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News | 28.10.2011

Plenary Round-up

Debriefing of the plenary session in Strasbourg 24-28 October 2011

Modernisation of public procurement

Initiative report by Green MEP Heide Rühle
Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)
Plenary debate Monday 24 October - vote Tuesday 26 October 2011 The European Parliament adopted with a huge majority a report on modernising public procurement, setting out proposals for revising EU rules on public contracts, drafted by Green MEP Heide Rühle.
All the good votes achieved in the IMCO Committee were confirmed by the plenary vote, i.e. the inclusion of environmental costs in assessment of most economically advantageous offer was maintained; the call to strengthen the rules on subcontracting, the call to envisage raising the thresholds. The adopted resolution calls for more simplification of the public procurement rules and a better access of SMEs. It is an excellent message sent to the European Commission which is going to make a proposal in December to review the existing Directives.

- Text of the report
- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Heide Rühle

Further information:
Stany Grudzielski, Greens/EFA adviser on Internal Market and Consumer Protection, stanislas.grudzielski@europarl.europa.eu

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State of play of the maternity leave directive

Oral question to the Council
Committee on Women's Rights
Plenary debate Tuesday 25 October - vote Wednesday 26 October 2011 A proposed revision of EU rules on maternity leave is in limbo, despite having been voted by the EP last year, as talks in Council are deadlocked. The Greens welcomed the outcome of the EP vote, which would provide for an improvement on the current situation by ensuring a minimum of 20 weeks maternity leave, although the group would have preferred a longer period. The group also welcomed the inclusion of proposals for 2 weeks paternity leave. It is time for the Council to stop stalling on this key legislation.

During the debate, the Council reported about some disagreement among Member States and the rejection of some proposals made by the EuroParliament. Germany and UK are among those Member States which put forward the excessive costs of the implementation of the proposals on the table.

- Text of the oral question
- Greens/EFA press release (in French only)
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Raül Romeva i Rueda

Further information:
Elisabeth Horstkötter, Greens/EFA adviser on Women's rights issues,
elisabeth.horstkoetter@europarl.europa.eu

System of taxation applicable in the case of parent companies and subsidiaries of different Member States

Legislative report under consultation procedure by Green MEP Sven Giegold
Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
Plenary debate Tuesday 25 October 2011 - vote Wednesday 26 October 2011 The European Parliament adopted by a large cross-party majority a report by Green draftsman Sven Giegold on a recast of the legislation governing the taxation of distributions from subsidiaries to parent companies. The report calls for effective minimum corporate taxation of 16%, and hence an end to nominal tax rates lower than that as applied by some Member States, and sometimes very low or even zero effective tax rate due to the exploitation of differences between national tax systems within the EU. The Commission should now come with a revised legislative proposal that will properly prevent the shunting of profits around Europe by parent companies to avoid being corporate tax at the legitimate level. The Council should abstain from adopting the re-casted directive, which serves as the legal basis for large scale tax avoidance schemes in the EU. In times of public austerity, the EU cannot afford to be soft on tax avoidance.

- Text of the report
- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release
- Plenary speech by Green rapporteur Sven Giegold

Further information:
Michael Schmitt, Greens/EFA adviser on Economic and Monetary Affairs,
michael.schmitt@europarl.europa.eu

Draft general budget of the EU for 2012

Report - first reading
Committee on Budgets
Plenary debate and vote Wednesday 26 October 2011 The European Parliament adopted its position on the EU's 2012 budget, under which an increase of 5.3% is foreseen. Given the increased competences of the EU, the Greens are not opposed to an overall budget increase per se, but the group has problems with a number of the budget lines and hence abstained in the final vote. The positive results in the vote are the increased funding of EU 2020 priorities, the reserve on Commission budget lines on expert meetings in order to force the Commission to take measures against capture by special interest groups (lobbyists), the greening of CAP, an increased funding for Palestine, the reduction of business flights passed, the freeze of MEP daily allowances, CO2 offsetting funds in EP budget and several Pilot projects with Green sponsoring or initiation, including Pilot Project Finance Watch.
Among the bad results : loss of all Green amendments on nuclear energy, including ITER, no greening of

Structural Funds, loss of amendments to scrap export refunds and tobacco aids, on linking JHA more to fundamental rights, on fair trade, on increasing development funds, on EEAS peace-building, on the reduction of General Expenditure allowance of MEPs and on freezing of salaries for high-ranking EU officials and MEPs.

