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Debriefing of the April plenary session

4 - 7 April 2022

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Council and Commission statements - Sixth Assessment Report of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

On Monday, the IPCC panel presented the third part of its Sixth Assessment Report, focusing on whether and how we can still prevent dangerous climate change and giving recommendations on mitigation measures. The IPCC report confirms the Greens/EFA's position that limited time remains to hold global warming at 1.5°C. Immediate action is required, especially in the energy sector. This will require a substantial reduction in fossil fuel use, widespread electrification, improved energy efficiency, and use of alternative fuels (such as green hydrogen). Cities and other urban areas also offer significant opportunities for emissions reductions. Reducing emissions in industry will involve using materials more efficiently, reusing and recycling products and minimising waste.

Bas Eickhout, Greens/EFA MEP and Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, comments:

"This report confirms what we have been saying for a long time: If we really want to save the climate, it can still be done. Yet when faced with new challenges, no matter how serious they are, we fall back on the fossil fuel option. We see that again with the current gas crisis. European leaders immediately flew around the world to conclude LNG deals, while there is still insufficient action on energy saving. This approach is unsustainable, both for the climate and for the economy. There is only one real solution: A full commitment to sustainability. This also requires not putting the Green Deal at risk, and the European Commission to swiftly publish its Nature Restoration Law and its Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive."

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Council and Commission statements - EU Protection of children and young people fleeing the war against Ukraine

On Tuesday, Members of the European Parliament debated how the EU can support coordinated assistance and protection to civilians in Ukraine, notably to children, youth and unaccompanied minors. The Greens/EFA call on the Member States to pay particular attention to the needs of children, including separated or unaccompanied children, who are in special need of protective shelters, protection from human trafficking and access to education as quickly as possible.

The overwhelming willingness of citizens and civil society in Poland, Hungary, Moldova and other countries to take in refugees cannot replace state responsibility. We call on EU member states to swiftly present distribution schemes and to provide transport, accommodation and care. We call on EU member states to interpret the Temporary Protection Directive generously and to offer all those fleeing the terrible war protection in the EU.

Saskia Bricmont, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the resolution on the EU's protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine, comments:

"Nearly 2 million children have already fled the war, 60% of Ukrainian children are internally displaced and millions of children still live in the daily anguish of the conflict."

The European Union is taking responsibility. It has acted quickly with the implementation of the Temporary Protection Directive. It must ensure rapid protection and access to rights for all children and young people fleeing Ukraine, without distinction. The most vulnerable must be protected, so that the horror of war is not compounded by discrimination and risks to their dignity."

The European Union must also provide direct means to ensure the safe passage of official transport to the member states, avoid human trafficking and the exploitation of children, facilitate the continuity of the care they need, offer greater protection to unaccompanied minors with the immediate appointment of a guardian, and also facilitate family reunification."

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Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022: including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation

