

Concentrations: la Commission autorise le rachat de Huber Silica par Evonik, sous certaines conditions

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

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'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017,...

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European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...

Mergers: Commission approves acquisition of Huber Silica by Evonik, subject to conditions

Evonik and Huber Silica are both manufacturers of speciality chemicals, including precipitated silica. This is used to make products such as toothpaste, paper, animal feed, tyres and shoe soles, but also in defoamers (anti-foam agents used in industrial processes), paints and coatings.

The Commission's investigation concluded that the transaction, as notified, raised competition concerns in the markets for: (i) precipitated silica for toothpaste and for defoamer applications; and (ii) hydrophobic precipitated silica, which is used in several products including defoamers, paints, coatings, food and feed additives. This is notably due to the relatively high combined market shares of the merged entity and the limited number of alternative suppliers in each of these markets.

The proposed remedies

To address the competition concerns, Evonik and Huber Silica offered to divest the following activities:

- Evonik's precipitated silica business for dental applications in Europe, Middle East and Africa;
- Huber Silica's precipitated silica business for defoamer applications in the European Economic Area (EEA); and
- Huber Silica's hydrophobic precipitated silica business in the EEA.

The divestment includes the full transfer of the production technology to a suitable purchaser's production facilities. During the transfer, the parties commit to provide the purchaser with full technical support and a transitional supply agreement.

To ensure the success of the production transfer and the effectiveness of the commitments, the purchaser of the assets needs to be an established producer of precipitated silica with an existing market presence in the EEA.

These commitments fully address the Commission's competition concerns.

The Commission therefore concluded that the proposed merger, as modified by the commitments, would no longer raise competition concerns. The decision is conditional upon full compliance with the commitments.

Companies and products

Evonik, of Germany, is active in the production and marketing of speciality chemicals.

Huber Silica, of the US, is part of Huber which is active in speciality chemicals and minerals, hydrocolloids and engineered woods as well as timber management.

Merger control rules and procedures

The transaction was originally notified to the Commission on 27 April 2017.

The Commission has the duty to assess mergers and acquisitions involving companies with a turnover above certain thresholds (see Article 1 of the [Merger Regulation](#)) and to prevent concentrations that would significantly impede effective competition in the EEA or any substantial part of it.

The vast majority of notified mergers do not pose competition problems and

are cleared after a routine review. From the moment a transaction is notified, the Commission generally has a total of 25 working days to decide whether to grant approval (Phase I) or to start an in-depth investigation (Phase II). This deadline is extended to 35 working days in cases where remedies are submitted by the parties, as in this case.

More information will be available on the Commission's [competition](#) website, in the Commission's [public case register](#) under the case number [M.8348](#).

Remarks by HR/VP Mogherini at the joint press conference with Pr

Brussels, 21 June 2017

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I would like to thank Antonio [Tajani, President of the European Parliament], for the enormous support that we have felt over the last months and years to the difficult work we have done on migration. I would just say one word: the fact that finally, one year and a half ago we moved the European institutions on the right track, taking collective action. As far as the external action is concerned this is starting to bring some results. We know it is a huge challenge. We will need to continue investing financial, human, political resources in the same direction which is the direction of partnership. It is not the walls that will manage the flows; it is partnership with countries of origin and transit, making things more sustainable from a human rights perspective, from a perspective also of European citizens in managing the solidarity internally. We need the European Council tomorrow to sustain these efforts, to put resources, to invest politically in partnerships, starting with the partnership with Africa and we need all of us to take responsibility. Sometimes we demand something from the European Union without realising that the European Union is each and every of us, each and every Member State, each and every institution and this is what I think all Europeans expect from us – that we take decisions, actions, consistently and together and, as I said, we start to see some first results. It is going to be, as Antonio were saying, a long journey. We started on the right path but it is going to require the effort of all of us together to manage better in the coming months and years.

Comment est-ce que vous allez aider la Libye dans le cadre de la lutte contre cette forme d'esclavagisme qu'on peut voir désormais s'installer aussi vis-à-vis des personnes qui viennent d'Afrique sub-saharienne?

