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News | 22.05.2015

## **Greens/EFA Round up**

### **Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 18-21 May 2015**

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#### **Financial Benchmarks**

*Debate Mon., vote Tues.* The European Parliament voted Tuesday on draft EU legislation on benchmarks used for commodities, interbank lending and exchange rates. The Greens are critical of this vote, as the new draft law fails to address flaws in existing legislation. The current rules have allowed scandals such as LIBOR and EURIBOR to occur, and this vote shows that the majority of MEPs have chosen not to learn from previous financial market manipulation scandals. MEPs are guilty of allowing for industry-driven amendments, removing or further weakening key provisions on transparency, consumer protection, and supervision which had initially been proposed by the Commission. Greens/EFA President Philippe Lamberts specifically denounced the removal of transparency requirements on the composition of benchmarks, and the watering down of provisions on the supervision of benchmarks. Lamberts recognised the introduction of a European backstop, which empowers the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) to define a benchmark as critical, but regrets that "ESMA will not have a binding mediation role in cases of disputes between national authorities in the supervision of critical benchmarks."

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information:

Michael Schmitt - Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs

[michael.schmitt@ep.europa.eu](mailto:michael.schmitt@ep.europa.eu)

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## Conflict Minerals

*Debate Tue., vote Weds.* The European Parliament voted Wednesday on draft EU legislation aimed at preventing conflict minerals through supply chain transparency. The Greens/EFA proposal which was passed significantly strengthens the original draft law put forward by the Commission, by introducing binding transparency rules which would apply to all firms throughout the supply chain. The fact that such rules would apply to all firms throughout the supply chain, and not just to smelters and refiners, is of key importance. When it comes to the prevention of conflict minerals from entering the EU market in goods and everyday products the voluntary approach has not been successful, and the Greens are pushing hard for the EU to tackle this issue with binding rules, as the US did already in 2010. This development is welcomed by the Greens, amidst fears that EU legislation on conflict minerals could become little more than an empty shell.

- [Facebook](#)
- [Green position and infographics](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Plenary intervention – Judith Sargentini \(NL\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

Chiara Miglioli - Adviser on International Trade

[chiara.miglioli@ep.europa.eu](mailto:chiara.miglioli@ep.europa.eu)

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## Situation in Hungary

*Debate Weds.* The situation in Hungary was debated Wednesday in the European Parliament. This debate follows remarks made by Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on the possibility of reinstating the death penalty there, and the government's public "consultation" on immigration. Though the degree of conviction behind Prime Minister Orbán's comments on reinstating the death penalty is unclear, Hungary's level commitment to fundamental European values is cause for concern. Furthermore, the fact that fundamental rights in Hungary are yet again being discussed indicates a failure on the part of EU governments in Council to ensure common European values are respected by all member states. The Greens have also criticised the reluctance of Mr Orban's political family members in the EPP to condemn his recent actions, and stress that the EU needs more consequent mechanisms for ensuring its common values are being upheld. Parliament will adopt a resolution in June, following a proposal of the Greens/EFA group.

- [Press release \(FR/DE/EN\)](#)

Further information

Christine Sidenius - Advisor on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

[christine.sidenius@ep.europa.eu](mailto:christine.sidenius@ep.europa.eu)

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## Mediterranean Migration Crisis

*Debate Weds.* MEPs have debated Wednesday the Mediterranean migration crisis, following Monday's agreement by EU foreign ministers to launch a military mission against migrant smugglers in the Mediterranean. Both Commission vice president Frans Timmermans and migration commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos were present at the debate, where they announced a number of measures. These measures include an emergency mechanism for relocating migrants, as well as a resettlement scheme to take in migrants from countries outside the EU, and more funding for secure borders. The Greens have hit out at the Council's approach of militarising EU migration policy. Rather than destroying smugglers' boats, compounding the already desperate situation of refugees by leaving them in the hands of unscrupulous smugglers for even longer, the Greens feel that the EU should be addressing the reason for the tragedies in the Mediterranean, and creating proper legal routes for migrants.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Green proposals for a European migration and asylum strategy](#)
- [Plenary intervention – Ska Keller \(EN, FR subs\)](#)
- [Plenary intervention – Judith Sargentini \(NL\)](#)

