



# Strasbourg Flash

## Greens/EFA plenary session priorities 4-7 May 2009

### Parliament to give seal of approval for a ban

Monday, 4 May 2009

The commercial trade in seal products represents only a fraction of most sealers' income and comes at a high price of cruelty to the animals.

The road to a ban has been a winding one: last year's initial Commission proposal for a ban came with a vague wording and gaping loopholes. This flawed proposal for a ban was nearly dismantled altogether by EP internal market committee rapporteur Diane Wallis, who favoured labelling of seal products over a ban.

Support for strong Green amendments restored the ban, with clearly specified derogations only for non-commercial and Inuit hunting. This position has been reinforced by informal trilogue discussions between EU institutions.

### Telecoms package: opposing a quasi net police

Tuesday, 5 May 2009

Electronic communications are a rapidly evolving medium, to which the EU can contribute positively or negatively. Welcome elements in current proposals include better information to consumers, improved access for disabled persons and restricting tie-ins to contracts.

Problematic areas still in play include key issues such as net neutrality, privacy and a contentious provision potentially empowering internet service providers to substitute judiciary authorities and pull the plug on consumers deemed to have infringed copyright. The now notorious Cohn-Bendit/Bono amendment (AM138 to the Trautmann report) on this is back with a compromise wording. Spectrum and a new agency of telecom regulators are also key.

### Asylum: a duty to provide shelter not detention

Wednesday, 6 May 2009

Three separate reports on asylum go to the vote in Strasbourg.

Greens welcome Commission improvements to the Directive on minimum standards for receiving asylum seekers, which sets out that applicants should be provided with shelter not kept in detention, except in exceptional cases.

However Greens warn against a clear threat of abuse in the proposed decentralised EURODAC system to collate asylum applicant data (notably fingerprints) with visa application and criminal data. The Lambert report reflects the necessity for a European Asylum Support Office to offer cooperation and expert advice at EU level.

#### Briefing

### Greens/EFA Co-Presidents Strasbourg briefing

with: **Daniel Cohn-Bendit**  
and **Monica Frassoni**

Tuesday, 5 May, 10.20-10.40  
Press conference room, EP, Strasbourg

#### Press conference

### Corbett report: an anti-democratic Trojan horse

with: **Monica Frassoni**, **Gérard Onesta**  
and **Johannes Voggenhuber**

Wednesday, 6 May, 11.30-12.00  
Press conference room, EP, Strasbourg

#### Press conference

### Book presentation: "The privilege of our generation" (Zurab Jhvania)

with: **Marie-Anne Isler Beguin**  
and **Joost Lagendijk**

Wednesday, 6 May, 15.00-15.30  
Press conference room, EP, Strasbourg

#### Seminar

### EU visas for Turkish citizens: time for clarity

Assessing the impact of the ECJ 'Soysal' decision  
with: **Joost Lagendijk** and guest speakers  
including Turkish ambassador **Oguz Demiralp**

Wednesday, 6 May, 15.00-18.00  
Room S2.2, European Parliament, Strasbourg

#### Greens/EFA Press Team

- **Helmut Weixler (Head of Team): Mobile +32 475 671340, Phone +33-3-88174760**
- **Isabelle Zerrouk: Mobile +32 477 319474, Phone +33-3-88174032**
- **Christopher Coakley: Mobile +32 485 241622, Phone +33-3-88174375**
- **Steven Cornelius (EFA Press Service): Phone +33-3-88172936**

## Greens/EFA plenary session priorities 4-7 May 2009

### Also worth watching - Parliamentary reports, debates and resolutions

#### Monday, 4 May

##### **Estrela report on pregnant workers/workers who have recently given birth**

Currently, the minimum period of maternity leave varies between 8 and 45 weeks in EU Member States. Greens support a 24 week minimum (in line with WHO recommendations), while the Commission came forward with 18 weeks and the FEMM committee voted for 20. Other report aspects include paternity leave and protection against unfair dismissal for mothers who return to the labour market.

##### **Parish report on animal testing**

Greens will vote against the report (as they did in committee) unless substantial improvements are taken on board via their amendments, regarding commitments to ending experiments on primates, investing in alternative methods, further restrictions on unnecessary use of animals and greater transparency on statistics.

##### **Working time directive and Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou report on working time in road transport**

The president of the EP negotiating team will give a statement on the failure to find agreement on working time. A separate report on working time in road transport does go to the vote. Self-employed road transport workers were due to be covered by the relevant directive last March but Commission has moved to exempt them. Greens argue that tired self-employed workers are no less of a danger on the roads than tired employees. Commission's revision would continue to allow drivers to be pressed into accepting false self-employment status to circumvent the rules.

##### **Commission statement on swine fever**

Beyond immediate health concerns, industrialised food production at the source of the outbreak must be examined.

#### Tuesday, 5 May

##### **Podimata report on energy efficiency labelling**

Commission's proposal for a new energy efficiency label is a gift to industry and retailers. It would continue to class virtually all fridges on the market with A grades. Greens want to maintain the closed A-G rating system, involving periodically re-evaluating the scale thresholds and avoiding additional A grades at the top end. An absolute majority (393 votes) is needed to avoid a devalued label and confused consumers.

##### **Wojciechowski report on protection of animals at time of killing**

The ill-titled report nevertheless sets out improved conditions for animal slaughter, while making appropriate concessions to religious groups.

##### **Maldeikis report on economic recover plan energy projects**

A key piece in the jigsaw puzzle of Barroso's re-election campaign, if not the economic recovery plan. Greens will table amendments against further public money for coal and CCS, and in favour of directing unused funds to energy efficiency and 'smart cities' rather than back to Member State pockets - as some governments are hoping.

##### **Corbett report on EP reform, Onesta report on petitions committee**

The report is more a Trojan horse to extend the control held by the biggest political groups, rather than a gift to EP reform. Anti-democratic moves include restrictions on amendments (only the big three groups could table alone to an own-initiative report), preventing groups playing to their strengths by forcing inflexible quotas on all committees and downgrading the petitions committee, a valuable direct link between citizens and Parliament. The Onesta report, meanwhile, sets out improvements and clarifications on the current petitions committee process.

##### **Lambert report on active inclusion of people outside the labour market**

On the day that the EP prepares for a job summit, the Lambert report delivers a strong text on inclusion of people outside the labour market - with a strong text on rights, adequate income, access to services and anti-discrimination.

##### **Commission declaration on the democracy process in Turkey**

#### Wednesday, 6 May

##### **Karas report on capital requirements directive**

Capital requirements rules are designed to protect savers and investors. Greens want to see further use of securitisation limited in view of its devastating effect on risk-taking. EP's ECON committee rejected the Greens amendment for a 15% retention on securitised products, keeping it at 5%. Proposed supervision arrangements are inadequate in light of the lessons of the financial crisis and the challenges that lie ahead.

#### Thursday, 7 May

##### **Debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law**

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