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News | 14.09.2018

Greens/EFA Debriefing

Plenary week, 10-14 September 2018

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The Future of Europe debate with the Prime Minister of Greece

Tuesday, 11 September

The European Parliament continues its series of debates on the Future of Europe with the Prime Minister of Greece, Alexis Tsipras.

In his speech, Mr Tsipras referred to the 2019 elections as a battle to save the EU from political forces seeking to destroy it and therefore urged progressive forces to form a broad alliance. He also strongly defending the way Greece exited the bailout programme which entailed austerity measures in the crisis-hit country.

Speaking on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group, **Ska Keller** stated: *"In Greece, Europe broke one of its fundamental promises, to bring prosperity to its citizens. Instead it brought poverty. Europe didn't find a solution based on solidarity and solidity. Our lesson from this needs to be that we finally create a social union."*

Apart from emphasizing the need to build a social Europe, with binding targets and legal instruments, **Ska Keller** also insisted on the urgency of the ecological transition. She underlined the role played by Greek people in welcoming migrants and also congratulated Tsipras for the success of the agreement between Greece and FYROM.

- [Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller](#)
- [See our Future of Europe section](#)
- [Future of Europe debates calendar](#)

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Autonomous weapon systems

Wednesday, 12 September

MEPs adopted Wednesday, by a very large majority, a resolution calling for a legally binding international ban of autonomous weapon systems.

The technological development of lethal autonomous weapon systems (or so-called killer robots) is advancing extremely fast and it is the responsibility of parliaments and governments to agree on international regulations for these weapons. The Greens/EFA initiated a plenary debate and resolution on this important question for our common future.

Greens/EFA security policy spokesperson, **Bodil Valero** MEP, commented:

"Autonomous weapons systems must be banned internationally, the power to decide over life and death should never be taken out of human hands and given to machines."

The text adopted by a large majority is based on our ideas and calls on High Representative Mogherini and EU countries to urgently develop a common position in order to speak with one voice at international level, and to work towards an international ban treaty on killer robots. The joint text adopted stresses that no money from the future European Defense Fund goes into the research and development of killer robots.

The resolution initiated by the Greens/EFA was adopted by a large majority of the European Parliament (566 votes in favour, 47 against and 73 abstentions).

- [Greens/EFA Resolution on lethal autonomous weapons systems](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Reinhard Bütikofer](#)
- [Social media](#)

Further information

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The rule of law in Hungary

Debate Tuesday, 11 and vote on Wednesday, 12 September

For the first time ever the European Parliament voted on a resolution calling on for sanctions against one Member State, and in this case Hungary. The debate took place in presence of the Council and of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

In an unprecedented move, Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of starting procedures against the Hungarian government for breaching European values on the rule of law (Article 7 of the TEU). The resolution by Greens/EFA rapporteur in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) **Judith Sargentini** was supported by over two-thirds of MEPS. As a next step, the report will now be debated by EU member states in the Council.

"Viktor Orbán's government has been leading the charge against European values by silencing independent media, replacing critical judges, and putting academia on a leash.

The Hungarian people deserve better, they deserve freedom of speech, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice and equality, all of which are enshrined in the European treaties. This is a historic result for

Hungarian citizens and for European citizens everywhere, that the European Parliament has voted by a large majority to stand up for the values we all hold dear" *declared **Judith Sargentini** after the vote.*

- [Sargentini report](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [How MEPs voted](#)
- [Plenary speech by Greens/EFA rapporteur Judith Sargentini](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Q&A on Hungary](#)

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Language Equality in the Digital Age

Vote Tuesday, 11 September

The European Parliament has overwhelmingly endorsed (592 votes in favour, 45 against, 44 abstentions) a report by EFA MEP Jill Evans which calls for action at the EU level to bridge the digital language divide. The report looks at the use of languages in digital technology and makes a number of recommendations for action by the European Commission. Although the Commission acknowledges that the Digital Single Market must be multilingual, no comprehensive EU policy has been proposed to address the problem of digital language barriers.

Language technologies are becoming central to our lives, but much of this technology is only available in a few widely-spoken languages. The EU is investing very little in language technologies compared with the USA and Asia, and Europe is falling behind.

The report calls on the EU to improve the institutional frameworks for language technology policies; create new research policies to increase the use of language technology in Europe; use education policies in order to secure the future of language equality in the digital age; increase the support for both private companies and public bodies to make better use of language technologies.

- [Report by Jill Evans](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [Plenary speech by EFA MEP Jill Evans](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Conference on Language Equality in the Digital Age](#)

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State of the European Union

Wednesday, 12 September

Commission President Jean Claude Juncker's final State of the Union speech addressed many issues including rule of law, Brexit, borders, Greece, 2019 European elections and Spitzenkandidaten, digital tax, EU-African trade agreement.

