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News | 28.11.2014

## **Greens/EFA Round-up**

### **Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 24-28 November 2014**

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## Tax evasion in the EU and #LuxLeaks

*Plenary debate Monday 24th November - vote on motion of censure Thursday 28th November* The Luxemburg Leaks revelations of tax evasion are a watershed moment in the fight to tackle tax avoidance and evasion in the EU. The Greens have been to the fore in pushing for a robust and coherent response. We have presented a mandate and terms of reference for a European Parliament inquiry committee into tax evasion and dumping and are calling for cross-party support so that the committee is set up without delay. An inquiry committee is the most powerful tool available to the European Parliament and with EU governments refusing to take serious steps to tackle the problem of tax evasion, it is all the more important that it fills this vacuum. However, clearly the reputation of the Commission president is also at stake and he must act or go. The motion of censure tabled by EFDD and extreme right members was defeated (461 against - 101 in favour - 88 abstentions).

- [Act of Go website](#) (EN/DE/FR/ES/NL)
- [Greens/EFA action plan on tax avoidance and tax dumping](#) (EN/DE/FR/ES/NL)
- [Facebook post](#)
- [Plenary speech - Rebecca Harms](#) (DE/EN)

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## Novel foods

*Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*  
*Committee vote - Monday 24th November 2014*

On Monday MEPs in the ENVI (Environment, Public Health and Food Safety) Committee decided to send the Commission back to the drawing board with its flawed proposals on food from clones and new types of food called 'nano-foods'. MEPs called for all food from clones and their descendants to be clearly labelled until there is specific legislation dealing with clone food. They also voted for a moratorium on 'nano-foods' until there are specific risk assessment methods in place enabling the European Food Safety Authority to assess the use of nano-materials in food. There are real concerns about the impacts of these new types of foods on human health, the environment and animal welfare and we argue that the precautionary principle must be honoured.

- [Press release](#) (EN/DE/FR)

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## Reducing plastic bag use

*Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

*Committee Vote - Monday 24th November 2014* A deal on new EU rules to reduce plastic bag use, which was reached between the European Parliament and Council this week, was confirmed by the European Parliament's ENVI committee Monday. The new rules, which were shepherded through by lead negotiator Green MEP Margrete Auken, oblige EU governments to adopt measures to drastically reduce the use of single-use plastic carrier bags, either through pricing or reduction targets. Though a major success overall

in spite of brinkmanship tactics from some government, unfortunately the hugely problematic 'oxo-biodegradable' plastic bags, which worsen the litter problem by fragmenting into micro-plastics, were not banned.

- [Press release](#) (EN/DE/FR)

- [Facebook image post](#)

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## Combating violence against women

*Plenary debate - oral question*

*Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014* Green MEP Ernest Urtasun raised the spectre of violence against women this week during a plenary debate. Tuesday was International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women which began the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Women suffer many forms of violence everyday around the world. Rape, domestic violence, as well as economic, cultural and social violence. During these 16 days the UN is carrying out an awareness raising campaign, #orangeurhood

- [Facebook image post](#)
- [Plenary speech - Ernest Urtasun](#) (ES/EN/FR)

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## Pope Francis visit to the European Parliament

*Plenary address*

*Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014* Pope Francis visited the European Parliament and addressed MEPs on Tuesday. The Greens welcomed the positive sounds Pope Francis made regarding the rights of migrants and asylum seekers and particularly his strong words on the situation in the Mediterranean. He also spoke positively on the need to protect the most vulnerable by doing more to tackle climate change. Our group invited representatives from the LGBT and migrant communities so that their views were also symbolically represented. Green MEP Ulrike Lunacek presented Pope Francis with a rainbow shawl made by indigenous women from Ecuador as a symbol of LGBT rights, indigenous peoples' rights and peace while our Co-President Rebecca Harms presented Pope Francis with a letter from the group.

- [Facebook image post](#)
- [Letter to Pope Francis](#) (EN) / [FR](#)

Further information:

Philippe Lamberts and Rebecca Harms – Co-Presidents Greens/EFA Group

## **EU-Canada Passenger Name Records agreement**

*Committee on Civil Liberties*

*Plenary vote - Tuesday 25th November 2014* MEPs voted Tuesday to refer the draft EU-Canada agreement on passenger data retention (PNR) to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). There are serious doubts about the legality of the planned EU-Canada PNR agreement. The mass collection and storage of air passenger data, with no suspicion, is disproportionate and undermines basic rights, with no evidence it helps in combating terrorism. While the exchange of passenger data may create a false sense of security, it is neither necessary nor effective in fighting terrorism and involves a large and unjustifiable cost. Instead, what we need is better cooperation between security services.

