News | 30.09.2011

Plenary Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary session in Strasbourg 26-29 September 2011

Trade in agricultural and fisheries products between the EU and Palestine

Recommendation
Committee on International Trade
Plenary debate Monday 26 September - vote Tuesday 27 September 2011

The European Parliament gave its consent to the revision of the EU-Palestinian association agreement on trade and cooperation. This agreement provides for the removal of all duties and quotas for Palestinian products originating in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Products originating from the illegal Israeli settlements are excluded from these provisions but concerns have been raised about the difficulties of identifying these products under the current system, which relies on the disclosure of postal codes. The Greens voted in favour, as did a majority of Members of the Parliament.

- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Keith Taylor

Further information:
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European road safety

Non legislative report
Committee on Transport and Tourism
Plenary debate Monday 26 September - vote Tuesday 27 September 2011

The European Parliament adopted the report on improving road safety in Europe. Among the set of proposals aimed at ensuring the highest road safety standards apply across Europe, there were several

proposals by the Greens including a long-standing recommendation for speed limits of 30 km/h in all urban areas in Europe (which was supported by the EP transport committee). The Greens welcomed the outcome of the vote, notably the support of MEPs for a Europe-wide 30 km/h speed limit in urban areas. Lower speed limits in urban areas will not only have major safety benefits for all road users but will also reduce noise and air pollution and, as such, would be a win-win situation.

- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release

Further information:
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Dual-use items and technology

Legislative report - first reading
Committee on International Trade
Plenary debate Monday 4 April 2011 - vote Tuesday 27 September 2011

The report presents a set of new authorisations aiming to control the export of dual-use items, goods and technology with both civil and military uses. Controlling the export of dual-use goods is not only crucial for the non-proliferation of arms, it is also key in the context of preventing authoritarian regimes brutally suppressing democratic opposition movements. For the Greens, the export of these sensitive goods and technology needs to be controlled prior to the export (ex ante control). However, this was not included in the final report that was submitted to the vote in plenary and because of this the Greens voted against the report. This is a missed opportunity to establish an effective system which supports the EU's human rights, foreign and security policy and takes into account lessons learned regarding European exports to authoritarian regimes especially in North Africa.

- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release

Further information:
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Middle East peace process and North Africa

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Plenary debate Tuesday 27 September - vote Thursday 29 September 2011

With the Palestinian Authority having launched its application for UN recognition of Palestinian statehood, the MEPs debated with the foreign policy high representative Cathy Ashton about the situation in Palestine and the EU response. The Greens have long supported a two state solution, based on the 1967 borders and Jerusalem as capital of both states and agree with the need to recognise the Palestinian state. In

their motion for resolution, the Greens/EFA call for a complete stop of settlement activities by Israel as an indispensable step in order to resume effective and credible peace negotiations. Peace talks must be based on the internationally recognised parameters, including the 1967 borders, and a timetable agreed by both parties. The Greens/EFA remind that settlements are illegal under international law and are on obstacle to peace. In his plenary speech, Daniel Cohn-Bendit gave his support to Mahmoud Abbas and argued that "the EU must take stronger action and play the political game. Israel has to understand that it is in its own interest that there be a Palestinian state. The EU needs to show that either the Israelis put an immediate stop to the expansion of settlements or the EU will be pushed into immediately recognising Palestine".
The Greens voted in favour of the joint resolution and welcomed the strong majority in favour of the resolution, which represents a clear message on how the EU should orient itself to supporting Palestine.

- Greens/EFA motion for a resolution
- Text adopted by EP (in Word - online version available later on)
- Plenary speech by Green Co-President Daniel Cohn-Bendit
- Greens/EFA press release

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State of the Union

Statement by the President of the Commission
Plenary debate Wednesday 28 September 2011

It was quite expected that the Eurozone crisis would dominate the debate on the state of the Union which followed the annual state of the union speech by Commission President Barroso.
In her speech, Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms agreed with Mr Barroso on his analysis that more Europe is the answer to the crisis. "Europe needs strong and democratically-controlled European institutions, not haggling between heads of government. We do not need new institutions; we already have an institution responsible for the economic governance of the EU - the European Commission - and for the oversight of this - the European Parliament. For too long Mr Barroso has caved in to national governments and we hope his strong speech today marks a shift in tack. He must follow through on his promises to renew Europe".
She also pledged not just for more Europe but for "a more just Europe with future-oriented investment, such as in education and sustainable economic development and combating poverty" and deplored that "climate and environment policy remains a big weakness of this Commission and its president"
and consequently that "the EU is heading into the forthcoming UN climate talks in Durban with no vision and no impetus".

