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Debriefing of the November Plenary Session

20-23 November 2023

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HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN GAZA

MEPs debated the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The Greens/EFA Group is calling for an urgent ceasefire agreement in Gaza, and for humanitarian aid to be allowed to reach people. We call for the unconditional release of hostages in Gaza, the safe evacuation of civilians, respect for international law and human rights and for a two-state solution. A political solution is the only way to secure lasting peace in the region and to bring an end to the cycle of violence. The EU must use all the tools at its disposal to help bring peace to the people of Israel and Palestine.

Terry Reintke MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, previously commented:

“The humanitarian situation in Gaza is deteriorating badly. Civilians are dying. Children are dying. People are in need of everything: Food, water, medical supplies. The EU must do everything in its power to provide help to these civilians. And the Israeli government has a responsibility to adhere to international humanitarian law, avoid civilian deaths wherever possible. We must see restraint and precision in the Israeli government's

response to terror, both to reach the hostages and to avoid civilian casualties."

- Israel-Gaza: Greens/EFA Group call for an urgent ceasefire agreement

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COP28 RESOLUTION

As 2023 is on track to be the hottest year on record, it is clear that time is running out to maintain the 1.5°C target. Therefore, the importance of the UN Climate Conference in the fight for saving the climate cannot be underestimated. Greens/EFA successfully pushed for the European Parliament to call for the agreed loss and damage fund to finally be established and staffed with fresh money, much more overall ambition to significantly lower emissions, a concrete date for the phase out of fossil fuels and an end of fossil subsidies. The first review after the Paris Agreement ("global stocktake") sets the moment to end the fossil fuel era. The Greens/EFA call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, for tripling renewable energy, doubling energy efficiency and concrete plans and measures to phase out all fossil fuels as soon as possible. Climate justice towards all who are suffering from the global north's vast output of emissions needs to be translated into concrete action. On the model of the accountability framework for the tobacco industry, we call for limiting the fossil fuel industry's lobby influence.

We urge for the United Arab Emirates to free political prisoners, to stop repressing the human rights movement and climate activists and we call for the UN to integrate human rights criteria in the selection process for future COP28 host countries.

Pär Holmgren MEP, Greens/EFA lead negotiator for the COP28 resolution, comments:

"The Climate Conference is a crucial moment for the climate and the planet. The Greens/EFA call for an end of the fossil era and a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. Public money is needed to invest in renewable energy projects, boosting climate action, economy and industry.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Social media
- Blog article

PESTICIDES

MEPs decided on the European Parliament negotiating mandate for the Sustainable use of Plant Protection Products Regulation (SUR), seeing a rejection. The EU's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies set EU-wide targets to reduce the use and the risk of chemical pesticides and the use of the more hazardous pesticides by 50% before 2030. The Commission proposal published in June 2022 would put this into law, transforming the current Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive into a Regulation.

The numerous negative effects of pesticides on biodiversity, non-target organisms like pollinators, and human health are obvious and well documented. This law is crucial to finally reduce the use of chemical pesticides in the EU and enable a shift to more sustainable farming practices by providing much-needed support for farmers. Beyond reduction targets, it will also set legal obligations for users of pesticides with regard to training, advice and the need for mainstreaming non-chemical alternatives and the introduction of preventative measures.

Sarah Wiener MEP, Greens/EFA MEP and European Parliament rapporteur for the SUR, comments:

"Today, Members of the European Parliament failed to agree on a position on the proposed pesticides regulation. This is a bitter blow for the protection of the environment and public health. To put it bluntly - the majority of MEPs put the profits of big agri over the health of our children and the planet.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Social media

NEW ZEALAND TRADE AGREEMENT

MEPs voted on the trade agreement with New Zealand. The agreement marks a turning point in EU trade policy, as it sets new enforceable standards on climate and sustainability, which the Greens/EFA have long campaigned for. The EU model for trade agreements must be further improved and must include, among other things, concrete targets and a clear roadmap for the implementation of sustainability commitments and phase out of fossil fuels.

- Text adopted
- Article

HUNGARY

MEPs debated the ongoing assault on democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law in Hungary. Recently, the governing Fidesz party announced it would table a new 'sovereignty law' that could be used to further attack NGOs and independent journalists. Prime Minister Viktor Orban was recently photographed shaking Vladimir Putin's hand as his government continues to block EU support for Ukraine in the Council. The Spanish Council Presidency failed to hold a hearing on Article 7 during this week's General Affairs Council and the Commission has been edging closer to releasing frozen structural funds. The Greens/EFA Group are calling on the Council to pursue the Article 7 procedure against the Hungarian government and for the Commission to hold its nerve on the requested reforms in the face of Orbán's blackmail tactics.

