Ανατολή. Η διοίκηση Trump ήδη οδήγησε τη διαδικασία ειρήνευσης σε αδιέξοδο αναγνωρίζοντας την Ιερουσαλήμ ως πρωτεύουσα του Ισραήλ και δηλώνοντας την πρόθεσή της να μεταφέρει την πρεσβεία της χώρας εκεί. Ως GUE καταδικάζουμε την ενέργεια των ΗΠΑ να περικόψουν τη βοήθεια προς την UNRWA. Αναγνωρίζουμε τη μεγάλη προσφορά του οργανισμού και εκφράζουμε τη βαθιά μας εκτίμηση για το έργο και τους ανθρώπους της. Χωρίς την αρωγή της UNRWA δεν μπορεί να αντιμετωπιστεί η ανθρωπιστική κρίση στη Λωρίδα της Γάζας. Το 70% των κατοίκων της Γάζας εξαρτώνται από τη στήριξη της UNRWA, η οποία έχει υπό την ευθύνη της τη λειτουργία 700 σχολείων, 137 κλινικών και παρέχει τρόφιμα και οικονομική στήριξη σε 1,7 εκατομμύρια Παλαιστίνιων που ζουν στον Λίβανο, την Ιορδανία, τη Συρία και στα κατεχόμενα παλαιστινιακά εδάφη.

Καλούμε την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση και τα κράτη μέλη της να κινητοποιήσουν επιπλέον χρηματοδότηση για την UNRWA και να αναλάβουν πρωτοβουλία για τη στήριξη της UNRWA και την εξεύρεση λύσεων για την οικονομική της κατάσταση. Εμείς ως GUE παραμένουμε σταθεροί στη θέση μας για τερματισμό της κατοχής, επιστροφή των προσφύγων στις πατρογονικές τους εστίες και ειρηνική επίλυση του Παλαιστινιακού στη βάση των δύο κρατών, στα σύνορα του 1967 και με την Ανατολική Ιερουσαλήμ ως πρωτεύουσα του παλαιστινιακού κράτους.

Tamás Meszerics, on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group. – Mr President, I believe that when we talk about the current financial plight of UNRWA we need to talk about two things simultaneously.

Firstly, we need to talk about the requirements of international humanitarian law. For all those who value and adhere to this part of international law, supporting this agency is an obligation, not a question of choice. Unfortunately, not all international actors subscribe to this view, and to be absolutely clear about it, the European Union is one of those, however, which does take it seriously, we, European Union and its Member States combined, are the largest donor to UNRWA.

So we shoulder a fair share from the costs. However, this proud place comes with responsibilities. We need to look further, we need to address the major large-scale political question as well. We need to engage with the peace process, because otherwise UNRWA will remain in place indefinitely, and that is the worst possible outcome.

Rosa D'Amato, a nome del gruppo EFDD. – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la decisione del Presidente Trump di ridurre drasticamente gli aiuti all'UNRWA è senza se e senza ma da stigmatizzare e si inserisce nel solco di una politica estera statunitense totalmente sbilanciata. Ricordiamoci anche la decisione di dichiarare Gerusalemme capitale solo di Israele. Essa sancisce la morte della già difficile ipotesi della soluzione a due Stati.

Chiediamo alla Commissione europea, alla Vicepresidente: non è forse questo il momento di dimostrare maggiore coraggio nella sfera mediorientale da parte dell'Unione europea e di tutti gli Stati membri? E con coraggio intendo un aumento dei contributi finanziari. L'Unione europea nel 2017 ha finanziato l'agenzia con poco più di 143 milioni di dollari, meno della metà degli aiuti statunitensi, a cui vanno aggiunti gli scarsi contributi volontari degli Stati membri. E ancora intendo azioni politiche per assicurare realmente il rispetto del diritto internazionale da parte di Israele, che impunemente continua a costruire colonie in Cisgiordania, ormai ridotta tante a *enclave* spezzate l'una dall'altra.

La Vicepresidente non c'è ma mi rivolgo al Commissario e faccio un ulteriore appello: il riconoscimento dello Stato della Palestina non può più attendere. Siamo già in colpevole ritardo e se non agiamo subito la storia ci giudicherà colpevoli di non avere fatto abbastanza per il popolo palestinese.

