



PLENARY SESSION PRIORITIES

4-7 July 2016



**European Council conclusions on Brexit Gabi Zimmer, GUE/NGL President, Germany**

The outcome of the Brexit referendum is a drastic warning sign of the EU's ongoing erosion. However, after its first meeting in the 27 member state format, the European Council announced that it intends to go on with business as usual. EU leaders show no sign of self-criticism and deny any need for fundamental change. They ignore the urgent need to set the integration process back on track by ending austerity, ensuring social cohesion and guaranteeing democratic control.



**Social & environmental standards, human rights & corporate responsibility Eleonora Forenza - Italy**

The Report assesses three reports voted in 2010 by the European Parliament on social, environmental and human rights standards. We have worked hard to highlight the shortcomings of EU trade policy in ensuring human rights and development worldwide. The report also develops an in-depth revision of the instruments at multilateral, bilateral, and unilateral levels to ensure the prominence of human and social rights over business, market and corporate profits.



**European Border and Coast Guard Marina Albiol Guzmán - Spain**

We are experiencing the largest movements of people since World War II because of war, violence and hunger for which EU governments and EU corporations are involved, if not directly responsible. However, the EU has decided to respond to this with further aggression, strengthening the Fortress Europe model. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency will replace Frontex with a much broader scope, including organising its own return interventions, and will be even less accountable. The EU's goal with this new agency is not to fulfil its international obligations but rather to externalise its borders to third countries, extending the model adopted by the Agreement with Turkey, and to keep migrants and asylum seekers out of the Union whatever the cost of this may be.



**Decision to withdraw situation in Poland from the EP's plenary agenda Barbara Spinelli - Italy**

I totally regret the decision taken by the EPP, ECR, EFDD and ENF Groups to completely withdraw, from the plenary agenda, the debate and adoption of a Resolution on "Recent developments in Poland and their impact on fundamental rights as laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union". On 13 April 2016, this Parliament already adopted a Resolution on the situation in Poland but focusing solely and entirely on the constitutional crisis, disregarding the will of some groups to include in that document, and in the relevant discussion, other matters of serious concern. I refer, in particular, to the recent legislative developments in the country that may risk severely undermining fundamental rights and the respect of the rule of law, such as the Broadcasting Act, amendments to the Law on the Police, proposals to introduce a complete ban on abortion and a proposed new law on terrorism. This decision is even more serious and incomprehensible with regard to the prolonged paralysis of the Constitutional Tribunal and the recent adoption, by the European Commission, of a Rule of Law Opinion expressing concerns about the ongoing constitutional crisis arising from the Amendments to the Law on the Constitutional Tribunal of 22 December 2015.



**Social inclusion and labour market integration of refugees Tania González Peñas - Spain**

This report is an important step to continue working for a comprehensive and non-discriminatory social inclusion of refugees, which requires not only active employment policies but also to provide access to housing, education and training, social protection, healthcare and family reunification. After the shameful EU-Turkey deal, all efforts are needed to reverse this unacceptable agreement and its effects, and keep putting pressure to guarantee that the Geneva Convention and the human rights of the refugees are respected and observed, also in terms of their integration into the labour market. We welcome the advocacy for the national minimum wage to remain valid for refugees, which we consider has been an interesting achievement, as well as the need for an increased public investment and the revision of the Reception Conditions Directive to ensure that applicants have access to the labour market not later than six months after the application is lodged.

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**TAX2 Report Miguel Viegas - Portugal**

We welcome many recommendations contained in the TAX2 report, namely the withdrawal of banking licences for financial institutions aiding tax fraud and the call for a global wealth registry. However, the report failed to get to the bottom of the issue, denouncing the role of capitalist globalisation and free movement of capital. Therefore, by omitting the real causes and the real people responsible for the current situation, it is not possible to get solutions that are genuinely capable of tackling the problem.



**Review of the Dutch Presidency - Animal welfare Anja Hazekamp, Netherlands**

In January, Minister Van Dam announced that animal welfare would be one of the key priorities of the Dutch Presidency. However, many urgent animal welfare issues have not been addressed and a new European animal welfare strategy has not been adopted, despite calls from the European Parliament. After starting with promising words, we now have to conclude that real actions to improve animal welfare have, regrettably, been omitted.



**Council and Commission statement on the protection of whistleblowers Fabio De Masi - Germany**

The harsh verdict against the LuxLeaks whistleblowers Deltour and Halet shows how urgently we need a comprehensive framework protecting those who speak truth to power. Even Commission President Juncker admitted improvements were needed, but this is empty talk as the Commission keeps ignoring our and the EP's calls for a legislative proposal on the matter. This exemplifies the hypocrisy that makes people turn away from the EU.



**Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Kostadinka Kuneva - Greece**

This is a great opportunity for us to put pressure on reversing the current implementation status of the important text on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the first human rights convention the EU ratified as a whole. Unfortunately, in terms of its application, it remains void in most member states. What the EP report tries to make clear is that there is no more time for wishful thinking and promises. It is now time for action. There are attempts to amputate what we call "Social Europe" and we must work together to prevent this from happening. It is unacceptable for the EU to spend billions to save banks, whilst on the other hand, diminishing social rights and benefits that are the result of decades of struggle. It is unacceptable to care about wealth, numbers and figures, but to be uncaring about people with disabilities and their families.



**Forward-looking and innovative strategy for trade and investment Helmut Scholz - Germany**

The GUE/NGL vision of future international trade relations builds on our ideas of solidarity, of economic justice and of fair trade relations. We describe our approach in detail in our proposal for an alternative resolution, because the INTA resolution only partly covers what is needed. While we welcome the increased importance given by the Commission to fair trade aspects, the main concept of the EU Commission's trade strategy remains to seek profits for the EU at the costs of other world regions. For too long Europe has carried out a trade policy that causes poverty and related migration movements.



**Synergies between the Structural Funds and Horizon 2020 Younous Omarjee - France**

The new Cohesion Policy package provides synergies between the Structural Funds and other EU policies such as the Horizon 2020 programme. As I wrote in my initiative report in 2014, it is now essential for the less developed regions, and in particular for the outermost regions, that the Commission makes necessary adjustments and guarantees them real access to the Horizon 2020 programme, to foster their greater inclusion in European and international research and innovation networks.

**GUE/NGL Press Briefing: Tuesday 05/07/2016 @ 14:30, EP Press Room**

**Gabi Zimmer, Eleonora Forenza and Marina Albiol.**

**Conclusions of the Council; Social and environmental standards, human rights and corporate responsibility; European Border and Coast Guard.**