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EXCLUSIVE

MARTIN SCHULZ

Parliament president says the EU can make a ‘positive impact’ on citizens’ lives in 2015
WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
Protecting animals, Preserving our future

In today’s globalised world, borders limiting the movements of humans, animals and goods have vanished, allowing pathogens or resistant bacteria to travel across the planet within 24 hours.

Concrete examples such as influenza, rabies, antimicrobial resistance highlight that effective prevention through detection and response at the animal source is essential.

The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) is an intergovernmental organisation with a mandate from its 180 Member Countries to improve animal health and welfare worldwide. The OIE and its partners work every day to strengthen the Veterinary Services, required for ensuring animal health, hence preserving human health, food security and food safety.

• OIE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES
The OIE is the intergovernmental organisation for adoption of international standards relating to animal health and welfare, and zoonoses.

• WORLD ANIMAL HEALTH INFORMATION SYSTEM
The OIE ensure the transparency on animal health, by sharing, in real time, verified and scientific information on the global animal disease control, including zoonoses, and animal welfare.

• INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT
The OIE capacity tools and buildings programmes help to improve good governance for the control of animal diseases worldwide (PVS Pathway, vaccine banks, etc.).

• HIGH QUALITY SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE
The OIE collects, analyses and disseminates global scientific veterinary information using its global network of nearly 300 Reference Centres.
BONUS, the joint Baltic Sea research and development programme

With the co-decision of the European Parliament and the Council in 2010, up to EUR 100 million funding is committed to BONUS for the years 2011-2017 by the eight EU member States around the Baltic Sea and the EU.

BONUS produces sustainable solutions through RESEARCH and INNOVATIONS in support of the ecosystem based management of Baltic Sea’s marine resources.

BONUS projects...

...create new knowledge about marine ecosystems...
BIO-C3 finds out how biodiversity functions and how it can be managed
COCOA finds out how multitude of nutrient forms change in the coastal sea

...boost sustainable fisheries...
INSPIRE improves the knowledge basis for sustainable fisheries
FISHVIEW improves migrations of fish in barraged rivers

...develop ways to reduce loadings from the catchment...
SOILS2SEA determines ways to reduce nutrient loads from agriculture
MICROALGAE develops emission controls by algal cultivation
OPTITREAT optimises small wastewater treatment facilities
PROMISE improves phosphorus recycling of mixed waste

...look for environmentally safer maritime activities...
CHANGE seeks to alter the antifouling practices of leisure boats
ANCHOR helps captains to operate their ships safely in harbours
ESABALT improves maritime safety by efficient situational data handling
SWERA reduces environmental risks from sunken wrecks
ZEB finds ways to clean oily waters onboard ships

...develop new methods for monitoring, surveillance and assessment...
BAMBI looks for new ways how to assess biodiversity
BLUEPRINT develops novel gene-based monitoring methods
AFISMON creates improved tools for new generation monitoring
FERRYSCOPE builds an integrated system of optical measurements from ferries and satellites
GEOILWATCH improves oil spill recognition at sea
HARDCORE harnesses coastal radars for environmental monitoring
PINBAL develops new ways for monitoring marine acidification

In support of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive and other European, regional and national coastal and marine environmental policies and plans

BONUS is funded jointly from the national research and innovation funding institutions in the eight EU member states around the Baltic Sea and the European Union’s Seventh Programme for research, technological development and demonstration. Russia participates in BONUS through bilateral agreements.
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New Year is a ‘fresh start’ for parliament

The Charlie Hebdo tragedy was an attack on the basic principles of free democracies and citizens’ civil liberties, and these are rights we must defend. Tightening mass surveillance would be the wrong reaction. Extensive retention of telephone data and passenger name records did not prevent the attack. Such measures provide a false sense of security, at the expense of civil liberties. Instead, there should be more cooperation between police, security and justice authorities in the EU. We must also improve anti-discrimination legislation and the struggle against hate speech and hate crimes, on all grounds – be it ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or political views.

Parliament should use the fresh start that comes with a new year as an impetus for an inquiry committee into tax avoidance and dumping in the EU following the ‘LuxLeaks’ revelations. With EU governments refusing to take serious steps to tackle the problem of tax evasion in Europe, it is all the more important that MEPs fill this vacuum. The proposal from the Greens/EFA group for a full parliamentary inquiry committee into the issue has succeeded in getting the required 25 per cent of MEPs. It is now down to us to ensure it is set up without delay.

In addition, the EU needs a rebalancing of its financial and economic priorities, with particular emphasis on social aspects, in order to prevent a further rise in inequalities which are destabilising our societies and inciting radicalisation.

The commission’s investment plan and the Latvian EU council presidency should focus their efforts on reorienting our economy and stimulating social and ecological innovation in sectors with huge job creation potential, such as the green sector and in the area of information and communication technology. An energy union based on energy efficiency and renewable energy – and solidarity – should become the flagship project for Europe. We need to ensure that benefits are spread across the continent. We must have control over our energy supply instead of depending on volatile energy prices and dictatorial supplier states.

Ulrike Lunacek (Greens/EFA, AT) is a vice-president of the European parliament

ON THE COVER | Parliament’s priorities

European parliament president Martin Schulz introduces our cover feature on a hopeful note, urging policymakers to learn from the challenges the EU faced in 2014 and use this new year as the opportunity to make a positive impact on citizens’ lives. He writes that “the elections [last May] must be considered as a last chance mandate for moderate European parties to achieve reforms”. The German MEP adds that Europe must “settle the ideological dispute between politicians who preach austerity and those who advocate reckless spending”, while working to strengthen the single market – “the crown jewel of the EU’s successes”. Read on to find out what he believes should be the focus of EU policy for the year ahead. See pages 18–19
Mediterranean unity key to fight against terrorism

Since the beginning of the new legislature, I have been a member of the parliamentary assembly for the Mediterranean union (UfM) through parliament's delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries (Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). Despite the potential such cooperation between 43 states might afford, I have come to realise how much our political resolve has weakened. This has not helped to improve relations between both sides of the Mediterranean.

The road to achieving a genuine union for the Mediterranean is paved with obstacles. The issue lies in the very nature of the UfM – it is a political, economic and geographic patchwork extending from Mauritania to Monaco. On the one hand, improvement in relations between Europe and the Mediterranean countries still depends on developments in the near east conflict. On the other hand, member states' resolve seems undermined by the unfavourable political, security, economic and budgetary climate.

Nevertheless, I still believe that the UfM is an idea worth fighting for and that new ideas must emerge. During her hearing, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini stressed the need for strengthening our ties with regional organisations, including the UfM. It seems particularly timely to put forward ideas, and give new impetus to Euro-Mediterranean relations.

If there is one thing my many years in politics have taught me, it’s that people need concrete projects in order for political action to make sense to them. We need to be taking more modest steps towards intra-Mediterranean cooperation, at least in the initial stages, and focus on 'small', concrete projects to make the UfM more pragmatic and more effective. These projects should initially be developed bilaterally for maximum efficiency.

These could, for example, be modelled on the Franco-Tunisian digital technology alliance, which is a network of companies that has been working to bring together French and Tunisian digital technology companies since July 2013. It aims to encourage them to interact and work in synergy, to put in bids for invitations to tender in the Mediterranean area. This is the type of action we should be taking consistently – working on projects that are useful to society and are related to, for example, digital technology, water, energy or even education. This
work should continue in order to create a real network between our societies on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Though conceived as a framework for social, economic and political relations between the European Union and southern and eastern Mediterranean countries, the UfM cannot, in the current context, merely be a forum dedicated to civil society. The Mediterranean countries are first and foremost faced with a security challenge. From Mauritania to Libya and up to Lebanon, the Mediterranean area has been weakened, more than ever before, through the proliferation of terrorist groups. The first requirement of economic development is continuous improvement of the security situation. Action against terrorism and securing our borders will only be effective if there is a coordinated effort on both sides of the Mediterranean.

However, the current problem is not so much knowing how to address security issues, but where to do so, given that there are so many international forums devoted to this question. As a result, the action that has been taken so far has been inconsistent – the 5+5 dialogue, the Nato Mediterranean dialogue and the organisation for security and cooperation in Europe are some examples. To enhance the impact of our work, it is essential that forums for dialogue become more effective. The UfM, as a group of 43 countries, including 15 in the southern Mediterranean, is the largest of any regional assembly and represents a coherent institution to deal with security issues. Adding a security dimension to the UfM – extending from Syria to Libya – would be another step towards a comprehensive approach to Mediterranean issues.

As a major power in the region, Algeria would need to play an important role in the UfM’s new security pillar. Given its history and geographical location, Algeria has an in-depth understanding of terrorist groups which are unsettling the Mediterranean region and threatening societal, social and economic projects in Mediterranean countries. It should be the leader and the EU’s special partner in the fight against terrorism, within the UfM framework. Algeria is entitled to assume this position particularly because of its involvement in the Nato Mediterranean dialogue, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, and of which Algeria became a member in March 2000. Algeria has continued to invest heavily in this dialogue since joining, and its contribution to the UfM from a security point of view would no doubt be invaluable.

Intelligence, training of military troops and sharing experiences are all necessary steps in the fight against terrorist groups which are proliferating in the region. A coordinated Euro-Mediterranean answer must be given. This is why I will ask that the issue of action against terrorism be placed on the agenda of the next UfM parliamentary assembly meeting, and will press for a security dimension to be incorporated as one of the fundamental principles of the UfM.

These ideas will hopefully contribute to the debate on reviving the UfM, which I believe is essential if we are to face our common challenges together. In any case, parliament is ready to take action. ⭐
On 13th November 2014, the Tokyo High Court issued a ruling ordering five people (three close relatives of the victim, an Evangelical pastor and another person) to pay damages to Toru Goto, a victim of abduction and attempts of forceful religious de-conversion in confinement conditions from September 1995 to February 2008.

The first three trial defendants (his brother, sister-in-law and younger sister) were ordered to pay a total amount of 150,000 €. Pastor Yasutomo Matsunaga of the Niitsu Evangelical Christian Church (Niigata City) was ordered to pay 30,000 € and another professional deprogrammer, Mr. Takashi Miyamura, 75,000 €.

Until now, Japanese courts have dismissed the illegal nature of abduction and attempted forceful religious de-conversion in confinement conditions. They have routinely ruled that such cases were not criminal but “mere talks between parents and children.” More women than men are victims of this practice. In Japanese culture, parents consider children to be under their authority regardless of age.

Toru Goto’s case was also dismissed as a criminal case but exceptionally not as a civil case.

In 1986, Mr. Goto, then 23, became a member of the Unification Church. In 1987, there was a first attempt of kidnapping and confinement by his father and other relatives but he managed to escape about a month later. In order to avoid another similar experience, he cut off all the links with his family.

Eight years later, in September 1995, the parents of the plaintiff, his elder brother and wife, and younger sister, kidnapped him from their home in Hoya City (Tokyo) according to instructions from deprogrammer Takashi Miyamura and Yasutomo Matsunaga, a Christian minister. For about 12 years, he was detained by his family in various apartments which had been technically equipped for confinement conditions. Pastor Matsunaga regularly visited him to urge him to leave the Church, knowing he was deprived of his freedom by his family.

During his confinement, Mr. Goto attempted to escape several times but he was caught every time. Even when he had influenza and developed a high fever, he was not allowed to visit a clinic.

In November 2007, it seems as though family members started arguing about whether to go on with the confinement or not, due to the financial burdens it imposed. In February 2008, his brother, his sister-in-law, his mother and his sister suddenly ordered him to leave the apartment. He was then emaciated and suffering from a serious state of starvation. He was hospitalized and diagnosed with malnutrition. For a while, he could barely stand on his feet.

The legal fight

In April 2008, Mr. Goto submitted a criminal complaint to the Ogikubo Police Station. However, the police did not
conduct any serious criminal investigation and turned the case over to the Tokyo District Public Prosecutor's Office.

On 9th December 2009, the prosecution decided to waive the indictment of the criminal complaint on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

On 23rd June 2010, Mr. Goto appealed to the Tokyo Committee for the Inquest of Prosecution with the hope of reopening the criminal case.

On 6th October 2010, Mr. Goto’s appeal was rejected on the ground that there were too many doubts to consider the case as an attempt of compulsion, capture, confinement and injury.

On 31st January 2011, he filed a civil lawsuit against his family members and the deprogrammers.

The 13th November 2014 ruling was a landmark victory for Toru Goto and for the members of his Japanese Association of Victims of Abduction and Forced Religious De-Conversion.

In 2013, the annual reports of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and the U.S. State Department cited Japan’s judicial system for turning a blind eye to the kidnapping and forced deprogramming of people in the Unification Church and other new religious movements over the past decades.

**UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE DENOUNCES TOKYO’S POLICY OF TURNING A DEAF EAR**

In July 2013, Human Rights Without Frontiers submitted a report on the general issue of attempts of forceful change of religion in Japan to the Human Rights Committee in order to bring to their attention its concerns about the total impunity of non-state actors who abducted and confined converts to new religious movements until they recant their new religious faith.

On 14th November 2013, the problem was raised by the Human Rights Committee in its list of issues addressed to Japan in the following terms: “Please comment on reports of cases of abduction, forced conversion and forced de-conversion, which were not investigated and prosecuted by the State party.”

On 15-16th July 2014, Japan’s human rights record was reviewed in the framework of the 111th session of the UN Human Rights Committee.

On 20th August 2014, the UN Human Rights Committee wrote in its Concluding Observations:

“Abduction and forced de-conversion

The Committee is concerned at reports of abductions and forced confinement of converts to new religious movements by members of their families in an effort to deconvert them (arts. 2, 9, 18, 26).

The State party should take effective measures to guarantee the right of every person not to be subject to coercion that would impair his or her freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief.”

In the last 40 years, hundreds of adult members of new religious movements - mainly the Unification Church and Jehovah’s Witnesses – were kidnapped and confined by their family to be deconverted.

On 7th November 2014, a couple living in Hiroshima City submitted a criminal charge against their family, a pastor and other kidnappers for being abducted, confined for six days until their escape and subjected to attempted forcible de-conversion.

For more than one year, Masato Ishibashi has been missing from his church and his job when visiting his family at New Year. Although he had sent a call for help to a fellow believer and had left a written statement to his lawyer asking for to be rescued in case of disappearance, the police refused to summon his parents.

Willy Fautré, director
Human Rights Without Frontiers Int’l
LATVIAN EU COUNCIL PRESIDENCY

Latvia EU council presidency an opportunity to enhance eastern ties

One of the three priorities of the Latvian EU council presidency is achieving a more engaged and globally responsible EU. The dramatic increase of security threats linked to or stemming from the European neighbourhood has put additional focus on this.

