

[en](#) | [fr](#)

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## Greens/EFA Round-up

### Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 13-16 January 2014



#### Table of contents

- Carbon capture and storage: no panacea
- CO2 emissions from vans
- Plastic waste in the environment
- Honey labels and GMOs
- Public procurement, public services and innovation
- Spain's new abortion law
- Free movement for all EU citizens
- Data protection and EU-US relations
- EU Citizenship for Sale
- 2013 progress report on Serbia
- European integration process of Kosovo
  
- EU-ASEAN relations
- EP rejects new GMO authorisation
- Investment products and commodity speculation
- Troika's flawed role under scrutiny

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## Carbon capture and storage

*Own-initiative report (Davies report)*

*Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

*Debate Monday 13th January 2014 – Vote Tuesday 14th January 2014* MEPs voted Tuesday to support the controversial and unproven Carbon Capture and Storage technology (CCS). There are real concerns that this uncertain, expensive and energy intensive technology is being used as a fig leaf to continue with business as usual for the fossil fuel industry. Greens believe we should be looking to phase out fossil fuels in power generation. Given doubts about the commercial viability of CCS, it should not be used as an excuse to continue building coal-fired power plants, and under no condition should public money be used to support CCS in the power sector.

- [Stop Climate Change blog post \(EN\)](#)
- [Webarticle \(DE\)](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Bart Staes \(NL/EN\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## CO2 emissions from vans

*Legislative report (Krahmer report)*

*Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

*Debate Monday 13th January 2014 – Vote Tuesday 14th January 2014* MEPs confirmed insufficient limits on the CO2 emissions of vans Tuesday despite the economic and environmental arguments to the contrary. The Greens believe the final outcome, which merely confirms a 2020 fleet average target that was set on the basis of poor data in 2011, will fail to stimulate innovation towards cleaner and more efficient vans beyond what was already expected. Consumers have missed out on an estimated €5,000 net savings per van over its lifetime through fuel efficiency. Additionally, it is a missed opportunity to fully capitalise on the potential for reducing climate-damaging emissions from vans.

- [Press Release \(EN/DE\)](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Carl Schlyter \(SV/EN\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## Plastic waste in the environment

*Own-initiative report (Prodi report)*

*Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

*Vote Tuesday 14th January 2014* The EP passed a series of recommendations Tuesday dealing with the problem of plastic waste in the environment. Independently, crucial legislation on single-use plastic bags is being shepherded through parliament by Green MEP Margrete Auken later this year. This report voted on Tuesday called for clear action to address the issue of plastic waste in general and its devastating environmental impact. Apart from calling for a phase-out of oxo-biodegradable plastics in general, as well as of dangerous plastic materials and additives, it called for a drastic reduction of the use of single-use

plastic bags.

- [Press Release \(EN/DE/FR\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## Honey labels and GMOs

*Legislative report (Girlinging report)*

*Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

*Debate Tuesday 14th January 2014 – Vote Wednesday 15th January 2014* A majority of MEPs voted Wednesday in favour of proposals meaning that the presence of GM pollen in honey would not need to be indicated on the label. The result was a sting to European beekeepers who again and again spoke out in favour of transparent labelling rules. In 2011, the European Court of Justice ruled that honey contaminated with genetically modified pollen would have to be labelled as such under EU legislation. In response, the Commission presented a revision of EU legislation on honey, proposing that the presence of GM pollen in honey would not need to be indicated on the label, effectively overturning the court ruling. The Greens had called on MEPs to listen to beekeepers and consumer rights advocates but a majority was swayed by an intense lobbying campaign, led by honey importers.

- [Press Release](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Bart Staes \(NL/EN\)](#)
- Text adopted

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## Public procurement, public services and innovation

*Legislative reports (Various reports)*

*Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection*

*Debate Tuesday 14th January 2014 – Vote Wednesday 15th January 2014* MEPs voted on a series of legislative proposals on public procurement Wednesday. The purchase of goods and services by public authorities amounts to almost 20% of GDP and, as such, can be used as a crucial measure for stimulating innovative sectors. The Greens welcomed provisions which will ensure that it is used to promote more sustainable and ethical sectors. Up-front price will not be the sole factor to be considered in tendering processes, with life-cycle costs also to be taken into account. Following concerns about the impact on the provision of water services in the proposals on concession contracts, the group is happy water was finally excluded from the scope.

- [Press Release \(EN/DE\)](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Claude Turmes \(EN/DE\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## Spain's new abortion law

### *Press conference*

*Wednesday 15th January 2013* Greens/EFA MEPs condemned proposals by the Spanish government to restrict rules on access to pregnancy terminations. At a press conference Wednesday, they described the plans as a retrograde move for women's rights and health, and called for the plans to be scrapped.

- [Webarticle \(ES\) & and recorded livestream of Press conference \(ES/EN\)](#)

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## **Free movement for all EU citizens**

### *Motion for Resolution*

*Debate Wednesday 15th January 2014 – Vote Thursday 16th January 2014* Free movement of workers is a fundamental principle on which the European Union is based and the Greens welcomed the clear stance that the EP took Thursday in favour of citizens' rights. EU citizens should be able to work in all member states and the centre-right politicians' rhetoric about preventing Bulgarian and Romanian citizens from exercising this right amount to knee-jerk populism. The debate in certain member states is a dark distraction, but the removal of temporary restrictions on free movement from 1 January is a cause for celebration, one emphasised by the large majority of MEPs.

