



LIAISON LETTER

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Converging agendas

Economic governance is one of the top issues on the European Parliament's agenda this week. Six pieces of legislation go through the full Parliament on economic coordination at EU level. House committees meanwhile hold hearings on **oversight** of mutual funds and of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

How to deal with **nuclear waste** is on the agenda in both the EP plenary and in a House Energy Committee hearing

FARM REFORM TOP OF THE BILL IN MEPS VISIT TO USA

Ten Members of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee visited Washington DC last week for discussions with Members of Congress and senior Administration officials.

The main topic on the agenda? The US Farm Bill and the EU's Common Agriculture Policy reform. The MEPs also visited a farm in Barboursville, Virginia and then travelled to New York for meetings at the UN and the NY Stock Exchange to discuss global food security and food scarcity.

The Delegation was led by Italian MEP Paolo De Castro (*left*), who chairs the Committee. The group also included MEPs from Germany, Greece, Hungary, Spain and the UK, representing six of the European Parliament's political groupings.

On Wednesday 15th June they met with: US Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack; Ambassador Kirk, US Trade Representative, and Ambassador Siddiqui, Chief Agriculture Negotiator.

They met the Chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Debbie Stabenow (D; Michigan) where other issues such as food safety, food prices, animal cloning and genetically-modified crops were discussed in addition to the overall farm reform debate.

And on the Wednesday evening, they attended a reception on the Hill during which they met with the Chief of Staff of the Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee Rep. Frank Lucas (R; OK), who was unable to attend himself due to a House vote on agriculture appropriations.

ALZHEIMER'S—A TRANSATLANTIC CONCERN?

Italian MEP Mario Mauro was in DC last week for meetings on the issue of Alzheimer's.

He met with the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Global Health, Christopher Smith (R.—New Jersey), and Ranking Member Ed Markey (D.—Massachusetts), ahead of a hearing to be held on the issue in the Sub-Committee later this week.

The meeting kicked off what is hoped will be a series of liaison activities between the European Parliament and the US House of Representatives on Alzheimer's disease.

Next up is the Sub-Committee's hearing this Thursday where testimony will be heard from Doctor Frisoni (of the Italian National Alzheimer Medical Centre).

Rep. Smith, who has been an active

member of the Congressional Caucus (intergroup) on Alzheimer's for over 11 years, has expressed a willingness to appear at a European Parliament Hearing on the subject later this year.

The Caucus has written to the UN General Assembly to raise the issue globally given that the number of cases of Alzheimer's is set to rise threefold by 2050 to around 115 million, with the biggest growth likely in China, India and Brazil.

HEARINGS IN THE HOUSE

Wednesday, June 22nd

Agriculture Committee—Sub-Committee on Conservation, Energy

Hearing on agricultural conservation programs
10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

Energy, Commerce Committee Communications Sub-Committee

Hearing on the Federal Communications Commission
10.30am US Eastern; 4.30pm CET

The full House meets at 12noon to discuss the America Invents (**Patents**) Act 2011

Oversight Committee—Emerging Threats Sub-Committee

Hearing on the changing role of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
1.30pm US Eastern; 7.30pm CET

Oversight Committee—Regulatory Affairs, Government Spending Sub-Committee

Hearing on the bailout of General Motors
1.30pm US Eastern; 7.30pm CET

Thursday, June 23rd

Transportation Committee—Sub-Committee on Aviation

Hearing on the performance of the aviation industry, including safety issues
9am US Eastern; 3pm CET

Foreign Affairs Committee

Hearing on Iran & Syria
10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

Agriculture Committee—Sub-Committee on Biotechnology

Hearing on agricultural biotechnology
11am US Eastern; 5pm CET

HEARINGS IN THE SENATE

Tuesday, June 21st

Banking, Housing Committee

Hearing on cybersecurity and data protection in the financial sector
10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

Commerce, Science, Transportation Committee

Hearing on John Bryson to be Secretary of Commerce and Terry Garcia, Deputy Secretary of Commerce
2.30pm US Eastern; 8.30pm CET

