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News | 18.01.2013

## **Greens/EFA Round-up**

### **Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 14-17 January 2013**

#### **Youth guarantee - Tackling youth unemployment in Europe**

*Motion for resolution*

*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

*Plenary debate Monday 14th January 2013 - vote Wednesday 16th January 2013*

Unemployment is sky-rocketing in crisis-hit EU member states, with youth unemployment particularly worrying (at around 50% in Greece and 35% in Spain for example). The Greens have been to the fore in advocating for a binding youth guarantee to address this problem and the EP adopted Wednesday a resolution driven by Green ideas on the youth guarantee proposals with the aim of pushing the Council into action on this urgently needed legislation.

- [Press Release](#) (EN/FR/DE)
- [Texts adopted](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Emilie Turunen](#)

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#### **Development aspects of intellectual property rights on genetic resources**

*Initiative Report - **Green MEP Catherine Grèze***

*Committee on Development*

*Plenary debate Monday 14th January 2013 - vote Tuesday 15th January 2013*

MEPs adopted a report Tuesday by Green draftsperson Catherine Grèze on the intellectual property rights of genetic resources in developing countries. Biopiracy is a major problem in developing countries, flying in the face of poverty reduction measures, notably for indigenous communities. This report outlines the problem and sets out measures to protect the intellectual property rights for genetic resources in poorer countries and regions. It includes proposals for action both at EU level and in terms of global governance.

- [Webarticle \(EN\) and video \(EU 23\)](#)
  - [Press Release](#) (EN/FR)
  - [Texts adopted](#)
  - [Plenary speech by Green rapporteur Catherine Grèze](#)
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## **Tax policy and the Irish Presidency of the Council**

*Debate with Council*

*Plenary debate Wednesday 16th January 2013*

MEPs debated the priorities of the Irish presidency of the European Council Wednesday morning with Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny. During the debate, Green MEP Sven Giegold presented Mr. Kenny with a “call to action” on EU tax policy. Highlighting the current loopholes in EU legislation and policy, the European tax pact sets out concrete measures that need to be taken to tackle tax fraud and evasion in Europe, which according to the Commission is depriving national exchequers of €1 trillion in lost revenue each year.

- [Press Release](#) (EN/DE)
  - [Document – European Tax Pact](#)
  - [GreensEP Twitter - Twittpic](#)
  - Plenary Speech
    - [Dany Cohn-Bendit](#)
    - [Sven Giegold](#)
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## **Regulating credit rating agencies**

*Legislative Report*

*Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs*

*Plenary debate Tuesday 15th January 2013 - vote Wednesday 16th January 2013*

The EP will vote for new rules on credit ratings agencies Wednesdays. Although the final compromise on the new legislation represents a moderate step forward for regulating this influential sector, the Greens regretted that it was not possible to achieve more ambitious provisions to change the market structure and prevent conflicts of interest. In particular, proposals to move from the current problematic and simplistic letter-based system (AAA) to a figure-based system, giving greater transparency on the situation and the likelihood of default, were seriously weakened by MEPs and Council. The rules also fall short of tackling potential conflicts of interest in a comprehensive manner, but rating agencies will have to refrain from issuing policy recommendations or prescriptions to sovereign states under the final rules.

- [Press Release](#) (EN/FR/DE/ES)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Sven Giegold](#)
- Texts adopted
  - [Credit rating agencies](#)
  - [UCITS](#)

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## **Corruption, misuse of EU funds and effects on the political decision-making processes**

*Council and Commission statements*

*Plenary debate with Council and Commission Wednesday 16th January 2013*

MEPs debated corruption and the misuse of EU funds with the Council and Commission on Wednesday. While the EP's special committee on organised crime has investigated evidence of a specific case of misappropriated EU funds in Italy, the problem is pervasive and present in many other EU member states. The Greens support of efforts to strengthen EU action to prevent such abuses. Apart from the obvious step of confiscating the proceeds of crime, this notably includes enhancing police and judicial cooperation and finally establishing a European public prosecutor.

- [Press Release](#) (FR)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht](#)

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## **Economic Partnership Agreement with Eastern and Southern Africa States**

*Recommendation*

*Committee on International Trade*

*Plenary debate Wednesday 16th January 2013 - vote Thursday 17th January 2013*

MEPs voted Thursday to approve voted an interim Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with 4 Eastern and Southern African countries. The Greens against the controversial agreement, the first of its kind to be concluded with African states. The agreement has the potential to undermine regional integration and threatens development in poorer and Least Developed Countries, which would have to eliminate tariffs, resulting in state revenue loss. Furthermore this would have an impact on local producers as they would have to compete with tariff-free imports from the EU. It is also unacceptable that the Commission ignored the demands of developing states to improve the interim agreement, as it had provisions which were changed in the full EPA on request of the ACP countries. Finally, not to forget it includes governments with questionable human rights records (e.g. Zimbabwe and Madagascar).

- [Press Release](#) (DE)
- [Texts adopted](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Judith Sargentini](#)

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## **Recent casualties in textile factory fires, notably in Bangladesh - Working conditions in Asia and EU retailers**

Poor health and safety conditions in production facilities in Asia supplying the EU market have once again come under the spotlight, with the recent and most deadly factory fires in Bangladesh's and Pakistan's histories where hundreds of workers died and many more were injured. The EP debated the issue Wednesday and adopted a resolution calling on companies to improve conditions on Thursday. It notably welcomed the recent Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Agreement between the government and a number of trade unions, NGOs and multinational textile retailers. The current EU approach to corporate social responsibility puts the onus on retailers and producers to address the issue but clearly more effort is needed. It therefore calls on major international garment brands to critically investigate their supply chains and to cooperate with their subcontractors to improve occupational health and safety standards. The EP also insists that the involved companies should support the measures taken to support and compensate the victims of the recent fires. As a vital element for the future improvement of the situation, it includes an appeal to both the Bangladeshi and Pakistani Governments to lift restrictions on trade union activities and collective bargaining. These events also raise implications for EU trade policy and the conditions attached. Unfortunately an amendment supported by the Green/EFA, which called for an EU agreement with third countries to allow victims of breaches of social or environmental legislation by European companies to have access to justice in the countries where the breach occurred, was rejected by a relatively narrow majority.

- [Press Release](#) (DE)
- [Texts adopted](#)

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## **Responsible MEPs**



Jan Philipp Albrecht

Member



Sven Giegold

Member



Judith Sargentini



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