Latvia should contribute to the review of the European neighbourhood policy, while keeping the eastern partnership alive. A number of eastern European countries have expressed their wish for closer ties with the EU, and the eastern partnership summit due to take place in Riga should recommit to this. It should also enhance pragmatic dialogue with the whole post-Soviet region. In this context, Latvia aims to revise the EU’s strategy for central Asia, where the presence and involvement of the EU has not reached its full potential. Of course, Ukraine will be a key issue which will require preserving unity and coherence of the union’s actions.

Strengthening the EU’s international role also implies global aspects. Latvia should assist the commission’s trade agreement negotiations with the United States, Canada and Japan. The ambitious transatlantic trade and investment partnership would increase global income by nearly €100bn and provide economic incentives for the EU, as well as enhance transatlantic security links.

As 2015 is the European year for development, Latvia will focus on the EU’s contribution to the UN summit on sustainable development and post-2015 poverty reduction targets. The common security and defence policy should also be gradually enhanced so it can meet global challenges.

Fighting unemployment, social exclusion and inequality should be priorities for Riga

I am very proud that my country, Latvia, has now taken over the EU council presidency. This is both a great responsibility and a great advantage for Latvian officials and politicians. It gives us the opportunity to show off our country and present our vision for the EU’s future development.

There are many problems to which Latvia could pay serious attention. In my opinion, the presidency should focus on fighting unemployment, social exclusion and inequalities. Currently in the EU, 24.6 million people are unemployed. Around 25 per cent of Europe’s population lives at risk of poverty. In Latvia, 35 per cent of the population lives in poverty. It would therefore make sense for Latvia to pay particular attention to this problem.

The ‘Europe 2020’ strategy aims to reduce the number of people living in poverty by 20 million within 10 years. We are already nearly halfway to the deadline, but unfortunately the results so far have not given us any reason for optimism. This could be due to two problems. Either the plans were too ambitious and unrealistic, or the way the strategy is being implemented is not effective. In my view, the ‘Europe 2020’ goals are achievable, but the EU lacks the will and ambition to reach them. Therefore, I would like to see the Latvian EU council presidency put forward a clear strategy within the social field, and demonstrate energetic fulfilment of its goals.

“Currently in the EU, 24.6 million people are unemployed”

Andrejs Mamikins
(S&D, LV) is a member of parliament’s foreign affairs committee
Geopolitical issues with Russia require ‘special attention’ from Latvian presidency

Latvia is taking over the EU council presidency for the first time. This entails even greater responsibility and, at the same time, a brighter spotlight while Latvia tries to fulfill all duties and objectives set by its government in order to generate a solid performance and outcome for its term.

The top presidency priorities – a competitive, digital and engaging Europe – are already well known. Unfortunately, sometimes new priorities emerge due to unforeseen events, such as the recent tragic Paris attacks, and these need to be tackled as effectively as possible. Nevertheless, I would like to point out another substantial – and judging by the recent issues in Ukraine, also relevant – case. We must pay special attention to the geopolitical issues and challenges that Europe is facing today from Russia.

It is a well-known fact that Russia is desperate to gain power in central Asia and in the eastern partnership states, in order to build up momentum towards the so-called Eurasian union pushed by Russian president Vladimir Putin. We must develop a common European approach to these Asian countries, not only in terms of promoting democratic and European values, but also in the interest of limiting Russia’s geopolitical intentions among these states. Judging by the reality that Ukraine is facing right now, it is safe to say that Russia’s interests do not necessarily match those of other sovereign countries. It is our duty and responsibility to act.

The main concern is that the world teeters on the brink of a large scale military conflict

Latvia must seize chance to ‘tone down’ Europe’s aggressive Russia rhetoric

Because of previously established adverse conditions in Europe, we can hardly expect any notable or revolutionary improvements to come out of the Latvian EU council presidency. The largest European economies slowed down in 2014, leading the EU to recession. This circumstance has made it very difficult for Latvia to reach one of its main presidency goals – promoting the competitiveness and growth of the EU. Now, we must start thinking of ways to soften the social impact of the recession in EU member states.

The EU’s conflict with Russia, and the fact that our heads of state simply let the US take the lead, has weakened the EU’s role on the global stage. We have now reverted back to the same climate that ruled during the cold war, when geopolitical competition suppressed all other forms of international relations. The impact of mutual sanctions has worsened the recession in Europe. However, the main concern is that the world teeters on the brink of a large scale military conflict.

Of course, Latvia itself cannot find a way out of the situation – that depends mostly on the behaviour of leading global actors. The best thing Latvia could do during its presidency is to tone down the aggressive rhetoric towards all topics related to Russia, paving the way for future reconciliation.
RAIDs (Rational Assessment and Innovative Drug Selection) is a EU funded project proposing a rational approach towards building intelligent new treatment designs based on the understanding of specific wiring errors in tumour cell signaling (http://www.raids-fp7.eu/). It is meant to set the stage for future precision medicine and vaccine development through a comprehensive analysis of the tumour and its interactions with the tumour micro environment.

At the core of the RAIDs project is BioRAID, a clinical trial including a substantial biobanking effort for molecular profiling with high standards of quality control of biological and clinical data. To our knowledge, BioRAID is one of the first prospective trials of this type aiming to identify predictive biomarkers for treatment response in cervical cancer patients. RAIDs results will be priceless to identify a set of stratification criteria that will help in the near future to better orient patient to a more personalized treatment. Main clinical trial support structures are based at the promoter site at Institut Curie with sponsorship delegations to Hannover (HCTC), ECRIN and NKI, Amsterdam. Genetic mutations (SeqOmics, Hungary), proteomic alteration (Translational platform Institut Curie (IC)) and their influence on the tumour microenvironment (NKI) of cervical cancers from 7 EU countries are being analyzed. Lacking harmonization in regulatory requirements across Europe and variable levels of experience with biobanking and clinical trial conduct had been a major challenge to the implementation of BioRAIDs study, which is actively including patients today. RAIDs project include a first-in-man DNA Vaccine trial, currently ongoing at NKI Amsterdam and accruing well.

The European collaboration between the different members (SMEs and academia) of the RAIDs consortium will ensure the exploitation of clinical and molecular results:

- SeqOmics (Hungary) plans to develop a molecular profiling platform for patient tumours in the neighboring countries.
- Drug sensitivity screenings currently ongoing shows highly interesting findings that may suggest new alleys for treatment proposals (INSELM/ France) as a function of specific molecular alterations. In addition, a RUSH assay-based (Boncompain et al, 2012) screening tool (IC, CNRS UMR144) for molecules that will inhibit chemokine secretion by tumour cells which misrepresent the microenvironment is being deployed. Knowledge will be helpful for complex precision medicine strategies or vaccines and molecules may be able to improve personalized treatments.
- Sophisticated animal modeling already demonstrated a synergy between a vaccine with radiotherapy (collaboration with Gustave Roussy), leading to future vaccine trial developments
- Monitoring genetic changes throughout the treatment process using targeted sequencing in so called Liquid Biopsies (plasma or sera)
- SMEs and large pharma have already shown interest for participation in the exploitation of results.

Continuous patient information will be ensured via a dropbox integrated into the RAIDs website to allow communication between patients and experienced physicians from many countries.

http://www.raids-fp7.eu/
MEPs unite in the fight against cancer

There were 3.45 million new cases of cancer (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer) and 1.75 million deaths from cancer in Europe in 2012. Cancer is an ever growing epidemic, and one that is continuing to rampage through all EU countries. It is our duty as actors in the EU to work together in a harmonised, collaborative manner to develop and implement comprehensive policies to protect our citizens and lower their cancer risk as much as possible.

At least one third of all cancers could be prevented by modifying or avoiding key risk factors such as smoking, being overweight, low fruit and vegetable intake, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption, and avoiding occupational exposure to carcinogens. Cancer prevention is a vital element of cancer control and this should be given an increased importance at EU and member state level.

At the European level, we aim to facilitate the development of national cancer policies by providing the necessary tools which can act as a guideline for member states. The European commission has been active in cancer policy for almost 30 years. Cancer continues to be a priority for the commission, as evidenced by the EU joint action on partnership for action against cancer (www.EPAAC.eu) 2011-2014 and by the new joint action 2014-2017 to create a ‘European guide on quality improvement in comprehensive cancer control’ (www.cancercontrol.eu).

In the European parliament, the MEPs against cancer (MAC) group plays a vital role in ensuring cancer remains high on the agenda. They work together to improve cancer control in Europe in the belief that cooperation adds value to member state actions. To address the challenges faced by the EU, MAC collaborates together with the European council, the commission and with relevant organisations towards the goal of reducing cancer incidence by 15 per cent by 2020. MAC members believe that impacts on health should be considered in all policies, and our cross-party approach ensures this.

On this occasion of world cancer day 2015 with the theme of ‘not beyond us’, we are encouraged to take a ‘positive and proactive approach in the fight against cancer’. One tool that we have at our fingertips is the newly revised European code against cancer, a set of 12 messages that outline simple lifestyle adjustments the individual can take to reduce their cancer risk. The MAC group was quick to welcome this new cancer code revision in a meeting at parliament in December of last year. The messages in the European code against cancer are applicable to all individuals across all member states, and serves as a key initiative in tackling health inequalities.

As a proud member of MAC, I am committed to continuing to help develop comprehensive EU cancer policies, closing the gap on health inequalities, and continuing to work with all stakeholders to stand tall and fight against cancer.

The EU has a duty to develop and implement comprehensive policies to protect people from cancer, says Miroslav Mikolášík

Miroslav Mikolášík (EPP, SK) is a member of MEPs against cancer (MAC)
On World Cancer Day, Rare Cancers Europe would like to highlight the specific battles that rare cancer patients face and underline the need for dedicated European Reference Networks for rare cancers.

20% of all cancer cases diagnosed in Europe annually are rare so, taken together, they are not so rare. Every year, over four million Europeans are diagnosed with a rare cancer.

Rare cancers pose a unique set of challenges including:
- Late or incorrect diagnosis
- Difficulties in finding clinical expertise and accessing appropriate treatments
- Difficulties in carrying out clinical studies due to the small number of patients
- Funding research for innovative therapies due to small markets
- Uncertainty in clinical decision-making
- Scarcity of registries, guidelines and tissue banks

Rare cancers bring great distress to patients and their caregivers. Due to the particular difficulties they pose, rare cancer patients face an additional burden of uncertainty. Access to expert opinion is crucial and may entail travelling long distances, often across national borders.

The EU has decided to provide support to rare diseases across the EU and to set up European Reference Networks (ERNs) focusing specifically on improving care and quality of life of patients. The Cross-border Healthcare Directive (2011/24/EU) gave the Commission the mandate to support Member States in developing ERNs between healthcare providers and centres of expertise.

By connecting highly qualified health professionals from across the EU, the aim of ERNs is to advance highly specialised healthcare and provide a concentration of knowledge and resources, especially in areas where resources are scarce, such as rare cancers.

The burden of rare cancers on society has not yet been adequately estimated but is recognised as a major public health problem. Rare cancers include all childhood cancers, most hematologic malignancies and several types of adult solid cancers. Over 186 rare cancers have been identified and grouped into 10+ “families”.

One way to improve diagnosis, treatment and quality of care for rare cancer patients is to concentrate treatment in specialised centres. Once identified, they can be linked through reference networks.

ERNs dedicated to rare cancers allowing a centralised review system, would contribute to decrease the number of pathologic misdiagnoses and improve quality of treatment. ERNs would also allow progress on registries, clinical trials and sharing of knowledge about rare cancers between doctors (oncologists and pathologists) and patients alike.

Rare Cancers Europe (a multi-stakeholder initiative including doctors, patients, academic institutions, oncology societies, and the industry) is therefore calling for the creation of specific ERNs for each of the 10+ identified families of rare cancers.

Let’s not miss this opportunity to offer hope, support and novel solutions to rare cancer patients. Join forces with us to call for the prompt creation of European Reference Networks dedicated to rare cancers!

About the author:
Dr Paolo G. Casali is a medical oncologist at the Istituto Nazionale Tumori in Milan, Italy and the chairperson of Rare Cancers Europe.

For more information visit www.rarecancerseurope.org or write to rarecancerseuropenews@esmo.org
Russian seizing of Crimea poses ‘strategic’ threat to EU and Nato

Parliament’s rapporteur on the strategic situation in the Black Sea and the annexation of Crimea by Russia, Ioan Mircea Pașcu, has delivered his report to parliament’s security and defence subcommittee. In his report, Pașcu has argued that the annexation of Crimea by Russia is, “completely changing the strategic situation in the Black Sea”. He claimed that Russia’s move into Ukraine was prompted by Nato’s eastward expansion. Russia’s aggression has been met with widespread condemnation across the world. Its actions in the region have breached several international agreements to which it is party, including the Helsinki accords, the Paris charter and the Budapest memorandum – the first two of which guarantee national sovereignty, while the latter protects Ukraine’s independence and borders. Pașcu concluded by drawing attention to the only instruments the EU has in place to challenge Russia; non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea and sanctions, while comparing it to Russia’s engagement in a naval arms race and exploration of oil and natural gas in the region. He said that, “in the long run, cooperation with Russia is more preferable than confrontation”.

This is a view that would seem to be at odds with that of EU leaders, including British and Dutch prime ministers David Cameron and Mark Rutte, who argue that sanctions must remain in force if Russian aggression is to be reined in.

ECB unveils trillion-euro stimulus to eurozone economy

The European central bank (ECB) chief Mario Draghi has unveiled a plan that will see the bank engage in an asset purchasing programme worth €60bn per month, until the end of September 2016, in an attempt to revive the flagging eurozone economy. Speaking following a meeting of the ECB governing council, Draghi said, the plan “was consistent with the aim of achieving inflation of close to or below two per cent”.

The ECB chief also announced eurozone interest rates will remain at the record low rate of 0.05 per cent.

In anticipation of Draghi’s announcement, vice-chair of parliament’s economic and monetary affairs committee Pablo Zalba Bidegain said, “Expansionary conventional and unconventional monetary policy by itself will not drive aggregate demand.”

Zalba Bidegain welcomed “any expansionary measures” but added, “We need reforms and fiscal consolidation at national level, otherwise these types of measures will not have the effect we all want and expect.” Greens/EFA co-president Philippe Lamberts said, “The ECB is being forced to fill the void left by eurozone member states’ inaction and play the role of an emergency service in the face of deflation”. Lamberts added that “the ECB is stuck between a rock and a hard place due to the hapless response of EU governments” to the economic crisis.
REACH’s death toll: 
800,000 animals and counting!

More than 100,000 animals have been poisoned, blinded and killed in avoidable tests.

The European Ombudsman agrees with PETA that ECHA is LETTING ANIMALS DOWN.

