Press release | 14.12.2016

Greece

Financial assistance must not be at the cost of labour rights

The European Parliament will today debate the labour market reforms and labour relations in Greece.

The European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are pushing to make financial assistance conditional on the liberalisation of labour laws, despite the fact that collective bargaining is protected under the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It would also run counter to the 2015 memorandum of understanding between Greece and its creditors, which said that Greek labour laws should be brought in line with European best practices.

Greens/EFA economic and finance spokesperson **Sven Giegold** commented:

"The Commission must not link financial assistance to labour market reform proposals which clearly violate European law. Such proposals would push Greece further away from the EU and would be completely at odds with the Commission's plans to create a European pillar of social rights. EU rights must apply to all Member States and their citizens with no exceptions. At a time of increased economic and social divisions in Europe, this would only serve to deepen discrepancies and undermine citizens' trust in the EU.

"Instead of paving the way for a violation of EU law, reform proposals should focus on fighting tax evasion and clientelism."

Greens/EFA economic and finance spokesperson **Ernest Urtasun** added:

"Greece has been set budgetary surplus targets that not even the IMF thinks they can meet. This can only lead to one thing: yet more crippling austerity for Greece, and more pain for people who have already suffered greatly over recent years.

"It is time to put an end to the pretence that endless cutting is the answer to Greece's economic problems."

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