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News | 26.10.2009

Greens/EFA round-up 19-22 October 2009

Debriefing of the plenary session in Strasbourg

Resolution on the UN climate negotiations and the EU position

Relevant committee : Environment, Health and Food Safety
Committee vote on Monday 19 October 2009

The Greens installed a sculpture completely carved in ice, about 2 m high, symbolizing a climate refugee in the middle of the parliament´s central "agora" and drew attention of the public to the issue on the EP agenda with a Council and Commission statement on climate change and developing countries.

In order to highlight also the topic for President Barroso in Plenary for the debate, the Greens distributed climate flags to each Green/EFA Group member to be held up.

On Monday, Environment Committee adopted almost unanimously adopted a *resolution* joining contributions from the other two above committees on the Copenhagen climate conference, aimed at sending a strong signal to Europe´s finance and environment ministers meeting in Luxembourg and the upcoming European Council. The MEPs actually urged Member States to go beyond the current conditional emission reduction target of 30 % by 2020 (compared to 1990), stating that science would require EU to reduce by 40 % to be consistant with the 2 degrees C objective. The Committee also maintained EP´s position from last March that EU has to commit to at least ?30bn for financing climate efforts in developing countries. Meanwhile the inability of finance ministers to come to any agreement on an EU contribution for climate financing in developing countries for mitigation and adaption effortson Tuesday was seen by many observers as a gamble that could end up as a failure in Copenhagen. Disappointingly, they were unable to agree on the amount and the distribution of the costs and thus unable to show leadership to step up EU commitments or even on an EU position to block surplus hotair from diluting targets in the future international agreement. The last hope will be the forthcoming EU Summit on 29-30 October.

Latest information indicates that EU eyes ships (20 %) and aircraft (10 %) emission cap proposals by 2020 for the Copenhagen Climate Summit.

See also:

- Press release about the vote in the ENVI committee
- Press release about the Greens/EFA action
- Pictures of the Greens/EFA action

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Resolution on freedom of information in Europe and Italy

Relevant committee : Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Vote Tuesday 20 October 2009

Difficult to support the negative outcome of the nerve-wrangling efforts to come to terms with a resolution on freedom of media particularly in Italy (but also elsewhere in Europe), a title which was already subject to political infighting and a key issue for the Greens. A right-wing majority of Christian Democrats, conservatives and eurosceptics succeeded with a very narrow margin (338 against, 335 in favor, 13 abstentions) in rejecting all relevant tabled resolutions in a crowed plenary. The motion backed by socialists, liberals, Greens and the far left with a call for an EU directive against concentration of media ownership and criticising the scandalous media situation in Italy has therefore been silenced. The Greens are even more bitterly disappointed as the chance of winning the parliament´s approval looked much better two weeks ago when an MEPs´debate revealed considerable anger and unease over Mr. Berlusconi´s media power.

An illustration of his media power could be watched in the documentary shown by the Greens on Tuesday and entitled "Videocracy" illustrating the shocking situation of Italian television in a (half) society without values with fascistoid tendencies.

How was this vote possible? It all lays in the fact that in the newly elected parliament, centre-right parties are the much the largest force in the assembly and their numerical strength eventually prevailed.

See also:
- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Greens/EFA press release
- Greens/EFA initiative - film projection Videocracy
- Study by European Alternatives - The state of the media in Italy: a European problem

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Draft EU budget 2010

Legislative proposal
Relevant committee : Budget

Debate Tuesday 20 October / vote Thurdsay 22 October

The annual exercise of the EU budget procedure ... ended up this year for the Greens with at least one considerable achievement (and some minor ones) concerning a budget line on the **Green New Deal** for which appropriation was accepted intending financing of sustainable and environ-mentally friendly actions that provide for reconciling economic, social and environmental requirements as well as for recovery of European regions during the economic and financial crisis. One should not forget that most of our own amendments were lost, often because they concern points on which we have a different political view than the other Groups such as nuclear. In principle, we always vote against und most of the time we lose. However, we succeeded also (in a coalition with the Socialists, liberals and sometimes far left) in getting rid with a large number of amendments of reserves i.e. on Turkey what is an important message. The reason is that the Christian-democrats had tried to pass the message, using the human rights argument, that a majority of the House is against Turkey joining the EU which obviously is wrong.

