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Debriefing of the October I plenary session

3-6 October 2022

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Energy prices: Vote on the resolution and debate on excess profits and cost of living

On Wednesday, Members of the European Parliament voted on the resolution on the EU's response to the increase in energy prices in Europe. The Greens/EFA Group called for increasing the windfall tax on fossil energy companies and extending it to other sectors, which did not receive a majority.

Marie Toussaint MEP, Greens/EFA member who negotiated the resolution on behalf of the Group, comments:

"Unfortunately, the majority of MEPs have failed to provide clear answers to the energy crisis. We need ambitious measures, going far beyond what the European Commission has put on the table. We proposed a ban on supply cuts and housing evictions, the introduction of a price cap on gas imports, the extension of the tax on super-profits to all multinationals, and increased investment in renewable energy.

"We cannot fight this crisis with fossil subsidies for new gas pipelines - such as MidCat - and gas companies. We need European money to massively promote the expansion of renewables and to relieve the burden on our

citizens. National measures must not lead to fragmentation and imbalances in the EU. The EU needs to extend the windfall tax to all companies benefiting from the current crisis and ensure a fair distribution of the money across the EU."

Bas Eickhout MEP, Greens/EFA Vice Chair of the Environment Committee, comments:

"The European Parliament has wasted an opportunity here to call on EU Member States to do more to address the acute energy and climate crisis and growing financial distress among Europeans. The windfall tax on fossil fuel companies and energy-saving interventions decided by ministers fall short of leading Europe fairly and sustainably through this crisis.

"We cannot just focus on short-term solutions to get through this crisis, we need a serious long-term vision on how to reach energy independence and guarantee security for citizens. That means massive investments in renewables now to ensure that our continent is powered 100% by green energy by 2040 at the latest.

"We need an EU-level solution for unprecedented social, geopolitical and climate challenges in the years ahead. That's why we urgently need an RRF-style EU solidarity fund that would effectively protect small businesses and vulnerable households from inflation and energy insecurity. We need a solidarity fund to guarantee the large-scale investments necessary for building insulation, energy savings and renewable energy across the EU."

- Text adopted
- Statement by Greens/EFA MEPs Rasmus Andresen & Ernest Urtasun calling for a new EU solidarity fund in the face of the energy crisis and ongoing war in Ukraine.
- Greens/EFA Press Release
- Social Media: Instagram - Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Marie Toussaint
- Read more: Energy poverty handbook

Commission proposal for measures under the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation in the case of Hungary

On Tuesday, MEPs debated proposals by the Commission to protect the EU budget from systemic corruption in Hungary in public procurement, under the rule of law conditionality mechanism. The Commission appears to be moving toward deeming anti-corruption proposals by the Hungarian government satisfactory enough to suggest for the Council to end the process, without any measures being imposed.

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA negotiator for the rule of law conditionality mechanism, comments:

"Less than a month after MEPs declared Hungary is no longer a democracy. Still, the European Commission is not doing enough to freeze funding to Hungary and to properly protect the EU budget. The Commission's proposals under the Conditionality Mechanism are too narrow and inadequate to address systemic corruption and state capture in Hungary."

"The Commission must fulfil its role of the Guardian of the Treaties and stop treating the rule of law as negotiable and use the conditionality mechanism properly. This cannot just be a paper tool that is nice in

theory. Therefore, the Commission should launch a new conditionality check based on the problems with the independence of the judiciary in Hungary, where the budgetary implications are clear-cut."

Daniel Freund MEP, Greens/EFA negotiator for the rule of law conditionality mechanism, comments:

"The conditions that the Commission has set are far too weak. Viktor Orbán and Fidesz have spent the last twelve years dismantling democracy and the rule of law. The Commission has not proposed a single measure that would make courts and public prosecutors independent again."

"Without an independent judiciary or an independent prosecutor, anti-corruption measures will not work. Hungary is no longer a democracy and the Commission's efforts will not change that without decisive action. With the rule of law mechanism, the Commission has a strong instrument that it is employing way too late and far too cautiously. It is absurd that Viktor Orbán can avert these sanctions before the end of the year with a few pseudo-reforms."

- Greens/EFA Press Release
- Social Media: Instagram – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA

A common charger for electronic devices

In two years, consumers in the EU will finally be able to charge mobile phones, tablets, and digital cameras with one single cable. The common charger for electronic devices will reduce electronic waste, save resources, limit extraction of raw materials, and is a victory for the environment as well as for consumers in the EU. The Greens/EFA Group has pushed for this to be as widely applicable as possible, and as a result, the standard USB-C cable will be able to fast charge any small-medium device from laptops to e-readers in the future as well. The group has also pushed for the so-called unbundling of chargers and devices, allowing consumers to buy them separately.