Antonio López-Istúriz White (PPE). – Señor presidente, a mis compañeros de la izquierda, por supuesto antiamericana, aquí en el Parlamento Europeo, quiero decirles que si analizan con detalle la última decisión de la Administración estadounidense, independientemente de que sea cuestión de Trump o no, es obvio que el OOPS sigue contando con el apoyo de los Estados Unidos y que sigue recibiendo su asistencia financiera y política. Eso está en la declaración.

Lo que está pasando es que la agencia está sufriendo una reforma. Normal y lógico. Una reforma necesaria, también, por otra parte, y que exige mayores fuentes de contribución voluntaria. Países como Bélgica, los Países Bajos y Suecia ya han avanzado que aumentarán sus contribuciones. Espero que también les recuerden a los países árabes que tienen que hacerlo, porque hasta la fecha tampoco lo han hecho. De los veinte donantes principales solo tres son árabes.

Lo que sí tiene que hacer la Unión Europea es establecer una misión independiente de supervisión para controlar que la educación y la ayuda que el OOPS da sean bien utilizadas para promover una cultura de paz y diálogo y no para que sus hospitales y colegios sean mal utilizados para reclutar a futuros terroristas.

Por último, mientras tenemos este debate legítimo no caigamos en la trampa de cuestionar el apoyo de los Estados Unidos a las relaciones internacionales. Después de todo, no podemos olvidar que el orden mundial basado en las reglas del cual disfrutamos hoy, el que creó el OOPS o el alto comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados, fue construido y sostenido por nuestros socios transatlánticos. En este contexto, vuelvo a insistir, independientemente de las dudas que esta Administración pueda provocarles a algunos de ustedes, yo estoy convencido, y tenemos que estarlo, de que los Estados Unidos no han permitido ni permitirán que el OOPS se quede solo.

Linda McAvan (S&D). – Mr President, I say to Commissioner Hahn that I think we're hearing a pretty united House here, concerned about the cost to UNRWA and supporting the work which is being undertaken. Most people have underlined that this is about humanitarian aid, not about politics. It is about aid to vulnerable people.

These people have a face, they want a future and find themselves as refugees, including in Syria today. This happens in many countries in the Middle East, and that's why I'm very disappointed that the United States has decided to cut this budget, because, by breaking with their traditional support for UNRWA, they're making political something which should not be so political.

I hear what you say about how the EU cannot bridge the entire gap left by the United States, and that other countries have to step up. But we should also recognise that some of those countries – Lebanon and Jordan – are already dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis as well. It is a difficult time and at a time when we've got a humanitarian crisis arising in Gaza, in particular – Archer is telling us about the appalling situation there. I think it is good that the EU has fast-tracked its payments. It is good that EU Member States are doing the same.

But we really must step up now. We must get other players to the table and get the funding guaranteed and get a long-term solution for UNRWA, not just in the short term, but a long-term solution at the United Nations so there is a secure funding base on which we can restart peace talks.

Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL). – Mr President, initially designed to be a temporary one-year programme, 65 years later it is a damning indictment of the international community that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is still needed today. 5.6 million people are registered for services provided by UNRWA and there are hundreds of thousands more not registered but who still need UNRWA's help.

UNRWA works to protect the rights of Palestinians, rights that are routinely trampled on and discarded by Israel, as illustrated in the case of Ahd Tamimi, a 17-year-old Palestinian child who should be in school, not in a prison dungeon.

Yet we have the international community – disgracefully, I believe – lacking the political will to address the root causes of the conflict in Palestine. Given the lack of that will, it should at the very least work to protect the most vulnerable, and there is no doubt the children imprisoned in Palestine have gone way past vulnerability.

UNRWA absolutely needs to be adequately funded and Member States should increase their funding for the vital services it provides to millions and millions of people around the world.

Margrete Auken (Verts/ALE). – Hr. formand! Tak for, at vi omsider får denne debat om Palæstina, som er god, men der er en mægtig elefant i rummet, som ikke nævnes: Israels totale tilsidesættelse af forpligtelserne i medfør af folkeretten til at betale, hvad deres besættelse koster. Israel og besættelsesmagten betaler ikke en eneste cent til UNRWA.