Don’t stand by while animals suffer and die – call on ECHA to do its job to limit this senseless suffering.

PETA International Science Consortium, Ltd. (PISC)
Society Building, 8 All Saints Street
London, N1 9RL
tel: +44 (0)20 7837 6327

For more information, see www.PISCltd.org.uk/ombudsman
When the EU passed the REACH legislation in 2006, this testing programme was intended to ensure that experiments on animals were used only as a last resort. Yet so far, more than 800,000 animals have died in REACH tests. By the time the programme is over, REACH is expected to be responsible for the deaths of upwards of 13 million animals.

A recent report published by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) – the agency that oversees REACH – revealed that 181 experiments were conducted on animals without prior approval or justification and additional tests were conducted on rodents and rabbits despite the availability of nonanimal tests. It is estimated that more than 100,000 animals have been abused and killed as a result.

There is an inexcusable lag between the time that humane testing methods are validated and approved and when they are integrated into the regulations. This lag is directly causing the suffering and deaths of hundreds of thousands of animals. Moreover, ECHA’s outdated guidelines for the application of nonanimal testing methods slow implementation to a glacial pace.

The European Ombudsman agrees with PETA UK that ECHA has failed to live up to its mandate and use all tools at its disposal to reduce the number of experiments that are conducted on animals. The European Commission and ECHA must update the testing regulations and guidelines and act on the Ombudsman’s advice before more animals are subjected to avoidable tests.
The European Union is in need of a ‘revived sense of urgency’

The past 12 months were full of warnings for the EU. They came from different corners and in different shapes, but they all carried weight, truth and in a number of ways, encouragement. 2015 started on perhaps the worst possible note. The attacks in Paris were not a direct attempt against the EU, but they went against the very values that guide this union. They were another clear warning shot aimed at Europe’s core.

We must address these warnings with determination and consistency. However, at the same time, we must not fall into the trap of applying simplistic solutions which would fail to address the complexities at hand. Strengthening the EU’s internal security will be top of the agenda for executives and legislatures alike, both at national and European level. Parliament stands ready to make its balanced contribution.

Last year, the most insightful analysis of the state of the union came when Pope Francis addressed MEPs and candidly pointed out the problems affecting the union – its inward-looking approach, its hedonism and its fear of the future – and stressed the need to put society and human dignity back at the heart of our project. The organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD) has heavily criticised the EU and its member states. A report published a few months ago details how widening inequality and a lack of action to correct this has reduced the potential for growth in the continent, putting an end – if this was not clear enough – to the idea of trickle-down economics and adding to the pressure to reform our agendas for the future.

And possibly the single clearest wake-up call came last May when EU citizens went to the polls – many did not – to elect their representatives to the European parliament. Countless observers, especially in the run up to the vote, anticipated and considered the election results as the ultimate confirmation of the rise of Euroscepticism in Europe. Yet the reality is more complex. Although the Eurosceptic vote did increase somewhat, there was no tidal wave. Be that as it may, the elections must be considered as a last chance mandate for moderate European parties to achieve reforms. Abstentions and the anti-establishment vote were in most cases not an endorsement for a positive alternative agenda, but rather the reflection of a society whose cohesion is reaching its breaking point and of a tested middle class.

In recent years, fissures have been expanding rather than retreating. Our society has become more polarised on a number of fronts. People are losing trust in the capacity of politics and public institutions to act. They see the gap between rich and poor widening. On top of this, taxpayers see individuals and firms dodging taxes at their expense. They see corruption and organised crime gripping the soul of politics. Moreover, opposition is brewing between groups of law-abiding citizens – between young and old, between those who have a safe job and those who live on short term contracts, and between migrants, nationals and long-term residents.

On a European scale, we have witnessed the opposition between austerity-minded and profligate-minded politicians, between north and south, core and periphery and small and big states. The soil for divergent forces in Europe is fertile everywhere. Eurosceptics, populists and extremists bank on a deteriorating scenario to reap electoral benefits. All that is needed for these forces to succeed is for moderate actors to ignore calls for urgent reform.

The EU does not have a magic wand that will allow it to solve all of its problems, reignite growth and bridge the economic and societal divisions that risk tearing it apart. However, a new sense of urgency is finally taking hold within the institutions and the member states. There is no denying that the EU
Martin Schulz (S&D, DE) is president of the European parliament.

“...a responsible and constructive world actor, both towards our partners and for the prosperity and security of Europe’s citizens.”

On the economic front, Europe must focus on completing the single market and making it fairer. In the eyes of firms and industries, the EU’s attractiveness lies in its market of potentially more than 500 million consumers. It offers economies of scale, standards and legal certainties. The single market is the crown jewel of the EU’s successes. We cannot take it for granted – we must perfect it. It must be a key component of any economic relaunch.

Nevertheless, we can no longer tolerate companies reaping the benefits of the single market while simultaneously pitting member states against one another in an unhealthy game of tax competition. This leads to tax avoidance and it comes dangerously close to actively aiding and abetting tax fraud. For this reason, in order for the single market to succeed, the commission must strive to combat tax fraud, avoidance and evasion, as well as fight against tax havens. This must be a core priority for the year ahead. Juncker’s team faces an uphill battle in an area that is jealously guarded by member states. However, there is now strong political momentum and it must spare no effort in forcing progress on this matter. Parliament will be there every step of the way.

Additionally, the EU needs to settle the ideological dispute between politicians who preach austerity and those who advocate reckless spending, by putting sound investment at the centre of its action. The investment plan recently put forth by the commission must be backed by other European institutions and private investors. It must also have the full support – including financially – of the member states. The commission’s proposal to exclude contributions to the fund from the calculation of an eventual excessive deficit provides a very real way of encouraging the ownership of the fund by the member states.

On the international front, the EU must not shy away from the role it has to play in facing the pressing global challenges. It is our duty to be a responsible and constructive world actor, both towards our partners and for the prosperity and security of Europe’s citizens. The EU must be in the driving seat to stabilise its neighbourhood – this is in the interests of both European citizens and the people of the affected countries.

Part of citizens’ mistrust stems from the perception that they are subjects rather than actors of the political and commercial village that the world has become. The EU must prove them wrong, whether we look at the transatlantic trade negotiations, the situation in our southern and eastern neighbourhood, migration or events further abroad, the EU must show greater firmness, fairness and engagement.

2015 must be a year of renewed trust in the EU institutions. For this to happen, we must to act with a revived sense of urgency and priority. This will not be an easy year, but it must be defined by renewed hope towards the future. ★
The EU is ‘under strain’ but must turn crisis into opportunity

Many considered 2014 to have been an ‘annus horribilis’. Domestically, the member states found themselves under pressure from growing populist movements, fuelled by the social discontent caused by the economic downturn. Externally, we have faced unprecedented crises in the European neighbourhood, which transformed our ring of friends in the east and south into a dangerous ‘ring of fire’. The recent tragic events in Paris and Ukraine demonstrate that we cannot shield ourselves from the conflicts around us. However, every crisis also brings an opportunity for reinvigoration, and the current Latvian EU council presidency offers a chance to tackle some key issues facing Europe.

We must challenge the populists and improve the economy. The echoes of the financial crisis can still be felt, and Europe faces a period of stagnation. The labour markets continue to present poor prospects and living standards have declined. This has led to public anger and mounting support for populist and Eurosceptic groups on all sides of the political spectrum.

Unless the situation improves considerably, such parties will remain a prominent part of the European political scene. We must stimulate smart growth, combining budgetary responsibility with policies that promote economic activity. The EU council presidency and parliament must urge member states to stay committed to the path of reforms, including a deepening of the internal market, the adoption of a digital agenda and the launch of commission president Jean-Claude Juncker’s investment plan. We must also maintain a long-term perspective and wrap up the transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) negotiations. These could be speeded up by the recent change, which moved talks about investor-state dispute settlement onto the last item of the agenda for negotiation. Concluding TTIP would not only bring the US and EU closer politically, but also contribute to growth and secure Europe’s place in the world economy.

Additionally, we must strive to maintain European unity on Ukraine. Destabilisation and war are now an everyday occurrence near Europe’s borders. The annexation of Crimea, the war in eastern Ukraine and the de facto annexation of Donbas mark the symbolic end of the post-cold war era and have forced EU member states to take a hard look at their values, security policy, and relations with Russia. Moscow is unlikely to de-escalate the conflict and restore Ukraine’s territorial sovereignty over the occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas in the near future. Russia will continue to put pressure on states such as Georgia and Moldova and back fringe political movements that chip away at Europe’s unity. If we genuinely want to play a leading role in the emerging multipolar world order, we will have to strengthen the EU’s geopolitical capabilities, particularly in its immediate neighbourhood. This must involve both an increasingly assertive stance towards Russia and greater support for Ukraine and its reforms.

We must also build a genuine energy union. The heavy drop in the price of oil – by more than 40 per cent – is great news for consumers and industries in Europe, but less so...
for some export-dependent governments worldwide. Hydrocarbons are a significant bargaining chip in foreign policy and their price directly affects geopolitical stability in the Middle East as well as Russian assertiveness and aggression towards Europe. The EU has finally started to take action on energy security after ignoring the issue for many years, and the new commission lists the establishment of an energy union as a key priority. The budget for 2014-2020 allocates funds for the building of a cross-border energy infrastructure, the creation of a common energy market, and an agenda promoting the development of new technologies in the energy sector. The Latvian EU council presidency must endeavour to overcome the potential inertia of bureaucratic structures and the opposition of certain member states and international corporations, to strive towards the goal of a genuine energy union.

The EU is under strain – to pretend otherwise would be insincere. We may crumble under its weight, squandering half a century of common effort. But we may also learn from past mistakes and emerge wiser, stronger and more unified than ever.

“This year will be a turning point, a decisive moment in understanding the direction the European Union will take. A community united by fiscal numbers or a family with a common fate and battle to fight. Unfortunately, the Paris terrorist attack obliged us to focus our attention on the idea of security and integration. The attack against Charlie Hebdo was a despicable and vile crime. By attacking journalists, it is freedom of speech and democracy that have been targeted. But, by preserving our values, like free movement of persons or freedom of the press, we respond firmly to terrorists: we will never give up on our fundamental rights.

Some people, like Marine Le Pen or Matteo Salvini, propose to suspend the Schengen treaty and return to a system of national borders. They lie just to take advantage of the fears of the electorate. In essence, it is pure populism. You can raise walls or fences as high as your imagination goes but this will only give the illusion of security. What Europe needs is to move forward from the short-term approach and set up a comprehensive policy capable of influencing integration policies, repression measures and concrete actions on the external level. This can be achieved by contributing to the establishment of a European intelligence capacity and increased judicial cooperation under clear and strong parliamentary scrutiny. It should be combined with a clear definition of the purpose of the European passenger name record (PNR) proposition. Once defined, we could determine the data retention period.

The European Union should meanwhile maintain and optimise the current framework of the Schengen agreement and use the existing instruments more effectively, including the Schengen information system. Moreover, Europe needs a positive approach which can be reached by promoting education and integration, as well as by tackling poverty and unemployment.

Whether in Paris, in Europe or Nigeria, we have to defend the values of democracy against terrorism and extremism. The reports of massacres from Boko Haram in Nigeria, including children used in kamikaze attacks, is terrifying.

“Every crisis also brings an opportunity for reinvigoration, and the current Latvian EU council presidency offers a chance to tackle some key issues facing Europe”

Jacek Saryusz-Wolski (PL) is a vice chair of parliament’s EPP group

EU requires ‘shock therapy’ if it is to make a return to economic growth

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Parliament’s 2015 Priorities

on a human level, but also on a political level. The Nigerian institutions have asked for our help and we cannot remain indifferent. The European Union must be the frontrunner in providing practical support to defend democracy in Nigeria. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past which were made in the Middle East and north Africa. We cannot leave Africa’s most populous country to face terrorists who turn inhumanity into a strength. The European Union and the whole international community should realise that we are facing a global threat that requires a global reaction.

As a global actor, Europe must also have a global economic role. The only way to get rid of this lasting crisis and give hope and new job opportunities to the younger generation is to put aside blind austerity and invest in our future. The Socialists and Democrats cannot merely accept an accountant’s vision of Europe. We asked for a shock therapy to be put forward. This would be implemented via new investments, public and private, the creation of a new European investment instrument and finally the adoption of an ‘investment clause’ to enable our economy to recover and save us from social breakdown, populism and European disintegration. In this regard, we achieved great success. We obtained the neutralisation of national contributions to the European strategic investment fund. We obtained the historical implementation of the investment clause for the co-financing element of the structural funds, as well as the public financing of European projects. We stopped a diabolical plan, within the commission, that intended to dictate terms to member states and threatened to impose sanctions should they refuse and implement financial reforms imposed by Brussels. It is not an easy job, but the Socialists and Democrats want Europe to move forward in a responsible way and not just say no or hold back.

Gianni Pittella (IT) is president of parliament’s S&D group

“Europe needs a positive approach which can be reached by promoting education and integration, as well as by tackling poverty and unemployment”
Our economies, our resources and our security are all under pressure. That is why the priorities set out by the Latvian EU council presidency are particularly timely, focusing on economic competitiveness, Europe’s digital potential, energy security and our eastern neighbours.

As the commission gets down to work, we look forward to details of first vice-president Frans Timmermans’ efforts towards a leaner work programme. We will not support any proposals that are hangovers of a 1950s mentality of European integration. However, we recognise that some in commission president Jean-Claude Juncker’s team are seeking more focused action.

Much of the commission’s work is arranged in themes – often under headings followed by the word ‘union’, such as capital markets union, banking union and energy union. Let us get away from the idea that the EU needs any more regulatory ‘unions’ and focus on delivering results. Rather than speaking about a capital markets ‘union’, let us seek open, transparent and well-functioning capital markets so that individuals, entrepreneurs and firms can reduce their reliance on banks for financing. Instead of an energy ‘union’, let us focus on reducing our reliance on unpleasant regimes by diversifying supply, increasing interconnectors and improving energy efficiency.

The EU saw far too many headline-grabbing gimmicks under the Barroso commission. This new team must not go down the same path. Its first test will be turning its proposals for an investment fund into a reality.

While the jury is still out on whether this fund will leverage private investment without burdening new risks onto the taxpayer, the proposal has kick-started a debate about attracting private investment. The ECR will seek to demonstrate how crowd funding, microfinance and non-bank finance can be used to help companies take on that one extra person and reduce unemployment.

