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Greens/EFA Debriefing

Plenary week, 2-6 July 2018

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Austrian presidency: Europe must protect those seeking safety

Debate - Tuesday 3 July

Austria took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union at the beginning of July and the Parliament debated its programme. They want to push for hard-line migration policy during their term in the presidency. The Greens/EFA group has repeatedly made clear that we cannot outsource our responsibility to protect those in need to countries with terrible human rights records and a history of torture or enslavement. The European Parliament has agreed on the need to replace the current Dublin system with binding relocation quotas. The heads of state and government should take this as their benchmark, not Austria's extreme proposals.

"Kurz's government is stirring up fear and division in the European Union. Instead of further ratcheting up the migration debate, Kurz and his government should promote a more social Europe, ensure tax transparency and encourage solidarity between governments. That would be a courageous presidency of the EU Council" declared Greens/EFA Co-Presidents.

- [Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President **Philippe Lamberts**](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Report "Austria – \(still\) open for shady money"](#)

Debate with the Prime Minister of Poland on the Future of Europe

Debate - Wednesday 4 July

The European Parliament continues its series of debates on the Future of Europe with the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki. Earlier this month, the Greens/EFA group organised a cross-party letter calling on the European Commission to take immediate steps to put the brakes on the seriously damaging Polish judicial reforms. The letter called on the European Commission to "immediately start an infringement procedure, in parallel to the Article 7 procedure, and refer the Polish Supreme Court Act to the European Court of Justice."

"The current Polish government is leading the country away from the path of democracy and civil rights. They are undermining the independence of the courts, trying to control political discourse and threatening the freedom of the media. The recent proposals to change the electoral law for the upcoming European elections, which would kick smaller parties out of the European Parliament, is yet another threat to democracy in Poland" commented Ska Keller.

- [Greens/EFA letter to the European Commission](#)
- [Plenary speech by Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller](#)
- [Press release](#)

Greens/EFA topical debate: Europe cannot let the hateful rhetoric of Italy's Interior Minister go unchallenged

Debate - Wednesday 4 July

This session, it is the turn of the Greens/EFA group to choose the subject for the topical debate slot. Earlier this month, the presidents of the Greens/EFA group, alongside those of S&D, ALDE and GUE/NGL, wrote to President Tajani, calling on him to respond directly to the statements of the Italian Minister of the Interior. At a time when many political leaders, here and in the United States, are pursuing alarming and dangerous policies towards minorities, we have to show that there is another face to the European Union, one that is prepared to honour its motto of 'United in diversity'.

"Nationalist ideologies and racism must have no place in Europe. Racism and hatred for minorities should never become socially acceptable again." said Greens/EFA MEP Romeo Franz.

- [European Parliament must speak out against racism and discrimination](#)
- [Plenary speech by Marco Affronte](#)
- [Press release](#)

Reform of the electoral law of the European Union

Vote Wednesday 4 July

The European Parliament gave consent to the reforms to the electoral law of the European Union. The reforms introduce an obligatory threshold of 2 to 5 % for constituencies with more than 35 seats (impacting only Spain and Germany). For the Greens/EFA, these electoral thresholds will damage the diversity of the parliament.

Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur **Josep-Maria Terricabras** commented: *"This unnecessary action will do*

*real damage to European democracy. Every vote in the elections should count but now many voters will have their choice invalidated by an arbitrary threshold.” Greens/EFA transparency and democracy spokesperson **Sven Giegold** added: "For the voters, more has been lost than won. The European Parliament has shown that it is fully functional with small parties so there is no need to curtail the right of voters by putting in place a percentage hurdle.*

- [Press release](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information:

Helena Argerich i Terradas - Advisor on Constitutional Affairs
helena.argerich@ep.europa.eu

Transport workers need dignified work conditions

Vote Wednesday 5 July

Following a challenge from Greens/EFA MEPs and other groups, the European Parliament last month rejected the negotiating mandate for posted workers in the road transport sector. MEPs voted to overturn the decision made in the Transport Committee, where some Social Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives voted to reduce social rights by disregarding principles like 'equal pay for equal work', further reducing adequate rest periods, legally secure entitlement to allowances for travel, accommodation and food. This week, MEPs voted to reject the package, which will now be sent back to the Transport Committee for revision.

- [Press release](#)

Further information:

Hana Rihovsky - Adviser on transport issues
hana.rihovsky@ep.europa.eu

Digital copyright: Greens/EFA group to force vote on controversial copyright proposals

Thursday 6 July

At the end of June, the European Parliament's Legal Affairs committee backed the proposed directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market and the mandate to proceed to negotiations with the European Commission and Council. The Greens/EFA group voted against at committee, citing concerns that the measures would seriously undermine basic internet freedoms, and is currently collecting signatures to challenge the mandate for trilogue negotiations. The requested number of signatures to ask for a vote on the decision to enter into interinstitutional negotiations was largely reached.

The trilogue mandate on the Copyright Directive was rejected. The majority against the mandate was quite clear: 278+/318-/31.

- [Press release](#)

Further information

Anne-Catherine Lorrain – Legal Advisor
anne-catherine.lorrain@ep.europa.eu

European Citizens' Initiative needs serious reforms

Wednesday 5 July 2018

The Greens/EFA group also challenged the trilogue mandate granted by the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs committee on the reform of the European Citizens' Initiative. The European Commission is consistently failing to follow up with meaningful legislative proposals and it's clear that the ECI needs major changes if it is going to deliver on its promise of bringing democracy closer to the people. The majority on the committee blocked Greens/EFA proposals to oblige the European institutions to provide a follow-up to citizens' proposals through a plenary debate and vote on each successful initiative. When one million citizens come together to demand change, they deserve to be treated with more respect than this.

The Greens/EFA voted against the mandate for entering in trilogue negotiations to ensure a stronger position of the Parliament. Unfortunately, the plenary voted in favour of the mandate. However, Greens/EFA will table an amendment to the Rules of Procedure to ensure a proper follow up to all successful ECIs.

Further information:

Helena Argerich i Terradas - Advisor on Constitutional Affairs

helena.argerich@ep.europa.eu

New members of the Greens/EFA Group

Tilly Metz and **Romeo Franz** are the new members of the **Greens/EFA Group** in the European Parliament. Tilly Metz follows **Claude Turmes** who moved to Luxembourg as State Secretary for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure yesterday (Monday, 2 July). Romeo Franz succeeds **Jan Philipp Albrecht**, who will be sworn in as Minister for the Environment, Agriculture, the Energy Revolution and Digitisation in Schleswig-Holstein on 31 August.

- [More info](#)

Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- [Political crisis in Moldova following the invalidation of the mayoral elections in Chisinau](#)
- [Somalia](#)
- [Migration crisis and the humanitarian situation in Venezuela and at its borders](#)

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