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News | 12.03.2021

## **Greens/EFA debriefing of the plenary session**

**8 - 12 March**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- International Women's Day
- EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
- Corporate due diligence and corporate accountability
- Equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UNCRPD
- Fisheries Control Regulation
- Declaration of the EU as an LGBTI Freedom Zone
- Government's attempt to silence free media in Poland, in Slovenia and in Hungary
- Commission statement - The Rule of Law conditionality mechanism
- Administrative cooperation in the field of taxation
- Conference on the Future of Europe
- Waiver of immunity of three Catalan MEPs

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### **International Women's Day**

The plenary has been opened with a celebration of International Women's Day (IWD). The Greens/EFA Group has called for the European Commission to come forth with a new directive to combat gender-based violence. In light of the growing number of cases across the EU of gender-based physical, psychological and sexual violence since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Greens/EFA have launched a public campaign and petition to urge the Commission to take legislative action to end this form of systemic violence.

- [Live Instagram with Ska Keller and Iratxe García](#)
- [Video : "What would you do in a world free from violence?"](#)
- [Video: "No More Empty Words!"](#)
- [An opinion by Terry Reintke](#)

- [An opinion by the Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Petition: Time for a European Directive on Gender-based violence](#)
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## EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

The European Parliament has voted in favour of a new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. The Greens/EFA had campaigned in 2019 in favour of a carbon border adjustment to extend the coverage of our climate policy to imported emissions and cover the EU's global carbon footprint. While support for this mechanism remains unquestionable for the Greens/EFA, the Group abstained on the final vote as last minute amendments to the report will see polluters continue to be given a free pass.

For the Greens/EFA Group, the introduction of a fair carbon border adjustment mechanism should not only honour our climate commitments but also to help to rebuild a secure and innovative European industrial base that generates new jobs. The revenues from this mechanism should be deployed in developing countries and support the European budget, in particular for the financing of the European Union's green transition.

**Yannick Jadot, Greens/EFA MEP** and rapporteur for the European Parliament on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, comments:

*"The right and the extreme-right have torpedoed, by a narrow majority of 15 votes, the dynamic that would allow the re-industrialisation of Europe and the creation of the skilled jobs of tomorrow. These MEPs are hindering the fight against climate change and weakening our industry, which risks not being able to seize the opportunity represented by the conversion to a decarbonised economy. The battle has just only begun, with the European Commission presenting its legislative proposal in June. The Greens/EFA group will take part to the discussions, with determination and ambition."*

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Press Release](#)
  - [Video - Yannick Jadot](#)
  - [Video - Manuela Ripa](#)
  - [Video - Damien Carême](#)
  - [Video - Bas Eickhout](#)
  - [Video - Sara Matthieu](#)
  - [Video - Michael Bloss](#)
  - [Video - Ville Niinistö](#)
  - [Video - Jakop Dalunde](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Yannick Jadot](#)
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## Corporate due diligence and corporate accountability

The European Parliament adopted a report advocating for binding rules to require companies to identify and remedy risks to human rights, health, the environment or good governance arising from their activities throughout their supply chain. The Parliament is also calling for increased transparency, the introduction

of a civil liability mechanism and legal remedies for victims, and the prohibition of the import of products resulting from forced or child labour.

**Heidi Hautala MEP**, Greens/EFA Coordinator in the International Trade Committee, and the chair of the European Parliament's Responsible Business Conduct Working Group comments:

*"It's clear that voluntary corporate initiatives are not enough. There must be a level playing field between companies. So long as we turn a blind eye to human rights violations in corporate supply chains, we reward those who evade their responsibilities. By setting a legal standard we can give responsible and sustainable companies a business advantage. The European Commission must include the Parliament's demands against unethical production conditions in the proposal for a European supply chain due diligence law. The Commission needs to guarantee access to justice for the victims of corporate malpractice."*

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Press Release](#)
  - [Video - Heidi Hautala](#)
  - [Video - Marie Toussaint](#)
  - [Video - Anna Cavazzini](#)
  - [Video - Grace O'Sullivan](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Heidi Hautala](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Greens/EFA Group](#)
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## **Equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UNCRPD**

Ahead of the new EU Disability Strategy, the European Parliament approved the report on equal treatment in employment and occupation in light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Led by Greens/EFA rapporteur, Katrin Langensiepen, the report calls for the full implementation of the UNCRPD in all aspects of society, the phase out of sheltered workshops and segregated employment, and the recognition of full labour rights for workers with disabilities.

**Katrin Langensiepen MEP**, Greens/EFA rapporteur for the report on the implementation of equal treatment in employment and occupation in the light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and vice-chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, comments:

*"Persons with disabilities are still not treated as part of our society in all circumstances. The Commission's Strategy mentions important points but remains dependent on the goodwill of the EU Member States when it comes to implementation. We will continue to go round in circles if the Member States do not agree to an overarching EU anti-discrimination directive. The Strategy can play an important role in mainstreaming disability rights into EU legislation. For participation in EU legislation, we demand representation for persons with disabilities in all EU institutions."*

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Video - Katrin Langensiepen](#)
- [Video - Tilly Metz](#)
- [Video - Sylwia Spurek](#)
- [Social Media - Twitter: Katrin Langensiepen](#)

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## Fisheries Control Regulation

The Aguilera report on Fisheries Control Regulations has been adopted. There have been new features introduced that control non-compliance with the landing obligation and improved transparency of Member State reporting which the Greens/EFA group support.