Another fashionable phrase often heard around Brussels is the digital single market. We all want digital companies to serve customers across and outside the EU, but we need more than words. Based on a G20 forecast, the internet economy will grow by eight per cent every year for the next five years. To take advantage of this growth, legislation must set core principles for removing physical barriers, ensuring rights, protecting against fraud and copyright abuses, and improving logistics. Prescriptive red tape or a ‘one size fits all’ mentality will see barriers erected and the eight per cent growth – that should have arisen in Europe – will instead arise elsewhere.

Finally, we cannot continue to ignore the elephant in the room – the euro crisis. Either we allow the weaker economies to exit the euro, or pro-euro politicians in richer eurozone countries will have to admit to their taxpayers that they will forever have to fund the weaker eurozone countries via fiscal transfers. Unless such bold actions are taken, the single currency will continue to act as a tear in the side of a ship; we can possibly bail out enough water each time to stop it from sinking, but it continues to weigh us down in the water.

So in 2015 we have a lot of hard work to do. Much of it will be quiet work to deliver on a few clear priorities, but the EU’s new year’s resolution for 2015 must be to do less and do it better.

Syed Kamall (UK) is chair of parliament’s ECR group
In Germany, the age-old debate on data retention is back. In France, discussions have started regarding new monitoring tools. The usual suspects promptly stepped in to make their voices heard – the recovery period following the horrific attacks in Paris didn’t even last a week. For us Liberals, it is clear that rather than falling for Pavlov’s reflex theory and collecting data, we should carry out a realistic analysis of the situation and act calmly. Specifically, this includes improving the exchange of information between intelligence services. While more and more information is being collected about citizens, the competent authorities continually fail to share important investigation results. Consequently, the EU now needs a secret service worthy of the name.

In this regard, we also need to keep our values in mind – after all, the European Union is more than just a common internal market. Above all, it is a union of values and solidarity. This common groundwork is Europe’s core brand in the world. As a result, the Liberals have proposed a ‘democratic governance pact’ which, by setting general, objective and binding standards, will ensure that our core values are strictly and fully respected. When it comes to common norms in terms of human rights, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the fight against despotism, we must not make compromises within the EU.

Besides protecting civil rights, we need to focus on establishing the appropriate conditions for growth. European economic policy must be aimed at promoting job creation and bringing prosperity to as many people as possible. The new commission has recognised this, and is launching a promising work programme. Instead of losing itself in detailed regulations, Juncker’s team wants to finally fulfil its promise of dropping unnecessary laws. Withdrawing overcomplicated regulations with new requirements for businesses and instead focusing on growth and employment will bring good news for Europe.

For the Liberals, it is clear that the EU needs to be ‘big in big things and small in small things’.

We also have a very clear idea of what the economic policy agenda should be – a strict stabilisation policy, market economy reforms, completion of the banking union, a common energy market, and extensive free trade. One thing is clear – Europe needs growth to create more opportunities for people. What is often overlooked is that sustainable growth cannot be achieved by debt-financed government spending or an overflow of cheap money. What has helped EU economies achieve growth and prosperity is the internal market and the opening of new markets. Yet this internal market is still far from complete. There is a huge amount of unused growth potential, especially in the expanding services sector and the digital agenda. We need to achieve considerable progress in the coming year. Our objective is also to promote free trade worldwide and remove all kinds of trade barriers – after all, free trade ensures progress and growth, promotes cultural exchange and creates peace. In particular, we will uphold our commitment to the successful conclusion of negotiations regarding a transatlantic free trade area with the US.

Well-founded civil rights and sustainable growth in Europe – this must be the priority for 2015.★

“European economic policy must be aimed at promoting job creation and bringing prosperity to as many people as possible”

Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (DE) is a vice-president of parliament’s ALDE group
Our group’s immediate focus as the year begins is on the political situation in Greece, where our comrades in Syriza are on the cusp of taking power. In light of this challenge to the ‘memoranda era’ with its failed austerity, the political and corporate elite in Europe have launched an undemocratic propaganda campaign to spread fear and lies among Greek voters about the so-called ‘dangers’ of electing a radical left government. They are scrambling to defend the very status quo that brought about the deepest economic and social crisis since the EU’s foundation, because the forces backing them still benefit from this unfair system. We will do everything possible to support Syriza and the Greek population.

In Greece, democracy has been on hold for the last five years. We want to see economic power back in the hands of sovereign governments and not with financial markets represented by unelected commission officials who prescribe the medicine of austerity which they are not required to take themselves. A medicine that was toxic for both the Greek and the EU economy and led only to poverty, higher unemployment, wage cuts, rising retirement ages, diminished workers’ rights and cuts to health and education spending.

While people suffer from this austerity, big business continues to profit from a system of legal global tax evasion. The ‘LuxLeaks’ scandal once again highlighted that the corporate elites are the real tax dodgers. And furthermore, multinationals are increasingly being put on an equal footing with sovereign nations amid backroom negotiations on future trade deals like the EU-US transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP).

The investor-to-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism that is being negotiated as part of TTIP could lead to sovereign governments having to compensate multinationals with taxpayers’ money if regulation runs counter to corporate interests and profits. Such a mechanism would see decades of gains in social and environmental protections rolled back with grave consequences for consumers, social protection, public health, and the environment. Encouragingly, awareness of these social costs has led to mounting public criticism of TTIP and strengthened the movement against it. GUE/NGL MEPs will continue to fight for a citizens’ trade agenda.

TTIP is just one cog in the commission’s deregulation agenda: its regulatory fitness and performance programme (REFIT) for better regulation is being used as a pretext to weaken health, safety, and environmental standards, under the guise of cutting red tape.

As Latvia takes charge of the rotating EU council presidency, competitiveness and growth have once again been named as top priorities. But at what cost? We call on the Latvian government not to consider labour and social protections as obstacles to growth and not to view protecting our planet as subordinate to a competitive economy. Use of European digital potential in EU development is also one of the key Latvian priorities. Our group wants to safeguard the principle of net neutrality and protect privacy and private data on the internet.

Finally, amid ever more global instability and bloodshed, the EU must reject the military-industrial complex and act as a global actor for peace. We must also protect the refugees fleeing from warzones, particularly from Syria. The EU needs a holistic approach to migration that creates safe and legal ways to access protection in Europe. We want an EU of solidarity, not one of far-right fear and discrimination.

The political and corporate elite in Europe have launched an undemocratic propaganda campaign to spread fear and lies among Greek voters.”

“The time has come to reclaim democracy from the elites, writes Gabriele Zimmer”

Gabriele Zimmer (DE) is chair of parliament’s GUE/NGL group.
European parliament must unite in defence of common values

The brutal attack on the French magazine Charlie Hebdo will overshadow the start of what was already set to be a challenging year for the European Union. It underlines the need for the European parliament to unite in defence of our common values now, more than ever. We have to better explain what we do in Brussels and regain the trust of our citizens for the European project.

This will all depend on how we manage the challenges of 2015. We are now less than a year from the crucial UN climate summit in Paris. If the world is to have any chance of halting dangerous climate change, we need to conclude an ambitious, binding global agreement at COP21. To positively influence the outcome in Paris, the EU must up the ambition of its climate commitments to ensure we play our part in keeping global warming below two degrees centigrade. This means focusing on energy saving and efficiency as well as seriously boosting renewable energy development. Therefore, the EU needs to adopt ambitious and binding targets for 2030. This is not only a matter of climate protection, but also of fostering a better and sustainable economy.

Directly linked to this is the EU’s new ‘energy union’ which will be developed in 2015. The Greens have long pushed for a true energy union and believe it is in the interest of Europe and its citizens to ensure this union moves us towards an economy powered by home-grown, safe and sustainable energy. This would help revitalise our economy and create jobs, reduce our harmful dependence on unreliable fossil fuel exporting countries, and support us in achieving our climate change goals.

The ‘LuxLeaks’ revelations have shone a welcome spotlight on tax avoidance and dumping in the EU and beyond. At a time when social and economic inequality is rising in Europe, we should be redoubling our efforts to ensure the wealthiest individuals and corporations contribute their fair share, rather than abetting them in avoiding their tax responsibilities.

Existing legislation should be enforced and tax rebates illegally obtained by companies must be reimbursed. The Amazon decision is a breakthrough to this end and must be the first of many cases. New legislation to increase transparency on all tax matters must be prioritised. And finally, we need a level playing field on taxation across Europe to stop the race to the bottom of tax dumping. We hope the inquiry committee proposed by our group will be swiftly implemented now that it has the required support from across the political spectrum.

The EU needs to promote European values not only inside, but also outside its borders. This means supporting democracy, state of law and freedom of speech, especially in neighbourhood countries such as Turkey or Ukraine. The EU must continue to present a strong and united front towards Russia. The top priority will be ensuring a peaceful resolution to the Ukrainian conflict is reached – one which respects the democratic and pro-European aspirations of Ukrainians, while protecting Ukraine’s integrity.
A Europe without borders is a ‘20th century fantasy’

One thing I know for certain is that this year the EU elite will go on forcing the peoples of southern Europe to suffer in the name of the euro. No matter how much the Greeks, Italians, Portuguese, Spanish and French suffer, the elite in Brussels, Frankfurt and Berlin will go on telling them that their industries are failing, their workers are unemployed and their national debt burden continues to grow because they have not yet suffered enough.

Yet we all know suffering will not heal their economies. The only thing that will heal these economies is for them to get out of the economic and monetary union with Germany. Instead, the EU and Berlin will go on demanding the Mediterranean countries impose ‘internal devaluation’ Every honest economist identified ‘internal devaluation’ at the start of the crisis as a reckless, brutal policy and so it has proved to be.

What is happening across southern Europe is human sacrifice to save the political project of the euro. However, UKIP has forced it onto the political agenda.

The political divide in the UK and increasingly in other countries across the EU, is not any longer between left and right. That is yesterday’s politics. The political divide now is between those parties across the EU, such as UKIP, who want to restore the common sense of national control of borders and immigration. Our opponents are the undemocratic elites wedded to the 20th century fantasy of a Europe without borders, run by technocrats without elections.

There is another continuing crisis, too; the industrial crisis of jobs and factories shutting down throughout the EU and reopening in the low cost, light regulation economies of Asia and the Americas. Now even China is heading into recession, showing massive spare capacity among the Asian giant’s cheap-labour factories.

These three crises are of course all just parts of a single great crisis: the crisis of the loss of democracy. There is a helplessness felt by people across the countries of the EU. The people elect representatives to their national parliaments only to find the representatives cannot control economic or monetary policy. They cannot control immigration, cannot control regulation, nor control the destruction of factories and jobs. This is driven by the ideological demand for economic and monetary union at any cost.

I don’t think anyone knows what will happen. I just know that I want our British democracy back. I expect in the coming months to see that more and more people of the great historic nations across the continent will want their own democracies back too.

Europe’s left-right divide has been replaced by those who want to ‘restore the common sense of national control of borders’, argues Nigel Farage

Nigel Farage (UK) is co-chair of parliament’s EFDD group and leader of the UK Independence Party

“What is happening across southern Europe is human sacrifice to save the political project of the euro”
Since 1981 the EISCAT Scientific Association has operated radar sites in northern Norway, Sweden and Finland for research on the upper atmosphere and near-Earth space environment over Northernmost Europe. Through the years, EISCAT also added an atmospheric heating system for doing controlled plasma experiments and a two-antenna radar system on Svalbard.

The partners in EISCAT are Sweden, Norway, Finland, the United Kingdom, Japan and China. Research institutions in France, Russia, Ukraine and Germany have contributed operations and investments; however the EISCAT results are used by scientists in more than 50 countries world-wide.

EISCAT’s primary scientific goals are to understand the effects of the solar wind on the Earth’s systems and advance knowledge in plasma physics by studying a place on Earth were plasma is naturally visible – the Aurora. The Arctic Aurorae, or the Northern Lights, occur when high-energy particles in the solar wind interact with the Earth’s atmosphere and magnetic field. Strong solar winds can cause serious disruptions to infrastructures such as power grids, telecommunication systems and satellites.

Being versatile and strategically placed in the Arctic and sub-arctic regions, the EISCAT radar systems support a variety of research programmes. Examples include measurements of temperature in upper Arctic atmosphere, meteorites affecting the atmospheric chemistry and space debris studies.

EISCAT_3D

The EU Commission and the EISCAT partners fund the planning and technical design work for a new radar system in Northernmost Scandinavia. Each site will hold 9919 stationary antennas formed into phased arrays. The transmitter will be placed in Norway and have 5 MW of transmitting power with an option to upgrade to 10 MW. This configuration will enable real time 3D vector mapping of the dynamics of large volumes of the near-Earth space and the upper atmosphere.

The EISCAT_3D system will be located under the main Aurora oval, where the Northern lights are most prominent, and at the edge of the Polar Vortex, one of the main features controlling the winter weather in the Arctic and Northern Europe. As with the current EISCAT, EISCAT_3D will utilize and enhance local facilities including rocket and balloon launch sites for studies of the atmosphere, magnetometers and optical instruments for plasma and Auraloral studies.

The capabilities provided by EISCAT_3D will contribute to realizing Unions H2020 Space programme by advancing the Union’s capabilities in areas of space weather prediction and space debris observation.

To ensure that EISCAT_3D is constructed using the most cost efficient technologies and that the knowledge gained from the developments in radar- and electronics technology will benefit society, the final technical design work will be carried out in partnership with industry and academia. EISCAT plans to enroll SME’s, large electronic manufacturing companies and academic institutions in the development of EISCAT_3D.

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EU space policy needs innovation to stay in ‘race’ against US

There is so much more to a well-developed space policy than just landing on the moon or a desire to one day land on Mars. Telecommunications, traffic surveillance, navigation, earth observation, danger prevention and even weather forecasts – the space industry is one of the main driving forces of innovation, the benefits of which can be felt by all. However, there is very little room at the top and the competition never sleeps. Last year, the organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD) examined data from over 40 countries with space programmes. The US remains the leader and is able to afford the largest space programme. Worldwide in 2013, there were at least 900,000 people employed in the space industry – not including universities and research facilities.

It goes without saying that the EU needs to collaborate with the European space agency (ESA) and find new ways of holding its ground against the growing competition. Europe can look back on 50 successful years in European space travel – and we need to build on this. Politicians can establish the right framework conditions, but the impulse needs to come from the economy itself. In terms of research and development, the EU has allocated a total of €1.7bn for space research over the next seven years under its new ‘Horizon 2020’ research framework programme. This money must now be put to good use, especially in relation to ‘global monitoring for environment and security’ (GMES), for security aspects and satellite communication applications.

