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Greens/EFA Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary week Strasbourg 14-17 April 2014



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Politicisation of EP administration posts and Martin Schulz

European Parliament Bureau & Ivan report
Bureau meeting Monday 14th April 2014 – vote Wednesday 16th April 2014 Political nominations by the two largest groups have gotten out of hand and seriously affect the independence of the Parliament's administration at all levels. There is an urgent need to properly reform the process for recruiting positions in the administration. This week, the Bureau of the European Parliament decided to confirm the appointments to top posts in the EP's administration of 3 staff formerly working directly for EP president Martin Schulz. The Greens had called for a decision on the nominations to be postponed and hit out at the decision, which was made despite a vote on the 3rd April last criticising the nominations.

- Press release (EN)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Bart Staes, MEP & budget control and transparency spokesperson
bart.staes@europarl.europa.eu _____

Monster trucks, pollution and safety

Legislative report (Leichtfried report)
Committee on Transport and Tourism
Plenary debate Monday 14th April 2014 – vote Tuesday 15th April 2014 MEPs voted to postpone a proposal to increase vehicle weight and size Tuesday. The proposal has a view to allowing the cross-border passage of so-called gigaliners or mega trucks. The Greens have been to the fore in opposing attempts to promote the spread of these trucks, which have raised major road safety concerns where they are in use. Shifting more freight to road transport will have a negative impact in terms of the environment, climate change and noise pollution, at the expense of rail transport. The Greens welcomed the decision by other groups to endorse the transport committee's vote to freeze the plan.

- Press release (EN/DE)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Hana Rihovsky, Advisor on Transport & Tourism
hana.rihovsky@europarl.europa.eu _____

EU airport noise rules

Legislative report (Leichtfried report)
Committee on Transport & Tourism
Plenary debate Monday 14th April 2014 – vote Wednesday 16th April 2014 A legislative agreement revising EU rules dealing with airport noise was confirmed by MEPs Wednesday. The Greens hit out at the agreement, which will enable the European Commission to intervene to overrule decisions made to introduce flight restrictions (like night bans) at airports. In general, the legislative review has sought to boost capacity at airports, rather than addressing the real problems caused by airports, which affect millions of European citizens. This is doing the work of the air transport lobby, against the interest of EU citizens.

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

Further information:

Paul Beeckmans, Advisor Transport & Tourism
paul.beeckmans@europarl.europa.eu

Transparency and the lobby register

Interinstitutional agreement (Gualtieri report)
Committee on Constitutional Affairs
Plenary debate Monday 14th April 2014 – vote Tuesday 15th April 2014 The controversial question of lobbying transparency and a lobbyist register was dealt with by MEPs Tuesday when they voted on plans to update European Parliament rules on lobbying. The Greens are disappointed with the outcome, which is a missed opportunity for truly ensuring full transparency of lobbying in the EU institutions. The urgently-needed compulsory register for lobbyists is effectively kicked to the long grass, which will leave the EU institutions far behind others, like the USA, in how they deal with lobbying. Given the recurrent scandals and public concern, this is regrettable.

- Press release (EN/DE)
- Plenary Speech – Gerard Häfner (EN/DE)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Guillaume Sellier, Advisor on Constitutional Affairs
Guillaume.Sellier@europarl.europa.eu

Banking resolution and taxpayers' exposure

Legislative reports (Various reports)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate & votes Tuesday 15th April 2014 MEPs voted Tuesday on ground-breaking new EU rules setting out a European framework for dealing with failing banks. The proposals on how to decide on the resolution of failing banks, including how to fund the cost, as well as on a European deposit guarantee, represent a core element of the European banking union. Whilst the Greens believe the rules could and should have gone further, this new EU framework and fund will certainly help address the exposure of taxpayers to the massive cost of failing banks, which has caused devastation in some EU member states. The Greens also criticised the insistence of EU governments that core elements of the new banking resolution system be dealt with through an intergovernmental agreement, as opposed to EU law, castings a long shadow over the achievement. There are doubts about the legal soundness of this intergovernmental approach and the Greens will thoroughly evaluate all legal options to avoid a precedent

