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Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 12-15 September 2016

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Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

Dieselgate emissions scandal - hearings continue as plenary debates interim report

Mon. 12, Tue. 13 Thurs. 15 September - Committee, EP debate

The EMIS committee heard Monday from Commissioners Bieńkowska (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) and Vella (Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) as part of their continued effort to establish the level of Commission responsibility in the Dieselgate scandal.

The interim report from the Committee of Inquiry into Emission Measurements (EMIS) has been passed by MEPs with a strong majority. Green MEPs are demanding greater support from the Commission in providing access to documents relevant to the inquiry and will press Commissioner Bieńkowska on how the Commission will ensure Member States fulfil their responsibilities.

For the Greens, it seems that the European Commission services responsible for the automotive industry turned a blind eye to mounting evidence which should have raised suspicions and led to further investigations. It is clear that, if we are to re-establish consumer confidence following the scandal, the regulations for the approval of diesel engines will have to be watertight, including greater EU oversight and enforcement powers.

Hearings continued on Thursday with representatives of Bosch, the company allegedly responsible for writing the 'defeat device' software.

- [Updated blogpost \(EN\)](#)
- [Statement by MEP Claude Turmes](#)
- [Text adopted](#)
- [Dieselgate campaign site](#)

Further information

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Further information

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Work-life balance

Mon. 12 September - EP debate; Tue. 13 September – EP vote

MEPs adopted Tuesday a report on Creating Labour Market Conditions Favourable for Work-Life

Balance. Greens/EFA MEP Tatjana Ždanoka was co-rapporteur, and the aim of the report is to feed into the Commission's upcoming work-life balance legislative package. The report calls for adapting policies to today's diverse society and asks for legislative proposals on maternity, paternity and carers' leave. For the Greens, achieving a good balance between our private lives and work is not only crucial for our well-being, it also brings benefits to the economy and society as a whole. The EU and its Member States need to adapt work-life balance policies to today's reality by promoting gender equality in employment and other spheres of life, but also by taking into account the needs of an increasingly diverse society. This requires a better sharing of paid work and caring responsibilities between men and women as well as society as a whole.

- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

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Rule of law in Poland

Tues. 13 September – debate ; Weds. 14 September – Plenary vote

MEPs adopted a resolution Wednesday on the current situation regarding the rule of law in Poland. The European Parliament demands compliance with constitutional standards, the independence of the Polish Constitutional Court, press freedom and strengthening the rights of women, which remain a critical concern. The Greens/EFA group has co-signed a joint resolution with the main political groupings.

The overall result is positive, as this is the first time there is such a large majority in favour of protecting the rule of law in a particular Member State. This being said, we lost several amendments we had co-signed with GUE, namely on sexual and reproductive rights, including abortion, the right to asylum, minority rights, LGBTI, environment.

Poland fought hard for democracy in the last decades of the twentieth century, ending a totalitarian system and reclaiming the rights of citizens. Our message to the Polish government is this: you claim to be the heirs of Solidarity, you cannot limit the freedoms of half of the Polish people.

Poland has until 27 October to implement the recommendations previously laid out by the Commission.

- [Text adopted](#)
- [Joint motion for a resolution](#)

Further information

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Situation in Turkey

Tues. 13 September - EP debate

The attempted coup against the democratically elected government of Turkey was of great concern and we have criticised it publicly. However, we are equally concerned about the growing number of police actions against various parts of the Turkish society, including independent journalists, judges and academics. The EU needs to push for an end to their persecution. Our response to the undermining of law, the repression of the Turkish opposition and the curtailment of freedom of the press must be further dialogue and support for civil society.

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

Further information

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State of the Union

Weds. 14 September - EP debate

The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, made his second annual address to the European Parliament. The address was followed by a plenary debate. Group co-president Rebecca Harms responded on behalf of the Greens/EFA.

For the Greens, The European Union, with all its achievements and its shortcomings, is still the best answer to nationalism. The European project is about sovereignty and the ability of democracies to make the choices that shape their future. But in a globalised world, one has to recognise that the only way to keep or regain sovereignty is to share it

You can see our many reactions during a live tweeting session on Twitter [@greensep](#) with #SOTEU.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
 - [Plenary speech – Rebecca Harms](#)
-

Social dumping in the EU

Tue. 13 September – EP debate; Weds. 14 September - EP vote

The European Parliament adopted Wednesday a report on social dumping in the EU. The term ‘social dumping’ is used to refer to a range of abusive practices and circumvention of existing labour and social legislation - results in the exploitation of workers and the violation of their rights. Overall, the report is rather position form a Green point of view, except in the area of transport, where the report does not call for monitoring of acquisitions by airlines outside the EU or collective agreements on rest times and social safeguards. The Commission and Member States need to step up their efforts to ensure the proper implementation of European and national legislation and improve the effectiveness of controls, including by a better exchange of information and by improving cooperation between national labour and social control bodies in cross border situations.

