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News | 14.09.2012

Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 10-14 September 2012

Alleged transportation and illegal detention of prisoners in EU countries by the CIA

*Own initiative report by **Green MEP H el ene Flautre**
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Plenary debate Monday 10 September - vote Tuesday 11 September 2012*

The report by Green draftsman H el ene Flautre was adopted by the European Parliament with a large majority (568 in favour, 34 against and 77 abstentions). The report, which comes 5 years after an original special inquiry by the EU Parliament, highlights new evidence of secret detention centres and extraordinary 'renditions' by the CIA in EU member states - notably regarding Romania, Poland and Lithuania, but also in the UK and other countries - as well as making recommendations to ensure proper accountability. The report calls for the affected EU member states to launch independent investigations into the abuses and to follow up the findings with clear action. The European Commission should also follow up on this and facilitate the investigation of these systematic abuses at EU level. The Council should openly acknowledge that these abuses took place and take measures to address them. For its part, the European Parliament should revisit the actions taken within a year and ensure member states and EU institutions finally take action.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green rapporteur H el ene Flautre](#) (FR)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Recorded stream of the press conference](#)
- How did MEPs vote? [See roll-call votes \(p.11\)](#)

Further information:

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Energy Efficiency Directive

*Legislative report by **Green MEP Claude Turmes**
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
Plenary debate and vote Tuesday 11 September 2012*

New EU rules on energy efficiency and saving were endorsed by MEPs on Tuesday. The final legislative deal goes some way towards closing the gap for the EU to meet its 2020 target of 20% energy savings, creating jobs and boosting the economy at the same time. As well as providing a legal architecture for the 20% target, the final legislation includes a number of crucial binding measures, notably an annual energy saving obligation. European Parliament draftsman and Green MEP Claude Turmes is calling for quick and full implementation of these new rules, which are a concrete tool for responding to the economic crisis. He calls further the Commission to come urgently with additional measures to fill the gap towards the 20% target.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Recorded stream of the press conference](#)

Further information:

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Sulphur content of marine fuels

*Legislative report by **Green MEP Satu Hassi** - first reading agreement
Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary debate and vote Tuesday 11 September 2012*

The European Parliament adopted with a large majority (606 votes in favour / 55 against / 13 absentions) new revised EU legislation aimed at reducing sulphur pollution from ships. The new general tougher limits on sulphur emissions from shipping will enter into force in 2015 in Sulphur Emissions Control Areas (SECAs) and 2020 in all EU seas. Not only will this have major health benefits, it will limit potential distortions of competition between firms facing even stricter limits in the SECAs and firms that do not operate in those areas. The European Commission has also been tasked with reviewing its air quality legislation, with a view to extending the current stricter requirements on ships in port to all ships in territorial waters.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green rapporteur Satu Hassi](#) (EN/FI)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- How did MEPs vote? [See roll-call votes \(p.27\)](#)

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Common system of taxation applicable to interest and royalty payments

Legislative report

The European Parliament adopted its opinion Tuesday on draft revised EU legislation aimed at limiting the current practise of companies and artists channelling profits through different member states to avoid their tax responsibility. These largely legal tax avoidance schemes like the 'Double Irish' and the 'Dutch sandwich' should be tackled and the European Council should take heed of this vote. The group also unsuccessfully pushed to further limit the scope for corporate tax avoidance through an effective minimum EU corporate tax rate, however calls for an effective minimum EU tax rate on interest and royalties income were included.

- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)

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Draft general budget 2013

Plenary debate with the Council - Tuesday 11 September 2012

On Tuesday, the Council presented its position on the 2013 budget. The Council reduces by 1.15 billion euros commitment appropriations in comparison to the Commission's proposal. Concerning payment appropriations, the Council remains 5.23 billion behind the Commission.

While fiscal difficulties across Europe necessarily have implications for the EU budget, across-the-board cuts are an inappropriate way of addressing this. Not only do they undermine the EU's ability to deliver on priorities it has set for itself, notably measures to stimulate economic recovery like the growth pact, the cuts also jeopardise existing EU programmes, which are underway and are being implemented on the expectation of funds already committed for 2013. These cuts are absolutely unacceptable. The Union is at risk not to be able to serve its obligations and make a sound EU budgetary policy in the future impossible. In addition, the Member States called for strengthening Europe's competitiveness and announced investment in sustainable growth. It's schizophrenic to announce European investment programs while following a policy of budget cuts.

