



Strasbourg Flash

Priorities for the Greens/EFA group for 16-20 April 2012

The crisis in Syria and the EU response

Tues. 17 Apr. - EP debate with EU foreign policy HR

The fragile ceasefire in Syria has brought some respite after a year of brutality by the Assad regime but it is far from clear if a peaceful solution will emerge. The EU needs to now do all it can to mitigate the humanitarian crisis, fully support the people of Syria and promote open communications, with a view to ultimately ensuring the end of the odious regime and a peaceful democratic transition. In the debate, the Greens will also criticise the shameful hypocrisy of Cyprus, which allowed the refuelling of a Russian ship delivering arms to the Assad regime.

Energy and carbon taxation in the EU

Weds. 18 Apr. - EP debate; vote Thurs. (Lulling report)

The EP is set to vote on proposed EU legislation on energy taxation, which sets out minimum European rates, notably with a view to introducing EU-level carbon taxation. The Greens welcomed the outcome of the vote in committee, which would give a clear political signal for closing some of the key loopholes in the current legislation, as well as for improving the proposals on carbon taxation. The group hopes the plenary will endorse this position and not succumb to the intense lobbying from those seeking to extend loopholes for dirty fuels.

Strasbourg press briefing by Greens/EFA co-presidents

Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rebecca Harms

Wednesday, 18 April, 10.20-10.40

Press Conference Room EP, Strasbourg

Fair social security for airline staff

Weds. 18 Apr. - EP debate and vote (Cabrnach report)

MEPs are set to adopt a legislative agreement revising EU rules on social security systems to close a number of loopholes under the current legislation. Under the terms of the deal, a key loophole will be closed, ensuring highly mobile flight personnel will not be forced to accept minimalist social security provisions. The loophole, which was exploited by a few low cost carriers, enabled airlines to register staff at their PO Box office in Malta to exploit its cheap and limited social security system. This will no longer be possible under the new rules.

Common corporate tax base for Europe

Weds. 18 Apr. - EP debate; vote Thurs. (Thyssen report)

MEPs will vote on proposals for a common consolidated base for corporate tax (CCCTB). The Greens have long supported the introduction of a binding EU CCCTB, which would ensure greater transparency on corporate tax in the EU and reduce the scope for tax evasion, as well as reducing the administrative burden for tax compliant cross border firms. The CCCTB should be accompanied by a minimum corporate tax rate, which together would help end the tax dumping that enables corporations in the EU to avoid up to €100 billion in tax payments.

Eurozone crisis: shifting the austerity focus

Weds. 18 Apr. - EP debate and Commission proposal

The EU Commission will outline a strategy for EU-wide employment creation and economic revival, with MEPs to debate the crisis with the ECB president and the Commission president. The Greens have long argued that the one-sided focus on austerity in the Euro crisis response has made the situation worse and that there needs to be a much greater focus on measures to turn the economy around, including clamping down on tax fraud and evasion. With Spain once again in the eye of the sovereign debt storm, the need for a more robust firewall and steps towards Eurobonds has once again been underlined.

Easier access to EU funds for crisis countries

Weds. 18 Apr. - EP debate; vote Thurs. (Hübner report)

Proposals aimed at making the use of EU funding easier in EU member states in fiscal difficulties and in receipt of rescue funds will be voted on by MEPs. Under the plans, crisis countries could use parts of their EU funds to mobilise increased loan financing for private promoters of projects, in cooperation with the EIB. The Greens support the intention, namely to assist member states affected by the crisis, but believe that - as it stands - it fails to provide for proper quality checks on projects and fails to ensure funds are not given to unsustainable projects.

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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Controversial EU-US PNR data agreement

Thurs. 19 Apr. - EP debate and vote (In 't Veld report)

After years of debate, following concerns raised by the European Parliament, MEPs are set to give a final verdict on the controversial draft EU-US passenger data (PNR) agreement. The Greens believe the new agreement has failed to address the fundamental rights concerns raised by the EP and courts in Europe, notably as regards lengthy retention periods for data, as well as the profiling of individuals. The group will be voting to reject the agreement and hope a majority of MEPs follows suit and overturns the committee recommendation.

Ever expanding ITER nuclear fusion budget

Thurs. 19 Apr. - EP debate; vote Fri. (Balzani report)

EU funds are set to be used to finance the increases in the ballooning budget of the ITER nuclear fusion project, under an agreement with the Council reached in December. MEPs will vote to give the go-ahead to the first tranche of funds, totalling €650 million, for 2012. With the commercial viability of nuclear fusion unclear - and certainly not a medium term option - the Greens believe no further EU funds should be channelled to the runaway budget of this project and that renewables and energy efficiency should be the priorities for public funding.

Asylum in Greece and preserving Schengen

Thurs. 19 Apr. - EP debate with Council and Commission

The situation regarding migrants in Greece will be addressed, following the ramping up of populist rhetoric in different EU member states, whether during the French presidential election campaign or separate calls for Greece to be excluded from Schengen. The Greens are concerned about the ability of the Greek authorities to properly accommodate legitimate asylum seekers but deplore knee-jerk populism. Instead, we should be focusing on finalising the EU asylum package and doing more to address the causes of migration in third

Women and climate change

Fri. 20 Apr. - EP debate and vote (Kiil-Nielsen report)

MEPs are set to adopt a report by Green draftsman Nicole Kiil-Nielsen on women in climate change. The report highlights findings that show women are worse affected by the impacts of climate change and proposes measures to address this, such as including gender equality in climate change policies and greater inclusion of women in decision-making on climate change in the EU.

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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
- **Frédérique Tarride (France):** Mobile +33-6-11742600
- **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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