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Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 21-25 October 2013

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EU data protection rules

*Legislative Report (Green MEP **Jan Philipp Albrecht**)*
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affair
Committee vote – Monday 21st October 2013

Legislative proposals revising EU data protection rules so that they are up to the challenges of the digital age were voted by the European Parliament's civil liberties committee Monday evening. The vote was a breakthrough for data protection in Europe and is a major step to replacing the current patchwork of national laws. The strong mandate for Green MEP Jan Philippe Albrecht to begin negotiations with Members States on the final rules came despite concerted heavy lobbying from industry resulting in a record breaking 3999 attempted amendments! Key issues include the 'right to erasure', explicit consent regarding data use and sanctions for non-compliance. Provisions on data transfer to third countries are very much in focus after the Snowden revelations. The Green campaign "Respect My Privacy" will continue throughout the negotiations as pressure now has to shift towards Member States to ensure a high level of protection for EU citizens.

- Press Release (EN/DE/FR)
- Respect My Privacy Campaign
- News Article

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Towards a UN climate change deal

Motion for Resolution
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary debate Monday 21st October 2013 – vote Wednesday 23rd October 2013

MEPs debated Monday the forthcoming UN climate talks in Warsaw and voted Wednesday on a resolution to this end. The Greens supported Environment committee recommendations for the EU to move to a 30% greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020 and for a 2030 reduction target of at least 50% compared to 1990 levels. Unfortunately these calls were removed by a majority of MEPs in favour of more vague recognition of EU ability to lead being determined by the ambition of its own policies. Despite the watering down of provisions regarding EU action, the resolution remains ambitious for the global deal in 2015 which is also why the Greens voted in favour.

- Plenary Speech - Bas Eickhout (EN)
- Stop Climate Change blog post

- Public conference (Brussels) - 2 Years Left to Reach an Ambitious Climate Deal
- Public conference (Warsaw) - Citizens' energy for a good climate
- Text adopted

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Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Legislative Report (Estrela Report)
Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality
Plenary debate Monday 21st October 2013 – vote Tuesday 22nd October 2013

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are coming under increasing pressure in some EU member states, in spite of being based on core EU values and central to efforts to promote gender equality. Against this background, a report on looking at the situation in the EU and looking for a common EU approach to ensure SRHR are prioritised and promoted came before MEPs for debate and vote this week. Unfortunately, a majority made of right-wing, conservative and so called Liberal MEPs at the last minute ensured that the report was sent back to committee! This was despite the report receiving cross party support in the committee. With higher rates of maternal mortality and teenage birth persisting in some EU member states, it is clear that more needs to be done to promote best practise in the EU. This cannot be ignored and we will ensure that the report is finally put to a vote in plenary

- Video Reaction – Ulrike Lunacek (EN/DE)
- Photo action by Green MEPs

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Medical implants and consumer safety

Legislative Report (Liese, Roth-Behrendt reports)
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary debate & vote Tuesday 22nd October 2013

Two legislative proposals aimed at updating EU rules on medical devices following various scandals (e.g. with breast implants, hip replacements), were voted on by MEPs Tuesday. MEPs backed Green pushes for long-overdue prohibitions on toxic substances in certain devices when safer alternatives are available. However, unfortunately neither provisions on full pre-market authorisation of high-risk medical devices nor comparative assessment of innovative high-risk devices against existing treatments were included. Green proposals for proper transparency on the results of medical trials and genetic testing were included in the final provisions, marking both reports as a step forward despite leaving some challenges unanswered.

- Press Release (EN/DE/FR)
- Text adopted

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Ship recycling: reducing the risk

*Legislative Report (Green MEP **Carl Schlyter**)*
Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Vote Tuesday 22nd October 2013

New legislation on the recycling of ships was adopted by the Parliament Tuesday, after being shepherded through the legislative process by Green draftsperson Carl Schlyter. The new EU rules will allow EU-flagged ships to be scrapped outside the EU only if strict standards are met. These standards effectively mean the end of 'beaching' where ships are simply taken apart on a beach, with scant regard for human health or the environment. Regular inspections, Commission assessments and increased scrutiny will help ensure compliance with these standards.

- See latest Press Release (EN)
- Text adopted

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Sustainable fisheries at risk

Legislative Report (Cadec report)
Committee on Fisheries
Plenary debate Tuesday 22nd October 2013 – vote Wednesday 23rd October 2013

The European Parliament voted on a proposed funding programme for EU fisheries for 2014-20 Wednesday as part of the Common Fisheries Policy. Unfortunately, some of the provisions in the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) are at odds with the goals of the recently-agreed reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and could seriously threaten the goal of more sustainable fisheries. In particular, the proposals to introduce subsidies for purchase of fishing vessels for young fishermen, funding for engine replacement and grants for temporary cessation of fishing are completely wrongheaded at a time when the CFP is looking to reduce, not increase, capacity. Thankfully, MEPs at least rejected proposals to reintroduce subsidies forthe construction of new fishing vessels more generally and backed Green proposals to increase funding for research and control. Taxpayers' money should only support activities that increase the sustainability of fisheries and prioritise the recovery of depleted fish stocks, so as to ensure that coastal fishing communities have a future.

