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Brussels Agenda

Greens/EFA priorities for 16-20 March 2009

The week at a glance (further details below):

Monday

15.00 Environment committee: vote on food labelling and oral question on GMOs
15.00 Budgetary control committee vote on budget discharge for EU institutions 2007
16.30 Non-discrimination vote in civil liberties committee

Tuesday

10.00-13.00 Online conference: Get involved (E-Polis network for sustainable cities) 10.00-13.30
Conference: Iran and Europe - Green visions for the future 17.00-20.00: Seminar on agriculture:
Nourishing people without biting the climate

Wednesday

09.30-12.30: EFA conference: Facing the Communist past
10.00: EP press conference - results of conciliation procedure on Working Time Directive
11.30-12.30: Commission announcements on: simplification of Common Agricultural Policy, human trafficking and Europe's telecoms market
16.00 Press conference on launch of "Open the doors" Israel/Gaza initiative with MEPs and Nobel laureates

Thursday-Friday

European Summit of EU heads of state and government, Greens/EFA representative: Rebecca Harms

Brussels Agenda

Environment committee vote on food labelling/question on GMOs

Monday, 16 March 2009 from 15.00-18.30

JAN 4Q2, European Parliament, Brussels

> Greens have long fought for better information to consumers, especially for food products. Today's vote is due to cover 1000 amendments to the Sommer report on food labelling. (Greens shadow: **Satu Hassi**) Meanwhile Italian Socialist **Guido Sacconi** will put an oral question regarding GMOs, following the Greens/EFA demand to the Commission to stop overstepping its remit and end its aggressive strategy to force through approval of GM crop varieties.

Non-discrimination vote in EP civil liberties committee

Monday, 16 March 2009 at 16.30

JAN2Q2, European Parliament, Brussels

> For too long there has been discrimination within discrimination: unlike gender and race/ethnic origin, age, religion, sexual orientation and disability discrimination grounds are not legally covered outside the workplace at European level. Facing opposition from certain Member States and political quarters, Commission President **Barroso** nearly backtracked on proposing legislation to remedy this situation. Fortunately pressure from MEPs, spearheaded by Dutch Green **Kathalijne Buitenweg**, now LIBE rapporteur, ensured the full proposal came forward. In the face of likely opposition from conservatives, a positive result in committee is crucial.

Kathalijne Buitenweg, the LIBE rapporteur, will be available for comment and interview immediately after the vote (likely to be after 17.30)

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Conference: Iran and Europe - Green visions for the future

Tuesday, 17 March 2009 10.00-13.30

Room A1G2, European Parliament, Brussels

> This conference features two main panels on a green vision for Europe-Iran relations and a 'political ecology' for Iran, with a wide range of guest speakers with expertise on Iran. The conference is organised by Green MEP and President of the EP Iran delegation **Angelika Beer** and includes an address from Greens/EFA Co-president **Daniel Cohn-Bendit**. For further information, see the programme.

Online conference: E-Polis network for sustainable cities

Tuesday, 17 March 2009 10.00-13.00

> Cities are a key battleground in reducing CO2 emissions, increasing energy efficiency and greening fundamental areas such as transport. In the past, innovative and successful grassroots initiatives by NGOs and city councils have too often been undiscovered outside their local area. The E-Polis network aims to share best practice and make give a real boost to sustainable approaches in urban areas. This conference calls on all to "Get involved". Find out how by joining the conference live at: <http://www.e-polis.info/webconference/>. With Greens/EFA MEPs: **Monica Frassoni**, **Gisela Kallenbach**, **David Hammerstein** and **Michael Cramer**.

EFA conference: Facing the Communist past

Wednesday, 18 March 2009 at 09.00-12.30

Room A5G3, European Parliament, Brussels > Conference organised by European Free Alliance MEP **László Tőkés**. Press conference follows at 12.30 in the same room.

Working Time Directive conciliation

Wednesday, 18 March 2009, EP press conference at 10.00

Press conference Room PHS 0A50, European Parliament, Brussels > The spotlight turns on Wednesday to the European Parliament-Council conciliation committee on the Working Time directive after Tuesday's deadline. The Council has so far been unwilling to find compromise and if conciliation fails, the old directive will remain in force. The European debate on working time has too often been skewed by false information. Current legislation, aimed primarily at health and safety, provides for 48 hour working weeks as *averages*, not weekly caps as has widely been reported. (See the Greens/EFA briefing). Greens/EFA conciliation committee representative: **Elisabeth Schroedter** (replacement: **Jean Lambert**).

Press conference: Launch of Israel/Gaza "Open the doors campaign"

Wednesday, 18 March 2009 at 16.00

Press conference room, A050, PHS Building, European Parliament > This initiative, supported by 128 MEPs and 42 Nobel Prize winners, calls for Israel to end the Gaza blockade, an end also to Palestinian rocket attacks and liberation of hostages such as Gilad Shalit and Palestinian prisoners who count several elected representatives among their number. Press conference participants include Green MEP **Caroline Lucas**,

MEPs from across the political spectrum and Nobel Laureates **Mairead Maguire** and **Martinus Veltman**. In cooperation with the NGO **Peace Lines** - visit their website for a full list of signatories to the initiative.

European Summit: Time to change strategy
Thursday, 19 March - Friday, 20 March 2009

> The spring European Summit of EU heads of state and government will focus on the economic recovery of Europe. Greens have been highly critical of an approach that has so far sought only to prop up polluting and outdated industries and technologies instead of shifting focus to green technologies that could deliver jobs and a more sustainable future. Greens have criticised the design of the €5 billion energy stimulus in particular and call for better use of the European Investment Bank loaning capacity.

The summit will also decide on the EU position towards the UNFCCC negotiations on a post-2012 international climate agreement. In order to play a constructive role in the negotiations, the EU position must reflect our historic responsibility and commit to domestic emissions reductions at the top of the range recommended by the UN IPCC (i.e. around 40%), as well as setting out a clear commitment to financing climate change mitigation and adaptation in developing countries of at least €30 billion per year by 2020.

Greens/EFA Vice-president **Rebecca Harms** will be available for comment.

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