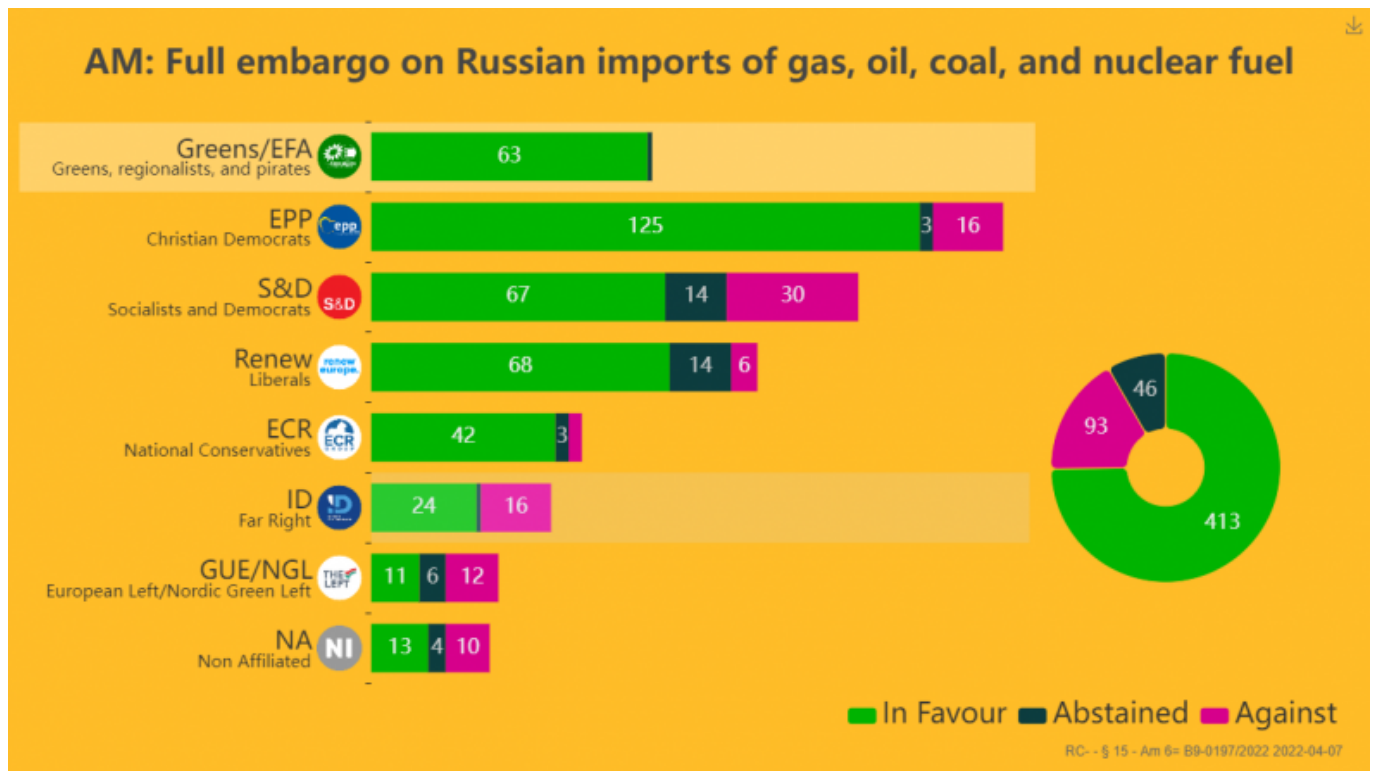
On Thursday, Members of the European Parliament voted on a resolution on the European Council's conclusions on the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the implementation of EU sanctions against Russia. The European Parliament voted overwhelmingly to adopt a position in favour of an immediate and full embargo on Russian imports of gas, oil, coal and nuclear fuel. This amendment was initiated by the Greens/EFA Group. Our Group is calling on the European Commission to accelerate the transition to 100% renewable energy. The benefits of focusing on energy efficiency measures and expansion of renewables are clear both in terms of energy independence, security and climate.

Russia's war strategy is of unacceptable cruelty. The images of the massacres in Bucha, Irpin and other Ukrainian cities are unbearable. We welcome the fact that the Commission has tasked a joint investigation team together with Ukraine to gather evidence and identify those responsible. Targeting civilians is a war crime and those responsible must be held internationally accountable.

Ska Keller, President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group:

“The war in Ukraine revealed Europe’s strategic mistakes in the past. Even after the atrocities done in Grozny and in Syria, very similar to what we see today in Bucha, even after Putin invaded Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, some governments continued to hope for good business with Russia and made us more and more dependent on goods from Russia, on energy and on other items.

We need to invest heavily in renewables and transition faster than we ever thought. This is, and will be, an enormous effort, and it won’t happen overnight. But we need to redefine what it means to act as fast as possible. We need to move to light speed. We need to save energy. Therein lies the huge potential that remains untapped so far. And this is true for individuals, sure, but also and even more so for industries and for policies –and the European Parliament must join efforts here as well.”



GreensEFA Full embargo on Russian imports of gas, oil, coal, and nuclear fuel

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Pay transparency

On Tuesday, the European Parliament voted in favour of the mandate to start negotiations with the Council on the Pay Transparency Directive. This directive is a crucial tool in the fight against the gender pay gap, currently at 13% EU-wide. With this strong mandate, led by Greens/EFA MEP Kira Marie Peter-Hansen as rapporteur, the European Parliament has given its go ahead for inter-institutional negotiations to start. The Greens/EFA Group applaud the progress for women's rights taken by this vote, and have long pushed for action to be taken to close the gender pay gap.

Kira Marie Peter-Hansen, Greens/EFA MEP and European Parliament rapporteur for the Pay Transparency directive in the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, comments:

"Today, the European Parliament has shown that we can be a parliament for progress and women's rights. Pay transparency is the best tool we have to close the gender pay gap and I am very happy to start trilogue negotiations with such an ambitious and strong mandate from this chamber. This legislation has the potential to eradicate unjust gender differences at workplaces across the EU."

