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News | 20.12.2019

Greens/EFA Debriefing

Plenary week, 16-19 December 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **Rule of Law in Malta, following recent revelations around the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia**
- **Conflict of interest and corruption affecting EU's financial interests**
- **Situation of the Uyghur in China and Sakharov prize award ceremony**
- **EU pollinators initiative to protect bees and other vital insects**
- **Animal welfare during transport**
- **EU-Mercosur and the European Green deal**
- **Election of the EU Ombudsperson**
- **ECJ ruling on Greens/EFA MEP Oriol Junqueras**

Rule of Law in Malta, following recent revelations around the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia

Debate with resolution Tuesday, vote Wednesday

On the initiative of the Greens/EFA group, the European Parliament has just voted on a resolution on the Rule of Law in Malta, after the recent revelations around the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. The vote calls on the Commission to enter into dialogue with the Maltese Government in the context of the Rule of Law Framework. In recent weeks, close allies of the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat have resigned and been implicated in the murder. PM Muscat has said he will step down in January.

"The European Commission can no longer turn a blind eye to the culture of impunity when it comes to money laundering and corruption in Malta. The newly elected Commission must begin dialogue with the Maltese government on the rule of law with a view to commencing Article 7 proceedings, if no immediate progress is made from the Maltese side." said MEP Sven Giegold.

- Video - Sven Giegold
- Press release
- Text adopted

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Conflict of interest and corruption affecting EU's financial interests

Debate Tuesday

According to leaks in the Czech media, the European Commission's audit into EU payments for non-agricultural funds to the Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš's Agrofert group of companies has found he is in conflict of interest. The leaked audit, which is the first to come out, finds that around €11 million of non-agricultural EU funds will need to be returned. A second audit looking into the potential conflicts of interest around EU agricultural subsidies and Agrofert is expected next year. The Greens/EFA group have pushed for a debate on the situation around conflicts of interest and EU funds.

A plenary debate and a resolution on the Babiš case might be planned for January.

- Video - Viola von Cramon-Taubadel
- Press release

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Situation of the Uyghur in China and Sakharov prize award ceremony

Debate with resolution on Wednesday and vote on Thursday; Sakharov award Wednesday

The Parliament debated the plight of the Uyghur in China, with a statement from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In the adopted resolution, the deputies demand the closure of the detention camps, the release of Ilham Tohti and all others prisoners for exercising their freedom of expression and an export ban on surveillance technology to China.

Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur economist fighting for the rights of China's Uyghur minority, will receive the Sakharov prize on Wednesday. In 2014, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Despite this, he remains a voice of reconciliation, an advocate of the implementation of regional autonomy laws in China.

- Greens/EFA motion for resolution
- Video - Reinhard Bütikofer
- Press release

- Text adopted

Further information:
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EU pollinators initiative to protect bees and other vital insects

Council and Commission statements, debate with resolution on Tuesday, vote Wednesday

Insect species are declining at an alarming speed. Without the around 11,400 species of insect pollinators whole ecosystems would collapse.
The resolution was adopted by a large majority including all Greens/EFA amendments. It calls on the Commission to extend the ban imposed on imidacloprid, clothianidin and thiamethoxam to all neonicotinoid-based pesticides; calls on Member States to align their assessments of pesticides pending the full adoption of the EFSA bee guidance at EU level. It also considers it important that EFSA also investigate the effect of substitution, as well as the availability of non-chemical methods; deems it necessary to support research regarding the agro-ecological transition of agriculture and the further development of methods of pest management which are harmless to pollinators, such as adequate cultivation techniques, crop rotation and balanced fertilisation.

- Video - Martin Häusling
- Text adopted

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Animal welfare during transport

Council and Commission statements and debate on Tuesday

The Greens/EFA group strongly supported calls for this debate on animal welfare in transport. It follows an incident on 24 November, where a ship containing 14,600 sheep overturned in a Romanian harbour, drowning all but 254 of the animals. Just as the Parliament demanded in its previous mandate, MEPs are again reiterating the call to set up an inquiry committee. The Greens/EFA group are asking for an end to live animal exports, shorter species-specific maximum journey times, and a maximum four-hour journey time for animals destined for slaughter.

- Video - Francisco Guerreiro

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EU-Mercosur and the European Green deal

Topical debate on Wednesday, 15:00

At the request of the Greens/EFA group, the plenary debated the compatibility of the EU-Mercosur free trade agreement with the European Green Deal. The very lively debate, involving 64 MEPs, recalled the responsibility of Brazil for the failure of the COP 15 in Madrid and the increased destruction of the Amazon rain forest under President Bolsonaro to gain arable land for soy exports to the EU. There are multiple injustices hidden in the EU-Mercosur trade agreement in terms of the protection of human and social rights, food safety and significantly, environmental destruction in Latin America. Such concerns urgently need addressing at a time when Europe is preparing to step up its green and social ambition.

Greens underlined that the EU-Mercosur and all existing and future trade agreements must go far beyond a reference to the Paris Agreement in the Trade and Sustainable development chapter, be it binding or not. All chapters of these trade agreements have to be fully revised and mainstreamed to be fit for the purpose of climate and social protection. Otherwise the binding provisions in the trade and services parts contradict all aims of the Paris and CBD Conventions.

- Video - Anna Cavazzini
- Our vision of trade policy
- Our conference on Mercosur
- Previous press release on Mercosur

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Election of the EU Ombudsperson

First ballot Tuesday, second and third ballots and election Wednesday

The European Parliament voted to elect **Emily O'Reilly** to continue in her current role as **European Ombudsman** for 2019-2024, an independent role that is designed to hold EU institutions and bodies to account, as well as promoting good administration. O'Reilly won in the third round of votes. There were five candidates in the first round. The Greens/EFA group supported the candidacy of Emily O'Reilly since she is best suited for the role as an independent candidate and given her strong track record in holding the EU institutions to account. The highest standards of transparency, ethics and integrity must be upheld by the work of the Ombudsperson's office.

- Press release
- Text adopted

Further information:
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ECJ ruling on Greens/EFA MEP Oriol Junqueras

Ruling Thursday

The European Court of Justice has ruled that our MEP Oriol Junqueras has the right to be a Member of the European Parliament. The Spanish Supreme Court had ruled that Junqueras could not take up his seat after he was elected in the last European elections in May, as he was in pretrial detention for having participated in the organization of a self-determination referendum in Catalonia. The Greens/EFA group have long been calling for a political solution.

"*Now that the ECJ has ruled that he should be able to take up his seat the Spanish state must provide him the opportunity to fulfil his duty to his voters." said* **Diana Riba** MEP, Greens/EFA MEP.
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GREENS/EFA MOTIONS FOR RESOLUTION

- Situation of human rights and democracy in Nicaragua
- Violations of human rights including religious freedoms in Burkina Faso
- Afghanistan, notably the allegations of sexual abuse of boys in the Logar Province
- The Russian "Foreign Agents" Law
- Violent crackdown on the recent protests in Iran

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 17 January 2020

Recommended

Press release

Leonardo1982

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Study

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Nikolaus Riss

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