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

Further information:
Francisco Padilla, Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs
francisco.padilla@europarl.europa.eu

Regulating investment markets and products

Legislative reports (Various reports including Green MEP Sven Giegold)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate & votes Tuesday 15th April 2014 A series of crucial new EU laws dealing with investment products and markets received final endorsement from MEPs Tuesday. The new rules on investment products (UCITS), shepherded through parliament by Green MEP Sven Giegold, will improve investor protection against reckless risk-taking. The new investment markets rules (MiFID) will help curb food

speculation, limit high frequency trading and bring greater transparency. In both cases, the Greens would have preferred to go further but this was not supported by the two biggest groups in the Parliament and so support the final outcomes.

- Press release (EN)
- Texts adopted

Further information:
David Kemp, Advisor on Economic and Monetary Affairs
David.KEMP@europarl.europa.eu _____

Plastic bags

Legislative report (Green MEP Margrete Auken)
Committee on Environment, Public Health & Food Safety
Plenary debate Tuesday 15th April 2014 – vote Wednesday 16th April 2014 New rules aimed at reducing the use of single-use plastic carrier bags were backed by MEPs Wednesday. Green MEP Margrete Auken, who is shepherding the legislation through Parliament, believes we should move to swiftly phase-out these bags, as one of the low-hanging fruit solutions to the pervasive problem of plastic waste in the environment. This means including ambitious and obligatory European reduction targets and a requirement that plastic bags should always come at a cost, with member states open to decide how this should be realised. The Greens welcomed the outcome, which would significantly strengthen proposals from the European Commission.

- Press release (EN/DE/FR)
- Plenary Speech – Margrete Auken (DA/EN)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Terhi Lehtonen, Advisor on Environmental Issues
Terhi.Lehtonen@europarl.europa.eu _____

Saving migrants' lives at sea

Legislative report (Coelho report)
Plenary debate Tuesday 15th April 2014 – vote Wednesday 16th April 2014 A legislative agreement on new EU rules on how FRONTEX border personnel should deal with migrants intercepted at sea was voted on by MEPs Wednesday. The legislation has come under 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 and held an action outside the plenary before the vote. We need a border policy that will ensure all EU governments and FRONTEX finally take their responsibility to prevent these avoidable tragedies off Europe's coast. These rules are a small step forward and contain binding provisions on search and rescue. Importantly, the fundamental principle of non-refoulement of people who face persecution is explicitly detailed in the new rules, following Green insistence.

- Press release (EN/DE/FR)
- Photo – “Rescue and Protect Refugees”
- Text adopted

Further information:
Ska Keller, MEP & Spokesperson
franziska.keller@europarl.europa.eu _____

Dany Cohn-Bendit's departing speech

Plenary debate Wednesday 16th April 2014 In his final speech as a member of the European Parliament, Greens Co-President Dany Cohn-Bendit spoke about the lessons to be learnt from the First World War for the Future of Europe. We must not be afraid to fight the nationalisms, national egoisms and far-right extremism that would relegate European countries to the past and leave them to fall far behind emerging powers. Only together can we tackle the crisis and other challenges to come. We do need a vision for Europe! A social Europe is needed now more than ever. Videos:

- Francais: N'ayez pas peur d'affronter l'extrême-droite! Ayons une vision de l'Europe, fédérale et sociale
- English: Lessons for Europe from the First World War
- Deutsch: Cohn-Bendit: 100 Jahre nach Ausbruch des Ersten Weltkriegs: Erkenntnisse und die Zukunft Europas

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Honey, GMOs and EU labelling

Legislative report (Girling report)
Committee on Environment, Public Health & Food Safety
Plenary vote Wednesday 16th April 2014 MEPs narrowly voted (283/248/45) to allow honey contaminated with GM-pollen to go unlabelled Wednesday. The vote was to accept an agreement reached on proposals to revise EU rules on honey, with those deciding not to take a position also making the difference. 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 agreement confirmed this and the Greens had called on MEPs to reject this hypocrisy.

