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Plenary Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary session in Strasbourg 6-9 June 2011

EU-Canada trade relations

Oral question with resolution
Committee on International Trade
Debate Monday 6 June - vote Tuesday 7 June 2011

In the EU's negotiations on a trade agreement with Canada, several aspects are of particular concern for the Greens, i.e. seal products, tar sands and GMOs. For years, the Greens opposed attempts by Canada to press the EU to repeal its ban on the trade in seal products, which is aimed at reducing the brutal practice of seal hunting. The Greens are also strongly opposed to Canadian attempts to gain exemptions from EU fuel quality rules for oil from environmentally-devastating tar sands. The resolution tabled by the EP Committee on International Trade made a clear reference to those three issues of major concern for our Group and the text was adopted with a large majority. The plenary even strengthened the text of the resolution by adopting three key amendments among which two Greens/EFA amendments :

- seal products : no ratification of the Canada Free Trade Agreement in the EP as long as Canada maintains its WTO case against the EU seals ban (amendment 10)
- Green Energy Act: the EP calls upon the EU "to drop its challenges against the Ontario Greens Energy Act's local content requirement" (amendment 4 tabled by the Greens/EFA)
- GMOs : the EP warns that the stricter [GMO] regulations enacted in the EU could be challenged by private companies under the proposed CETA dispute-settlement mechanism, in particular since the CETA also provides for stronger intellectual property rights, including on patented seeds;"

- Motion for a resolution (Committee on International Trade)
- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Keith Taylor

Further information:
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Charging of heavy goods vehicles

Recommendation for second reading - Legislative procedure
Committee on Transport and Tourism
Debate and vote Tuesday 7 June

The final legislative agreement, reached with member state governments, on revising EU rules on road charging was supposed to ensure that road charging for heavy goods vehicles takes account of external costs, notably environmental costs, and not just road building costs. With the Council increasingly watering down legislation for transport, the Greens were concerned that the proposal would fall far short of addressing the real costs of road transport on the environment, notably by failing to take account of climate change impacts, as well as accident-related costing.
The European Parliament adopted the final agreement, revising EU legislation on the so-called Eurovignette. The Greens voted for the proposal, as the principle of charging for 'external costs' had been included for the first time in EU legislation. However, they have called the legislative revision a missed opportunity for failing to truly include environmental and climate change costs in road charging for trucks. While the costs of noise and air pollution will be included, it is highly regrettable that the final legislation has been watered-down and excludes external transports costs such as landscape and biodiversity damage, climate change and oil dependence costs from the Eurovignette. On top of this, the legislation is riddled with loopholes, notably the exclusion of all vehicles below 12 tonnes.

- Greens/EFA press release
- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speeches by Green MEPs Michael Cramer and Eva Lichtenberger

Further information:
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Application of Schengen acquis in Bulgaria and Romania

Non legislative report - Consultation procedure
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Debate Tuesday 7 June - vote Wednesday 8 June

The Greens were in favour of the inclusion of both countries as they have fulfilled the criteria that were applied to other member states. While there are concerns about corruption, notably in Bulgaria, this is not a criterion for accession to Schengen. As regards access to documents, the Greens/EFA always required to inform the Parliament in detail about all the relevant evaluations, discussions, etc. in order to make an informed decision. As regards the substance, our Group insisted that the border checks should be lifted as soon as possible, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so. Joining Schengen is conditional - a state has a right and an obligation to join it as soon as the preconditions are properly met. The Greens/EFA oppose additional preconditions not stipulated in the Schengen acquis.
In spite of the fact that the debate has been overshadowed by current moves to increase border restrictions in the EU, the European Parliament voted with a large coalition majority in favour of including Bulgaria and Romania in the Schengen area in 2011.