In a community of 28 countries with over 500 million inhabitants, there is certainly creativity and a striving for new innovation. The difficulty lies in pooling and coordinating skills and experience. Approval procedures are complicated and national sensitivities should not be underestimated. Therefore, the ESA ministers sent out the right signal at their meeting at the beginning of December last year. With work on the Ariane 6 space shuttle going ahead, the continued success of Europe’s launch vehicle is guaranteed. In the future, Ariane 6 will also ensure independent access to outer space. Precisely the right signals are being sent out for maintaining Europe’s competitiveness in the space industry. The German and French joint venture, ‘Airbus Safran launchers’, will be responsible for developing, building and marketing new rockets. This also sends a clear message to US competitor Space X.

The race between Europe and the US has once again
picked up speed. Last year, following a 10-year journey, the ESA successfully landed the ‘Rosetta’ probe on a comet 800 million kilometres from the sun to research the history of how our solar system was formed. It is now Space X’s turn – the USA company has developed a ‘reusable’ rocket, which will be deployed to deliver food and other supplies to the international space station (ISS). Once this has been done, the rocket will not fall into the sea as is customary. Instead, it will land on a floating platform in the sea, ready to be reused. This would be a revolution in the history of space travel and could significantly reduce the cost of such projects. Space X already benefits from lower costs thanks to its lean structure. However, other small and extremely flexible US companies are entering the market and benefitting from government support. Europe’s space industry therefore needs to be more cost-efficient. The small scale, very complex structures in Europe consisting of various players in industry, politics and science are large cost drivers.

Other extremely ambitious European projects are also slowly starting to take shape at the same time. Last summer, a mountaintop was destroyed in Chile, laying the foundations for a project of unimaginable size – the European extremely large telescope (E-ELT). It is a single telescope with a main mirror measuring 39 metres in diameter, set to open doors to new worlds as of 2024. The images the telescope will transmit are said to be 16 times sharper than those of the Hubble telescope, developed by the national aeronautics and space administration (Nasa) and the ESA. The aim of this ambitious project is to find evidence of an earth-like planet on which life could form in the habitable zone of a star. However, this is likely to take a few years or even decades.

In our everyday lives, we all benefit from countless innovations originating from space travel – without even noticing. Satellite communication in particular still attracts too little attention. Rapid internet access in Europe’s most remote areas, navigation systems which are not just for cars but also for air and sea transport, climate protection initiatives and even the efficient management of Europe’s energy networks – these would all be unthinkable nowadays without satellites. Research activities therefore need to be pursued in this area too.

“Worldwide in 2013, there were at least 900,000 people employed in the space industry – not including universities and research facilities”
EUMETSAT prepares to broadcast Copernicus marine data across the EU

The European Union has entrusted EUMETSAT to operate the Copernicus Sentinel-3 marine mission and to deliver marine data services to Copernicus service providers and users.

In 2015, EUMETSAT will support the commissioning of the Sentinel-3 satellite by ESA and start to extract marine products at its multi-mission facilities in Darmstadt and to deliver these as well as other products from the Jason-3, EUMETSAT and third party missions across the EU and EUMETSAT's Member States.

CREATING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL THROUGH AN INTEGRATED REAL-TIME DATA SERVICE

Based on its highly scalable architecture, EUMETCast will provide flexible Sentinel-3 data services (e.g. low or high volume, contents and formats) to an unlimited number of simultaneous users in the EU, regardless of possible limitations of local communication infrastructures. Users only have to be equipped with a standard VSAT terminal costing less than 2 k€. EUMETCast will thus provide equal access opportunities for all Copernicus users in Europe, with possible extensions to Africa. Moreover, EUMETCast will integrate marine data from Copernicus, EUMETSAT and third party missions from the US, China, India into a unique data stream to support the development of a broader range of real-time marine applications and services.

To meet high-timeliness requirements, EUMETSAT will rely on high-speed networks like GEANT as well as on its operational EUMETCast multicasting service based on European commercial telecommunication satellites and the latest Digital Video Broadcast (DVB-S2) standard. Using technologies widely used for Digital TV broadcasting, EUMETCast already delivers a wide range of meteorological and environmental satellite data to more than 4,100 users in Europe and Africa, with an average availability of 99.9%.

For further information on EUMETCast and how to get access to the service: www.eumetcast.com

EUMETSAT
Eumetsat-Allee 1, 64295 Darmstadt (Germany)
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APDES is a Portuguese NGDO that promotes the integrated development of vulnerable groups and communities. Founded in 2004, its main goal is the universal access to healthcare, employment and education. Several national and international institutions, such as the World Health Organization and the Pompidou Group/Council of Europe, have acknowledged the excellence of our work.

APDES activities are multidisciplinary and all-inclusive, due to its intervention based on Services, Research and Advocacy, where it promotes the dialogue with political decision-makers. APDES has a wide geography of intervention, covering three continents through the several projects implemented and the 10 international networks it is part of. Our organization works with several groups, such as children and youngsters, the elderly, drug users, sex workers, long-term unemployed and families.

COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
APDES has been prioritizing Cooperation and Development since 2008, in particular in Angola. At the time, the project “Empowerment for the Community Work in the Neighbourhood of Capalanga” was created, aiming to bring the university closer to the community, increasing the social responses in the healthcare, education and socioeconomic development fields and promoting the dialog and social agreement between local authorities and non-state actors.

From this first action in the territory, the “Palankinha School” project was born, with the support of the Japan Embassy and the Open Society Initiative of South Africa. Assuming the School as a tool that promotes the community development, the project comprises the Architectonic Rehabilitation of the school, the training of a teaching staff team and the implementation of a pedagogical model for Citizenship.

In the European Year for Development, we undertake new opportunities and challenges, particularly with the start of two projects Co-funded by the EuropeAid Program. Aimed at the universal character and improved quality of Education in Angola, the “Sikola” project strives for the rapprochement between the local authorities and non-state actors in Luanda, Cabinda and North Lunda, in order to establish a dialogue and develop a prolific teamwork in these matters. Consulting among local NGO’s for the organizational development and continuous training of teachers focused on pedagogical contents and in the reinforcement of each individual’s civic conscience, are some of the initiatives carried out.
A lot has been said and written on climate change. Some call it a disturbing truth that cannot be denied. Others are more cynical and consider that there has always been a warming-up and cooling down of the earth.

In my view it is important to avoid emotions and instead to focus on the facts. We know that Europe is not always the most ambitious continent in the world, for example in the field of innovation, entrepreneurship and economic growth. But in the field of climate change we can be proud of what Europe is doing.

If all the satellites envisaged within the Copernicus programme become operational, Europe will have the world’s most developed observation capacity. The European earth observation can be used for international policy, as climate change is a global problem.

The programme has been designed to provide monitoring of land, air and atmosphere; while most marine and water monitoring is included in the security and emergency services. In addition to these five services, a climate change service is foreseen.

One of the main objectives of this programme is to provide reliable indicators. This would present a continuous picture of our evolving world to the scientific community and public authorities. It is important to stress that Europe will be the first continent to have such a unique information pool.

Furthermore, additional benefits will be derived thanks to the use of the data by private business and European citizens who will also have access to Copernicus services and downstream applications.

Monitoring the environment in order to support its protection and sustainable use is the ‘raison d’être’ of Copernicus. The availability of up-to-date indicators about the state of the environment, in its different components, can provide the ‘raw material’ for a lot of applications useful to sustainable resource management and biodiversity preservation. This data can be used in resource-saving applications ranging from precision agricultural techniques to forest management, from marine resource management to pollution control.

Preliminary results show that climate change is real and that we should be worried about it. Climate change should be taken seriously as it places a mortgage on future generations. The European economic and social committee (EESC) has stressed the need for action in this field, underlining the need to develop the network of satellites, while emphasising that this should be paid from the community budget.

The EESC was actively involved in RIO+20, and hopes that Europe will continue to take the lead in this important process at COP21 in Paris. At this crucial event, the international community must achieve tangible results, supported by all partners.

As president of the EESC, let me underline not only the potential environmental impact, but the social and economic impacts of Copernicus – it is a tool to create jobs. Synergies between ecologic and economic objectives constitute the basis of the program.

The EESC has launched this project in order to facilitate SME involvement in the space economy, especially in the midstream and downstream activities, and not only for the space-related industry.

A lot of downstream applications are envisaged and many examples have already been provided on how private businesses could use this data to develop or widen their market sector. Some examples of practical applications include solar power site selection and plant monitoring, damage assessment for insurance claim management, precision farming and oil pipeline encroachment monitoring.

New opportunities will arise for SMEs in particular, as they will benefit most from the availability of free data. It is true that big businesses already have the opportunity to buy very high resolution data because they can afford this type of investment and enjoy subsequent returns.

But the case for SMEs is different – Copernicus will provide them with data of sufficiently high resolution to develop new businesses without the need for substantial and risky investment.

Henri Malosse is president of the European economic and social committee.
The first steps mankind made in space were the result of the cold war struggle between the US and Russia. For a long time, space was one of the many areas of competition between them. Although the situation today is different, countries from all over the world now participate in the space race in order to pursue technological advances. However, we are also aware of the rapidly changing international environment, as we face new challenges to common security.

The EU, as such, is a fairly new player in the space race. It was only after the Lisbon treaty came into force that it became possible to create a meaningful EU policy in this area. As other players have been involved in this area for quite some time, the EU has to build on the experience gained by some of its member states.

There is a lot to gain – the commission’s space programme can help to modernise not only space-based technologies, some experts also indicate that it may enhance the overall reindustrialisation of Europe. Galileo was expected to successfully compete with the US global positioning system, but sadly, it did not fulfil our expectations. Together with the Copernicus earth surveillance programme, they are the first, and so far only, major infrastructure projects managed by the European commission. Massive investments in scientific research and the space programme, in the range of up to €17bn and €20bn respectively, are expected to create spin-off effects in other sectors, to become drivers of innovation and to help European industry regain a leading role on the world stage.

While the origins of space exploration were strictly related to military goals and applications, they have quickly proven their worth for civilian purposes. Despite a different geopolitical situation existing today, the space race is still very important for military reasons. This is something that has been discussed in one of the security and defence subcommittee meetings. One of the conclusions which arose from the meeting was that, while the EU cannot directly invest in military areas, there are numerous other fields that can benefit from greater European engagement. Until recently, the main goal of the European space programme was to gain technological independence from our long-time strategic partner, the US, and to be able to develop our own satellite navigation capabilities.

Paradoxically, this pushed Europe into the arms of Russia, whose credibility left much to be desired but had the means to deliver EU satellites into orbit. Yet, subsequent failed launches due to flaws in Russian rockets proved that this cooperation is very costly for the EU and brings very little in terms of tangible results. For instance, in May 2014, Express AM4R, which was to be Europe’s most powerful communication satellite and worth €238m, was lost because the Russian proton-M rocket exploded. This shows that the EU has to choose its partners wisely, not only to prevent the waste of EU taxpayers’ money, but also any loss of credibility as an important actor in space. EU actions in this field should also be coherent, with general policies and principles applied in other areas which, under current circumstances, would put closer cooperation with Russia under question.

The examples described earlier show clearly that the European space programme is a tool of both internal and external EU policies. If pursued wisely, it will bring benefits both for the EU on the international stage, and for the industrial and scientific development of its member states. The vision of technological independence should not, however, weaken relations with the US and make Europe dependent on a country which has proven – and is still proving – to be very unreliable.
Space is the industrial revolution of the 21st century, underpinning European industry and day-to-day life. In fact, there is little in society that is not influenced or delivered because of space technology. Importantly, space presents us with significant geopolitical, economic and societal opportunities.

The European global satellite navigation systems agency (GSA) is responsible for translating navigational technology into services that directly benefit the lives of citizens. European geostationary navigation overlay service (EGNOS) and Galileo satellites are examples of how Europe is using space as a solution. For example, Galileo’s civil nature and its interoperability with global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) constellations means end users will benefit in many ways from more accurate and reliable positioning services. EGNOS provides enhanced services that help improve efficiency and accuracy in the transportation sector.

European GNSS benefits all EU citizens. Some are employed by companies active in the production of GNSS devices, while others work for firms whose products are improved by the GNSS services. Some citizens use GNSS services to make their work more efficient, and many benefit from using GNSS services when navigating by foot with their smartphone in hand or through in-car navigation system.

To understand the economic potential for European GNSS, it is important to look at the global GNSS market. According to the GSA’s market and technology monitoring process, European companies (EU28 plus Norway and Switzerland) had an estimated 26 per cent share of the global GNSS market in 2012. In components manufacturing, European companies are especially strong in antenna manufacturing, as well as in producing components for the road, rail and aviation sectors. Europe is a global leader in systems integration in rail and has a strong presence in the maritime and road sectors. However, Europe performs weakest in the location-based services (LBS) market, where the US is the current global leader. However, LBS presents huge potential for Europe. There is an enormous opportunity for application developers and value-added services where small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups can bring innovation. The experience of EU GNSS research and development (R&D) projects proves SMEs are especially strong in applications for fleet management, vehicle tracking and recreation. LBS is by far the largest market for GNSS. Over the past five years, global shipments of GNSS-enabled LBS devices have grown from 300 million to one billion.

In order to better

**Space provides EU with ‘geopolitical, economic and societal opportunities’**

Satellite technology will save lives and ‘result in one billion working hours being saved’, writes Carlo Des Dorides
access this market, Europe needs Galileo. The total cost for the Galileo programme – from design to development, deployment, exploitation and maintenance – comes out at about €50 per EU citizen. For this, EU citizens will see long-term tangible benefits in many areas – from safety to smart phones, from cars and flights to rail transport – everyone benefits from European GNSS.

With the many applications that the EGNOS and Galileo satellites offer, our lives will become simpler. Getting from one place to another becomes easier and the amount of time spent on specific tasks is reduced. Based on a recent analysis, between 2015 and 2025 it is estimated that 120,000 flights will not be diverted and 33,000 not cancelled thanks to EGNOS and Galileo. This will result in one billion working hours being saved, the equivalent of over 100,000 years.

European GNSS is also good for the environment, allowing for efficiencies and thus decreasing fuel consumption. As a result, between 2015 and 2025, Galileo and EGNOS will reduce CO2 emissions by nearly 20,000 tonnes. Together, EGNOS and Galileo will also save 7000 tonnes of pesticides, 2.2 million tonnes of fertiliser and 4.5 billion litres of fuel.

Finally, EGNOS and Galileo save lives. Thanks to services such as the new e-Call system, it is estimated that over the next decade European GNSS will contribute to saving over 4500 lives.

By investing in European GNSS and related R&D programmes, we are creating European competences in space and the ability to develop space infrastructure that opens the door to new industries and markets, supporting innovation and ensuring the advancement of Europe.

Carlo Des Dorides is executive director of the European global navigation satellite systems agency

"The total cost for the Galileo programme [...] comes out at about €50 per EU citizen"
The remit of the SR2S MARS project is to develop, validate and increase the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the most critical technologies related to a magnetic shielding system for protecting astronauts’ lives during long duration space missions.

