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News | 21.05.2021

Greens/EFA debriefing of the plenary session

17-20 May 2021

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Effects of waiver of the WTO TRIPS agreement on Covid-19 vaccines, treatment, equipment and manufacturing capacity in developing countries

In light of the announcement made by the US President Joe Biden, the Greens/EFA Group requested a debate with resolution on the effects of waiver of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) on Covid-19 vaccines, treatment, equipment and manufacturing capacity in developing countries.

Alongside with the vote on a resolution in June, the Greens/EFA Group will continue to call on the Council and the European Commission to support at the WTO-level a TRIPS waiver proposal put forward originally by India and South Africa. On top of the waiver, the EU needs to lend full support to technology transfer to third countries for global production to scale up.

Philippe Lamberts MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments**:**

"*The EU must stand with India and South Africa by following the US in transatlantic partnership and support a waiver of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The fight*

against the pandemic will only succeed if we work together."

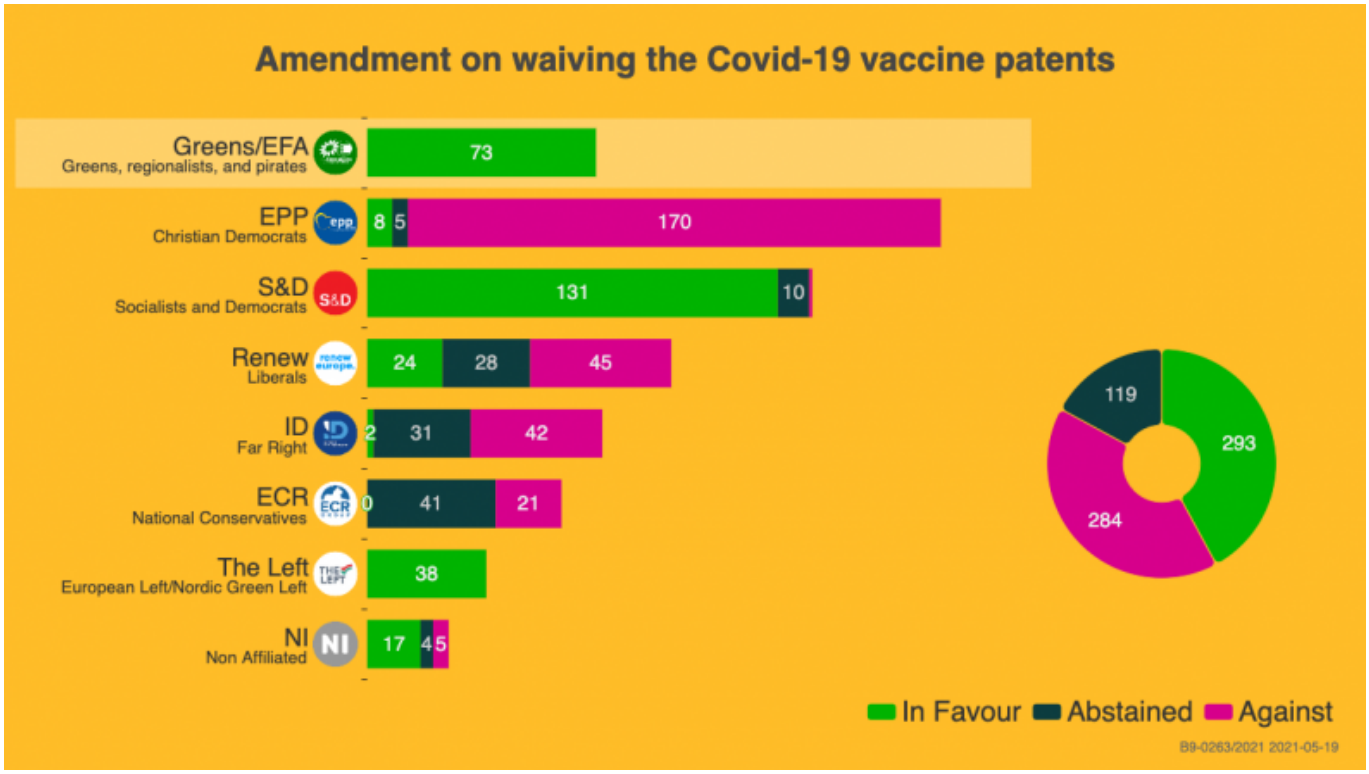
Ska Keller MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

