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News | 20.01.2023

Debriefing of the January Plenary Session

16-19 January 2023

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Election of a Vice-President of the European Parliament

On Wednesday, Members of the European Parliament voted to elect Marc Angel MEP (S&D) as Vice President, sitting in the Bureau of the Parliament. The vote was held in the wake of the suspension of the former Vice President Eva Kaili, who was caught up in allegations of corruption at the heart of the 'Qatargate' scandal. The Greens/EFA Group had selected Gwendoline Delbos-Corflied MEP to run for Vice President. Delbos-Corfield is a long-time corruption fighter, champion of ethics and integrity and European Parliament Rapporteur on the situation in Hungary.

Terry Reintke MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, comments:

"Amidst its biggest corruption scandal the majority of the Members of the European Parliament did not seize the momentum to vote for Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, the candidate with the highest expertise on ethics, transparency and fighting corruption. Power games and backdoor deals among the biggest groups seemed to be more important.

"We congratulate Marc Angel on his election as Vice-President of the European Parliament, the Greens/EFA Group will continue to apply pressure on this House to put in place a zero-tolerance strategy on corruption.

We need stronger and better oversight of MEPs, as well as greater transparency of their assets, lobbyists, as well as sanctions for Members who do not comply with ethics rules."

Philippe Lamberts MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament, comments:

"People need to trust that ethics and integrity are at the heart of the work of MEPs. That is why we cannot allow half measures or paper reforms when it comes to the fight against corruption. We will hold the new Vice President, the Bureau, and all MEPs to account to ensure that we have the strongest possible measures in this house."

"All organisations and third country interest groups that lobby EU policy makers must be on the EU's transparency register. We urgently need an independent ethics body with the power to investigate all EU institutions, agencies, and bodies."

- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Benoît Biteau
- More: Greens/EFA Group propose transparency and integrity measures

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The terrorist threats posed by far-right extremist networks

At the end of 2022, German law enforcement uncovered and arrested a network of right-wing terrorists belonging to the so-called *Reichbürgerbewegung*. This network is just one example of the rise of right-wing violent extremism in recent years, not only in Germany, but across the EU. The Greens/EFA Group requested the debate held on Wednesday to send a clear message against these developments. The group called for authorities and law enforcement in all the EU not to turn a blind eye on this substantial threat to our democracies. We also called for broader prevention measures, including education and integration, and a strong response from civil society to step up against fascism everywhere.

- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA

The storming of the Brazilian democratic institution

On Wednesday, MEPs debated the storming of the Brazilian democratic institution.

The Greens/EFA Group condemn these anti-democratic acts of violence and illegal occupation in the strongest possible terms. These attacks on the country's Congress, Supreme Court and presidential palace are direct attacks on democracy in Brazil. The objective was to destabilize the new government and create chaos, and was not the result of spontaneous protests, but had been prepared for weeks.

The Greens/EFA Group called for a thorough investigation at all levels into the circumstances that led to the attacks as well as the omissions of state institutions that failed to act to prevent the attacks. The group is particularly concerned with the role played by social media in promoting aggressive rhetoric, election fraud narratives, violence, and disinformation since the election in October 2022. The Greens/EFA Group

also called for solidarity and support with President Lula, the rule of law and the Brazilian democratic system.

- Text adopted
- Social Media: Twitter - Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter - Anna Cavazzini

Executions of protesters in Iran

On Wednesday, MEPs debated the EU's response to the ongoing protests and executions in Iran with the High Representative Borrell. The human rights situation in Iran has deteriorated drastically over the winter break. Iranian security forces continue clamping down heavily on protesters and have executed at least four young protesters in the last two months. All of them were in their early twenties.

The Greens/EFA Group called on the EU to increase pressure on the Iranian regime to stop the crackdown and the executions, and to find ways to help protesters on the ground as well as the Iranian diaspora.

Ernest Urtasun, Vice-President of the Greens-EFA, following the adoption of a resolution on the" EU response to the protests and executions in Iran" by the European Parliament:

"The European Parliament today spoke out strongly against the Iranian regime's violent repression and killings of its people. The Islamic Republic must be held accountable for its crimes and must allow access to the newly established UN fact-finding mission.

