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Flash - Plenary session 8-12 February 2021

Greens/EFA priorities for the part-session

COVID-19 VACCINES

European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, will attend the plenary of the European Parliament on Wednesday to answer questions on the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccinations throughout Europe. The Greens/EFA group back an EU-level approach to vaccine procurement and stress that full transparency around contracts must be guaranteed. The Greens/EFA support the provision of public funds for vaccine development but also expect pharmaceutical companies to deliver the agreed amount. The Greens/EFA group are calling for a global approach to fighting the pandemic, with renewed large-scale investments in both COVAX and existing pharmaceutical production and a temporary waiver of intellectual property barriers within WTO rules.

Debate: 10 Wednesday
Greens/EFA MEPs: Ska Keller and Philippe Lamberts; Tilly Metz and Michèle Rivasi are shadows on this file in the ENVI committee

More:

- Greens/EFA Campaign: No secret deals with our Covid vaccine!
- Greens/EFA Press Release on Affordable and Accessible Vaccines and Medicines

NEW CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

On Tuesday, the European Parliament will decide its position on the New Circular Economy Action Plan, launched by the Commission in March 2020. In total, thirty-five proposals and measures are due to be adopted in the next few years, ranging from a new sustainable product policy framework to waste reduction targets and better waste management of batteries and old vehicles. The Greens/EFA group

welcomes this ambitious plan, but stresses the need for a binding objective to significantly reduce the EU's material and consumption footprint by 2030 and bring it within planetary boundaries by 2050.

Debate: 8 Monday, vote: 9 Tuesday
Greens/EFA MEPs: Margrete Auken (shadow in ENVI), Anna Cavazzini (rapporteur for IMCO opinion) and Jutta Paulus (rapporteur in TRAN)

More:

- Press Release on the launch of the Circular Economy Action Plan | Greens/EFA
- REPORT on the New Circular Economy Action Plan
- New Circular Economy Strategy - Environment - European Commission

RECOVERY & RESILIENCE FACILITY

The European Parliament will give its green light to formally launch the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) on Tuesday. The RFF is at the core of the €750 trillion NextGenerationEU recovery plan. In total, the RRF will make €672,5 billion available (€312.5 billion in grants and €360 billion in loans) for Member States to invest and rebuild after the current crisis. The Greens/EFA have strongly advocated for ensuring a green and social recovery. We welcome the final agreement that requires Member States to invest at least 37% of the money in climate and biodiversity-related measures and that all investments must be consistent with the “do no significant harm” principle.

Debate and vote: 9 Tuesday
Greens/EFA MEPs: Damian Boeselager (shadow in the ECON Committee) and Ernest Urtasun (shadow in the BUDG Committee)

More:

- Press Release on the agreement | Greens/EFA
- REPORT on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Recovery and Resilience Facility

ECB ANNUAL REPORT

On Tuesday, the European Parliament will vote on its annual report on the operations of the European Central Bank (ECB). The Greens/EFA support the emphasis of “action against climate change” in the report, which encourages the ECB to continue its efforts to integrate attention to climate change into its monetary policy measures. Ecology and economy must go hand in hand. The Greens/EFA group have long called for the ECB to be much more active in the fight against the climate crisis and pay more attention to climate-related risks in the financial system. Another welcome inclusion in the report is a call for gender balance in appointments to the ECB executive board and for the Council to draw up gender-balanced shortlists.

Debate: 8 Monday, vote: 9 Tuesday
Greens/EFA MEPs: Philippe Lamberts

ASYLUM: REPORT ON BORDER PROCEDURES

Border procedures are highly controversial, but nonetheless play a major role in the EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum. To this date, these procedures have never been assessed by the European Commission, even though they are legally obliged to do so under the Asylum Procedures Directive. Led by the Greens/EFA rapporteur, Erik Marquardt, the European Parliament has now evaluated the implementation and highlighted severe legal and human rights concerns. The Greens/EFA strongly support this report and encourage the European Commission to take a closer look at the functioning of the EU's border procedures.

Debate 8 Monday, vote 9 Tuesday
Greens/EFA MEPs: Erik Marquardt (Rapporteur)

More:

- For a fair and efficient asylum system in Europe | Greens/EFA
- Marquardt Report on Common Border Procedures (European Parliament)

OSTROVETS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

Belarus is about to launch a nuclear power plant in Ostrovets, a town located only 45km from Vilnius, the capital of an EU member state. The Greens/EFA group has been following this case since construction started and several severe security concerns have been raised. The Greens/EFA Group are calling for construction on this nuclear project to be stopped. On Thursday, the European Parliament will vote on a resolution asking the Commission for further steps to engage with the Belarusian government to, at the very least, make this power plant compliant with European safety measures.

Debate and vote: 11 Thursday
Greens/EFA MEP: Bronis Ropė (Shadow Rapporteur)

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On Tuesday, the European Parliament will vote on a report calling for an EU Strategy on preventing and combating the trafficking of human beings and protecting victims of trafficking. The Greens/EFA group endorse the proposal and stress that it is vital to introduce safe and legal migration routes. The trafficking of human beings is a gendered crime, and to prevent it the EU must challenge gender discrimination and gender-based violence at every level of society. Clear rules to end exploitative working conditions must be established to prevent trafficked people from going unnoticed.

Debate: 8 Monday, vote: 9 Tuesday
Greens/EFA MEPs: Alice Kuhnke (Shadow in LIBE) and Ernest Urtasun (Shadow in FEMM)
More:

- REPORT on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims

GHOST FLIGHTS IN EUROPE

Over the last year, demand for flights has plummeted due to the global pandemic. Usually, airlines must actively use 80% of their airport slots in Europe to avoid these slots being granted to more compliant airlines for the next season. In order to prevent airlines from flying with empty planes simply to secure their slots (known as ghost flights), the EU adopted a temporary waiver of the slot regulation. Demand has now slightly recovered, but a full exemption remains in place until the end of March, meaning airlines can withdraw from their slots without any consequences for their slot entitlements, even at the very last minute. This has a big impact on travellers' planning security. On Monday, the Parliament will vote on reassessing the slot relief proposal to make airlines more reliable while still preventing the need for ghost flights, a compromise welcomed by the Greens/EFA group.

Vote: 10 Wednesday
Greens/EFA MEP: Ciarán Cuffe

DE FACTO ABORTION BAN IN POLAND

On Tuesday, the European Parliament will debate the de facto abortion ban in Poland that entered into force last week. Women are only allowed to obtain an abortion if the pregnancy is a result of rape or incest or when their life is endangered. The abortion ban means that 97,6% of abortions will now be illegal to perform in Poland. The Greens/EFA Group strongly condemns this unlawful decision that will only further strip Polish women of their rights and have a particularly devastating effect on the lives of low-income women.

Debate: 9 Tuesday
Greens/EFA MEP: Sylwia Spurek and Terry Reintke

More: Video: It is time to act for women and LGBTI rights in Poland

MORE

- The full plenary agenda for the week can be found on the Parliament website here.
- The plenary sessions can be followed live here.

GREENS/EFA PRESS CONTACTS

- Simon McKeagney (Head of Communication)
  Simon.mckeagney@europarl.europa.eu
- Alex Johnson (EN)
  Alex.Johnson@europarl.europa.eu
- Pia Kohorst (DE)
  pia.kohorst@europarl.europa.eu
- Guendalina De Sario (FR)
  guendalina.desario@europarl.europa.eu

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Contact person



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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