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Greens/EFA Round-up 18-21 January 2010

Debriefing of the plenary session in Strasbourg

Hearings of Commissioner-designates

Procedure under Article 17 of the Treaty on European Union
Hearings in committee Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 January 2010

The hearings of the 26 Commissioners-designate took place between 11 and 19 January.The last four hearings took place in Strasbourg on Monday 18 and Tuesday 19 January.The candidates answered questions from MEPs and have been evaluated on their abilities to deal with the issues in their portfolios.

Following the resignation of Bulgarian EPP-affiliated commissioner-designate Rumiana Jeleva, Kristalina Georgieva has been designated as the new Bulgarian Commissioner. This resignation has had a knock-on effect as the EPP in particular has set its sights on ALDE or S&D-affiliated candidates (Olli Rehn, the Finnish commissioner-designate for economic and monetary affairs, Neelie Kroes, Dutch Commissioner, responsible for the digital agenda but also the High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton).

The whole process will of course be delayed since a new hearing must be organised for Kristalina Georgieva.

The Conference of the Presidents of the political groups decided on Thursday 21 January to vote on the resolution winding up the debate on the Commission and to vote on the College of Commissioners during next plenary session on 9 February.

See:
- Reactions to the hearings by Greens/EFA MEPs (press releases and video statements)
- Greens/EFA Co-Presidents' briefing (video)
- Hearings website of the European Parliament

Iran

Statement by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission
Debate Tuesday 19 January 2010 - vote during February plenary session

Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for foreign and security policy, gave a statement to the European Parliament plenary on Iran. Barbara Lochbihler - German Green MEP and Chair of the EP's Delegation to Iran - expressed surprise and disappointment following Iran's decision to postpone the visit of a cross-party delegation of MEPs to the country earlier this month.

A resolution will be tabled and voted during the February plenary session.

See:
- Speech by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission
- Plenary speech by Barbara Lochbihler, Greens/EFA MEP, Chairwoman of the delegation for relations with Iran (video)
- Greens/EFA press release (DE)

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Haïti

Statement by the / Vice-President of the Commission
Debate Tuesday 19 January 2010 - vote during February plenary session

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, gave her first statement to the European Parliament and stressed the need for a long-term commitment to rebuild. MEPs urged that the aid the EU pledged should be delivered urgently and expressed the need for a solid EU commitment towards reconstruction.

During her speech, Eva Joly reminded that urgent humanitarian aid is necessary but not sufficient. It must be backed up with long term development aid. The best way to help them would be to respect them and allow them to benefit from their own resources. Haïti's debt should be cancelled, this would also be a way to pay our debt to that country.

A resolution will be tabled and voted during the February plenary session.

See:
- Speech by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission
- Plenary speech by Eva Joly, Greens/EFA MEP, Chairwoman of the Committee on Development (video)
- Greens/EFA press release (FR)

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Revision of the Cotonou agreement

Initiative report
Relevant committee: Development
Debate Tuesday 19 January - vote Wednesday 20 January 2010

A large majority adopted the report by Eva Joly, Green MEP and Chairwoman of the Development Committee, on the mid-term review of the 2000-2020 EU-ACP Cotonou Agreement. The report requests the ACP-EU negotiators for a serious policy change and the need for policy coherence is underlined. EU policies on trade, fisheries and agriculture must be coherent in order to support sustainable development in ACP states. Agriculture as priority sector to combat poverty, market regulation to encourage production for local consumption and to ensure fair prices for farmers is highlighted. The worrying issues of land grab are also addressed by calling the ACP states and the Commission to take concrete measures to avoid future food crisis and violent food riots. The Greens have in particular highlighted the need to fight against tax havens and illicit financial flows from developing countries. The EIB has been asked to review its activities in offshore centres.

See:
- Text of the report
- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speech by Eva Joly, Greens/EFA MEP and Chairwoman of the Development Committee (video)

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SWIFT : EU-US agreement on bank data sharing

Council statement
Debate Wednesday 20 January 2010 - vote during February plenary session

The current agreement on SWIFT is finishing on 31 January 2010. On a request of the Council of last July, the EC Commission has negotiated and concluded an interim agreement for the period 1 February - 31 October 2010. This agreement was adopted on 30 November last year, so one day before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Nevertheless, such agreement needs the consent of the EP to enter into force. During the debate on Wednesday 20 January in plenary session, the Council has announced that the agreement will officially be referred to the EP for consent on 25 January. Since it is technically impossible for the EP to give its consent before the first of February, on a request of Dany Cohn-Bendit, the EP will ask the Council to suspend the agreement and to wait until the EP has given its consent. In the meantime the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs will examine the dossier, especially to check whether the interim agreement complies with the conditions outlined in the EP resolution of last September. The LIBE committee will also have to consider the opportunity to ask for a legal opinion of the Court of Justice on the compatibility of the agreement with the Treaties and in particular with the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

See:

- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms
- Greens/EFA press release

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Democratisation in Turkey

Council and Commission statements
Debate Wednesday 20 January 2010 - without resolution

The debate (without resolution) on 19 January 2010 goes back to the decision by the Turkish Constitutional Court to ban the Democratic Society Party (DTP). But the debate has been used as an opportunity for a general debate on the situation in Turkey and on EU-Turkey relations. After the intervention of Mr López Garrido on behalf of the Council, underlining the strategic importance of Turkey and the speech of Olli Rehn on the importance of the democratisation process, MEPs took the floor. On behalf of the Greens/EFA Hélène Flautre and Ska Keller deplored the closure of the DTP as a step backward, as well as the aerostations of the elected representatives of this party. It was interesting to see that not only MEPs from Greens/EFA, Socialists (S&D), Liberals (ALDE) defended the EU perspective for Turkey but also some Members from the EPP Group.

See:

- Plenary speech by Hélène Flautre, Greens/EFA MEP and Chairwoman of the delegation for the relations with Turkey (video)

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Spanish Presidency of the EU

Council statement
Debate Wednesday 20 January 2010

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero presented the programme of the Spanish Presidency to the European Parliament. Mr Zapatero listed several priorities for his term, among which building an energy common market, to help reduce EU energy dependence, creating a digital internal market, to boost productivity and e-commerce, making industry more sustainable to combat climate change and investing in research and education, to enable Europe to become a leading player. The programme of the Spanish Presidency also includes the implementation of new instruments under the Lisbon Treaty to make "citizens feel closer to EU institutions", such as the new citizens' right of initiative to propose legislation.

See:
- Text of the programme of the Spanish Presidency (pdf)

- Plenary speech by Daniel Cohn-Bendit (video)
- Greens/EFA meeting in Madrid 28-29 January 2010

Recommended

Press release

Ivan Aleksic

Serbia/Mladić: Quote from MEP Prebilič

04.09.2026

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Esma Nur Büyükgüçlü

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