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A Greens/EFA debriefing of the plenary week

Plenary week, 13-15 May 2020

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Recovery plan & Multiannual Financial Framework

Debate Wednesday, Vote Thursday & Friday (on amendments to New MFF, own resources and Recovery Plan)

The European Parliament held a debate and voted on the Coronavirus Recovery and Transformation Plan, as part of the debate on the Multiannual Financial and own resources. At the last European Council summit European leaders were unable to reach an agreement on the size or financing of the plan and instructed the European Commission to make a proposal that would come under the framework of the EU's multi-annual budget (MFF). The Parliaments resolution, if passed, will be the first bold demand on size and common financing put on the table by one of the EU institutions and calling, in addition, for the money in

the fund not only to be raised through common EU bonds but for it to be disbursed mostly as grants with recipients having to respect strict EU Treaty values, climate/biodiversity and tax. Now the Commission and Council will need to agree on the next steps and heed the Parliaments demand to be fully involved in the setting up and oversight of the Recovery and Transformation Fund.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- The Greens/EFA Recovery and Resilience Plan
- Video – Bas Eickhout
- A Green/EFA contribution to a future EU Recovery Fund
- More on Recovery Plan and Corona Crisis
- Social media

Further information

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Discharge 2018

Debate (and possibly final vote on where amendments are tabled) Wednesday &Thursday

MEPs voted this week on the discharge procedure, an annual budgetary control exercise looking at how the EU's money was spent across 52 separate budgets for the year 2018.

The Plenary supported Greens/EFA positions of granting the discharge to 47 different EU institutions and postponing of granting of discharge to the Council and EU Council (non-cooperation with the EP), European Economic and Social Committee (harassment case including top management).

As expected, we did not win over the majority for the postponement of the discharge to the Committee of Regions, the European Development Fund and ITER Joint Undertaking.

Although there were some slight improvements in previous years, the Greens/EFA group had tabled amendments to push the European Parliament towards more performance-based budgeting, to improve the transparency & democracy in spending as well as functioning of the EU institutions, and to improve people and staff management to make the EU Institutions more gender-balanced, safe and an attractive place of employment.

The Greens/EFA Group managed to keep and even add very strong language especially to the Parliament and the Commission's discharge reports, stongly defending our political lines on democracy, transparency, environmental footprint, sound financial management, protection of whistleblowers and anti-harassment.

Viola von Cramon-Taubadel MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control committee following the Commission's discharge procedure, commented:

"The Commission must revisit the Common Agricultural Policy and ensure that EU funds are equally accessible for all market actors and that the CAP is in line with the Green Deal, as well as with the original aims of the policy. If Members States cannot guarantee the controlling function by accredited agencies, then the EU should employ a stricter oversight system for protecting the EU's financial interests.

"European taxpayers' money cannot be used to fund oligarchs' business empires. The Commission must publish the findings of the audits into Czech PM Andrej Babiš' business interests without delay, the public have a right to know the results," she continued.

Daniel Freund MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control committee following the Parliament's discharge procedure, comments:

"The discharge vote is a chance for the Parliament to get its own house in order and we have successfully used this opportunity to push through amendments improving the transparency of MEPs expenses and their lobby meetings.

"The Parliament has now voted for stricter rules on the General Expenditure Allowance, calling for MEPs to

better document how they spend their allowance and return unused funds, in order to avoid the potential abuse of up to €40 million a year."

The discharge procedure is the Parliament's main opportunity to scrutinise the budgets of all the EU institutions and agencies.

- Texts adopted (Discharge 2018) available here
- Press release

Further information

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Hungary: emergency legislation in Hungary and its impact on the rule of law and fundamental rights

Debate Thursday

Following the call of the Greens/EFA group, the Parliament debated Thursday the Emergency Legislation in Hungary and its impact on the Rule of Law and fundamental rights. The Hungarian Parliament passed a controversial Coronavirus emergency law on 30 March, which enables the government to rule by decree, without a 'sunset clause' and with limited parliamentary oversight.'

Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield MEP, the European Parliament rapporteur on the rule of law in Hungary and Greens/EFA member of the Civil Liberties committee, commented:

"Everywhere in Europe there have been emergency laws to tackle the Corona crisis, but only in Hungary

does this legislation not have an end date or scope for parliamentary scrutiny. Without a sunset clause or oversight, Viktor Orbán's government is able to rule by decree indefinitely. It's vital that the European Parliament has the opportunity to debate these measures, to provide some form of democratic debate for Hungarian citizens. In this battle of narrative, we must stick to the truth and our European values, and not follow the discourse set by the Hungarian government.

