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## Greens/EFA Debriefing

Plenary week, 21-24 October 2019

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### EU budget 2020

*Debate Tuesday, vote Wednesday*

Parliament casted its vote on the budget for 2020. In the Parliament's position on the European Commission's proposal, MEPs want the budget to be increased by three billion euros from 168 to 171 billion calling for investments of more than two billion euros in climate protection and around 500 million euros in the fight against youth unemployment and the Erasmus youth exchange programme. Due to efforts of the Greens/EFA group, the European Parliament pushed for the first time for a budget line for an EU sea rescue mission. Now the European Council will need to decide on the proposals.

*"The European Parliament has taken a bold step towards a more forward-looking and greener budget. Member States must now agree to putting more money where it's needed."* said Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur **Rasmus Andresen**.

- [Press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by MEP Daniel Freund](#)

- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

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## **Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean**

*Debate Wednesday afternoon, vote Thursday*

At the request of the Greens/EFA group, an Oral Question by the LIBE committee on search and rescue in the Mediterranean, with resolution, was debated. The Greens/EFA group is calling on EU Member States to assume their responsibilities to prevent people dying in the Mediterranean. Europe has a humanitarian responsibility and a moral duty to rescue people in danger and needs to urgently equip itself with an EU Search and Rescue mission, ensuring that lives are no longer lost at sea. The criminalisation of NGOs saving lives must end.

Unfortunately, the resolution was voted down. The Parliament was not able to agree on a text that would have called for sustainable and long-term Search and Rescue in the Mediterranean.

- [Plenary speech by MEP Erik Marquardt](#)
- [How MEPs voted](#)

Further information

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## **Turkish military operation in northeast Syria and its consequences**

*Debate Wednesday morning, vote Thursday*

The Parliament debated on the Turkish military operation in Northeast Syria and its consequences. The Greens/EFA group wanted to see a firm response from the EU side, an EU arms embargo, and a call for the immediate withdrawal of Turkish troops. The EU has a strong responsibility towards Syrian refugees in Turkey.

The joint motion for resolution supported by EPP, S&D, RE, Greens/EFA and GUE was adopted by a large majority.

- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by MEP Tineke Strik](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [Group statement](#)

Further information

Raphael Fisera - Advisor on Human Rights / Middle East & North Africa

## Assessment of the impact of plant protection products on honeybees

*Vote Wednesday*

The European Parliament adopted an objection to a European Commission's proposal modifying the framework for the assessment of pesticides. The objection led by the Greens/EFA group, which is equivalent to an effective veto by the European Parliament, is due to the European Commission's failure to take chronic toxicity into account. Chronic toxicity is of crucial importance for proper protection of bees. By failing to take up chronic toxicity in the harmonised assessment regime, the European Commission is contravening the objective of the Pesticides Regulation to ensure a high level of protection of animal health and the environment.

*"This change of legislation has received relatively little attention so far because it has been discussed behind closed doors at the technical level. It's time for the European Commission to present a proper proposal at the political level so that Member States can be held accountable for this issue and then many EU countries might change their tune"* said Greens/EFA MEP **Bas Eickhout**.

- [Press release](#)
- [Briefing document](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [More about greens/efa work on pesticides](#)

Further information

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## Public country-by-country reporting

*Debate Tuesday evening, vote Thursday*

The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament has pushed for a debate on the state of play of tax transparency for large multinationals (public country-by-country reporting).

Members of the European Parliament have voted on a resolution calling on Member States to make progress on measures designed to improve tax transparency for multinationals. In the five years since the LuxLeaks scandal, which showed the extent of multinational tax avoidance, EU Member States have blocked a European Commission proposal on public country-by-country reporting (CbCR) from April 2016. The German government, together with a handful of EU tax havens, have blocked action.

*"The Council has an obligation to act on the proposal on the table. The blockade against tax justice in the Council by Member States must end otherwise we risk losing further the trust and support of the European citizens that are expecting the EU to act decisively on tax avoidance and tax evasion."* said **Sven Giegold** MEP, Greens/EFA spokesperson on economic affairs.

On Friday there will be the first opportunity in months for the Member States to discuss the Country-by-country reporting proposals in a working party meeting, where a decision can be taken by qualified majority voting.

- [Press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by MEP Ernest Urtasun](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

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## **Opening accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania**

*Debate Wednesday afternoon, vote Thursday*

On 18<sup>th</sup> October, the European Council summit failed to reach an agreement on opening EU accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania,

The European Parliament, on the initiative of the Greens/EFA group, adopted a firm response to the decision by three countries (France, Denmark and the Netherlands) to block opening EU accession talks with North Macedonia and Albania at last week's European Council. The resolution also calls the European Council should not wait until May 2020 to find another opportunity to open accession talks but already give green light for both countries at their next meeting.

Reinhard Bütikofer MEP, Greens/EFA coordinator in the Foreign Affairs Committee, commented : *"It is in the interest of no one to leave those countries in the lurch because we know that's the best way for them to move away from democracy and the rule of law. Not opening negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania is a serious blunder and damages the EU's standing with our closest neighbours."*

- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Plenary speech by MEP Marcel Kolaja](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

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## **Announcement of 2019 Sakharov Prize winner**

*Conference of Presidents of the Political Groups, Thursday*

The Conference of Presidents decided to award the 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Ilham Tohti. This award sheds light to his fight for the rights and culture of China's Uighur minority. He was sentenced to life in prison in 2014. Greens/EFA call for his release. The Prize award ceremony will take place on 18th December at 12:00 hours in plenary in Strasbourg.

- [Press release](#)

Further information

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## **GREENS/EFA MOTIONS FOR RESOLUTIONS**

- [Egypt](#)
  - [Uganda, notably the proposed bill to impose capital punishment of homosexual acts](#)
  - [Proposed new criminal code in Indonesia](#)
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**Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 29 November 2019**

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