



PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

7-10 September 2015



THE STATE OF THE UNION Gabi Zimmer, GUE/NGL President, Germany

The governing elites have brought the EU to the brink of disintegration. The unsolved errors of the euro further increase the imbalances between North and South, rich and poor. The euro crisis is being misused for a neoliberal dismantling of European welfare states in order to generate higher profits for banks and corporations and is not providing the right answers for growing levels of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment. For the same reason, social and workers' rights are being attacked under the guise of "better regulation" while the issue of tax evasion is not being dealt with at all. The Commission, ECB and IMF are forcing Greece into a vicious circle of recession and poverty. In this way, they have damaged both Greek and European democracy. Increasing refugee flows are totally overwhelming the EU which is reacting using deadly isolationist policies resulting in increasing nationalism. The fact that extreme right-wing parties are gaining strength is a dangerous sign of disintegrating solidarity.



MIGRATION Cornelia Ernst, Germany

The continuous arrival of asylum-seekers and migrants in the EU and the appalling inability of member state governments to address the situation is often likened to a natural disaster or a tragedy that is striking us. This could hardly be farther from the truth. People are fleeing from poverty and wars that more often than not result from policies of the EU and its member states. Reducing the number of asylum-seekers therefore means putting an end to economic policies that impoverish the South and stopping support for dictatorships and injustice.



MIGRATION: MEASURES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION FOR GREECE AND ITALY Kostas Chrysogonos, Greece

Regarding provisional measures in the area of international protection for the benefit of Greece and Italy, the current Common European Asylum System has left these two countries helpless to deal with unprecedented numbers of asylum-seekers arriving in their territory. The Commission proposal is too little, too late. The 40.000 refugees to be relocated are a drop in the ocean and the voluntary participation of member states weakens the proposed system even further. We need to adopt urgently a permanent, obligatory mechanism of a fair distribution of asylum-seekers.

MONITORING THE APPLICATION OF EU LAW

My report on the implementation of EU law in the years 2012-2013 was voted by an overwhelming majority in the Parliament's JURI Committee in July. Hopefully this vote will be validated during the plenary session in September. For the first time in such a report, a strong emphasis has been placed on the impact of EU law on the protection of social and economic rights, especially in times of austerity.



RIGHT2WATER Lynn Boylan, Ireland

Water is a human right and should never be treated as a commodity. Nearly 2 million citizens signed the Right2Water ECI – the first successful European Citizens' Initiative. The Commission's response however was weak, unambitious and very disappointing. In countries across the EU, from Ireland to Greece, the issue of water privatisation has become a serious concern for citizens. The Commission needs to wake up and officially recognise that access to water and sanitation is a human right.

**GUE/NGL Press Briefing, Tuesday 8 Sept at 14.30 in EP Press Room
Gabi Zimmer, Cornelia Ernst & Martina Anderson**

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ILO FORCED LABOUR CONVENTION Patrick Le Hyaric, France

Forced labour breaches human rights and is an affront to the dignity of 21 million women, men, girls and boys who are victims of an exploitation which generates USD 150 billion per year for those who organise and manage it. The ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention aims to fight new forms of the slave trade and of exploitation by establishing obligations to prevent it and to provide victims with protection. EU policies must be designed to defend and promote human rights and decent work and to eradicate trafficking in human beings anywhere; a first step will be the adoption of this Convention by the EU.



EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH EDUCATION IN THE EU Malin Björk, Sweden

It's time to transform power relations between women and men, and we have to start in schools. Girls' rights to education are the cornerstone of a sustainable, gender equal and inclusive society. This report accentuates the devastating impacts of austerity policies in schools, the need to invest in free public education for all, integrating comprehensive sexuality education in the curricula, combating sexism, gender stereotypes and homophobia.



PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST Martina Anderson, Ireland

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East should be a cause of the greatest concern for these institutions. Europe must stand over its own commitments in terms of advancing the peace process and protecting the two-state solution in the wake of Israeli political attacks. Israel profits from the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and some of that profit comes from Europe. We can end this by suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement and by introducing guidelines on the labelling of settlement products. We can make the occupation cost.



DEUTSCH REPORT: INVESTMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOBS
Josu Juaristi, Basque Country

This report is more balanced than expected and reiterates the importance of cohesion policy, something that is not insignificant considering the discourse of the right and the extreme right. Obviously, it is not "our" report and does not reflect, among other things, our firm position against macroeconomic conditionality, but instead it does include quite a few of our views and amendments on the objectives of cohesion, territorial cooperation, governance, unemployment, youth and education. Moreover it also strongly criticises the problem of late payments.

SEE OUR DOCUMENT:

GUIDELINES FOR AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY ON MIGRATION BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOLIDARITY on WWW.GUENGL.EU

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