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Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 1-5 February 2016

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Car pollution laws and real driving emissions tests

Mon. 1 Feb. – EP inquiry committee; Weds. 3 Feb - plenary vote

The European Parliament abdicated its responsibility Wednesday to protect the health of EU citizens when it waived through a decision introducing 'conformity factors' as part of the testing procedure for car pollutant emissions. Implementation of such conformity factors will allow car manufacturers to produce

and market cars that exceed the EU limits indefinitely, effectively overwriting legal limits for NOx emissions from diesel vehicles set in EU law and giving carmakers a license to pollute. The Greens led calls to reject this decision but the objection failed to secure the required absolute majority. As a direct response to the 'diesel-gate' scandal, this is a serious blow to the credibility of the EU to regulate the car industry. The Greens urge the Commission to come back with a real driving emissions test with no exemptions.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Article and report - Dieselgate and the car lobby
- Greens/EFA action - No licence to cheat on dirty diesel
- Roll Call Votes - Real Driving Emissions conformity factor objection

Further information
Terhi Lehtonen – Advisor on environmental issues
terhi.lehtonen@ep.europa.eu

Controversial TiSA services agreement

Mon. 1 Feb. – EP debate; vote Weds.

The European Parliament adopted Wednesday a resolution setting out its position with regard to the ongoing negotiations on the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA). The resolution addresses some of the major concerns with the negotiations regarding for instance the provision of essential public services, as well as on data protection and other basic rights, and also the issue of ratchet and standstill clauses that the EP has now rejected. For the Greens, this is therefore a missed opportunity to show a yellow card to the European Commission that should now deeply revise its negotiating strategy. Unfortunately, the Green amendment requesting for a revision of the Council's mandate was only narrowly rejected. The resolution remains toothless as long as the European Commission ignores the EP's demands. The Greens will continue to push for the protection of public services and to fight against the TiSA agreement.

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

Further information
Chiara Miglioli - Adviser on International Trade
chiara.miglioli@ep.europa.eu

Health damaging endocrine disruptors and Commission inaction

Tues. 2 Feb. – EP debate

MEPs debated Wednesday the situation of health damaging endocrine disruptors with the Commission. The General Court of the EU ruled in December that the European Commission has breached EU law by failing to act to adopt criteria for 'endocrine disrupters' as required under the EU's biocides regulation. Under the regulation, the Commission was obliged to adopt scientific criteria for the identification of these harmful chemicals by December 2013 with a view to facilitating the limitation of their use. The case was brought by the Swedish government but supported by the European Parliament and Council. Despite the ruling, the Commission is still scandalously refusing to adopt the criteria. Read the full tale of typical 21st century law-making – where lobbies rule the roost and public health is of secondary interest to the pursuit of profit.

- Webarticle
- Social media

Further information
Juliette Leroux - GMO Campaigner
juliette.leroux@ep.europa.eu

EU Corporate Tax Package

Tues. 2 Feb. – EP debate

As the Google tax scandal turns into a storm in the UK, Commissioner for tax affairs, Pierre Moscovici, presented Tuesday in the European Parliament his new European package to fight corporate tax abuses. While this is a positive step with some proposals for binding legislation, it is not enough. The final package to be adopted by Member States must be more ambitious if we want it to be "game over" for multinationals shifting profits offshore and avoiding paying taxes. More measures are needed and the Greens will continue their work at the forefront of the fight for tax justice. It's Member States' political will, which lately seems to have moved offshore as well, that will be crucial to achieving key reforms. Unfortunately, most EU leaders have so far shown no enthusiasm for truly tackling corporate tax avoidance.

- Plenary speech – Philippe Lamberts

- Webarticle

Further information
Catherine Olier - Tax Justice Campaigner
catherine.olier@ep.europa.eu

Schengen at risk and Europe's asylum shame

Tues. 2 Feb. – EP debate

MEPs debated Tuesday the growing reintroduction of border controls, as Europe's disjointed response to the refugee crisis has become an existential threat for the Schengen system of free movement. Schengen is perhaps the most successful and popular achievement of the EU and it is imperative that all EU member states work to ensure that this is preserved. It is Europe's disunity that has created a solidarity crisis and existential threat to the EU out of what is a humanitarian emergency. If there is no agreement on how to share the responsibility for those refugees who have fled desperate situations to come to Europe, the whole system cannot function. This is in turn what is placing the strain on the Schengen system. Misinformation, particularly from EU commissioners, certainly does not help.