Judiciary Committee—Crime, Terrorism Sub-Committee

Hearing on the Administration's cybersecurity proposals
2.30pm US Eastern; 8.30pm CET

Wednesday, June 22nd

Homeland Security Committee

Hearing on rail and transit security
10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

Judiciary Committee

Hearing on intellectual property law enforcement
10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

Thursday, June 23rd

Agriculture Committee

Hearing on Farm Bill accountability
9.30am US Eastern; 3.30pm CET

Foreign Relations Committee

Hearing on Afghanistan & Pakistan with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton
10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

FORMER US AMBASSADOR TO EU SPEAKS

Boyden Gray a former US Ambassador to the EU spoke last week to the World Politics Institute in DC. We sent one of our new interns to find out more.

Ambassador Gray's remarks focused on his frustration with what he described as the dominance of NATO within Euro-American relations. He said that his effectiveness as ambassador to the EU was undermined by NATO's outsized role

He said this marginalization was partially to blame for the failure of the

US and European countries to adopt a common agreement on accounting standards before the financial crisis.

The EU and the United States had been trying to align the European-led International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) with the US General Agreement on Accounting Practices (GAAP), but the process had faltered, according to Gray, because of a lack of prioritization of the issue within the United States.

He said that many of the most difficult contemporary problems in the United States and Europe---from the financial

crisis, to sovereign debt bailouts, to NATO financing issues---could have been avoided or at least partially ameliorated if there had been more economic coordination between governments on both sides of the Atlantic.

To improve the situation, Gray called for a more prominent role for economic coordination within the Euro-American relationship .

In the Q&A session, many questions related to energy issues: Europe's dependence on Russian gas; and potential issues around shale gas.

THIS WEEK IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT— COMMITTEES

Monday, June 20th

Joint hearing of Foreign Affairs, Development, Women's Rights Committees & Human Rights Sub-Committee on role of **women in North Africa** and Middle East democratization process

Agriculture Committee discuss the latest on the **E.Coli crisis** with European Commissioner Ciolos

9.30am CET; 3.30am US Eastern

Economic Committee consider amendments to a report on **global economic governance**

3.00pm CET; 9.00am US Eastern

International Trade Committee vote on a report on **EU trade policy** towards 2020.

The draft report aims to position the EU in the changing world trade scene and to set strategic policy lines in areas, such as multilateral and bilateral trade relations, the relation of trade policy with other EU policies, market access, access to raw materials and intellectual property protection.

Tuesday, June 21st

Foreign Affairs Committee discussion with Nabil Al-Araby, **Egypt's Foreign Minister** and incoming Secretary General of the Arab League

9.00am—10.30am CET; 3am US Eastern Time

THIS WEEK IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT— PLENARY

MEPs meet in a plenary session on Wednesday and Thursday in Brussels. Highlights of the agenda include:

Economic governance

Months of hard negotiations on the six pieces of economic governance legislation could culminate on Thursday with a plenary vote by the European Parliament. The aim of the new EU laws is to revamp the EU's flagging economic coordination rules.

Consumer rights

An EU-wide right for consumers to change their minds within two weeks of a distance purchase and clearer pricing rules for internet sales are among the main benefits of new rules on consumer protection due for adoption this week.

European Central Bank

Mario Draghi was recommended to succeed Jean-Claude Trichet as President of the European Central Bank by the EP Economic and Monetary Affairs

Committee on 15 June but this needs to be confirmed by Parliament in a plenary vote on 23 June. Mr Draghi's nomination is also on the European Council agenda of 23-24 June.

Farm reform

A revamped EU agriculture policy providing secure food supplies, environmental protection, new jobs and renewable energy is the goal sketched out in a draft resolution by the Agriculture Committee. The report now goes to the plenary for vote..

