

European United Left • Nordic Green Left



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

**GUE/NGL**

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# **Our Work Your Voice**

**The Left in the European Parliament**

**2014-2016**





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In the last European elections in 2014, millions of European citizens voted for our 52 MEPs and our member parties to make their voices heard and have their interests represented in the European Union. This booklet showcases our work and our activities in the European Parliament during the first half of the eighth legislature. Not every issue, action and achievement was big enough to have been covered by the media. Nonetheless, they are a crucial part of our work and our mission in the

Parliament as they affect you as European citizens. Every vote that we win, every success in committees and delegations of the Parliament that we make against a conservative, right-wing majority is a small but important victory for progressive and social policies.

In Dimitrios Papadimoulis, we have a Vice-President of the European Parliament who represents GUE/NGL in the Parliament's Bureau. By holding this office, he serves this institution and the citizens of the European Union, by respecting and promoting the founding ideas and principles of participation, transparency and democratic accountability. His main duties are gender equality and diversity, the European trade unions, the Council of Europe and the Inter-Parliamentary Union as well as the information and communication policy of the European Parliament.

As the left group in the Parliament, we try to give voice to the people and organisations that are often excluded or marginalised in the decision-making process as they are not backed by big businesses. We also need the knowledge and experiences of extra-parliamentary forces and groups in order to keep our feet planted firmly on the ground. Therefore, we base our policies and our work on open discussions, exchange of views and debates with citizens, experts, NGOs, trade unionists, social movements, feminist groups, communities and elected representatives at different levels.

The GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament has a long-standing tradition of hosting civil society to present their opinions inside the Parliament. We want to exchange ideas, participate in open dialogue and debates. With our initiatives we provide a platform for society and to have the conversations we need, to fight for another, more progressive and peaceful, Europe.

Gabi Zimmer  
President of GUE/NGL



## Refugees and Migration

Wars, persecution, climate change and poverty have driven more people from their homes than at any time before in history. The UNHCR estimates that 65 million people are currently displaced. Our MEPs have condemned the response of the EU and most member states which have been applying multiple measures to prevent refugees and migrants from entering Europe, denying them the right to access international protection and returning them. We believe Europe has a historical duty to develop a comprehensive and reasonable migration policy which promotes human rights and is based on the free movement of individuals.

Our group has been at the forefront of providing a platform for the voices of the growing movement of citizens, NGOs and local authorities across Europe who have also been standing up for the rights of refugees and migrants, providing practical support and helping them to be heard by European policy-makers.



Our MEPs went to Greece (Idomeni, Athens, Lesbos), Italy (Lampedusa, Sicily) and France (Calais) on several occasions to observe the situation relating to the reception of refugees and migrants and respect for their fundamental rights. The MEPs also visited northern Greece, FYROM, Serbia and Croatia where they witnessed the situation on the 'Western Balkans route' before it was shut down.

Delegations to third countries were also organised to better understand the situation there. A delegation to Jordan enabled MEPs to see for themselves the increasing poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities faced by Syrian refugees in third countries. Meanwhile, a delegation to Turkey presented MEPs a chance



to witness the conditions in detention centres for people returned from Greece to Turkey, and the precarious situation of refugees in Turkey in general. They also listened to first-hand testimonies from refugees who had been shot at by Turkish military police at the Syrian-Turkish border. Meanwhile, a delegation to Sudan enabled MEPs to further investigate the externalisation of EU border control to third countries.

Our delegations visited refugee camps, reception and detention centres, and locations where refugees arrived in and transited across countries. They held meetings with activists, volunteers, refugees, NGO representatives, emergency workers, social workers, immigration ministers, border and coast guard officials, United Nations representatives and human rights lawyers.

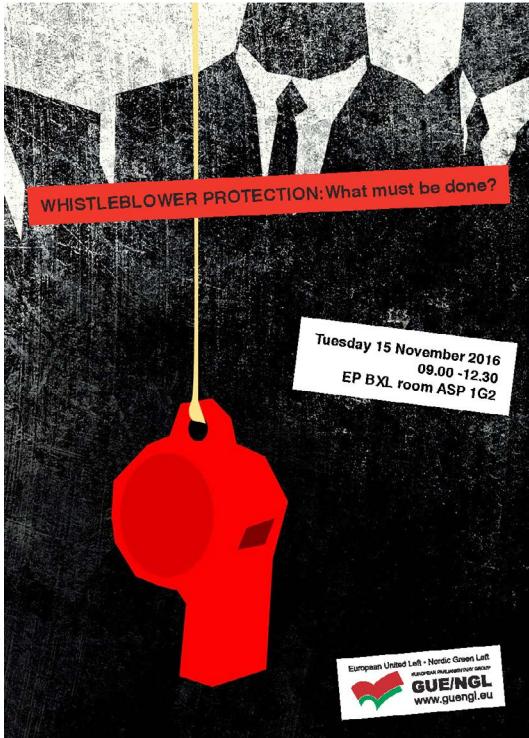
At both committee and plenary levels, our MEPs used their findings from these trips to put serious violations of refugees' and migrants' human rights on the European Parliament's agenda. They also relayed their findings to journalists and the public in order to hold the EU and member state decision-makers behind these contemporary migration policies accountable for their actions and abuses.

In the Parliament, our group succeeded in having Malin Björk MEP appointed as the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs' (LIBE) Rapporteur for the new EU resettlement framework proposal which had been presented by the Commission back in July 2016. This report is key to ensuring that the EU and its member states will substantially improve the quality of their resettlement programme and increase the number of refugees being resettled in Europe.

## Champion for Justice

In May 2016, Martina Anderson was successful in steering an in-depth opinion through the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee. The opinion addressed the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the European Union. It was overwhelmingly supported and incorporated into the final report which was adopted in plenary.

