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Strasbourg Flash

Weekly preview of the Greens/EFA group - 20-24 September 2010

EP priorities (full text below, click for printable version pdf):

- Readmission agreements with 3rd countries and basic rights (Monday)
- Protecting biodiversity in the EU (Monday)
- Enforcing IP rights and respecting digital rights (Monday)
- Security of gas supply - EU legislation (Tuesday)
- Toxic biocides and substance approval - EU rules (Tuesday)
- Safety of medicinal products on the market - EU legislation (Tuesday)
- New rules on EU financial supervision (Wednesday)
- Inclusion of aviation in the emissions trading scheme (Wednesday)

Other EU priorities:

- Data protection and passenger name records (Wednesday, Commission)

Events:

- Co-presidents press briefing (Tuesday)

Readmission agreements with 3rd countries and basic rights

Mon. 20 Sept. - European Parliament debate

The Greens/EFA group is very concerned about readmission agreements with third countries in general, and a current EU agreement with Pakistan in particular. The focus is regrettably on deporting third-country nationals who no longer have the right to stay in the EU, while ignoring whether the receiving country can safeguard the return of its citizens, respecting fundamental human rights. With the Lisbon Treaty, the Parliament now has the power to reject these agreements and the Greens believe it should actively use this power.

Protecting biodiversity in the EU

Mon. 20 Sept. - European Parliament debate (vote Tues.)

2010 is not only the year of biodiversity and a key year for UN talks on biodiversity, it is also the year in

which important EU targets expire. The Greens believe the EU should urgently adopt new targets and welcome that the De Lange report recognises the need to halt biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystem services by 2020. The Greens also welcome the call to dedicate 0.3% of GDP to biodiversity protection but regret the report does not give specific guidance for the next financial perspectives. (see latest press release)

Enforcing IP rights and respecting digital rights

Mon. 20 Sept. - European Parliament debate (vote Weds.)

The Greens/EFA group regrets that the Gallo report treats all IPR infringements the same way, making no distinction between counterfeiting and copyright infringements either in terms of their impacts on consumer rights and safety or how infringements should be dealt with. For this reason, the Greens/EFA group has prepared an alternative resolution together with other political groups.

EU legislation on security of gas supply

Tues. 21 Sept. - European Parliament debate and vote

In recent years, the EU has had regular reminders of the need to do more to respond to disruptions in gas supply and this legislation, which provides for emergency response coordination at EU-level, is a welcome and long-overdue response to this. Crucially, it also ensures there must be a minimum supply of 30 days for all European households in case of disruptions, although the Greens would have preferred a higher minimum reserve. (see latest press release)

Toxic biocides and substance approval - EU rules

Tues. 21 Sept. - European Parliament debate (vote Weds.)

The Greens want to ensure that the most harmful substances are no longer used in biocides, except in very limited cases. Any move towards EU-level product authorisations of biocidal products will mean giving the necessary time and resources are given to the European Chemical Agency for overseeing the assessment of biocidal products. EU approvals should not lead to less stringent standards and, for this reason, the Greens have insisted that the legislation gives member states the right to place extra controls on the use of biocides. (see latest press release - fr)

Safety of medicinal products on the market - EU legislation

Tues. 21 Sept. - European Parliament debate (vote Weds.)

This legislation is a step forward for guaranteeing the safety of medicinal products already on the market, setting out procedures to ensure vigilance. Providing for patients to communicate their side effects directly to national authorities, rather than through pharma firms, notably for new products, is a clear improvement, as are the requirements for clearer product information leaflets. While it could have gone further, the Greens support the compromise.

New rules on EU financial supervision

Weds. 22 Sept. - European Parliament vote on legislative compromise

The Greens welcomed the compromise agreement on legislation creating new EU financial supervisory authorities, which will ensure the authorities have more powers than originally foreseen, as demanded by MEPs. While the compromise is not perfect, notably with the Council securing the sole right to declare an emergency, a number of Green proposals were included, such as the power to suspend dangerous activities, thereby improving the final legislation. (see latest press release)

Inclusion of aviation in the emissions trading scheme

Weds. 22 Sept. - European Parliament debate with Commission

Aviation will be included in the EU's emissions trading scheme from the beginning of 2012, as part of Europe's efforts to tackle climate change. Scandalously, the US, with the backing of Canada and Mexico (president of this year's UN climate talks), is seeking to undermine this already-adopted European legislation. The Greens are strongly critical of this development and want the Commission and Council to stand firm in support of EU climate policies.

Data protection and passenger name records

Tues. 21 Sept. - European Commission proposal

The Commission is set to present its 'PNR Package' setting out its policy on the exchange of passenger name records with third countries and agreements with the US, Australia and Canada. The EP, and the Greens in particular, have long raised their concerns with these agreements, which infringe basic civil liberties and give third countries access to far-reaching data. The Greens believe current data transfers to the US should be immediately halted, as there is no proper mandate and the US system undermines EU data protection law.

Co-presidents press briefing

Tues. 21 Sept. 10.20-10.40, European Parliament press room

Press briefing with Greens/EFA co-presidents **Dany Cohn-Bendit** and **Rebecca Harms** on the key issues of the plenary session for the Greens/EFA group.

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