News | 14.10.2011

Weekly Round-up

Debriefing of the week (including the plenary session in Brussels 12-13 October 2011)

Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Initiative report by Green MEP Isabella Lövin
Committee on Fisheries
Committee vote Tuesday 11 October 2011 The European Parliament fisheries committee adopted a report by Greens/EFA MEP Isabella Lövin on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The report highlights the particular responsibility of the EU to step up efforts to combat IUU fishing both by pushing for greater international efforts and by properly implementing EU rules.
"As the EU imports over 60 percent of its seafood, it is all the more clear that international cooperation is necessary. Last month's agreement with the US on combating illegal fishing is an important step in the right direction. There is a need for a common import policy among the major fish importing nations - notably, the EU, the US, China and Japan - with complete traceability and requirements for catch documents for all fish. This should be complemented by global registers for fish DNA to prevent mislabelling" said draftwoman Isabella Lövin.

- Text of the draft report
- Video statement by Green MEP Isabelle Lövin

Further information:
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EU position in the UN climate talks in Durban

EU Environment Council - Monday 10 October 2011 EU environment ministers met on Monday 10 October to agree on the EU's position for this year's UN climate summit in Durban in December. The Greens welcome the fact that the EU is open to a second commitment period under the Kyoto Protocol but regret that this pledge has not been made clearer and risks undermining the EU's climate credibility. A much stronger call from the EU to continuing with Kyoto beyond 2012 could help to move the talks forward. The EU must also ensure that prolonging the Kyoto protocol will make environmental sense; the loopholes that undermine the effectiveness of Kyoto at present - such as the surplus emissions permits ('hot air') and

the creative rules for accounting for emissions from forestry - must be resolved immediately. Regarding its emissions reduction, the Greens/ EFA group very much regrets that the EU is still sticking to its outdated and insufficient 20% emissions reduction target by 2020.
A few weeks ahead the start of the climate talks in Durban, the Greens/EFA will organise a high-level interactive public conference "The Green Race to Durban and Beyond" (9 November, European Parliament, Brussels).

- Video statement by Green MEP Bas Eickhout
- Greens/EFA press release
- Blog entry - Stop climate change website
- The Green Race to Durban and Beyond - a Greens/EFA event

Further information:
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Common Agricultural Policy

European Commission
Adoption of legislative proposals - Wednesday 12 October 2011 The European Commission presented its legislative proposals on the reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy.
The Greens regret that the proposals have been severely watered-down to meet the demands of change-resistant member states and the agro-industry lobby. For the Greens, a core goal of this reform should be redressing the perverse system of payments to ensure it promotes a fair distribution of funds, which prioritises support for smaller farmers and local food systems, rather than benefiting large farmers and the agro-industry. Regrettably, the Commission proposals fall short on this front. The threshold or cap, beyond which direct payments should be 'degressive', is set far too high, benefiting large farmers and the agro-industrial complexes.

- Greens/EFA press release
- Video statement by Green MEP Martin Häusling (DE)

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Preparation for the European Council meeting

Council and Commission statements
Plenary debate Wednesday 12 October - vote Thursday 13 October 2011

The Greens/EFA co-signed a motion for resolution with the Socialists (S&D), Christian Democrats (EPP) and Liberal (ALDE) Groups which was adopted with a very large majority. Even if it failed to include all the points raised by the Greens, it included enough policy content to make the Green group agree on the text, gives a clear signal to the Heads of State, the Commission and the public that the Parliament is united in asking for urgent, common and decisive action in the worst financial crisis since the existence of the EU. Among others, the adopted text states that an EU plan for stability and growth must include the recapitalisation of European banks, a community-based EFSF and future ESM, a further coordination and harmonisation of tax systems between Member States, including measures against tax fraud, evasion and avoidance, an economic government for the euro area based on the Community method and democratic accountability to the European Parliament, a report on the issuance of European sovereign bonds (eurosecurities) under joint and several liability before the end of 2011.
Of course, the Greens would have favoured a more ambitious text with a stronger measures on regulation of the financial industry, a call for an investment plan with project bonds in order to foster the ecological transformation, the establishment of a EU financial transaction tax and a harmonisation of corporate taxation and a stronger emphasis on the role of the EU

Commission as the core of the "economic government" as well as a clearer proposals for democratic accountability of this government to the European Parliament.

