



# Strasbourg Flash

## Priorities for the Greens/EFA group for 10-13 December 2012

### EU budget 2012-2013: bad deal for Europe

Mon. 10 Dec. - Budget committee vote; plenary vote Weds.

A draft agreement on the EU's 2013 budget and provisions to cover shortfalls under the 2012 budget looks set to be endorsed by the European Parliament, following an indicative vote in the budget committee. The vote will have to be confirmed in the committee and in a plenary vote on Wednesday, with the deal having been endorsed by Council. The Greens have criticised the draft agreement. While it has improved on the original Council position, it both fail to bridge the shortfalls under the 2012 budget and continue the trend of under-budgeting for 2013.

### Wrongheaded EU patent system

Tues. 11 Dec. - EP debate and vote (Various reports)

The long-debated unitary European patent will be voted on by MEPs. With major uncertainty about the legal compatibility of the legislative proposals under the EU Treaty, the Greens believe the EP should wait until an anticipated opinion by the EU Court of Justice's Advocate General before voting. The group has major concerns about EU institutions delegating powers on intellectual property to a non-EU organisation: the European Patent Office. The Greens also believe there is need to clearly prevent the patenting of life forms and respect EU decisions against software patents.

### Strasbourg priorities press briefing

with Greens/EFA co-presidents **Dany Cohn-Bendit** and **Rebecca Harms**

Tuesday, 11 December, **10.30-10.50** - Press Conference Room EP, Strasbourg

### Controversial Latin American trade deal

Mon. 10 Nov. - EP debate; vote Tues. (David report)

The EU Parliament will decide whether or not to endorse a controversial draft EU free trade agreement with Colombia and Peru. The agreement has provoked strong opposition due to concerns that it would negatively impact on the development of the two Latin American countries. The FTA would further expand the export of raw materials from Peru and Colombia, without taking into account social and environmental concerns, and place business interests ahead of human rights. The Greens will be urging other groups to reject the agreement.

### Airport noise and working conditions

Tues. 11 Dec. - EP debate; vote Weds. (Various reports)

EU rules dealing with airports, including noise restrictions and working conditions for groundstaff, will be voted on by MEPs. The Greens welcomed the transport committee vote to oppose the liberalisation of groundhandling services due to concerns about employment conditions. However, the group is concerned that the legislative proposals on airport noise would open the door for the EU Commission to overrule noise-related restrictions introduced in local and regional airports in favour of more airport capacity.

### Financial transaction tax: ball rolling

Tues. 11 Dec. - EP debate; vote Weds. (Podimata report)

Proposals launching an enhanced cooperation procedure for introducing a financial transaction tax for an initial group of 11 EU member states will be voted on by MEPs. The Greens have long advocated an FTT both to help curb risky financial speculation and generate much-needed revenue from an under-taxed financial sector for pressured exchequers. This enhanced cooperation is a first step. Ideally, the FTT should apply in the EU as a whole but the task at hand is now to move forward with this coalition of the willing and hopefully convince other member states to join at a later date.

### Animal transport and welfare

Tues. 11 Dec. - EP debate; vote Weds. (Wocjichowski report)

MEPs will vote on a report on the controversial issue of animal transport. Long distance transport of animals, often in poor conditions, leads to distress for the animals involved. The Greens believe current EU legislation needs to be improved and support calls to limit journey times to 8 hours. The report adopted by the agriculture committee was ambiguous on this key issue and the Greens are looking to include clear language on an 8 hour limit. The group also believes there is a need for less crowded transporting conditions and better protection for wounded animals.

**HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED OVERLEAF**

### Greens/EFA Press Team

- **Helmut Weixler (Team head):** Mobile +32 475 671340, Ph. +33-3-88174760
- **Isabelle Zerrouk:** Mobile +32 477 319474, Ph. +33-3-88174032
- **Richard More O'Ferrall:** Mobile +32 477 443842
- **Steven Cornelius (EFA Press Service):** Ph. +33-3-88172936



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### Addressing fundamental rights in the EU

Tues. - Thurs. 11-13 Dec. - EP debates & votes (Zdanoka, Benova reports)

Two important reports on fundamental rights in the EU will be voted by MEPs. The report by Greens/EFA MEP Tatjana Zdanoka on the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency is overshadowed by the UK government blocking the adoption of a multiannual framework for the agency. The group condemns this populist opportunism. While supporting the annual report on fundamental rights in the EU, the Greens believe the exercise is insufficient. The group is in favour of finally creating a proper monitoring instrument on fundamental rights, including country-by-country reporting.

### EU-Russia agreement, rights and democracy

Weds. 12 Dec. - EP debate; vote Thurs. (Swoboda report)

With negotiations on a new EU-Russia agreement ongoing, MEPs will vote on a report setting out the EP position. In its eagerness to reach an agreement with Russia, for economic and strategic reasons, the EU is unfortunately all too ready to ignore major concerns with the Putin regime, which conflict with basic EU values. As the recent parliamentary elections revealed, Russia still fails to respect democratic norms. The rule of law and human rights also remain major problems, with high profile cases like those of Mikhail Khordorkovsky and Pussy Riot underlining this.

### Human rights and EU policy

Weds. 12 Dec. - EP debate; vote Thurs. (Tavares report)

MEPs are set to vote on a report by Green MEP Rui Tavares on the EU's human rights action plan and strategic framework. The report makes strategic recommendations for an EU human rights policy which takes into account the effects of the current economic crisis and its influence on the perceived political clout of the EU in the world. The report also critically comments on the lack of cooperation and integration between the services of the main EU institutions in the human rights area, as well as making recommendations on how the EP works on human rights.

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- **Helmut Weixler** (head): Mobile +32 475 671340, Ph. +33-3-88174760
- **Isabelle Zerrouk**: Mobile +32 477 319474, Ph. +33-3-88174032
- **Richard More O'Ferrall**: Mobile +32 477 443842
- **Steven Cornelius** (EFA Press Service): Ph. +33-3-88172936

### Press officers from national delegations

- **Paul Alex** (Germany): Mobile +32 495-402328
- **Marie Shand** (France): Mobile +33-6-43271757
- **Dirk van den Bosch** (Netherlands): Ph. +33-3-88177881, Mobile +31 627-015080
- **Anne Hilden** (Finland): Mobile +32-473-735136
- **Hans van Scharen** (Belgium - Flemish speaking press): Ph. +33-3-88177642, Mobile +32 484-729776
- **Marita Pahlen** (Sweden): Ph. +33-3-88177273, Mobile +46 706 750373



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### EU summit and the continuing crisis

Weds. 12 Dec. - EP plenary debate; EU summit Thurs. - Fri.

EU leaders will meet to agree on plans for deepening the EU's economic and monetary union, with a plenary debate on the summit the day before. As at every previous step, it seems EU governments - led by Germany - will stay a step behind the game. The Eurozone needs to take urgent steps towards mutualising sovereign debt (such as through a debt redemption) to turn the corner on the crisis. EU leaders will also discuss plans for an EU 'banking union', with the Greens believing banking supervision plans need to be made more democratic and to better reflect the diversity in banking models.

### Israeli settlements: a barrier to peace

Weds. 12 Dec. - EP debate; vote Thurs.

With the Israeli government having decided to expand illegal settlements in the West Bank, MEPs are set to debate the issue and the EU's response with the EU foreign policy high representative and adopt a resolution. Expanding these settlements, as proposed by the Israeli government, is illegal under international law. With a halt to settlement expansion a precondition for resuming peace talks, the decision by the Israeli government is a direct act of provocation, which flies in the face of regional peace. The EU and its member states must unite in opposing this act of aggression.