Anna Cavazzini, Greens/EFA MEP and Chair of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee and shadow rapporteur on the single charging cable, comments:

"The common charger is a great success for the environment, as it will save up to 1000 tonnes of electronic waste every year across Europe, and a victory for consumers as it means an end to cable clutter. One cable will be all you need.

"The European Parliament has pushed for this legislation to be as widely applicable as possible, so the standard USB-C cable will be able to fast charge any small-medium device from laptops to e-readers in the future as well.

"The compromise found with the Council allows consumers to purchase devices and cables separately. This option is crucial as consumers now have the sustainable choice."

- Text adopted
- Greens/EFA Press Release
- Social Media: Twitter - Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Instagram – Greens/EFA

The death of Mahsa Amini and the repression of women's rights protesters in Iran

Debate with High Representative Borelli with resolution

Thursday, the European Parliament voted on a resolution on the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and the repression of women's rights protesters in Iran. The Greens/EFA strongly condemn the death of Mahsa Jina Amini, and all victims of unrestrained violence of security forces. The Greens/EFA call on the Council and Commission to apply pressure to the Iranian authorities to immediately stop violence against protesters and to keep the internet accessible for all.

Ernest Urtasun MEP, Greens/EFA Vice-Coordinator of the Foreign Affairs Committee and European Parliament rapporteur of the resolution on the death of Mahsa Jina Amini and the repression of women's rights protesters in Iran, comments:

"It's been over two weeks since Jina Amin was killed by Iranian morality police and the Iranian authorities have been unable to provide accountability for her or any of the 76 protesters deaths that have occurred since. We therefore call on the Iranian authorities to hold an independent, impartial and prompt investigation into the death of Jina Amini and to stop the violence directed against peaceful protesters and human rights defenders.

"Over the past four decades, Iranian women have continued to peacefully protest against the compulsory hijab rules and the violations of their fundamental human rights. Today we want to express our solidarity with women in Iran and the protests across the country.

"We call on the EU and its Member States to use all engagements with the Iranian authorities to put an end to the violent crack-down of protests and to ask for the abolishment of all laws and practices that deprive women of their autonomy and rights. Respect for human rights needs to be a core component in the development of EU-Iran relations."

- Text adopted
- Greens/EFA Press Release
- Social Media: Twitter – Marie Toussaint
- Social Media: Twitter – Kira M. Peter-Hansen
- Social Media: Twitter – Terry Reintke
- Social Media: Twitter – Ernest Urtasun
- Social Media: Twitter – Ernest Urtasun
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Greens/EFA
- Social Media: Twitter – Diana Riba i Giner
- Social Media: Twitter – Tineke Strik
- Social Media: Twitter – Sara Matthieu
- Social Media: Instagram – Greens/EFA

Accessibility in the EU Internal Market

Tuesday, MEPs debated and voted on the report on the Accessible EU Centre. Greens/EFA MEP Katrin Langensiepen was rapporteur on the report, which was adopted with a broad majority: 611 in favour, 3 against, and 9 abstentions.

The Accessible EU Centre will soon be created by the Commission, impacting the lives of 100 million persons with disabilities throughout the EU. This report, on initiative of the Greens/EFA Group, calls on the Commission to guarantee an ambitious and inclusive Centre. This requires adequate funding and more cooperation with accessibility professionals, organisations representing people with disabilities, public and private actors at national and EU level. The goal is to tackle the lack of qualified accessibility experts, as well as to support the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of accessibility-related legislation and make the life of persons with disabilities easier.

- Text adopted

Ocean Governance and the protection of biodiversity

On Thursday, MEPs passed a resolution on momentum for the ocean: Strengthening Ocean governance and biodiversity. The resolution calls for the EU to stand as a leader in protecting the oceans, restoring marine ecosystems, and raising awareness about the essential role that the ocean plays in maintaining a liveable planet. It also underlines that the upcoming climate (COP27), and biodiversity (COP15) conferences will be crucial to ensure that the oceans stays at the centre in the fight against climate change, and recognizes that the good health of our oceans and seas is crucial for maintaining their role in mitigating climate change. Finally, the resolution stresses that combatting the degradation of the ocean requires a considerable joint effort and calls for global, systemic, integrated, and ambitious governance.

