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Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 9-13 December 2013

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Posted workers rules

Employment and Social Affairs Council
Monday 9th December 2013 EU employment and social affairs ministers agreed Monday on a common position on draft proposals on the enforcement of EU rules on posted workers. The overarching goal of this legislation should be to ensure the proper enforcement of EU rules on posted workers, to strengthen the rights of and guarantee better protection against exploitation for these workers, who are often in precarious situations. After months of deadlock, negotiations between the European Parliament, Council and Commission can finally start, with the EP's employment and social affairs committee having adopted its position in June. The Greens welcome the outcome, which is a significant development for ensuring robust controls as regards EU rules on posted workers. EU employment and social affairs ministers have followed the EP's line in rejecting the European Commission's attempt to limit the possibilities to control the implementation of this crucial legislation.

- Press release

Further information:
Philine Scholze, Advisor on Employment and Social Affairs
philine.scholze@ep.europa.eu

Surveillance of the external sea borders

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Vote Monday 9th December 2013 The European Parliament's civil liberties committee voted Monday on new EU legislation on the surveillance of external sea borders. The new rules aim to clarify how border guards serving in Frontex-coordinated maritime operations should deal with migrants intercepted or rescued at sea. Instead of the current abhorrent practise, by which Frontex simply turns back boats regardless, MEPs supported a Green proposal to ensure Frontex will have to properly assess whether refugees on intercepted boats need protection in the EU. The issue is in focus since the latest tragic losses of life in the Mediterranean and the perceived failure to tackle this recurring problem. The Greens have consistently pushed for a comprehensive EU border policy, which would ensure all EU governments finally take their responsibility to prevent these avoidable tragedies off Europe's coast and to ensure mutual support in doing so. The Greens welcomed the vote, which sets out the EP's position for negotiations with EU governments on the new rules. EU governments are expected to adopt a common position later in the week, with legislative negotiations foreseen to start before Christmas.

- Press release

Further information:
Christine Sidenius, Advisor on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
christine.sidenius@europarl.europa.eu

Common Fisheries Policy

Legislative report (Rodust report)
Committee on Fisheries
Debate Monday 9th December – vote Tuesday 10th December A legislative agreement on proposals to overhaul the EU's Common Fisheries Policy was endorsed Tuesday by MEPs. The deal is an important step forward and will undoubtedly improve the EU's dysfunctional fisheries policy. It also includes a number of key Green proposals, such as priority access for those who fish in a sustainable way and contribute to coastal communities. Rules on how the EU fleet fishes in non-EU waters have also been strengthened. However, the outcome is tinged with disappointment that EU governments were not willing to match the ambition of the European Parliament (notably on discards and fisheries management plans).

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Isabella Lövin
- Text adopted

Further information:
Michael Earle, Advisor on Fisheries
michael.earle@ep.europa.eu

North-East Atlantic: deep-sea stocks and fishing in international waters

Arsenis report

Committee on Fisheries
Debate Monday 9th December – vote Tuesday 10th December MEPs have voted in favour of new EU rules governing deep sea fishing. The Greens strongly regret the failure to back proposals to phase-out destructive bottom trawling. The devastation caused by these indiscriminate fishing practices on sensitive environments - like sea beds and reefs - as well as on threatened species has been well-documented. The UN has underlined that these deep sea environments are ecologically fragile, with unique biodiversity and slower life cycles. While a phase-out of deep sea trawling would have affected only a handful of EU boats, but would have had enormous environmental benefits. MEPs unfortunately swallowed pro-trawling arguments. The Greens voted against the report.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Jean-Paul Besset
- Text adopted
- Press release (EN, FR, DE, ES)

Further information:
Michael Earle, Advisor on Fisheries
Michael.earle@ep.europa.eu

EU-Morocco Fisheries Partnership Agreement

Committee on Fisheries
Debate Monday 9th December – Vote Tuesday. 10th December The European Parliament voted Tuesday in favour of a new, but very controversial EU-Morocco fisheries agreement, two years after decisively rejecting an earlier version. The Greens criticised the vote and the agreement, which would give the EU the right to fish in Western Saharan waters despite the fact the government of Morocco has no right to sell the resources of Western Sahara under international law. Furthermore, the Greens are concerned with the unsustainable nature of the agreement from a fisheries perspective and its dubious economic basis. The Greens voted against the report.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Raül Romeva i Rueda
- Text adopted
- Press release (EN, FR, ES)

Further information:
Michael Earle, Advisor on Fisheries
Michael.earle@ep.europa.eu