We call for an extension of sanctions against the most senior representatives of the Islamic Republic, starting with Ayatollah Khamenei and President Raisi.

We also ask the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to be listed as terrorist organisation while avoiding negative consequences for humanitarian aid and Iranian conscripts.

The Iranian regime should stop the executions, release all the imprisoned protesters, and abolish the death penalty.

For the Parliament, the seriousness of the breaches of human rights jeopardizes the Iran nuclear deal. Iranian people deserve justice and solidarity. We must increase our support inside and outside the country."

- Text adopted
- Social Media: Instagram – Hannah Neumann
- Social Media: Twitter – Hannah Neumann
- Social Media: Twitter – Hannah Neumann
- Social Media: Twitter - Ernest Urtasun
- Social Media: Twitter - Tineke Strik
- Social Media: Twitter - Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA

Uber lobbying practices in the EU

On Wednesday, MEPs debated the revelations regarding Uber's lobbying practices in the EU. Uber is the

biggest platform work company and has been able to roll out its business model by operating illegally, dodging labour laws, and employing aggressive lobbying tactics. By hiring drivers and riders as self-employed, Uber avoids paying taxes and social security contributions, leaving workers without any social protection, and denying basic workers' rights such as minimum wages and sick pay.

In December the European Parliament adopted its proposal for rules aimed at strengthening platform workers' rights. However, Uber's lobbying machine managed to convince some who will vote to weaken these rules. The Greens/EFA Group strongly condemned Uber's exploitation, calling for fairness to prevail and for strong support on workers' rights.

- Social Media: Twitter – Mounir Satouri
- Social Media: Twitter – Kira van Sparrentak
- Social Media: Twitter – Tilly Metz
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA

Food price inflation debate

During the last couple of years food prices have surged, leading to millions of people in the EU struggling to pay for food. Between January 2021 and January 2022, the price of a tonne of wheat rose from 275$ to 475$, and that trend has only been exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. In May 2022 alone, food inflation reached 7.5%. The consequences of this price explosion are devastating. Every time food prices rise by just 1%, 10 million people are thrown into extreme poverty worldwide. We need to tackle the price surge at its root.

Part of this food inflation is driven by speculation and not only by market fundamentals such as disruptions in the supply chain. Food speculators bet on food prices by buying futures contracts from farmers, gambling that prices will rise and that they will be able to sell at a higher price in the future.

In situations of crisis and market instability – like now, with Putin's war in Ukraine – they act as hunger and war profiteers. Food speculators make the food markets highly volatile by playing with the principle of supply and demand. All at the expense of consumers world-wide who pay a higher price for their food. The Greens/EFA Group called to address this issue by strengthening the regulatory framework of financial markets to limit speculation on essential food commodities.

Waste Shipment Regulation

On Tuesday, the European Parliament voted on a report on the regulation of waste shipment. MEPs supported a proposal by the Greens/EFA MEP Sara Matthieu to ban exports of plastic waste to non-EU countries. This will only allow shipments of waste to third countries if their environmental and health standards are equivalent to those of the EU. It's a victory for nature by limiting waste exports significantly. The EU is finally taking responsibility for the waste it produces.

- Text adopted
- Social Media: Twitter – Sara Matthieu
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Ernest Urtasun
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA

- Social Media: Instagram – Greens/EFA

Presentation of the programme of activities of the Swedish Presidency

On Tuesday, the Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson presented the priorities of the Swedish Presidency. The Greens/EFA are concerned with the new direction of the Swedish government, its reliance on the support of the far right, and the lack of ambition on climate and environmental policies.

- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA

More

- Storming of the Brazilian democratic institutions
- Humanitarian consequences of the blockade in Nagorno-Karabakh
- EU response to ongoing protests and executions in Iran
- Situation of Journalist in Morocco, notably the case of Omar Radi
- Establishment of a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 17 February 2023

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Community manager

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