



Strasbourg Flash

Priorities for the Greens/EFA group for 12-16 March 2012

Nuclear power one year after Fukushima

Mon. 12 Mar. - EP debate with Commission

Following on from the first year anniversary of the Japanese earthquake and the resulting nuclear disaster (11 March), MEPs will debate the consequences with the EU Commission. The tragic consequences of Fukushima will continue to be felt in Japan for years. While some EU member states have decided to rule out nuclear as a result, others are planning to push ahead. At the EU level, the Greens have expressed concerns that the nuclear stress tests are little more than an excuse to allow the nuclear industry to continue with business as usual.

Hormone-free beef: the EU-US dispute ends

Tues. 13 Mar. - EP debate; vote Weds. (Quisthoudt report)

A long-running dispute between the EU and the US on beef imports will finally be brought to an end under an agreement to be adopted by the EP. Under the terms of the deal, the US will be allowed to export high quality beef, which has not been treated with growth-hormones, to the EU, with the US lifting retaliatory restrictions on EU imports. The Greens welcome the fact the EU was able to maintain its own high food standards and keep hormone-fed beef off the EU market, facing down a WTO ruling in spite of the efforts of the US.

Strasbourg press briefing by Greens/EFA co-presidents

Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rebecca Harms

Tuesday, 13 March, 10.20-10.40

Press Conference Room EP, Strasbourg

Strengthening the role of cooperatives

Mon. 12 Mar. - EP debate; vote Tues. (Giegold report)

The EP will adopt a report by Green draftsman Sven Giegold on cooperatives. Cooperatives and other similar organisations in the social economy function along market principles but set other priorities than mere profit maximisation. The potential of these organisations is underused across the EU, particularly given the positive role they could play in the current economic crisis. The report sets out concrete measures to address this, such as through EU rules on public contracts and state aid, and improving the legal status of coops.

Dutch discriminatory website

Tues. 13 Mar. - EP debate; vote Thurs.

A discriminatory website set up by the PVV party in the Netherlands is set to be debated by MEPs. The website, which encourages Dutch citizens to post complaints about people from central and eastern Europe who are living in the Netherlands, is at odds with a number of EU values. As well as conflicting with the right to non-discrimination as set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Treaty, it is also at odds with EU rules on racism and free movement. The failure of the Dutch prime minister to criticise the website is also a concern.

Stopping the massacre in Syria

Tues. 13 Mar. - EP debate with Council on EU summit

The brutal violence by the Syrian authorities continues unabated, notably in the city of Homs. The international community seems no closer to action, following last month's shameful UN resolution veto by China and Russia. The EU has widened its sanctions against the Assad regime but it needs to go further and it also needs to do more to support the people of Syria and promote open communications, so that these crimes against humanity cannot take place behind closed doors. The violence needs to stop and the Assad regime end.

Tackling child labour in the cocoa sector

Tues. 13 Mar. - EP debate; vote Weds.

MEPs are set to endorse the 2010 international cocoa agreement, which will help ensure fairer and more sustainable trade, but are also set to adopt a resolution outlining the problems of child labour in the cocoa production sector. Child labour and trafficking remains a major problem, particularly among the multitude of small producers in West African countries, where most cocoa imports come from. The EP resolution makes a number of concrete suggestions for further work to address this problem under the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO).

HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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Business as usual with Putin's Russia?

Weds. 14 Mar. - EP debate with Council; vote Thurs.

No sooner had Vladimir Putin been unsurprisingly declared winner in Russia's presidential election than EU leaders were issuing fawning statements, despite evidence of electoral manipulation and recent efforts to stifle opposition politics in Russia. EU strategic partnership should only be possible with countries when there are shared interests and value. In the case of Russia, the first steps to this end imply dialogue with the political opposition outside the Duma, renewed Duma elections, political pluralism and freeing political prisoners.

Climate policy to 2050 - low carbon roadmap

Thurs. 15 Mar. - EP debate and vote (Davies report)

Long term EU climate policy comes under the spotlight, as the EP adopts its position on the EU low carbon roadmap 2050. Science recommends greenhouse gas cuts of up to 95% by 2050 in Europe if we are to play our part in avoiding dangerous climate change but the EU is way off track. The Greens want the EU to address the short-term inconsistency, notably increasing the EU's 2020 target to a 30% reduction and retiring emissions permits from the emissions trading scheme, with a view to getting the malfunctioning ETS back on track.

Other EU issues

Shadow banking - out of the murk

Tues. 13 Mar. - EU Commission proposal

There is a wide range of entities, mechanisms and activities that are part of the financial sector but are outside the realm of traditional banking and financial regulation. The Commission is set to present initial proposals on a European approach to dealing with shadow banking. It is clear that many of these entities and structures have direct links to the irresponsible speculative behaviour that has had such a damaging impact on the wider global economy. The Commission's green paper must be a first step to proper regulation of shadow banking.

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