"*President Joe Biden is taking a most welcome step, showing the way forward for Europe. Now there can be no more excuses from the European Union. We call on Ursula von der Leyen to support this historic initiative and make global solidarity a reality.*"

- Press release
- Video - Philippe Lamberts
- Video - Sara Matthieu
- Video - Diana Riba i Giner
- Video - Anna Cavazzini
- Video - Tilly Metz
- Video - Sven Giegold
- Video - Ernest Urtasun
- Social media: Twitter - Philippe Lamberts
- Social media: Twitter - Sara Matthieu
- Social media: Twitter - Diana Riba i Giner
- Social media:Twitter - Anna Cavazzini
- Social Media: Twitter - Ernest Urtasun
- Social media: Twitter - Tilly Metz

Accelerating progress and tackling inequalities towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 - Second amendment on waiving the Covid-19 vaccine patents

In an indicative vote, ahead of next month's vote on the TRIPS waiver resolution, the European Parliament voted to call for the EU to set up a global Covid-19 vaccination strategy ensuring that all people in developing countries will have equal, affordable and timely access to vaccination. The vote on temporarily waiving patent rights on Covid-19 vaccines, equipment and treatments, was included as an amendment to the resolution on *accelerating progress and tackling inequalities towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030*.The main focus of the resolution calls to ensure that the global response to Covid-19 includes lessons from the fight against AIDS and HIV.



Amendment on waiving the Covid-19 vaccine patents

- Text adopted
- Social media: Twitter - Saskia Bricmont
- Social media: Twitter - Anna Cavazzini
- Social media: Twitter - Rasmus Andresen

The conflict of interest of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

The European Parliament debated about the conflict of interest of the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Andrej Babiš, and how the Council, Commission and Parliament will handle this case in the future. In its audit report, published on 23th April, the European Commission has clearly shown that PM Babiš has breached conflict of interest rules over his control of trust funds linked to his Agrofert group of companies. All EU subsidies, as well as any funds that were awarded from the Czech national budget to his company Agrofert since February 2017, when a local conflict of interest law came into force, are irregular and should be returned.

The Greens/EFA Group was the first one to call out to the Commission in September 2018 and demanded that this case sees a full investigation and a follow-up to these findings, which were recently finalized and published by the Commission. Now, it's finally time for the Council to react with more than empty gestures. PM Babiš must prove that he is no longer in conflict of interest, either by cutting ties to Agrofert or by ensuring that he can have no economic interest that might arise from his role as head of the Czech government.

The vote on the accompanying resolution will take place in the plenary in June.

Mikuláš Peksa, Pirate Party MEP and Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control Committee, comments:

"The Prime Minister's conflict of interest is not only fuelling an oligarchic structure, it is also damaging the purpose of the European agricultural policy, concentrating the market and hurting small farmers, consumers and the climate. It is unacceptable that Babiš, while being the beneficial owner of Agrofert Group, took part in the negotiations on the CAP and fought against the capping of subsidies and environmental protection."

Viola von Cramon MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control Committee, comments:

"The Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš is one of the most powerful men in Czechia with ownership over one of its biggest companies, this is similar to what we usually call state capture for other countries. Meanwhile, he has a seat at the top of the government and a seat at the negotiating table in Brussels. This should not be accepted: The European Commission and Council must ensure that this conflict of interest can in no way affect European democratic standards, nor come at the expense of Czech and European voters and taxpayers."