After attacks on journalists, NGOs, academia, minorities and European institutions, the Hungarian government is now attacking the trans community.

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA Vice-President and Member of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, said:

“I can tell you - and this goes to the Hungarian government - you will not win with this. This continent thrives with freedom and diversity. And we will fight for that. You will not break this community. Trans people will not cease to exist just because you want them to. We in this parliament and in this European Union will stand with this community and defend their rights.”

- Press release
- Video - Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield
- Video – Terry Reintke

Further information
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Transitional CAP mandate vote

Notification of mandate voted on Friday

The Commission’s proposed legislation for the transitional period of the Common Agricultural Policy follows the ‘old rules, new budget’ approach to one of the most important areas of EU policies (35% of the

EU budget) that need reform in order to meet the aims of the Green Deal.

The European Parliament's Agriculture Committee has proposed a mandate to continue with the current CAP for the next two years, only correcting a few shortcomings and offering nothing new in terms of farming practices or structural changes in the distribution of CAP funds, nor does it address the unequal direct payments between Member States.

Allowing an extension of the failed policies of the past risks losing significant time for biodiversity and climate protection. The Greens/EFA Group ask for a fully democratic process in the EU parliament on all its aspects, including the transitional regulation for 2021 and 2022. We oppose any unnecessary short-cuts, which is why we are objecting to the mandate ahead of the first reading in plenary.

- Video – Bas Eickhout

Register for the Greens/EFA Webinar on Monday 18 May 13:00 – **MEPs Benoît Biteau** and **Tilly Metz** discuss what agriculture we need to feed us and preserve the planet after Covid-19.

- Register here
- Share the Tweet

Further information
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Asylum paper

Release this week

Ahead of the European Commission's proposal for a new Pact on Migration and Asylum, the Greens/EFA

Group released its new paper this week calling for increased support for the willingness of cities and municipalities to receive refugees and asylum-seekers in order to embrace the potential for solidarity in Europe. Hundreds of cities and municipalities in Europe are willing to welcome asylum seekers and this should be supported with EU funding. The overcrowded border camps must be closed. Refugee protection in Europe need to be organised in the spirit of solidarity, which our Group proposes to strengthen via a system based on positive incentives. Our group is calling for those who wish to help should have the ability to do so, with the support of EU funds, if necessary.

- Greens/EFA paper - Proposal for a Fair and Efficient European Asylum System

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Debate on vaccines

Thursday 14.30-15.30

MEPs held a debate Thursday on vaccines and therapeutics in the context of COVID-19 with Council and Commission statements.

During the debate, our MEP Petra de Sutter, who is also a medical doctor said: "Let us use this health crisis to change our pharmaceutical rules. The EU must safeguard our health and put it above corporate interests."

- Video – Petra De Sutter
- Video – Anna Cavazzini
- Video - Pär Holmgren

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- http://twitter.com/GreensEFA

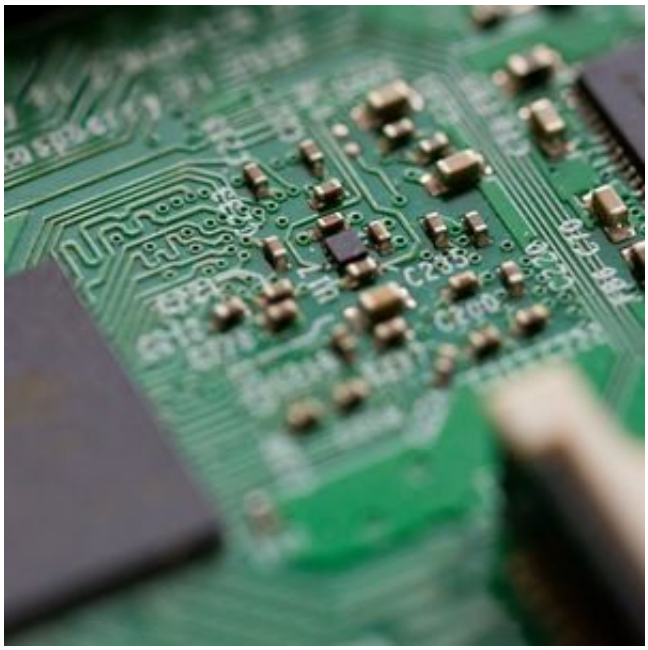
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