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Brussels Agenda

Weekly preview of the Greens/EFA group - 27 Sept. - 1 Oct. 2010

EP priorities (full text below):

- CO2 emissions limits for vans (Tuesday, legislative vote, ENVI)
- More transparency for prescription medication (Tuesday, legislative vote, ENVI)
- Halting dangerous offshore exploration (Tuesday, vote on resolution, ENVI)
- EU budget 2011 and the external action service (Tuesday and Thursday committee votes)

Other EU priorities:

- Roma: minority protection and EU law (Commission report, Wednesday)
- Economic sanctions for budgetary indiscipline (Commission proposal, Wednesday)
- Financial transaction tax for Europe (EcoFin council, Thurs. - Fri.)

International priorities:

- Aviation and emissions trading (ICAO assembly, 28 Sept. - 8 Oct.)

CO2 emissions limits for vans

Tues. 28 Sept. - legislative vote in EP ENVI committee

With transport a key challenge for EU climate policy, this legislation seeks to tackle emissions from vans, following the rules on car emissions. The legislative proposal from the Commission fell below original intentions and the CO2 limits proposed fall far short of what is technically possible. With progress being blocked in the Council by Germany, France and Italy, it is up to the EP to push ahead. The Greens want to strengthen the proposals and are working with other groups to this end ahead of the vote. (see press release or blog for more detail)

More transparency for prescription medication

Tues. 28 Sept. - legislative vote in EP ENVI committee

The Greens have worked with other MEPs to transform this legislative proposal from one driven by the interests of the media and pharma industries, into legislation setting out what information patients should

have access to. The vote in committee should ensure that the legislation now aims to provide greater transparency on prescription medication based on patients' needs, rather than information to promote the commercial interests of pharma firms.

Halting dangerous offshore exploration

Tues. 28 Sept. - vote on resolution in EP ENVI committee

The Greens led the way in calling for an EU moratorium on oil exploration following the Deepwater Horizon catastrophe, highlighting insufficient EU rules on offshore drilling, notably on safety and liability. EU energy commissioner Oettinger subsequently endorsed the call for a moratorium. This EP resolution keeps the pressure on the Commission to ensure the EU regulative framework is reinforced to address the risks of offshore drilling. (see press release)

EU budget 2011 and the external action service

Tues. and Thurs. 28 and 30 Sept. - legislative vote in EP BUDG committee

MEPs in the budget committee will deliver their verdict on the proposed budget for 2011. The committee will also vote to revise EU legislation to facilitate the setting up of the new EU External Action Service. The Greens have a keen interest in both votes.

Roma: minority protection and EU law

Weds. 29 Sept - EU Commission presentation of report

France's appalling policy of Roma expulsions remains at the top of the EU agenda, with the Commission hopefully set to present its analysis on Wednesday. The blatant discrimination of Roma in France, and elsewhere, is clearly in conflict with EU law and has gone on far too long. The Greens believe the Commission should not waste any more time and should agree to launch an infringement procedure at its weekly meeting. (see press release)

Economic sanctions for budgetary indiscipline

Weds. 29 Sept - EU Commission proposal

The economic crisis in the Eurozone has put the question of budgetary discipline high on the agenda. The Greens believe any sanctions must be part of a broader economic framework, including much better budgetary surveillance and economic policy coordination, and must target excessive surpluses as well as deficits. This framework should also include incentives, while sanctions must be proportionate and avoid compounding existing financial problems.

Financial transaction tax for Europe

Thurs. - Fri. 30 Sept. - 1 Oct., EcoFin Council

EU finance ministers will discuss the introduction of a financial transaction tax at their Council meeting. The Greens have long advocated a financial transaction tax (FTT), which could play an important role in reducing volatility, curbing speculation and contributing to a more equitable revenue collection and distribution system, and believe the EU should lead the way. Green MEPs will present a paper on the feasibility of an FTT on Tuesday. (see press release)

Aviation and emissions trading

28 Sept. - 10 Oct., Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organisation

Aviation will be included in the EU's emissions trading scheme from the beginning of 2012, as part of Europe's efforts to tackle climate change. Scandalously, the US, with the backing of Canada and Mexico

(president of this year's UN climate talks), is seeking to undermine this already-adopted European legislation at the ICAO. The Greens are strongly critical of this development and want EU representatives to stand firm in support of EU climate policies.

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