- Press release
- Video - Mikuláš Peksa
- Video - Viola von Cramon-Taubadel
- Video - Tineke Strik
- Video - Thomas Waitz
- Video - Daniel Freund
- Social media: Twitter - Mikuláš Peksa
- Social media: Twitter - Daniel Freund
- Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group
- Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group

Human rights protection and the EU external migration policy

The EU and its Member States are far from meeting their human rights obligations towards migrants in the conduct of the external dimension of EU migration policy. This report by Greens/EFA Rapporteur **Tineke Strik** provides the first operational framework for ensuring effective protection, monitoring and

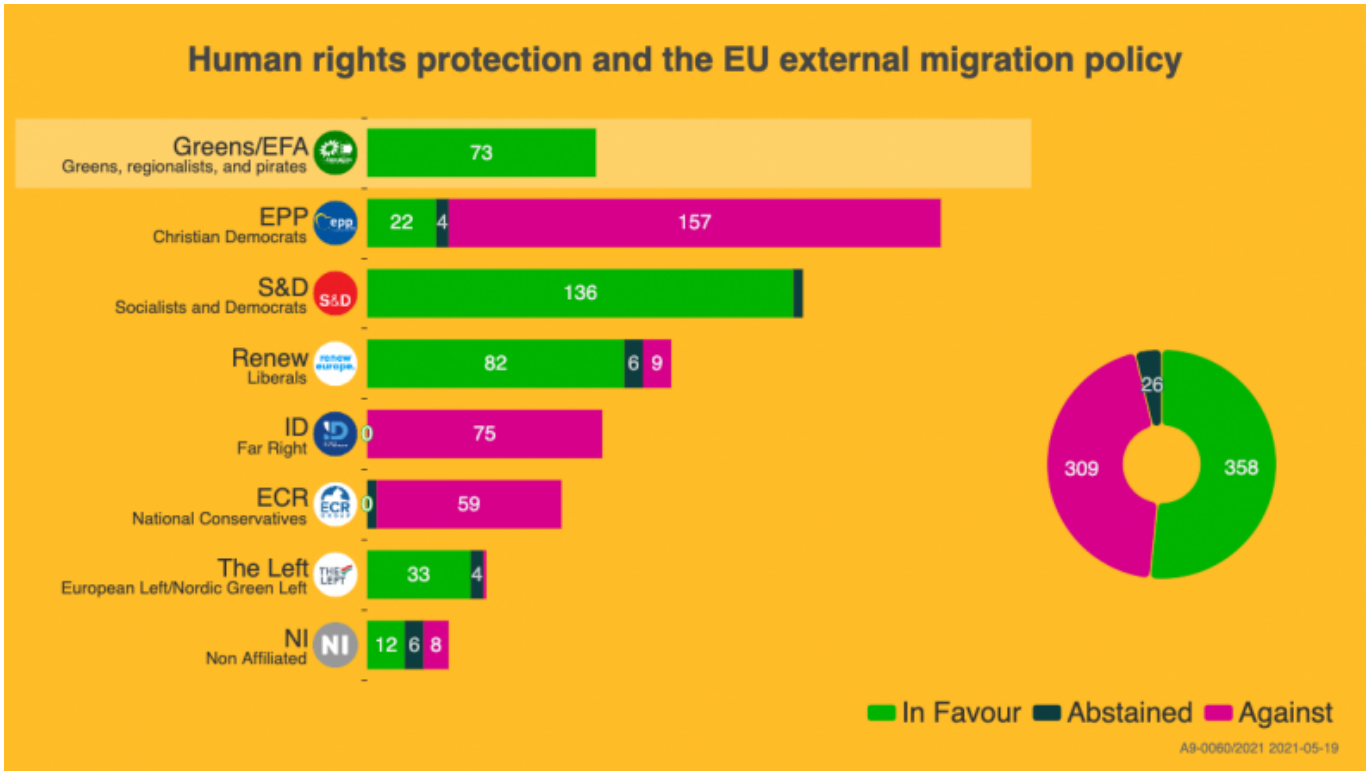
safeguards throughout the EU migration policy cycle and across all EU actors and bodies, as well as for enhanced parliamentary scrutiny and democratic oversight.

