



Strasbourg Flash

Priorities for the Greens/EFA group for 2-6 July 2012

Overzealous customs enforcement of IPRs

Mon. 2 July - Plenary debate; vote Weds. (Creutzmann report)

Proposals to toughen EU rules on customs enforcement of intellectual property rights will be voted on by MEPs. The Greens believe the proposed scope of IP rights is far too wide and that customs officials should only be responsible for addressing trademark and copyright counterfeiting. The group also believes that certain goods in transit should not be subject to the rules, with major concerns about the impact on developing countries' access to generic medicines (not intended for the EU market). Expanding the scope to small items will also hit small consumers and online shoppers.

Sealing ACTA's fate

Tues. 3 July - Plenary debate; vote Weds. (Martin report)

The Greens hope a majority of MEPs endorses the recommendation for the EP to reject the controversial ACTA anti-counterfeiting trade agreement. The group has been active on the treaty since the outset, highlighting problems with the opaque negotiation procedure, as well as serious concerns with the ultimate contents of this far-reaching agreement. The Greens believe it is wrongheaded to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to global intellectual property enforcement and believe the EU should address the deficiencies in its own rules first.

* Press conference Weds. 4 July, 13.00 EP press room

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

Tuesday, 3 July, 10.30-10.50 - Press Conference Room EP, Strasbourg

Promoting rail through better EU rules

Mon. 2 July - Plenary debate; vote Tues. (Serracchiani report)

A legislative agreement on new EU rules on the single European railway area will be voted on by the European Parliament. The Greens broadly welcomed the legislative deal. It provides for strong independent national regulators to guarantee the effective functioning of the European rail sector, as well as ensuring complaints are dealt with in a timely manner. The final deal also includes Green proposals to ensure rail operators have proper choice as regards their energy providers and to reduce noise pollution from freight rail.

European patent and legal contradictions

Tues. 3 July - Debate; vote Weds. (Various reports) - Poss.

Long-stalled legislation on a European patent regime will be voted by MEPs, with the 25 EU governments involved in the enhanced cooperation nearing a compromise. The Greens have long expressed concerns about the proposals, notably plans to give the European Patent Office (an international, non-EU body) the power to grant patents under EU law. Not only is this legally questionable, the EPO also has a record of disregarding EU law, for example by granting patents on life-forms and software in spite of this being explicitly excluded under EU law.

Animal welfare and EU action

Mon. 2 July - Plenary debate; vote Tues. (Paulsen report)

Animal welfare and the EU's regulatory framework will be addressed in a report to be voted on by MEPs. One of the key problems in the EU's approach to animal welfare concerns the failure to implement existing rules, such as on transport times for animals or the ban on battery cages for hens. In addition to improved enforcement, the Greens believe animal transport times should be limited to 8 hours, and that more needs to be done to promote animal welfare standards in trade policy, and to strengthen labelling on animal welfare practices.

Boosting the economy with project bonds

Weds. 4 July - Plenary debate; vote Thurs. (Färm report)

The European Parliament is set to endorse a legislative agreement giving the go-ahead for a pilot phase for EU project bonds for financing energy, transport and telecommunications projects in EU member states. The Greens have supported project bonds since the outset as an important tool for helping to revitalise Europe's flagging economy. Clearly, this scheme is just a drop in the ocean and the group hopes project bonds are adopted permanently and on a much larger scale, with a focus on sustainable projects.

HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED OVERLEAF

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Subverting Schengen: illegal border controls

Weds. 4 July - Plenary debate with Commission/Council

While EU governments are trying to change the rules of the Schengen border-free system with a view to reintroducing border controls (and excluding the EP), internal border controls continue to be only exceptionally allowed under Schengen. Notwithstanding that, national authorities in a number of countries are carrying out de facto controls on their borders with other Schengen members. These stealth border controls (which include standard checks on cross-border buses to Germany and other controls in the Netherlands) are illegal and the Commission should act against them.

Syrian crisis and the EU response

Weds. 4 July - Plenary debate

The alarming situation in Syria has continued to deteriorate as the world has watched on. The Annan Plan was stillborn and the international community has failed to provide any alternative in spite of the rapidly multiplying death toll in Syria. MEPs are set to debate the situation in Syria and the EU's response with the EU foreign policy high representative Cathy Ashton. The Greens have repeatedly called for measures to support the democratic opposition, tougher sanctions against the regime and greater efforts to prevent the arms trade to Assad regime.

Illegal fishing and international flagging rules

Thurs. 5 July - Plenary debate with Commission

Proposed changes to the CITES international convention on endangered species risk opening the door to more illegal fishing. The changes, which concern who is responsible for controlling catches on chartered boats, would create a loophole that could be exploited by unscrupulous sections of the fishing industry to bypass EU and international rules tackling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Unfortunately, EU environment commissioner Potocnik supports the changes. The Greens will be seeking to change his mind before a key CITES meeting at the end of July.

Other EU priorities

Better regulation of investment funds

Tues. 3 July - Commission proposal

The Commission is set to come forward with a series of proposals to revise EU rules on investment funds (so-called UCITS). The Greens believe the EU's rules are in need of thorough overhaul, notably as regards the retail aspects, with a view to strengthening investor protection, addressing misleading product marketing, ensuring proper transparency and promoting sustainable investment products. Regrettably, it seems the Commission is set to focus solely on depositaries and remuneration.

Tackling climate-damaging car emissions

Tues. 3 July - Commission proposal

EU rules limiting CO2 emissions from vehicles include short-term and medium-term (2020) limits. With the short-term limits now being phased-in, the Commission will present proposals aimed at implementing the 2020 limit of 95 g of CO2 per km. The Greens decried the legislation adopted in 2008 for its lack of ambition, which would deliver no improvement beyond business-as-usual. The group believes the 2020 limit should be strengthened. This is technically possible, in the interests of consumers and would help address the gap towards meeting the EU's energy saving target.

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