©antonio-grosz

en

News | 17.03.2017

Greens/EFA Round up

Debriefing of the Strasbourg plenary week 13-16 March 2017

Table of contents

- Mercury rules will protect vulnerable and put an end to dangerous storage
- Gender equality: still a long way to go on equality
- EU Arctic policy
- Animal welfare: rabbit farming needs minimum standards
- Circular Economy can deliver for climate and jobs
- Firearms: stronger controls will improve safety
- LuxLeaks appeal verdict
- Official controls in the food chain
- Shareholders' rights: progress on transparency
- Conclusions of the European Council/Rome Declaration
- Major step forward on conflict minerals
- Fishing sector data collection
- Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

Mercury

Debate Monday 13 March, vote Tuesday 14 March

MEPs approved Tuesday 14 March new legislation on the regulation of mercury. This will reduce the trade and use of mercury, the risk of contamination, and bring legislation in line with the 2013 Minamata Convention. While the Greens/EFA group wanted a commitment for mercury to be banned in dentistry throughout Europe by the end of 2022, Member States could not agree to this. MEPs have considerably improved the Commission’s original proposal, significantly reducing the risks posed to citizens and protecting our environment from contamination. The final deal also includes a ban on using dental amalgams from July 2018 on children younger than 15 and on pregnant and breast-feeding women. The legislation will also see an end to the hazardous storage of liquid mercury underground.

- Text adopted
- Plenary speech – Bas Eickhout
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)

Further information
Axel Singhofen, Advisor on Health and Environment Policy
axel.singhofen@ep.europa.eu

Equality between women and men in the EU

Debate Monday 13 March, vote Tuesday 14 March

MEPs have backed Tuesday 14 March a report from Greens/EFA rapporteur Ernest Urtasun on equality between women and men in the EU. The report forms the European Parliament's response to the European Commission's report on progress on gender equality in the EU for 2014-15. For the first time, the report includes a commentary on member states performances and a statistical annexe, which shows that progress on many measures has stalled in recent years. Equality between women and men in the EU was enshrined in the Treaty of Rome in the principle of equal pay for equal work. 60 years on, this is still not a reality. The pay gap remains at 16.5% and has increased in some Member States in the past 5 years. Improved implementation of gender equality policies could result from enhanced coordination of various tools and mechanisms already available at EU level. The report includes a series of recommendations for EU institutions and member states.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Plenary speech – Ernest Urtasun
- Social media

Further information
Georgia Tsaklanganos - **Advisor on Women's Rights and Gender equality**
georgia.tsaklanganos@ep.europa.eu

An integrated EU policy for the Arctic

Debate Monday 13 March, vote Thursday 16 March

The European Parliament adopted Thursday 16 March its position on the Commission's 'Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic'. The EU has a long-standing interest in the region and has been engaged in discussions over the Arctic's future for some time, given that three of its Member States (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) are Arctic countries. Climate change and growing competition for access to the Arctic and its natural resources mean the Arctic region faces new challenges, especially to the environment and human security. The report includes a range of measures on environmental protection, sustainable fishing, and a call for Member States and the Commission to work towards a ban on oil and gas extraction in the Arctic.

- Text adopted
- Plenary speech – Heidi Hautala
- Blog post

- Video - social media

Further information
Delphine Chalençon - Climate Change Campaigner
delphine.chalencon@ep.europa.eu

Minimum standards for the protection of farm rabbits

Debate Monday 13 March, vote Tuesday 14 March

MEPs have backed legislation Tuesday 14 March on minimum standards for the protection of farm rabbits, effectively to end the cage age. Most rabbits are kept in miserable, disease-ridden conditions. They are the second highest population of farmed animals in the EU - up to 30% of caged rabbits die in factory farming systems. Conservatives and others tried in vain to block calls on the Commission to bring forward binding legislation on rabbit welfare. Animal welfare will always be a very high priority for the Greens and we have worked tirelessly against factory farming of all animals.

- Text adopted
- Plenary speech – Florent Marcellesi
- Blog post
- Social media

Further information
Andrzej Nowakowski - Advisor on Agriculture and Rural Development
andrzej.nowakowski@ep.europa.eu

Circular Economy

Debate and vote Tuesday 14 March

The European Parliament voted Tuesday 13 March on a series of reports to revise legislation related to waste and packaging, under the banner of “the Circular Economy”. The Greens/EFA group focussed on concrete preventative action, binding reduction targets for food waste and marine litter, improved collection of waste materials, stronger recycling targets and an end to incineration of recyclable or compostable waste. The final text includes binding targets for recycling and a call on the commission to set up binding food targets. Taken together, these measures can help the EU meet climate commitments and boost the economy.

Texts adopted

- End-of-life vehicles, waste batteries and accumulators and waste electrical and electronic equipment
- Waste
- Landfill of waste
- Packaging and packaging waste

- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Plenary speech – Davor Škrlec
- Social media (animated GIF)
- Video

Further information
Sophie Perroud – Food Campaigner
sophie.perroud@ep.europa.eu

Revised firearms directive will improve public safety

Debate and vote Tuesday 14 March

MEPs approved Tuesday 14 March an agreement between the European Parliament and Council on revisions to the Firearms Directive, designed to improve security measures on gun control. Measures include prohibition of certain semi-automatic firearms and converted firearms, improved measures for deactivation, tracing and storage of weapons, medical and psychological monitoring for those acquiring or in possession of a firearm, and improved information exchange between Member States.

While we were in favor of stricter rules on the firing capacity of authorised semi-automatic firearms and would have liked to secure tighter restrictions on what types of guns are legal and who can own them, this agreement is still a significant step forward.