Ukraine crisis and the EU's role

Motion for Resolution
Plenary debate Tuesday 10th December 2013 – Public Hearing with activists Wednesday 11th December 2013 - Vote Thursday 12th December 2013 The Greens have expressed serious concern about the situation in Ukraine and the crackdown against democratic pro-EU demonstrations and pushed to ensure it was a priority item of the plenary session. The EU needs to do all in its power to support the pro-European mobilisation. To this end, the Greens successfully pushed for a special EP delegation to be sent to Kiev. The EU needs to be unified in its response both to Ukraine and Russia. In the medium term, committing to visa liberalisation and university exchange programmes would give concrete support to young Ukrainians. There should also be targeted sanctions, such as a visa ban for officials directly involved in the brutal attacks on demonstrators so that they are held to account for their actions. On Wednesday, the Greens organised a hearing with Ukrainian activists from the Maidan Square protests in Kiev. This was streamed live online, and also broadcast live on Ukrainian television. Green MEPs also bore Ukrainian and EU flags

during the vote on Ukraine on Thursday in an act of solidarity with protestors on Maidan Square.

- Press Release (EN/DE/FR)
- Plenary Speech – Rebecca Harms (DE/EN/FR)
- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Text adopted (only as Word document)
- Recorded Video of Event - From Maidan Square to the European Parliament
- Photos - Greens/EFA Plenary action & Event Maidan Square to the European Parliament

Further information:
Paolo Bergamaschi - Advisor on Foreign Affairs
paolo.bergamaschi@ep.europa.eu

Timing of auctions of greenhouse gas allowances

Legislative report (Groote report)
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Vote Tuesday 10th December 2013 The European Parliament finalised Tuesday an agreement on mandating a regulatory measure aimed at tackling the oversupply of emissions allowances in the EU's emissions trading scheme by postponing the auctioning of 900 million allowances ('backloading'). The Greens welcomed the vote but stressed that more structural reforms are necessary to truly address the problems with the ETS. The overdue backing for this measure, which has been unnecessarily delayed by the stubbornness of EU governments and centre-right MEPs, means it is now possible to move on to truly tackling the problems with the emissions trading scheme. 'Backloading' is only a stop-gap measure to buy time for more fundamental structural reform of the scheme. According to the Greens, fixing the ETS implies permanently retiring allowances and increasing the outdated 2020 EU emissions reduction target. The Greens voted in favour of the report.

- Text adopted
- Press release (EN, FR, DE)

Further information:
Terhi Lehtonen, Advisor on Environmental issues
terhi.lehtonen@ep.europa.eu

Credit agreements relating to residential property

Legislative report (Sanchez Presedo report)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Vote Tuesday 10th December 2013 The European Parliament adopted Tuesday new rules on mortgages. The Greens welcome these new rules, which represent a breakthrough for consumer protection in the crucial financial area of residential lending and mortgages. Irresponsible lending has played a prominent role in the current economic crisis, leading to property bubbles and massive, unsustainable indebtedness among millions of consumers. However, the Greens regret that this new legislation fails to address the bigger picture of residential lending. A major shortcoming is the failure to provide for any regulatory tools to deal with the huge macroeconomic risks posed by irresponsible lending. But given that the directive constitutes a clear step in the right direction, the Green Group voted in favour of the report.

- Text adopted
- Press release (EN, DE)

Further information:
Michael Schmitt - Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs
michael.schmitt@ep.europa.eu

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Non-legislative report (Estrela report)
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender equality
Vote Tuesday 10th December 2013 The Plenary of the European Parliament rejected Tuesday a report already adopted by its own women's rights committee on sexual health and reproductive rights (SHRH), after a narrow majority of MEPs voted to back an alternative resolution by centre-right political groups, which aimed to bury the issue. For the Greens, this rejection, as well as the scornful attitude of some right-wing MEPs during the proceedings, is a shameful episode for the European Parliament. The initial report, rejected Tuesday, aimed to highlight the importance of these basic rights for the health and well-being of women and men across Europe. Sexual and reproductive health and rights are under increasing pressure in some member states, despite being based on core EU values and central to efforts to promote gender equality. The Estrela report looked at the situation in the EU and set out a common EU approach to ensure SRHR are prioritised and promoted. The Greens were very much in favour of the Estrela report and so voted against the alternative resolution.

