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News | 30.04.2021

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

**26 - 30 April**

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- Parliamentary immunity lifted for Greek Neo-Nazi MEP Ioannis Lagos
- Child guarantee

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### **Joint debate: EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement**

Ahead of the deadline of the final EU-UK trade deal negotiations, the European Parliament has adopted the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The Greens/EFA Group wants the EU to build the strongest possible relationship with the UK, without sacrificing standards. The implementation of the level playing field provisions are important to prevent social, environmental and fiscal dumping.

The Greens/EFA Group calls for an increase of the European Parliament's involvement in the implementation of the TCA and full compliance with EU data protection laws. This agreement is unprecedented and, therefore, the scrutinizing role of the Parliament should reflect this. The Greens/EFA Group believes that voting on the trade agreement is necessary to avoid an accidental no-deal.

**Philippe Lamberts MEP**, Co-President of the Greens/EFA Group and member of the UK Coordination

Group in the European Parliament, comments:

*"It is up to the Commission to see that social, fiscal and environmental dumping is prevented. The UK must not become a Singapore-on-Thames; the EU should ensure that access to the Single Market for financial services is conditional on commitments from the UK on tax cooperation and the fight against money laundering. Regardless of how the UK government is trying to move its people away from Europe; we must remember that we are in one boat, we are the same people and we will move forward together as a continent."*

Speaking in the debate, **Jordi Solé** (Greens/EFA), President of the EFA Group in the European Parliament, said:

*"For our Scottish friends the TCA might be the lesser evil to keep ties with the EU, but also a painful consequence of a decision imposed on them, a decision they did not take. For them, as well as for an increasing number in Wales, the best possible relation with the EU is not the TCA. It is the possibility of full membership in our Union. I hope they can soon re-join us once they take a democratic choice in favour of independence."*

- [Text adopted: The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#)
- [Text adopted: The outcome of EU-UK negotiations](#)
- [Co-Presidents press release](#)
- [EFA President press release](#)
- [Video - Philippe Lamberts](#)
- [Video - Jordi Solé](#)
- [Video - Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield](#)
- [Video - Terry Reintke](#)
- [Video - Grace O'Sullivan](#)
- [Video - Heidi Hautala](#)
- [Video - Anna Cavazzini](#)
- [Video - Ciarán Cuffe](#)
- [Video - Caroline Roose](#)
- [Video - Niklas Nienau](#)
- [Video - Benoît Biteau](#)
- [Video - Rasmus Andresen](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Terry Reintke](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Rasmus Andresen](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)

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## EU-Turkey relations

The recent protocol incident in Turkey demonstrated how the relationship between the EU and Turkey has deteriorated. Nevertheless, the Commission and Council have pursued an opening of relations to the regime, whilst Turkish democracy and rule of law are still under attack and human rights and gender equality are being undermined on a daily basis.

The Greens/EFA Group demands that the European Commission and Council bring democracy, fundamental rights, the rule of law and gender equality to the forefront of any renewed relations with Turkey. The EU needs to be a reliable and credible ally to Turkish civil society and many imprisoned members of opposition parties, journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers and academics.

**Sergey Lagodinsky**, Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation to Turkey, comments:

*"The political situation in Turkey is alarming. We expect the European Union and the Turkish government to prioritize compliance with international obligations and respect for human rights in their bilateral relations. We stand in solidarity with those in Turkey who are fighting for human rights and the rights of the opposition."*

Speaking in the debate, **Ska Keller**, Co-President of the Greens/EFA Group, said:

*"Confronted with all of those issues, the Council is still working on a mandate for the modernisation of the customs union between the EU and Turkey without any linkage to human rights and – very differently from accession negotiations – upgrading the customs union entails zero commitment for press freedom or the rights of opposition parties. It's a purely economic instrument that will help Erdoğan win in the area that makes him most vulnerable – economics."*

- [Press release](#)
  - [Video - Ska Keller](#)
  - [Video - Sergey Lagodinsky](#)
  - [Video - Alice Kuhnke](#)
  - [Video - Ernest Urtasun](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Ska Keller](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Ernest Urtasun](#)
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## **Russia - Navalny, the Ukraine border and the Czech Republic diplomatic conflict**

The European Parliament has adopted the resolution on Russia's recent actions: the current situation in Ukraine; the case of Alexei Navalny, the Russian opposition leader on a hunger strike for three weeks; and the recent reports of the involvement of Russian GRU intelligence services in the 2014 explosion of an arms depot in the Czech Republic.