- Greens/EFA press release
- Plenary speech by Green Co-President Rebecca Harms (in German)

Economic governance package of legislation (6-Pack)

Legislative procedure (consultation)
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate Wednesday 22 June - vote Wednesday 28 September 2011

The Parliament debated in June on the six-pack of economic governance legislation. Final votes took place during the second part-session of September.
The Parliament adopted the final compromise. Greens believe the agreement falls short of providing the economic governance structures Europe needs. The Greens fully agree that there is a need for strong, binding limits to public deficits but this has to take fully into account social justice and the future investments of the EU that are necessary to ensure a sustainable economy. This implies looking at revenue, as well as expenditure. The failure to do so in these proposals will result in an excessive reliance on austerity programmes that will exacerbate poverty and destroy popular support for the European project. Greens voted in favour of two reports (Ferreira, Haglund) which create new European procedures for the surveillance and correction of macro financial imbalances and one report (Ford) which enhance transparency and accountability of national budgets. But they voted against the other three reports (Wortmann-Kool, Feio and Goulard) which provide an umbalanced revision of the Growth and Stability Pact over relying on pro-cyclical rules for fiscal consolidation.

- Texts adopted by EP: Fereira report - Haglund report - Ford report - Wortmann-Kool report - Feio report - Goulard report
- Plenary speeches (22 June) by Green MEPs Philippe Lamberts (FR) and Sven Giegold (DE)
- Greens/EFA press release

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Rio+20 earth summit

Oral questions with resolution
Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
Plenary debate Wednesday 28 September - vote Thursday 29 September 2011

MEPs voted on a resolution setting up the guidelines for a common EU position ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 2012). By adopting the resolution of the ENVI committee, the European Parliament calls for a strong Rio +20 summit and tangible action to guarantee sustainability. Most of the good elements of the resolution were maintained such as ocean governance, opposition to offshore oil extraction in the Arctic and tar sands and oil shale, call for financial transaction tax at international level, support to recommendation to remove biofuels subsidies and mandates until guarantees removing competition with food, call for status of climate and environmental refugees, global targets for RES and energy efficiency, opposition to large scale geoengineering ...

Unfortunately, the amendment deleting call for nuclear phase out was adopted, the call for access to seeds and calling GM and monoculture not sustainable was deleted and the non-patentability of life was also deleted.

- Text adopted by EP (in Word - online version available later on)

- Greens/EFA press release (in French)

Further information:
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European Globalisation Fund

Legislative report - Codecision procedure
Committee on Employment and Social Affairs
Plenary debate and vote Thursday 29 September 2011

MEPs voted on a resolution and amending legislative proposal on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. The proposal aims at extending a set of crisis-related derogations to the European Globalisation Fund. The EGF was set up to provide support in cases where job losses were the result of globalisation. The Greens believe it is right to extend the derogations with the crisis ongoing. However, the group believes the EGF is in need of fundamental reform if it is to be continued beyond 2013, notably through closer coordination with EU structural funds and greater focus on prevention, sustainability and the promotion of new skills, such as for green jobs.

Both the legislative proposal and the resolution were adopted with a large majority for rather good results: the reference to a separate budget line was deleted, as well as the proposal to reinforce the EGF as a "Community instrument funded by Community budget credits.

- Text adopted by EP (in Word - online version available later on)
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Elisabeth Schroedter
- Greens/EFA press release (in German)

Further information:
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EU-Morocco fisheries agreement and Western Sahara

Vote to refer to the European Court of Justice
Plenary vote Thursday 29 September 2011

On the initiative of Green MEP Raül Romeva i Rueda, the European Parliament voted on a proposal to refer the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement to the European Court of Justice to assess its compatibility with the EU treaties and international law. The revised agreement requires the consent of the European Parliament before being concluded.
MEPs voted against the proposal to refer the fisheries agreement to the European Court of Justice with 221 votes in favour, 302 against and 30 abstentions. The Greens strongly condemned the outcome of the vote since the agreement is a blot on the EU's foreign policy and its compatibility with international law is also highly questionable.

- Web article about why to refer the agreement to ECJ
- Greens/EFA press release

Further information:
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Security scanners

Commission statement
Plenary debate Thursday 29 September 2011

The Commission was invited to plenary to explain its position regarding body scanners. Parliament had adopted a resolution in July in which it among other things asked for all body scanners to make use of a stick figure to protect passengers' identities and ensure that they cannot be identified through images of any part of their body. Furthermore it asked to be fully engaged in an ordinary legislative procedure. The Commission however proposed its measures on body scanners as an implementing measure (former comitology).

In its plenary statement the Commission defended its proposal stating it had found the right balance between privacy and security. Being more prescriptive would create a monopoly situation for one company. Greens/EFA speakers Judith Sargentini (rapporteur for opinion in LIBE) and Eva Lichtenberger (shadow TRAN) disagree. Companies should adopt their technology to privacy standards not vice versa. Unfortunately the EPP rapporteur de Grandes and the TRAN socialists like Said El Khadraoui supported the Commission's line.

- Plenary speech by Green MEP Judith Sargentini

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up : 28 October 2011

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Adriaan Ploegh



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Responsible MEPs



Sven Giegold

Member



Rebecca Harms

Member



Philippe Lamberts

Member



Judith Sargentini

Member



Keith Taylor

Member

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