Sur la Libye, nous avons signé des programmes avec l'Organisation Internationale des Migrations et l'UNHCR pour soutenir leur travail en Libye – un travail qu'ils ont commencé à faire avec beaucoup de difficultés et de

courage. Je voudrais les remercier pour le travail qu'ils ont commencé à faire dans les camps de détention pour assister les migrants qui sont présents en Libye dans des conditions extrêmement difficiles même à imaginer, pour garantir leurs droits, protéger leur vie – ce n'est pas seulement sauver des vies, c'est aussi protéger les droits des personnes, et aussi pour leur offrir une alternative, c'est-à-dire la possibilité de rentrer dans leur pays d'origine.

J'ai fait référence au fait que plus de 4 500 migrants retenus en Libye soient déjà rentrés depuis les premiers mois de 2017 dans leur pays d'origine et ce, grâce à ce travail de partenaires que l'Union européenne soutient financièrement.

Ce travail va continuer, j'ai discuté avec le Premier Ministre [du Gouvernement d'Accord National, Fayez] al-Sarraj; nous discutons également avec les municipalités en Libye de la nécessité d'avoir plus d'accès à ces camps de détention pour garantir des conditions de protection des migrants à l'intérieur des camps mais aussi la possibilité de pouvoir retourner dans leur pays d'origine de façon sûre et dans le plein respect des droits de l'homme.

Y compris des gens qui viennent d'Erythrée?

J'ai fait référence à un programme que l'Organisation Internationale des Migrations et l'UNHCR – they are doing this with their own rules meaning that they are identifying those who are entitled to the status of refugees – and for that cases we have the resettlement procedures – and those that are economic migrants who voluntarily could return to their countries. They are assisted by the IOM through our financial support to do so.

So, we are talking about voluntary returns, protection of human rights, sometimes saving lives inside the camps, providing food and water and basic living conditions. We are at the same time facilitating returns on a voluntary basis through the international organisations of the UN system that are entitled to do this, following all the human rights highest standards – I think that this is the correct way to do.

Nel sud dell'Italia ci sono dei fenomeni criminali che approfittano di questi che sono traffici di un sistema macro internazionale. Sul fronte interno si sta pensando ad un progetto di rafforzamento, di controllo perché pare anche da molte denunce che ci sono molti minorenni che vengono coinvolti in questo genere di traffico?

Solo il fatto che laddove c'è una domanda, c'è un'offerta e viceversa, e quindi abbiamo anche un problema interno da gestire, non è mia competenza diretta il lavoro interno che facciamo su questo fronte, ma certamente ci sono connessioni delle organizzazioni criminali internazionali che vanno combattute nei paesi di origine, nei paesi di transito, lungo tutta la rotta. Noi a volte vediamo soltanto l'ultimo tratto della rotta: quello del Mediterraneo. Ed è per questo che il lavoro dell'Unione europea in questi anni, due anni, si è concentrato invece moltissimo sulla Libia, sul Sahel,

sui paesi del deserto del Sahara, dove cerchiamo di smantellare queste organizzazioni criminali che trafficano esseri umani, ma trafficano anche sostanze stupefacenti, armi, con reti di finanziamento che possono facilmente andare a sostenere attività che poi incidono sulla sicurezza di larga parte di questi territori. Penso alle attività terroristiche, che a volte oltretutto spesso coprono le attività criminali, è tutto connesso. Il lavoro sul fronte esterno si è rafforzato moltissimo in quest'ultimo anno. Sul fronte interno, ripeto non è mia competenza diretta, ma chiaramente ci sono delle connessioni da smantellare.

Austrian Foreign Minister Kurz proposed that the routes on the Mediterranean Sea should be closed like the one on the Balkan. Is that a feasible option? A realistic option?

We discussed this with Minister [of Foreign affairs of Austria, Sebastian] Kurz. We were together in the European Union Foreign Affairs Council on Monday.

Closing the route in the central Mediterranean is something that is neither feasible nor is it a political objective of the European Union as such.

First of all, because as Antonio [Tajani, President of the European Parliament] said, the route goes through Libya which is a country that needs to be stabilised and helped from a political, security point of view, for the Libyans first of all. So we are not talking about a country that has a clear stable government that is in control of the entire territory. It is a country still in crisis, so it is absolutely vital, first of all, to support Libya. And we see all the fragility – we also see some the potential – but this is our first objective to stabilise Libya, to help Libya for its own sake, for the sake of the Libyan people first of all and also for security reasons. Second, because the Mediterranean Sea in the Central Mediterranean route is a bit more of a sea than what we faced in the Eastern route last year. This to say that the law of the sea obliges all, being them fishermen or military ships, to save people at sea. You cannot close a sea route. You have the moral and the legal duty to save people at sea. Then you discuss – are you entitled to stay? Are you entitled to have refugee status? Are you not entitled to stay and you have to go back? But first of all, in the middle of the sea you save lives. This is a legal and a moral obligation and a political objective we all share and we all affirmed in the European Union unanimously.

