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Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 11-15 April 2016

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Air passenger data retention: mass surveillance not the solution to terror threat

Mon. 11 Apr. – Civil liberties committee; Weds. EP debate; vote Thurs.

The Parliament voted to approve controversial new legislation setting up an EU system for the collection and retention of air passenger data (PNR). The Greens/EFA group has consistently criticised the proposed system, which will undermine the fundamental rights of EU citizens. PNR will also undermine the security of our societies by diverting badly-needed resources from security and intelligence tools that could actually be useful for combating terrorism, such as targeted surveillance.

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

Further information
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Strengthening data protection in the EU

Mon. 11 Apr. – Civil liberties committee; Weds. EP debate; vote Thurs.

The parliament approved the long-awaited reform of the EU's data protection rules. Green MEP and draftsman Jan Philipp Albrecht pushed for an agreement that provides legally sound and uniform data protection standards, providing a high level of protection for citizens. The legislation creates an EU-wide data protection regime, replacing the outdated data protection rules from 1995. This is a major step forward for consumer protection and competition and ensures Europe has data protection rules that are fit for purpose in the digital age.

- Video - press conference (EN)
- Video explaining what the new law means for citizens
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Social media - Facebook
- Social media – Twitter (video)
- Text adopted

Further information
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MEPs back improvements to flagship Erasmus+ scheme

Mon. 11 Apr. – EP debate; vote Tues.

The introduction of mobility schemes through Erasmus+ marked a major step forward as a concept across the European Higher Education area. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that mobility is less prevalent in vocational education training due to major obstacles such as countries' mutual recognition and accreditation of their study and working practices, administrative burden of the application process or financial constraints of apprentices. On Tuesday, MEPs backed a report by Greens/EFA rapporteur Ernest Maragall and called for further commitments of the Commission and Member States. The report sets out a number of concrete proposals for improving the situation, including establishing a permanent and sustainable system that is fully operational and predictable and open to all, creating accompanying measures, especially for minors and a defining a stronger role of intermediary institutions. Regrettably, MEPs rejected an amendment which called for the provision of official documents in all EU languages.

- Press Release (EN)
- Text adopted

Further information
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Ensuring sustainable fisheries beyond EU waters

Mon. 11 Apr. – EP debate; vote Tues.

While the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy has helped improve the sustainability of the fishing industry in European waters, there are still major problems with fisheries and fish stocks worldwide. On Tuesday, the European Parliament adopted a report by Green MEP Linnea Engström which set out proposals on how to deal with the problems of ensuring fisheries beyond European waters are made more sustainable. This implies ensuring the European fleet employs the most sustainable practises possible, whilst also using the CFP and bilateral fisheries agreements between the EU and third countries to improve the nature of global fisheries and tackle illegal and unregulated fishing.

- Web article (EN)
- Text adopted

Further information
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The refugee crisis and the EU-Turkey agreement

Tues. 12 Apr. – EP debate and vote; Weds. 13 Apr. EP debate

The European Parliament adopted Thursday its annual progress report on Turkey's EU accession process. The report highlights concerns with the backsliding on democratic norms, like freedom of expression and media, under the Erdogan regime. It is disturbing that EU governments are now bending over backwards to please President Erdogan, whilst wilfully ignoring his transformation of the Turkish state into an autocracy with increasing disregard for basic rights. The Greens have been to the fore among those criticising the Turkey deal, which is at odds with EU and international law. Already, major concerns have been raised about the implementation of the agreement and the impact it is having on refugees in Greece and Turkey.

- Press release (DE/EN)
- Text adopted

Further information
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Panama Leaks: EU Parliament inquiry green light; robust mandate must follow

Tues. 12 Apr. – EP debate

On Tuesday, the Parliament debated the Panama Papers revelations, which showed wealthy individuals and firms channel funds through offshore firms to avoid paying taxes. The Greens/EFA group has lead calls for the creation of a parliamentary inquiry committee to properly investigate the revelations and their implications at EU level. We have secured backing from some political groups at the European Parliament so this now looks set to go ahead! If we want to achieve real tax justice then the committee must have strong powers and we'll be pushing for an inquiry with real teeth.

- Press release (DE/EN)
- Social media
- Greens/EFA proposal for a mandate

Further information
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Reviewing the EU-Central Asia strategy

Tues. 11 Apr. – EP debate; vote Weds.