Derudover er angrebene på UNRWA i øvrigt chokerende. De tusindvis af dedikerede medarbejdere bliver på deres post, når andre evakueres. Dusinvis af dem er blevet dræbt. De skal hædres og takkes for den enestående indsats, de gør for de palæstinensiske flygtninge i Libanon, Jordan, Syrien, på Vestbredden og især i Gaza, der har lidt under Israels belejring i 10 år nu.

USA's pludselige brud med sine forpligtelser er chokerende, og det er som nævnt golfstaternes svigt faktisk også. Derfor: Tak til EU, som gør en indsats for, at UNRWA kan fortsætte sit imponerende arbejde.

Til sidst lige et spørgsmål til fru Mogherini: Hvor er den klare protest over Israels ødelæggelse af den EU-betalte skole i Abu Nawar i område E1? Hvor er kravet til Israel om at betale erstatning? Vi savner stadig at høre en klar melding her.

Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE). – Pane předsedající, když jsme vyjednávali tuto rezoluci, domluvili jsme se na tom, že to nebude žádný politický *statement*. Že to bude rezoluce o agentuře, která je mezinárodní, dělá skvělou práci, a my chceme svým způsobem v této práci pokračovat. Není to ani na straně Izraele, ani na straně Palestiny. Je to na straně lidí. Obvyčných lidí, kteří trpí válečným konfliktem, konfliktem, který měl být vyřešen.

Ano, moji předřečníci tady několikrát vzpomínali to, že ten konflikt se táhne. Palestinci byli na straně poražených, Izraelci na straně vítězů, ale my nejsme ti, kteří tady mají soudit konflikt. My jsme ti, kteří mají řešit situaci. A ta situace nastala taková, že prostě jeden z největších přispěvatelů řekl, že zvaží, zda bude i nadále přispívat takovými prostředky, jakými přispíval dodneška. A tady, dámy a pánové, je velmi důležitá věc. Podívejme se, jak zareagovala Evropská unie. Řekla: „Nás se to netýká.“? Ne, neřekla. Evropská unie řekla: „Jakým způsobem můžeme pomoci?“ Taky řekla členským státům: „Členské státy, pojďte se spolu podílet více na řešení této situace.“

A tady Vám chci, pane komisaři, poděkovat, protože Vy jste jeden z těch motorů této pomoci. Vy jste jeden z těch, který hledá cestu z této, bych řekl, poměrně bezvýhodné situace. Já jako poslanec EP jsem navštívil uprchlické tábory, já nevím, jestli se to dá nazývat uprchlické, jestli někdo více než padesát let, šedesát let může být uprchlík. Ale prostě navštívili jsme je. A ta místa vypadají tak, jak vypadají. A naše pomoc by měla jít pro nejchudší, pro ty, kteří nemají vzdělání, a já si myslím, že odpověď Evropské unie v tomhle je velmi pozitivní. Hledáme řešení. A to řešení není jednoduché. A to je to, milí kolegové, na co bychom se měli dívat. Dívat se na to, jak to bude vypadat do budoucna. To je řešení Evropské unie.

Arne Lietz (S&D). – Herr Präsident! Die Entscheidung der US-Regierung, Hilfszahlungen an UNRWA mit politischen Forderungen zu verbinden, stellt eine gefährliche Politisierung von humanitärer Hilfe dar. Ich bin über die Zurückhaltung der Zahlungen zutiefst beunruhigt. Davon betroffen sind die medizinische Versorgung von drei Millionen palästinensischen Flüchtlingen, die Versorgung mit Nahrungsmitteln von 1,7 Millionen palästinensischen Flüchtlingen sowie die Ausbildung von 500 000 Kindern in über 700 UNRWA-Schulen. Es besteht die Gefahr, dass derart substanzielle Kürzungen der humanitären Hilfe zu weiterer Instabilität in der Region führen. Die Einschätzung teilen auch Israel und der Generalstabschef der israelischen Armee Gadi Eizenkot.

Er geht in seinem Appell sogar darüber hinaus: Er fordert mehr humanitäre Hilfe im Gazastreifen, da sonst wegen der Lage der Menschen noch in diesem Jahr ein Krieg drohen könnte. Auch seiner Meinung nach muss die Frage der humanitären Hilfe gesondert von anderen Fragen behandelt werden.