I hope I was clear enough. Thank you.

Q. Les femmes sont spécialement exposées à des violences, des viols, à la vente, à l'esclavage. Est-ce que pour les femmes, pour les enfants, est-ce qu'on envisage des actions spécifiques car le commerce, le trafic prévoient aussi l'exportation des organes. De quelle manière peut-on stopper ce commerce et ces viol invisibles à nos yeux mais qui ont lieu dans le désert? Bravo pour avoir sauvé ces vies, c'est magnifique.

Merci. En effet la semaine dernière au Niger, des dizaines de milliers de personnes ont été sauvées de manière régulière, mais je le répète, chaque vie

perdue est une vie perdue de trop.

Pour les femmes et les enfants, on a des programmes et des actions spécifiques.

Premièrement, pour la question du départ des femmes, surtout celles qui sont les plus exposées au commerce sexuel, en particulier à partir de certains pays, le Nigeria par exemple. Nous faisons des programmes ciblés pour informer les communautés locales dans les pays d'origine, dans certaines régions spécifiques d'origine, sur les risques que les jeunes femmes encourent si elles commencent ce voyage dans les mains des passeurs et des réseaux criminels.

Deuxièmement, nous donnons une protection spéciale pour les femmes le long de la route. Troisièmement, point qui est très important pour moi, pendant la formation du personnel des garde-côtes libyens, nous avons ajouté une formation spécifique sur les droits de l'homme et les droits des femmes en particulier; sur la façon de gérer des situations compliquées du point de vue des droits de l'homme, des droits des femmes, des enfants; comment gérer des situations soit du point de vue médical, soit du point de vue émotionnel qui sont compliquées à gérer, précisément parce que l'expérience de Lampedusa et d'autres expériences italiennes ont montré qu'il faut avoir une formation très ciblée sur cet aspect-là.

L'Union européenne forme non seulement des forces de sécurité libyennes mais aussi des forces de sécurité dans le Sahel, au Mali ou au Niger, en appuyant précisément un travail sur le respect des droits des femmes et des hommes bien sûr, également avec la contribution des ONG internationales, spécialisées sur ce sujet.

[Speech by HR/VP Mogherini at the 2017 European Union Institute f](#)

Brussels, 21 June 2017

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You won't be surprised if I skip my formal speech and simply tell you how I feel exactly one year after the presentation of the Global Strategy [for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy] and a couple of days after having presented to the foreign ministers the report on the first year of implementation; and tomorrow and the day after tomorrow in the European Council the Heads of State and Government will also have a look at that. I would not expect that this will be their first priority, but most of the

things that will be discussed at the European Council actually are part of the implementation of the Global Strategy, because if you work on counterterrorism or you work on migration that all refers to the way in which we changed our work in this last year.

This time last year was quite difficult, still quite ok, but on the edge of a complicated time. I remember very well with many of you, we were together in the beginning of the process of even thinking of a Global Strategy two years ago. And last year around the end of the month many were having doubts whether it was the right time to come out with the new strategy for the European Union as one of the Member [States] decided to leave and I remember it was a difficult decision to take, but I think that one year after that time we can say without any doubt that in this year we have needed our common Global Strategy much more than we would have expected and we have managed to implement much more than what we have expected one year ago.

I was realising that it is a bit like the parallel, if I can make the parallel, to the Iran deal [JCPOA]. Many sceptics before we managed to get the deal were saying 'you will never get there' and we got there. Then everybody was saying 'you will never implement it' and we implemented it and then now many are saying 'it will never survive' and still it is surviving and I am sure it will survive. I think it is more or less the same. Many were sceptical about the fact that it was the right time to have a Global Strategy and I have seen in this last year that not only the European citizens, not only the European leadership or the European institutions, but also our partners around the world have used the Global Strategy – using it to make the European Union one of the very points of reference across the globe.

