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Greens/EFA Debriefing

Plenary week, 28-31 May 2018

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Plastics: new directive is an opportunity to take action on chemicals

Commission proposals, Monday 28 May

The European Commission published its proposals for a directive on single use plastics. The Greens/EFA group has welcomed the European Commission's proposals for a directive, but called for stronger reduction targets and action on chemicals used in plastics.

"It is great to see that the Commission wants to ban several single use plastic items, but we should also set concrete reduction targets for some other applications. And the Commission should tighten rules around what can be included in plastics. Toxic chemicals such as phthalates, Bisphenol A or halogenated flame retardants are linked to major health concerns. Given the serious danger posed by adding these chemicals and the obstacles they give to a proper recycling system - we need to get them out of the economy entirely." declared **Margrete Auken**, Greens/EFA MEP and European Parliament's rapporteur for the 2015 EU legislation to reduce lightweight plastic bag use.

- Greens/EFA MEP Margrete Auken comments on the leaked Commission proposal on plastics
- Press release
- Plastic attack video

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Sustainable Finance: sustainability key to future proofing finance

EP - Debate Monday 28, vote Tuesday 29 May

Many pensions and investment products are heavily exposed to dirty fuels that will have no value by the time young people reach retirement. The European Commission published its proposals on 24 May, including a taxonomy for classifying the climate risks of various financial products. The European Parliament voted with a wide majority (455 votes in favour, 87 against and 97 abstentions) in favour of an initiative report from Greens/EFA MEP Molly Scott Cato, setting out the parliament's position on Sustainable Finance. The Greens/EFA group has successfully steered the parliament's position on the sustainability transition to include support for plans to extend the concept of stranded assets to include fundamental ecological systems and services such as unsustainable agriculture.

- Greens/EFA MEP Molly Scott Cato comments on the Commission proposals
- Press release
- Plenary speech by Molly Scott Cato, rapporteur
- Text adopted

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Sustainable fishing: intensity limits need to be respected

EP - Debate Monday 28, vote Tuesday 29 May

The European Parliament voted on the trilogue outcome on the Multiannual Management Plan for the North Sea. While the Common Fisheries Policy sets an upper limit to fishing intensity (known as F-MSY), the North Sea Plan allows fishing at higher levels than allowed under the basic regulation. The Greens/EFA group has condemned the decision of the majority of MEPs to back fishing legislation without guaranteeing meaningful sustainability targets. The European Commission and the Council used a dubious interpretation of the limits when negotiating the Multiannual Management Plan for the Baltic Sea, and have applied this again to the North Sea. This will result in fishing in excess of sustainable levels, and at odds with the provisions of the Common Fisheries Policy. The Greens/EFA group tabled an amendment to mitigate against this, but this was not taken.

MEPs also voted on an initiative report from Linnéa Engström, which presents proposals for controls on EU fish imports to raise standards that imported fish must meet and use the power of the EU market to improve global fishing standards.

- Text adopted - Multiannual plan for demersal stocks in the North Sea and the fisheries exploiting those stocks

- Press release
- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA MEP Linnéa Engström
- Text adopted Conformity of fisheries products with access criteria to the EU market

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Multiannual Financial Framework and cohesion policy

Commission proposals - Tuesday 29 May
EP – vote on MFF resolution Wednesday 30 May

On Tuesday 29 May, the European Commission presented its first sectorial proposals for the post 2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, starting with the European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund and Common Provisions Regulation. "*It is a green success that the European Regional Development Fund will no longer allow investment in fossil fuels, airport infrastructure and landfill. However, we are most alarmed by the announcement that regional funding could be transferred into a new investment fund of the European Commission.", said* ***Monika Vana****, Greens/EFA spokeswoman on regional development.*

On Wednesday 30 May, the European Parliament voted on the resolution on the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework and Own Resources, which criticises the Commission's cuts to cohesion policy. The Greens/EFA group has welcomed the Commission's commitment to creating new Own Resources for the EU budget. The resolution was adopted thanks to a majority of the pro-European Groups : EPP, S&D, ALDE and Greens/EFA.

- Greens/EFA position paper on post 2020 MFF
- Press release
- Text adopted on MFF and own resources

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Trump trade dispute: deadline for steel and aluminium tariffs

EP - Debate on Tuesday 29 May

There was a Commission statement on the US tariffs on steel and aluminium. The Greens/EFA group has consistently called on the EU to defend multilateralism. The situation shows the need for Europe to make its economy less vulnerable to Trump's whims. A strong industrial policy that defends European workers and supports the move to a low carbon economy would put the EU on a stronger footing when facing up to Trump's bullying tactics.