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur for the Pay Transparency directive in the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, comments:

"This text is ambitious, far-reaching and has the potential to make a real difference. We will defend this mandate in the negotiations with the Council to finally close the gender pay gap in the near future."

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Ongoing hearings under Article 7(1) TEU regarding Poland & Hungary

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced on Tuesday that the Commission will trigger the Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism against the Hungarian government. The Conditionality Mechanism has been in place since January 2021. The Greens/EFA Group took the Commission to the European Court of Justice over their failure to trigger the Mechanism. The Greens/EFA Group now call on the Commission to follow through with the announcement and formally trigger the mechanism without delay.

Daniel Freund MEP, Greens/EFA Member who negotiated the text on behalf of the group from the Budgetary Control Committee, comments:

"It was a strategic mistake not to trigger the mechanism long before the Hungarian elections. The Commission's lack of action on Hungary has shown that wannabe autocrats in other Member States can easily follow Orban's lead and bend the rules of democracy while using EU money for their own benefit. The Commission must now follow through on today's announcement and formally trigger the mechanism."

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA Member who negotiated the text on behalf of the group from the in Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, and shadow rapporteur on Poland, comments:

"The Commission must show that they are serious about defending the rule of law by taking action against the government of Poland, as well. There is a strong case to be made for triggering the regulation against the Polish government and the longer the Commission dithers, the worse the damage to democracy will become. So long as the independence of the judiciary is in question and ECJ rulings are not implemented, the rule of law is under threat in Poland."

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Right to repair

On the initiative of the Greens/EFA, the European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the right to repair. With this resolution, the European Parliament reaffirms its stance as a defender of consumer rights. Citizens should be encouraged to make use of their right to repair, which would stimulate more sustainable consumption, a reduction of waste and negative impacts on the environment. The resolution calls for longer-lasting and repairable products, the strengthening of consumer rights and guarantees for a longer use of goods.

In the context of the New Consumer Agenda and the Circular Economy Action Plan, the European Commission is considering proposing a separate legislative act on the right to repair in September 2022.

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Situation of women in Afghanistan

On Thursday, Members of the European Parliament voted on a resolution on the Situation in Afghanistan, in particular the situation of women's rights. The situation has increasingly worsened since the Taliban takeover last year, with close to 25 million people currently in need of humanitarian aid. Repression against women and girls has tightened. The Greens/EFA call for a strong and joint response to the ongoing humanitarian and human rights crisis.

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur of the resolution on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the situation of women's rights and member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, comments:

“The Taliban takeover has made the lives of all Afghans extremely dire, and the crisis has been deepened by the drought, the pandemic, the indirect impact of international sanctions and the overwhelming level of food insecurity. Women and girls are facing particularly difficult conditions under Taliban rule.

We call for a review of sanctions, ensuring that these do not undermine the basic rights of Afghan people. The EU should create alternative ways to reach the population and step up humanitarian aid. We call upon the High Representative and the Commission to step up EU coordination for evacuation of the Afghan human rights defenders who wish to leave, and to press Member States to enhance their visa and resettlement policies, as well as a clear safe passage to our embassies and the European Union. We must invest in protection of Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries. Our solidarity with Ukrainian refugees has shown that we have the capacity to welcome and protect those in need. Let’s make sure every refugee has the same rights.”

Hannah Neumann MEP, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, comments:

“Civil disobedience is on the rise in Afghanistan. Brave women and girls are protesting for their right to education and are organising their resistance against Taliban oppression. As the Greens/EFA Group, we are calling on member states’ governments to act now on their promises and coordinate the evacuation of those who need to leave and support those who want to stay with a fund. We have a responsibility towards all Afghan women and girls, and we must not abandon them.”

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Greens/EFA motions for resolution

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- [MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the start of the implementation of the 2021-2027 cohesion policy](#)
- [MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the conclusions of the European Council meeting of 24-25 March 2022, including the latest developments of the war against Ukraine and the EU sanctions against Russia and their implementation](#)
- [MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the situation of the rule of law and human rights in the Republic of Guatemala](#)
- [MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on human rights situation in North Korea, including the persecution of religious minorities](#)
- [MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the EU’s protection of children and young people fleeing the war in Ukraine](#)

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