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Plenary Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary session in Strasbourg 4-8 July 2011

Short selling and certain aspects of credit default swaps

Legislative report by Green MEP Pascal Canfin

Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Plenary debate Monday 4 July - vote 5 July 2011 The report by Green draftsman Pascal Canfin wanted to strengthen the original proposals to address the problems of the risky practice of short-selling. The Greens are pushing for EU measures to ban uncovered short selling, which can cause havoc to financial markets and already has.

The European Parliament adopted the Canfin report, setting out its position on draft EU legislation aimed at regulating short selling and credit default swaps on sovereign debt. The report, which was adopted by a large majority of MEPs including the Greens, the EPP and S&D, significantly strengthens the initial legislative proposal, notably providing for a ban on naked credit default swaps of sovereign debt and curbs on naked short selling. The ECR/ALDE amendments intending to delete the ban of naked CDS on sovereign debt and to weaken the rules on short selling restrictions were defeated with a strong majority. The European Parliament indeed adopted the amended report but did not vote on the final legislative resolution, with a view to securing agreement with the Council on the final legislation in first reading. The vote on the legislative resolution will then take place during the September session.

- [Text of the report](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green rapporteur Pascal Canfin](#)

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Oral questions to the Commission

Plenary debate Monday 4 July The use of Passenger Name Record information for law enforcement purposes has been a long standing issue. Agreements have been concluded with the US, Canada and Australia in 2007 and 2008. There are real concerns with the disproportional and far-reaching nature of these agreements.

In the plenary debate with Commissioner Malmström, Greens remained critical whereas EPP and ECR seemed convinced of the necessity and proportionality of the use of PNR data for law enforcement purposes. The position of S&D and ALDE remained unclear, particularly on the agreement with Australia. Jan Philipp Albrecht and Rui Tavares intervened on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group mentioning our concerns on data retention, profiling, the lack of a privacy impact assessment and the very critical opinions of the Commission and Council legal service, plus the need to submit any draft agreement reached to the European Court of Justice to check for its compatibility with fundamental rights before the EP votes on it.

- [Text of the oral question](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht](#)

Further information:

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Derivatives, central counterparties and trade repositories

Legislative report by Green MEP Pascal Canfin

Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

Plenary debate Monday 4 July - vote 5 July 2011 The soft-touch approach to regulating the derivatives market has been left to go far too long and this legislation is a crucial step towards reducing the risks associated with derivative products.

The European Parliament adopted the legislative report which aimed at tightening the regulation of these opaque and risky products, which played a significant role in the financial crisis, and also at ensuring much greater transparency of derivatives. The Greens/EFA Group voted in favour.

A crucial measure endorsed by MEPs today is that the majority of privately traded over-the-counter derivatives will be standardised and traded through central counterparties that guarantee payment if one party fails. This will help reduce the complex interdependencies associated with these products and reduce the systemic risk in the financial system.

The vote on the legislative resolution is postponed to September.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green rapporteur Pascal Canfin](#)

Further information:

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Review of the Hungarian Presidency and vote on the revised Hungarian constitution

Council and Commission statements

Plenary debate Tuesday 5 July

Plenary debate on the revised Hungarian constitution Wed. 8 June - vote Tuesday 5 July The strongest criticism to the Hungarian Presidency came from the Greens/EFA Group once more.

In his speech, Daniel Cohn-Bendit spoke about the schizophrenia of Mr Orban's government which speaks

two different languages : one pro-European language in Brussels and another one - nationalist - at home. While recognising the work done at EU level by the Hungarian administration, Daniel Cohn-Bendit stressed the fact that the Hungarian government destroyed back home everything they have built up in Brussels. He also referred to several examples like the decision of the Hungarian Media Council to oppose the merger of two newspapers in contradiction with the opinion of the EU Commission. Daniel Cohn-Bendit also deplored that Mr Orban remained voiceless as President in office on such crucial issues such as the decision of Denmark to reintroduce border controls or the revolutions for freedom in the Arab world.

The joint motion for resolution by S&D, Greens/EFA, ALDE and GUE that was adopted by the European Parliament was based on the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) opinion and gives a strong signal to the Hungarian and all EU governments that they should and will be held accountable when acting beyond the democracy and rule of law standards and fundamental values commonly shared in Europe.

- [Plenary speech by Green Co-President Daniel Cohn-Bendit](#)
- [Motion for a resolution on the revised Hungarian Constitution](#) , by Greens/EFA and S&D
- [Text adopted by EP](#)

Further information:

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Greenhouse gas emissions reductions and risks of carbon leakage

Initiative report by Green MEP Bas Eickhout

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Plenary debate Wednesday 22 June - plenary vote Tuesday 6 July Due to an unexpected motion to postpone the vote during the June mini-session in Brussels, the vote on the report by Green MEP Bas Eickhout took place on Tuesday during the July session. The delay in vote was used by the energy intensive industry lobby to mobilise all national associations against the key parts of the report - most of which were deleted through the votes. The Green rapporteur was forced to recommend his group to vote against the report in the final vote, after the centre-right amendments aimed at fundamentally weakening the report and previous positions adopted by the European Parliament were passed by a narrow majority (one of the crucial ones with 324 in favour /321 against /23 abstentions). Had the report been adopted, the position of the EP from Cancun resolution (EU should do 30% domestic reductions by 2020 in the interest of economic growth) would have been dramatically weakened to one of making increasing the ambition of EU climate targets conditional to comprehensive international agreement and asking for that to be met without changing the ETS cap.

- [Text of the report as adopted in committee](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Bas Eickhout](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)

Further information:

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Restriction or prohibition of GMO cultivation

Report

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Plenary debate and vote Tuesday 5 July The Parliament voted on proposed new rules to give member states the right to decide whether to prohibit the cultivation of GMOs on their territory. The Greens voted in favour of the report.

