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Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 14-18 December 2015

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

Contesting approval of import of a genetically-modified glyphosate resistant maize

variety

Mon. 14 Dec. – EP plenary debate; vote Weds.

The European Parliament rebuked Wednesday the Commission by objecting to the authorisation of a new genetically modified maize variety. Despite the EP's environment committee having already said no, the Commission proceeded to finalise the authorisation without waiting for a vote in the Plenary. Not only is this a blow to the EU's democratic process, it also highlights major flaws with the EU authorisation process for GM crops, which the Commission itself recognises. An urgent reform should be the Commission's top priority.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Social media](#)

Further information

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Car pollution laws and real driving emissions tests

Mon. 14 Dec. – Environment committee vote

The European Parliament's environment committee voted Monday to reject a decision to introduce 'real driving emissions' (RDE) tests for measuring compliance with EU car pollution limits. The controversial decision would create tests with such major loopholes ('compliance factors') that it would enable car manufacturers to produce and market cars that exceed EU legal limits on pollutants by a large margin permanently. Our calls to reject this proposal was adopted by the environment committee and we urge the Commission to come back with a real driving emissions test with no exemptions and which ensures all cars approved for the market comply with the EU's pollutant limits. For the Greens, this vote is an important step towards overturning the outrageous decision by EU governments on creating a fundamentally-flawed driving emissions test procedure. The European Parliament will now vote as a whole on the proposal to reject the RDE test decision, most likely in January.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Europe's energy future

Mon. 14 Dec. – EP plenary debate; votes Tues.

The European Parliament adopted Tuesday two reports setting out its position on the European Energy Union and the proposal for a 10% target for electricity interconnectivity across the EU.

The direction of EU energy policy is at odds with the commitments Europe has taken under the UN climate agreement in Paris. The Paris climate agreement implies that the EU step up efforts to phase-out fossil fuels and move towards an economy powered fully based on renewables. The EU must now deliver its promises to make Europe the 'world number one' on renewable energy and to establish the policies and measures in line with a 1.5°C / well below 2°C world. We need to push for greater ambition on the EU's 2030 renewables and energy efficiency targets and for both to be binding, as requested by the Greens. Unfortunately, so far, the Commission's proposal lacks ambition and EU governments are lagging. Today, the European Parliament has called both the Commission and the Council to change method.

Ensuring a much higher level of interconnectivity between power systems is essential for ensuring a more flexible, decentralised and sustainable energy sector. An overall 10% target can help to this end but in the future we need to adopt a more flexible approach and set targets tailored for specific regions, based on scientific evidence and taking into account a number of additional qualitative parameters, including the accessibility of the interconnectors.

- [Text adopted - Energy Union](#)
- [Text adopted - Electricity interconnection](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Updating EU border and coastguard rules

Tues. 15 Dec. – European Commission proposal

The European Commission presented a proposal to create a European Border and Coast Guard System, building on the mandate of the FRONTEX border management agency. However, there are concerns about the composition, role and functions of the mooted system, notably as regards whether it can act without the agreement of a member state and how to guarantee fundamental rights.

During the recent vote on the report concerning complaint mechanism in FRONTEX, we called to ensure, thanks to our Green co-draftsperson, Ska Keller, that human rights violations will not go unresolved in the new mechanism. This is a strong message to FRONTEX that it has to follow the Fundamental Rights Charter. The Commission took it on board in the new proposal. Still, many other concerns remain in place.

- [Latest press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Finalising EU data protection reform

Tues. 15 Dec. – Trilogue negotiations to finalise legislation

Negotiators from the European Parliament and Council reached an agreement Tuesday evening on the long-open reform of the EU's data protection rules. The first instrument is the data protection regulation which creates new rules and is a major step forward for consumer protection and competition. For our Green MEP Jan Philipp Albrecht, who is the European Parliament draftsperson on the data protection regulation, this breakthrough paves the way for the conclusion of the much-anticipated reform of the EU's data protection rules. The legislation will create an EU-wide data protection regime, replacing the outdated data protection rules from 1995. This will be a major step forward for consumer protection and competition and ensure Europe has data protection rules that are fit for purpose in the digital age.

The second instrument of the data protection reform package is a directive on data protection rules for police and judicial authorities when they process personal data. The directive sets clear data protection rules for law enforcement authorities and will improve the rights of citizens throughout the EU.

EU governments must now give the final green light to this agreement and ensure the balanced compromise reached Tuesday brings this long legislative process to successful conclusion.