- [Press Release \(EN/DE/FR\)](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Rebecca Harms \(EN/DE/FR\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## **Data protection and EU-US relations**

*Debate Wednesday 15th January 2014* In the continuing response to the revelations on mass surveillance by US secret services, MEPs debated the implications of the transfer of the personal data of European citizens to the US under the 'Safe Harbour' decision with the Commission and Council. The Greens believe that, under the current circumstances, simplified data exchange provisions for US businesses under the Safe Harbour decision cannot be maintained.

- [Press Release \(EN/DE\)](#)
- [Plenary speech by Green MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht \(EN\)](#)

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## **EU Citizenship for sale**

### *Motion for Resolution*

*Debate Wednesday 15th January 2014 – Vote Thursday 16th January 2014* The European Parliament adopted Thursday a resolution on the selling of EU passports, following revelations about a Maltese scheme offering the possibility to 'purchase' citizenship, which have provoked debate about the consequences at EU level. With similar schemes in other member states on citizenship and residency, there are legitimate questions in the context of the EU's border-free system. However, the Greens believe the

revelations also raise wider questions for Europe. We need to finally introduce a coherent approach to legal migration, as well as a meaningful asylum system, and not leave citizenship merely open to the highest bidders.

- [Text adopted](#)

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## **2013 progress report on Serbia**

*Progress report (Kacin report)*

*Debate Wednesday 15th January 2014 – Vote Thursday 16th January 2014* The EU accession progress of Serbia was assessed by MEPs this week. The Greens welcomed the opening of accession negotiations with Serbia but caution that the EU must be vigilant, ensuring Serbia remains committed to reforms and to normalising relations with Kosovo. The European Parliament adopted a Green amendment stressing that Serbia and other countries in the regions will need to implement the EU environmental standards and adopt targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in the coming years. The adopted text notes the contradiction in Serbia's plans to produce electricity from coal and its emissions reduction goals. In this respect, it calls Serbia to adopt an energy policy in line with EU targets.

- [Press release \(EN\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## **European integration process of Kosovo**

*Progress report (Rapporteur Green MEP Ulrike Lunacek)*

*Debate Wednesday 15th January 2014 – Vote Thursday 16th January 2014* The European Parliament welcomed Thursday progress made with regards to Kosovo's European integration process. The Greens welcome the opening of negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Kosovo. The Greens stressed, however, that the EU must not put Kosovo on a separate track to other Balkan countries. The EU should accelerate the process that will lead to visa liberalisation for Kosovo, the only country in the region whose citizens are not allowed to travel freely to the EU.

- [Press release \(EN\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## **EU-ASEAN relations**

*Own Initiative report (Bütikofer report)*

*Vote Wednesday 15th January 2014* MEPs supported Wednesday a report by Green draftsman/rapporteur Reinhard Bütikofer on the EU's relations with the ASEAN Community. The report calls for the EU to give greater priority to its relations with this politically and economically important region, notably appointing an EU head of delegation to ASEAN and strengthening parliamentary cooperation through the creation of

an EU-ASEAN inter-parliamentary assembly. As well as highlighting rights and environmental issues, the report puts a particular focus on enhanced cooperation in education, culture and science.

- [Press release \(EN/DE\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## **EP rejects new GMO authorisation**

*Motion for resolution*

*Vote Thursday 16th January 2014* MEPs backed a Green motion Thursday to reject the recent proposal by the Commission to authorise the cultivation of a type of GM maize in the EU for the first time in 15 years. There are major concerns with the proposed authorisation of this crop, which has been genetically modified to produce a pesticide toxin that endangers moths and butterflies and to withstand a herbicide. The resolution calls on EU governments to reject the proposal and on the Commission not to authorise any new GMO variety until the risk assessment methods have been significantly improved.

- [Press Release \(EN\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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**ALSO**

- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution on situation of rights defenders and opposition activists in Cambodia and Laos](#)
- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution on recent elections in Bangladesh](#)
- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution on recent moves to criminalise LGBTI people](#)

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## **Outside the plenary**

### **Investment products and commodity speculation**

*Final trilogue negotiations*

*Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs*

*Tuesday 14th January 2014* An agreement was reached between the European Parliament and Council on proposals to revise EU legislation on financial and investment markets (MiFID). The Greens welcomed crucial provisions on investor protection, transparency in financial markets and on high frequency trading that will prevent rent extraction and rogue market interventions. A key priority for the group was also met as new powers for the European Securities and Markets Authority will help rein in speculation on sensitive food and commodity markets which has had devastating consequences in the developing world.

- [Press Release \(EN/DE\)](#)

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## Troika's flawed role under scrutiny

*Committee Hearings*

*Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs*

*Thursday 16th January 2013 – Economic affairs committee debate* A European Parliament inquiry into the role of the EU-ECB-IMF troika was launched by the EP, with a series of hearings during the week and the presentation of a first draft of the inquiry's report on Thursday. With very serious allegations of maladministration and contraventions of EU and international law being levied against the EU-ECB-IMF Troika, the Greens were to the fore in pushing for this inquiry. Any findings of maladministration or legal negligence must be accompanied by robust recommendations on follow-up action. Further information: Francisco Padilla, Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs

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*Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 7 February 2014*

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