Ska Keller, President of the Greens/EFA group reacted to President Juncker's speech by pointing out nationalism and racism as the inside enemies of Europe but also less obvious ones, like “the decision-makers refusing to take decisions or wanting to keep the status quo and the parties and governments, of who use the EU as scapegoat and are cutting away democracy and civil liberties”.

In her speech, Greens/EFA Co-President stated that increasing quality of life for all should be a major policy goal and is the essence of all policy making. She stressed the need for common minimum social standards in Europe and for a framework directive on adequate minimum income schemes; she urged for action about climate change and a quick shift to renewables and a phasing out of coal. Last but not least, referring to the situation of EU countries where judges are dismissed, corruption legalized, newspapers closed and civil society treated as criminals, she reaffirmed that Europe must stand as the champion of democracy and rule of law for all its citizens and that political leaders have to take up their responsibility. “If Europe loses on democracy, it will lose itself”, she concluded.

- [Plenary speech by Ska Keller](#)

Digital copyright

Debate Tuesday, 11 and vote Wednesday, 12 September

Before the summer, the European Parliament decided to rethink its position on EU copyright reform plans, including on upload filters and a “link tax”, after massive protests. Consequently, over 200 individual proposals for changes were filed and submitted to a plenary vote.

The Parliament adopted the report (438 votes in favour, 226 against and 39 abstentions) and the negotiating mandate on copyright reform. For the Greens/EFA, it is disappointing and changes are cosmetic in nature. The European Parliament will now enter into negotiations with the Council and the European Commission ("trilogue") in a weak position. The European Parliament's position on upload filters (Article 13) and on a new right for press publishers (Article 11) are particularly controversial and do not reflect the majority position within the Greens/EFA Group.

- [Press release](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [Plenary speech by MEP Julia Reda](#)

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Dual quality of products

Thursday, 13 September

MEPs adopted Thursday, by a large majority, a resolution on calling for an end of companies producing different quality products for different parts of Europe without the consumer being clearly informed of such a difference. For the Greens, double standards in product quality in the EU are unacceptable. Following on from consumer outcry, after it was revealed that same-branded products have been marketed with differing qualities across Europe, the European Parliament has voted on a report condemning these practices. It is calling for measures at EU level to end such practices.

A Greens/EFA amendment calling for such practices to be included in a blacklist within the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive - practices that are prohibited in all circumstances - was adopted.

Igor Šoltes, Greens/EFA member of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection said: *“It's not just unfair to consumers to market the same-branded products with lower-quality ingredients in different countries, it's bad for peoples' health and for consumer confidence.”*

- [Press release](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [Video \(English\)](#)
- [Video \(Slovenian\)](#)

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Greens/EFA MEPs take EFSA to court over Monsanto studies on glyphosate

Thursday, 13 September

Greens/EFA MEPs **Michèle Rivasi**, **Bart Staes**, **Heidi Hautala** and **Benedek Javor** are taking the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to the EU Court of Justice for its refusal to provide public access to crucial studies regarding the impacts of glyphosate on human health. EFSA is supported in the court case by Monsanto and by Cheminova, whose lawyers declined to attend the public hearing.

For the Greens/EFA, any decision on chemicals which can be harmful to humans or the environment must be based on science – science that must be public and peer-reviewed. In this case, the public interest should supersede Monsanto's and Cheminova's commercial interests.

- [Video - Monsanto's toxic tricks](#)
- [Press Briefing](#)
- [Blog post](#)
- [See our work on pesticides](#)
- [Interview with our MEPs Heidi Hautala, Bart Staes and Thomas Waitz](#)

Further information

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European CO2-regulation for cars and vans

Monday, 10 September

The environment committee (ENVI) of the European Parliament voted on the European Commission's proposal for European CO2 regulation for cars and light commercial vehicles. Members of the committee demanded clear and ambitious targets for cleaner cars. A majority of the committee agreed demanded clear and ambitious targets; i.e. reducing CO2 emissions by 20 percent by 2025 and by 45 percent by 2030. The European Commission had proposed 30 percent by 2030.

*“It is good news that the committee strengthened the Commission's proposal – despite huge lobby efforts and against the votes of the Conservatives” commented Green MEP **Bas Eickhout** after the vote.*

- [Press release](#)
- [The Vision Scenario for the European Union](#)

Further information:

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- [Cambodia, notably the case of Kem Sokha](#)
 - [July 2018 fires in Mati in the Attica region, Greece, and the EU's response](#)
 - [Threat of demolition of Khan al-Ahmar and other Bedouin villages](#)
 - [Myanmar, notably the case of journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo](#)
 - [Uganda, arrest of parliamentarians from the opposition](#)
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