In October 2016, Rapporteur Dennis De Jong succeeded in getting the Parliament to pass a report proposing a 'directive of the European Parliament



## Carers in Europe

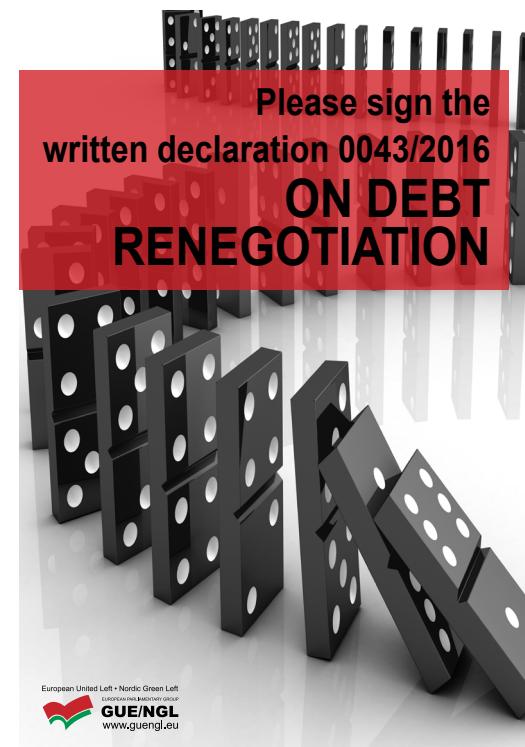


and of the Council on provisional legal aid for suspects or accused persons deprived of liberty and legal aid in European arrest warrant proceedings'. The directive guarantees legal aid from the time of questioning by authorities; provisional and ordinary legal aid in all circumstances; limits to the recovery of costs; and sharpening the quality requirements of the legal aid afforded.

A Delegation of MEPs from the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) including Takis Hadjigeorgiou, Marie-Christine Vergiat and Miguel Urbán visited southeastern Turkey in March 2016 to urge the Governor of Diyarbakir to release people who had

been trapped in the district of Sur, including many women and children. Previously, Sur in Diyarbakir had for months been under curfew and sustained heavy attacks by the Turkish military and police.

Our MEPs stand in solidarity with and in defence of progressive and democratic processes in Latin America as well as the achievements reached in various countries by progressive and left governments. We support the peoples' and the workers' struggles in this region for democracy, achieving better political, economic, social and cultural rights and opposing any imperialist or neo-colonialist external intervention



## RESISTANCE AND UNITY Solidarity with Latin America and defence of ALBA



Muntpunkt,  
Muntplein 6,  
Place de la Monnaie - 1000 Brussels



against the sovereignty of the countries. We stand for the end of the blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and the end of the 1996 Common Position from the EU. We stand against the recent military and institutional coups d'état in Latin America with imperialist help. We actively supported the peace process in Colombia and we also stand for the defence of the rights of indigenous people for access to the land, as well as the environment and better conditions for their people and country.

## International Solidarity

GUE/NGL group commits to a genuine development policy and peaceful international cooperation. The current military approaches to conflicts or areas of emigration jeopardise peaceful solutions and sustainable development policies; as well as the interpretations of the EU's treaties – such as Article 41(2) of the Lisbon Treaty – and EU instruments regarding the use of EU budget and EU development funds for military purposes (for example in Africa).

For our group, this scandalous trend is unacceptable. Similarly, we denounce the 'ATHENA mechanism' that promotes joint financing of military operations - decided without any parliamentary scrutiny.

In international development, GUE/NGL MEPs made significant impact in three key areas: the Sustainable Development Agenda, the future of EU development

policy and policy coherence for development. We believe that all external policies are interlinked and in order to be coherent, they should be aligned with sustainable development goals.

Our MEPs have fought for a trade policy that is consistent with sustainable development. They successfully introduced into debates the principle of respect for a country's freedom to decide on its

own policies to eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and boost sustainable development. Our group reaffirms the right of developing countries to regulate investment to ensure obligations and duties for all investors whilst guaranteeing countries' sovereign space to regulate. Through our amendments, we stressed the importance of development effectiveness principles (ownership, alignment, harmonisation, mutual accountability, managing for results) and gender equality.

We called on the EU and member states to reform their own tax laws and to promote binding measures



to ensure European companies making profits in developing countries pay fair taxes in those countries. We constantly work with experts and campaigners for a legally binding international framework to hold companies accountable for violations abroad.

GUE/NGL MEPs have advocated for an alignment of global value chains and trade policies with the highest social and environmental standards with respect to the promotion of human rights and people's dignity. We have focused particularly on the sustainability of the garment sector value chain. In addition, we have underlined the risks of public-private partnerships and their negative impact on development. Our MEPs strongly criticised industrial agriculture – including the so-called 'Green Revolution' – and appealed for more support for smallholders and family farming through the sustainable increase of diversified food production by means of agro-ecological practices. Our group succeeded in introducing the concept of food sovereignty and reiterated our opposition to, and rejection of, GMO crops in Africa as we believe they create dependency and challenge food sovereignty.



GUE/NGL MEPs have consistently opposed any attempt to link development aid to border control, management of migratory flows or readmission agreements. We believe that only through a coherent framework amongst all of our external actions can we achieve a fairer world where no one is left behind, and where human rights and citizens' dignity are fulfilled.

The crisis in Ukraine, the instability and wars in the Middle East, as well as the current policy of the European Union at its external borders are clear examples of the need for an alternative EU Neighbourhood Policy that is truly orientated towards its self-proclaimed purpose of being a policy of peace and understanding.

GUE/NGL rejects external military interventions in sovereign countries. In December 2015, GUE/NGL organised a two-day peace conference focusing on the EU's



## 12th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE THE EUROPEAN UNION, TURKEY, AND THE KURDS



26-27 JANUARY 2016 • ROOM ASP 1G2  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BRUSSELS



NATO and other military bases. The protection and defence of human rights are regularly used as a pretext for military intervention in other countries that conceals the economic and geopolitical interests of the EU and the US. We will keep working tirelessly for the strengthening of the international arms export control regime.