Through this report, the Greens/EFA Group calls for ensuring that EU external migration policy is not supporting interceptions at sea that return people to an unsafe port, which would be complicit in human rights violations. In addition, the report ensures that EU readmission agreements and cooperation on border management are only concluded with third countries that explicitly commit to respecting human rights.

Tineke Strik MEP, Greens/EFA rapporteur of the report 'Human rights protection and the EU external migration policy', comments:

"It's time for the EU to show a human face in its migration policy. The EU must stop cooperating on migration with countries where human rights are violated. There must be improved access to justice for migrants and refugees that have suffered from human rights violations, they must be able to hold countries directly accountable."

The Greens/EFA group succeeded in gathering voices around the MEP Tineke Strik's report. Despite the strong opposition of the far-right and centre-right Groups, a progressive majority led by the Greens/EFA carried the vote in defence of migrants' rights.



Human rights protection and the EU external migration policy

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video - Tineke Strik
- Video - Mounir Satouri
- Social media: explanatory video
- Social media: Twitter - Tineke Strik
- Social media: Twitter - Tineke Strik
- Social media: Twitter - Mounir Satouri

- Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group

Recent deaths in the Mediterranean and search and rescue at sea

Following a recent increase in tragic deaths in the Mediterranean, the Greens/EFA Group have called for an urgent debate with the Council and Commission on the situation facing migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean. The debate comes after revelations that appear to show the EU border Agency, Frontex, coordinating with the Libyan Coast Guard to arrange illegal "pullbacks", stopping refugees and migrants from crossing the Mediterranean into Europe.The Libyan Coast Guard has been accused of multiple human rights violations. The debate also comes ahead of the report from the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group, due in June from Greens/EFA MEP Tineke Strik.

Erik Marquardt MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Frontex Scrutiny Working Group, comments on the revelation of Frontex' collaboration with the Libyan Coast Guard:

"We are witnessing an unprecedented complicity between Libyan militias, Frontex and EU governments, in which the harshest crimes can go unpunished. The Commission cannot allow a situation where it is funding illegal pullbacks coordinated by Frontex in complicity with the Libyan Coast Guard."

- Press release
- Video - Erik Marquardt
- Video - Tineke Strik
- Video - Saskia Bricmont
- Video - Damien Carême
- Social media: Twitter - Erik Marquardt
- Social media: Twitter - Tineke Strik
- Social media: Twitter - Tineke Strik
- Social media: Twitter - Saskia Bricmont
- Social media: Twitter - Damien Carême
- Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group
- Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group

EU Blue Card / New avenues for labour migration

On the 17th May, **Greens/EFA negotiator Damian Boeselager** and the other negotiators from the European Parliament, Council and Commission reached an agreement on the revised EU Blue Card Directive. The Directive covers the conditions of entry and residence of non-EU nationals for the purposes of highly-qualified employment. Procedures will now be simplified and family relocation to the EU will be made easier. It will also be easier to accumulate the necessary years of residence for long-term residence when moving between EU countries.

In addition to the agreement on the Blue Card, the Parliament's report on New Avenues for Labour Migration has been adopted in this plenary session on Thursday, 20th May. The report sets out the Parliament's ambition for future legislative work in the area of labour migration. Third-country migrant workers seeking low- or medium-skilled employment should be covered in the EU's legislative framework, the rights of migrant workers further strengthened and the report calls on the Commission to develop an EU talent pool as an EU-intra matching platform with information exchanges, opportunities to connect businesses with institutions and international matching of migrant workers.

The Greens/EFA Group welcomes this report because it reflects the Group's beliefs that the EU needs a holistic European Migration Code that highlights the positive aspects of migrations. The code needs to address inequalities and the vulnerable situations migrant workers face, ensure decent working and living conditions for all workers, and allow migrants to play an active role in society.

