



Strasbourg Focus - 6/9 July

PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES – GUE/NGL GROUP IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Greece GUE/NGL President - Gabi Zimmer - Germany

The last few weeks have clearly shown that the Euro Group, ECB and IMF creditors are not interested in a viable solution to the debt crisis in Greece. Instead, the creditors want the failed austerity measures, which have pushed Greece into a humanitarian crisis, to continue. A democratically-elected government in the EU is being forced to accept conditions that contradict its alternative policies and which do not offer a way out of the crisis. EU leaders are trying to bring down the Greek government, slowly drive Greece into bankruptcy, and deliberately risk the loss of European citizens' money. EU leaders are openly using one-sided allegations to undermine the reputation of the Greek government. Even the democratic referendum asking the Greeks to be part of an important decision is being used against the Tsipras government. This farce is not only unique, it further undermines EU citizens' trust in the EU and puts the EU's future at risk.



TTIP vote Helmut Scholz - Germany

During the last Plenary the big groups managed to postpone debate and vote on TTIP within the Parliament. At the end, no Member can avoid answering the following questions: will the widespread public opposition to investor-state dispute settlement be respected and the public services, consumer protection and our agriculture be shielded from the interests of large corporations in the transatlantic mega-deal? My group has tabled a range of amendments transporting civil society views into the EP arena. We will stand firm against ISDS and any secret regulatory cooperation council preventing the future advancement of our societies.

EU Neighbourhood Policy Helmut Scholz - Germany

It is largely undisputed that the current EU neighbourhood policy has failed. There is no stability, security and prosperity. Intensifying internal conflicts, disintegrating state structures or corrupt "partner" elites characterize the situation. In the search for a way out of this situation, the rapporteur unfortunately avoids a clear in-depth analysis and therefore remains limited to cosmetic improvements. Stability and prosperity in the EU neighbourhood can only be achieved if the countries in question find the EU to be a partner who assists them to develop their societies in a self-reliant way instead of imposing "European" concepts.



Middle East Peace Process Martina Anderson - Ireland

Israel is not committed to a just resolution to the conflict. We know this from the comments made by Prime Minister Netanyahu during the Israeli General Election when he dismissed the two-state solution. Today Israel profits from the occupation. We need to create a situation where the occupation costs Israel. The EU can do this by suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement, by introducing guidelines on labelling of settlement products or introducing sanctions on Israel. It's a question of political will.



Resource Efficiency Kateřina Konečná - Czech Republic

We will be voting the long-awaited report by Finnish MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen on Resource Efficiency: Towards a Circulatory Economy. I am really glad that we have moved forward a little after the Commission's rash withdrawal of the original waste package proposal. I really hope that based on our proposal the Commission will come up with a directive that will move us to a better use of resources and reduction of unnecessary waste. Although this is only a non-binding resolution, the Committee with a vast majority of 56 votes has given the Commission a clear signal that we demand a well-developed in-depth proposal. Our GUE/NGL ENVI members tabled many amendments to this draft report, a lot of them covered by 36 compromises supported by all political groups and some of them were adopted during the vote. Therefore I welcome the final outcome of the proceedings.



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Green Employment Initiative Lynn Boylan - Ireland

As we make the necessary transition to a clean green economy we must ensure that governments guarantee the full and targeted involvement of workers, including workers dislocated from declining polluting industries and also in the new sectors. Any successful just transition to preserve and protect our environment must include a buy-in from the workers involved to ensure we deliver for both the climate and the workforce.



Commission Work Programme 2016 Martina Michels - Germany

The European Commission failed to adequately assess the root causes of the current multi-level crisis. Europe 2020 continues and combines austerity-oriented policies with a more radical privatisation programme like ESFI. We know all the results and they are especially evident in Greece: growing unemployment, poverty, deep wage cuts, a higher pensionable age, and lower public spending for education, culture, health etc.. The Commission's weakness is that it has not produced a work programme for a modern idea of a democratic and sustainable social Europe based on peace.



Commission Work Programme 2016 Inês Zuber - Portugal

We reaffirm that debt has been the pretext for the imposition of austerity measures, the real consequences of which are increased poverty and debt. To face the debt burden we demand the renegotiation (restructuring and substantially reducing) of debt, bringing it to sustainable levels, as a matter of urgency and elementary justice. Unfortunately the majority of the EP is not in favour.



EU-Cuba Relations Javier Couso - Spain

Cuba deserves respect. It is important to highlight that Cuba has only reacted to foreign powers' policies when it found space for dialogue between equals. After the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the US, a normal development will lead to the derogation of the EU's common policy and the recognition of its failure. In this case, respect for the sovereignty of peoples is a big lesson that should be taken into account in other cases.



Employment Guidelines Neoklis Sylikiotis - Cyprus

The GUE/NGL position on the Employment Guidelines is that workers' rights and decent work, labour standards and adequate social protection should be safeguarded. Some of our Group's amendments were included in the Agea report, which we consider generally-speaking to be better than the Commissions' proposal. On the other hand, suggestions that Member States should convert unemployment benefits into grants for starting a business, as well as the promotion of entrepreneurship in the social care sector, are very worrying.

GUE/NGL PRESS BRIEFING: Tuesday 07/07/2015 14h30 Press room EP,
Dimitris Papadimoulis, Gabi Zimmer - **Situation in Greece.**



Solidarity with Greece !



GUE/NGL PRESS CONFERENCE: Wednesday 08/07/2015 15h00 Press room EP,
Eleonora FORENZA, Helmut SCHOLZ, Lola SÁNCHEZ CALDENTEY, Anne-Marie MINEUR on "**A reinforced STOP TTIP campaign**"