In order to address the critical need for building peace and global disarmament including nuclear disarmament, GUE/NGL organised a peace and anti-NATO conference in June 2016 ahead of the NATO summit in Warsaw a month later. The conference brought together high-level participants including MEPs, political leaders, journalists, academics, stakeholders and experts from all over the world. The



Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its aim was to formulate alternative proposals for the ENP from a leftist perspective. Left parties, extra-parliamentary social and peace movements from the various Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood countries attended. To this end, GUE/NGL will continue to work in view of a shift towards a peaceful and emancipatory EU Neighbourhood Policy.

GUE/NGL has intervened in demanding the dissolution of political-military blocs such as NATO; to reject the Common Security and Defence Policy; and to reject the European Defence Union. GUE/NGL is committed to an exclusively civilian and peaceful EU foreign policy and we reject the deployment of all military forces. We therefore call for the abolishment of all

two-day gathering was an opportunity to have a critical debate on NATO's expansion policy, and to discuss potential solutions for demilitarisation. The peace conference concluded with all participants sending a clear message of protest to 'the brothers-in-arms' (NATO and the EU) along with leftist alternative proposals for building peace.

GUE/NGL has denounced the attempts by the current regime in Kiev to ban the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU). GUE/NGL stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and in particular with the KPU.

We fight hard for: balanced economic relations, fair trade and fair distribution of wealth and resources in the EU's

PE CE Conference

W R

**Peace in Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood**

THURSDAY      FRIDAY  
10/12/2015    11/12/2015  
15H00-20H00    09H30-12H00  
Room ASP 1 G2  
European Parliament

European United Left - Nordic Green Left  
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Registration: sabine.leesing@ep.europa.eu  
Livestream: guengLeu

**SUPPLIES FOR LIFE IN PALESTINE:  
ENERGY, WATER AND HEALTH**

Wednesday 25 May  
16.00 - 18.30  
EP BXL room ASP 1G2

European United Left - Nordic Green Left  
**GUE/NGL**  
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neighbourhood and the rest of the world; and due implementation of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially on poverty eradication, humanitarian aid and sustainable economic and social development.

GUE/NGL stands for another Europe: a Europe of cooperation and sovereign states with equal rights, and of progress and peace. A Europe of solidarity with all countries and peoples around the world. We stand firmly with Palestinians, Kurds, Sahrawis and the peoples of Latin America in their struggles for justice. This solidarity is based on the principles of self-determination, sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, peace, rights, social progress, friendship and cooperation.



Throughout this period, GUE/NGL MEPs have stood firm against undemocratic neoliberal trade agreements that would give unprecedented powers to multinational corporations. They have been an ongoing force of resistance against the European Commission's proposed agreements with multiple countries including the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Comprehensive Economic

and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA). Our MEPs have also stood up against the Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism (ISDS) and Investment Court System (ICS) in these agreements, which would allow multinational companies to sue governments if their investments in a signatory country do not achieve their expected level of profit.

In the European Parliament, our MEPs have actively taken part in the negotiations on a resolution with safeguards and benchmarks to oppose the negative impact of the TTIP and TiSA agreements. They have also led opinions from committees



against these agreements and have pushed strongly for a real parliamentary debate on CETA, which was denied by the largest groups in the Parliament.

GUE/NGL has hosted several events in the Parliament to further dialogue with important actors in trade and influence public debate over these agreements. In addition, we have worked with local, regional and national government representatives as well NGOs, trade unions and campaigners to coordinate and strengthen the growing movement of millions of citizens around the world who stand against these agreements.

In May 2015, the Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI) adopted an opinion on recommendations to the Commission on the negotiations for TTIP. The majority of GUE/NGL amendments were adopted including a demand for the Commission to be more transparent in the negotiations; a defence of the precautionary principle during negotiations as fundamental to the EU's environmental, health and consumer protection policy; and opposition to the inclusion of an Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism. The amendments approved changed the text of the opinion to the point that the right-wing Rapporteur withdrew his name from it.

At a time when the EU is negotiating an unprecedented number of free trade agreements, our group has worked in parallel to the European institutions with relevant external organisations on the development and reinforcement of left-wing alternative approaches to international trade based on the principles of fair trade, cooperation, solidarity, social rights, and respect for the environment and freedom of movement.

In July 2016, Eleonora Forenza MEP was the Committee for International Trade's (INTA) Rapporteur for an own-initiative report on the 'Implementation of the 2010

recommendations of Parliament on social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility'. The report, which was adopted by the Parliament, called for legally binding human rights, social and environmental standards in the EU's international trade agreements, as well as gender assessments before and after their implementation. The resolution adopted with the report also called for the European Commission to act within the World Trade Organisation to promote the setting of enforceable rules for the sustainable management of global supply chains by multinational companies. In addition, it insisted that countries signing trade agreements with the EU must also ratify and implement the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) core labour conventions, as well as reasserting the need to maintain and strengthen the role of the ILO in



international trade agreement negotiations. It also called for full transparency in the negotiations, which in practice remains absent in the ongoing negotiations on agreements such as TTIP, CETA and TiSA. Throughout this period, GUE/NGL MEPs have taken a strong stance on EU regulation for conflict minerals. This regulation aims to stop the financing of armed groups in developing countries through the trade of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold. It also requires companies to report on the sources of minerals and metals imported into the EU. Throughout the negotiations, GUE/NGL MEPs played an important role in rejecting the Commission's proposal which would have only required reporting on a limited number of minerals that was not mandatory for the entire production chain - in favour of the more complete and binding system that has since been negotiated with the Council.

During the first half of this legislature, GUE/NGL MEPs have been strongly involved in the development of the United Nations' treaty on business and human rights. The treaty aims to overcome the lack of international law to control multinational companies and to provide access to justice for those affected by their operations and human rights violations. Both inside the European Parliament and in several other forums including United Nations meetings, GUE/NGL MEPs have

pushed hard for a binding treaty while many government representatives - including official EU delegates - and big business lobbies have strongly resisted the development of such a treaty. In solidarity with African and other Southern countries, GUE/NGL MEPs have resisted the European Union's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states, as well as the EU's proposed free trade agreements with Tunisia and Morocco. These EPAs help to impose neoliberal economic programmes on the partner countries, undermine development efforts and prevent real economic sovereignty in these states. By contrast, our MEPs have consistently stood up for fair trade that facilitates economic and social development, and for reinforcing cooperation with these countries.

