



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

Brussels Agenda

Weekly preview of the Greens/EFA group - 26-30 March 2012

EP priorities (full text below):

- Hungary - EP scrutinises democratic scale-back (civil liberties committee, Mon.)
- No mega trucks on EU roads (transport committee debate, Mon.)
- ACTA - the next steps with the controversial anti-counterfeiting deal (trade committee, Tues.)
- PNR - scrapping the EU-US passenger data agreement (civil liberties committee vote, Tues.)
- EU enlargement: Serbia and Kosovo in the spotlight (plenary debate Weds., vote Thurs.)
- Strengthening the EU response to refugees (plenary debate Weds., vote Thurs.)
- Air passenger rights and EU rules (plenary vote, Thurs.)
- Risky derivatives: missed opportunity for tougher rules (plenary vote, Thurs.)
- Repression in Belarus under scrutiny (plenary vote, Thurs.)

EU priorities:

- European cyber police proposals (Commission proposal, Weds.)

Greens/EFA events:

- Greece - Green co-presidents high-level meeting in Athens (Tues.)
- Document freedom: open standards in the eBook market (Conference, Weds.)
- Human rights in Azerbaijan ahead of the Eurovision (Press conference, Thurs.)
- Global Green Congress (Thurs. - Sun.)

Hungary - EP scrutinises democratic scale-back

Mon. 26 Mar - Civil liberties committee debate (**Tavares** report)

The EP has raised its concerns with the impact of new constitutional laws on basic democratic freedoms in Hungary, including political plurality, the independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression and media freedom. The Council of Europe has underlined these concerns, yet the European Commission's response has been limited to narrow areas. As a consequence, the EP civil liberties committee is pushing ahead with a report analysing the situation in Hungary, the first time this procedure has been used, with the first debate taking place on Monday. (see [latest press release](#))

No mega trucks on EU roads

Mon. 26 Mar - Transport committee debate with Commissioner Kallas

Cross-border journeys of gigaliners or mega trucks (trucks of more than 40 tonnes) are currently prohibited under EU law. Transport commissioner Kallas is set to propose completely changing the interpretation of the legislation to permit them. The Greens are opposed to promoting the use of gigaliners, as this would shift freight transport from rail to the road - with negative consequences for safety and the environment. We should be doing the opposite. The group also rejects attempts to introduce this by the back door, excluding the EP from the decision-making process. (see [latest press release](#))

ACTA - the next steps with the controversial anti-counterfeiting deal

Tues. 27 Mar - Trade committee debate

The controversial anti-counterfeiting trade agreement (ACTA) will be in the spotlight in the European Parliament next week. A number of EP committees, including the lead trade committee, will consider whether or not to proceed with the ratification process in spite of the decision by the Commission to refer ACTA to the European Court of Justice. Other options being considered include a separate ECJ referral by the EP and an interim report, pending the outcome of the Commission's referral. The Greens believe the EP should proceed as normal with the ratification process, and that MEPs should reject ACTA. (see [latest press release](#))

PNR - scrapping the EU-US passenger data agreement

Tues. 27 Mar - Civil liberties committee vote

MEPs on the lead civil liberties committee are set to give their verdict as to whether the draft EU-US passenger data (PNR) agreement should be approved by the EP or not. The Greens believe the new agreement has failed to address the fundamental rights concerns raised by the European Parliament and courts in Europe, notably as regards the lengthy retention periods for data, as well as the problem of profiling of individuals. A recent independent study commissioned by the group confirms this. As a result, the Greens will be supporting the proposal to reject the deal. (see [latest press release](#) and [study](#))

EU enlargement: Serbia and Kosovo in the spotlight

Weds. 28 Mar - Plenary debate; vote Thurs. (Various reports)

MEPs are set to debate and adopt reports assessing the accession progress of a number of EU enlargement countries (Serbia, Kosovo, Turkey and Bosnia). Given the recent decision on Serbia's candidate status, which the Greens welcomed, the progress report on Serbia will be of particular interest. However, question marks remain about justice sector reform, as well as the elephant in the room: relations with Kosovo. The EU must also give Kosovo the prospect of progress in its accession process. (see [latest press release](#))

Strengthening the EU response to refugees

Weds. 28 Mar - Plenary debate; vote Thurs. (**Tavares** report)

Proposals to help EU member states improve their ability and capacity to receive refugees are set to be endorsed by MEPs. The new joint resettlement programme, which is being steered through the EP by Green draftsman Rui Tavares, aims to resettle people in the EU who have been granted refugees status in third countries that lack the capacity to offer proper protection. In order to facilitate this, the scope of the European Refugee Fund, which provides financial assistance

to EU member states to support resettlements, will be extended to ensure a wider group of vulnerable persons can be eligible.