LATEST NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

New ECB Head

Mario Draghi was recommended to succeed Jean-Claude Trichet as European Central Bank President in an Economic & Monetary Affairs Committee vote last Wednesday. The committee opinion - 33 in favour, 2 against and 4 abstentions - now needs to be confirmed by a vote of Parliament as a whole, scheduled this week.

Addressing the committee on Tuesday, Mr Draghi told MEPs that the ECB must not be diverted from its primary goal of price stability.

Children & data privacy

Children using social networks must be protected by EU data privacy rules, and all EU citizens should have the right to know what information is being stored on them and for what purpose, urged the EP Civil Liberties Committee last Wednesday.

People must be able to have their data easily deleted, corrected or blocked and be informed about any misuse or lapses in data protection, argues a draft resolution which is designed to influence the revision of the existing EU Data Protection Directive due to be

launched by the European Commission after the summer.

Phosphates

A proposed ban on the use of phosphates in household laundry detergents from 1 January 2013 should be widened to household dishwasher detergents as of 2015, said the Environment Committee on Wednesday.

The committee inserted amendments that would extend the phosphate ban and phosphorus compound restriction to include household automatic dishwasher detergents as of 2015.

DATA PROTECTION RAPPORTEUR IN DC

German Greens MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht (*right*), who is the European Parliament rapporteur on the EU-US data protection framework agreement, was in DC on June 13th-14th.

He was here to take part in the "2011 Computers Freedom & Privacy Summit", where he spoke in a panel entitled: "A clash of civilizations: The EU and US negotiate the Future of Privacy". Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission also intervened via videoconference.

While in Washington, Mr Albrecht met with the staff of the Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay

Rockefeller (Dem; West Virginia) and with staffers of Sen. John Kerry (Foreign Relations Committee chair). These two Senators are co-sponsors of a bill on internet privacy, currently tabled in the Senate.

He also had a meeting with Bruce Swartz, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, and US negotiator of the EU-US Framework Agreement on Data Protection. He participated in the Electronic Privacy Information Center "Champion of Freedom" awards dinner, where he established contact with Rep. Jason Chaffetz, (Rep.-Utah), the only Republican Congressman who voted against the Patriot Act!



EP/MEPs IN US MEDIA

Middle East

Huffington Post, June 15th

*"A unilateral Palestinian move toward statehood could be "dangerous," the president of the **EU parliament** said Tuesday during a visit to the West Bank. Frustrated by a long-standing impasse in peace talks with Israel, the Palestinians have mounted a campaign for international recognition at the U.N. General Assembly in September. European support would be critical, but **EU parliament chief Jerzy Buzek** sounded cool to the idea, saying it could complicate peace efforts "*

Draghi hearing

New York Times, June 15th

*"At a **confirmation hearing at the European Parliament**, Mr. Draghi, the former governor of the Bank of Italy, also highlighted the risk that a Greek default could set off a "chain of contagion." "All in all, the costs outweigh the benefits," he said.*

His comments came as European finance ministers held an unscheduled meeting in Brussels to try to bridge differences in the new package for Greece."

Also in Huffington Post

Draghi/ECB

Wall Street Journal, June 17th

*"Italy's government asked Lorenzo Bini Smaghi, Italian member of the European Central Bank's executive board, to step down nearly 2 years before his term ends to facilitate the ascension of countryman Mario Draghi as the bank's president...The possible stalemate isn't likely to put Mr. Draghi's succession to the ECB at risk: The Italian central banker was nominated by euro-zone finance ministers as the only candidate for the job, and then approved by the ECB and a **European Parliament committee**."*

MORE MEPS IN US MEDIA

Cybercrime

Computerworld, June 15th

*"Justice Ministers across Europe want to make the creation of "hacking tools" a criminal offense, but critics have hit back at the plans, saying that they are unworkable...The ministers' proposals will now be put to the **European Parliament**, which must approve the text before it can become law. It is likely that **MEPs** will question some of the ministers' assumptions and will seek to better define what is meant by "tools"."*

Also in Huffington Post, June 11th.