- Press release (EN, FR, DE)
- Reaction and explanation video – Ulrike Lunacek (DE/EN)
- SRHR – Deconstructing the Myths (Video) (EN/FR/DE/ES/CT)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Elisabeth Horstkoetter, Advisor on Women's Rights and Gender equality
elisabeth.horstkoetter@ep.europa.eu

Instrument for stability and peace (ISP)

Committee on Foreign Affairs (Report by Green MEP Bütikofer)
Debate Tuesday 10th December – vote Wednesday 11th December The European Parliament voted Wednesday on a series of funds for the EU's external action policies over the coming 7 years (2014-20), including the Instrument for Stability and Peace (ISP). The report was driven by Green rapporteur/draftsman Reinhard Bütikofer. The new Instrument for Stability and Peace equips the EU to play a significantly stronger peace-making role in current and future conflicts and crises. Crucially, the European Parliament succeeded in doubling the funding available for conflict prevention to €200 million in spite of the opposition of EU governments. The report also strengthens the role of women in peace-building and reinforces measures on dialogue and reconciliation, among other issues.

- Text adopted
- Press release (EN, DE)

Further information:
Tobias Heider - Advisor on Security and Defence
tobias.heider@ep.europa.eu

Mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation

Legislative report (Cutas report)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Debate Tuesday 10th December 2013 – vote Wednesday. 11th December 2013 The European Parliament voted Wednesday to update EU rules on the automatic exchange of tax information, with a view to including all categories of income. The Greens support the proposal as an important step in efforts to tackle tax evasion, providing for more effective coordination and tax justice. EU member states blocking the generalisation of automatic information exchange, notably Austria and Luxembourg, must yield and agree to this important measure, which responds to the challenges raised by offshore leaks and the staggering €1 trillion annual losses of tax revenue in the EU. The directive subject of Wednesday's report aims at the further extension of automatic information exchange. The Greens regret however that a key negative amendment was passed, giving Member States discretion as to their actions and referring to possible national law exemptions. For this reason, the Greens abstained in the final vote.

- Text adopted

Further information:
Michael Schmitt - Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs
michael.schmitt@ep.europa.eu

Globalisation Adjustment fund

Legislative report (report)
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
Debate Tuesday 10th December 2013 – vote Wednesday 11th December 2013 MEPs supported Wednesday the continuation of the Globalisation Adjustment fund, which will provide direct help to workers, regardless of their contract type, made redundant as a result of structural changes in world trade patterns or globalisation. The Greens have been pushing to improve this fund and welcomed the outcome. The Fund provides co-funding for active labour market measures and a coordinated package of personalised services that should anticipate future labour market perspectives and be compatible with the shift towards a resource efficient and sustainable economy.

- Plenary speech - Marije Cornelissen
- Text adopted

Further information:
Berta Halmos, Advisor on Employment and Social Affairs
berta.halmos@ep.europa.eu

Human rights in the world 2012 and EU policy on the matter

Initiative report (Kukan report)
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Debate Tuesday 10th December 2013 – vote Wednesday 11th December 2013 The European Parliament adopted Wednesday its annual report on human rights. The Greens believe the EU needs to do more to ensure coherence between its internal and external human rights policies. The Greens have been critical of the tendency for the EU to shy away from raising human rights with strategic partners and believe this should be redressed. In addition to prioritising the fight against trafficking and torture, the Greens have also pushed for the EU to take a clear stance against drones and the indiscriminate consequences of their military use. Unfortunately, a strong Green amendment deploring EU migration policies towards the Southern Mediterranean was rejected. Another amendment condemning the military use of armed drones was also rejected. Despite these negative points, the Greens were satisfied with the overall report and

voted in favour.

- Text adopted
- Press Release (DE)
- Video - The Greens: driving force of EU policy on Human Rights (EN/DE)

Further information:
Raphaël Fišera - Advisor on Human Rights
raphael.fisera@ep.europa.eu

Bank accounts: a basic right

Legislative report (Klute report)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate Wednesday 11th December 2013 – Vote Thursday 12th December 2013 EU rules on basic bank accounts will be revised under proposals voted on by MEPs Thursday. The Greens pushed to ensure the legislation establishes a universal right to a basic payment account for all people residing in the EU, not just citizens, which is crucial to addressing the exclusion and social and economic disadvantages faced by those who currently are not able to have one for various reasons. Importantly, the proposed rules will also ensure information on account charges is more transparent and easily comprehensible for consumers.

- Press release
- Plenary speech – Sven Giegold (DE/EN)
- Texts adopted (only as Word document)

Further information:
David Kemp - Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs
david.kemp@ep.europa.eu

See also

- Greens/EFA motion for resolution on Central African Republic
- Greens/EFA motion for resolution on organ harvesting in the People's Republic of China
- Greens/EFA motion for resolution on Sri Lanka

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