Long time exposure to ionizing radiation is linked to the probability of various types of cancers. Means to adequately shield the astronauts from this radiation are required in order to plan for exploration missions to Mars, Asteroids, or for settling on the Moon surface.

SR2S has explored the feasibility of a superconducting magnetic shield, comparing the various possible magnetic configurations and analysing its merits as well as the challenges of this approach. It also includes the development of some key enabling technologies to be used to build such a spacecraft shield.

Main activities of project partners include:

- Assessing the requirements for an active radiation shield suitable to protect astronauts during long duration flight in space
- Gathering together the most competent European teams needed in this joint effort, exploiting the existence in Europe of worldwide cutting edge expertise in the technologies of protective shields (also known as superconductors)
- Providing a roadmap for future technical developments needed to develop the active shield technologies needed for space travel
- Reviewing, analysing and selecting the requirements on radiation doses for exploration travel in deep space

This successful FP7 project will enhance science research for future deep space missions.

To find out more about SR2S Mars project visit our website: [http://www.sr2s.eu/](http://www.sr2s.eu/) or follow us on Twitter @SR2SMARS
Email: questions@sr2s.eu

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The SEAM (Small Explorer for Advanced Missions) project aims at developing, building, launching and operating a nanosatellite for science-grade measurements of magnetic and electric fields in the Earth ionosphere. An overarching goal for the project is to jointly develop a nanosatellite platform for advanced scientific missions.

Micro- and nanosatellites are attractive due to their low launch cost; this allows for ground-breaking missions with satellite constellations. The CubeSat nanosatellite standard allows unification of spacecraft preparation and launch, making the projects more affordable. For advanced missions to fully realize the potential offered by nanosatellites, the capacity of the platforms must be enhanced and small yet sufficiently sensitive sensors must be developed.

The SEAM spacecraft features

- electromagnetically clean platform
- dual deployable 1m booms
- precision attitude determination
- flexible autonomous data acquisition system
- high-bandwidth telemetry
- an integrated solution for ground control and data handling
- miniaturized magnetic sensors.

The objectives of the satellite are to characterize the auroral field-aligned currents and to study natural and anthropogenic ELF and VLF emissions.

The consortium brings together eight partners from five European countries, six of which are SMEs aiming to offer novel solutions to the high end of the nanosatellite market. The Royal Institute of Technology KTH is the coordinator of the project. Based on a broad expertise in space research and development, recently consolidated in the KTH Space Center, the university strives to be at the leading edge of European space innovation.

For more information see [www.fp7-seam.eu](http://www.fp7-seam.eu)
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EU COLLABORATION PROJECT   DEVELOPS ADVANCED NANOSATELLITE PLATFORM
The vision of the si-Cluster is to create a world class cluster on space technologies and applications. Striving for this vision, its mission is to place Greece amid the countries that develop cutting-edge space technologies and applications. The goal of the si-Cluster is to develop Greece as a leading region for space technologies and applications with a high international visibility, capable of attracting high impact research, and developing innovative solutions and products in order to foster and further expand business activities.

It currently consists of 37 members representing the majority of the Aerospace sector in Greece while it is expanding rapidly not only its industrial base but also its cooperation ties with all the innovation ecosystem actors, including academia, research institutes, European, regional and central governmental and other stakeholders involved in this demanding technological field.

Over 70% of its members are located in the Attica Region. The main thematic focus of the si-Cluster is in Aerospace Electronics (65%), Remote Sensing Applications (25%), and Aerospace Materials & Structures (10%). The si-Cluster members have an export ratio of over 40%, and employ locally more than 2000 professionals, out of which 30% are highly skilled personnel holding a PhD or MSc degree.

Through a series of well-designed services and benefits provided to its members, the si-Cluster creates the necessary framework and conditions for them to flourish, in order to create added value for the Greek space industry.

Recent Milestones and Achievements
During the past year, the si-Cluster reached very important milestones and achievements, the most significant of which are:

- Awarded as the “Tech Initiative of the Year” for Greece by the PC Magazine. The si-Cluster is considered by experts and the general public as the most innovative project for Greece for the years to come.
- Developed five flagship collaborative projects between si-Cluster members: ACRITAS, MENEALOS, CIDCIP, NFOFRAS and BLISS. These projects all aim at the development of end products and services for the international space market.
- Inaugurated its Innovation Center and headquarters with state-of-the-art office space and amenities housing its members, as well as an in-house business center, an exhibition area and a computing and virtualization data center to support the sector development.
- Signed an agreement with the Greek Ministry of Defense, to act as an end user for the products developed by the si-Cluster members, in order to verify their operational readiness, and vouch for their functionality and robustness.
- Signed an agreement with the largest and most well-known aerospace cluster in Europe, the Aerospace Valley cluster in France. This was followed by a “Cluster Ambassador Programme”, where one delegate from the si-Cluster is located in Toulouse, in order to promote collaboration between the two cluster members.
- Signed an agreement with the Apulian Space cluster (Distretto Aerospaziale Pugliese), which is of paramount importance in order to develop joint space programmes for the Adriatic meta-region.
• Organised a series of roadshows for si-Cluster members in China, Israel, Belgium, Holland and France. These have already resulted in commercial agreements and collaboration opportunities for the Greek Space Industry.

• Certified as an EU-BIC, by the European Business Network – EBN proving that the si-Cluster offers best-in-class services to its members and is the best place in Greece to start-up a Space venture.

• Certified with the Bronze Label, by the European Cluster Excellence Initiative exhibiting the commitment of the management team to cluster management excellence.

• Implements a 7.5 million € programme co-financed by the Greek State/NSRF for the development of the IT business plan and R&D programme. During the first year of the programme, the majority of the KPIs set at the beginning of the programme have already been reached. This proves that the Greek space industry is moving forward at a very fast pace, with a growing market share, constantly expanding its capacity.

The si-Cluster has been co-financed by the Hellenic Republic and the European Union – European Regional Development Fund, in the context of the O.P. Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship (OPC II).

To keep in touch with our latest news, success stories, and collaboration opportunities, please visit our website (www.si-cluster.gr), or contact the si-Cluster management team.

The 37 members of the si-Cluster

Members of the si-Cluster at a roadshow in Israel, accompanied by representatives of the Greek General Secretariat for Research and Technology and the European Space Agency.
Investment in space sector is ‘not an extravagance but a necessity’

When I was 15, Poland’s first – and to date, biggest – space observatory was built in my home region. Each visit in this new Silesian planetarium was a real feast for my teenage imagination, even if back in 1955 imagining that man would travel to space seemed as utopian as the thought that a Pole would be writing these words as a committee chair in the European parliament. In the following decades, we explored much more of outer space. Today, space programmes remain crucial for many areas of our economy, our environment and our security.

EU space policy deserves a long-term vision, built together and followed by all stakeholders. We should bear in mind that the space sector is not a standard industrial sector; it is of great strategic importance. Institutional customers play a very important role – the market is not completely open. However, like all other sectors, it is changing fast – new technologies and new players mean greater competition.

A key challenge in the coming years will be the implementation of the Galileo and Copernicus programmes, as well as the space surveillance and tracking support framework. Galileo will give us our own navigation and positioning system, and it will play a growing role in many sectors such as energy, transport, fisheries, civil engineering, emergency services and more. Copernicus will provide continuous data on pollution and global warming. The space surveillance and tracking (SST) framework will help us tackle the dangers of space debris and avert disruption risks.

We must promote a greater European space market, both institutionally and privately. Not only will it generate wealth and jobs, it will also support space manufacturing and help maintain political and financial commitment to space programmes. Following the commission’s legislative proposal for creating an internal market in commercial earth observation data, parliament is beginning work on this file. Non-legislative ways to strengthen the market should also be used, so that European space programmes serve EU public policy, and so that space policy is mainstreamed in as many policy areas as possible – in telecoms, transport, agriculture, to name but a few.

There is also a need for high levels of investment in research and development and innovation. There needs to be greater coordination between the EU, the European space agency and the member states. Parliament called for a joint ‘research roadmap’ in an excellent report on space industrial policy published in 2013. The EU should also focus on critical technologies. We should assess how to support access to space and develop a European launcher. Additionally, we must review the rules on procurement, in order to better take into account the specificities of the space sector.

Space infrastructure – in terms of innovative telecommunications, observation or navigation, for example – even if it is built for civil purposes, has the capacity to serve European surveillance, security and defence projects. Let us therefore remember that investments in this sector are not an extravagance but a necessity. Finally, our space programme can boost not only Europe’s industrial competitiveness and safety of the world’s citizens, but also the imagination of many generations of teenagers who will be coming to observatories to explore, learn and marvel.

Promoting the European space market will do wonders both for EU competitiveness and the imagination of teenagers everywhere, writes Jerzy Buzek

Jerzy Buzek (EPP, PL) is chair of parliament’s industry, research and energy committee

“Space infrastructure – in terms of innovative telecommunications, observation or navigation, for example – even if it is built for civil purposes, has the capacity to serve European surveillance, security and defence projects”
At the end of this year, we should finally be able to benefit from the first commercial services associated with Galileo. In spite of a seven-year delay to the initial schedule, it has been worth the effort. So, let’s briefly remind ourselves of the benefits of the plan to create a European satellite radio navigation system.

At the moment, we are over-reliant on the US global positioning system (GPS). That dependence creates, first of all, a problem of a strategic nature, since we do not have control of the satellites on which our foreign and security policy is based. As with energy and digital matters, Europe’s access to space must not be dependent on the goodwill of third-party countries. Space is indissociable from our sovereignty – so let’s not leave it to others. Let’s stop being subjected to the three ‘Gs’: GPS, Gazprom and Google.

Moreover, the quality of the current system leaves something to be desired, particularly regarding the accuracy of the signal. The data gathered by satellite radio navigation systems has nevertheless become increasingly precious in a large number of areas, especially in transport. On a daily basis, it increases travel safety, facilitates traffic flow, and reduces congestion and its impact on the environment.

With the deployment of the European geostationary navigation overlay service (EGNOS), which improves upon GPS positioning (three metres instead of 17 metres), noticeable progress has been achieved. In maritime transport, for example, this system allows ships to be guided through narrow channels or the exploitation of the halieutic resources off our coasts. In the aviation sector, EGNOS provides assistance for mountain rescue or the landing of large planes at medium-sized airports.

Galileo and its even more precise signal offers us new opportunities – promoting the development of multimodal transport, guiding tractors to increase the yield of harvests or even developing services to help elderly or disabled people, for example, people suffering from Alzheimer’s who go missing.

The exploitation of space has once again been in the limelight thanks to the resounding success of the Rosetta mission. Let’s not quell the terrific enthusiasm sparked by Philae. It is a long-term effort: Rosetta is the embodiment of 10 years’ work. A suitable, sufficient budgetary programme over the long term is, therefore, necessary. New research based on the exploitation of space is costly and requires a critical mass which we can only achieve on a European level. We must encourage the pooling of resources and the development of commercial applications to stimulate research which will benefit all Europeans.

Let’s not forget all the industry and services directly connected with space and with the possibility of geolocation, these are worth tens of billions of euros per year. Europe must retain its leadership in this field; it is a question of competitiveness and of preserving our jobs. Furthermore, it is estimated that just the deploying of Galileo could ultimately generate 20,000 jobs and 2000 permanent jobs, and this is without taking applications into account.

In 2015 episode VII of Star Wars will hit the screens, but let’s leave the fiction to Hollywood, while we win the real star wars.★

"Europe’s access to space must not be dependent on the goodwill of third-party countries. Space is indissociable from our sovereignty – so let’s not leave it to others"
For many of us, space is synonymous with fiction. We hear more said about it in the cinema than we do in our daily lives. However, in Europe, space is no longer a myth—it is a reality, a firmly-established industry, and I would even go as far as to say, an industry just like any other.

Little is known about the space industry but we owe much of our modern way of life to it, both in terms of the present—communications, television, satellite vehicle navigation, meteorology, disaster prevention, mapping, and defence—and the future—scientific research and space tourism. The success of the space industry is one of the greatest achievements of European integration, bringing together virtually all space production and economic forces on the continent.

Since the entering into force of the Lisbon treaty, space has been included in the remit of the European Union, with the aim to “develop a European space policy”. The outgoing commission implemented a number of highly innovative initiatives which have thus far not delivered what they were supposed to: creating a clear practical policy for the industry. No doubt we remain at the early stages, which is why I hope the new commission will be able to meet the two great challenges I consider to be the pillars of this new policy: competitiveness and independence.

The space industry performs particularly strongly and it has already established itself in the private sector and in exports, which account for half its turnover. Comparatively, the US, Chinese and Russian industries are highly dependent on national contracts in the public sector, at over 80 per cent. With just 34,000 employees or 10 times less than that of the US, we manage to do equally well technologically. It is estimated that six per cent of our gross domestic product depends on space technology. However, globally the European space industry is a small fish in a large pond, with a turnover equivalent to just 10 per cent of that of the aeronautical industry, and a total allocated European institutional budget six to seven times lower than that of the US, particularly in the field of research and development (R&D).

European policy needs to ensure the sector can overcome an imperious bureaucracy. There is a need for ongoing programmes, such as Copernicus, Galileo and Horizon 2020, in line with the requirements of the sector and with the challenges of tomorrow. Just like in the United States, or the space programmes of emerging countries, we think in terms of response measures. We need to reform governance so that space policy is thought of as a bridge linking countries together, rather than being confined to silos.

As is the case with defence or foreign affairs, the space industry is a tool for independence and even sovereignty. However, our industry remains overly dependent on expertise from abroad to master certain highly-advanced technology. How would our economy continue functioning if the United States were to block GPS?

Dependence is measured through our obligation to use technology we do not have and are forced to purchase. It is similarly evident in the low technological readiness of certain products. It is virtually impossible to market an untested product. These are critical issues for both our public policies and our trade balance.

Focusing on R&D and reforming our governance are the keys to success in a space industry. Europe becomes stronger when it dreams. We did it with Rosetta and Philae, so this year let’s resolve to pursue the momentum of the great space adventure. Let’s put stars in the eyes of Europeans! ★

Franck Proust outlines why Europe needs ‘a clear and practical policy’ for the space industry

Franck Proust (EPP, FR) is a member of parliament’s international trade committee

“I hope the new commission will be able to meet the two great challenges I consider to be the pillars of this new policy: competitiveness and independence”
With a phenomenal number of entries, nominations have now closed for this year’s MEP Awards. The Parliament Magazine would like to take the opportunity to thank all those who participated and we look forward to announcing the Shortlist on 28 January with voting opening on Monday 2 February, so be sure to visit the website at www.MEPAwards.eu

Awards timeline:

**Shortlist announced**
28 January 2015

**Voting opens**
Monday 2 February 2015

**Voting closes**
Monday 23 February 2015

**Awards ceremony**
Wednesday 18 March 2015

For further details, please contact events@dods.eu or +32 (0)20 7593 5668

Thank you to our sponsors
Opening Up Education Through Digital And Online Learning: A Viable Solution For Africa

EP-Nuffic seeks to engage Dutch training institutions to join in the rise of open online education on the African continent – a task waiting for stronger European commitment. EP-Nuffic is the national expertise and service centre for internationalisation in education in the Netherlands. It is proud to be a partner of the Université d’Abomey-Calavi (UAC), the largest university in Benin on the West African coast. UAC is determined to widen access to its programmes and to improve their quality by ‘going e-‘.