Our MEPs have long stood against the importation of products from occupied countries (such as Palestine and Western Sahara) and have called for mandatory origin labelling as a minimum measure.

In June 2016, Rapporteur Martina Anderson's report on the signing and ratification of the World Health Organisation's Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products passed with overwhelming support by the Parliament. The report pushed the EU to sign and ratify the protocol which aims to eliminate the illicit trade in tobacco products and complements the work done by Anderson on the Tobacco Products Directive in the last legislature.

Throughout the current legislature, our MEPs have also prioritised the fight against the production and distribution of new psychoactive substances, or so-called legal highs. This included a visit to China to assess its production and distribution of these substances and shadowing the passing of control measures for several of these products in the European Parliament throughout 2015 and 2016, most notably in October 2016 when four such substances were subjected to control measures.



## Workers' Rights

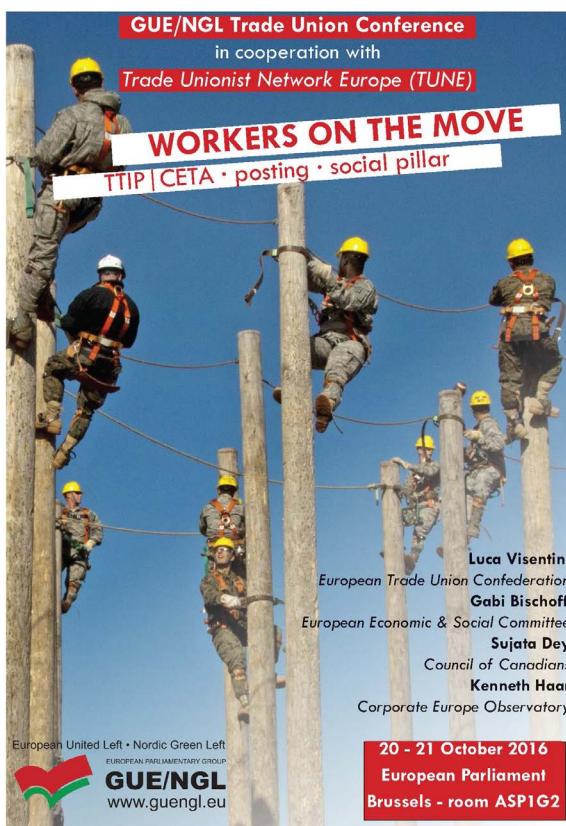
Undeclared work has increased during the economic crisis due to austerity policies and deregulation. This deprives workers of social protection, threatens health and safety, and lowers labour standards. In addition, it undermines our public finances and social security systems. The decision to establish a European platform to enhance cooperation in the prevention and deterrence of undeclared work is, therefore, an important step forward in the fight against social dumping and the erosion of social and labour rights in the EU. GUE/NGL also proactively worked to include discussions of falsely declared work such as bogus self-employment and the participation of trade unions within the platform.

The regulation on EURES (European Network of Employment services) was revised with the purpose of reducing unemployment in the EU. Instead of promoting the Commission's idea of 'balancing' labour markets between different countries via mobility, its main principle now supports fair and voluntary labour mobility - as advocated by GUE/NGL. Through our initiative, social partners have

been included in the EURES network at European and national levels. Cross-border partnerships now have better recognition, in particular workers who commute daily across borders.

A GUE/NGL own initiative report on reducing inequalities with a special focus on child poverty showed how austerity measures led to increased poverty. The report by MEP Inês Zuber states that this multidimensional problem needs multidimensional answers – not limited to child support funds – sustained by public, free and universal education, healthcare and social security in addition to secure employment conditions and support for parents.

In an opinion to a report on 'Poverty: a Gender Perspective', GUE/NGL MEP Lynn Boylan



proposed the idea of paid leave from work for people who are experiencing domestic violence. It highlighted the urgent need to combat domestic violence, and called on the Commission and member states to look at introducing a system of paid leave for victims and survivors of this crime. This was the first time the European Parliament had endorsed such a position, and helped to ensure that victims' employment and economic independence are equally protected.

The European Parliament's comprehensive report on social dumping in the EU is the first of its kind to tackle the phenomenon. It included a catalogue of proposals and recommendations to combat social dumping and enforce social protection in the EU. GUE/NGL

worked hard to ensure the report included a call on the Commission and member states to promote collective agreements and to accept the principle of equal pay for equal work in the same workplace.

In November 2016, GUE/NGL organised a two-day conference in cooperation with TUNE (Trade Unionist Network Europe) which addressed current challenges for workers, among them the Posted Workers Directive, the European Pillar of Social Rights, free trade agreements and more.

In February 2016, GUE/NGL held the 'Regaining Ground' event in Brussels to discuss the consequences of austerity on collective bargaining and the fight to protect this system.