We have lived in the last year a bit of an identity crisis: How many are we? Where are we heading to? Why are we together? Then I believe that also thanks to the Global Strategy partially, not only, we rediscovered the value of being together, the added value, the existential value of being together that was clearly referred to in Rome on the 25 March. That to me is the internal strategy, the re-launch of the reasons why we are stronger together and, in the meantime, we have seen that our partners in the world, even those that are not necessarily partners, but our interlocutors in the world, have in parallel realised that you can like the European Union or not – sometimes we put a lot of emphasis in things that are not particularly welcome, sometimes it can be rules, or human rights, or other things -, but there is a value that in these times it is quite essential which is that you always know what can come from us. We are quite predictable and in these times I think this is essential and a positive element.

We are there for our principles, our values, our interests that, as we discussed last year, are not in contradiction, we are there for partners. We stay true to our partnerships. And I think more and more people around the globe realise that we are an indispensable partner, be it on security, be it on climate, be it on trade, be it obviously in development and humanitarian aid, in diplomacy, be it for the power of peace. The power of the European Union is projected especially in the regions that feel and realise that making peace can make your economy, but also your connections, your living standards much better off than they were before.

I think that in this year of implementation of the Global Strategy, first of all we realised that yes, we definitely needed it, that actually we needed it much more than we realised when we had it and that it was a useful tool to work together, put together different institutions and starting to work across the board; and also we implemented much more than we expected. Now, I can give you plenty of examples: I would say that 2 examples are maybe the most evident ones.

One is the example of Mali and the Sahel. I was there 2 weeks ago, visiting our 2 missions and operations – a civilian and a military one –, and our delegation. The terrorist attack in Bamako on Sunday had two victims – one working for the EU delegation and one for the EU training mission, reminding us that there is a heavy price that our men and women pay daily, but also reminding us that we actually do the job on the ground and sometimes we do not even realise how much of a European Union flag is there in conflict or crises situations. But there you have a military training mission, a civilian mission that is training the police and the security forces, an enormous amount of development work done, you have the diplomatic work on the peace agreement, you have the regional approach with the G5 Sahel – I was announcing there €50 million support to the G5 Sahel joint force to tackle terrorism and smuggling and trafficking of not only human beings but also drugs and arms.

That it's really the laboratory of the common approach where you have all parts of the work that needs to be done, from security to development, to peace and diplomacy put together. And actually you realise that no one has the same kind of mix of instruments and that is exactly what we wrote one year ago in the Global Strategy: that the European Union has to move from a fragmented approach of all the instruments we have to using them all together to specific strategic aim. This is I think the perfect example.

It is a strategic objective because the security, peace and development of the Sahel, in Mali in this case, is key to the European Union security on counterterrorism, but also on migration and on the other side, it helps regional and global cooperation. This is one example of how we accelerate it – because part of it was already done – the coming together of different angles of work. This is true for Mali, the Sahel but this is also true for many other situations where I see more and more that we use our economic instruments, our trade instruments, our climate, energy or economic investment instruments, or even cultural diplomacy we started, in an integrated work towards the strategic objective.

The second field is clearly security and defence. This was the field that was probably subject of scepticism the most one year ago, and especially at the time of the British referendum when everybody was saying: "Now that the major military power is gone, what do you want to do?". It is quite clear that we managed to move in this last year to a level that even a couple of months ago many were saying this is going to be impossible even in 10 years. I think we have moved more in 10 months than in the last 10 years. Some say more than in the last 60 years, maybe that is a bit too much. For sure, we have managed to overcome a series of psychological blocks that were there.

The EU/NATO cooperation still in September was the main point of argument, with many saying that if we develop European defence this will be seen as an hostile act on the other side of Brussels. A couple of months afterwards and with the election of [Donald] Trump we proved these people wrong, because the European defence has become the strongest pillar for NATO and the strongest reassurance for the transatlantic alliance that Europeans will be there and will continue to be there to keep the military alliance strong from our own perspective, with our own differences.

We are not a military alliance and we have Member States that are not NATO allies but it is the best guarantee for NATO to hold a strong position and we have taken decisions in the last four, five months – including the Military Planning and Conduct Capability here in Brussels, coordinating all the military training missions we have – including by the way the one on Mali that was facing a loss on Sunday. We took decisions on beginning the work on PESCO [Permanent Structured Cooperation], the coordinated annual review on defence or the beginning of the work to have a better financing of the battlegroups – after ten years of establishing them. In these months, a matter of months and not years, and by unanimity.