The Greens/EFA Group condemns Russia's provocations at the Ukrainian border, the incarceration and treatment of Alexei Navalny, as well as malign interference in the Czech Republic. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, along with the European Council, must demonstrate the EU's solidarity by taking appropriate countermeasures.

**Sergey Lagodinsky MEP**, Greens/EFA Group spokesperson on Russia, comments:

*"We welcome that MEPs clearly side with Alexei Navalny, his foundation and other persecuted people and condemn the military provocations on the Ukrainian border. We demand a strong stance from the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Clear red lines are needed for the EU's relations with Russia, and this relationship must be based on respect for democracy and human rights."*

**Markéta Gregorová**, Pirate Party MEP and Greens/EFA Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, comments:

*"Today's debate shows that the people of the Czech Republic have the support of the whole European Parliament. Not only that our demands for compensation of families of the citizens who died in 2014*

*explosion in Vrbětice were included in the resolution, but that we are also supported in the exclusion of Rosatom from the Dukovany nuclear power plant tender. The reaction of the Russian government shows that when the EU stands together and speaks as one it has an impact. Let this be the lesson learned for our future dealings with Kremlin."*

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Video - Viola von Cramon-Taubadel](#)
- [Video - Mikuláš Peksa](#)
- [Video - Reinhard Bütikofer](#)

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## **Chinese counter sanctions on EU entities, MEPs and MPs**

On the 22nd of March, the Chinese government listed sanctions against Greens/EFA Member Reinhard Bütikofer and fellow MEPs, the Parliament's Human Rights Subcommittee, as well as Belgian Green MP Samuel Cogolati and MPs from the Netherlands and Lithuania, think tanks and academia experts. The move by the Chinese authorities followed the decision to place certain Chinese officials on the EU's sanctions list for human rights violations against the Uighur people in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.

For the Greens/EFA Group, the reaction of China is unacceptable, disproportionate and unfounded. The EU adopted sanctions, based on a solid legal basis, against middle-ranking Chinese officials and CCP-party members responsible for serious human rights violations, which are an attack against the values that the Parliament represents: democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The Parliament cannot put the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) on the agenda as long as these sanctions are in place against its own Members. Consideration of the CAI and any ratification procedure must be put on hold.

The resolution will be voted on in the May plenary session.

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

*"The European Parliament is not impressed by Chinese sanctions. China's attack on the heart of European democracy has already proven to be a misguided miscalculation and has strengthened resilience against an increasingly aggressive Chinese foreign policy."*

- [Press release](#)
- [Video - Reinhard Bütikofer](#)
- [Video - Hannah Neumann](#)
- [Video - Sara Matthieu](#)
- [Video - Jordi Solé](#)
- [Video - Francisco Guerreiro](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Hannah Neumann](#)

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## **European Council and Commission statements - COVID certificate**

On Wednesday, the European Parliament debated the proposed EU "Digital Green Certificate", along with the accessibility and affordability of COVID vaccines. With vaccinations in Europe increasing and testing facilities improving, this tool is supposed to bring back freedoms to all European citizens. Free universal

testing and the assurance of nondiscrimination between vaccinated and unvaccinated people are non-negotiable and key to a fair certificate. Additionally, the data gathered for the certificate has to stay in Europe and be strictly protected. Fair access and equality between all member states has to be ensured. The Digital Green Certificate cannot become the only tool in combating the pandemic; a dramatic increase in vaccine production and distribution is also necessary.

- [Text adopted: Digital Green Certificate - third country nationals](#)
- [Text adopted: Digital Green Certificate - Union citizens](#)
- [Video - Tineke Strik](#)
- [Video - Tilly Metz](#)
- [Video - Diana Riba I Giner](#)
- [Video - David Cormand](#)
- [Video - Jutta Paulus](#)
- [Video - Michèle Rivasi](#)
- [Video - Piernicola Pedicini](#)
- [Video - Sara Matthieu](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)

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## **Digital taxation: OECD negotiations, tax residency of digital companies and a possible European Digital Tax**

The European Parliament has adopted its position on the ongoing international tax negotiations at G20/OECD level. These negotiations have a twofold objective: to design rules to tax the digital economy more fairly and to end the race to the bottom by introducing a minimum effective tax rate.

