



# The 7th legislature of the European Parliament

## A Green Review

### 1. Promoting crisis resilience through social justice

**Main issues at stake.** The past legislature saw the unfolding of the economic crisis overwhelming the European societies, especially on the southern periphery. As the euro zone slipped into extended recession, unemployment reached unprecedented levels in most Member States, and sovereign debt multiplied when states saved insolvent banks from collapsing. While dozens of Council meetings yielded little to no results, the European Central Bank (ECB) commitment to save the euro stabilised sovereign debt markets for now. But many basic democratic accountability demands remain by large unmet and the rows of populist Eurosceptics are growing.

**What we achieved.** The pace and magnitude of financial and economic re-regulation has increased since the outbreak of the crisis. The Greens/EFA contributed to several important decisions, such as caps to bankers' bonuses (CRDIV) and the establishment of financial supervision bodies. We successfully brought the ECB's banking supervision powers under parliamentary control. We were one of the driving forces behind the FTT. We introduced the idea of the youth guarantee at EU level in 2009 and fought for the rights of posted workers, as far as possible within the limits of the legal framework. SMEs will benefit from more research funds under the Horizon 2020 framework programme thanks to our pressure. We paved the way for flexibly reducing co-financing of regional funds for the Member States most hit by the crisis, while urging them to use the funds transparently.

**What we could not achieve.** Multiplying the summits, the heads of government deliberately kept the European Parliament away from the decisions over the most important safeguard mechanisms against the crisis, such as the ESM. The Council also imposed drastic cuts on the European budget (MFF), preventing the EU from helping economic recovery. The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) failed to ensure fair distribution of farming subsidies between and within Member States. Inside Parliament, conservatives and liberals successfully relayed finance lobbyists preventing stronger regulation on banks (CRDIII & IV), hedge funds (AIFM, UCITS), and credit rating agencies (CRA). Consequently, macroeconomic regulation cannot serve for counter-cyclical impulses (Six pack, Two pack). While the FTT is still under legal threat, the European Banking Authority's competence to ban short-selling has been confirmed by the European Court of Justice.

### 2. Securing our climate and energy future

**Main issues at stake.** In 2009, the Copenhagen COP failed to produce a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, bringing international climate diplomacy to a relative stalemate. The 2011 Fukushima nuclear catastrophe weakened the dogma that nuclear plants in

developed economies are safe. Nevertheless, and in spite of extreme weather phenomena and record low polar ice caps, the EU climate debate remains dominated by old models and vested interests – to the point that towards the end of the legislature the EU ETS collapsed.

**What we achieved.** The major success of the Greens/EFA was the negotiation of the energy efficiency directive, which lays out the energy efficiency objectives for member states until 2020. Even though the objective of an increase of energy efficiency by 20% was watered down in the Council, this is a major step forward. We also fought to dedicate a 85% share of the energy research funds in the Horizon 2020 framework programme to research in renewables and energy efficiency. In addition, we ensured that European infrastructure financed via the TEN-T instrument respect EU environmental standards and climate goals; and that Member States will be allowed to include environmental costs in toll systems for lorries. We contributed new ideas for Europe's economic future, winning a majority for our strategy pursuing a renaissance of industry for a sustainable Europe. Finally, in the EP our group remains the strongest critical voice against shale-gas fracking and nuclear power, advocating tougher stress tests for example.

**What we could not achieve.** We witnessed how much the urgency times of the Stern Review have receded when Parliament rejected an unconditional 30% target for greenhouse gas reductions for 2020, no matter the outcome of international climate negotiations. The EU emission trading system is in shambles, hindering the necessary future-oriented investments. Moreover, we were not able to deliver a European version of the German *Energiewende*. And in spite of our vigilance, the European Commission stepped up its promotion of nuclear energy, which threatens to undermine the prospects to make the “energy transition” a cornerstone for Europe's future.

### 3. For a healthy environment

**Main issues at stake.** From the EHEC-bacteria infected vegetables to horsemeat in lasagne, this legislature saw another series of food scandals at EU scale, questioning the practices of the agro-industry. Meanwhile, between industrial trawling and national vested interests, most fish stocks in the EU are still over-fished, making the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform critical.

**What we achieved.** With a European Parliament for the first time on equal footing with the Council in on both reforms of the CFP and CAP, our biggest success was the CFP vote. It put an end to overfishing and established that only so much fish should be caught that stocks could recover. Instead of allowing national fleets to continue fishing according to historic quotas, it made quotas depend on environmental conditions. In the CAP reform we introduced environmental focus areas, to restrict monocultures and reserve a certain percentage of farmland to protect biodiversity. The Greens/EFA also guided the implementation of the Nagoya protocol on biodiversity; inserted strict provisions on nanomaterials in the legislation on biocides and food; and protected bees from certain neonicotinoids in pesticides. We fought hard to build up the EP's resistance to the agro-industry pressure for easier market access for GMOs, and succeeded in reinforcing conditionality. Finally, with the Waste electric and electronic equipment (WEEE) reform we contributed to closing raw material cycles by restricting such waste exports to non-industrialised countries.