- Text adopted
- Social media: Twitter - Grace O'Sullivan

Flexible Assistance to Territories (FAST CARE) package of support for EU regions affected by the war in Ukraine and the COVID 19 pandemic

Tuesday, MEPs voted on the Flexible Assistance to Territories (FAST CARE) package of support for EU regions affected by the war in Ukraine and the COVID 19 pandemic. FAST CARE will see added flexibility for EU structural funds to be used to support regions in their efforts to assist those fleeing the war in Ukraine. FAST CARE is a follow up programme to CARE and CARE+, emergency measures designed to finance refugee support projects. This is the EU level response to Member states requesting greater financial support and flexibility during the current crises.

Niklas Nienass, Greens/EFA MEP and European Parliament Rapporteur for the FAST CARE package, comments:

"In the face of Russian aggression, the EU must act with speed and determination to support all those fleeing the war in Ukraine. We must support the towns, cities and regions that are taking in refugees. MEPs have voted to increase support for refugees, to include third country nationals, and to reduce the financial burden felt by regions.

"We welcome that FAST CARE will be implemented so quickly, in order to ensure that money can go to those who need it most. The EU is demonstrating the ability to react quickly in a crisis and to deliver where it is needed.

"These emergency measures are necessary and vital to support both regions and local NGOs in helping

refugees affected by the war in Ukraine. However, the Commission should look to new sources of emergency funding in the future. Cohesion Policy is designed to minimize inequalities in the long run. The priorities of regional funds, such as supporting the green transition and strengthening social policies, should not be sidelined."

- Text adopted
- Greens/EFA Press Release

Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- EU's response to the increase in energy prices in Europe
- Situation of human rights in Haiti in particular related to gang violence
- Death of Mahsa Amini and the repression of women's rights protesters in Iran
- Media freedom crackdown in Myanmar, notably the cases of Htet Khine, Sithu Aung Myint and Nyein Aye
- Recent humanitarian and human rights situation in Tigray, Ethiopia, notably that of children
- Resolution on Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine

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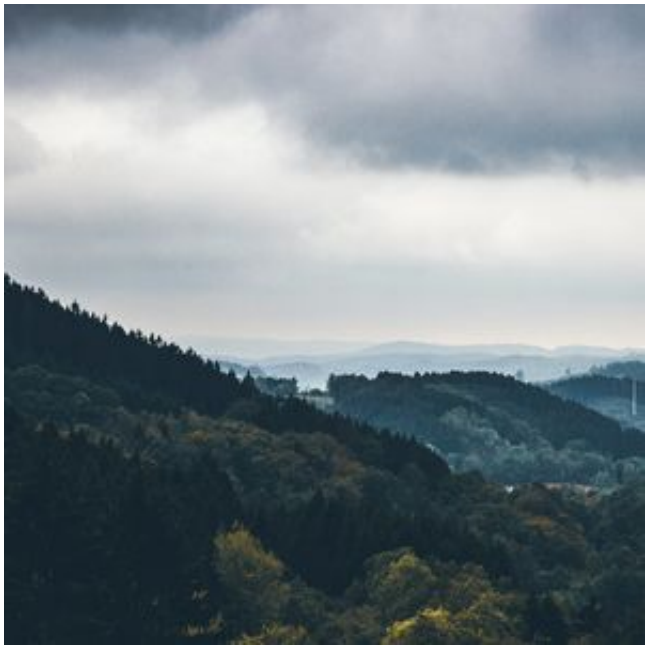
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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 21 October 2022

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Press release

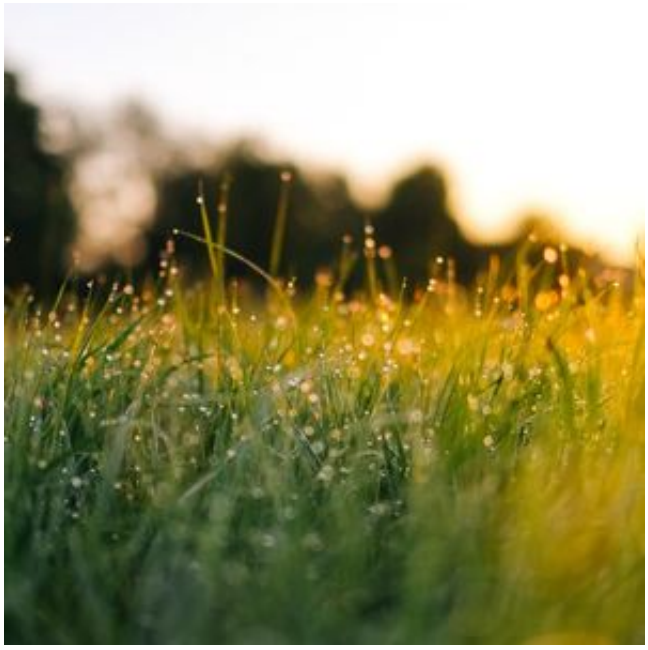
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