Ich begrüße die Entscheidung der EU, in einigen Mitgliedstaaten – darunter auch Deutschland – im Schnellverfahren UNRWA zusätzliche Finanzmittel zur Verfügung zu stellen. Für eine langfristige Finanzierung benötigen wir aber auch einen multilateralen globalen Finanzierungsrahmen. Diesbezüglich möchte ich insbesondere an die Finanzierungszusagen der Mitglieder der Arabischen Liga appellieren.

Die EU muss der UNRWA weiterhin als zuverlässiger Partner zur Seite stehen und sich für die Entwicklung eines globalen Finanzierungsplans einsetzen. Ich appelliere an das Europäische Parlament, in der Abstimmung am Donnerstag in diesem Sinn eine überparteiliche klare Botschaft an die internationale Gemeinschaft zu senden. Meine Verhandlungen unserer Entschließung zwischen allen politischen Gruppen stimmen mich dafür zuversichtlich.

Marita Ulvskog (S&D). – Herr talman! Herr kommissionär! För 2 år sedan stod jag här i kammaren och talade om att FN:s hjälporganisation UNRWA hade den minsta budgeten på 10 år samtidigt som det internationella samfundet hade misslyckats med att ge människor i Gaza ens ett minimum av hjälp. I dag står jag här igen efter USA:s besked om att kraftigt minska stödet till UNRWA. Historien upprepar sig.

Nu fattas det 500 miljoner dollar, samtidigt som över 5 miljoner palestinska flyktingar är helt beroende av humanitärt stöd. Vi vet hur viktigt UNRWA:s uppdrag är och vi vet att minskad finansiering får mycket svåra humanitära och politiska konsekvenser i en av de mest utsatta regionerna i världen. Det får inte ske att dessa besparingar drivs vidare. Jag tycker ändå att det är väldigt upplyftande att lyssna till Mogherini och Hahn och andra här. Vi är väldigt överens över alla partigränser och det gör mig ändå lite hoppfullare.

Jag ska inte stå här om ett antal år igen och vara orolig över den utsatthet som palestinierna fortsätter att leva i, och som är en risk för hela världssamfundet. Så tack för en bra debatt. Och nu måste vi faktiskt uträtta saker och ting. Vi ska inte vara samhällsbyggare åt palestinierna. De ska få bygga sina samhällen själva och känna sig starka och fria.

Eugen Freund (S&D). – Mr President, I say to the Commissioner that this should come as no surprise – a president who is throwing all conventional norms overboard has no empathy for the victims of his policy. And yes, that we are stuck in a mess in the Middle East is certainly the result of US action or inaction, and now we come to UNRWA.

We all know that the United Nations is doing an excellent job in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Without the dedicated support of the UN we would have no schools, no hospitals and probably no food for about a million people who live under dire circumstances.

The commitment of the European Union to allocate an additional EUR 42 million for the Palestinian territories and east Jerusalem is a very positive step. It is, in addition, an important signal by the European Union at a time when the US administration is retreating more and more from its international commitments. It could and should also open a window for the EU to revert from being a mere payer to becoming more of a player in the Middle East.

Brando Benifei (S&D). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la decisione americana di ridurre drasticamente i fondi destinati all'UNRWA è un duro colpo per gli oltre 5 milioni di rifugiati palestinesi nella regione. Il lavoro dell'Agenzia è ormai per molti di loro l'unico sostegno per quanto riguarda cibo, sanità e istruzione, in mancanza di una soluzione duratura al conflitto mediorientale. Mettere a rischio le sue attività per fini politici, come sta facendo l'amministrazione Trump, può avere effetti devastanti per tutti i paesi coinvolti, incluso Israele, come alcuni suoi ufficiali sanno bene.

Oltre a rinnovare il proprio supporto diplomatico e finanziario, come l'Alto rappresentante Federica Mogherini non ha mancato di fare, l'Europa deve lavorare insieme all'ONU per spronare altri paesi – penso in particolare ad alcuni paesi del Golfo – a rinnovare il loro impegno, al tempo stesso cercando soluzioni per rendere finanziariamente sostenibile a lungo termine l'operatività dell'agenzia, che non deve essere più in balia di decisioni unilaterali. L'Europa può e deve giocare un ruolo ancora più forte.