**What we could not achieve.** Industrial lobbies successfully mustered a majority to prevent traffic-light style food labelling, they took the edge off the CAP reform by ensuring disproportionate support for big industrial farms, they made the European Parliament reject the 8-hour limit to animal transports, and they managed to water down WEEE return rates and procedures. Food labels still do not contain information on whether animals have been fed with GMOs, and the Unitary Patent provides no solid protection of biodiversity and farmers' rights to seed breeding. Despite new legislation against illegal timber imports, illegal timber is still imported and processed in the EU. The practice can impossibly be curtailed without penal instruments to fight it.

#### 4. Fighting for human rights, social, democratic and digital rights

**Main issues at stake.** In the name of national security, Member State governments do not shy from putting fundamental EU freedoms at risk. They temporarily reintroduced border controls as a reaction to immigrant influx after the Arab Spring in 2011, and the documents on secret services tapping telecommunication published by whistleblower Edward Snowden revealed the most systematic privacy violation in Europe since decades. Basic human rights were put into question, as the economic crisis worsened the situation of irregular immigrants, or as Hungary's right-wing government reforms threatened the rule of law. The fragility of EU democracy was furthermore exposed when two *Sunday Times* journalists posed as lobbyists and successfully offered money to MEPs in exchange for amendments.

**What we achieved.** With unprecedented help of civil society, we had outstanding success when mobilising against ACTA, which would have damaged internet freedom and privacy rights. In addition, we managed to resist the SWIFT agreement, which regulates financial data transfer to US agencies, and the PNR agreement, which transfers passenger data. By criticising legal reform in Hungary, we drew attention to the need to respect EU core values, demanding an 'alert agenda' monitored by the EU institutions in case of fundamental rights breaches. Though we failed to establish a full-fledged EU asylum system, we improved the situation of refugees by making different forms of discrimination reasons for granting asylum and by establishing a human rights control panel with NGO representatives in the border control agency FRONTEX. Our efforts on the ECI helped reducing the EU's democratic deficit and proved its potency in the initiative against water privatisation. In the Petitions committee, we relayed various citizens' struggles against the Spanish coastal law, chemical waste in Huelva, Spain, and pollution from the Taranto steel factory in Italy. We also gave strong impulses to the files on equal pay and representation of women in boardrooms.

In the wake of the *Sunday Times* incident and Dalligate, the Greens/EFA wrenched compromises from the other groups on the MEPs' code of conduct, making its binding rules for financial transparency amongst the strictest worldwide - even though the code foresees no penal instruments against bribery yet.

**What we could not achieve.** We saw the European Parliament adopt a second version of SWIFT with only superficial improvements to privacy protection. Industry lobbies hampered the adoption of an ambitious data protection agreement, which is now stuck in Council, as is our proposal for better rules on parental leave. Despite our efforts for a roadmap on LGBT rights, there has been no progress on legislation. And for irregular immigrants in Southern Member States the situation remains dire.

## 5. For global solidarity and security

**Main issues at stake.** Over the last five years, the major geopolitical shift for the EU occurred with the Arab Spring. Today, from Tunisia to Egypt, the situation remains uncertain and has even turned to a civil war in Syria. The assertion of new powers like Brazil or China, and the global race for natural resources have stalled WTO negotiations, driving the EU to conclude several questionable free-trade agreements – the one with the US (TTIP), the most comprehensive, being launched recently. Meanwhile, on the development front, the momentum of the MDGs has abated one year before the 2015 horizon.

**What we achieved.** The Greens/EFA have engaged in the shaping of the newly established EEAS and the Instrument for Stability (IFS) and fought for the establishment of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights. We were the driving force behind the EU position against cluster bombs, demanding their full prohibition. We put policy coherence for development on the EU agenda. Our claims against offshore tax havens were first supported in development policy, before Commissioner Šemeta picked them up. Following the Arab Spring, we negotiated improvements into the EU's Mediterranean macro-regional strategy.

**What we could not achieve.** We failed to introduce ex-ante export controls for dual use items, like telecommunications technology or chemicals, mostly due to a sudden change of mind of the German ALDE delegation. The S&D and EPP group made a reformed GSP pass, which weakens the developing economies even further. In the CAP reform we were outvoted on ending export subsidies, which put global food security at risk. Our demand for broad economic support to stabilise democratisation after the Arab spring did not find the necessary effort.

## 6. Celebrating cultural diversity

**Main issues at stake.** Cultural diversity stands under the pressure of a globalised uniformed culture and the challenges of a politically integrated Europe. But as the economic crisis put a strain on cultural and education programmes all over Europe, it also highlighted the economic aspects of culture, especially when the ACTA debate put copyright issues to the forefront. The two first Pirate Party MEPs in our group strengthened and diversified our position in this field.

**What we achieved.** The Greens/EFA used the revision of the EU mobility exchange programmes, like ERASMUS, to promote education opportunities for all. We ensured that the debate on copyrights and piracy remains open, balancing various positions and interests in the creative process. We strongly influenced the design of the European online archive Europeana. And our traditional commitment to cultural diversity was reflected in the initiatives of MEPs from regional parties, when we drew attention to the value of and threats to linguistic diversity in the EU.

**What we could not achieve.** In mobility exchange programmes we failed to block the European Loan Guarantee Facility for Master students, which can increase risk of youth indebtedness. In several copyright-related files industry pressure prevented our open approach from prevailing.