UAC is turning to digitalisation as a means to break out of the ‘amphi’ curse: lecture halls where hundreds of students are packed to follow chalk-and-blackboard teaching under poor audio-visual conditions – and from where hundreds more are left out due to the scarcity of infrastructures. With 100,000 registered students, an average teacher/students ratio of 1/98 and limited government resources, UAC must innovate drastically – or perish. This is the plight of all universities in Africa. Open and online education (OOE), whether home-grown or adapted from existing sources, appears to be a viable solution to improve quality while at the same time widening access to a rapidly increasing student population.

What does a digital course look like at UAC? Imagine a PowerPoint presentation, with an oral explanation from your teacher, who appears in a small window in the bottom-right corner of your screen. Nothing fancy, only the essential, and home-produced to respond to local needs. So far UAC has produced 52 digital courses. Through the Dutch-funded NICHE programme managed by EP-Nuffic, UAC will be able to intensify its efforts and roll out its e-learning expertise to its 26 faculties and schools.

UAC has a strong OOE vision and receives reinforcements from several partners, in addition to EP-Nuffic:

With UNESCO and the African Union’s initiative African Virtual Campus, UAC produces multi-media resources and documentation. With help from the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, it holds training sessions for its teachers to help them put their courses online. So far, 100 out of 900 teachers have been trained. 200 computers have been acquired with support from the West African Economic and Monetary Union. The Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne offers technical assistance to help UAC set up its local version of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) – currently only for use on campus due to limited Internet bandwidth. Private students may take courses in ICT and in Business English in a tele-education centre with its own generator. The courses are offered in real-time by various partners in India. And from next year, UAC students will also have access to open, online courses in Applied Computer Science through the African Virtual University, financed by the African Development Bank.

“With 100,000 registered students, an average teacher/students ratio of 1/98 and limited government resources, UAC must innovate drastically – or perish.”

Hélène Bernot Ullerö • www.nuffic.nl/niche
In 2000 the world came together to agree on eight simple yet crucial aims, which became known as the millennium development goals (MDGs), with the overarching ambitious target of ending poverty by 2015, a deadline that has now arrived.

It is fitting that this year will see the ‘post 2015 process’ take place – the international negotiations, led by the UN, to put in place sustainable development goals, once the current millennium development goals expire. 2015 is also the year when a new international climate agreement will be decided, requiring stronger links to ensure climate-resilient and resource-efficient sustainable development.

That is why it is so timely that 2015 has been designated as the European year for development (EYD). I believe that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to raise awareness with EU taxpayers on how our work is making a difference in some of the world’s poorest countries. It is the first ever European year to focus on external relations.

The main objective of the year is to inform and raise awareness among EU citizens, especially younger people, of the results of EU development cooperation. It also aims to get people actively engaged in development. We want to spark a debate around the motto of the year ‘our world, our dignity, our future’ – a motto suggested by the European parliament and later adopted by both the parliament and the council.

EU development aid ‘is something to be proud of’

“The main objective of EYD is to inform and raise awareness among EU citizens, especially younger people, of the results of EU development cooperation”

EYD offers a unique opportunity to create awareness and momentum for development issues, writes Neven Mimica
The EYD will bring together young people, policymakers, civil society, the private sector, academic institutions and individual stakeholders to focus on their common development aims and how they will run their own activities throughout the year.

There will be many occasions for people across the EU to become involved. A range of activities and events will take place which people of all ages and interests can participate in, and, we hope, will stimulate interest and engagement across Europe.

But why is the EYD 2015 needed and why now? The 15 years since the millennium have seen the fastest reduction in poverty in human history: there are now half a billion fewer people living below the international poverty line. But there remains much to do: 805 million people, or one in nine, still go hungry every day and 58 million children worldwide are still not participating in primary school.

As the world’s largest aid donor, the EU and its 28 member states have played and continue to play a key role in contributing to the alleviation of poverty. You only need to think of the 70 million people who have gained access to drinking water since 2004, almost 14 million children enrolled in primary education and the seven million births attended to by medical staff. EU aid is something to be proud of.

According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, 85 per cent of EU citizens agree that helping people in developing countries is important. Furthermore, 67 per cent think development aid should be increased – a rise of six percentage points since the 2013 survey.

It is important to remember that we can all have an enormous influence on global development. This ties in very strongly with the spirit of the European year, which is about letting citizens know how they themselves can make a difference, even in small ways; for example by buying products which come from developing countries during their weekly shop. Eurobarometer also found almost half of all EU citizens would be prepared to pay more for groceries or products from developing countries, and nearly two thirds say that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a main priority for the EU.

As the European year for development gets underway, it is motivating and inspiring that the future of development is in all our hands. Let us use the unique opportunity which 2015 provides to put development in the spotlight and together we can make this year count. I hope that the European year for development will create a unique momentum and raise awareness bringing development closer to citizens across the EU.
Industrial ships generate approximately one billion tons of polluting emissions every year which in turn contribute to health problems such as premature deaths and cardio-respiratory diseases among citizens. To mitigate its effects, the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies (FIIAPP), a Spanish institution dedicated to international cooperation, carried out a project to control polluting emissions from ships in Turkey, with financing from the European Commission. The project contributed to the ratification of the annexes of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) by the country. This not only means that the country has adopted the same legislation for maritime transport policies as the EU, but also that it now benefits from a legal basis to enable it to inspect vessels with foreign flags that enter Turkish ports. FIIAPP has been working in Turkey for ten years to facilitate its accession to the EU by adapting its legislation to European standards.

This is just one example of the work FIIAPP has been doing to improve the functioning of public systems in the 90 countries where it works, making it a reference institution in Europe in terms of managing international technical cooperation projects with other government institutions. The Foundation, whose board is chaired by the Vice President of the Spanish Government, works at the service of public administrations by managing the participation of its different bodies in international cooperation projects and exchanging best practices and models of public policies. In addition, FIIAPP is the Spanish institution responsible for managing the EU twinning programme and an eligible entity for delegated cooperation.

To manage these projects, FIIAPP mobilizes approximately 1,000 civil servants and experts each year. Geographical priorities are Latin America and the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, West Africa, Sahel, as well as Pre-Accession and European Neighbourhood countries. Its projects, focused on modernising public administrations, encompass sectors such as migration, terrorism, climate change, management of infrastructures and social services, among others.

Furthermore, FIIAPP is a leading actor in the implementation of EU activities in the area of prevention of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats.

Currently, FIIAPP is expanding its lines of work through agreements with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP)

www.fiiapp.org
@FIIAPP
New feedstocks of biowaste in Africa for development of sustainable products

Coordinator, Prof. Anne-Belinda Bjerre, Danish Technological Institute
Dr. Mathias Gustavsson, IVL Swedish Environmental Research Institute

In Africa, more than 25% of all fruit, vegetables and plant production end up as biowaste due to undeveloped harvesting technologies, and lack of storage capacities. The Biowaste4SP project is an EC project with the aim to turn biowaste resources by-residues and co-products into value-added products, thereby improving the circular bio-economy in Africa.

For example, when processing the rice paddy in a rice mill in Ghana, 65% will be good rice for consume, 7% rice bran, 22% will be rice husk and 6% will end as waste and dust. Besides, in a commercial banana plantation in Egypt, we found that about 7% of the banana fruits produced (in addition to the amounts of leaves and stems) is rejected and used for compost.

Since enormous amounts of agriculture biomasses are produced in Africa each year, further use and upgrade is attractive also seen from a sustainable point of view. The Biowaste4SP project shows the road map for the whole value chain from production, collection, storage, and conversion of the identified biowaste resources to their final sustainable products. The results will have direct application in Africa and will give further support to development processes in rural and urban areas.

Six Post Docs and PhD students from Africa are educated during the project period of three years.

One of the deliverables just fulfilled in the project is a catalogue with identified agricultural biowaste feedstocks available in the five African partner countries Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana and Morocco. The identified biowaste resources are herein classified as sugar rich (high contents of cellulose, hemicellulose and starch), nutrient rich (high contents of plant nutrients), and protein rich feedstocks including their potential use for production of bioethanol, biogas, lactic acid, amino acid, protein and fertilizer (as indicated in Table 1). Estimated yields of the products will be presented from real experimental fermentation trials. The catalogue will arrive as a text book at the end of the project (December 2015).

Table 1: Potential biowaste resources and potential products from the conversion of these

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biowaste</th>
<th>Sugar rich</th>
<th>Nutrient rich</th>
<th>Protein rich</th>
<th>Potential product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cassava</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>ET, LA, AA, DDGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassava bran</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>FZ, BG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>ET, LA, AA, DDGS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice hulls</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>ET, LA, AA, DDGS, VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice straw</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>BG, FZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton stock</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>BG, FZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybean waste</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>BG, FZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manure</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>BG, FZ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Key to abbreviations: ET_ ethanol ; LA_ Lactic acid; AA_ amino acids; PRO_ proteins; VA_ value added products ; BG_ bio-gas; FZ_ Fertilizer; DDGS_ “Distillers dry grain solids”; in this context the solid rest after fermentation)
Dignity should drive EU development policy

The European year for development (EYD) is the culmination of a process which began in 2012. Representatives of the European economic and social committee, commission and the European confederation of relief and development non-governmental organisations (Concord) came together for my report on the “agenda for change: the future of EU development policy” which proposed to dedicate the year 2015 to development. I introduced an amendment to the report, as well as a verbal question to the commission, to give the approach advocated in the report more visibility and the rest is history. We won the argument and this year sees, for the first time, a dimension of EU external policy designated as a European year.

The motto of EYD2015 – “our world, our dignity, our future” – takes into account our firm resolve to shape, together with our partners, the future of our planet, fully respecting the principle of the irreducible nature of the human being. I think it is worth remembering parliament’s role, with regard to the slogan and its success in getting the council to accept the idea of placing dignity at the centre of the EYD2015.

The eradication of poverty, primary education for all, promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, reduction of infant mortality, improvement of maternal health, combating of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, preservation of the environment and the setting up of a worldwide partnership for development were the millennium development goals (MDGs) proclaimed by the UN in 2000. Progress has been made but the work is far from complete.

Whether the glass is half full or half empty, the fact remains that the goals have not been met. This presents us with some questions. Was the strategy adopted in the year 2000 the correct one? Was public development aid (PDA) insufficient? Are developing countries not primarily responsible for their sad fate? These questions are relevant and recurring. Answering these questions requires the means for engaging in strategic reflection. When will an independent institute for development on the European scale be created? One should remember that agencies and other European institutes have already been created in the past for less.

What we can say is that globalisation, the source of wealth, has not been able to drive down poverty as global gross domestic product has increased. In fact, we can observe that the wealth...
created is constantly advancing. It is interesting to note that while the economic gap between states has reduced, inequalities are accentuating within countries. It is obvious in regard to the fight against poverty that rethinking our development policies is necessary.

Emphasis on responsibility and accountability will be crucial following a reflection on our external relations and on development cooperation in particular. Recent changes introduced to EU development policy already indicate the path to be followed. The European parliament adopted and the council accepted the principle of differentiation, which aims to remove most of the ‘emerging’ countries from the list of beneficiaries of PDA from the EU. From a common sense point of view, ‘differentiation’ calls for China, in particular, to allocate at least part of its ‘made in China’ wealth to the eradication of poverty. What formerly came under international solidarity must in the future become a subject for Chinese, Brazilian or Salvadorian domestic policy.

This would enable the European Union to dedicate itself more to fighting poverty within the framework of its partnerships with developing countries and prioritise the least advanced countries. We enter this major awareness-raising campaign with this spirit of responsibility, while remembering dignity must remain when everything else has been forgotten. ★

“Globalisation [...] has not been able to drive down poverty as global gross domestic product has increased”

Charles Goerens (ALDE, LU) is parliament’s rapporteur on the European year for development
The European ESTHER Alliance brings European Governments and allied organisations together to forge health partnerships with low and middle income countries. The Alliance has eight active country members – France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Norway, Switzerland, Ireland; and one observer – the UK.

Since 2002, the ESTHER initiative has supported 350 institutional health partnerships in 40 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. ESTHER partnerships have contributed to improving health outcomes, developed services where none existed and trained over 50,000 vitally needed health workers. Our partnerships have contributed to Millennium Development Goal progress in key areas of child health, maternal health, and HIV and other major diseases.

The ESTHER Alliance is defined by its twinning, or partnerships, approach: professionals from our hospitals and health institutions work with their peers in partner countries, and together we work to improve frontline services and develop the capacity of the people who deliver them. Following our Charter for Quality of Partnerships we apply a best practice framework, emphasising aid effectiveness, partnership equality and reciprocity of benefits.

The ESTHER Alliance is ready to engage with the post-2015 agenda and new challenges for health, recognising the need for resilient health systems to withstand emergent threats such as the Ebola epidemic. In 2014, the Alliance approved an ambitious 5-year strategy, seeking to add new Member countries, expand collaboration between Members, and increase implementing partners. The Alliance will strengthen capacity of hospitals and key health institutions to protect health, deliver safe and high quality services, and achieve better health outcomes.
INVESTING IN FRAGILITY?
GET REAL INVOLVEMENT

Fragile areas remain a source of instability in the world. In fragile areas, there is a lack of security, justice, opportunity and governance. In order to move forward, it is crucial to address the causes of fragility. This is also reflected in the number of Millennium Development Goals that have been achieved, in which the most fragile countries are clearly still falling behind. Investing in post-conflict areas is the answer. But who is willing to take the risk?

How you can support fragile areas
The UN Synthesis report (Art. 79) towards a post-2015 agenda states: “We must address state fragility, support internally displaced persons and contribute to resilience of people and communities.” “Reconciliation, peacebuilding, and state-building are critical for countries to overcome fragility and develop cohesive societies, and strong institutions. These investments are essential to retaining the gains of development and avoiding reversals in the future.” These recommendations by the UN Secretary General fall in line with our conclusions on fragility. We are therefore, in the frame of the European Year of Development 2015, calling on EU decision makers to support:
- Long-term commitment to state building and good governance;
- Adoption of an integrated approach: help restore the social contract between governments and citizens by ensuring collaboration on sustainable solutions by meaningful political dialogue;
- Funding and means of implementation that are appropriate for a fragile and conflict-affected situation;
- Agendas and implementation based on the real needs of communities;
- Attention to the position of women as both the victims of fragility as well as powerful agents of change.

