



**PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES**

**26-29 October 2015**



**European Council Conclusions** Gabi Zimmer, GUE/NGL President, Germany

We call for an urgent change in the direction of EU policy on refugees. The Council wants to put up more walls around Fortress Europe and keep turning desperate people away from Europe by force. It has agreed to develop an action plan with Turkey with the aim of keeping refugees there, instead of respecting their rights to individual examinations for international protection and asylum. We cannot accept a dirty deal with Erdoğan. He wants the EU to turn a blind eye to his war on the Kurdish people, while the EU gives him funding to take in refugees. We call for an immediate end to Erdoğan's war on the Kurdish people. The EU needs safe and legal pathways for refugees, a relocation mechanism based on solidarity and member states' economic capacities, as well as refugees' individual needs.



**GMOs** Lynn Boylan, Ireland

The proposal from the Commission on GMOs was a complete cop-out. President Juncker has completely dodged the commitments he made as a candidate for presidency to correct the lack of democracy which currently exists in decision-making for GMOs in the EU. The Environment Committee rightly voted down this half-baked proposal but it is now time for Juncker to make good on his promise and make one which delivers what is necessary.

**Novel Foods** Lynn Boylan, Ireland

Citizens have very legitimate concerns regarding the effects novel foods will have on their health and the environment. In particular, the effects of the use of very new technologies such as engineered nano-materials being used in food for consumption remain largely unknown. I believe that the precautionary principle should always be used for food safety issues. I am disappointed that coming out of this proposal, the Commission will not be obliged to seek a second opinion from EFSA.



**European Structural and Investment Funds** Martina Anderson - Ireland

European Structural and Investment funding is a vital solidarity tool providing important investment support to regional and local communities. It is disconcerting to see the introduction of a mechanism that turns this funding into an instrument of austerity, allowing the suspension or reprogramming of funds to regional and local authorities for budgetary issues at a national level. This mechanism should not be used, and we have tabled a resolution criticising the mechanism, as well as the undemocratic way it was imposed, and calling for its removal.



**Commission work Programme 2016** Inês Zuber - Portugal

The Commission Work Programme, as proposed, continues the path towards the deepening of the economic and social crisis whilst maintaining the failure in the accurate identification of its root causes, as it persists in the implementation of neo-liberal and austerity oriented policies. A rupture with these policies is mandatory, and the work programme should be oriented, amongst others, to the revocation of the economic governance legislation and the EMU framework.

**GUE/NGL Press Briefing, Tuesday 27 Oct at 14.30 in EP Press Room**  
**Gabi Zimmer - European Council Conclusions; Lynn Boylan - GMOs;**  
**Marisa Matias - European single market for electronic communications**

For more information please contact: Gay Kavanagh +32473842320, Gianfranco Battistini +32475646628

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**National Emissions Ceilings Directive** **Kateřina Konečná - Czech Republic**

The Parliament will vote on the revision of the National Emission Ceilings Directive this plenary. In the light of VW emission scandal, this legislation is more important than ever. This directive is crucial for air quality in our cities because it will oblige national policies to reduce air pollution. Quality of air and air pollution is the most important health problem in the EU. The revised directive puts controls on different types of air pollution in each member state. Its goal is to cut the number of premature deaths caused by air pollution by half by 2030. National ceilings for six pollutants (sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, ammonia, methane, particulate matter and non-methane volatile organic compounds) were set for countries to reach by 2030. The ENVI committee added mercury to the list of pollutants and introduced fully binding targets for the reduction of pollutants to 2025, with the exception of methane. The proposed EP report is stronger and more ambitious than the Commission's proposal and GUE/NGL will support it.



**Reform of EU electoral law** **Helmut Scholz - Germany**

With this Report the EP intends to use its right of initiative to reform European electoral law aiming for a better democratic legitimation. "It should be fair within Europe" declares one of the rapporteurs who is not willing to accept that the German Federal Constitutional Court simply prohibits an electoral threshold for the European elections. This should be now corrected for Germany by changing the European Elections Act and similarly also for Spain. The obvious calculation is that many will not be affected and agree; Federal Constitutional Courts can hardly oppose "European" law and Germany will not block the innovations in the Council. The EP should not be instrumentalised by the German grand coalition. If it works once, it will always work: not for our group.



**European single market for electronic communications** **Marisa Matias - Portugal**

The agreement that we will be voting threw out two of the main issues: roaming and the most important of all – net neutrality. Internet is definitely a common good, a fundamental right. All citizens must have access to it without discrimination, the same way they can travel on roads that were built centuries ago to connect people. We need to save net neutrality.

**Information exchange in the field of taxation** **Marisa Matias - Portugal**

I welcome that the report is more ambitious than the Commission and especially the Council. The Parliament sends a clear signal to the member states that people will no longer accept secret tax deals to the benefit of multinationals. In this regard I call on my MEP colleagues from other groups to support our amendments to make all tax rulings fully transparent and not to hide behind so-called tax secrecy.

**European Semester** **Marisa Matias - Portugal**

Despite all the compromises to incorporate the different visions and proposals, there is still a really thick line dividing us: austerity as a rule. We need solidarity not austerity. We need to stop treating deficits as sinners and surpluses as righteous. Surplus is not a naturally positive dimension. We cannot accept that workers, once again, have to pay the costs.

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