The Greens/EFA request to have a resolution on the debate on US tariffs in the steel and aluminium sector and the EU's response did not get a majority.

- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller

- Press release

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Future of Europe – debate with Luxemburgish Prime Minister

EP – Debate Wednesday 30 May

The European Parliament held a debate with the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Xavier Bettel, on the Future of Europe. During his speech, Greens/EFA group co-president Philippe Lamberts said that Luxembourg's commitment to European integration is undermined by its aggressive tax policies. *"Luxembourg has always declared itself in favour of European integration and there is plenty in its record to vindicate that. It was under the Luxembourg Presidency that the EU sealed the agreement on the pioneering General Data Protection Regulation. Luxembourg has also worked hard to advance equality, in particular for women's rights, and has given the green transition a prominent place in its public policy. It has even emerged as one of the defenders of the European Commission's proposals to protect whistleblowers. But there is one serious problem with this picture - Luxembourg's opposition to any form of tax harmonisation is unworthy of a country that claims to defend the European project."* he said.

- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Philippe Lamberts

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Reform of anti-dumping and anti-subsidy regulations

EP - Vote Wednesday 30 May

MEPs voted on the outcome of trilogues. This is the first time the EU introduces social and environmental standards in the calculation of anti-dumping duties. The EU is also the first WTO member to do so. Following the Regulation on conflict minerals, it is the second time social and environmental considerations become binding criteria in a trade legislation.

- Text adopted

Further information
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Posting of workers

EP – Vote Tuesday 29 May

The European Parliament backed the outcome of trilogue negotiations on the revision of the Posting of Workers Directive. Under the agreement, workers who provide a service in an EU Member State other

than their country of origin will benefit not only from the minimum wage but also from local collective agreements. They shall also be entitled to any travel, accommodation and meals allowances that their colleagues receive. The revisions are expected to enter into force in 2020.
Terry Reintke, negotiator for the Green/EFA Group on the Posting of Workers Directive and social policy spokesperson for the group, commented the vote:*"Posted workers will also receive the same entitlements as their colleagues, making their terms and conditions genuinely equal. One of the great benefits of the EU is being able to live and work in every member state. By ensuring fairness for those working across borders, we're delivering on that promise and making a more genuinely socially-just Europe possible."*

- Press release
- Text adopted

Further information
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Common Agriculture Policy : the future of food and farming

EP - Debate Monday 28, vote Wednesday 30 May

The Greens/EFA group has expressed strong concerns with the European Commission's planned reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, due to be published on Friday (1 June).
The European Parliament backed an own-initiative report on the reforms, which are expected to see CAP spending on rural development cut by 25 percent.
The Greens/EFA Group wants to see a more targeted approach, promoting rural development and small farms and investing money in transitioning to sustainable agriculture. "*Europe needs a radically different agricultural policy. We want to shift direct payments away from industrial scale agriculture and support instead smaller and more sustainable farms. Farmers that meet high environmental, labour and animal welfare standards, including reducing pesticide use, should be rewarded for their efforts", said* **Thomas Waitz**, Agricultural Policy Spokesman of the Greens/EFA Group.

- Greens/EFA CAP proposals
- Press release
- Text adopted
- Plenary speech by Greens/EFA MEP Thomas Waitz

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Objections to the authorization of two GMOs

EP - Vote Wednesday 30 May

The European Parliament, coherent with its criticisms of the decision process, adopted two objections to the authorization of two genetically engineered crops for import into the European Union : genetically modified maize GA21 and genetically modified maize 1507 × 59122 × MON 810 × NK603, both tolerant to one or several herbicides, including glyphosate. The Commission's decision on these two GM maizes is awaited for the coming weeks.
The issue of the way GMOs are being approved in the EU is currently discussed in the European

Parliament, but meanwhile, GMO authorizations have not stopped, quite the contrary. Since the debate started in February 2017, the Commission has tabled 14 new authorizations (seven maize, 4 soybeans, one cotton, one oil-seed rape and one beetroot), which bring the number to an impressive 25 GMOs since December 2015 - more than the two previous Commissions combined!

- Blog post
- Text adopted GM maize GA21
- Text adopted GM maize 1507 × 59122 × MON 810 × NK603 …

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- Situation of imprisoned EU-Iranian dual nationals in Iran
- Situation in Nicaragua
- Situation on women's rights defenders in Saudi Arabia
- Sudan, notably the situation of Noura Hussein Hammad

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