- Text adopted by EP (see p.63 - provisional Word version)
- Motion for a resolution co-signed by the Greens/EFA
- Greens/EFA press release
- Plenary speeches by Greens/EFA Co-President Rebecca Harms (DE) and MEP Philippe Lamberts (FR)

Further information:
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Accession of Bulgaria and Romania to Schengen

Oral questions to Council and Commission
Plenary debate Wednesday 12 October - vote Thursday 13 October 2011 The European Parliament adopted a resolution calling on the Dutch and Finnish governments to stop blocking a decision to endorse the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU's Schengen border-free zone. The Greens/EFA supported the common resolution. Bulgaria and Romania have fulfilled all the conditions required of them and refusing their entry to Schengen is unacceptable. Joining Schengen is conditional - a state has a right and an obligation to join it as soon as the preconditions are properly met. The Greens/EFA are against additional preconditions not stipulated in the Schengen acquis. That's why our Group strongly criticised the impasse, with the European Parliament already having approved the decision.

- Text adopted by EP (see p.65 - provisional Word version)
- Plenary speech by Green MEP Judith Sargentini (NL)
- Greens/EFA press release

Further information:
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Current developments in Ukraine

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Plenary debate Wednesday 12 October - vote October II session The Parliament debated with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy about the current situation in Ukraine in the context of the recent ruling against former Ukrainian prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko. While the Greens are in favour of concluding an EU-Ukraine association agreement, guaranteeing the rule of law and making democratic progress is a precondition for this. The politically-motivated ruling against Tymoshenko is a backwards step for the rule of law in the Ukraine and a blow to EU-Ukraine rapprochement.
The European Parliament will vote during the second session in Strasbourg (24-27 October 2011). Political groups will table motions for resolution by October 19th.

- Greens/EFA press release on Tymoshenko trial

Further information:
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Situation in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Egypt

Statement by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Plenary debate Wednesday 12 October - vote October II session The Parliament also debated with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy about the situation in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria and Egypt where mass democratic protests are still going on and where no other answers than repression and detention of peaceful protesters are provided by the authorities of those countries.
The European Parliament will vote during the second session in Strasbourg (24-27 October 2011). Motions for resolution to be tabled by 19th October.

- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Chair of Human Rights' Subcommittee Barbara Lochbihler (DE)

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

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ALSO IN THE NEWS

- ## Opening of Parlamentarium

The brandnew Visitors' Centre of the European Parliament was officially inaugurated this week and will be opened to the public from Friday 14th October onwards. Open 7 days a week. See our web article
More information at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/parlamentarium.html

- ## Hearing Women and Climate Change

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality of the EP organised a hearing on women and climate change.
Green MEP Nicole Kiil-Nielsen is the rapporteur of this topic. The draft report should be presented in the committee at the end of this year.
See video with MEP Nicole Kiil-Nielsen and Commissioner Connie Hedegaard
The Greens/EFA Group co-organised an essay contest on Women and Climate Change a few months ago. Click here to read the rewarded essays **********
Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up : 28 October 2011

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Press release

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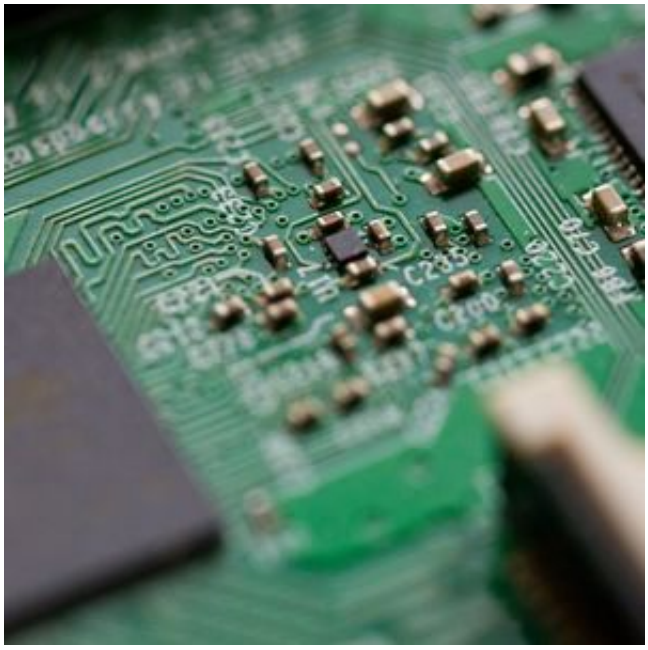

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