How to work in fragility
Cordaid believes that power imbalances, whether in economy, security, gender or religion, are among the root causes of fragility. To restore social cohesion and stability, and to enable communities to flourish, Cordaid works simultaneously in the following areas
1. Security and justice: protection for people, freedom from fear and the provision of justice.
2. Opportunity: access to basic services, economic improvement, and the right to earn a decent living.
3. Governance: institutions that respond to people’s and communities’ needs, and that represent their interests.

In this way, we can enhance the relationship with public and private stakeholders and restore the social contract. From our 100 years of development experience and proven track record, we have learned that an on-the-ground-presence is essential for success in vulnerable and fragile areas. Cordaid and its partners are well positioned to build formal systems based on the existing local, often informal, structures in post-conflict areas.

The New Deal
As part of its commitment to addressing fragility, Cordaid hosts the secretariat of the Civil Society

Eradicating poverty calls for long-term commitment to fragile and conflict-affected areas
change at the local, regional, national and international level. We have a large network of trusted partners, particularly in fragile areas. We deliver innovative solutions to complex problems in multidisciplinary projects that tackle security and justice, healthcare and economic opportunity. In line with our open development strategy, we publish all of our project data online using the IATI format, which increases our transparency and accountability. We have a long history of financial innovation, ranging from Results Based Financing to blending grants and loans, to increase the financial sustainability of our partners around the world.

**Cordaid’s role**
We are ideally positioned to mobilize citizens, (social) enterprises, NGOs and governments to bring about system change at the local, regional, national and international level.

“**The only effective way to deal with poverty and conflict is to combine state building, conflict resolution and good governance with the improvement of basic services such as healthcare and education. This calls for stamina, a comprehensive strategy, and a clear financial commitment.**”

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**FACTS AND FIGURES**

634 partners

38 countries

324,000 private donors

181 mln. euros

Total annual budget

>100 years of experience

11 country offices

>1600 projects

Source: annual report 2013

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**ABOUT CORDAID**

Cordaid is the Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid, with its headquarters in The Hague and country offices in 11 countries. It has been fighting poverty and exclusion in the world’s most fragile societies and conflict-stricken areas for more than a century. Cordaid is deeply rooted in Dutch society with 324,000 private donors. Cordaid is a founding member of Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE. Cordaid has a staff member on the board of CONCORD, the EU Confederation of EU CSOs in relation with the EU institutions, co-initiator of the European Year for Development. [www.cordaid.org](http://www.cordaid.org)

**CARE. ACT. SHARE. LIKE CORDAID.**
The European year for development (EYD) gives us an opportunity to raise awareness and instigate a public debate about development policies. The EU’s 28 member states combined constitute the world’s largest aid donor, yet opinion polls show low knowledge of Europe’s impact. 2015 will also be the year when two major UN processes conclude: the post millennium development goals (MDGs) talks in New York in September and the climate talks in Paris in December. The EYD must go beyond a series of events to showcase EU development policy and must be a year of action where the EU takes the lead to ensure a successful outcome to these global talks.

The aim of the post MDG UN summit is to agree a new global development framework and replace MDGs with sustainable development goals (SDGs). The European parliament has called on the EU to play a leading role in this process along with national governments to ensure the goals are ambitious, put the eradication of extreme poverty at their heart, as well as emphasising human rights. Good governance, reducing inequalities and empowering women and girls are also vital. An essential part of the SDG process is to match policy goals with serious commitments on financing and these are due to be made at a special conference in Addis Ababa in July. We need to see countries reach the committed target of spending 0.7 per cent of their national income on development aid, which is one key part of the financing efforts needed if the SDGs are to be achieved.

The climate talks in Paris in December follow shortly after the New York talks. I have seen first hand the effects of climate change on some of the world’s poorest people, for who global warming is not a future problem but a real and present danger. We need a renewed sense of urgency and serious emission reduction targets backed up by policies to deliver them if we are to stabilise global temperatures. Poverty will never be history unless we tackle climate change.

However, there is a third process which comes up for review this year which has featured lower down on the agenda: the EU gender action programme. In too many countries, progress is being undermined as women are subjected to violent attacks in conflict situations, notably in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Syria, and girls’ access to education is under attack. The rights of women and girls must get back on track in 2015 by investing in policies to redress the balance.

The official launch of the European year for development in Riga on 9 January was a positive start to this crucial period, as was the launch of the international civil society campaign for action in 2015. Civil society and non-governmental organisations will play an absolutely vital role in the efforts to make this year a success. Figures from a recent Europe-wide survey of public opinion show 85 per cent of those surveyed believe it is important to help people in developing countries, and 64 per cent said that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU. The EYD must galvanise this support and use it to pressure politicians at the two UN summits to make a deal which lays the foundation for a more equal, sustainable world community beyond 2015.

Linda McAvan (S&D, UK) is chair of parliament’s development committee.

“Poverty will never be history unless we tackle climate change.”

Linda McAvan (S&D, UK) is chair of parliament’s development committee.

END POVERTY EVERYWHERE

2015: A Year for Action

“Poverty will never be history unless we tackle climate change.”

Poverty will never be history unless we tackle climate change.
EYD must maintain focus on combating malaria

With 2015 designated as the European year for development (EYD), we find ourselves at something of a rare tipping point. As the UN initiated millennium development goals (MDGs) come to their natural conclusion, attention has moved towards the next chapter in international development. Ideally, this post-2015 agenda will see a significant shift in focus from emergency response to a sustainable approach, underpinned by strengthening existing healthcare systems. However, there is a temptation for us to indulge in reflection by lingering on the accomplishments of the past, bolstered by the somewhat justifiable guise of evaluating what works and what doesn’t.

The fight against malaria, the sixth MDG, has long been heralded as arguably the most successful campaign of its kind. The widespread distribution of nets, effective treatments and rapid diagnosis tests have seen mortality figures drop an impressive 47 per cent between 2000 and 2013, according to the world health organisation. Indeed, 55 countries are expected to realise the 2015 world health assembly and roll back malaria partnership target of lowering malaria incidence by 75 per cent.

Yet despite malaria being preventable and curable, half a million people still succumb to the disease each year, with 584,000 people dying in 2013. It is an affliction made all the more poignant for its rampancy in children under the age of five, some seven per cent of whom will suffer attendant and lasting neurological episodes.

We are now confronted with a rare opportunity; foregoing self-indulgence in favour of capitalising on our gains. The post-2015 sustainable development goals (SDGs) framework will face fresh challenges, complacency not least among them. Perversely, the success of preventative and control measures in the campaign against malaria might well prove its undoing. With the rise of other health emergencies, such as the Ebola outbreak, there is a concern that malaria funding will be viewed as less critical in the short-term.

Of the 75 malaria resurgence events since 1930, most have been attributed to a decline in funding, according to a study by the Clinton health access initiative. If we fail to eradicate malaria now, diluted budgets and complacency will see past gains lost to increasing cases of drug-resistance.

A realisation that the development landscape is shifting is necessary. While donor countries look to trim their balance sheets, global wealth is on the rise. Even the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia are set to reach higher-income brackets, which will see their eligibility for pricing concessions snatched away, critical in the case of essential medicines but also impacting on international support. The emerging economies of Brazil, China and India must be encouraged to use their increasing influence to support upcoming SDGs, if they are to succeed.

The private sector is also set to play a pivotal role. Due to the threat posed to their workers by the disease, oil and gas companies in particular have driven forward the anti-malaria campaign. Chevron, the global fund’s largest single corporate donor, will provide more than €50m over the course of eight years, while the ExxonMobil malaria initiative runs programmes in Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Angola. Yet, to date, we have failed to harness the extraordinary potential posed by the indigenous private sector.

On 27 January 2014, colleagues from parliament’s committee on development will host an event with the support of the Novartis malaria initiative looking at how private sector innovation and improved funding through public-private partnerships could boost our efforts in the fight against malaria.

Nirj Deva believes ‘diluted budgets and complacency’ could impact on the gains made in the fight against malaria.

Nirj Deva (ECR, UK) is a vice-chair of parliament’s development committee.

“If we fail to eradicate malaria now, diluted budgets and complacency will see past gains lost to increasing cases of drug-resistance.”
Dorcas is one of the many teachers supported through ECSITE. This €1,000,000 project improves the quality of education for 80,000 community school pupils in Zambia. It is financed by the EU and the Belgian Government and is implemented by the Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance, VVOB.

We have a convincing track record in providing innovative and scalable solutions for educational reforms. We are partner and service provider for governments and private actors in ten developing countries. We provide high level but cost efficient expertise in improving the quality of education systems for the benefit of about 3,000,000 learners world-wide. We are strong in strategy for primary and secondary education, in promoting equity and in professional development of teachers and school leaders.

Mrs Dorcas Mwape

“...I did not know that involving parents could have such a positive impact on the children’s learning process. If parents keep their children too busy after class, they are not able to do their homework or they come for class tired the following day. I have started discussing with parents possible solutions to bad grades. The children are now happier to learn and come to school.”

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DAI

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DAI has built a strong reputation for innovation. Even our name, Development Alternatives, reflects the fact that seeking unique approaches is central to our identity. For example:

- DAI was voted as a Devex Top 40 Development Innovator in 2011, one of only ten consulting firms to receive this accolade globally.
- USAID recently awarded DAI the Center for Development Innovation Consulting Services contract, building on DAI’s successful collaboration with USAID’s Grand Challenges for Development.
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In times of profound change, the EU is called to play a leading role in transforming the global development framework, and to launch with its international partners a new quest to eliminate poverty, reduce inequalities and promote sustainable social, economic and environmental development. Acknowledging the achievements of the millennium development goals, but also their shortcomings, it is time to address the root causes of poverty and move forward with more innovative and transformative goals.

In November, by a large majority, the European parliament passed a resolution advocating a rights-based approach as the underpinning concept of the post-2015 framework. Such an approach places special emphasis on building strong institutions, promoting good governance and fighting corruption as starting points in addressing key challenges to sustainable development.

Indeed, the current situation is unbearable. According to the OECD, citizens in developing countries lost around five trillion euros in illicit financial flows in the last decade, an astonishing sum that by far exceeds the official development assistance for the same period. Therefore, business as usual is no longer an option. Dealing with widespread corruption must be a priority – without this, poverty will not be eradicated and inequalities will continue to grow. A more assertive focus on strengthening the rule of law and global good governance is necessary.

Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, as well as providing access to justice for all, should become the cornerstones of the new global development framework.

This conceptual change will not be easily embraced by all actors in the international community. In fact, it was already contested during the discussions at the UN open working group, which eventually managed to find consensus around 17 new sustainable development goals (SDGs) – including one on justice and effective institutions. It could be argued that this particular new SDG will not be properly addressed if it has to share development efforts with an extensive list of 17 different priorities. On the other hand, reopening the hardly achieved consensus on these SDGs could risk the elimination of the essential but still contested goal on justice and effective institutions.

Presented with this dilemma, parliament endorsed all 17 SDGs in its November resolution, but suggested the possibility of clustering them, while stressing the importance of promoting good governance and the rule of law in the new framework. The same approach was adopted by the European council a few weeks later, when EU ministers also unanimously backed the post-2015 synthesis report released in December by UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon. The synthesis report actually clustered the extensive list of 17 SDGs into six pillars, ‘justice’ being one of them.

By adopting these documents, important steps were taken towards the transformation of the development agenda. Yet, there is still a long way to go until the September summit in New York and the final adoption of SDGs. The EU should remain actively engaged in the negotiations, speaking with one voice and strongly advocating the goal on justice and effective institutions as an essential pillar in the new global development framework.
The European year for development is an excellent opportunity for us to revise our policies on development. We urgently need to bring a decisive end to the idea of charity where the donor-recipient relationship is still too firmly rooted in an association of ambivalent dependency. This outmoded type of partnership too often engenders feelings of humiliation and frustration for which there is no justification, and which may at times exonerate the elite in developing countries of their responsibility. Real partnership is where an equal relationship exists between partners based on genuine exchange, open, constructive dialogue, mutual respect and trust.

2015 was to be the deadline for achieving the millennium development goals. However, although significant progress has been made with respect to some targets, it has to be said that, on the whole, the results show a considerable shortfall. Rich countries have still not fulfilled their commitment to financing the UN official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent. It is worth reminding donors of the need for them to honour their commitment to this moral contract.

The EU is the world's largest donor of development aid. Therefore, this year will be an opportunity to inform European citizens of this fact by showing them the positive impact their contributions have had on relieving the incalculable human suffering experienced by people living in poor countries. But the effectiveness of development aid, combating terrorism, transparency in conflict mineral trading, appropriate use of natural resources, the establishment of social security for all, fair taxation, economic partnership agreements, regional integration, budgetary aid, are all topics that require debate.

Finally, we would do well to commit ourselves more fully to supporting economic development based individual initiatives, and to promote the establishment of SMEs and family businesses. Development in these countries will only be at the cost of supporting the creation of business initiatives.

2015 will also be the year when the establishment and building of impartial public institutions is strongly advocated, without which there can be no rule of law, access to justice, education, a service-minded administration for citizens, health services, culture, and humane, well-trained police forces.

Africa and Europe share a common destiny forged from a common history and an interdependent relationship. Europeans and Africans are natural allies. A strong, genuine, essential alliance between these two great and beautiful continents could create a peaceful and prosperous future. Together, they could potentially have a decisive influence in creating a new, more just, more united and freer world order.

The terrorist attack on Charlie Hebdo, the massacre of 2000 people by Boko Haram in Nigeria, or even the Taliban attack resulting in the deaths of more than 141 people, 132 of which were children, on a school in Pakistan last December, remind us once again that we all belong to a common humanity. Real, genuine solidarity is the only weapon we have to confront this situation. Therefore, we must build battlefronts with our partners to protect ourselves against the threats facing us all.

In aiding partner countries in their constant battle against poverty, we cannot help but be moved by the optimism of the people's will. As the Nobel peace prize winner Desmond Tutu once said, “I cannot know happiness if others do not know it, and I cannot fully enjoy it if others do not enjoy it as much as I do”.

“Africa and Europe share a common destiny forged from a common history and an interdependent relationship”
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people die of cancer each year worldwide

3.5 MILLION
people are diagnosed with cancer in Europe each year

1.8 MILLION
people die of cancer in Europe each year

20% of cancer deaths are caused by lung cancer

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