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# Greens/EFA Debriefing

## Plenary week, 14-17 January 2019

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**Special Committee on Pesticides (PEST) final report**

The PEST report, co-authored by Greens/EFA MEP Bart Staes, was adopted in its entirety by a very large majority (526 in favour, 66 against, 72 abstentions). The report calls for public access to all industry studies in their entirety to allow for timely independent scrutiny, and to make sure that there are no conflicts of interest in the assessment process. It makes numerous calls on the European Commission and

on Member States to strengthen the health and environmental assessment of pesticide active substances as well as of pesticide products. It calls for a ban of the use of pesticides for pre-harvest applications and in areas used by the general public or vulnerable groups. It asks for a systematic review of all available studies concerning the carcinogenicity of glyphosate and glyphosate-based formulations to assess whether it would be justified to have an ad hoc review of the approval of glyphosate.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video by rapporteur Bart Staes
- Greens/EFA work on pesticides

Further information
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**Glyphosate: copy, paste, approve**

Ahead of the vote of the final report of the special committee on pesticides, Bart Staes, along with MEPs from other groups, presented new research proving that German authorities (the Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung) copy and pasted industry text for their conclusions on the renewal of the hazardous product “glyphosate”. This worrying new development sheds light on the failure of regulators to stand up to the power of industry when it comes to the authorisation of dangerous substances.

- Detailed Expert Report on Plagiarism and superordinated Copy Paste in the Renewal Assessment Report (RAR) on Glyphosate

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**Gender equality and taxation policies in the EU**

Greens/EFA co-rapporteur Ernest Urtasun presented a joint report calling on the European Commission to end gender-discrimination in taxation policies through the individualisation of tax systems and for VAT exemptions for essential basic goods such as sanitary products.

MEPs voted in favour of the report which calls for the elimination of gender biases present in many tax systems in the EU, which are indirectly reinforcing current gender gaps (employment, income, unpaid work, pension, poverty, wealth, etc.), creating disincentives for women to enter and remain in the labour market, and reproducing traditional gender roles and stereotypes. It also specifically calls for the individualization of personal income taxation and the elimination of the "care and tampon tax" in the EU.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video by rapporteur Ernest Urtasun

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**The UK's withdrawal from the EU**

With this deal largely expected to fail to win the required number of votes, UK MPs should know that there is a way out of this, should they wish to re-join the European family. T*he Greens/EFA group has made it clear repeatedly that the European Union should welcome the UK back with open arms.*

A debate took place in the European Parliament just a few hours after the rejection of the Brexit deal by UK MEPs in Westminster.

*For the Greens/EFA, this devastating defeat for Theresa May cannot be seen as a crisis but as an opportunity to break the deadlock in the UK Parliament and take the question of Brexit back to the people. The time for political games is over, the solution to this crisis must be put to the British public.* Under no circumstances can the UK be allowed to crash out of the EU in March, UK MPs must work towards building a positive majority to rule out no-deal.

- Video by Greens/EFA Co-President Philippe Lamberts
- More on Brexit

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**Romanian Presidency -** Debate with Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă

This month marks the start of the six-month Romanian EU Council Presidency. With vital topics such as tax transparency, whistleblowing and climate action to shepherd through before the EU elections in May and rampant corruption at home, the Romanians have their work cut out over the next few months.

*The nature of the EU Council Presidency means that an additional focus is given to the Member State holding the reigns. In a country where just under €40 billion a year is lost to corruption, the Romanian government should take the opportunity of the Presidency to prove its commitment to the fight against corruption, the rule of law and European values. The rest of Europe is watching.*

Ska Keller addressed the Romanian PM on behalf of the group.

- Video with Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller
- Press release

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**Future of Europe debate with Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister of Spain**

At the occasion of the Future of Europe debate in the European Parliament with the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, the Presidents of the Greens/EFAgroup, Ska Kellerand Philippe Lamberts,call on the Spanish government to be more vocal in Europe and to resolve the conflict in Catalonia.

*"The Spanish government shows in many areas that a greener and a more social Europe is possible. We welcome the Spanish government's very concrete measures to help families in need and to bring forward the energy transition. We call on the Spanish Prime Minister to bring this voice to meetings with his colleagues in Brussels where it is very much needed."* saidGreens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller.

