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News | 08.07.2016

## **Greens/EFA Round up**

### **Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 4-8 July 2016**

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**Energy labels and a common sense A-G system**

*Mon. 4 July – EP debate; votes Weds.*

MEPs voted on proposals to revise EU rules on energy labelling. This review will make the EU's energy label system more simple and easy to understand, shifting to a simple, colour-coded A-G system, instead of the current confusing system (with A+ - A+++ etc.). Unfortunately, the most energy consuming goods will continue with the confusing A+, A++, A+++ labels until around 2030 and household direct electric heating will continue to be excluded from the energy labelling scheme. Further, an opportunity to improve transparency has been missed, with no obligation to inform consumers about the energy consumed by the labelled products when they are advertised.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

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## **Human trafficking and EU external relations**

*Mon. 4 July – EP debate; votes Tues.*

Parliament adopted a report by Green MEP Barbara Lochbihler setting out proposals on how the EU in its external relations can and must do more to address one of the worst forms of human rights violations: trafficking in human beings. With current legislation not being implemented properly - including those elements relating to the support and protection of victims and the prosecution of perpetrators - there is an urgent need to improve the situation. A human-rights and victim's centred approach is needed and victims as well as vulnerable people need to be at the heart of all efforts. The fight against trafficking in human beings requires greater international cooperation including with regard to financial investigations. European companies need to ensure products are free of forced labour along their entire supply chains, labour standards need to be enhanced and workers' rights protected. Safe and legal ways into the EU are necessary to decrease the vulnerability of migrants and refugees and can thereby help prevent trafficking in human beings.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Web article](#)

Further information

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## **UK referendum aftermath**

*Tues. 5 July – EP debate*

Our group believes it is in the interest of all sides that negotiations on implementing the regrettable outcome of the referendum begin as soon as possible. However, the Greens believe it is nobody's interest to take a vindictive approach to this. A large proportion of UK citizens voted to remain in the EU, including two of the four component countries, and the eventual negotiations need to somehow take the view of these voters into account. The EU has been overwhelmingly positive for its citizens and European politicians need to bring the focus of the EU back to delivering stability and prosperity for all. Our group will be focusing on this reboot of the EU.

- [Latest press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Plenary speech by Rebecca Harms \(DE\)](#)

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## **Diverting development aid to military purposes**

*Tues. 5 July – European Commission proposal*

The Commission presented a controversial proposal to transfer EU development aid, earmarked for peace and poverty reduction, towards military projects in third countries in Africa. The Greens/EFA condemned this suggestion as not only morally reprehensible, but very likely illegal. Funds allocated to the Peace and Stability Instrument should be used for civilian conflict prevention and other measures addressing the root causes of conflict via non-military means.

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## **Revising money laundering rules and tackling tax avoidance**

*Tues. 5 July – European Commission proposal*

In response to the Panama Papers revelations, the European Commission presented proposals to update EU rules aimed at preventing money laundering. Of the proposals, the most welcome is the creation of a public

register of beneficial owners for companies and business-type trusts. There is still room for the Commission to be much bolder though, especially on ensuring concrete enforcement of the legislative obligations, and we are calling for stronger protection for the whistleblowers who bring scandals into the open. For a full run down of the proposals, see our recent web-article.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Web article](#)

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## **Controversial EU-Canada trade deal ratification**

*Tues. 5 July – European Commission proposal*

The EU Commission set out its proposal as to how the EU-Canada trade agreement (CETA) should be ratified. In a welcome move, the Commission backtracked on its plans to send CETA to Council as an "EU-only" deal, which would not require national parliaments to ratify the agreement. By-passing the democratic ratification process to fast-track the implementation of this highly controversial agreement would have been a scandal, and it is clear that public pressure has been instrumental in forcing this u-turn. The Greens/EFA group will continue to push for maximum democratic oversight and for the overall agreement to be rejected.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [CETA event - The Citizens' CETA Summit](#)
- [Our latest blogs on TTIP and CETA](#)

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## **Frontex expansion poses serious concerns**

*Tues. 5 July – EP debate; vote Weds.*

The European Parliament voted in favour of a proposal to create a new European border and coast guard, expanding on the current EU FRONTEX border agency. Green/EFA MEPs opposed the proposal, citing major fundamental rights concerns and the risk that Member States which do not want the agency's involvement could be pressurised into accepting it under threat of the reintroduction of border checks in the Schengen area. In addition, the proposal enhances the prospect of participation in returns and missions in third countries, which raises further rights concerns.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

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## **Whistleblower protection: EU rules badly needed**

*Weds. 6 July – EP debate*

MEPs debated the question of whistleblower protection with the Commission, one week to the day after the Lux Leaks whistleblowers were given guilty verdicts. The Lux Leaks case yet again underlined the glaring need for common rules on whistleblower protection. Parliament has called on the EU Commission to propose EU legislation to this end on a number of occasions and there is a clear legal basis for such a framework under the EU Treaties. The Greens/EFA group has outlined a prototype for how such an EU law should look and we are now again urging the Commission to act on this and bring forward a proposal.

- [Consultation on draft whistleblowing directive](#)
- [Web article and plenary speeches](#)

Further information

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## Tax evasion: conclusion of Lux Leaks investigation

*Weds. 6 July – EP debate; vote Wedn.*

The second phase of the EP's inquiry into the 'Lux Leaks' tax avoidance scandal concluded with a report, adopted by parliament's plenary. The report delivers a strong analysis of the problems, including a criticism of those member states that have blocked progress, and clear recommendations on what legislative and policy measures need to be taken. The "unfinished business" of the committee will be taken up by the EP's Panama Papers inquiry. Disappointingly, conservative MEPs united to water down some elements of the draft report - see our web article for more information.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/ES/FR\)](#)
- [Plenary speech – Philippe Lamberts \(FR\)](#)
- [Web article](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

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## Greens/EFA motions for resolution

- [Strategic priorities for the Commission Work Programme 2017](#)
  - [Japan's decision to resume whaling in the 2015-2016 season](#)
  - [Situation of albinos in Africa, notably in Malawi](#)
  - [Myanmar and notably the situation of Rohingyas](#)
  - [The European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other European innovation funds and EU programmes](#)
  - [Bahrain](#)
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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 16 September 2016

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