Now we feel a little bit more self-confident than six, seven months ago. We digested – abbiamo elaborato il lutto – how do you say it in English? We managed our own mourning and we realised that the prophecy of the British referendum being the beginning of the end was simply not true. And we are now more than ever determined to go on at 27. And you see the last, all the last, election results proving the myth of the end of the European Union wrong. And so this gives confidence.

There is another issue, the huge unpredictability of the political positions of others in the global scene – and here I am exercising all my diplomatic skills, has proven to the European citizens and the European leaders that we need to rely on ourselves and we need to take decisions and follow them up with some determination and courage.

And this is why I think we have managed to implement so much of the Global Strategy, including on security and defence. So this brings us to an interesting place now because we have done a lot. We have recovered, I think psychologically and emotionally, all the trust in ourselves that was shaken last year. And we can now offer, I believe, not only to the European citizens but also to our partners in the world, the European Union not only as a global player but also as a strong and reliable and predictable global player.

If you look at climate change – we managed not only to keep our unity and insist on implementation and preserving the agreement in Paris, but also in building global alliances to make sure that state and non-state actors, including in the United States [of America], reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement. And this can bridge the difficult years we have ahead of us. Making sure that the important decisions that need to be taken – that by the way, out of our own experience we know very well are also compatible with economic growth and investments in the green sector – can bridge these difficult years we have ahead of us together with others. From China to Latin

America, from India to Africa – after the announcement by [US] President Trump that the United States [of America] would withdraw from the agreement, we had joint statements or demarches or agreements with the African Union, Chile, China, and I could continue.

Building global alliances, being a point of reference for some in the world, or for many in the world, is one example, while the other one I would like to make of that is multilateralism and the UN system. I believe the European Union in these years, also thanks to the implementation of the Global Strategy and our strategic vision, has managed to position itself as a point of reference for those that want to seriously invest in multilateralism and the UN system. Be it peacekeeping, be it conflict prevention, be it the investment on humanitarian front – I think we managed and we will continue to manage to put together those in the world that believe security is not just military and that you need to have a sustainable security approach, that security is also the rule of law, human rights, democracy, good governance, but also humanitarian aid, development cooperation, conflict prevention and so on.

And there are not many in the world that can interpret this role at this stage. If you look around – very few. If you consider who is in this world of today a diplomatic power, investing in multilateralism and diplomacy? Who is a humanitarian major donor, always reliable, not only pledging but also delivering? Who is the major development aid provider – more than all the rest of the world together? But also, who is there every time that multilateralism needs support? And who is there to advocate for human rights? And who is there to advocate for free and fair trade? And the list continues. If you put together all of this – difficult to find anyone else. Which is sad – it is not a point of pride. It is a point of warning. But in the meantime we encourage others in the world to partner with us on each and every of this field. We constitute in the world a point of reference. For many more than we realise.

And I think with the Global Strategy in this year – also thanks to your collective work, and thanks to you also because you have accompanied us in this process from the very beginning – we have managed to position the European Union in a place where we would not be if we did not have the Global Strategy as it is. And again I think it is not something that is relevant just for me and my work but is relevant for the work we have done together. Because this has been really, both the work leading to the Global Strategy itself and implementation, a collective teamwork. A collective true European teamwork.

So I would like to thank you for that. I am glad to share this moment with you and I remember well previous meetings we had last year. I was always saying do not expect that the work is finished with the Global Strategy because I will come back to you when it comes to the implementation because we also need to implement this together. This continues also after year one. So we will continue to work together on defining the priorities for the implementation of next years and we are doing that already in July with the foreign ministers to keep the rhythm very fast, very ambitious and still very much united, as we have proven to all those that say and think that the

European Union is bureaucratic and slow.

In these last weeks I have had the strange feeling of hearing people say: "Could we slow down a bit, please?" And you know – no. No, not really. Not really because it is not the time for taking things slowly. It is the time for putting all the energy in it, thinking carefully, strategically – as we always say and think – but going fast.

Thanks.

Opening speech by President Juncker at the High Level Conference on Migration

Presidente, carissimo Antonio,

Presidente Pittella,

Sehr verehrte Frau Vorsitzende Zimmer,

Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren Abgeordnete, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately I cannot express myself in my native language, Luxembourgish, because only a few of you are fluent in Luxembourgish, so I will try to express myself in the three other languages we are used to; German first.

Meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren,

zum ersten Mal wurden in der vergangenen Woche Master-Titel in europäischem Grenzmanagement verliehen. Wenn mehr als 20 Absolventen aus 16 Ländern ein Programm an sechs Partneruniversitäten und bei verschiedensten Institutionen des EU-Grenzschutzes durchlaufen haben, dann ist das eigentlich der Beweis, dass wir tatsächlich ein neues Kapitel in der Migrationspolitik aufgeschlagen haben. Das gemeinsam mit Frontex aufgelegte Programm zeigt, dass wir langfristig daran arbeiten, unsere gemeinsamen Grenzen auch gemeinsam zu schützen.

Zusammen mit vielen von Ihnen ist es uns in weniger als einem Jahr gelungen, etwas hinzukriegen, was vorher 20 Jahre lang nicht möglich war. Nämlich eine Europäische Grenz- und Küstenwache aufzubauen. Diese trägt dazu bei, die am stärksten betroffenen Grenz-Abschnitte abzusichern. Zurzeit sind bereits 1.600 europäische Grenzschrützer im Einsatz, die die nationalen Grenzbeamten unterstützen – 977 in Griechenland, 402 in Italien, 168 in Bulgarien und 65 in Spanien. Zusätzlich steht ein Pool von 1.500 Grenzschrütz-Beamten sofort einsatzbereit. Man soll also aufhören, dauernd zu verlangen, dass wir in Sachen europäischer gemeinsamer Grenzschrütz ernst machen – wir tun dies

bereits.

In der Migrationspolitik werden wir von zwei europäischen Grundprinzipien geleitet: Verantwortung und Solidarität. Deshalb habe ich gemeinsam mit anderen während des Europawahlkampfes deutlich gemacht, dass wir kein Land im Stich lassen dürfen wenn es um Menschen in Not geht. Es kann nicht sein, dass allein die Lage auf der Landkarte darüber bestimmt, wie viel Verantwortung ein Land in der Flüchtlingsfrage trägt.

Und ich möchte hier ausdrücklich und belobigend die außergewöhnlichen Anstrengungen Italiens hervorheben, wie auch diejenigen Griechenlands. Italien gibt minütlich ein Beispiel dafür ab, was europäische Solidarität bedeutet – und Griechenland tut dasselbe.

Und weil wir Italien und Griechenland nicht alleine lassen dürfen ist die Kommission vor Ort und unterstützt diese Mitgliedstaaten, wie auch andere. In Griechenland und Italien haben wir zentrale Aufnahmestellen eingerichtet, in die wir EU-Beamte, Mitarbeiter von EU-Agenturen und Experten aus den Mitgliedstaaten entsandt haben. Wir haben auch – obwohl die Anstrengung nicht reicht – für moderne Ausrüstung gesorgt. Und wir haben dafür gesorgt, dass der Anteil von Asylsuchenden, deren Fingerabdrücke in Griechenland erfasst werden, rapide gestiegen ist. Während im September 2015 nur 8 Prozent der ankommenden Menschen registriert wurden, waren es ein Jahr später 100 Prozent. Wir haben also die Strukturen geschaffen, die wir brauchten, um Kontrolle und geordnete Verhältnisse zu gewährleisten.

Gleichzeitig haben wir auch dort angesetzt, wo die Geflüchteten ihren gefährlichen, ja lebensgefährlichen Weg zu uns antreten. Wir haben unsere Ressourcen im Mittelmeer aufgestockt und konnten so mehr als 500.000 Menschen in Not retten. Darüber hinaus legen wir auch den Menschenhändlern das Handwerk. Zu diesem Zweck dient im Übrigen auch das Abkommen mit der Türkei, was dazu geführt hat, dass die Zahl der ankommenden Flüchtlinge aus der Türkei in Griechenland um 98 Prozent zurückgegangen ist.

[Solidarity and Responsibility]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All of this should serve as a reminder of how far we have come in such a short space of time. In the last year alone, over 6,000 Syrians have been given safe and legal pathways to Europe from Turkey. And almost 21,000 people have now been relocated from Greece and Italy. Not enough, but this is a historical first. And with a real push, it is feasible to relocate all other eligible people by September 2017.

But solidarity is not a one-way street – every country must take its fair share of responsibility. And if there are some who refuse, the Commission must also honour its own responsibilities.

We showed last week with the infringement procedures we have launched that we are taking our responsibilities seriously.

Let me be clear: I take no satisfaction at all in starting infringement

procedures – I want, I like, I would like, I would love to convince, because I believe solidarity should first come from the heart – but if it is not then we have to uphold binding decisions.

