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News | 15.06.2012

Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 11-15 June 2012

Legal basis of the Schengen evaluation mechanism

Council statement followed by a round of political group speakers
Plenary debate Tuesday 12 June 2012

The European Parliament's civil liberties committee voted on two key legislative files related to the EU's Schengen border-free system, one related to the reintroduction of border controls (Weber report) and one on the evaluation of Schengen (Coehlo report). The votes come after last week's controversial decisions by home affairs ministers on Schengen. For the Greens, the outcome of the votes sends a mixed message on Schengen and falls short of delivering a convincing rebuff to the moves by EU governments to scale back the EU's border-free system.
With EU governments seeking to dismantle the EU's Schengen border-free area, and trying to exclude the European Parliament from the decision-making, Greens/EFA co-president Rebecca Harms during the plenary debate slamed the EU's Danish presidency for its role in the process.

- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms
- Greens/EFA press release on the vote in the Civil Liberties Committee (EN/FR/DE)

Further information:
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Member States in the euro area ("two-pack")

Two legislative reports (Gauzès - Ferreira)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate Tuesday 12 June - vote Wednesday 13 June 2012

The European Parliament voted on two key legislative proposals aimed at further strengthening economic

governance in the Eurozone, the so-called 'two pack'. Both reports were carried with large majorities by the Parliament. The Greens voted in favour and welcomed the outcomes as setting out an alternative to the one-sided crisis response in the EU focused on austerity and structural reforms, while strengthening democratic oversight of the necessary EU budgetary surveillance. MEPs voted to counter-balance fiscal consolidation with measures aimed at stimulating economic recovery in crisis countries. This includes consulting social partners and NGOs on macroeconomic adjustment programmes, ex-ante analysis of the potential social impacts of these programmes, as well as transparency on the methods used by the Commission for analysing sovereign debt sustainability and economic outlooks. The EP also voted to make it easier to put countries under enhanced surveillance and to ensure countries subject to an adjustment programme carry out a comprehensive audit of their outstanding debt. MEPs also supported Green amendments aimed at ensuring budgetary cutbacks do not damage the provision of core public services, like health and education. The European Parliament also voted to strengthen the scrutiny and control role of the European Parliament and national legislatures in the EU-level budgetary surveillance and coordination. The immediate creation of a redemption fund and a roadmap for Eurobonds as well as a sustainable growth facility aimed at providing a countercyclical balance to fiscal consolidation measures have also been voted in favour as part of a coherent crisis response.

- Greens/EFA press release
- Text adopted by EP (only available in Word until now)

Further information:
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Negotiations on the UN Arms Trade Treaty

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Motion for a resolution on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs
Plenary debate Tuesday 12 June - vote Wednesday 13 June 2012

The European Parliament today adopted with a large majority (612 votes in favour - 18 against - 0 absentions) a very strong position on the forthcoming Arms Trade Treaty negotiations at the UN. This vote comes at the right time when the team of Mrs Ashton and the representatives of the Member States are on their way to New York for four weeks of UN negotiations on ATT.
For more than 10 years the Greens have been lobbying for the establishment of a treaty to regulate the global arms trade and today's resolution will add valuable support to the efforts of the EU delegation preparing for a tough two weeks of negotiations. The Greens managed improve the outcome of the committee vote and to have important proposals adopted on anti-corruption mechanisms and the inclusion of Dual Use goods into the treaty. Unfortunately the Group lost a very important amendment on the role of civil society organisations and their access to the mechanisms of implementation of the treaty.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Tarja Cronberg
- Web article
- Text adopted by EP (only available in Word until now)

Further information:
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Scheme of generalised tariff preferences

Legislative report
Committee on International Trade
Plenary debate Monday 11 June - vote Wednesday 13 June 2012

A revision of the generalised system of preferences, under which the EU provides preferential market access to developing countries, was voted on by MEPs. The revised rules aim to reduce the list of beneficiary countries, notably by ruling out emerging economies. The Greens believe the scheme needs to be adapted but the criteria used are too broad and will lead to the exclusion of some countries that should continue to be eligible. Exclusion or threat of exclusion also puts pressure on countries to negotiate potentially-damaging free trade agreements with the EU.
Unfortunately the result of the plenary vote is pretty bad and none of the Green amendments was adopted. Thus, the cut by more than half in the number of beneficiaries of the GSP scheme for developing countries is confirmed. The new scheme will come into force on January 1, 2014.

The final vote for the legislative resolution with 503 in favour, 107 against and 37 abstentions. Greens voted against.

- Plenary speech of Green MEP Ska Keller
- Text adopted by EP (only available in Word until now)

Further information:
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Multiannual financial framework and own resources

Council and Commission statements
Plenary debate and vote Wednesday 13 June 2012

The June EU summit will launch the debate among EU leaders on the EU's next budgetary period (2014-20).The Greens believe the EU budget should be a central tool in the EU's crisis response and be primarily used to promote investments aimed at stimulating the sustainable transformation of Europe's economy. The group has long advocated a proper system of own resources for the EU budget , ending rebates and correction mechanisms; this would lift the burden from national exchequers and end the annual horse trading, which undermines the effectiveness of the EU budget.
The Parliament debated and voted a motion for a resolution tabled by 5 parliamentary groups included the Greens/EFA. The joint resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority (541 votes in favour, 100 votes against and 36 abstentions).