- Press release (DE)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Corinna Zerger, Advisor on Food Safety
corinna.zerger@europarl.europa.eu ___

Scrapping EU data retention rules

Plenary debate Wednesday 16th April 2014 With the European Court of Justice having ruled that the controversial EU data retention directive is incompatible with the Charter of Fundamental Rights, MEPs debated the next steps with the Commission Wednesday. The Greens believe the Commission must immediately implement this ruling and give up its continued advocacy for data retention and other types of unjustified mass surveillance. The same has to apply to EU governments. Not only does this infringe basic rights, it has also been shown to be ineffective and disproportionate.

- Most recent Press release (EN/DE/FR)

Further information:
Wouter Van Ballegooij Advisor on Civil Liberties
wouter.vanballegooij@europarl.europa.eu ___

EU rules on posted workers

Legislative report (Jazlowiecka)report
Committee on Employment & Social Affairs
Plenary vote Wednesday 16th April 2014 New legislation endorsed by MEPs Wednesday is an important step forward for the rights of those posted to work temporarily in other EU member states. The Greens welcomed that the Posting Enforcement Directive is finally there so that exploitation via abuse of posting workers rule can stop. The new rules will oblige EU member states to actively work against illegal practices such as letter box companies and false self-employment. Posted workers will have a right to information on their rights, with member states tasked to set up bodies to this end. The final rules will also strengthen the hands of member states to carry out controls.

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

Further information: Philine Scholze, Advisor Employment & Social Affairs
philine.scholze@europarl.europa.eu _____

Waste shipments and the EU's responsibility

Legislative report (Green MEP Bart Staes)
Committee on Environment, Public Health & Food Safety
Plenary debate & vote Thursday 17th April 2014 A legislative agreement revising EU rules on waste shipments was endorsed by MEPs Thursday after EP draftsman/rapporteur Green MEP Bart Staes reached a deal with EU governments. The goal is to tackle illegal waste shipments causing damage to human health and the environment, with recent scandals in developing countries having focused attention on this. The deal ensures member states are obliged to make comprehensive inspection plans with an appropriate minimum number of checks. These plans will be publicly accessible, with member states to cooperate on enforcement

- Press release (EN)
- Text adopted

Further information:
Axel Singhofen, Advisor on Environmental Issues
axel.singhofen@europarl.europa.eu _____ **Want to be kept informed?**

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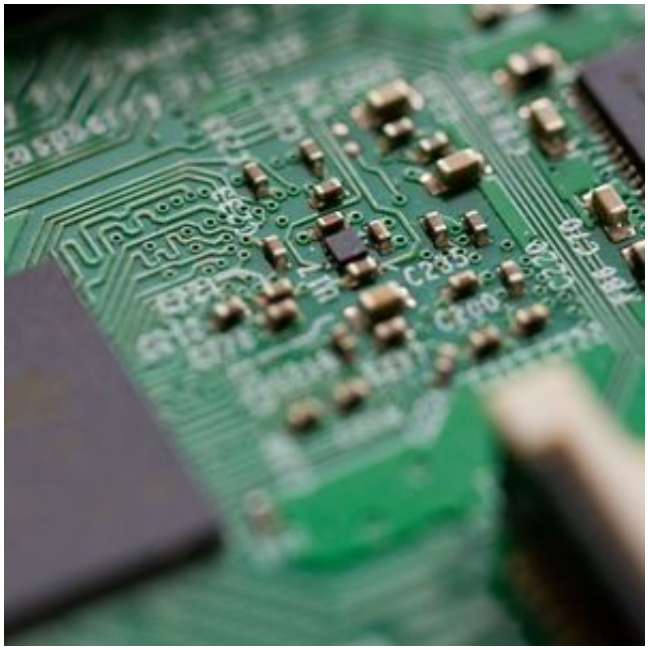


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