The Greens/EFA are very supportive of these international tax negotiations and are supporting the European Parliament's position. There is a large majority in the Parliament to call for comprehensive and effective rules at international level to stop tax dodging. The European Parliament has welcomed the recently announced Biden tax plans which include a minimum effective tax rate of 21% on multinationals.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Video - Damien Carême](#)
- [Video - Sven Giegold](#)
- [Video - Kira Marie Peter-Hansen](#)
- [Video - Mikuláš Peksa](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Damien Carême](#)

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## **Rights & Values and Justice Programmes 2021-2027**

Led by **Rapporteur Alice Bah Kuhnke** and co-Rapporteur **Heidi Hautala**, the Rights & Values Programme and Justice Programme have been overwhelmingly adopted. The Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV) aims at promoting, strengthening and defending EU values, supporting the fight against all forms of violence, and creating opportunities for engagement and democratic participation. It is part of the Justice, Rights and Values Funds, as well as the Justice programme, which contributes to the development of a European area of justice based on the rule of law, mutual recognition and mutual trust between justice professionals in cross-border proceedings.

At a time when European democracy and the rule of law are facing challenges, the Greens/EFA has put the adoption of a strong CERV Programme at the core of the Group's priorities. With the approval of the final trilogue agreement, the CERV Programme will create support for grassroots projects promoting, strengthening and defending EU values.

Well-functioning judiciaries in Member States are crucial for the accurate application of EU legislation. Respect for the rule of law, non-discriminatory access to justice for all, in particular for people in a vulnerable situation, and gender equality are core objectives of this programme.

**Alice Bah Kuhnke MEP**, Greens/EFA rapporteur for the CERV, comments:

*"With a total budget of €1.55 billion, we've secured a near doubling of EU-funding for civil society organisations and stakeholders to strengthen and support our common EU values and defend the equal rights of citizens across the Union."*

**Heidi Hautala MEP**, Greens/EFA co-rapporteur for the Justice Programme, comments:

*"The rule of law and fundamental rights cannot be defended without a well-functioning and independent justice system. Judges, prosecutors and other professionals in the judiciary have a key role in providing access to justice and upholding the rights and values of the European Union. Special attention is given to equal rights and non-discrimination: The Programme promotes gender equality, the rights of the child and the protection of victims in all its actions."*

- [Text adopted \(CERV\)](#)
- [Text adopted \(Justice programme\)](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Video - Alice Bah Kuhnke](#)
- [Video - Diana Riba I Giner](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
- [Video - Heidi Hautala](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Heidi Hautala](#)

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## 2019 Discharge Reports

Every year, the Budgetary Control Committee looks into the "discharge" reports for all EU institutions and agencies. The discharge procedure is there to check whether the EU budget has been legally and efficiently used and spent and to assess whether the 2019 EU budget implementation was more efficient and more effective than the previous year's.

The Greens/EFA Group is concerned about in whose pockets EU funds truly end up, and have been pushing for greater transparency in the discharge reports. We want to see a fair gender balance across the EU's institutions and bodies. We need to improve the Parliament's environmental footprint, protect whistleblowers, combat harassment, and prevent conflicts of interest and revolving doors. For the 2019 discharge reports, the Group is particularly concerned about unresolved harassment cases in the EESC and numerous serious issues at Frontex, including breaches of fundamental rights, non-declaration of lobby meetings, severely delayed recruitment of key staff and weak policies around mobbing.

The 2019 Discharge for Frontex will be postponed due to MEPs' concerns over human rights abuses, lobbying and spending by the border agency.

**Viola von Cramon MEP**, Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control Committee and shadow rapporteur on the Commission Discharge for 2019, comments:

*"EU spending must be accountable to European citizens and the Common Agricultural Policy is the second biggest chunk of the EU budget, yet we still don't know who receives this money. The Commission is unable to provide a list of the top 50 beneficiaries of EU Agricultural Funds, which inspires little confidence in the current model for the CAP that is being negotiated. The current CAP proposal repeats the mistakes of the past and will be disastrous for sustainable farmers, the environment and animal welfare, and must be reworked."*

- [Texts adopted](#)
  - [Press release](#)
  - [Video - Saskia Bricmont](#)
  - [Video - Bas Eickhout](#)
  - [Video - Viola von Cramon-Taubadel](#)
  - [Video - Daniel Freund](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Greens/EFA Group](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Tineke Strik](#)
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## **Preventing the dissemination of terrorist content online**

On Wednesday, the Parliament adopted the regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online. The regulation aims to set out the parameters on content removal and the liability of service providers.

The Greens/EFA Group criticized the regulation due the impact on SMEs with the threat of fines, the lack of independent removal authorities and the excessively wide-reaching cross border removal orders. Protection of the fundamental rights of free speech and media freedom remain a priority. Therefore, the Greens/EFA Group voted against the regulation.