- [Greens/EFA press release](#) (DE)

Further information:

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Political use of justice in Russia

Plenary debate with EU foreign policy high representative Tuesday 11 September - Vote Thursday 13th September

Recent events in Russia, notably the politically-motivated trial and conviction of Pussy Riot, have highlighted major concerns about the rule of law and basic rights in Russia since the re-election of

Vladimir Putin as president. Green MEPs spoke out against the abuse of the legal system to stifle dissent in the debate with the EU's high representative for foreign policy. The Greens believe the EU should be more honest and be critical of the deteriorating situation in its dialogue with Russia and put forward a motion for resolution criticising Russia and listing the abuses. Russia cannot be a strategic partner for the EU if fundamental conflicts exist between our values and goals.

The joint motion for resolution was unanimously adopted.

- [Text adopted by EP](#) (Word version - p. 310)
- [Webarticle \(EN\) and plenary speech by Green MEP Werner Schulz](#)
- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution](#)

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Common organisation of the markets in fisheries and aquaculture products

Legislative report

Committee on Fisheries

Plenary debate Tuesday 11 September 2012 - Vote Wednesday 12th September 2012

The first of a set of legislative proposals reforming the EU's Common Fisheries Policy was voted on by the European Parliament Wednesday. MEPs supported Green proposals to include information on specific fish stock, area of catch and how the fish was caught on labels. With the ostensible goal of CFP reform to promote sustainable fisheries, the Greens believe providing clear information to consumers on the fish they buy is essential for encouraging more sustainable consumption habits. MEPs unfortunately failed to support Green proposals to change subsidies for storing/freezing fish when prices are too low. The best place to store fish is alive in the sea.

- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)

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European banking Union / State of the Union

Oral question to the Commission with resolution and statement by the President of the Commission

Plenary debates Wednesday 12 September 2012 - vote Thursday 13 September 2012

The European Commission presented legislative proposals aimed at providing for a supervisory system for European banks, as well as a communication with a broader scope including European deposit guarantee and banking resolution schemes, another key elements of the proposed European banking union. The Greens are in favour of strong banking supervision rules but cautioned that empowering the European Central Bank to fulfil the role of banking supervisor raises a number of challenges, notably as regards transparency, accountability, budgetary control and conflicts of interest with its existing roles.

"The Greens will work to ensure not only that the democratic concerns are addressed, but also that potential conflicts of interest between the ECB's monetary stability roles, its new role as banking supervisor and investor protection are properly managed. We will also seek to safeguard the crucial role all 27 member states have in the supervision of a fully integrated single market along the lines of progressive position the European Parliament adopted when establishing the European Supervisory Authorities in 2010" said economic and finance spokesperson Sven Giegold. Concerning deposit guarantee schemes, the Greens support the creation of robust EU deposit guarantee schemes (as opposed to the current national schemes) as part of a wider toolkit to ensure that the public is not left to bear the burden of bank failures but there is a need for differentiation to reflect the diversity in the banking sector, and the different risks associated with different business models in the sector.

Greens voted in favour of the resolution which was integrally adopted despite attempts from the EPP to delete part of the text through split votes.

In an earlier debate on the State of the Union with the President of the Commission, Greens/EFA co-president Dany Cohn-Bendit addressed the European Parliament, calling for a post-national Europe, a commensurate EU budget and a social redemption fund for European citizens hit by the crisis.

- [Text adopted by EP](#) (Word version - p. 314)
- [Plenary speech on the European banking Union by Green MEP Sven Giegold](#) (EN/DE)
- [Greens/EFA press release on European banking Union](#)
- [Plenary speech on the State of the Union by Green Co-President Dany Cohn-Bendit](#)

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Political situation in Romania

Council and Commission statements

Plenary debate Wednesday 12 September 2012

Despite the EU Commission having raised serious questions about rollback of democracy in Romania, following a series of emergency decisions taken by the Ponta-led government, concerns remain. MEPs debated this with the Council and Commission. The Greens believe the failure by Romania to address the concerns raised must be met with the appropriate sanctions, notably the start of a procedure under Article 7(1) of the EU treaty. The EU institutions should be consistent in upholding European democratic values and not get bogged down in political tit-for-tat.