Another success worth to be mentioned is the fact that the Greens managed to get the 50m extra for developing countries against climate change at least out of the reserve.

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Resolution on Guinea

Consultation procedure
Relevant Committee : Fisheries
Vote Thursday 22 0ctober 2009

It was not pure coincidence that the Fraga Estevez Report on the fisheries partnership agreement with the EU was on the agenda short time after the terrible massacre of 28 September of approx. 150 opposition supporters with thousand more wounded in the stadium of the capital Conacry followed by an outcry all over Africa and the world. It were actually the Greens who could not accept the vote the agreement scheduled one day later in the committee. As a result, the Fisheries Committee refused to endorse the agreement and to pay 1.05 million to the Guinean government.

This week then, fortunately, the EU Commission decided to drop the Guinea fisheries agreement under these circumstances as requested by the Greens. This is a strong signal that fisheries relations with third countries cannot be continued "at any cost", a decision which never happened before.

In this context, the Green organised this week a debate with direct video link to Guinea with the title "It´s not only about fish" and Thierno Sow, head of the Guinean human rights organisation on the latest developments in the country.

See also:
- Press release (in Spanish)
- Debate 'Guinea: it's not only about fish"

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Decision on the 2009 Sakharov Prize laureate

Conference of Presidents
Thursday 22 October 2009

EU Parliament awards 2009 Sakharov Prize to Russian human rights defenders
Today, the European Parliament´s Conference of Presidents awarded the annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to the Russian Oleg Orlov, Sergei Kovalev and Lyudmila Alexeyeva in the name of the human rights organisation "Memorial" and all human rights defenders in Russia.

The Greens were particularly pleased with this decision as they were the political Group which instigated the proposal which found unanimity among all political Groups. The prize is a reward for the long-lasting outstanding work of "Memorial" which has been subject to state repression, threats, house searches and trials for years. Their merit also goes to the very difficult work on the stalinistic past and the opening of the Russian archives, despite all hindrances. The decision has to be seen especially in the light of the brutal murders of critical journalists such as Anna Politkovksaja, Natalia Estemirova and others which remain unpunished.

The decision will be an important signal of European unity for next month´s EU-Russia Summit and boost the EU´s resolve to prioritise human rights and therefore chances of success when speaking with one voice.

See also:
- Greens/EFA press release

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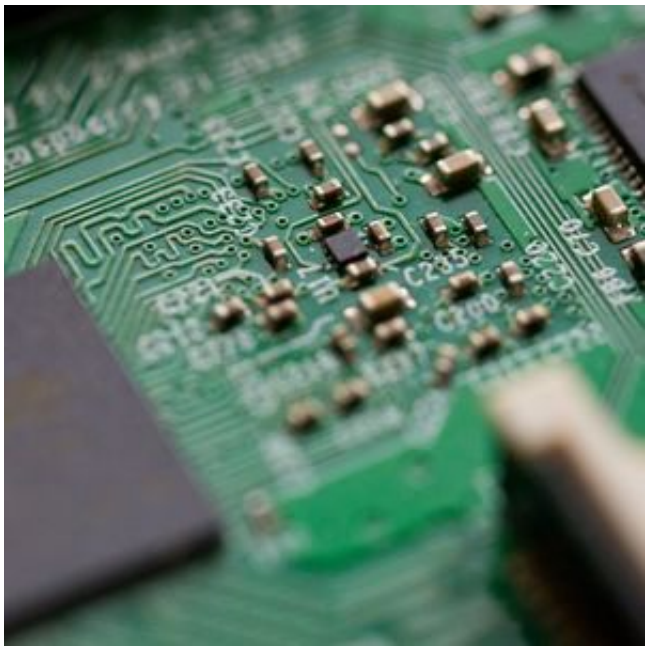


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