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News | 26.10.2012

Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 22-23 & 25-26 October 2012

Single seat for the European Parliament

Resolution on the 2013 budget
Committee on Budget
Plenary vote Tuesday 23rd October 2012

During the vote on the EU budget for 2013 Tuesday, MEPs proposed ending the European Parliament's multi-seat operation by adopting relevant language in the budget resolution. The long-running question of the Parliament travelling circus was brought into sharper focus this week as two Strasbourg plenary sessions were packed into the one week. While this innovative solution may yet be struck down by the Court, the move and the vote have ensured the current inefficient and wasteful operating method is back on the agenda. The Greens continue to push to have the issue debated in the EP plenary as the additional cost, environmental damage and public unpopularity of the multi-seat operation means the question cannot be ignored.

- Greens/EFA press Release (EN/DE)
- Study on the environmental impact of the multi-seat operation

Further information:
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General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013

Budget Procedure
Committee on Budget

Plenary vote Tuesday 23rd October 2012

The Greens welcomed the outcome of the vote on the 2013 EU Budget which drew a line in the sand for negotiations with the Council. In contrast with EU governments, which want to short-sightedly slash the overall budget, the Greens believe the EU budget is the best placed instrument for stimulating economic recovery across Europe but this implies allocating an appropriate level of resources to R&D, structural funds and other economy-stimulating measures. As ever, the Greens opposed plans to waste large sums of taxpayers' money on the ITER nuclear fusion research pipe-dream, which is impossible to justify in the current times. Unfortunately, as there was no majority to cut on fusion energy, but a majority to decrease development cooperation, the group abstained in the final vote.

- Greens/EFA press release (EN/DE)

- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speech by Helga Trupel (EN/DE)

Further information:
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Appointment of a Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank

Motion for Resolution
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Committee vote Monday 22nd October 2012 - Plenary vote Thursday 25th October 2012

MEPs voted to reject the sole candidate, Yves Mersch, for the vacancy on the executive board of the European Central Bank as their calls for a female candidate to be considered had been ignored. The Greens led criticism about the failure to consider any female candidates for the vacancy, and although not binding, Thursday's vote sends a strong signal that EU governments cannot simply ignore these legitimate concerns. There has been no female member of the ECB's executive board since 2011, a situation compounded by the lack of any female presidents of Eurozone central banks, which sit on the governing council, and which adds to the impression that it is an old-boys' club. The Greens also hit out at the conservatives for calling on EU governments to ignore the vote.

- Greens/EFA press release: EP takes stand against exclusion of women from Euro decision-making (EN/FR/DE)
- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release: EPP shows flagrant disregard for democratic process (EN/DE)

Further information:
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Boardroom quotas for women

Commission Legislative proposal
Postponed on Tuesday 23rd October 2012

The Greens expressed deep regret Tuesday at the European Commission's decision to postpone a highly anticipated proposal aimed at introducing a binding EU quota for a 40% representation of women on executive boards. It is hoped that the resistance of some Commissioners is a temporary blip and that the Commission presents a boardroom quota in the coming weeks. There is no shortage of sufficiently qualified women in the workforce, with more female university graduates than male, but the representation of women on executive boards remains unacceptably low, at around 14%. The voluntary approach to addressing one of the major remaining barriers to gender equality has failed and the Greens support the introduction of binding boardroom quotas with a view to stimulating the push towards balanced boardrooms. The Greens had also launched an ongoing video and e-mailing campaign targeting those Commissioners who oppose Commissioner Reding's proposals and support her strong statement that she will not give up.

- Get Women on Board Campaign - Watch the Campaign video and E-mail Now!
- Greens/EFA press release: Further delay on tackling major outstanding barrier to gender equality regrettable (EN/DE)
- Greens/EFA press release: EP throws weight behind EU quota, with cross-party support (EN)

Further information:
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Multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020

Interim Report
Plenary debate and vote Tuesday 23rd October 2012

The European Parliament overwhelmingly adopted Tuesday an interim report on the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-20 (517 in favour, 105 against, 63 abstentions), setting out the core priorities for the EP ahead of negotiations with EU member states. Greens and other MEPs made it clear that they want an EU budget that plays a central role in stimulating economic recovery in Europe and the sustainable transformation of our economy. They have also clearly nailed their colours to the mast in favour of a meaningful own resources system, including a Financial Transaction Tax, for the EU budget. The Greens believe the EU budget should be a key instrument for stimulating economic recovery, with more investment in research, education, green technologies, and the sustainable transformation of our energy sector. The Commission's proposals fail to reflect this ambition and must be increased.