## Rencontre REALPE: emploi, droits sociaux et solidarité dans les municipalités



## Gender Equality

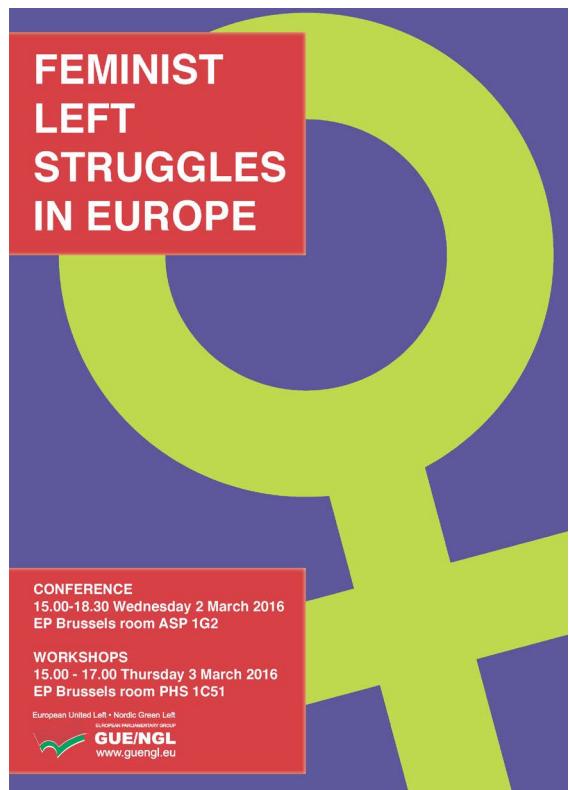


In April 2016, the European Parliament adopted a report by GUE/NGL Rapporteur Kostadinka Kuneva, on women domestic workers and carers in the EU. The report called on the EU to recognise the employment and social rights of domestic workers and carers and demanded the elimination of numerous forms of discrimination that domestic workers and carers suffer from.

Our MEPs further developed their links with feminist movements in Europe to work together to achieve the rights of women and girls. At the request of GUE/NGL,

the situation of women in Poland was put on the plenary agenda in October 2016. GUE/NGL MEPs strongly condemned the Polish government's approach to abortion and the impact of their approach on women's fundamental rights. We organised a cross-party press conference in conjunction with the ALL OF US network and invited Polish feminist activists to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. The proposal for a total ban on abortion was eventually rejected, but the struggle goes on as the conservative government in Poland is still planning to present new proposals on abortion and other areas of sexual and reproductive rights.

Thanks to the proactive and dedicated work of the GUE/NGL MEPs on the FEMM Committee over many years - and in close cooperation with committed forces inside the Parliament and women's rights



**FEMINIST  
LEFT  
STRUGGLES  
IN EUROPE**

CONFERENCE  
15.00-18.30 Wednesday 2 March 2016  
EP Brussels room ASP 1G2

WORKSHOPS  
15.00 - 17.00 Thursday 3 March 2016  
EP Brussels room PHS 1C51

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organisations all around Europe – the European Commission finally took the step in March 2016 of the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women. This will be finalised during 2017. GUE/NGL welcomes this but will in every event related to combating violence against women continually call for a comprehensive legal framework at EU level.

The GUE/NGL group has strongly condemned the fact that the Commission removed both the proposal to revise the directive on maternity and our subsequent demand for a new directive on maternity leave, parental leave and paternity leave which would increase the rights of all parents and provide better protection for women in the labour market. Our MEPs stress that the slow progress towards equal pay in Europe has lifelong consequences for the women and girls of today. The gender gap in wages produces an even greater gender gap in pensions and leads to poverty for many women in the later stages of their lives. We want to eliminate all forms of precarious work and strongly condemn the austerity policies that lead to the feminisation of poverty.

Gender equality and women's rights have also been recognised by the Committee on Development in all its work and GUE/NGL helped put forward concrete proposals towards the EU Gender Action Plan and its implementation. Our group demanded more efforts to increase women's access to health and health education, family planning, prenatal care and sexual health. Also included was reproductive health primarily to address the largely unachieved Millennium Development Goal 5 on maternal health. Furthermore, our MEPs have emphasised the importance of access to health care and universal coverage, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.

For the GUE/NGL group, it is very important to acknowledge the gender dimension of immigration. Thanks to our efforts, the European Parliament adopted a progressive report on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU. We believe that policies and legislation on migration and asylum should be gender sensitive and reflect the fact that migration affects women and men differently. Unfortunately, migrant women are affected by multiple compounding issues including racism, gender insensitive migration policies, lack of family support, cultural exclusion and legal, economic and communication barriers. For example, when a migrant woman experiences violence against women this is exacerbated by the other issues she faces. GUE/NGL believes that protection of the dignity, integrity and privacy of migrant women throughout the process of immigration, asylum and integration are paramount in fulfilling all the human rights of migrant women.



## Financial Regulation and Tax Justice



In the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON), our group often faces an uphill battle against neoliberal austerity policies such as the European Semester, a new wave of financial market deregulation, a deepening of the internal market's competitiveness agenda and the spread of public-private partnerships as a substitute for public investments. Our role in these areas revolves around shedding light on those developments for the public and presenting a clear alternative view to the political mainstream.

**TAX JUSTICE**  
**FIGHTING CORPORATE TAX DUMPING & TAXING WEALTH**

ADMINISTRATION DES CONTRIBUTIONS  
SERVICE D'IMPOSITION BUREAU SOCIETES

TUESDAY 21 APRIL #luxleaks

EP BXL 9:00-12:30 ASP 1G2 & 14:00-17:30 PHS 7C050

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In the work of the LuxLeaks special committees and the Panama Papers inquiry committee, we managed to bring the scandalous extent of tax dodging and money-laundering to the forefront of the public debate in the EU. In this context, we have been instrumental in pushing for a stronger European Parliament position on the protection of whistleblowers; bolder measures against tax advisors; accounting firms and banks which promote and assist in financial crimes and on dissuasive sanctions against tax havens. Through in-depth analysis of internal European Council documents, we also documented the complete failure of the EU's current system to fight tax avoidance which has been blocked for decades by the

EU's own tax havens. GUE/NGL has always fought against the European economic governance framework which represents blackmail and the imposition of neoliberal and austerity policies. In an effort to increase the role of the European Parliament in scrutinising the implementation of the adjustment programmes, the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs decided to establish the Financial Assistance Working Group (FAWG) in February 2016. The FAWG focused its work on Greece and organised a fact-finding mission to Athens in March 2016. Through the work of the FAWG, the striking differences amongst the creditors on the future of the Greek programme



## Restructuring Debt Rebuilding Democracy

*The outcomes of the Truth Committee on Public Debt in Greece: gaining knowledge, pushing for subversion  
Ways out at the international level: UN work for a multilateral debt restructuring framework.*

09.00 - 12.30 Tuesday 1 March 2016  
EP room ASP 1G2

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European Commission

**Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union**

Report by:  
Jean-Claude Juncker  
in close cooperation with  
Donald Tusk  
Jeroen Dijsselbloem  
Mario Draghi  
and Martin Schulz

**A Critical Response to the 5 Presidents' Report One year after publication**

Thursday 30 June 2016  
EP BXL room ASP 1G2  
15.00 - 18.30

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and the future negotiations on the debt were repeatedly exposed and the shortcomings of the current austerity-based policies of both the EU institutions and the IMF were underlined. Unfortunately, due to the correlation of forces in the Parliament until now, we have not been successful in having the European Semester and its tools and mechanisms repealed. In spite of the repeated attempts to whitewash it, we will continue to fight against it.