Damian Boeselager, Volt MEP and Greens/EFA shadow MEP in the lead LIBE Committee, comments on the EU Blue Card Directive:

"The agreement reached last night is a step towards a fairer and more resilient EU-wide immigration system. The Blue Card Directive will improve the lives of those seeking work in the EU and thanks to our efforts, will ensure that refugees and seasonal workers now have full and immediate access to the visa scheme. We need to normalise the narrative on migration and shift the focus away from border controls to a system that invests in people and opportunities."

- Text adopted
- Press release
- Video - Damian Boeselager
- Video - Alice Kuhnke
- Video - Tineke Strik
- Social media: Twitter - Damian Boeselager
- Social media: Twitter - Damian Boeselager
- Social media: Twitter - Tineke Strik

Just Transition Fund

The Just Transition Fund (JTF) has been adopted as a new instrument with an overall budget of €17.5 billion. This fund is the core element of the European Green Deal, helping the regions most affected by the ecological transition.

The Greens/EFA group has requested the establishment of the JTF for a long time to support regions moving towards a climate-neutral economy and the phasing out of coal. From the beginning, it was essential for the Greens/EFA to prevent JTF support for fossil fuels. This has paid off; the JTF is now truly a climate fund, and not a single JTF-Euro will be spent on gas infrastructure and fossil fuels. However, as promising as the adaptation of the JTF is, the budget of €17.5 billion needs to be expanded dramatically to help all 108 regions in Europe.

Niklas Nienass MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur for the Just Transition Fund, welcomes the agreement:

"The Just Transition Fund delivers on the promise of the Green Deal to start the transformation of the economy, create new jobs and cushion the change in a socially responsible way. It is a Green success that not a single euro will be invested in gas infrastructure and fossil fuels. Oil, gas and coal have no place in the process of change. Any public investment in fossil fuels is a waste of taxpayers' money. The future belongs to renewables."

- Text adopted
- Press Release
- Video - Niklas Nienass
- Video - Henrike Hahn
- Video - Mounir Satouri

- Video - François Alfonsi
- Social media: Twitter - Niklas Nienass
- Social media: Twitter - Mounir Satouri
- Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group

EU strategy towards Israel-Palestine

In recent days, Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem have been the scene of a new escalation of violence that has left hundreds dead and thousands injured. In response, the European Parliament held an urgent debate.

The Greens/EFA Group is shocked and saddened by this escalation. The Group urges the EU and the US to advocate for the strengthening of peace negotiations between all parties to resolve the conflict in the area, and welcomes the ceasefire announced on Thursday evening.

Philippe Lamberts MEP, President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, comments:

"There are no military solutions or weapons of war that can solve conflict in Israel and Palestine. Only by returning to talks will the cycle of violence and heartache end. The EU must support renewed peace efforts and all parties must work to bring peace and end this conflict for good."

- Social media: Twitter - Philippe Lamberts
- Social media: Twitter - Jordi Solé
- Social media: Twitter - Margrete Auken
- Social media: Twitter - Reinhard Bütikofer
- Social media: Twitter - Salima Yenbou
- Social media: Twitter - Grace O'Sullivan
- Social media: Twitter - Sergey Lagodinsky
- Video - Jordi Solé
- Video - Margrete Auken
- Video - Reinhard Bütikofer
- Video - Salima Yenbou
- Video - Grace O'Sullivan
- Video - Sergey Lagodinsky

Chinese counter sanctions on EU entities and MEPs and MP

Following the imposition of arbitrary sanctions from the Chinese government against Greens/EFA MEP **Reinhard Bütikofer**, as well as other MEPs and the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Human Rights, Belgian Green MP Samuel Cogolati, and others, the Parliament voted in favour of the resolution tabled by Greens/EFA MEPs.