- Press Release (EN/DE/FR/ES)
- Plenary Speech – Raul Romeva (EN/ES)
- Text adopted

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Migrant protection after Lampedusa and preparation of the European Council

Motion for resolution
Plenary debate & Vote Wednesday 23rd October 2013

Following yet another tragedy involving a migrant boat in the Mediterranean, MEPs voted on a resolution addressing this situation on Wednesday to put pressure on EU Member States ahead of the European Council meeting Friday. The Greens believe there is an urgent need for rules obliging member states to do more to assist migrant boats in distress but unfortunately EU governments are stalling on this, blocking concrete measures under EU legislation on the surveillance of external sea borders that is currently being debated. Instead of mere surveillance and information-sharing, EU member states should have a duty act to save lives at sea, which the Greens insisted on in the resolution.

- Greens/EFA motion for resolution
- Press Release (EN/DE/FR)
- Plenary Speech - Daniel Cohn-Bendit (EN/FR/DE)
- Text adopted

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Secret data surveillance and SWIFT

Legislative Report
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Vote Wednesday 23rd October 2013

The EP adopted a resolution Wednesday calling for the suspension of the EU-US agreement on the exchange of SWIFT bank transfer data. This came following the latest revelations about covert surveillance by secret services, notably that the US secret service (NSA) accessed private data of EU citizens via the SWIFT bank transfer system. The Greens believe this totally undermines the EU's agreement with the US on accessing SWIFT information and that the agreement, which in any case has insufficient data protection provisions, needed to be suspended. The affair has wider implications, notably good faith in the EU-US trade negotiations, and the Greens have called for talks to be suspended.

- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Press Release (EN/DE/FR)
- Text adopted

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Arctic 30: detention of activists in Russia

Plenary Debate Wednesday 23rd October 2013

With the Arctic 30 environmental activists and journalists still being detained on spurious charges in

Russia, MEPs debated the situation Wednesday. The EU should do more to ensure the Russian authorities immediately release those detained, with their incarceration little more than a political stunt by the regime, and we are calling on the EU's foreign policy high representative Catherine Ashton to directly intervene in this matter. The issue raises wider questions about Arctic policy and the huge environmental risks of nascent resource extraction plans, following melting sea ice. Instead of encouraging a free-for-all, EU member states should lead efforts to protect this sensitive environment.

- Press Release (EN/DE)
- Plenary Speech - Rebecca Harms (EN/DE/FR)
- Photo action by Green MEPs
- Photo action Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms

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EU-Turkey negotiations

General affairs council
Tuesday 22nd October

EU governments decided Tuesday to reopen accession negotiations with Turkey following a compromise reached over the summer. Instead of merely negotiating on the next procedural negotiating 'chapter' (chapter 22 on regional policy), we believe there is a need to go further in order to promote fundamental rights and freedoms. The EU should open the negotiating chapters on the judiciary, fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security (chapters 23 and 24) as soon as possible and offer a credible negotiating timetable.

- Press Release (EN/DE/FR)

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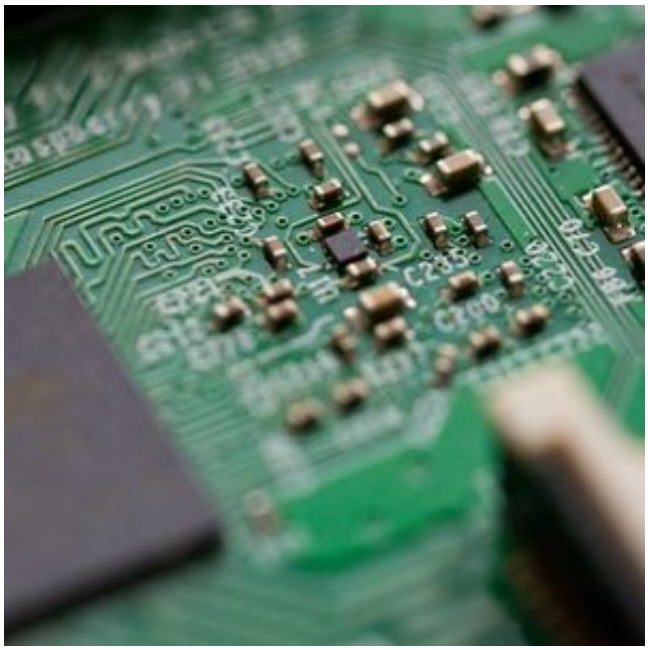
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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 22 November 2013

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