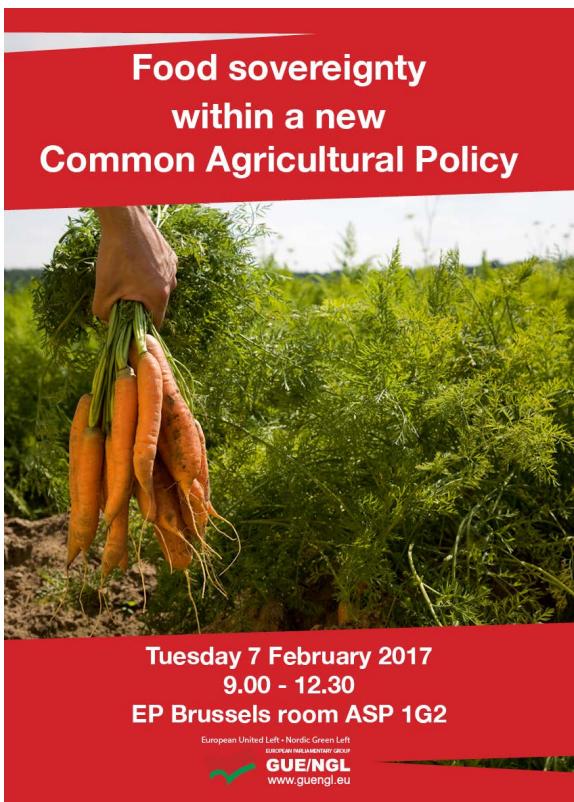
## Agriculture and Fisheries

GUE/NGL Coordinator for the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), Lidia Senra, is a Co-Rapporteur for the own-initiative report on 'Women and their roles in rural areas'. The report is still in progress and aims to give visibility to the key role that women play in rural areas and the need to assure their participation in all relevant decision-making organisations and institutions, as well as to guarantee public services in rural areas.

Stefan Eck MEP is the Rapporteur for an own-initiative report of the Parliament on minimum standards for the protection of farm rabbits. This is the first species-specific report on rabbits in the European Parliament to date. The ultimate goal is to encourage the European Commission to present an ambitious species-specific draft legislative proposal. However, this particular report kick-started a broader discussion on rabbit farming in the EU amongst all the stakeholders – from MEPs and NGOs to the rest of the sector and its industry. The report was adopted by the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in January 2017.

GUE/NGL MEPs have long stood for the protection of small scale, artisanal fisheries and coastal communities, the sustainability of catches and the protection of marine ecosystems and biodiversity. Equally, our MEPs have worked for the defence and promotion of fishers' rights and earnings, better health and safety conditions for fishers, better scrutiny and oversight in combatting illegal, under-reported and under-regulated industrialised commercial fishing.

Our group have put forward concrete proposals in the European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries (PECH) to reinforce and increase the control member states have on the fisheries sector, and to promote proximity management in order to better achieve social, environmental and economic sustainability goals. Moreover, our MEPs have taken a critical approach to the way fisheries agreements with third countries have been implemented.



For the benefit of fishers and marine ecosystems, GUE/NGL MEPs have consistently called for a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy while also highlighting animal rights. We argued for the use of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to improve workers' conditions, better conservation measures and provide more support for fleet sustainability and the development of coastal communities.

Our MEPs have put forward proposals that reinforce the importance of marine research and development with more data acquisition to the betterment of our knowledge of marine resources and ecosystems. We strongly adhere to the principle that fisheries management must go hand-in-hand with sound, scientific knowledge.

Events have been organised by our group between 2014 and 2016 to highlight the importance of indigenous fisheries in third countries, Galicia, Ireland, Portugal and the outermost regions. These initiatives featured contributions from MEPs, NGOs, trade union and fishing sector representatives, as well as academics, workers and small vessel owners.

Miguel Viegas MEP was the Rapporteur of an opinion from the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on an own-initiative report by the Committee on Regional Development. Titled 'The right funding mix for Europe's regions: balancing financial instruments and grants in EU cohesion policy', it fought against an increasingly neoliberal agenda which has crept further into rural development policy with financial instruments being promoted ahead of grants. Our MEP believed it was important to be in a position to counteract this and to put forward alternative views.



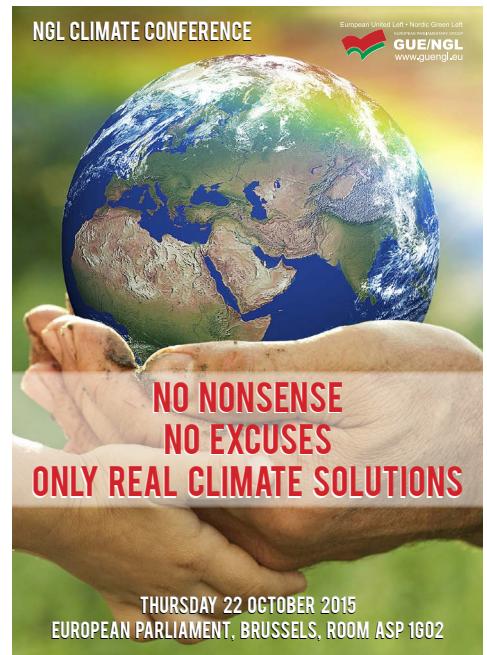
## Climate, the Environment and Animal Rights

GUE/NGL led the passing of a successful report and resolution by Lynn Boylan MEP in Parliament in support of the Right2Water European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) which had gathered 1.8 million signatures from across Europe. The report called on the Commission to produce legislative proposals which would enshrine the human right to water in EU legislation to keep water as a public good and also make sure that water services are excluded from the TTIP negotiations.