The European Parliament adopted Wednesday, by an overwhelming majority, a report by Green MEP Tamás Meszerics on the implementation and revision of the EU-Central Asia strategy. The significance of Central Asia has grown over the years, mainly due to its geopolitical significance and energy resources. This report calls for the EU to place respect for human rights and democracy at the core of its strategy in relations with these countries. It also calls for a coherent and consistent approach towards the region and for EU funding to be clearly incentive- and performance-based. The report also pushes for more environmental sustainability in the extraction and processing of natural resources and for an effective water diplomacy aimed at sustainable water-management and water-sharing.

- Text adopted

Further information
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EU Parliament opposes re-approval of glyphosate for most uses

Weds. 13 Apr. – EP vote

The European Parliament adopted a resolution setting out its position on a proposal by the EU Commission to re-approve the controversial toxic substance glyphosate for use in Europe. The resolution flagged massive concerns with the Commission's proposal, notably calling for significantly restricting the uses for which glyphosate could be approved. While the resolution fell short of calling for the out-right ban the Greens/EFA MEPs are demanding, it nonetheless sends a clear message to the Commission that they must

work with EU governments to fully address these concerns, rather than rushing ahead with re-approval.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Web article
- Social media
- Text adopted

Further information
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Poland and the rule of law

Weds. 13 Apr. – EP vote

A resolution on the controversial changes in Poland regarding the Constitutional Tribunal was supported by a clear majority of MEPs. There can be no doubt that the laws passed will compromise the independence of the judiciary and the Council of Europe's Venice Commission has underlined these concerns. It is welcome that the Commission has announced it will monitor the laws under the new EU rule of law framework. If the Polish government fails to back down, the Commission must swiftly follow-through and EU governments in Council must give their full support. The Greens/EFA group backed amendments which would have placed emphasis on other concerns about Poland, such as protecting women's reproductive rights, ethnic minorities, independence of the media and environment, but these fell.

- Text adopted

Further information
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EU trade secrets rules and the implications for whistleblowers

Weds. 13 Apr. – EP debate; vote Thurs.

Controversial new EU rules on trade secrets were approved by the European Parliament. The new legislation creates excessive rights to secrecy for businesses. The rules are a direct threat to the work of journalists and their sources, whistleblowers, employees' freedom of expression, and our rights to access public interest information (such as on medicines, pesticides, car emissions, etc.).

- Press Release (DE/EN/FR)
- Web article
- Social media
- Text adopted

Further information
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Energy poverty: tackling poverty in the face of increasing household costs

Thurs. 14 Apr. – debate and vote

MEPs adopted by a large majority Thursday a report by Green MEP Tamás Meszerics on how to tackle energy poverty in the face of increasing household costs . On our proposal the European Parliament calls for a winter heating disconnection moratorium and a European definition on energy poverty. With over 50 million people impacted by increasing inequality and dependence on energy consumption, this report gives 5 key recommendations and calls on the EU Commission and EU governments to provide the necessary upfront investment to reduce the energy costs of poor households. It also calls for an EU framework on a minimum income for citizens and for the EU to hold a summit on poverty reduction.

- Text adopted

Further information
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Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

- Honduras
- Nigeria
- Pakistan, in particular the attack in Lahore
- Situation in Poland (joint motion)

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 13 May 2016

Recommended

Press release

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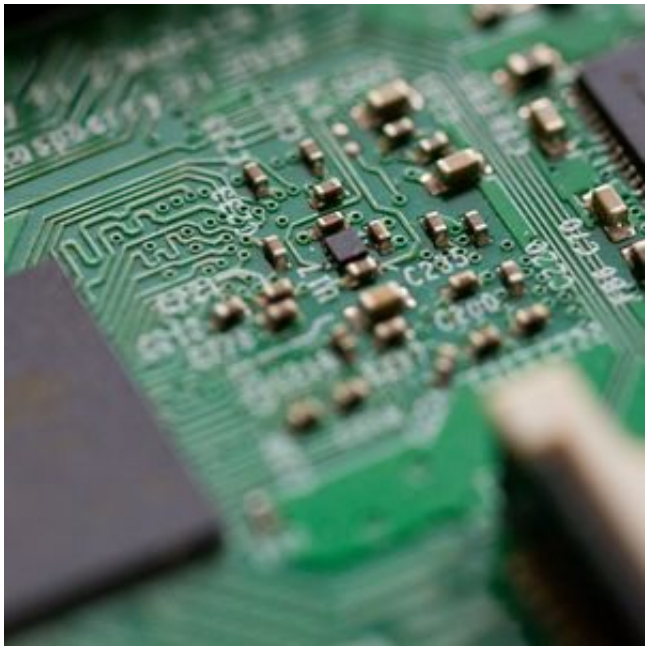


Tilly METZ elected European Parliament Vice-President

12.11.2026

Press release

chris-ried



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Contact person



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