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Greens/EFA Debriefing

Plenary week, 11-15 February 2019

EU-Singapore trade agreement

Debate and vote on Tuesday, 12 February

The European Union's trade agreement with Singapore and the accompanying investment protection agreement were adopted by the majority of Members of the European Parliament. The Greens/EFA voted against.

Heidi Hautala, Vice-President of the Greens/EFA Group and spokesperson on trade comments:"The agreement with Singapore is a deal against a sustainable and fair international trade policy. The liberalisation of financial services and a broad right of action for investors place financial profit above environmental protection and consumer protection. Even public government bonds can be the subject of investor lawsuits. Public services are less protected than, for example, in the CETA agreement with Canada. We reject international trade agreements that come at a social and environmental cost. The bottom line for trade agreements must be the Paris Climate Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. “

The Greens/EFA group called for a delay to the consent of the Investment Protection Agreement, because of significant concerns over the inclusion of public debt. Moreover, a ruling is pending before the ECJ concerning the compatibility of the Investment Court System (ICS) within CETA with the EU Treaties which is expected for publication around May. Hence, the ratification of the Singapore agreement (which also contains ICS) prior to the final ruling is ill-timed. The Greens/EFA group is against all EU trade agreements with third countries which perpetuate special foreign investor protection rights.

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video – Reinhard Bütikofer
- Greens/EFA interactive page on trade

Further information:

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Debate with the prime minister of Italy on the Future of Europe

Tuesday, 12 February, 17:00-19:30

The Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte addressed the European Parliament in the "Future of Europe" debate.

The President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, Philippe Lamberts, criticized the Italian government for its short-sighted economic and social policies:

"Italy has the potential to play an exemplary role in the ecological and fair transition of the European economy. For a long time, Italy has been in a difficult budgetary situation and previous Italian governments have not helped much to improve this. However, theatrical and provocative politics betrays the seriousness of the Italian situation. The Italian government should embrace those who believe that the architecture of the Euro needs to be reformed. Building alliances would be much better for Italy than trying to undermine cooperation.

"There are a lot of movements and individuals in Italy that stand for an ecological transition, however these voices are not being heard by the Conte government, which seems to prefer to push for large infrastructure projects like the tunnel in the Suse valley that threaten nature. We are with those who fight for an ecological Italy based on solidarity with strong civil society and we support the appeal 'Onda verde e civica'."

- More on Future of Europe
- Video – Philippe Lamberts

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EU gas directive - final trilogue

Tuesday, 12 or Wednesday, 13 February

On the night of the 12 February 2019, trilogue negotiations were concluded on the revision of the Gas Directive, which enlarges EU market rules to gas pipelines entering the EU from third countries. The revision will require that pipeline projects between Member States and third countries, such as Russia do abide to rules such as ownership unbundling or third party access, including Nord Stream 2. The revision therefore reduces monopoly suppliers and thus increase supply security.

Benedek Jávor MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the Gas Directive commented: "*The agreement will help implementing solidarity among Member States and will enshrine the role of the Commission in new agreements or requests for exemptions. The German government's approach to Nord Stream 2 sells their EU partners short and flies in the face of European solidarity. If Nord Stream 2 would get a free ride from EU*

rules, this would undermine the entire security of the EU. Today's deal is thus a clear message to Germany to duly consider interests of its EU partners and stop moving ahead with bilateral pipeline policies..

- Press release

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Final trilogue on copyright

Wednesday, 13 February

Trilogue negotiations on the Copyright Directive finalised a text containing a worrying version of Article 11 creating a new right for press publishers (also called the 'the link tax'), and the most negative version of Article 13, concerning upload filters, to date. It goes beyond any text the Parliament has previously agreed to by including even small businesses in the controversial upload filter provision, which were previously excluded by Parliament.

Negotiators also watered down the authors' right to proportionate remuneration to the point of being useless, by explicitly allowing total buy-out contracts in the final text.