GUE/NGL's Stefan Eck was instrumental in laying down the groundwork needed by the EU in ratifying mercury regulation and its compliance with the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The legally-binding convention aims to protect human health and the environment from the effects of mercury and its compounds with controls and reductions across a range of products, processes and industries where mercury is used, released or emitted.



Based on the precautionary principle, our group has always fought tirelessly to defend human and animal health and the environment. Consumer protection and animal welfare are amongst our top priorities, too. Our MEPs have been vociferous against the introduction of substances that could impact negatively on public health. GUE/NGL MEPs won a vote for objecting to the Commission's proposal to continue the use of the phthalate, DEHP – a reproductive toxicant – and endocrine disrupting chemicals in recycled materials linked to male infertility. GUE/NGL have also opposed the Commission's proposals to introduce glyphosate-resistant cotton and four other genetically-modified seeds.



In November 2015 – on the initiative of GUE/NGL MEPs – the European Parliament adopted a resolution for a new EU Animal Welfare Strategy (2016 – 2020) with the overall aim of strengthening animal welfare standards across the EU. The resolution seeks proper implementation of new legislation and better enforcement of existing legislation.

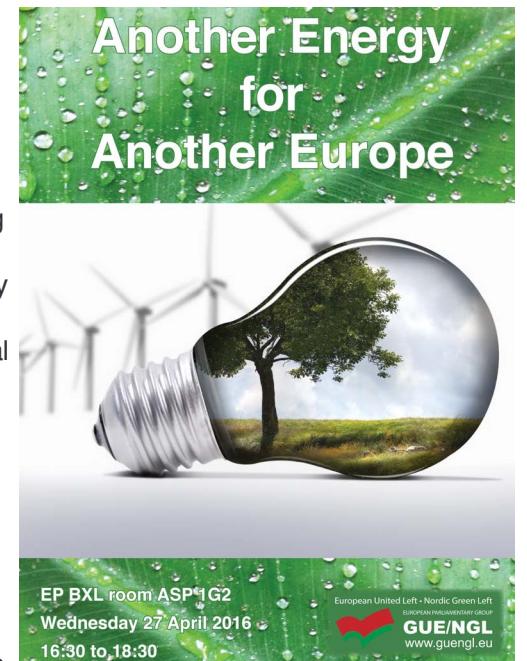
## Industry, Research and Energy

In June 2015, GUE/NGL Rapporteur João Ferreira submitted the 'Untapping the potential of the Blue Economy to create jobs and growth through research and innovation' report to the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, (ITRE). It looked at the numerous economic sectors linked to the seas and oceans, spanning traditional and emerging sectors including fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, inland waterway transport, tourism and shipbuilding. The prospects for and exploitation of offshore mineral and energy resources and biotechnology in a sensitive way were also included. The report also stated that state authorities must lead in managing resources in a sustainable way, with education, training, job creation, to create gender equality and women's participation, and research and development central to the sustainable development of the blue economy.

GUE/NGL's Rapporteur on the ITRE Committee Paloma López helped push through the 'Renewable Energy Progress Report' by garnering cross-party support for linking energy policy to the climate objectives of COP21, despite opposition from the biggest right-wing bloc in the Parliament. GUE/NGL also succeeded in retaining priority access for renewables to the grid along with national monitoring systems and national targets in at least 30 percent in the post-2020 framework. Whilst the Commission decided to ignore these in its legislative proposal, they still set the standard for legislative work in Parliament. In analysing progress under the current directive, the report named the countries lagging behind and positioned itself against the retroactive elimination of support schemes, thus sending a clear signal to member states.

In April 2016, GUE/NGL MEPs from the ITRE Committee held the 'Another Energy for Another Europe' hearing. The first of the two panels present focused on the Commission's so-called Energy Union and its opposition to the liberalisation of the energy market and EU governance. The second part – 'Energy transition from the left perspective' – was devoted to citizens and their role in the energy market.

As rapporteur for the 'Investment for jobs and growth: promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union', ITRE Coordinator Neoklis Sylikiotis's opinion underlined the need for a comprehensive strategy for industries that stimulates the real economy in order to tackle unemployment, promote growth and create new jobs. It also highlighted the need to support public investments which will respond to the needs of society and to provide incentives for small and medium enterprises to flourish.



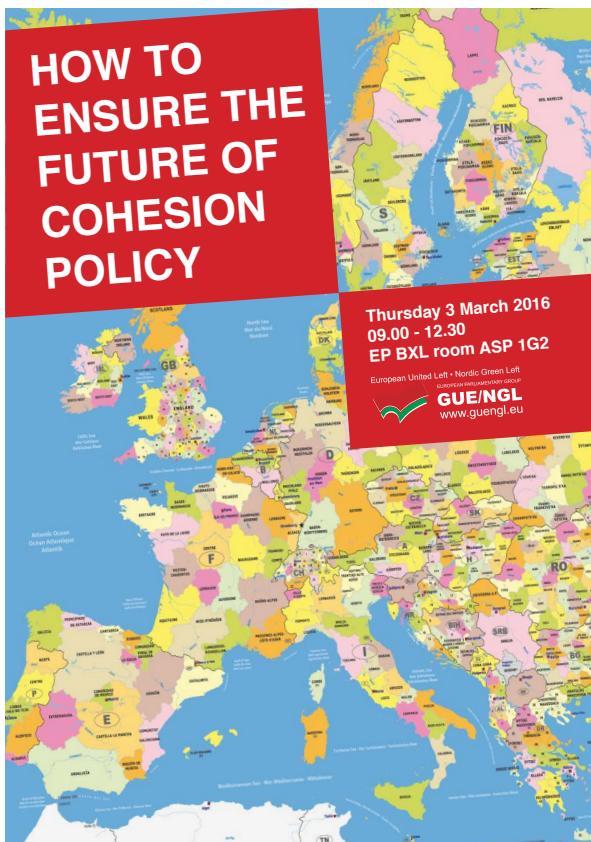
## EU Cohesion

In November 2016, MEPs from the Committee for Regional Development (REGI) – GUE/NGL group in particular – fought hard to overturn the European Commission's threats to suspend the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI) for Spain and Portugal. Our group has shown that it is possible to block a decision with macroeconomic conditionalities attached when everyone thought it couldn't be done.

