

# STRASBOURG FOCUS

PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

7-10 Mars 2016



## **Preparations for the European Council** Gabi Zimmer, GUE/NGL President, Germany

The EU is looking into an abyss since during this refugee crisis some member states are sabotaging European solutions based on solidarity. If the EU is not able to find a common and fair solution to assist Greece with the incoming refugees, we will see a humanitarian crisis. To prevent that, urgent action has to be taken by the EU using all necessary means. Member states have to open their borders to all refugees and allow people to apply for asylum and international protection in order to respect our human rights and international obligations. We need safe and legal routes for refugees and migrants and a binding relocation plan put into action now. The EU must not fight refugees but the root causes of migration. The current emergency situation must not be used as an excuse to broaden NATO's influence in the region.



## **Implementing the European agenda on migration** Cornelia Ernst - Germany

The fact that thousands of refugees are now stranded in northern Greece and are suffering in horrifying conditions is very worrying. What is even more worrying is that this situation has been brought about by Austria using its influence in the region to have countries like FYROM close their borders for refugees. This sort of action is harmful both for Greece and the EU as a whole – what we need instead is increased support to the Greek government in handling the refugees, safe passage for refugees and a binding and massive relocation scheme within the EU.



## **Better Law-Making** Kostas Chrysogonos - Greece

The Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Law-Making is an improvement compared to the Commission's initial proposal. For example, the fact that the EP should be consulted on withdrawals has been included and the need for greater transparency is stressed. However, we remain sceptical about this agreement, as there is an overemphasis on "overregulation and administrative burdens" throughout the text resulting in a strengthening of the deregulation agenda.



## **The situation of women refugees and asylum seekers** Malin Björk - Sweden

The current EU migration and asylum policy must be replaced by a human rights based approach. Such an approach must also ensure the rights and safety of women refugees and asylum seekers. It requires safe and legal ways to enter the EU, the right of women to lodge claim for asylum independent of their spouse, and to define gender-based violence as a valid reason for seeking asylum in the EU, as well as putting an end to detention.



## **Market access to port services** Stelios Kouloglou - Greece

In 2013, the Commission asked for the opening of the port services market. The European Parliament is now going to disagree with promoting a new framework with no reference to liberalisation. Port workers have opposed these liberalisation processes and we owe a lot to their struggles. GUE/NGL supports their efforts to safeguard their working rights. In the current hostile market environment, GUE/NGL asks that a precondition for enhancing the general operation of ports must be better and safer working conditions in all sectors of port services. The new Port service draft regulation now offers this minimum basis.

**GUE/NGL Press Briefing: Tuesday 08/03/2016 @ 14:30, EP Press Room**

**Gabi Zimmer – Council Preparations and outcome of EU-Turkey summit**

**Malin Björk – The situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU**

**Rina Ronja Kari - Banking Union Annual Report 2015**

For more information please contact: Gay Kavanagh +32473842320, Nikki Sullings +32483035575



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## **Animal health Anja Hazekamp - Netherlands**

The Animal Health package is a very complex piece of legislation, merging 50 basic Directives and Regulations and 400 pieces of secondary legislation into one single Regulation. The aim was to improve standards, to provide a common system to better detect and control diseases and tackle animal health risks in a coordinated way. Although this is not an animal welfare law, the Regulation underlines the strong link between animal welfare and animal health.



## **Banking Union: Annual Report 2015 Rina Ronja Kari - Denmark**

This is the first annual report, and we had wished rather than expected that the Parliament would take a stand against the serious problems in the Banking Union. However this has not happened. The Union will not protect us against a new crisis as we were promised. Furthermore, nothing is done about the fact that man in charge of the institution that was to control the big banks – Mario Draghi – is also a member of the bank bosses' powerful lobby organization G30.

### **Press Conferences : EP Press Room**

**Tuesday 8 March 17.30 - 18.00**

**Marie-Christine VERGIAT, Takis HADJIGEORGIOU, Miguel URBÁN CRESPO on  
"GUE/NGL MEPs report on the situation in South East Turkey"**

**Wednesday 9 March 14.30 - 15.00**

**Marie-Christine VERGIAT with guests Mirjam van REISEN, Mussie ZERAI on  
"The EU and Human Rights Situation in Eritrea"**

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