- [Plenary speech by Green Co-President Rebecca Harms](#) (EN/DE/FR)
- [Latest press release on Romania](#) (18 July 2012)

Intergovernmental agreements between Member States and third countries in the field of energy

*Legislative report - First reading agreement Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
Plenary debate Wednesday 12 September - vote Thursday 13 September 2012*

Given concerns about security of energy supply and competition, the Commission proposed new legislation aimed at ensuring proper coordination of Member states' energy agreements with third countries. Currently member states do not have to inform the Commission or other member states about such agreements. The Greens believe it should be mandatory to report on negotiations on these agreements and that the Commission should be able to input into these EU-relevant agreements.

The Parliament regrettably adopted the first reading agreement which is weak and includes no mandatory reporting. Two key amendments tabled by the Socialist Group and supported by the Greens intended to reassert that Member States should declare when they are negotiating a new energy Intergovernmental agreement (IGA) and should take advice from the Commission on any incompatibility were rejected. The report was voted with a majority of 369 in favour, 240 against and a few abstentions. The Greens definitely voted against.

- [Text adopted by EP](#) (Word version - p. 45)

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European venture capital funds

*Legislative report - Green MEP Philippe Lamberts
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate and vote Thursday 13 September 2012*

MEPs voted Thursday in favour of new EU legislation on venture capital funds, which was shepherded through the European Parliament by Green draftsperson Philippe Lamberts. The final agreement as announced by the Danish presidency contained a key provision on tax havens as part of third country rules. Many member states have since backtracked on it. This is unacceptable, as council has proven to be unable to stick to an important agreement that would have combined a boost for sme investment with strong anti-tax haven measures, whereas the has confirmed its commitment to the original deal and to the fight against havens.

- [Text adopted by EP](#) (Word version - p. 169)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green rapporteur Philippe Lamberts](#)

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Forwarding to and handling by the EP of classified information held by the Council on matters other than those in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy

*Interinstitutional agreement procedure - Report by **Green MEP Gerald Häfner**
Committee on Constitutional Affairs
Plenary debate and vote Thursday 13 September 2012*

The report by Green MEP Gerald Häfner was adopted in a single vote with an overwhelming majority. The European Parliament will finally get access to classified documents from the Council under an inter-institutional agreement. This access is essential for the EP to be able to effectively exercise its functions, notably in view of its expanded competences under the Lisbon Treaty, for example with regard to international agreements. A similar agreement already exists with the Commission.

- [Text adopted by EP](#) (Word version - p. 3)
- [Greens/EFA press release](#)

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Situation in Syria

*Plenary debate with High Representative Catherine Ashton Wednesday 4th July 2012
Vote of the motion for resolution Thursday 13 September 2012*

A debate on Syria took place in July with the presence of the High Representative Catherine Ashton. The joint motion for resolution was adopted during the September session. Greens voted in favour. The adopted text calls for full and unimpeded access to the country for humanitarian assistance and medical care to all those who are in urgent need of aid so as to avoid civilian loss of life. The Green motion for resolution urged EU Member States to fully examine Syrian applications for asylum and to resettle refugees from Syria so as to provide them with shelter options within the EU. This position has been diluted in the adopted text which only refers to adequate and responsible measures to be taken by the EU regarding an eventual influx of refugees to the EU Member States.

- [Greens/EFA motion for a resolution](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#) (Word version - p. 304)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP H  l  ne Flautre](#) (July 2012)

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Role of women in the green economy

Own initiative report

Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Plenary debate Monday 10 September 2012 - Vote Tuesday 11 September 2012

MEPs voted Tuesday in favour of a report criticising the lack of integration of gender concerns in policies and programmes for sustainable development. The Greens welcomed the vote and have long worked on

mainstreaming gender in policy formation. The role of women in the green and sustainable economy is often underestimated or ignored completely in international and EU wide programmes. As a result, we risk exacerbating existing inequalities as we tackle the economic and climate crises.

- [Webarticle](#)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)

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Sven Giegold

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