



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

Brussels Agenda

Weekly preview of the Greens/EFA group - 7-12 May 2012

EP priorities (full text below):

- **Mortgages - EU rules and consumer protection (economic affairs committee vote, Mon.)**
- **Public opposition to the controversial ACTA anti-counterfeiting deal (petitions committee, Tues.)**
- **Safer medical products - closing the loopholes in EU rules (environment committee vote, Tues.)**
- **Mobile phone roaming - a small step forward (plenary debate Weds., vote Thurs.)**
- **No patenting of life-forms (plenary debate Weds., vote Thurs.)**
- **Taxing financial transactions in the EU (plenary debate Weds., vote Thurs.)**
- **Discharging the EU budget (plenary debate Weds., vote Thurs.)**

Greens/EFA events:

- **Meeting Europe's challenges - Greens/EFA meeting in Copenhagen (Thurs. - Fri.)**

Mortgages - EU rules and consumer protection

Mon. 7 May - Economic affairs committee vote

EU legislation harmonising standards applying to mortgages across the EU is set to be voted on by the lead economic affairs committee. The Greens believe the legislation should strengthen consumer protection in the mortgage sector but the proposals have been subject to industry lobbying, seeking to limit the ambition in terms of consumer protection.

Public opposition to the controversial ACTA anti-counterfeiting deal

Tues. 8 May - Petitions committee vote

The European Parliament is set to give a platform to the millions of citizens who are opposed to the controversial anti-counterfeiting trade agreement, as the petitions committee hears a public petition against ACTA signed by 2.5 million petitioners. The Greens have opposed ACTA since the outset, highlighting concerns with fundamental rights, internet and enterprise freedom, and access to medicines, among others. The EP is set to give its verdict on the ratification of ACTA before the summer recess and the Greens are pushing for its rejection. (see [latest press release](#))

Safer medical products - closing the loopholes in EU rules

Tues. 8 May - Environment committee vote

The recent scare involving the Mediator diabetes medicine, which was withdrawn as a result of adverse reactions, revealed shortcomings in EU legislation on pharmacovigilance (medical product safety). The Commission has proposed revising the EU rules to take account of this, clarifying transparency obligations, extending the list of medicines requiring additional monitoring and, crucially, revising the process involving urgent procedures. The Greens support the proposals to ensure an urgent procedure would be automatically triggered when a company interrupts the sale/marketing of a medical product.

Mobile phone roaming - a small step forward

Weds. 9 May - EP plenary debate; vote Thurs.

The European Parliament is set to endorse a deal reached with the Council to revise EU rules governing mobile phone roaming charges in the EU. The deal will lead to lower charges for mobile phone users when roaming across borders and, as such, is a welcome step but the Greens have expressed regret that a comprehensive solution to bring down exorbitant and artificially high roaming costs was not possible, particularly for data roaming. (see [latest press release](#))

No patenting of life-forms

Weds. 9 May - EP plenary debate; vote Thurs.

The awarding of patents for biological processes is explicitly prohibited under EU legislation, however the European Patent Office continues to award patents for processes such as breeding, with a recent case in the spotlight last week. The EP is set to vote on a resolution to this end. The Greens believe there is a need to ensure the EPO properly applies the terms of the applicable EU legislation. In the long term, the group believes the EPO needs to be brought under proper democratic control and bound by the decisions of the European Court of Justice. (see [latest press release](#))

Taxing financial transactions in the EU

Weds. 9 May - EP plenary debate; vote Thurs.

MEPs will vote on proposals to introduce an EU financial transaction tax (FTT). The Greens have long advocated the introduction of an FTT, which would both help curb risky financial speculation and generate much-needed revenue for under pressure exchequers (such as for development or climate aid, or as part as an EU system of own resources). The FTT should ideally apply in the EU as a whole but there is need to push forward with the proposals as swiftly as possible via enhanced cooperation with the widest possible group of EU members. The Greens believe exempting pension funds from the FTT is not a good approach long term. (see [latest press release](#))

Discharging the EU budget

Weds. 9 May - EP plenary debate; vote Thurs.

The European Parliament is set to give its verdict on the discharge of the EU budget for 2010. Beyond the now annual brouhaha over the EU's Court of Auditors inability to sign off on the overall EU budget, there are more specific concerns with a number of the EU's agencies, with criticisms having been made over budget management and possible conflicts of interest. Among these the European Food Safety Agency again features, with the Greens concerned about recurring conflicts of interest at EFSA.

Meeting Europe's challenges - Greens/EFA meeting in Copenhagen

Thurs. - Fri. 10-11 May - Greens/EFA external conference in Copenhagen

In the context of the Danish EU presidency, the Greens/EFA group is organising an external meeting in Copenhagen. The conference will address key issues such as the EU's response to the ongoing change in the Arab world and green jobs as part of a way out of the economic crisis. It will also aim to provide a preliminary assessment of the Danish presidency. (see [more information](#))

EU rules for a more robust banking sector

LAter date - Economic and financial affairs committee vote

Two important legislative proposals aimed at strengthening the banks and credit institutions will be voted by the economic and financial affairs committee. The current financial has made clear that the regulations governing the banking sector are not up to the task. The Greens support the proposals for stricter capital requirements and enforcement, as well as to strengthen corporate governance and reduce reliance on external rating agencies.