- Greens/EFA press release (in German)
- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA MEP Tatjana Zdanoka

Further information:
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Multiannual financial framework

Initiative report
Special Committee on policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable EU after 2013 (SURE)
Debate and vote Wednesday 8 June

This report concludes the work of the SURE committee on the next financial framework post 2013 and sets out the position of the European Parliament on the future financing of the EU.
The Greens supported the broad headlines of the report which points out that freezing or decreasing the future EU budget is not an option if the EU is serious about achieving the priorities it has set for itself. The report also reiterated the need for a true 'own resources system' for the EU budget and underlined the added value the EU budget can deliver over actions by individual Member States. The Parliament adopted

the report with a large majority (468 votes in favour / 134 against and 54 abstentions).
The overall text is good and in plenary some more of our amendments have been included, notably calling for priority to be given to energy efficiency and renewable energies when deciding on energy infrastructure and making specific reference to a Financial Transaction Tax as a possible new own resource for the EU budget

- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release
- Greens/EFA position paper 'No Sustainable Resources without new own resources' (SURE)
- Plenary speech by Green MEPs Helga Trüpel and Bas Eickhout

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European arrest warrant

Oral question - no resolution
Debate Wednesday 8 June

On the very same day of the EP plenary debate, the European Commission presented proposals to guarantee access to legal advice EU-wide. The proposals come in the context of growing concern about the European arrest warrant.
The Greens welcomed the new proposals on legal access but argued that more fundamental reform of the European arrest warrant is needed to address the serious concerns that persist. There is clear evidence that the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) is being disproportionately used by some member states, with scant regard for human or financial costs.
The Greens believe there is a need to take legislative steps to prevent this misuse. The group also believes sub-par prison standards in many member states need to be addressed in the context of the EAW, as well as the current situation by which citizens travelling within the Schengen area are arrested even when a request for an EAW has been turned down. Those arguments have been raised by Green MEPs during the debate with EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding.
Unfortunately Commission and Council were not prepared to propose a revision of the framework decision on the European Arrest Warrant, insisting instead on guidelines and better training of judicial authorities. The Greens will continue to push for legislative reform and other measures to ensure a proportionate use of judicial cooperation instruments and the raising of criminal justice standards and prison conditions in the EU

- Greens/EFA press release
- Text of the oral question to the Council and to the Commission

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht

Further information:
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Revised Hungarian constitution

Council and Commission statements
Debate Wednesday 8 June - vote during the July session

There are fundamental democratic concerns with the new constitution that was adopted by the Hungarian Parliament on 18th April, with support of the government party alone. Indeed it continues the trend of the current government to limit democratic pluralism and basic rights in Hungary, following on from the controversial media law and other measures. MEPs debated with the representatives of the Council and Commission about the revised Hungarian Constitution and the Greens called on the Commission to check its compatibility with EU law and treaties.
The deadline for motions for resolution is 29 June and the vote is due for the July plenary session.

- latest Greens/EFA press release
- plenary speeches by Green MEPs Judith Sargentini and Ulrike Lunacek

Further information:
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EU-Russia Summit

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Debate Wednesday 8 June - Vote Thursday 9 June

Ahead of the forthcoming EU-Russia summit, MEPs discussed the EU's relationship with Russia and, notably, problems with the rule of law and human rights. Concerns with the absence of basic rights,

democratic freedoms and the rule of law are as pertinent as ever. The Greens believe the EU has a duty to prioritise these concerns in its relations with Russia.
The Parliament adopted with a very large majority the joint motion for resolution tabled by five political groups including the Greens/EFA. The adopted text clearly *"reaffirms the urgent need for Russia to implement fundamental principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and media freedom as a basis for cooperation; calls on Russia to take concrete action to improve its human rights record and to protect journalists, human rights activists, minorities and opposition representatives from violence and intimidation*".
It also *"takes note with concern of the ruling handed down by the Russian appeal court against Mikhail Khodorkovsky and his business associate Platon Lebedev on 26 May 2011 as a continuation of politically motivated court decisions and condemns political interference with the trial".*
Unfortunately, the amendment tabled by the Greens/EFA calling on Russia to shut down immediately all the Chernobyl type reactors was defeated by the Conservatives (EPP) and the Socialist Group (S&D) which voted against (409) while Greens, ALDE and GUE voted in favour (180).

- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Text adopted by EP (not yet available)
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Werner Schulz

Further information:
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NUCLEAR : Stress tests of nuclear power plants and Italian referendum

Commission statement on stress tests
Debate Thursday 9 June - no resolution

The Greens were very critical of the objective, methodology and overall content of the tests, agreed between the Commission and EU nuclear safety regulators. Core safety risks, notably the threat of terrorist attacks or a plane crash, are set to be excluded from the criteria to be assessed. The Commission will have no authority to impose sanctions or to decide on shutting down a reactor should it fail a test. While the flaws of the voluntary nature of the tests have been made clear, with the nuclear industry having set the parameters of the proposed stress tests, it is now clear that this poacher-turned-gamekeeper approach to nuclear safety is flawed.
EU energy commissioner Oettinger made a statement in the front the European assembly on the EU nuclear safety tests.