A press conference is planned Monday 21 December, with Jan Philipp Albrecht (European Parliament

rapporteur on the data protection regulation), Marju Lauristin (European Parliament rapporteur on the data protection directive), Félix Braz (Luxembourgish justice minister) and Vera Jourová (EU justice commissioner) in the pressroom in the European Parliament in Brussels.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Preparation of the European Council of 17 and 18 December 2015

Weds. 16 Dec. – EP plenary debate

Ahead of this week's summit of EU leaders, Greens/EFA co-president Philippe Lamberts discussed the refugee crisis and proposals by the EU Commission to create a European border and coast guard system. The proposal shows the EU is continuing to get its priorities wrong in responding to the refugee crisis. Member states could be forced to accept border control missions from a beefed-up FRONTEX agency. However, nothing is being done to tackle those member states who refuse to accept a fair distribution of refugees across Europe and this remains at the heart of the problem.

- [Plenary intervention – Philippe Lamberts](#)
-

Dieselgate, car pollution rules and the EU response

Weds. 16 Dec. – Conference of Presidents of political groups

MEPs voted Thursday to support the creation of an inquiry committee, on a Green initiative, to investigate the car pollution scandal. The Greens/EFA group, which has been pushing for the creation of an inquiry committee since the Volkswagen scandal broke, welcomes the decision as an important step in ensuring the implications of the scandal are properly dealt with at EU level. The Greens believe the Commission is failing to grasp the seriousness of the situation. Beyond the illegal nature of emissions manipulation, there

are issues of regulatory enforcement and loopholes. This inquiry must focus on the roles played by the responsible national authorities and the European Commission in allowing this regulatory breakdown to occur.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Mandate of the committee](#)

Further information

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Sakharov Prize award for Raif Badawi

Weds. 16 Dec. – Award-giving ceremony

The European Parliament awarded Wednesday the 2015 Sakharov Prize for freedom of thought to Raif Badawi, who the Greens were the first to nominate. As the Saudi blogger and human rights activist remains in prison, his wife Ensaf Haidar, who lives in exile in Canada with their children, represented him during the ceremony in Strasbourg. The group believes this is a deserved recognition of his role in promoting political and social debate in Saudi Arabia. The regime must take stock of this strong message and release Raif Badawi and all other imprisoned activists.

- [Social media](#)
- [Latest press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information

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Hungary and basic democratic values

Weds. 16 Dec. – EP plenary vote

MEPs voted on a resolution on the situation in Hungary. The Greens/EFA group has previously written to EU Commission president Juncker, highlighting concerns that the new laws on asylum, which were adopted in Hungary earlier this year, are in conflict with EU law and has called on the Commission to investigate this. So far, the Commission's approach has been far too narrow and failed to deal with many concerns over the last years about breaches of the basic rights and values, set out in the EU Treaties, and the possibility to consider an Article 7 procedure in this case. The Greens believe parliament should criticise this and put pressure on the Commission to act.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Greens/EFA motion for resolution](#)

Further information

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EU arms export rules: EU must prevent arms going to repressive regimes and terrorists

Weds. 16 Dec. – EP plenary debate; vote Thurs.

The European Parliament adopted Thursday a report setting out its assessment of how EU rules on arms exports are being implemented (EU Common Position 944/2008), which has been shepherded through the EP by Green MEP and EP rapporteur Bodil Valero. The report calls for EU governments to tighten up EU rules and practices on arms exports, notably as regards implementation. In this respect the report calls for in depth-risk assessment of the overall situation of the recipient country before issuing licences, for much more effective end-user controls including non-misuse clauses and on-site inspections. It also calls for a more restrictive national application of the eight criteria of the Common Position also with respect to services of private military companies. With European arms continuing to be used in conflicts around the world, all this is essential. The report also addresses how to prevent arms from getting to terrorists in Europe and recalls that it is essential to ensure coherence between arms exports and the credibility of the EU as global human rights advocate. Additionally, it promotes an effective implementation of the Common Position as contribution to the EU's Policy Coherence on Development. Regarding past actions, the report criticises the merely reactive character of the Member States export policies. Unfortunately, conservative MEPs (mainly EPP and ECR) managed to scrap a Green demand from the text, namely to highlight that only 21 of 28 Member States made full submission to the 16th Annual Report on arms exports, and that the three main European arms exporters (France, Germany, UK) were among those who failed to comply with reporting obligations of the legally binding EU Common Position.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)

Further information
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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- [Situation in Burundi](#)
- [20th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement](#)
- [Ibrahim Halawa facing potentially the death penalty](#)
- [Malaysia](#)
- [Situation in the Maldives](#)

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 22 January 2016

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Wolfgang Vrede



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