However, the Group voted against the report as the final text underwent major changes. It will be more difficult for authorities to plan inspections and report infringements, potentially leading to higher unreported catches. This will be to the detriment of marine biological resources and to those who previously followed the rules.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Video - Grace O'Sullivan](#)
- [Video - Caroline Roose](#)
- [Video - Rosa D'Amato](#)
- [Social Media: Twitter: Grace O'Sullivan](#)

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## Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone

In the wake of the introduction of discriminatory laws against the LGBTIQ community in Poland and Hungary, and worrying developments in other countries, the resolution on the declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ freedom zone has been adopted. Everyone should enjoy the same freedom to live and publicly show their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics without fear of discrimination or persecution. LGBTIQ rights are human rights. Equal treatment and non-discrimination are rights enshrined in the EU Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

**Terry Reintke MEP**, Vice-President of the Greens/EFA Group and Co-President of the LGBTIQ Intergroup in the European Parliament, comments:

*"We must make the European Union an LGBTIQ Freedom Zone. Across the political groups, we are sending a strong signal against hate and agitation and opening the door for EU-wide initiatives on freedom, equality and diversity."*

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Press Release](#)
  - [Video - Terry Reintke](#)
  - [Video - Alice Kuhnke](#)
  - [Video - Sylwia Spurek](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Terry Reintke](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Terry Reintke](#)
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## **Government's attempt to silence free media in Poland, in Slovenia and in Hungary**

### *Council and Commission statements*

A free and independent media is a crucial pillar of democracy. Poland, Slovenia and Hungary's attempts to silence opposition newspapers, radio and television stations are clear attacks on these freedoms. The defiance of EU values by these countries should be evidence enough for the Council and the Commission to act to sanction the Polish and Hungarian governments.

The Greens/EFA Group strongly condemns the attacks on the free media in Poland, Slovenia and Hungary and calls on the European Commission to use the tools at their disposal to sanction these governments.

**Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Greens/EFA MEP** and European Parliament rapporteur for the situation in Hungary, comments:

*"Unfortunately, the Commission has yet to take any serious action on the declining situation facing media freedom. The Commission continues to take no action on long-standing complaints about state aid distorting the media landscape in Hungary. The Council refuses to seriously discuss the ongoing Article 7 procedures for both Poland and Hungary. So long as the Commission and Council fail to act on media freedom, it will show that that the media can be successfully attacked by oligarchs and autocrats."*

- [Press Release](#)
  - [Video - Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield](#)
  - [Video - Salima Yenbou](#)
  - [Video - Tineke Strik](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social Media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
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## **Commission statement - The Rule of Law conditionality mechanism**

On Thursday, the European Commission gave a statement on the application of the Rule of Law Conditionality Regulation. The Greens/EFA Group emphasises that this tool is long overdue and its stringent application is a step towards defending the rule of law, the sound financial management of the Union's budget and, ultimately, taxpayers' money. Urgent action is needed to strengthen the rule of law in Europe and to stop the misuse of EU funds by oligarchs and corrupt politicians.

- [Video - Terry Reintke](#)
  - [Video - Daniel Freund](#)
  - [Social Media: Twitter - Terry Reintke](#)
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## **Administrative cooperation in the field of taxation**

On 15 July 2020, the Commission published the Tax Package, which contains a legislative proposal to amend the Directive on Administrative Cooperation (DAC7). The DAC7 proposal aims at extending the EU tax transparency rules to digital platforms making sure that those who make money through the sale of goods or services on platforms also pay their fair share of tax. In addition, DAC7 also strengthens considerably the exchange of information between tax administrations and their collaboration in the EU. This is essential in order to make sure everyone pays their fair share and tax administrations are properly equipped to curb cross-border tax avoidance and evasion.

The Parliament is now delivering a strong report that would, if taken into account by the Commission and the Council, strengthen even further the current set of rules. The Greens/EFA Group deplores that the Council will seemingly not consider the European Parliament's views and recalls that taxation matters should not be ruled by unanimity.

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Video - Sven Giegold](#)
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## Conference on the Future of Europe

The Presidents of the European Commission, Council and Parliament have signed a joint declaration kicking off the process for the Conference on the Future of Europe. The Conference, scheduled to begin in May, will be the first opportunity at comprehensive reform of the EU in more than a decade. The Conference will include randomly selected citizens' assemblies as a key component and will develop concrete proposals on how to make the EU more democratic, effective and bring it closer to citizens, by spring 2022.

**Daniel Freund MEP**, representative of the Greens/EFA group for the Conference, comments:

*"It's no secret that the EU needs fundamental reforms. The crises of the last decade have shown that the EU is needed, but needs change. This Conference must drive Europe closer to its citizens. We need more democratic participation and oversight in the EU. Too many major decisions have been held back due to narrow minded national perspectives in the Council.*

- [Press Release](#)
  - [Social Media - Twitter: Greens/EFA Group](#)
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## Waiver of immunity of three Catalan MEPs

The EFA Group in the European Parliament has responded to the outcome of a vote in the European Parliament to lift the parliamentary immunity of three Catalan MEPs involved in Catalonia's self-determination movement.

President of the EFA Group in the European Parliament **Jordi Solé MEP** said:

*"Political disagreements require political solutions, and the European Parliament has today missed an*

*opportunity to contribute towards resolving the political conflict between Catalonia and Spain through dialogue. Nevertheless, there is obviously significant political support in this parliament and elsewhere for a political solution and we will continue working in that direction.*

**Ska Keller MEP**, President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, comments:

*"The Group considers in this case that the competence of the Spanish Supreme Court is still disputed and has not been sufficiently clarified during the evaluation done by the JURI Committee. Without further clarity on this key element of the request, the Group considers that the waiver should be rejected."*

- [Press Release - EFA Reaction](#)
  - [Press Release - Greens/EFA rejects the waiver of immunity](#)
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*Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 30 April 2021*

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**Contact person**



Katy Cadwallader

Human Resources Officer



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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