- Text adopted by EP
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Helga Trüpel (in German)
- Greens/EFA press release

Further information:
Tom Köller, Greens/EFA adviser on Budgets, tom.koeller@europarl.europa.eu

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EU-Australia agreement on the processing and transfer of EU-sourced passenger name record (PNR) data

Recommendation
Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
Plenary debate Wednesday 26 October - vote Thursday 27 October

The European Parliament endorsed by a wide majority (483 votes in favour, 96 against, 11 abstentions) a proposed EU-Australia agreement on the retention of passenger data (PNR). For the Greens, storing private data for extended periods is in conflict with court rulings in Europe, particularly in the absence of clear-cut provisions against profiling. The Greens have condemned the deal for failing to address fundamental rights concerns repeatedly raised by the European Parliament, and voted against in the plenary vote. Christian Democrats (EPP), Socialists (S&D), Liberals (ALDE) and ECR all voted in favour of the agreement. The Commission had not managed to improve the agreements in any way. Completely unsuspicious travellers will still be profiled, sorted into non-transparent risk categories, and have their data stored for up to 5,5 years. The legal services of both Commission and Council, the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency as well as the Data Protection Supervisor have pointed out the unconstitutionality of such pre-crime policing. Unfortunately by consenting to this agreement the Parliament has also set a standard for negotiations with the US.

- Text adopted by EP
- Greens/EFA press release

Further information:
Wouter van Ballegooij, Advisor on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, wouter.vanballegooij@europarl.europa.eu

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State of play of the negotiations of the European Council concerning the economic crisis

Statement by the President of the Parliament
Plenary debate Tuesday 25 October 2011

After the Summit, the Greens commented that the most important lesson of this latest crisis meeting with no definitive outcome must be that the EU needs to finally commit to a proper common economic policy.

The Parliament debated on Tuesday 25 October on the situation ahead of the Eurozone summit (26 October) without the Council and Commission representatives being present.
For the Greens, the deal reached during the night of Wednesday on Greek debt, bank recapitalisation and EU rescue funding will likely be enough to pull the Eurozone back from the brink for now but it has again failed to provide a definitive answer and draw a line under the crisis. On the three main elements of the package, the proposals lack clarity, are insufficient, will take too long and are left open to the whim of the markets.

- Plenary speech by Green Copresident Rebecca Harms
- Greens/EFA press release on the Eurozone summit

Further information:
Francisco Padilla, Greens/EFA adviser on Economic and Monetary Affairs, francisco.padilla@europarl.europa.eu

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Sakharov Prize

Decision
EP Conference of Presidents
Thursday 27 October 2011

The winner of the 2011 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought was decided at the EP conference of presidents. The 2011 prize has been awarded to a group activists representative of the Arab Spring: Asmaa Mahfouz (Egypt), Ahmed al-al-Sanusi Zubair Ahmed (Libya), Razan Zaitouneh (Syria), Ali Farzat (Syria) and Mohamed Bouazizi (Tunisia). The Greens/EFA group, which supported the nomination, welcomed the decision.
The official Sakharov Prize award ceremony will take place during the December 2011 plenary session in Strasbourg.

- Previous news article

Further information:
Mychelle Rieu, Greens/EFA adviser on Human Rights, Middle East and Euromed , mychelle.rieu@europarl.europa.eu

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Also voted

Current developments in Ukraine

Plenary vote Thursday 27 October 2011

The plenary debate took place in the previous session on 12 October (see round-up) following a statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
See text adopted by EP

Situation in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Egypt

*Plenary vote Thursday 27 October 2011*The plenary debate took place in the previous session on 12 October (see round-up) following a statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
See text adopted by EP

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up : 18 November 2011

Recommended

Press release

Ivan Aleksic

Serbia/Mladić: Quote from MEP Prebilič

04.09.2026

Press release

Esma Nur Büyükgüçlü

Serbia: Greens/EFA call for consequences after new spy…

03.09.2026

Press release

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Press release

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[Heatwaves and extreme record temperatures make the swi…]

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Responsible MEPs

Sven Giegold

Member

Rebecca Harms

Member

Helga Trüpel

Member

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