- plenary speech by Green Co-President Rebecca Harms
- latest Greens/EFA press release on stress tests
- Green Euro-campaign 'No Fake Test, Mr. Oettinger!'

Referendum in Italy
On Wednesday 8 June, the Greens/EFA held a press conference in Strasbourg on the consequences on EU energy policy of the referendum this weekend on nuclear energy in Italy. If Italy votes to join Germany against nuclear, how will EU leaders handle European citizens' increasing concern over the risks of nuclear energy? During this press conference, the Greens also launched an appeal calling the Italian people to vote YES in the referendum and stay nuclear-free. Italians have until 12 June to 'Vota SI'.

- Video clip Vota SI

Further information:
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External dimension of social policy

Initiative report
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
Debate Monday 6 June - Vote Tuesday 7 June

The European Parliament adopted a resolution aiming at promoting the labour and social standards, including in EU trade agreements. This resolution calls for the strengthening of the ILO, better implementation and ratification of Conventions, and their respect both in and outside the EU. The adopted text also calls for the Commission to include a chapter on sustainable development, containing a legally binding CSR clause, in the free trade and investment agreements it negotiates with third countries and also to provide incentives for enterprises to enter into CSR commitments and an obligation of diligence for enterprises and groups of enterprises, i.e. an obligation to take proactive measures to identify and prevent any violation of human or environmental rights, corruption or tax evasion, including in their subsidiaries and supply chains However, the Greens/EFA regret that the adopted text *"stresses that no directive regulating CSR and enforcing respect for it should be adopted at EU level".*

- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release (in French)

Further information:
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"Let's change Europe"

A group of MEPs today launched the cross-party appeal "Let's change Europe" criticising current economic and social policies in the EU and calling for a change of course. It's the economic governance package, in particular, that's in the line of fire. It is described as an unprecedented challenge to the basic values and principles that underlie our shared future: solidarity, social justice, equal opportunities and sustainable development. The appeal advocates an alternative to the austerity measures put forward by right-wing politicians in Europe. The online appeal which was initiated by Green MEP **Sven Giegold** and S&D MEP Udo Bullmann has already been signed by many high-profile figures, among them Greens/EFA co-chairs **Dany Cohn-Bendit** and **Rebecca Harms**, former prime ministers, academics, trade union and civil society figures.

Sign the appeal at http://www.changeforeurope.eu

Recommended

Press release

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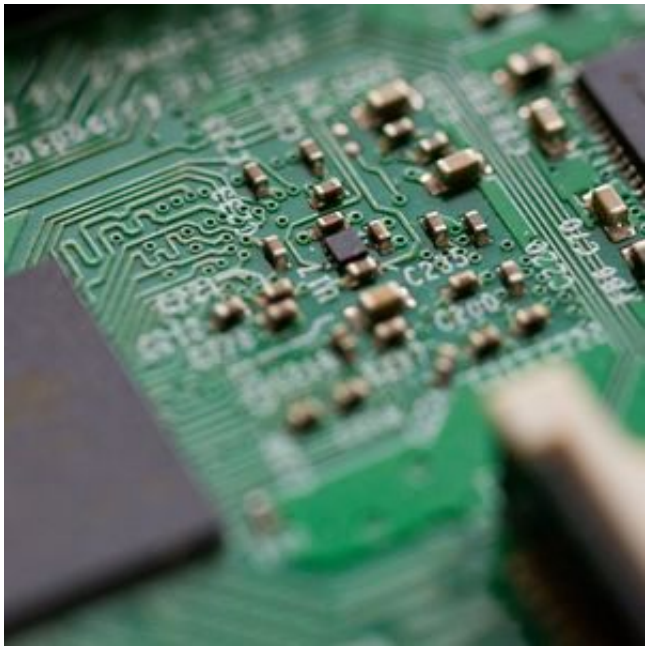


Tilly METZ elected European Parliament Vice-President

12.11.2026

Press release

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Redek Kozak



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Responsible MEPs



Jan Philipp Albrecht

Member



Michael Cramer

Member



Sven Giegold

Member



Rebecca Harms

Member



Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member



Judith Sargentini

Member



Keith Taylor

Member



Helga Trüpel

Member

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