The Greens/EFA group will now fight to have the link tax and upload filters rejected in the final plenary vote before the end of the Parliamentary term.

Julia Reda, Greens/EFA Vice President and shadow rapporteur on the Copyright Directive said : "*The content of the deal on the table no longer resembles what the Parliament voted for. We urge the whole Parliament to reject the Directive's most harmful Articles 11 and 13 on the link tax and upload filters. The current deal is a backwards step for freedom of expression online, but it's not the end of the road, we can still fight against damaging upload filters and a link tax. We need to send a clear message that we want to protect authors' rights as well as users and small publishers.*"

The final vote in plenary could be as soon as 25-28 March, 4 April, or at the latest 15-18 April.

- Press release

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EU-Morocco Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreement

Consent vote on the agreement on Wednesday, 13 February

Members of the European Parliament voted in favour of the planned fisheries agreement between the European Union and Morocco. The vast majority of the catches under this agreement are however to take

place to the waters of Western Sahara, occupied by Morocco. This agreement contravenes international law and violates the rulings of the European Court of Justice of February 2018 and December 2016.

On the initiative of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, before voting on the consent to the EU-Morocco agreement, MEPs voted on whether to refer the agreement to the European Court of Justice. Unfortunately the majority of the Parliament voted to allow the agreement to proceed without the scrutiny of the ECJ.

Linnéa Engström, Fisheries spokesperson for the Greens/EFA group, declared: “This agreement was concluded without the consent of the people of Western Sahara in direct contravention of the ECJ's ruling. It's time for the EU to develop a more suitable fisheries policy than one that takes advantage of unresolved conflicts at the cost of others abroad."

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video – Linnéa Engström

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Palm oil

This week, the European Commission finally published its draft decision on palm oil. The draft decision recognises palm oil as an unsustainable biofuel, but leaves some big loopholes to be closed.

"The good news is that after years of the Greens/EFA group fighting against the incredibly damaging effects of mass palm oil production on forests, animal habitats and the environment, the European Commission finally acknowledges that palm oil is not a sustainable biofuel."

"The bad news is that the loopholes in the proposal are too big and will allow the big producers of palm oil to continue to wreak destruction.

The battle is not over, the proposal is under consultation for the next four weeks so we, along with civil society and the public, still have time to close these loopholes and clamp down on destructive palm oil entering the EU" declared **Bas Eickhout**, Greens/EFA rapporteur on the file.

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EU blacklist on money laundering

The European Commission has unveiled its 'blacklist' of 23 jurisdictions where there is a significant risk of money laundering or terrorist financing. The list contains 'third country' jurisdictions and includes places such as the Bahamas, the US Virgin Islands, Panama and Saudi Arabia.

The list will require all financial and credit institutions, real estate agents, providers of gambling services

doing business with persons established in the jurisdictions on the blacklist to undertake enhanced due diligence on transactions.

The blacklist comes as a result of the EU's Anti-Money Laundering Directive, which obliges the Commission to undertake assessments of the jurisdictions which have strategic deficiencies in their national anti-money laundering regimes that pose significant threats to the financial system of the Union. Although the EU already had such a list, it is the first time that the Commission produces an evaluation using its own technical methodology, which was a long term demand of the European Parliament. However, transparency over the whole process of selection and evaluation of countries needs to be improved.

Judith Sargentini, Greens/EFA rapporteur on the Anti-Money Laundering Directive comments:*"The publication of the blacklist is a victory in the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing and will make it harder for criminals and the corrupt to shift their dirty cash into Europe. European Commission assessments of jurisdictions where there is a risk of money laundering and enhanced due diligence of business will help reduce huge flows of illicit funds from entering the EU."*

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Protection of animals during transportation

Debate on and vote on Thursday, 14 February

The implementation report was adopted in plenary. For the Greens/EFA group, this report sends an important signal to the European Commission that the current regulation is inadequate and in desperate need of revision. The time has come to ensure that Member States enforce regulation on the welfare of animals during transportation consistently and thoroughly, and for infringement proceedings to take place against those that do not.