- Video Greens/EFA Co-President Ska Keller

- Press release
- More on Future of Europe

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**Nuclear decommissioning**

MEPs adopted by an overwhelming majority Thursday a report by Greens/EFA MEP Rebecca Harms on the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania.

During Lithuania's accession to the EU, it was agreed that the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, which was imposed on Lithuania during the Soviet occupation and included two Chernobyl-type reactors, will to be closed over safety concerns. In turn, the EU agreed to foot a substantial amount of the bill. With each MFF, the EU defines the amount for the next 7 years as well as other key points of the Ignalina programme. This time, the Commission's proposal for the next MFF was not very favourable to Lithuania. Yesterday MEPs supported Lithuania's arguments and voted for the European Union to contribute €780 million in the 2021 to 2027 budget, rather than the initial €552 million proposed by the European Commission.

Rebecca Harms, Greens/EFA rapporteur for the programme on decommissioning the Ignalina nuclear power plant, commented:

*"The European Union must be a reliable partner for Lithuania in decommissioning the Ignalina nuclear power plant and phasing out nuclear energy. The European Parliament is sending a signal of reliability in assisting the people of Lithuania in the decommissioning of the outdated Ignalina nuclear power plant."*

The Parliament also voted in favour of the future funding for Euratom Research Programme and for further additional billions for the building of ITER, an experimental fusion reactor. The Greens/EFA group opposes more taxpayers' money being spent on nuclear power and voted unanimously against these reports. On a more positive note, our amendments on gender equality and ethics were, against the will of EPP & ECR, included in the final Euratom text.

Texts adopted

- Nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania
- Euratom Research and Training programme 2021- 2025
- The European Joint Undertaking for ITER and the Development of Fusion Energy

- Press release

Further information

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**The Fiscalis programme for cooperation on taxation**

The European Parliament adopted Thursday, by a very large majority, a report by Greens/EFA MEP Sven Giegold on the Fiscalis programme for cooperation on taxation.

Fiscal fraud very often takes place by exploiting loopholes in bilateral tax treaties and fiscal competition in an international dimension, that's why the fight against tax avoidance and evasion and financial crime cannot be tackled effectively solely by individual countries.

Greens/EFA rapporteur Sven Giegold argues that the Fiscalis programme will concentrate EU intervention on setting up efficient mechanisms and the indispensable IT tools for administrative cooperation, aiming at providing more effective tools for national tax authorities in their fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance, while indirectly facilitating taxpayer's tax compliance.

Our amendment to include joint audits, which had been lost at Committee level, has also been taken on board.

The file has been referred back to Committee for inter-institutional negotiations.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- More on tax justice

Further information
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**Rights and values**

The European Parliament adopted Thursday a report by Greens/EFA MEP Bodil Valero on establishing the Rights and Values programme.

Democracy and rule of law in Europe are under threat. That is why one of the Greens/EFA group's core priorities is the adoption of a strong Rights and Values Programme, which would provide the much needed support for civil society groups defending and promoting democracy, equality and the rule of law in the EU.

Greens/EFA rapporteur Bodil Valero argues that this instrument should be adequately funded and easily accessible for supporting citizens and civil society engaged in promoting these most endangered European values.

Bodil Valero, rapporteur on the Rights and Values Programme, commented: *"All EU countries have the duty to respect the rule of law, which is a basic principle that the EU is based on. We must give the EU both a carrot and stick when it comes to defending the rule of law. That's why it's vital to set higher demands on how EU money is spent."*

MEPs also debated on the protection of the EU's budget in cases of where there are deficiencies in the rule of law in Member States.

- Text adopted
- Press release

Further information
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**Fundamental Rights**

The European Parliament adopted Wednesday MEP Josep-Maria Terricabras' report on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union in 2017.

Despite the fact that basic rights must be respected by both the European Union and the Member States, when implementing EU law, we continue to witness breaches and violations of rights. The report focuses topics chosen due to their social and political impact and because of there is a perception that the issues need to be addressed urgently. These include the rule of law, women's rights, migration, media freedom, freedom of expression and assembly, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, hate speech and other forms of intolerance and the role of the Agency on Fundamental Rights.