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Video - Marcel Kolaja](#)
  - [Video - Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Patrick Breyer](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Marcel Kolaja](#)
  - [Social media: Twitter - Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield](#)
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## **European Defence Fund**

The European Parliament has adopted the report on the European Defence Fund (EDF). The Commission's proposal on the EDF means that the EU's budget funding is increased from around €600 million under the current budget, to €8 billion for the next. This will make the EU one of the continent's biggest investors in military research.

The Greens/EFA Group wants a strong, modern and common European security and defence policy which is human-rights based, transparent, and accountable to the Parliament. The EDF has a very weak ethics mechanism, no transparency features and the European Parliament has no control over implementation for the next seven years. The EDF risks exacerbating inefficiency in the sector, the duplication of projects, and more defence industrial overcapacities which drive harmful European arms exports. The Greens/EFA

advocate for an alternative model which would rely on pooled national budgets, and addresses not only joint research and development, but also acquisition, maintenance, training and security of supply.

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Video - Michael Bloss](#)
  - [Video - Mounir Satouri](#)
  - [Video - Hannah Neumann](#)
  - [Video - Henrike Hahn](#)
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## Parliamentary immunity lifted for Greek Neo-Nazi MEP Ioannis Lagos

This week, Members of the European Parliament voted by a resounding majority to waive the immunity of MEP Ioannis Lagos, former leader of the neo-Nazi “Golden Dawn” party, who was sentenced by the Greek courts in October to 13 years in prison for “leading and belonging to a criminal organisation”.

**Marie Toussaint**, Greens/EFA MEP and rapporteur for the immunity file for the European Parliament, comments:

*“The Greek judicial system has demanded action from the European Parliament for months and it was imperative to waive the immunity of Ioannis Lagos so that he can finally face justice in his own country. Lagos' guilty sentence is for the most serious of crimes and he cannot be allowed to evade justice with impunity. The extreme methods and the past electoral success of Golden Dawn in Greece, shows why we must always stand up to fascism, hate speech and the extreme violence it gives rise to, wherever it exists.*

- [Text adopted](#)
  - [Press release](#)
- 

## Child Guarantee

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution on the EU Guarantee Against Child Poverty. Ahead of the European Social Policy Summit on 7th May, the resolution calls on EU governments to guarantee all children in the European Union free access to healthy food, clean drinking water, adequate housing, healthcare, education, care and leisure activities and to implement the Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights. The aim of the action plan is to significantly reduce child poverty by 2030.

**Katrin Langensiepen**, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur and vice-chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, comments:

*“EU governments must make the fight against child poverty a priority. European social policy must ensure that all children have access to basic care and that single parents, LGBTIQ families and people with disabilities receive targeted support. Member States should increase the five per cent allocated from the European Social Fund to fight child poverty. The post-pandemic period will raise poverty to new levels.”*

- [Press release](#)
- [Video - Katrin Langensiepen](#)
- [Social media: Twitter - Katrin Langensiepen](#)

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*Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary debriefing: 21 May 2021*

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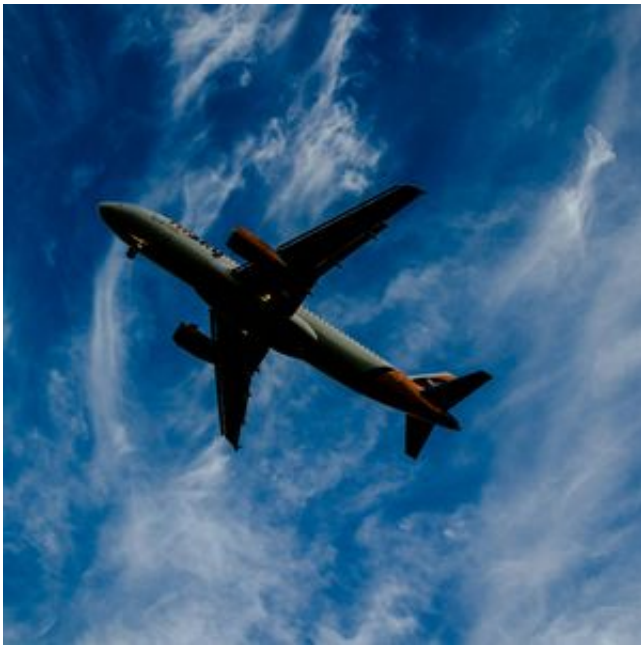


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21.01.2026

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