The financial transaction tax as Own resources also got a large support (486 +, 130 -, 33 abstentions).
It's the first time the EP has officially backed the Commission proposal in Own resources, especially the FTT.

- Plenary speech by Green Co-President Daniel Cohn-Bendit
- Greens/EFA press release (FR/DE/ES)

- Joint motion for a resolution
- Text adopted by EP (only available in Word until now)

Further information:
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Critical Information Infrastructure protection - achievements and next steps : towards global cyber-security

Legislative report
Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
Plenary vote Tuesday 12 June 2012

While the European Parliament in Strasbourg voted in favour of a report aimed at strengthening the security and resilience of vital information and communication infrastructure EU-wide, the Greens/EFA group voted against. The debate originally concerned the resilience of information infrastructure, but during the parliamentary proceedings it became increasingly focused on law enforcement. Among other things, it wrongly refers to crimes such as intellectual property rights infringement. Critical information infrastructure protection should focus on ensuring the resilience of our physical infrastructure. To ensure that the continued debate on network resilience and robustness in the EU stays on the topic of robust and resilient infrastructure the Greens/EFA group rejected the report, which unfortunately does not make clear distinctions between these different topics.

- Article
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
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Food intended for infants and young children and food for special medical purposes

Legislative report
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary debate and vote Thursday 14 June 2012

EU rules on food for young children and infants, as well as for special medical purposes, were voted on by MEPs Thursday. The Greens voted in favour of the report , welcoming improvements on labelling.
The EP voted to finally tackle the problem of 'children's milk', a variety of milk-based products for children up to 3 years that are marketed with terms like 'growth milks', yet which do not have any added-benefit and may even be harmful to children. Regretably, the EP failed to back a Green proposal to ensure the most toxic pesticides cannot be used in the production of baby food.

- Press release
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
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GMO Campaign: No speed up of new approvals

Open letter to Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy John Dalli
12 June 2012

The Danish presidency failed Monday in its attempt to get the renationalisation of the ratification of GMOs on the Council agenda. The proposal gave undue power to private companies to negotiate directly with Member States' governments, and the Greens/EFA group are opposed to it. There is now the fear however that Commissioner Dalli will use the rejection of the proposal to speed up approvals of new GMOs. The Commissioner had already threatened Member States that he would resume authorising new GMOs for commercial growing if no agreement on the "renationalisation" proposal was reached. The Greens/EFA group wrote to him Tuesday urging him not to proceed. To do so would only jeopardise public confidence and trust in the scientific assessment agencies, currently under close scrutiny for possible conflicts of interest, and the Commission itself.

- Web article
- Letter to Commissioner Dalli

Further information:
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Greek Health Crisis

Open letter to Commission President Barrosso
Presented Tuesday 12 June 2012

Healthcare in Greece has reached a crisis point. Its organisation and delivery has been rendered almost impossible. As treatment in public hospitals has shot up due to the crisis, spending and staff levels have been slashed. The supply of life-saving drugs to the Greek market has been cut and major hospitals are running low on materials. With healthcare panic setting in, the Greens presented Commission President Barroso with a letter urging him to act to ensure this fundamental right.

- Web article
- Letter to Commission President Barroso

Common Fisheries Policy reform

Fisheries Council meeting Tuesday 12th June 2012

After late night negotiations, fisheries ministers announced their position on the reform of the EU's common fisheries policy (CFP) early Wednesday morning. The Commission had made some positive proposals, introducing sustainable catch levels in line with the "Maximum Sustainable Yield" (MSY) and banning discards, but the ministers delayed and weakened these positive elements. The Greens denounced this short sighted move that will prevent the industry from ever becoming profitable and independent of subsidies. Drastic reform is needed for the CFP which has been a model for unsustainable fishing. A vast body of evidence shows that sustainable catch levels are not a hindrance to a profitable fishing industry, but are in fact a precondition for it. The European Parliament must now take up the baton and ensure this CFP reform is meaningful and puts our fisheries on a sustainable footing.

- Press release
- Web article
- Campaign Video
- Explaining the misunderstandings about MSY: why it's possible tomorrow
- Reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (Study)
- Outcome of fisheries council meeting
- Commission proposals

Further information:
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See also

- Ukraine - Greens protest in football stadium
- Rio + 20 : Green priorities for the Earth Summit - video of the press conference - Rio+20 - conference documentation
- Co-Presidents' press briefing

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- www.stopclimatechange.net

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up : 6 July 2012

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Press release

Edoardo Bortoli

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Press release

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[New Co-Presidents Terry Reintke and Nicolae Ștefănuță …]

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Study

@frank-mckenna

LEVERAGING EU SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT FACILITATION AGRE…

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Press release

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Responsible MEPs

Rebecca Harms

Member

Ska Keller

Member

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