Further information
Aleksejs Dimitrovs - Advisor on legal affairs, civil liberties, justice and home affairs
aleksejs.dimitrovs@ep.europa.eu

Brexit looms on EU summit agenda

Weds. 3 Feb. – EP debate

Ahead of the next summit of EU leaders (18-19 February), MEPs debated Wednesday in Strasbourg some of the main items on the agenda. In addition to the refugee crisis and the threats to Schengen, the British referendum on EU membership is likely to be a central issue. It is essential that the EU, the UK government and the 'pro' movement in the UK make a positive case for EU membership. Clearly, it is in all sides' best interest that the UK remains in the EU but also that it is a positive, proactive and engaged force in Europe. However it is vital that any reforms to the EU inspired by the British must be seen to be of benefit to all EU citizens.

- Plenary speech – Rebecca Harms

Further information
Edouard Gaudot – Strategic Unit
edouard.gaudot@ep.europa.eu

Opposing GMO feed approvals and reforming the system

Weds. 3 Feb. – EP votes

MEPs objected Wednesday to a decision by the European Commission to authorise 3 new glyphosate tolerant GM soybean varieties for use in the EU. The non-binding objections highlight the concerns with these varieties, whose risks have not been properly assessed. The Greens welcome the news, which follows another vote against authorisation of GM maize in December. Again, this underlines the urgent need to revise the EU system for authorising genetically modified food. In the absence of a properly reformed authorisation system, it is irresponsible to proceed with further GMO approvals.

- Press release (FR)
- Text adopted – GM soybean FG72
- Text adopted – GM soybean MON 87708 × MON 89788
- Text adopted – GM soybean MON 87705 × MON 89788

Further information
Juliette Leroux - GMO Campaigner
juliette.leroux@ep.europa.eu

EU-Kosovo progress continues

Weds. 3 Feb. – EP debate; vote Thurs.

Following the ratification of the EU-Kosovo Stabilisation and Association Agreement, MEPs adopted a report by Green MEP Ulrike Lunacek on Kosovo's progress towards EU membership. The report acknowledges the progress made, as well as areas where more effort is needed, such as fighting high-level corruption and organised crime. Granting visa liberalisation to Kosovo's citizens would be a further positive signal on Kosovo's place in Europe.

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

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

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- Bahrain: the case of Mohammed Ramadan
- Human rights situation in Crimea
- Missing book publishers in Hong Kong
- Situation in Libya
- Systematic mass murder of religious minorities by ISIS
- Situation in Yemen

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Press release

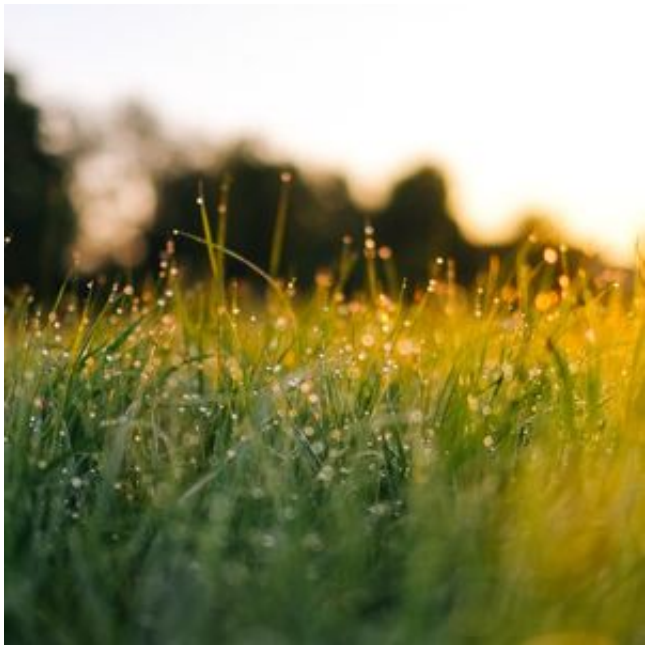
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Press release



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