



Strasbourg Flash

Priorities for the Greens/EFA group for 11-15 June 2012

Border controls and preserving Schengen

Mon. 11 June - Civil liberties committee votes

With EU governments attempting to dismantle the Schengen border-free system, the EP civil liberties committee will vote on proposals from the EU Commission on the reimposition of border controls, as well as on an evaluation system. Schengen is an overwhelmingly positive EU policy and its integrity should be preserved. This implies ensuring decisions on reintroducing border controls are taken at EU level (not national level), are very limited and only in exceptional circumstances. EU-level evaluation is also essential, while proposals to change the legal base to exclude the EP from the process are scandalous.

Eurozone economic governance - '2 Pack'

Tues. 12 May - Debate; vote Weds. (Gauzes, Ferreira reports)

MEPs will vote on key legislative proposals reforming Eurozone economic governance. The Greens support the necessary strengthening of EU-level budgetary coordination but believe this must include proper democratic oversight. The group is also in favour of adapting the '2 pack' to ensure more countercyclical flexibility and a qualitative approach to budgetary discipline. Setting out a roadmap for mutualising sovereign debt would help restore confidence in Euro sovereigns, while a proper EU sustainable growth facility is also needed to counterbalance fiscal tightening. The Greens believe the '2 Pack' must deliver this.

**Strasbourg priorities press briefing
with Greens/EFA co-presidents Dany Cohn-Bendit and Rebecca Harms**

Tuesday, 22 May, 10.20-10.40 - Press Conference Room EP, Strasbourg

Preferential trade for poor countries

Mon. 11 June - Plenary debate; vote Weds. (Fjellner report)

A revision of the generalised system of preferences, under which the EU provides preferential market access to developing countries, will be voted on by MEPs. The revised rules aim to reduce the list of beneficiary countries, notably by ruling out emerging economies. The Greens believe the scheme needs to be adapted but the criteria used are too broad and will lead to the exclusion of some countries that should continue to be eligible. Exclusion or threat of exclusion also puts pressure on countries to negotiate potentially-damaging free trade agreements with the EU.

Illegal Israeli settlements - an EU response

Tues. 12 June - Plenary debate

The thorny question of illegal Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories is set to be debated by MEPs with the EU's foreign policy high representative. After years of prevarication at EU-level, foreign ministers have finally started to take a tougher stance vis-à-vis the Israeli government and its complicity in this odious policy. The Greens believe the EU must be more proactive on this issue, both at international level and domestically, where firmer action is needed to ensure products from the settlements do not reach EU markets.

Regulating the global arms trade

Tues. 12 June - Plenary debate; vote Weds.

After years of pressure, negotiations on a UN arms trade treaty are beginning. With arms agreements with developing countries valued at more than \$40 billion per year, the Greens and others have pushed for a robust UN arms trade treaty under which arms cannot be exported to countries where there is a serious risk of human rights or humanitarian violations. The EP will adopt a resolution aimed at shaping the EU position. The Greens believe any treaty must be legally binding, have a broad scope concerning arms, cover corruption and ensure proper transparency.

Own resources and the EU budget

Weds. 13 June - Key debate with Council and Commission

The June EU summit will launch the debate among EU leaders on the EU's next budgetary period (2014-20) and MEPs are set to debate this. The Greens believe the EU budget should be part of the EU's crisis response and be primarily used to promote investments aimed at stimulating the sustainable transformation of Europe's economy. The group has long advocated a proper system of own resources for the EU budget; this would lift the burden from national exchequers and end the annual horse trading, which undermines the effectiveness of the EU budget.

HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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Euro crisis - time running out

Weds. 13 June - Key debate with Council and Commission

With the June summit of EU leaders billed as make-or-break for the Euro, MEPs will debate the crisis with the Commission and Council. As the situation in Spain deteriorates, and uncertainty in Greece persists, it is clear the time for prevarication has run out. The immediate priority must be to shore up sovereigns by granting the ESM a banking license, on the way to a full economic and banking union, with mutualised sovereign debt. The flawed one-sided focus on austerity needs to be balanced with sustainable investments and steps to clamp down on tax evasion.

Baby food and EU rules

Thurs. 14 June - Plenary debate and vote (Ries report)

EU rules on food for young children and infants, as well as for special medical purposes, will be voted on by MEPs. The Greens welcomed moves by the EP to strengthen the provisions on labelling, as well as tackling misleading health claims on milk-based products for children. The group believes the rules should also ban the use of the most toxic pesticides in the production of baby food. While the environment committee did not support this, the group hopes these commonsense proposals will be endorsed by the plenary.

Rio +20 UN sustainable development summit

Press conference on the challenges and the EU position

Wednesday, 13 June, 10.00-30 - Press Conference Room EP, Strasbourg

Other EU priorities

Fixing EU fisheries - CFP reform

Tues. 12 June - Fisheries ministers council

Fisheries ministers are set to decide their position on the reform of the EU's common fisheries policy. The CFP has been a model for unsustainable fishing, leading to the current situation in which 3 in 4 fish stocks are in a parlous state. Drastic reform is needed. The Commission made some positive proposals, introducing sustainable quotas and banning discards, but its scandalous proposal to create market-based fisheries is wrongheaded. Short-sightedness by ministers will prevent the industry from ever becoming profitable and independent of subsidies.

Energy saving rules in the balance

Weds. 13 June - Trialogue negotiations; energy council Fri.

Negotiations between the EP and Council on key EU energy saving rules enter a decisive phase, with a crunch meeting on Wednesday. With the EU way off track on its 2020 target of 20% energy savings, an ambitious energy efficiency directive is crucial to closing the gap, and would create jobs and boost the economy. Making the 20% target binding would be important, but the directive deals with more than that. EP draftsman and Green MEP Claude Turmes believes the legislation needs to enshrine binding measures, including for energy firms, that ensure the 20% target can be met.

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