Further information

Christine Sidenius - Advisor on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

[christine.sidenius@ep.europa.eu](mailto:christine.sidenius@ep.europa.eu) \_\_\_\_\_

## Money Laundering

*Debate Tues., vote Weds.* New legislation was adopted Wednesday by the European Parliament, aimed at tackling money laundering. The Greens warmly welcomed the final legislation, as it includes crucial provisions on central registers for beneficial ownership. The new rules mean that the ultimate owners of companies will have to be listed in central registers in EU countries, open both to the authorities and to people with a "legitimate interest", a pivotal measure in the fight against tax evasion and terrorist financing. The European Parliament vote today marks the final adoption of the legislation, and member states will have two years to transpose the anti-money laundering directive into their national laws.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information:

Michael Schmitt - Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs

[michael.schmitt@ep.europa.eu](mailto:michael.schmitt@ep.europa.eu) \_\_\_\_\_

## Maternity Leave

*Oral question Tues., vote Weds.* MEPs adopted Wednesday a resolution on the European Commission's plan to withdraw draft EU legislation on maternity leave. The resolution calls on the Commission not to withdraw this draft legislation, as the Maternity leave directive has been blocked in the European Council since it was adopted in 2010 by the Parliament, and the Commission recently put a shelf life on the Directive: in the Commission's working programme for 2015, it is stated that if an agreement is not reached within 6 months the proposal will eventually be withdrawn. The Greens view the failure of the EU governments to respond to the clear position of the Parliament on this issue as an insult, and now call on the Commission to properly exert pressure on EU governments in Council. In the event that the directive is finally withdrawn, the Greens will have no hesitation in exploring the possibility of challenging the decision before the European Court of Justice.



- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Facebook - Plenary action photo](#)
- [Plenary intervention – Jordi Sebastià \(ES\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information:

Georgia Tsaklanganos - Advisor on Women's Rights and Gender equality

[georgia.tsaklanganos@ep.europa.eu](mailto:georgia.tsaklanganos@ep.europa.eu)

## Other priorities

### Visit of Rajagopal, leader of the movement against land grabbing in India

The Green group welcomed Rajagopal PV, the famous leader of the movement against land grabbing in India. At first glance, the situation of Indian farmers may seem distant from that of European farmers. However, the fight against land grabbing knows no borders. In India, but in Europe as well, rich and fertile farmlands are used by corporate polluters. The quality of air, soil and water cannot be sold off for profit.



### “Better regulation” package

European Commission vice-president Franz Timmermans presented Tuesday the Commission's 'better regulation' proposals. The proposals seem to be tailored to strengthen the role of the big industry lobby in the EU's legislative process. Shackling democratically-elected legislators with more bureaucracy, whilst strengthening the influence of industry lobbies, would amount to a coup on the EU's democratic process. This would not be a better way to regulate and would not lead to better laws.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

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## State of Nature report

*Commission report (Weds.)* The European Commission presented Wednesday its State of Nature report, which looks at the status of species and habitats protected under EU legislation on birds and nature over a 6 year period (2007-12). The report underlines the numerous, manmade threats to habitats. For the Greens, it should be a warning signal for European policy makers about the need to redouble efforts to protect indigenous nature and address biodiversity loss. The current legislation is up for review and this report should serve as a rallying call to ensure these essential rules are not just maintained but properly enforced. The main EU target of 'halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services' by 2020 will not be achieved if the efforts are not upscaled.

- [Press release \(EN\)](#)

Further information:

Terhi Lehtonen – Advisor on environmental issues

[terhi.lehtonen@ep.europa.eu](mailto:terhi.lehtonen@ep.europa.eu)

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## Greens/EFA motions for resolutions on:

- [Plight of Rohingya refugees, including mass graves in Thailand](#)
- [Swaziland, notably the cases of Thulani Maseko and Bheki Makhubu](#)
- [Xylella emergency](#)
- [Zimbabwe, notably the case of Itai Dzamara](#)

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- <https://www.facebook.com/greensefa>

\*\*\*\*\* *Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up:*  
12 June 2015

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**Contact person**





Jean-Bernard Pierini

Web and Communication Officer

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