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

Further information

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Asylum - additional measures for Italy and Greece

Weds. 14 September – debate; Thur. 15 September - EP vote

MEPs adopted, by a large majority, a report on additional measures for Italy and Greece from Greens/EFA MEP Ska Keller. We gladly welcome the adoption of an amendment reiterating Member States' obligation to ensure the right to family reunification and to fast-track vulnerable cases to enable them to be reunited with their families as soon as possible. Last year, the Council agreed to relocate

160,000 refugees from Greece and Italy to other Member States. The Commission is now proposing that 54,000 of those relocation places be instead sacrificed in favour of resettlements under the EU-Turkey deal. It is crucial that the EU increases the safe and regular channels for refugees to come to Europe. At the same time, with Greece and Italy still under considerable strain, this must not come at the expense of existing relocation commitments. Member States must fulfil their commitments and make available at least one third of the total 160,000 relocation places by the end of the year. The relocation programme must also include Afghan nationals, who would not currently be eligible under the current proposals.

- [Press release \(DE/EN/FR\)](#)
- [Speech by Greens/EFA Rapporteur Ska Keller](#)
- [Text adopted](#)

Further information

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Apple State Aid decision

Weds. 14 September - EP debate

Following the recent announcement on the Apple State Aid case, MEPs debated Wednesday - in the presence of Commissioner Vestager - the impact of the Apple decision and the steps that now need to be taken.

The Greens strongly welcome the Commissioner Vestager's and Commission's decision on Apple. National tax authorities must now investigate if Apple didn't pay its fair share of taxes in EU Member States.

Questions around the appeal by Ireland and Apple, new state aid guidelines and the need for further EU corporate tax reforms are expected. Earlier this year, we have released a report on IKEA's tax avoidance strategies and look forward to see how the Commission will follow up on it and investigate.

- [Plenary speech – Philippe Lamberts \(FR\)](#)
- [Social media - Strong support to MEPs and Commissioner Vestager](#)
- [Green report on IKEA's tax avoidance strategies](#)

Further information

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Copyright reforms

Weds. 14 September - Commission proposal

Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society, Günther Oettinger, presented Wednesday his proposals for copyright reforms.

For the Greens, these plans are an attack on the freedom to link. The retrograde plans spell disaster for the internet. Mr. Oettinger has let copyright reform be hijacked by corporate interests and turned a blind eye to the needs of artists and users.

The Parliament has rejected this idea multiple times in its resolutions on the Digital Single Market and it must do so again. Already, MEPs from all political groups are coming together to voice their opposition.

The Parliament has rejected this idea multiple times in its resolutions on the implementation of the copyright Directive (Reda report) and on the Digital Single Market, and it must do so again. Many MEPs from various political groups have already voiced their concerns, which announces heated debates in the Parliament in the upcoming months.

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

Further information

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External investment plan

Weds. 14 September - Commission proposal

The European Commission presented Wednesday a proposal for an EU External Investment Plan. For the Greens, sustainable business and job creation are essential to poverty reduction - a target all development funding should aim for. In the case of the new European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) special focus should be on development effectiveness principles, especially transparency and accountability. It is also important to secure proper monitoring and evaluation of the EFSDs in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Further information
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Nomination for Sakharov Prize 2016

Thur. 15 September – EP Plenary vote

The Greens/EFA Group has nominated the Turkish journalist, columnist and documentarian, Can Dündar for this year's Sakharov Prize. Awarding him the prize would be a powerful signal of European support for freedom of the media and freedom of expression in Turkey. Read more about why we have chosen to nominate him:

- [Can Dündar for Sakharov Prize 2016](#)

Further information
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Informal Council meeting to discuss security

Fri. 16 September

There was an informal meeting of the European Council on Friday in Bratislava. Ministers discussed a paper on security from Bernard Cazeneuve and Thomas de Maizière, the French and German Interior Ministers.

Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- [Philippines](#)
- [Joint motion for a resolution - Poland](#)
- [Somalia](#)
- [Zimbabwe](#)

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Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 7 October 2016

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Leonid Andronov



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