Air passenger rights and EU rules

Thurs. 29 Mar. - Plenary vote (**Taylor** report)

The EP is set to adopt a report by Green draftsman Keith Taylor, setting out proposals aimed at strengthening the rights of air passengers. The report calls for the strengthening of existing rules as regards assistance and reimbursement for delays and cancellations. The report also includes proposals for addressing some of the problems faced by persons with disabilities. Crucially, from a Green perspective, it also calls for better information on environmental performance. (see [press release](#))

Risky derivatives: missed opportunity for tougher rules

Thurs. 29 Mar. - Plenary vote (Langen report)

The EP is set to endorse a final legislative agreement on new EU rules for over-the-counter derivative products. While the Greens welcomed the fact that the new rules will create a regulatory framework for these risky and opaque products, the group regrets that the rules were not more far-reaching and that they will fail to provide for a proper EU oversight. (see [press release](#))

Repression in Belarus under scrutiny

Thurs. 29 Mar. - Plenary vote on resolution

With state repression in Belarus getting worse, the EU tightening sanctions, and EU-Belarus relations on a downward slope, MEPs will vote on a timely resolution on the situation in the country. The Greens are extremely concerned about the worsening situation in Belarus but also believe the EU's response needs to be reoriented: expanding sanctions and reducing economic ties on the one hand, while redoubling diplomatic efforts on the other hand.

European cyber police proposals

Weds. 28 Mar - European Commission proposal

The European Commission is set to present its communication on the new European Cyber Crime Centre. Given the cross-border nature of cyber crime, it is clear that a European response is necessary. The Greens believe that there is a need to ensure the fundamental rights of EU citizens are not compromised however.

Greece - Green co-presidents high-level meeting in Athens

Tues. 27 Mar. - High-level meeting in Athens

Green co-presidents Rebecca Harms and Dany Cohn-Bendit travel to Greece for a series of high-level meetings, including with the prime minister and the governor of the central bank. The Greens have consistently criticised the one-sided austerity focus of the crisis response being pushed by centre-right governments in Europe and will seek to further explore alternatives in Athens. (see [latest press release](#))

Document freedom: open standards in the eBook market

Weds. 28 Mar. - Conference, 16.00-19.00 - European Parliament Room ASP 1G3

To mark Document Freedom Day, the Greens/EFA group is organising a conference on open standards in the eBook market. (see [programme](#))

Human rights in Azerbaijan ahead of the Eurovision

Thurs. 29 Mar. - Press conference, 10.30 - European Parliament press room

The Eurovision Song Contest is set to take place in Azerbaijan this year. This press conference, organised by Green MEP Ulrike Lunacek with activists from Azerbaijan, aims to draw attention to some of the problems in country ahead of the contest.

Global Greens Congress

Thurs. - Sun. 29 Mar. - 1 Apr. - Congress - Dakar, Senegal

Greens from across the world will meet for the Global Green Congress, with some Green MEPs also set to participate. (see [more details](#))

Schengen and EU-level oversight

Thurs. 8 Mar. - Home affairs ministers council

Following on from the controversy surrounding the imposition of restrictions to the Schengen border-free system, home affairs ministers will debate changes to EU rules regarding the evaluation of Schengen. This evaluation has been carried out at intergovernmental level hitherto but the Greens support proposals to transfer this responsibility to the Commission for EU-level scrutiny of existing and future Schengen members. (see [latest press release](#))

Tar sands - outlawing dirty fuel in the EU

Fri. 9 Mar. - Environment ministers council

Proposals to effectively prevent the import of oil from tar sands, due to its excessive greenhouse emissions, are set to be decided by environment ministers after deadlock in the Council committee. The Greens support the Commission's proposals, which would ensure this highly climate and environment damaging fuel will not find its way to Europe's petrol pumps. The group hopes environment ministers will not cave to the intense lobby from the Canadian government and dirty fuel firms. (see [press release](#))