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News | 25.05.2012

Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary session Strasbourg 21-24 May 2012

EU Summit / Euro crisis

Council and Commission statements
Plenary debate Tuesday 22 May 2012

Ahead of the EU summit, MEPs held a headline debate with the Commission and Council. The changing political landscape had raised hopes for a shift in course from the failing response to the Euro crisis. The Greens have long argued that the one-sided focus on austerity has made the situation worse. There needs to be a much greater focus on measures to turn the economy around such as eurobonds as well as an ambitious EU inititiative for promoting sustainable investments and clamping down on tax evasion. On Tuesday, the Greens presented an overview of a green investment pact for economic and fiscal sustainability in Strasbourg. Unfortunately the EU Summit on Wednesday paid little more than lip service to the need to maintain the integrity of the Euro and to keep Greece in the Eurozone and failed to support these aspirations with any substance.

- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Philippe Lamberts
- Greens/EFA press Release (EN/FR/DE)
- Document: A green investment pact for economic and fiscal sustainability (EN/FR/DE)
- Press Release - Greens present investment pack (EN/DE)

Further information:
Francisco Padilla, Greens/EFA Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs, francisco.padilla@europarl.europa.eu

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EU and China: Unbalanced Trade?

Own-initiative report
Committee on International Trade

Plenary debate Tuesday 22 May - vote Wednesday 23 May 2012

EU-China trade relations are in focus, with the EU running a trade deficit of €170 billion/year and China buying EU sovereign debt. The Greens believe that defensive protectionism is not in Europe's interest and that we instead need to finally pursue a long-term industrial policy, cooperate with China in promoting green tech and a sustainable economic transformation, while getting China to respect human rights and social and environmental standards.

Greens/EFA members tabled their own alternative resolution on this issue but it was rejected by a large majority. Only parts of the communist Group (GUE/NGL) voted for it.
The report on 'EU and China: Unbalanced Trade?' was carried unchanged by a large majority of the European Parliament while the Greens/EFA abstained in the final vote.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Yannick Jadot
- Greens/EFA alternative resolution
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
Martin Köhler, Greens/EFA adviser on International Trade, martin.koehler@europarl.europa.eu

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A resource-efficient Europe

Own-initiative report
Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary debate Wednesday 23 May - vote Thursday 24 May 2012

The Greens believe resource efficiency should be a core priority for the EU, first and foremost to tackle our overconsumption of global resources, but also with a view to promoting innovation, reducing our dependence on imported resources and helping to achieve the EU's climate, energy and environmental goals. The group believes the approach outlined by the Commission is undermined by a lack of concrete measures and clear targets.

With the EU Commission having presented its resource efficiency flagship last year, the European Parliament voted to set out its position on the EU resource efficiency agenda.

The Greens welcomed the outcome of the vote, which strengthened the Commissions proposals. For the Greens, the EP has rightly called for a shift in the taxation burden from labour to pollution and the wasteful use of resources. This will not only boost employment, it would also be a step forward for a resource-efficient Europe. The EP also took a clear position in favour of Commissioner Hedegaard's proposals to set separate default values for tar sands in the GHG accounting rules for fuel quality directive reduction obligations. In order to be meaningful life-cycle accounting must be as accurate as possible and there is no justification for favouring carbon intensive unconventional fuels.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Bas Eickhout
- Greens/EFA press release
- Text adopted by EP
- Stop Climate Change blog post

Further information:
Terhi Lehtonen, Greens/EFA adviser on Environment, terhi.lehtonen@europarl.europa.eu

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Situation in Ukraine and the case of Yulia Tymoshenko

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Plenary debate Tuesday 22 May - vote Thursday 24 May 2012

While the disturbing situation surrounding the detention and treatment of former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko has rightly made headlines, there are wider concerns about human rights abuses and the persecution of political opponents by the Ukrainian government. With the European football championships about to kick-off in the Ukraine, the country is even more under the spotlight.
The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation in the Ukraine, highlighting the problems with human rights and political repression.

In her speech, Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms welcomed that there is finally a broad public debate about Yulia Tymoshenko and other cases of opposition politicians that are being put to trial for politically motivated reasons. She urged EU and government officials to use the EURO2012 as a stage to critique the Ukrainian President and his government.

- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Plenary speech of Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms
- Greens/EFA press release
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
Paolo Bergamaschi, Greens/EFA Advisor on Foreign Affairs, paolo.bergamaschi@europarl.europa.eu

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Bluefin tuna in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean

Legislative report by Green MEP Raül Romeva
Committee on Fisheries
Plenary debate Tuesday 22 May 2012 - Vote Wednesday 23 May 2012

With the fishing season for bluefin tuna having just opened, MEPs voted on new EU legislation, implementing internationally-agreed rules (ICCAT). The Greens expressed regret that the legislation merely implements the international standards and fails to adopt more ambitious measures to truly tackle the critical status of this endangered iconic fish species. If the EU was serious about saving bluefin, it would adopt measures including closing areas for bluefin fishing, notably during the breeding season. The EU will again have the opportunity to push for more stringent quotas and regulations when ICCAT meets in November this year.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Raül Romeva i Rueda
- Greens/EFA press release
- Web article and video
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
Michael Earle, Green Advisor on Fisheries, michael.earle@europarl.europa.eu

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Taxing financial transactions in the EU

Legislative report
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Pleanary debate Wednesday 23 May - vote Wednesday 23 May 2012

MEPs voted to endorse proposals to introduce an EU financial transaction tax (FTT). The Greens have long advocated the introduction of an FTT both to help curb risky financial speculation and generate much-needed revenue for under-pressure exchequers (such as for development aid). The FTT will ideally apply in the EU as a whole but if this cannot be agreed by the Council then there is need to move forward, such as through enhanced cooperation with the widest possible group of EU members. On the negative side, the Greens believe exempting pension funds from the FTT was a mistake and not a good approach in the long term.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Sven Giegold
- Greens/EFA press release
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
Michael Schmitt, Greens/EFA Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs,
michael.schmitt@europarl.europa.eu

Equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value

Own initiative report with recommendation to the Commission
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
Plenary debate and vote Thursday 24 May 2012

While equal pay legislation outlaws paying women and men differently for the same job or for work of equal value, the gender pay gap remains due to direct or indirect discrimination. Despite longstanding EU and national legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment terms between women and men, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is still not a reality. MEPs overwhelmingly voted in favour of a report calling for equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and recommended measures to this end. 'Equal pay for equal work' is a core principle, which should guide employment policy. Individuals doing the same work should receive the same remuneration, regardless of gender or other factors. This is currently not the case and there is a need for more to be done to redress this.

- News article and video
- Greens/EFA press release (FR/DE)
- Video speech by Green MEP Franziska Brantner after Committee meeting in April
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:

Elisabeth Horstkötter, Greens/EFA Advisor on Women's Rights and Gender equality,
elisabeth.horstkoetter@europarl.europa.eu

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Our web articles of this week on :

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- Durban platform - Which Future for the Kyoto Protocol?
- Mandatory hearings for Citizens' Initiatives introduced
- Homophobia

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up : 15 June 2012

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In Defence of Democracy

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Bas Eickhout

Vice-President

Sven Giegold

Member

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Member

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Member

Philippe Lamberts

Co-President

Contact person

Jean Kutten

Head of Web & Publications Unit

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