- Text adopted
- Plenary speech – Igor Soltes
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)

Further information
Stany Grudzielski - Advisor on Internal Market and Consumer Protection
stanislas.grudzielski@ep.europa.eu

LuxLeaks verdict

Wednesday 15 March

Whistleblowers responsible for uncovering of the LuxLeaks scandal, Antoine Deltour and Raphaël Halet, have lost their appeal Wednesday 15 March. The Luxembourg Appeals Court found them guilty of stealing documents, revealing business secrets and violating trade secrets. Antoine Deltour was sentenced to a six-months suspended jail sentence and a €1,500 fine, while Raphaël Halet received a €1,000 fine. Journalist Edouard Perrin was acquitted. For the Greens, even with reduced sentences, this ruling is deeply incomprehensible and regrettable, as their revelations allowed the European Commission to propose important tax reforms. Without their courageous actions, the existence of shady tax deals between large companies and Luxembourg's tax administration would have remained secret. Whistleblowers must be protected, not convicted.

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

- Plenary speech – Sven Giegold on TAXE recommendations

Further information
Pam Bartlett Quintanilla - Transparency and Democracy Campaigner
pamela.bartlettquintanilla@ep.europa.eu

Further information
Catherine Olier - Tax Justice Campaigner
catherine.olier@ep.europa.eu

Official controls in the food chain

Debate Tuesday 14 March, vote Wednesday 15 March

MEPs approved Wednesday 15 March new regulations on the official controls of food and feed law, part of a comprehensive package to modernise the laws controlling animal health, plant health and animal welfare. The aim of the new regulation is to ensure the uniform application of the agri-food chain rules across the EU by harmonising current legislation and bringing all controls under one source. The Greens/EFA group was behind a number of positive amendments, including measures on transparency, consumer expectations, stricter penalties, and the inclusion of a whistleblower clause.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Plenary speech – Bart Staes

Further information
Corinna Zerger – Advisor on Food Safety and Quality
corrina.zerger@ep.europa.eu

Shareholder rights directive: progress on transparency

Debate Monday 13 March, vote Tuesday 14 March

MEPs have approved Tuesday 14 March the agreement with the Council on the revised directive on shareholders' rights. The legislation aims to improve long-term commitment of shareholders in listed companies and strengthen the link between directors' pay and long-term performance. We have secured greater transparency on executive remuneration, and that shareholders will have a say on this. We have also pushed for inclusion of social and environmental performance criteria in assessment of directors' performance. This must now be taken into account in investment strategies. Thanks to amendments previously adopted by the Parliament on a Green initiative, country-by-country public reporting is currently being discussed in another legislative proposal.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Plenary speech – Pascal Durand

Further information
Francesca Beltrame – Legal Advisor

francesca.beltrame@ep.europa.eu

Further information
Catherine Olier - Tax Justice Campaigner
catherine.olier@ep.europa.eu

Conclusions of the European Council/Rome Declaration

Debate Wednesday 15 March

The European Parliament discussed the conclusions of the European Council and the future of Europe, ahead of the 60th anniversary of the Rome Declaration – the founding of the EU.

Greens/EFA co-president, Philippe Lamberts, told newly reelected Council President, Donald Tusk, that Europe needed a new direction. One that would reunite citizens with the European project, focusing on fiscal and social convergence, rather than solely on migration, terrorism and ultra-liberal trade deal.

- Plenary speech – Philippe Lamberts

Major step forward on conflict minerals

Debate Wednesday 15 March, vote Thursday 16 March

This deal is a major breakthrough in responding to the problem of conflict minerals. For the first time in Europe, firms involved in the extraction and trade of minerals will be obliged to check whether their supply chain has links to armed conflicts and human rights abuses. While the Commission and Council were originally intent on allowing companies to voluntarily self-certify as a 'responsible importer', we are pleased to have helped secure binding legislation. Some loopholes remain, with the majority of 'downstream firms', who process minerals to produce final products like smart phones and tablets, remain outside the scope of the legislation. We would like to see this used as an example for binding legislation on corporate responsibility for other sectors and producers, such as textiles and palm oil.

- Text adopted
- Press release (DE/EN/FR)
- Social media
- Plenary speech – Molly Scott Cato
- Plenary speech - Igor Šoltes

Further information
Paula Lopez Reig - Advisor on International Trade
paula.lopezreig@ep.europa.eu

Fisheries data collection

Debate and vote Thursday 16 March

The European Parliament adopted Thursday 16 March new rules on data collection in fisheries. This report, from Greens/EFA rapporteur Marco Affronte, aims to bring data collection into line with the requirements resulting from the revised common fisheries policy (CFP). By harmonising the framework with the other EU legislation on the collection of information in fisheries, we can remove overlaps and help reduce the costs of the whole marine data collection system. This is a very positive step, but it is not over yet, as the new regulation must now be applied in all member states.

- Text adopted
- Plenary speech – Marco Affronte

Further information
Eleni Zacharaki- Advisor on Fisheries
eleni.zacharaki@ep.europa.eu

Greens/EFA motions for resolutions

- Philippines, the case of senator Leila M. De Lima
- Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia and the situation in Crimea
- EU priorities for the UN Human Rights Council sessions in 2017

Want to be kept informed?

- www.greens-efa.eu
- http://twitter.com/GreensEP
- http://www.facebook.com/greensefa

****

Next issue of Greens/EFA Plenary Round-up: 7 April 2017

Recommended

Press release



EU caves in to the fossil fuel lobby

19.11.2026

Press release

karsten-wurth-unsplash



[Court upholds EU climate rules - EU must now show lead…]

12.11.2026

Press release

©jonathan-marchal



[Tilly METZ elected European Parliament Vice-President]

12.11.2026

Press release



[Ukrainian children in Russia: Parliament to call for u…]

11.11.2026

Please share

- E-Mail