- EUCO quote from Terry Reintke MEP

CO2 STANDARDS FOR TRUCKS, TRAILERS, COACHES & BUSES

MEPs debated measures to strengthen the CO2 emission performance targets for new heavy-duty vehicles. The Greens/EFA Group sought to maintain the previously agreed outcomes of the ENVI committee vote, which includes an emissions reduction target of -90% by 2040, ensuring that virtually all new urban buses on the EU market as of 2030 will be zero-emissions. The standards will, for the first time, include CO2 targets for utility vehicles such as rubbish trucks and and smaller trucks. These measures will accelerate the decarbonisation of the sector. Ambitious CO2 emissions reduction targets will lead to the progressive phasing-out of combustion engines in the trucks and buses market. This will considerably improve air quality across Europe, cleaning up air pollution in cities across the EU. With 70,000 Europeans dying

prematurely each year due to pollution from road transport, we cannot afford to dilute or delay these measures further.

Bas Eickhout MEP, Greens/EFA Vice President and European Parliament Rapporteur for this file comments:

"Making road transport more sustainable is not only crucial for the climate, it is also one of the best ways to tackle air pollution in our cities. We need to accelerate the electric transition and give clarity to the industry so that truck manufacturers can invest in the vehicles of the future.

- Clearing the road for cleaner transportation
- Text adopted
- Press release
- Social media

NET ZERO INDUSTRY ACT

The Net Zero Industry Act is the first legislative proposal at EU level truly dedicated to industrial policy. Greens/EFA have welcomed the Union's initial intention to act in a unified manner to boost our manufacturing capacity for key clean energy technologies. However, parliamentary work has significantly watered-down and shifted these ambitions. Therefore, the Greens/EFA group will next week table amendments to this act in an effort to bring back the necessary focus on the decisive technologies, and to introduce vital environmental safeguards.

- Text adopted

PACKAGING

The European Parliament voted on its position on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation ahead of the trilogue negotiations. The Greens/EFA strongly welcomed the Commission's proposal, which laid down binding packaging waste reduction targets for the first time along with concrete waste prevention measures.

Unfortunately, the final vote from Parliament considerable weakened the initial proposal. The Greens/EFA strongly supported setting reuse targets for key sectors during negotiations. However, an unprecedented lobby effort by the single-use packaging industry seriously weakened the level of ambition leading to a rejection.

- Text adopted
- Press release

RIGHT TO REPAIR

The European Parliament adopted its position for the trilogue negotiations on the Right to Repair report. This is a landmark file that will set the tone for a more affordable, sustainable, and circular future for

consumers. It gives an overdue update to our high consumer protection standards in the internal market resulting in less electronic waste and products that last longer.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Social media

JOBS & IMPACT INVESTMENTS IN A JUST TRANSITION

MEPs voted on the Just Transition report, led by Greens/EFA MEP Sara Matthieu. It highlights the potential both to create significant numbers of new jobs and to transform existing employment into green and sustainable jobs in the green transition.

The decarbonisation of the European economy will come with the opportunity to create new jobs, especially in the energy and circular economy sectors. But it will be also an opportunity for working people to have better jobs, with stable employment, fair pay, and decent working conditions, with workers and trade unions being involved at every stage of the process.

- Text adopted
- Social media
- Blog article

BUDGET

The EU's budget for 2024 was agreed in late-night negotiations between Members of the European Parliament, Commission and Council. The Greens/EFA Group managed to secure increases for the LIFE programme, Erasmus, Horizon and the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism as well as greater support for the southern neighbourhood under Next Generation EU. MEPs debated the outcome of the negotiations on Tuesday. The Greens/EFA Group called for an agreement on the revision of the EU's long-term budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework, by the end of the year.

- Text adopted
- Parliament to vote on MFF revision - quote from Rasmus Andresen

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GREENS/EFA MOTIONS FOR RESOLUTIONS

- Killing of Tamaz Ginturi, a Georgian citizen, by Russia's occupying forces in Georgia
- Latest attacks against women, women's rights defenders in Iran, and its arbitrary detention of EU nationals
- Unlawful detention of President Mohamed Bazoum in Niger

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Conservatives and Social Democrats Put Jobs at Risk

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