Our group welcomes that the adopted text calls for maximum 8hours journey time to slaughter and calls to reduce the journeys of unweaned animals, such as unweaned calves or lambs, to a maximum of 1.5hrs and 50km, given the difficulty of ensuring the welfare of these particularly vulnerable animals. The report also recommends the call for an inquiry committee to investigate failures to apply the current rules on animal welfare in transport.In November 2018, several Greens/EFA MEPs brought a case to the ECJ against the conference of the presidents' decision not to put the establishment of an inquiry committee to vote in plenary.

- Text adopted
- Video - Thomas Waitz

Further information:
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Regulation establishing the European Labour Authority

Negotiations on the European Labour Authority were concluded with stronger protections for workers using their free movement rights. The European Labour Agency will strengthen the functioning of the Internal Market and will help better detect mailbox companies, bogus self-employment and other fraudulent business practices across all EU Member States and mediate between national authorities in labour disputes. European level social partners will be involved in the governance structures and it will cooperate closely with national social partners. The Greens/EFA group have long argued for a more social Europe that protects workers' rights.

“The European Labour Authority will support free movement and the rights of all workers, it will be able to coordinate inspections throughout Europe and ensure compliance with the rules. This is a big step towards a more social Europe." declared **Jean Lambert**, Social Policy spokesperson for the Greens/EFA Group.

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Your message for the climate: Upload your picture!

United we can fight climate change! Over the past few months, young people across Europe have been marching on our streets to raise their concerned voices against the biggest threat mankind has ever faced. Greens/EFA want to bring their voice to the European Parliament. Politicians should not ignore, but listen to the thousands of people fighting for climate protection in the streets. The tool will enable young people to upload a picture with their own favorite climate message.

- **Upload your picture**

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Fix Globalisation - new video and interactive webpage

Globalisation currently demands twice the resources our planet can provide. Climate-proofing our trade agreements needs to be an EU priority. That is why we have published our new 'Green Trade for All' paper, that highlights 12 bold new ideas to transform the system to ensure maximum human well-being with the minimum use of resources.

- Visit our interactive webpage
- Watch our video

Further information:
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Recommended

Press release



EU caves in to the fossil fuel lobby

19.11.2026

Press release

karsten-wurth-unsplash

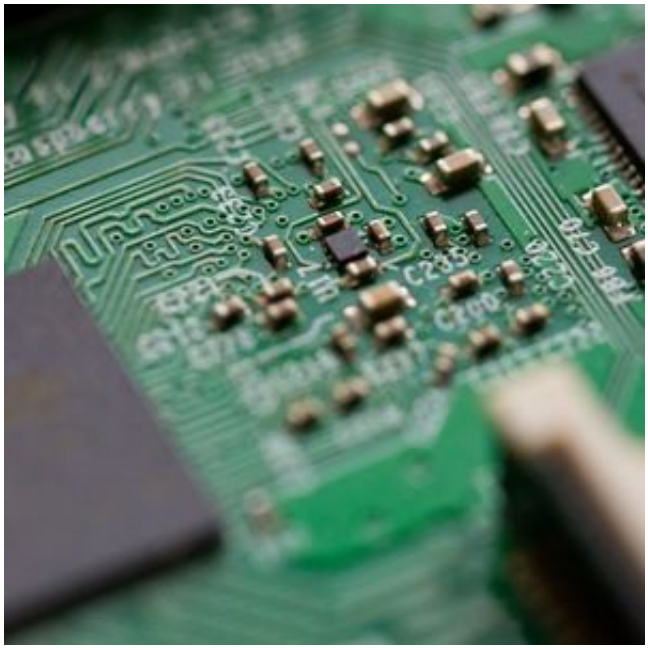


[Court upholds EU climate rules - EU must now show lead…]

12.11.2026

Press release

chris-ried



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11.11.2026

Opinion

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