Procedura «catch-the-eye»

João Pimenta Lopes (GUE/NGL). – Senhor Presidente, o subfinanciamento desta agência da ONU não é de agora, mas o problema fundamental é a continuada e crescente agressão de Israel contra a Palestina e o seu martirizado povo, uma agressão que se agrava suportada pelo reconhecimento de Jerusalém como capital de Israel pela administração norte-americana, num apoio explícito à política sionista de Israel, em expressa violação do direito internacional, uma posição que não está desligada da sua estratégia de desestabilização do Médio Oriente.

Exigem-se ações firmes, nomeadamente no contexto da ONU, com vista à reversão desta decisão, ao fim da agressão de Israel à Palestina e ao reconhecimento do direito do povo palestino à edificação do Estado da Palestina nas fronteiras anteriores a 1967 e com capital em Jerusalém Leste.

Reiteramos a solidariedade de sempre com o povo palestino e a sua legítima e heroica luta de sete décadas pelo direito à constituição de um Estado soberano e viável e pelo respeito do direito de regresso dos refugiados palestinos que a política de expansão e ocupação da Palestina por parte de Israel gerou.

(Fine della procedura «catch-the-eye»)

Johannes Hahn, Member of the Commission, on behalf of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. – Thank you, Mr President, and I thank the honourable Members for this debate which has highlighted the importance of UNRWA once again. It's clear that we have to assist UNRWA in overcoming its current financial crisis. Unfortunately, it's not the first one, but this time it has been triggered by one of the main donors.

From this debate I conclude that we all join in a common call for support to UNRWA as an important stabilising factor in the region and an important element in ensuring the viability of the two-state solution. Without UNRWA, millions of people, especially children, would lose access to essential services like education and health care.

We all are aware of what it means to lose one generation, or even several generations, if we fail to provide the necessary education and professional training and everything related to this. Such a failure might lead to radicalisation and other things which are definitely not in our, or the world's, interests in future.

Today, as many Members have said, UNRWA provides assistance and protection for more than five million Palestinian refugees. The European Union enjoys a strong and dynamic partnership with UNRWA. I see Pierre Krähenbühl at least twice to three times a year to discuss with him what needs to be done to improve UNRWA's performance in terms of the services it provides. We also discuss its internal structural needs and challenges and how UNRWA should be reformed. I can tell you that a lot of important measures have already been taken. We should further support all the reform measures taken by UNRWA itself.

So I really appreciate all the support we gained today from Parliament, but I'm pretty sure that it will not be the last discussion about UNRWA and the Palestinians here in plenary.

Presidente. – Comunico di aver ricevuto sei proposte di risoluzione conformemente all'articolo 123, paragrafo 2, del regolamento.

La discussione è chiusa.

La votazione si svolgerà giovedì 8 febbraio 2018.

Dichiarazioni scritte (articolo 162)

Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), per iscritto. – Ogni giorno, più di 500 mila bambini palestinesi imparano a leggere e scrivere nelle scuole gestite dall'UNRWA, l'agenzia delle Nazioni Unite per i rifugiati palestinesi. Nove milioni sono invece le visite mediche che questa stessa agenzia finanzia in un anno attraverso 140 centri sanitari, disseminati nei territori devastati della striscia di Gaza, della West Bank e della Siria. Un'assistenza a dir poco indispensabile, che in un momento critico come quello attuale, viene tagliata di ben 65 milioni di dollari dal suo più grande donatore, gli USA, solo perché mancherebbe quel «rispetto» e «apprezzamento» alle scelte dell'amministrazione a guida Trump. Una decisione dai risvolti tragici, sia per i civili innocenti la cui sopravvivenza dipende dagli aiuti umanitari, che per l'Europa stessa. L'estrema povertà, infatti, non fa altro che aumentare il rischio di radicalizzazione e moltiplicare i flussi migratori di rifugiati verso i nostri paesi. È, quindi, con soddisfazione che accolgo il nuovo pacchetto UE da 42,5 milioni di euro per aiutare i Palestinesi nella costruzione del loro futuro stato, che potrà co-esistere insieme a quello di Israele. Oggi più

che mai c'è bisogno che l'Europa faccia uno sforzo collettivo per risollevare UNRWA e chiedi a Trump di riconsiderare la sua scelta.