- Text adopted
- Press release

Further information
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**EU Western Sahara**

Members of the European Parliament voted on the amendment of the EU-Morocco trade agreement. The agreement is set to expand trade advantages for exports into the EU from the part of the territory of Western Sahara that wasillegally annexed by Morocco in 1975. The EU does not formally recognise Moroccan claims of sovereignty over the territory.

This deal runs counter to European and international law, was negotiated without the consent of the indigenous Sahrawi people, and comes in the wake of a serious conflict of interest scandal involving, among others, former Rapporteur Patricia Lalonde from ALDE and Gilles Pargneaux from the S&D. The Greens/EFA group voted against the agreement.

*"It's astonishing that this vote was even going ahead when such serious questions around conflicts of interest hang over the process. The whole deal should have been rejected outright and the agreement submitted to the European Court of Justice for review prior to any vote."* commentedHeidi Hautala**,**Vice-President of the Greens/EFAgroup in the European Parliament

- Text adopted

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**Greens/EFA motions for resolutions**

- Azerbaijan, notably the case of Mehman Huseynov
- Sudan

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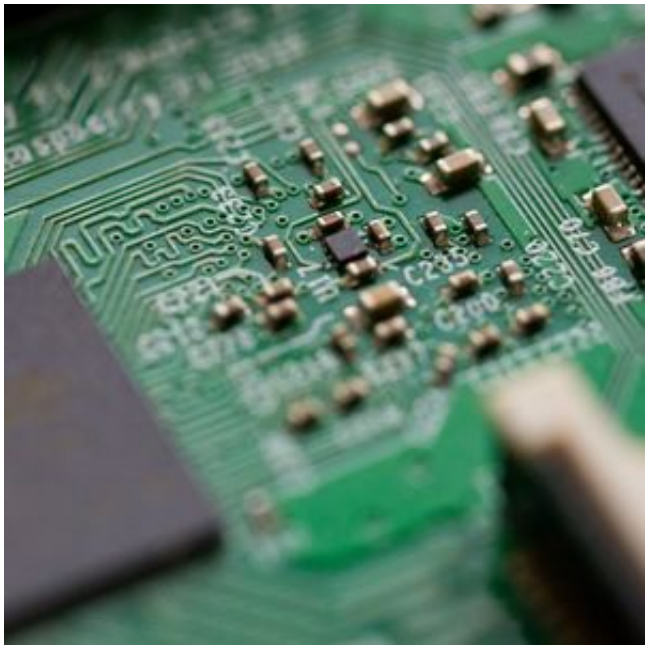
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*Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 15 February 2019*

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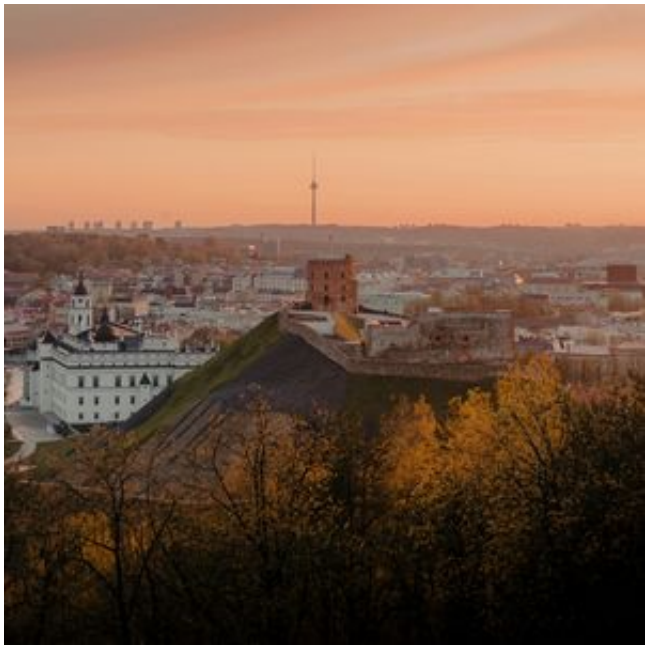
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