- [Press release](#) (EN/DE/FR)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Facebook image post](#)
- [PNR campaign website](#)

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## **Migration and tragedies in the Mediterranean**

*Plenary debate*

*Protest & plenary debate – Tuesday 25th November 2014*

One year on from the major tragic loss of lives of migrants off the coast of Lampedusa and the tragedies involving migrant crossings continue. The EU is no closer to developing a coherent approach and, if anything, things are moving in the wrong direction, with a new Frontex mission aimed at simply deterring migrants and with no mandate to save lives at sea. Meanwhile, a number of countries (like Spain) are introducing new policies that raise major rights concerns. Green MEPs joined NGOs outside the European Parliament in Strasbourg to form a human chain to highlight the plight of migrants.

- [Protest video](#) (FR)
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## **UN climate talks and the EU's role**

*Plenary debate - vote Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014*

With this year's UN climate summit just around the corner, MEPs adopted a resolution Wednesday focusing on the EU's position. As the recent US-China deal again confirmed, the EU risks getting left behind in the UN climate talks, as a result of its intransigence on its climate policies. The Greens supported the call to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2050 but believe the EU needs to be much more

ambitious as regards its 2030 climate policy if it is to play a leadership role at the key UN climate summit in Paris in 2015. We must have an ambitious, binding international climate agreement that abides by the scientific evidence on what is necessary to limit warming to 2°C.

- [Facebook image post](#)
- [Green demands for COP20](#)
- [Press Release](#) (FR)
- [Text adopted by EP](#)
- [Plenary speech – Bas Eickhout](#) (EN)
- [Plenary speech – Yannick Jadot](#) (FR)
- [Greens/EFA conference "One year before Paris 2015"](#)

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## **An investment plan for Europe**

*European Commission proposal*

*Announcement – Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014*

Commission president Juncker formally made his proposals Wednesday to the European Parliament to create an investment plan for Europe. The Greens have long been calling for a major investment strategy at European level to counter-balance the damaging one-sided preoccupation with austerity that has prevailed hitherto. However, we believe Europe can do better than the fanciful ‘€315 billion’ plan proposed by Juncker which lacks ambition, means and clear goals. We have outlined proposals to mobilise a far more ambitious amount of public funds, which could realistically leverage €750 billion. However, it is not just about the overall amount, it is also about the direction, and our plan focuses on sustainable investment and job creation.

- [Press release](#) (EN/DE/FR/ES)
- [Plenary speech – Philippe Lamberts](#) (DE/FR)

- [The Greens/EFA alternative investment plan](#)

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## **Recognition of the Palestine statehood**

*EP plenary debate - Wednesday 26th November* The situation in the Middle East was debated by the Parliament on Wednesday. The Greens believe that a peaceful and diplomatic solution is the only option and that recognising the legitimate claim of Palestine to statehood must be a part of this process. MEPs will vote on a resolution during the next part-session in December.

Further information:

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## **Leyla Yunus imprisoned**

*Hearing – Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014* Dinara Yunus, daughter of human rights defender Leyla Yunus, spoke with our group Wednesday evening about the fate of her mother. Leyla Yunus was given specific mention this week as a runner up for this year's European Parliament Sakharov Prize due to her continued imprisonment, along with her husband, in their home country of Azerbaijan. Their imprisonment came only one day after she wrote an open letter to President Ilham Aliyev, criticizing him for targeting human rights activists and bloggers. Green MEPs and Dinara exchanged information and plans on how to increase pressure on the Azerbaijani government before it's too late.

- [Leyla Yunus nomination for the Sakharov Prize](#)
- [Dinara Yunus on twitter](#)
- [Facebook image post](#)

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## **ALSO**

Greens/EFA motion for resolution on :

- [Serbia, the case of accused war criminal Šešelj](#)
- [Iraq: kidnapping and mistreatment of women](#)

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## Want to be kept informed?

- [www.greens-efa.eu](http://www.greens-efa.eu)
- <http://twitter.com/GreensEP>
- <https://www.facebook.com/greensefa>

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*Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 19th December 2014*

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Press release

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Marek Piwnicki auf Unsplash



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