



PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

1-4 February 2016



February Council - Brexit & Refugees Gabi Zimmer, GUE/NGL President, Germany

Concerning the UK's plan for an in/out referendum, we defend the right of the British people to decide if they want to be member of the EU or not. But we oppose Prime Minister Cameron's attempt to use this as leverage to weaken social standards in free movement and to make migrants the scapegoats for his disastrous austerity policies. On refugee policy, the EU heads of state and government must make the long overdue shift to a common humanitarian reception policy with safe routes for refugees. Blaming Greece and the threat to exclude it from Schengen is just another shabby political move to distract from the EU's failure.



Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) Stelios Kouloglou - Greece

The TiSA Agreement currently negotiated outside the WTO structures by 52 WTO Members, including the EU on behalf of the 28 EU member states, is aiming to further liberalise services beyond GATS rules. The European Parliament will adopt its recommendations for the EU Commission to negotiate within the plurilateral TiSA negotiations, which the GUE/NGL opposes. According to the current mandate, TiSA will boost the liberalisation of services; open an opportunity to undermine the right of states to regulate; limit equal chances for mutual market access of SMEs under local and regional authorities; and call into question the quality of jobs. Our demands include: to limit the scope of TiSA; the exclusion of any standstill and ratchet clauses; social rights for development; protection of the environment; data protection and right to privacy; and an equal multilateral negotiated status for all WTO Member States with their legitimate interests to be included and guaranteed.



Corporate Tax Package Fabio De Masi - Germany

The Commission cannot claim to lead the international fight against corporate tax dodging. This package will not bite against the profit shifting business. On transparency, there is nothing new and the proposed anti-BEPS (Base Erosion and Profit Shifting) measures are largely disappointing. Even the OECD recommended stricter rules. In particular the EU's own gigantic tax havens will be able to continue with business as usual.



New strategy for gender equality post-2015 Malin Björk - Sweden

It is scandalous that the European Commission is rejecting the EP's and Council's demand for a new gender equality strategy (2016-2020) aimed at creating equality and ending all kinds of discrimination. A staff working document can never replace a serious and political strategy at EU level that would set concrete objectives and ask commitments from the member states to combat gender inequalities in all areas.



Financing the refugee facility for Turkey Takis Hadjigeorgiou - Cyprus

The EU has agreed with Turkey to finance its refugee facilities to the tune of 3bn euros, while at the same time Turkey is not doing what is necessary to ease the refugee crisis. The agreement does not take into consideration the terrible situation that is evolving in the South Eastern region of Turkey with the curfew and the killing of innocent Kurds. Turkey is also overlooking the ongoing occupation of Cyprus and Turkey's obligations vis-à-vis the EU on the subject of the Cyprus issue. The EU should focus on the root causes that brought about the refugee crisis by terminating the ongoing wars in the region for which the EU and member states are not blameless.

GUE/NGL Press Briefing: Tuesday 02/02/2016 @ 14:30, EP Press Room

European Council of 18 & 19 February; Recommendations on TiSA; Corporate Tax Package.

Participating MEPs: Gabi Zimmer, Stelios Kouloglou and Fabio De Masi.

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Respect for the international principle of non-refoulement Marina Albiol - Spain

Non-refoulement is a principle enshrined in international refugee law, and present in the UN's Conventions Relating to the Status of Refugees and Against Torture. But for years governments, such as the Spanish government, have refused to comply, hindering the effective right to asylum and strengthening borders, which have become impenetrable to those fleeing wars and conflicts which have been fuelled from the West. If the EU wants to be a human rights reference, then it must guarantee that these rights are respected on our own borders.



ECB Annual Report 2014 Matt Carthy - Ireland

I will be voting against this report as, while it contained some progressive provisions, the text was watered down due to political interference and what can only be described as politicking. Moreover, the ECB is based on the idea of deepening the power of supranational bodies and its whole aim and intention is to move political power further away from the people. This undemocratic interference is simply unacceptable.



Situation in Venezuela Javier Couso - Spain

We are very concerned about the tense situation in Venezuela. The opposition seems to forget it has won the legislative election, not the presidential one, so it should be aware of the role the Constitution gives to the President, which was obtained by the same democratic legitimacy. The GUE/NGL group calls for mutual respect and asks the opposition to put a stop to destabilizing the agenda it has embraced during the past months.

Situation in Libya Javier Couso - Spain

We regret the situation of political and social chaos in Libya since 2011 and we reject any kind of new military intervention. We are concerned about recent statements by the Secretary General of NATO saying that the Command of the US military forces in Africa (AFRICOM) is ready to intervene in the country. We stand for dialogue and sovereignty to end this unstable situation and the need to include all parties (excluding terrorist groups).

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