Thanks to successful negotiations, the EP takes the position that any consideration of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), as well as any discussion on ratification by the European Parliament, be justifiably frozen because the Chinese sanctions are in place; demands that China lift the

sanctions before dealing with CAI, without prejudice to the final outcome of the CAI ratification process; expects the Commission to consult with Parliament before taking any steps towards the conclusion and signature of the CAI; calls on the Commission to use the debate around CAI as a leverage instrument to improve the protection of human rights and support for civil society in China and reminds the Commission that it will take the human rights situation in China, including Hong Kong, into account when asked to endorse CAI.

Reinhard Bütikofer, Chair of the European Parliament's China Delegation, comments:

"*In reacting to China's sanctions against the European Parliament, the Parliament does take a clear stance. The European Parliament will not budge. We are strongly united in defending our interests and values. Chinese efforts to police worldwide what conversation about China Beijing would want to allow are as ridiculous as they are arrogant, and they will fail. With its sanctions, China has miscalculated. They should learn from their mistakes and rethink. Because of China's sanctions, the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment has been put into the freezer, and the Parliament demands that China lift its sanctions before it will deal with CAI. Parliament also expects the Commission to consult with us before taking any steps towards formally signing CAI.*"

- Text adopted
- Press release
- (debate took place in April)

Commission statement on Business Taxation

On 18th May, the European Commission released its new Communication on Business Taxation for the 21st century. The Commission's proposals aim to tackle tax avoidance with a series of legislative proposals. It also recognises the need for fair and effective taxation of capital income, both individual and corporate.

The Greens/EFA Group welcomes the positive messages coming from the Commission but has concerns over how these proposals will be accepted in national capitals, which have so far blocked progressive proposals on tax issues.

Sven Giegold MEP, fiscal policy spokesperson of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, explains:

"*For years, member states have blocked proposals for a common consolidated corporate tax base and important reforms in VAT and corporate taxation. Citizens and companies need a fairer and more efficient tax system. 'Sweetheart deals' for Amazon, Apple, ENGIE and co. represent a massive distortion of competition in the European Single Market. The Commission must apply Article 116 to tax issues, in order to protect the integrity of the Single Market.*

"Europe needs an ambitious agreement at the OECD-level. There is still no clear commitment from the member states to match President Joe Biden's proposal for an effective minimum tax rate of 21 percent. The Commission's plan to promote equity financing for companies makes economic sense, but we can only afford such plans if at the same time we actually adopt effective measures against aggressive tax avoidance."

- Press release

- Video - Sven Giegold
- Video - Claude Gruffat
- Social media: Twitter - Claude Gruffat

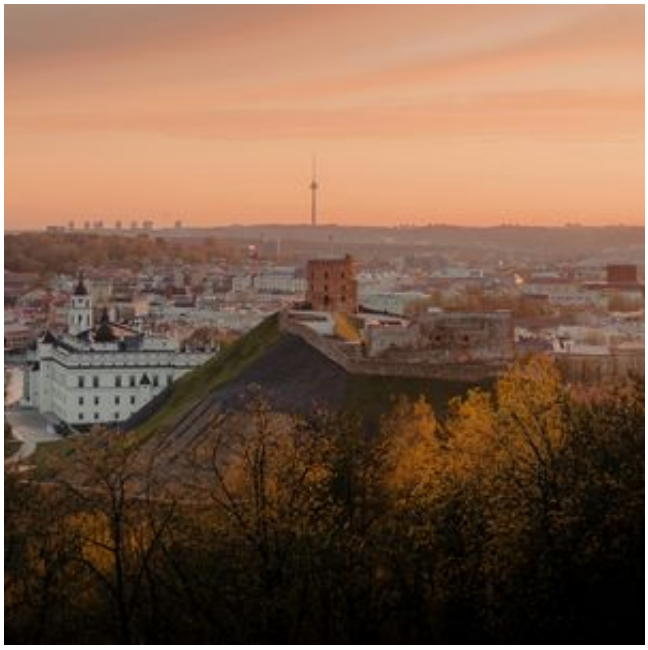
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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 11 June 2021

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Contact person



Jeroen Steeman

Community manager

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