And at the same time we must keep looking for solutions and get on with fixing the system for the future.

The current system is plainly broken: procedures are too complex, too lengthy and applicants are not treated the same way in each Member State.

Some national asylum systems are more generous than others. This encourages 'asylum shopping'. We all saw too vividly how the current system cannot cope under pressure.

That is why we need a robust system that helps the Member States most affected by geography, gives refuge to those in need of protection, and helps return those who have no right to stay in the European Union.

This was the basis for the Commission's proposal to reform the whole Common European Asylum System. Our proposals are anchored in international law and look to reform every aspect of our asylum law – from reception conditions to asylum procedures to qualifications and to the Dublin rules on identifying responsibility.

Our proposal harmonises protection standards in the EU, puts an end to secondary movements and asylum shopping, and ensures stricter rules to combat abuse.

This is now urgently needed and we must now press ahead. I am glad that your Parliament, Mr President, is advancing steadily on this work. And I thank the Maltese and the future Estonian Presidencies, as well the previous Slovak Presidency for all their efforts to break the deadlock between Member States.

Now is the time to find a balanced compromise and make our asylum system fully fit for purpose.

[S'attaquer aux causes de la migration]

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Quand nous parlons de migration, nous ne devons jamais oublier que derrière les statistiques et les chiffres, il y a des femmes, des hommes, des enfants, qui auraient préféré rester chez eux au lieu de se jeter sur les routes d'un exil incertain pour échapper à la misère, à la violence, à la guerre. Il est de notre responsabilité à nous Européens de faire en sorte que ces personnes puissent bâtir un avenir meilleur dans leur pays plutôt que de risquer leur vie en Méditerranée et d'enrichir des trafiquants sans scrupule.

C'est la raison pour laquelle nous avons intensifié notre coopération avec les pays d'origine et de transit, notamment, comme le Président l'a justement souligné, avec nos cousins africains.

Nous avons lancé l'année dernière un nouveau cadre de partenariat avec l'Afrique. La lutte contre les trafiquants a été renforcée, avec le soutien du Corps européen de garde-frontières et de garde-côtes, d'Europol et de la mission Sofia en Méditerranée. Je salue au passage tous ceux qui font partie de ces différents instruments qui ont été mis en place: Europol, ceux qui participent à la mission Sofia, tous ceux qui sont engagés dans le Corps européen de garde-frontières et de garde-côtes, font un remarquable et admirable travail. Sans eux, nous serions perdus. Sans eux, beaucoup de malheureux, eux aussi, seraient perdus.

Des mesures ont été prises pour faciliter le retour de migrants irréguliers vers leur pays d'origine. Le programme d'aide au retour volontaire lancé par l'Organisation internationale pour les migrations avec le soutien financier de la Commission a déjà permis à plus de 4000 migrants bloqués en Libye de retourner dans leur pays d'origine. Et des accords de réadmission sont en cours de négociation avec le Maroc, le Nigéria, la Tunisie et la Jordanie.

200 millions d'euros seront mobilisés en 2017 pour des actions dans le domaine de la migration en Afrique du Nord, notamment en Libye, mais aussi en Egypte et en Tunisie.

Par ailleurs, notre Fonds fiduciaire d'urgence pour l'Afrique a mobilisé, en un an, quelque 1,9 milliard d'euros. 118 projets ont déjà été approuvés, avec par exemple le Niger, le Sénégal ou le Soudan du Sud.

Enfin, j'ai proposé un Plan d'investissement externe pour l'Afrique et les pays voisins. Je compte sur la célérité des co-législateurs pour qu'il puisse être opérationnel d'ici à septembre. Nous avons écrit et récité trop de poèmes sur la coopération entre l'Afrique et l'Europe; il faut maintenant investir sur place pour que l'Afrique puisse répondre présent quand il s'agit de réaliser ses ambitions.

[Conclusion]

En deux ans, nous avons beaucoup fait pour mieux gérer les différents aspects des questions migratoires. Ce n'est pas le moment de se laisser aller à l'autosatisfaction ou, pire encore, de laisser se creuser des fissures de solidarité. Nous devons compléter et consolider les fondations mises en place. Est-ce que je suis satisfait de ce que nous avons fait jusqu'à ce jour ? Oui et non, parce qu'il reste tellement de choses à faire. Nous les ferons ensemble.

Merci.