- Greens/EFA press release (EN/FR/DE)
- Plenary speech by Helga Trupel (DE/FR)
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
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Revision of the current data retention framework

Debate with Commission
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Plenary debate Tuesday 23rd October 2012

Green MEPs debated data retention Tuesday evening with Home Affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, who failed to prove the necessity for the far reaching legislation. The Greens have long expressed concern about the disproportionate nature of the rules, with member states storing citizens' private data for up to 24 months, and a planned review of the controversial rules is to be postponed. Rather than bringing greater security, the system instead treats 500 million Europeans as under suspicion and is subject to abuse with little evidence. It is disproportionate, a massive violation of fundamental rights and should be repealed.

- Greens/EFA press release: EU-Richtlinie hat jede Legitimation verloren (DE)
- Plenary speech by Judith Sargentini (EN/NL)

Further information:
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Regulating markets in financial instruments

Legislative report
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate Thursday 25th October 2012 - vote Friday 26th October 2012

MEPs voted on Friday for important legislative proposals on the regulation of the market for financial instruments (MIFID). The Greens welcomed the strengthening of proposals on high frequency trading and commodity speculation that set clear boundaries on speculation on essential commodities like food. Unfortunately, MEPs did not go further and endorse a clear definition of excessive speculation. The Greens also regretted the failure to further protect consumers and forbid inducements. This would have been an incentive for financial advisors to recommend products in their clients' interest and not simply on the basis of securing the highest commission.

- Greens/EFA press release (EN/DE/FR/ES)
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
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European Semester for economic policy coordination

Legislative report
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate Thursday 25th October 2012 - vote Friday 26th October 2012

The report by Greens/EFA rapporteur Marije Cornelissen on the European Economic Semester was adopted by MEPs Friday. The Parliament used this opportunity to critique the one sided focus on pro-cyclical fiscal contraction that we have seen thus far in response to the Euro crisis. The report calls for a broader approach to European economic governance, such as addressing stagnating wages compared to productivity levels, stressing the need for indicators beyond GDP, demanding measures to address the impact of cutbacks on vulnerable social groups and economy stimulating measures, notably in the green economy. Regrettably, MEPs failed to support specific calls to take into account the imbalances caused by current account surpluses, and not just deficits.

- Greens/EFA press release
- Text adopted by EP

Further information:
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Sakharov prize winner

Conference of Presidents
Vote Friday 26th October 2012

Two Iranian rights activists, Nasrin Sotoudeh and Jafar Panahi, were announced Friday as the winners of the 2012 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought, following a decision by the European Parliament's conference of presidents. The Greens/EFA group, which nominated the two activists for this year's prize, welcomed the decision which recognises not only their tireless work to advance rights and freedoms in Iran, but also sends a strong political message to the regime in Tehran and the Iranian people. The widespread persecution and repression of rights activists and political opponents in Iran is a tragedy for the country and its society, which the Ahmadinejad regime must end

- Webarticle: Greens/EFA support two Iranian candidates - a film maker and a Human Rights advocate (EN)
- Greens/EFA press release (EN/FR/DE)
- This years' nominees

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- www.stopclimatechange.net

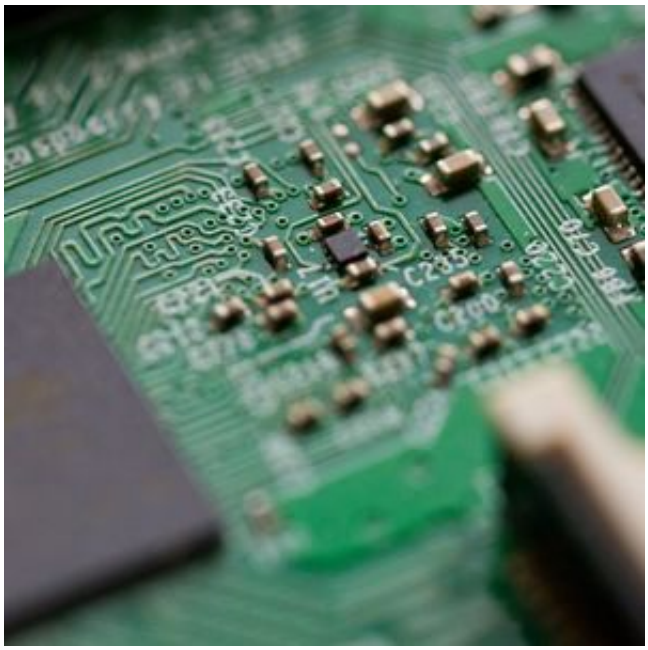
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