The adopted report ensures that Member states can use environmental or socio-economic grounds to prohibit GMO cultivation on their territory (e.g. in order to protect their biodiversity, to prevent the development of pesticide resistance in weeds, or because of a lack of data on the impacts of GMO cultivation). Furthermore the report calls for mandatory anti-contamination measures (which implies that such measures must be set-up in countries which do not have them yet such as Spain). The EP also called for the introduction of a strict liability system in all MS which ensures that the polluter pays for damages that might occur due to the cultivation or placing on the market of GMOs. It also calls for improvement and better implementation of the risk assessment at EU level. The precautionary principle must also be taken into account and regions within Member states may also adopt measures to ban GMOs.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Bart Staes](#)

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Food information to consumers

Legislative report

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Plenary debate Tuesday 5 July - vote Wednesday 6 July The European Parliament endorsed a final agreement on new EU legislation on information on food products. The Greens supported the final agreement (outcome of the vote: 606 in favour /46 against /26 abstentions) , which will include some important concrete improvements for consumers, but the group would have preferred more ambitious rules, notably full front-of-pack labelling.

The new rules will include stronger rules against fake foods and deceptive practices like adding water or gluing meat, ensuring these must be labelled. Misleading labels, such as picturing fruit or other foods on labels even if they are not present in a food product, will also be banned. Consumers will also be informed about presence of nano-particles and the origin of vegetable oils, such as palm oil. Rules will be implemented to make it easier for vegans and vegetarians to find what they want.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Carl Schlyter](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)

Further information:

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Body scanners in airports

Report

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Plenary debate Tuesday 5 July - vote Wednesday 6 July There are serious concerns about the potential

impacts of the widespread use of body scanners both in terms of privacy and public health. At the committee stage, the transport committee of the European Parliament supported Green proposals that there should be no standard use of body scanners without full democratic scrutiny of any proposal by the Commission and no use of x-ray technology in body scanners.

The European Parliament adopted the report on the use of body scanners in airports and the Greens welcomed the outcome, after Green proposals calling for stricter conditions on the use of body scanners were adopted, notably the exclusion of x-ray technology.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- Plenary speech by Green MEPs [Judith Sargentini](#) and [Eva Lichtenberger](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)

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Programme of activities of the Polish presidency

Council and Commission statements

Plenary debate Wednesday 6 July

After Hungary, it is now Poland's turn to take over the EU presidency at a crucial period. Clearly, the EU's economic crisis and the fate of the Euro will continue to top the agenda.

In her address to Donald Tusk, Polish Prime Minister and President-in office of the European Council, Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms welcomed the enthusiasm of the Polish Presidency and spoke about the need to have a fair and equitable approach towards EU deficit countries most affected by the current crisis and stressed the need of solidarity measures and of a new deal and a new approach to global financial markets. Investment programmes should follow the environmental, climate and energy challenges along the lines of a Green new deal. Poland should push for innovation around climate and energy issues and promote the creation of green jobs.

Two weeks before the start of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council (on 16 June), a delegation of Green MEPs visited Warsaw to obtain more detailed information about the status of Poland's preparations to take over the EU Presidency and above all about the targets set by the Polish Government within the framework of specific priorities. The Green delegation was particularly interested in the Polish energy policy in connection with the EU Presidency and the next Conference on Climate Change in Durban (December 2011). Members of the Delegation also expressed serious concern about the current Polish energy policy, which relies on risky and ecologically questionable technologies such as nuclear energy and shale gas extraction.

- [Programme of activities of the Polish Presidency](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green Co-President Rebecca Harms](#)

Further information:

Agnieszka Rochon, Greens/EFA liaison officer for the Polish Presidency

Changes to Schengen

Commission statement

Plenary debate Wednesday 6 July - vote Thursday 7 July One week ago, the EU Summit agreed on proposals to revise the Schengen agreement to allow for the reintroduction of border controls. The Greens believe reintroducing border controls is inimical to the Schengen system and oppose leaving any

such decisions up to individual national considerations. The group strongly opposed the attempts by some Member states to exclude the EP from the decision-making on this issue (see [press release dated 29.06.2011](#)).

The crux of the resolution tabled in Strasbourg was to keep the European Parliament fully involved in any changes made to the Schengen agreement, Schengen Code,.... and that any change should focus on maintaining the principle of free movement.

This was achieved since the resolution was adopted with the 4 major parliamentary groups including the Greens voting in favour. The message to the European Council is crystal clear : the European Parliament must be involved in ordinary legislative procedure on Schengen.

- [Greens/EFA motion for a resolution](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- Greens/EFA press release ([in German](#))
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Judith Sargentini](#)

Further information:

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Election of the Members of the European Parliament

Initiative report

Committee on Constitutional Affairs

Plenary debate and vote Thursday 7 July The Greens have long argued for an electoral system that would enable the election of a proportion of candidates from pan-European electoral lists, as a step to trying to increase awareness of the European dimension of the EP elections. The group supports the proposal in this report for a transnational, pan-European list for the election of 25 members.

Due to insecure voting majorities on the report, the EP rapporteur asked for a referral back to committee. Greens/EFA supported this request and voted in favour. The report was then sent back to committee. To be continued.

- Greens/EFA press release ([in German](#))
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Gerald Häfner](#)

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AND ALSO

Fair Politics

Since 2009 the Evert Vermeer Foundation has been awarding the Fair Politician prize to the Member of the European Parliament who has contributed most to enhance Policy Coherence for Development. This year Green MEP Catherine Grèze was awarded the 'Fair Politician' Award.

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Jan Philipp Albrecht

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