Schengen—comment piece by Chris Caldwell

New York Times, June 12th

*"The **European Parliament** this week voted overwhelmingly to recommend extending Schengen to the European Union's two newest members, Bulgaria and Romania...Until recently, "building Europe" was easy. European citizens, after grumbling a bit, would reconcile themselves to the plans of pan-European visionaries. They are getting less easygoing by the day. Building Europe now depends on taking an occasional step back, even if that means reassuring*

member states of their right, in an emergency, to keep watch over their own borders"

Seals

Huffington Post, June 14th—comment from Sheryl Fink of the International Fund for Animal Welfare

*"IFAW is releasing disturbing new video evidence proving that Canada's commercial seal hunt remains inhumane and unenforceable. The new footage comes amidst a heated **debate in the European Parliament** that suggests the seal hunt could impact a major trade agreement between Canada and the European Union "*

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AND FINALLY: NEW GREEK MINISTER; GOLF; TLD NEXT...

European Parliament's loss is Greece's gain

The European Parliament Vice-President responsible for transatlantic relations, Stavros Lambrinidis, has been appointed to the job of Foreign Minister of Greece.

He already attended his first meeting of EU foreign ministers this weekend.

This will mean a reshuffling of positions in the European Parliament, with a new Vice-President to be elected and somebody new in charge of transatlantic relations.

We wish him well, and thank him for his commitment and support for the transatlantic liaison between the

European Parliament and US Congress.

Golf in the news

More European congratulations are due this week to the young golfer from Northern Ireland who won the US golf open. Is this a good omen for the next Ryder Cup match between the US and Europe?

Meantime, also out on the links this weekend were President Obama and Speaker John Boehner, who teamed up to beat Vice-President Biden and Ohio Governor Kasich.

The US media were watching to see if the Obama/Boehner part-

nership could lead to a breakthrough in discussions on the US debt levels, but so far no news has leaked to that effect...

Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue

The twice-yearly meeting of MEPs and Members of the US Congress is set to take place in Budapest on June 30th and July 1st.

This will be the first such meeting since the opening of the 112th Congress.

We will bring you more in future editions.

More hearings in the House

Thursday, June 23rd (continued)

Foreign Affairs Committee—Sub-Committee on Global Health, Human Rights

Hearing on global strategies to combat Alzheimer's - 2pm US Eastern; 8pm CET

Foreign Affairs Committee—Sub-Committee on Middle East, South Asia

Hearing on transition and the strategic framework in Iraq—2pm US Eastern; 8pm CET

Friday, June 24th

Energy & Commerce Committee—Sub-Committee on Environment, Economy

Hearing on Yucca nuclear waste licence review—9am US Eastern; 3pm CET

Financial Services Committee—Sub-Committee on Capital Markets

Hearing on oversight of mutual funds—10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

Homeland Security Committee—Sub-Committee on Cybersecurity

Hearing on the Administration's cybersecurity proposal—10am US Eastern; 4pm CET

This week in the European Parliament

More from the plenary agenda this week

Nuclear waste

MEPs will vote on a report arguing that exports of nuclear and radioactive waste to countries outside the EU should be permitted, provided these countries can handle the waste safely. The text, as adopted by the EP Energy Committee also argues that EU governments need to improve worker safety and encourage research into alternatives to burying the waste deep underground.

Carbon emissions cuts

MEPs are considering a new call for a more ambitious EU climate policy, with a 30% reduction of CO2 by 2020 instead of the current 20% target. Making 25% cuts alone within the EU (instead of through investments in the developing world) could help modernise and benefit the EU economy, according to a draft resolution to be put to the vote on Thursday.

Aviation safety—Canada

The European Parliament votes on Thursday on an aviation safety agreement with Canada, the most far-reaching negotiated with a non-EU country to date. The deal, which needs Parliament's consent to take effect, provides for mutual recognition of technical aviation and aircraft standards, so as to avoid duplicating checks. It also provides for joint inspections, investigations, exchange of aviation safety data and increased regulatory cooperation.

More on these votes and debates in next week's edition.