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Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 24-27 October 2016

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EU must be able to deal with all breaches of democracy, rule of law, fundamental rights

Tuesday 25 October - plenary debate

The European Parliament adopted a report Tuesday, calling on the Commission to bring forward a proposal for a Union Pact for democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights by September 2017. For the Greens, it is vital that the EU is able to respond to all breaches of democracy, rule of law or fundamental rights, including those occurring in the Member States without a strict link with EU secondary law. But it can only do so if it has the right tools at its disposal. For that purpose, the Parliament proposes a system of permanent monitoring of the situation in the Member States with a prominent role played by independent experts. Recent events in Poland, Hungary and elsewhere highlight the urgent need to improve how we respond to failings when they do occur. Where Member States' governments fail to maintain fundamental rights, the EU should take action and Member States should not be able to hide behind the defence of national competence. While the proposals in this report don't go as far as we would have liked, they are a very welcome step in the right direction.

- Text adopted

Further information
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Presentation of Commission work programme

Tuesday 25 October - Commission statement

The Commission presented Tuesday its work programme for 2017. While it focuses on many of the rights things from tax issues to climate policy or social concerns, the proposal falls short of what is needed and looks more of a communication stunt, for example when it comes to creating a European Pillar of social rights or doubling the EFSI capacity. The Greens would also like to see a real change of course, closer economic policy coordination in the EU, as well as increased investment in sustainable economic growth. We continue to criticise the unchanged approach to trade deals (notably TTIP and CETA) and highlight the risks posed to civil liberties by high levels of surveillance of our citizens. We also regret the lack of concrete proposals to address the problems revealed by the Barroso and Kroes scandals.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)

Further information

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Commission launches Corporate Tax package

Tuesday 25 October - plenary debate, Wednesday 26 - Commission launch

MEPs debated Tuesday the European Commission's new proposal for a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB).

The ways companies are currently taxed - treating subsidiaries from the same company as if they are completely independent entities - does not reflect the reality of their operations leading to an artificial reduction of their tax bills. For the Greens, progressing towards the consolidation of the tax base beyond having a common base would be a crucial step to ending tax avoidance. It would be even more effective if it were combined with a minimum corporate tax rate across Europe.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Blog post
- Social media

Further information
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Democracy and press freedom Hungary

Wednesday 26 October - Plenary

Green MEPs protested Wednesday against attacks on democracy and press freedom Hungary. The biggest Hungarian opposition daily newspaper, Népszabadság, was summarily shut down in October 2016. Since then, the company that owned the newspaper has been sold to a company owned by Lőrinc Mészáros, one of the biggest oligarch and close friend of the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. This is a brutal action against the freedom of press and the remaining opposition media in Hungary.

- Background article
- Social media

Key debate on conclusions of European Council

Wednesday 26 October - Plenary

The Council and Commission both made statements following this week's Council session. CETA was one of the main themes. The Greens regret that the Commission continues to ignore the unprecedented mobilization of citizens against trade agreements, which would only serve the interests of multinational corporations, as opposed to serving the general interest. Our trade policy must be geared towards improving social, environmental and health standards, not narrow corporate interests.

- Plenary speech – Philippe Lamberts

Situation of journalists in Turkey

Wednesday 26 October - Plenary debate

The European Parliament discussed Wednesday the situation of journalists in Turkey, which was already bad before the coup, and keeps worsening day by day. After the attempted coup on 15 July, thousands of journalists have been arrested. The Greens demand that the Turkish government end the arbitrary persecution of journalists in Turkey. We also want to shed light on the on-going prosecution and imprisonment and keep the debate on the alarming situation of journalists in Turkey on-going.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Greens/EFA motion for resolution
- Text adopted

Further information

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2017 Budget

Tuesday 25 October - debate, Wednesday 26 – vote

The European Parliament today voted on the 2017 budget and the revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), backing several amendments from the Greens/EFA Group.

Among these are the freezing of 20% of the pot in the EU Commission's budget from which former EU commissioners are paid a transitional allowance for three years. This money will not be released until the EU Commission strengthens its code of conduct.

Our Group also welcomes budget increases to concrete projects that will benefit EU citizens, such LIFE, Erasmus, and the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement.

MEPs also agreed to allocate funds for responding to major political challenges, such as the migration crisis. However, this new money is still not enough. The European Parliament will need to deliver further financial means if we really want to fight the root causes of migration.

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Text adopted – Budget 2017
- Text adopted – MFF revision

Further information
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Nuclear security and non-proliferation

Wednesday 26 October - plenary debate, Thursday 27 - vote

In a historic vote, the EP adopted by a large majority (415 in favour /124 against /74 abstentions) a motion for resolution on nuclear security and non-proliferation which calls on its Member States to vote in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution which will trigger works on a new treaty banning all nuclear

weapons.

The text of the resolution asks for the withdrawal of all tactical nukes from Europe (including the Russian weapons), the need to establish a nuclear free zone in Europe and to continue working on the conference leading to a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction. It also questions the modernization of nuclear arsenals and deplores the re-emergence of nuclear weapons as active deterrent.

- Press release (DE/FR)
- Greens/EFA motion for resolution
- Text adopted

Further information
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2016 Sakharov Prize winner

Thursday 27 October – Conference of Presidents

The Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament has awarded the 2016 edition of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Nadia Murad Bassee and Lamiya Aji Bashar, fighters for women's rights and against sexual violence by members of the so-called "Islamic State". Both belong to the religious minority of Yazidis in Iraq. The prize will be officially awarded during a ceremony in Strasbourg in December.

Further information
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CETA trade deal on hold

Thursday 27 October

There was no EU-Canada Summit this week as the controversial trade EU-Canada deal CETA is currently on hold. Last week, Greens/EFA MEPs, politicians, citizens, civil society, local and public representatives from the EU and Canada united against the CETA deal by holding a counter-summit in the European

Parliament.

- Social media – Citizen's CETA Summit

Further information
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Other Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- European Voluntary Service
- Situation of Mosul / Northern Iraq

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 25 November 2016

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Press release

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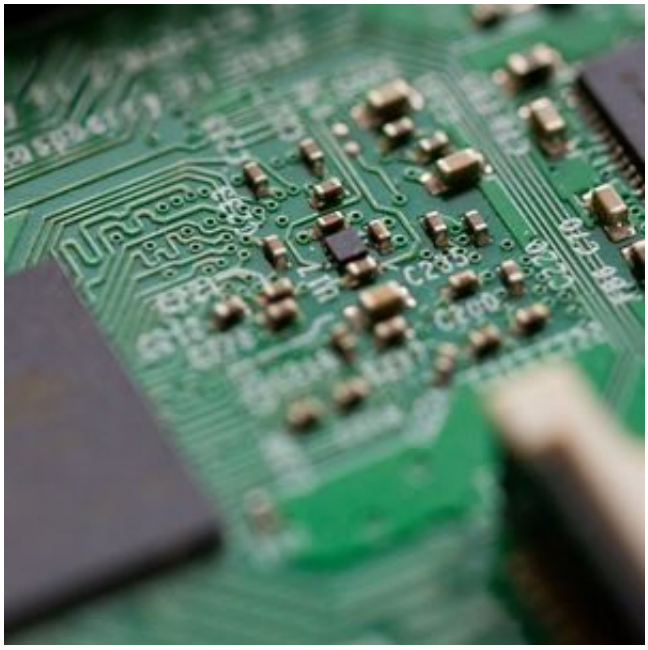


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