The GUE/NGL group held a hearing on the future of the Cohesion Policy in March 2016 which was an important starting point for discussion on the future strategy of the scheme. Our MEPs expressed that "as a tangible policy of solidarity, the Cohesion Policy must be retained. While it cannot iron out the mistakes of other policies at national or EU level, it is and must remain the most visible expression of the benefits of cooperation in a united Europe for the people."

GUE/NGL MEP Younous Omarjee's opinion on the renewable energy progress report was adopted by the REGI committee in April 2016. In doing so, the Rapporteur emphasised the key role of the Cohesion Policy in achieving the objectives of the Renewable Energy Directive and of the Energy Union. He also encouraged national, regional and local authorities to make full use of the potential offered by the European Structural and Investment funds to achieve these targets.

A REGI delegation paid a visit to Greece in November 2016 during which MEPs listened to testimonies from Greek politicians and drew up a positive assessment of the effects of the Cohesion Policy in the country. GUE/NGL MEPs also successfully pushed for the extension of the special financial measures for Greece and Cyprus.

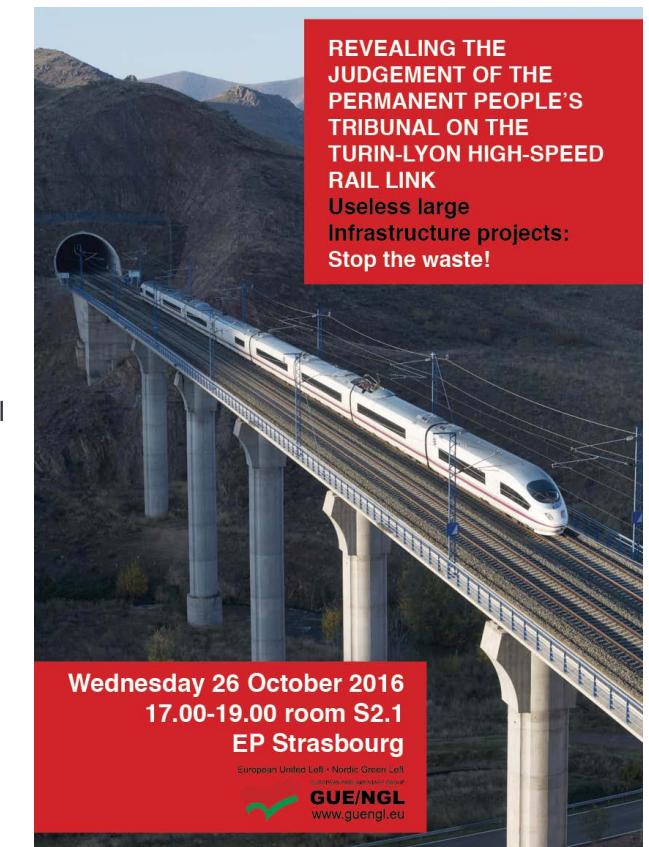


## Transport

In October 2015, GUE/NGL MEPs on the European Parliament's Committee on Transport invited activists from the European 'Back on Track' network to Strasbourg. The activists from Sweden, Germany, Denmark and Switzerland are fighting to prevent European night train connections from being banned. Even though night trains are highly practical, environmentally friendly and profitable, many European rail companies do not want to further invest in them. GUE/NGL MEPs believe this is the wrong way forward and posed numerous questions to the European Commission in support of the activists' cause.

In January 2016, GUE/NGL hosted a hearing on 'Tracking the EU aviation sector flight route', providing a forum for discussion on current cases and future prospects. Experts on the panels gave a critique of the Commission's proposed aviation package and opposed moves for privatisation of the sector in Greece and in France.

In October 2016, more than 150 people took part in the GUE/NGL initiative, 'Revealing the Judgment of the Permanent People's Tribunal on the Turin-Lyon High-Speed Rail Link' in Strasbourg. Italian citizens from the affected areas and MEPs for the 'NO TAV' movement presented their judgement to the President of the European Parliament on the violation of human rights in Val di Susa through violent repression and the militarisation of the area. The hearing on the Turin-Lyon rail link was also an opportunity to focus on other EU megaprojects which currently threaten environmental and economic sustainability as well as our citizens' health.

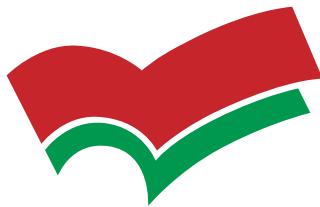


## Our Work and Our Group



## GUE/NGL Delegations

-  AKEL
-  Bloco de Esquerda
-  DIE LINKE.
-  eh Bildu
-  FOLKEBEVÆGELSEN MOD EU
-  FRONT DE GAUCHE
-  Alternativa Galega de Esquerda en Europa
- Izquierda Plural
-  Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy
-  L'ALTRA EUROPA con TSIPRAS
- Barbara Spinelli - Independent
- Luke 'Ming' Flanagan - Independent
- Sofia Sakorafa - Independent
- Stefan Eck - Independent
-  PCP Partido Comunista Português
-  Partij voor de Dieren
- 
-  Popular Unity
-  Sinn Féin BUILDING AN IRELAND OF EQUALS
-  SP Socialistische Partij
-  SYRIZA
-  L'UNION POUR LES OUTREMERS
-  Vänsterpartiet
-  vasemmisto RIKKAUTTA JOLLA ON ARVOA



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

## GUE/NGL

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