Bogdan Brunon Wenta (PPE), *na piśmie*. – Z wielkim niepokojem przyjąłem decyzję obecnej administracji Stanów Zjednoczonych o drastycznej redukcji finansowania pomocy humanitarnej dla uchodźców palestyńskich w ramach UNRWA. Zgodnie z zapowiedzią prezydenta Trumpa w 2018 roku USA zamierzają przekazać agencji 65 mln USD zamiast planowanych 125 mln. Pomoc świadczona przez agencję jest kluczowa dla przetrwania ponad 5 mln Palestyńczyków, w tym kobiet i dzieci, którym UNRWA zapewnia pożywienie, wodę pitną, schronienie, opiekę medyczną i edukację. Pozbawienie agencji środków finansowych jest równoznaczne z odebraniem tym osobom prawa do wspomnianych świadczeń. Apeluję do administracji amerykańskiej, by ponownie rozważyła decyzję o redukcji finansowania dla UNRWA, pamiętając o losie tych, którym zapewnia ona codzienne przetrwanie i godne warunki życia.

W ostateczności proponuję zastąpienie wycofanych środków innymi programami na rzecz Palestyńczyków lub przynajmniej rozłożenie planowanej redukcji w czasie, aby społeczność międzynarodowa zdołała podjąć odpowiednie działania kompensacyjne. Jednocześnie zwracam się do Unii Europejskiej i państw członkowskich o koordynację działań na rzecz wypełnienia powstałej w budżecie UNRWA luki, tak by utrzymać ciągłość pomocy humanitarnej udzielanej palestyńskim uchodźcom.

18. Agenda van de volgende vergadering: zie notulen

19. Sluiting van de vergadering

(La seduta è tolta alle 22.52)

Verklaring van de gebruikte tekens

*	Raadplegingsprocedure
***	Goedkeuringsprocedure
***I	Gewone wetgevingsprocedure (eerste lezing)
***II	Gewone wetgevingsprocedure (tweede lezing)
***III	Gewone wetgevingsprocedure (derde lezing)

(De aangeduide procedure is gebaseerd op de in de ontwerptekst voorgestelde rechtsgrond.)

Afkortingen van de commissies

AFET	Commissie buitenlandse zaken
DEVE	Commissie ontwikkelingssamenwerking
INTA	Commissie internationale handel
BUDG	Begrotingscommissie
CONT	Commissie begrotingscontrole
ECON	Commissie economische en monetaire zaken
EMPL	Commissie werkgelegenheid en sociale zaken
ENVI	Commissie milieubeheer, volksgezondheid en voedselveiligheid
ITRE	Commissie industrie, onderzoek en energie
IMCO	Commissie interne markt en consumentenbescherming
TRAN	Commissie vervoer en toerisme
REGI	Commissie regionale ontwikkeling
AGRI	Commissie landbouw en plattelandontwikkeling
PECH	Commissie visserij
CULT	Commissie cultuur en onderwijs
JURI	Commissie juridische zaken
LIBE	Commissie burgerlijke vrijheden, justitie en binnenlandse zaken
AFCO	Commissie constitutionele zaken
FEMM	Commissie rechten van de vrouw en gendergelijkheid
PETI	Commissie verzoekschriften
DROI	Subcommissie mensenrechten
SEDE	Subcommissie veiligheid en defensie

Afkortingen van de diverse fracties

PPE	Fractie van de Europese Volkspartij (Christendemocraten)	
S&D	Fractie van de Progressieve Alliantie van Socialisten en Democraten in het Europees	Parlement
ECR	Fractie Europese Conservatieven en Hervormers	
ALDE	Fractie Alliantie van Liberalen en Democraten voor Europa	
GUE/NGL	Confederale Fractie Europees Unitair Links/Noords Groen Links	
Verts/ALE	Fractie De Groenen/Vrije Europese Alliantie	
EFDD	Fractie Europa van Vrijheid en Directe Democratie	
ENF	Fractie Europa van Naties en Vrijheid	
NI	Niet-fractiegebonden leden	